



Rock Hall Waterfront Committee **DRAFT**



Rock Hall Waterfront Master Plan



DRAFT: December 20, 2016

Funding for the Rock Hall Waterfront Master Plan is provided by a Working Waterfront Enhancement Grant, through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

ROCK HALL WATERFRONT MASTER PLAN PUBLIC DRAFT

This public review draft of the Rock Hall Waterfront Master Plan is based upon a collaborative public planning process involving meetings of the Rock Hall Waterfront Committee (RHWC), a public "visioning" meeting in August 2016 and a two-day public community workshop in October 2016 to develop and expand upon the initial ideas. The strategies were further reviewed and refined at the December 1, 2016 RHWC meeting.

The Rock Hall Waterfront Committee met on January 5, 2017 to review the draft and recommended that the draft be forwarded to the Planning Commission and Town Council for their review and adoption. An Adobe PDF file of the public draft has been posted to the Town of Rock Hall's web page. Printed copies are available for review at the Town Hall.

The public is invited to comment on the draft plan at the Town of Rock Hall Council Workshop meeting on January 30, 2017.

The Rock Hall Planning Commission will review the plan at their meeting on February 8, 2017 and advise the Town Council as to its consistency with the Rock Hall Comprehensive Plan (see page 4 for information regarding the draft Waterfront Plan's consistency with the Comprehensive Plan).

The Rock Hall Town Council will be asked to approve the plan at their meeting on February 9, 2017.

For those unable to make the Town Council Workshop Session on January 30, and who wish to provide comments please submit those comments no later than February 6, 2017:

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**Rock Hall
Waterfront Committee
DRAFT**

**Rock Hall Waterfront
Master Plan**

Prepared for

Town of Rock Hall, Maryland

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DRAFT: January 20, 2017

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Thank you to the many residents and friends of Rock Hall's waterfront who attended public meetings, filled out the community survey, and offered other valuable insights throughout the planning process.

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- A. Community Survey
- B. Public Meeting Summaries
- C. Enhancement Concepts
- D. Other Federal Funding Sources

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INTRODUCTION

Rock Hall's waterfront is a treasured place in the hearts and minds of many residents and visitors to the area. Many have spent most of their lives there, working the water to make a living. Others know it for the famous Fourth of July fireworks, its Pirates and Wenches Weekend and New Year's Eve celebrations.

The purpose of the Town of Rock Hall Waterfront Master Plan is to help guide future changes to enhance waterfront areas while maintaining the strong sense of place that makes Rock Hall's waterfront unique and special. The plan focuses on areas that are currently zoned Maritime Water Dependent (MWD) and Maritime Commercial (MC). This includes the waterfront area roughly between Walnut Street and Chesapeake Avenue. The plan also addresses the linkages to and from Rock Hall's Main Street and other nearby attractions and services.

The overall goals of this grant-funded project are:

- To develop strategies (Action Plan) for the retention and expansion of water-dependent businesses;
- To identify options for expanding waterfront access to working watermen, visitors and Town residents alike; and
- To evaluate the compatibility and suitability of existing and proposed land uses, infrastructure, facilities and services.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) WORKING WATERFRONT PROGRAM

According to the DNR's Working Waterfront Program website, "DNR's Working Waterfronts Program (WWP) assists with the preservation of existing and historic working waterfronts in Maryland. The WWP engages partners throughout the state to define working waterfront lands, infrastructure and activities; identify community needs; and offer technical and financial assistance to ensure public access and support for water-dependent businesses and industries."

DNR's Working Waterfronts Program awarded a FY 2016 Working Waterfront Enhancement Grant to Rock Hall to develop the master plan.

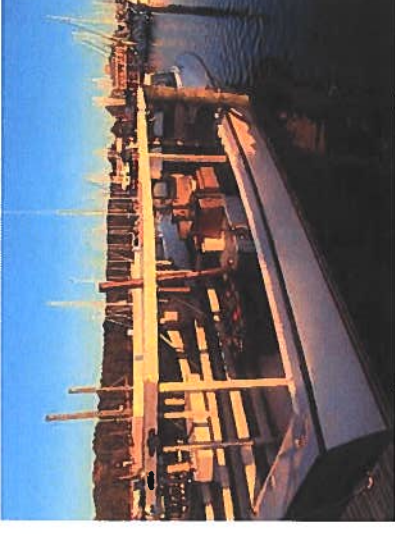


Figure 1 Rock Hall Harbor

What Is a Working Waterfront?

The National Working Waterfront Network states: "Working Waterfronts are the waterfront lands, waterfront infrastructure, and waterways that are used for a water-dependent activity, such as ports, small recreational boat harbors, fishing docks, and hundreds of other places across the country where people use and access the water."

ROCK HALL WORKING WATERFRONT ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Rock Hall Mayor and Town Council appointed members of the Working Waterfront Enhancement Committee (RHWEC) to develop the plan. The committee identified the following key goals as the desired outcome for the Plan:

- Develop an overall, community-based vision;
- Determine how best to protect working waterfront assets;
- Identify potential waterfront enhancements to encourage and attract more users while protecting working waterfront assets;
- Identify potential linkages to/from waterfront, downtown and nearby destinations; and
- Develop the plan so that it can be implemented in manageable pieces.

PLANNING PROCESS

The master plan was developed around a series of five RHWEC meetings interspersed with three public meetings. Table 1 Planning Process on page 3 lists each of the meetings and the topics for those meetings.

PLANNING CONTEXT

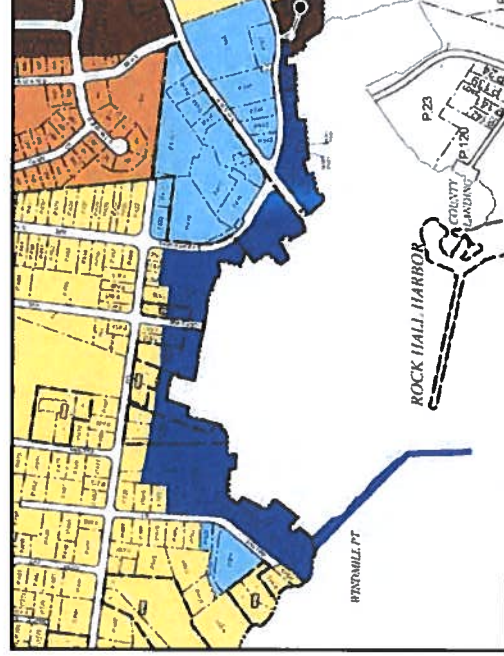


Figure 2 The study area includes all the lands zoned as Maritime Water Dependent (MWD) with the dark blue color and lands zoned Maritime Commercial (MC) with the light blue color around Rock Hall Harbor. (Source: Town of Rock Hall)

The use and enhancement of the Town of Rock Hall's waterfront is shaped by policies and guidance provided in its adopted Comprehensive Plan, its recently completed Sustainability Plan and Designation (2015), and related efforts such as the recent Main Street Affiliate designation and its role as a destination as part of the Stories of the Chesapeake Maryland Heritage Area and on the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway.

Table 1 Planning Process

Actual/Proposed Date	Meeting/Event	Agenda
Thursday, July 28	RHWC Meeting #1	• Planning process • Issues and Opportunities
Thursday August 25	Public Meeting #1	Additional discussion of Issues and Opportunities • What is desired future character of the waterfront • What areas along the waterfront do you want to keep as they are today • What areas would you like to see changed • What is your top priority for either preserving or enhancing the waterfront
Thursday September 29	RHWC Meeting #2	• Review existing conditions report • Refine list of potential opportunities identified at Public Meeting #1 for more detailed development
Thursday, October 27 and Friday, October 28	Public Meeting #2 – Community Design Work Session	Develop waterfront design plans focusing on short and mid-term projects with high potential for near term funding
Thursday December 1	RHWC Meeting #3	Review report on the results of the community design work session with draft strategies/recommendations (preliminary outline/draft of the plan)
Thursday January 5, 2017	RHWC Meeting #4	Review draft plan
Monday January 30, 2017	Town Council Workshop	Opportunity for Public Comment/Town Council Discussion
Wednesday February 8, 2017	Planning Commission	Advice to Town Council regarding consistency with the Comprehensive Plan
February 2017	Town Council	Action on Plan Recommendations



Figure 3 The plan was developed through a community-based collaborative approach including two public workshops (above) and a series of meetings with the Rock Hall Waterfront Committee to develop and review the goals and strategies for the plan.

Another major source of income for the Town and the 5th District is the marine industry. There are many marine-oriented businesses employing several hundred people on a full or part-time basis. There are 14 marinas with more than 1,450 slips in the 5th District, including 8 marinas within the town limits. There are 20 marine-related service businesses, 6 sailing charter/rental businesses, and 5 yacht sales operations. In addition, there are at least two kayak or rowing shell sales and rental businesses. Many of these businesses are situated on the Harbor and depend on the town maintaining a working waterfront.

Town of Rock Hall Comprehensive Plan, 2011

Comprehensive Plan (2010)

The Rock Hall Waterfront Master Plan is consistent with the Town of Rock Hall's Comprehensive Plan. Three "Vision Goals" in the Comprehensive Plan provide overall guidance for any changes under consideration for its waterfront:

- Rock Hall will build a sustainable community that meets the needs of townspeople, visitors, and the environment;
- Rock Hall will maintain its small town character and its particular sense of place while allowing planned change which will enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors of all income levels and ages;
- Rock Hall will establish a strong economic base.

The Comprehensive Plan lists goals directly related to maintaining and enhancing the waterfront:

- Support and encourage expansion of the seafood industry;
- Maintain Rock Hall as a preeminent location for the recreational boating industry and expand the opportunities for adding marine industry enterprises to the economic base of the community;
- Promote Rock Hall as a regional tourist destination;
- Maintain and enhance the quality of the local ecosystem through planning;
- Limit development in areas with constraints in order to minimize the loss of life and structures and impacts to the environment;
- Encourage stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries, and their watersheds;
- Preserve and enhance the natural ecosystems and functions of streams, stream buffers and riparian forests;
- Effectively manage stormwater to prevent the degradation of streams;
- Protect and enhance wildlife and its habitats; and
- Improve the overall appearance of the town by encouraging visual improvements to existing structures, streets, and parking areas, and by adopting design standards for new development.

Recommendations made as part of the Master Plan are consistent with these goals and contribute towards implementing the strategies listed under each goal in the Comprehensive Plan. http://www.rockhallmd.com/sites/rockhallmd/files/uploads/rh_comprehensive_plan_july_2011.pdf

Sustainability Plan and Sustainable Community Designation

The Town of Rock Hall was designated as a Sustainable Community by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in March of 2016. A Sustainable Community Designation (SCD) is a "threshold requirement" for eligibility to apply for a wide variety of DHCD programs aimed at strengthening communities. Specifically, available funds target needs such as: business retention and expansion, streetscape improvements, increased homeownership and home rehabilitation, and land acquisition.

A committee of Rock Hall citizens prepared an action plan, which was approved by the Town in October, 2015. Recommended actions that relate directly to the waterfront area include:

Environment

Desired Outcome 1: Improve and maintain condition and appearance of Rock Hall Harbor

- Action: Educate boaters, waterfront property owners, business owners and citizens about maintenance and upkeep of Rock Hall Harbor
- Action: Create a Harbor Master position with authority to enforce environmental laws and welcome and orient visiting boaters to the Harbor and available mooring locations

Desired Outcome 2: To promote and encourage environmental/recreational tourism year-round

Strategy: Perform outreach to promote a diverse educational and recreational eco-tourism program, focusing on the environment and ecology, thereby promoting Rock Hall tourism and creating employment opportunities

- Action: Create, market and advertise a year-round calendar of recreational and environment-related events



Figure 4 Existing boardwalk at Rock Hall Landing Marina

Economy

Desired Outcome 2: Establish Rock Hall as regional tourist destination offering diverse activities and events for different visitor populations (such as boaters, fishermen, sportsmen, birders)

Strategy: Promote local history, culture and environment as a resource for tourism (Chesapeake Heritage Area)

- Action: Create local festivals based on special assets of Rock Hall (culture, environment and history, such as a Rock Hall Heritage Festival)
- Action: Major advertisement of recreational tourist activities within the area (social media, magazines, etc., such as Eastern Neck Island)

Transportation

Desired Outcome 2: Installation of sidewalks on Bayside Avenue and additional crosswalks and sidewalks for shoppers along Route 20 commercial strip

Quality of Life and Society

Desired Outcome 3: Enhance and promote the preservation and recreational use of public open space and natural areas

- Action: Improve public access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries

Desired Outcome 4: Promote Rock Hall's heritage

- Promote awareness of Rock Hall's history and culture and develop marketable approaches to encourage heritage tourism

Local Planning and Land Use

Desired Outcome 1: Preserve waterfront in perpetuity

- Consider the acquisition of easements or property
 - o Identify feasible properties for acquisition
 - o Develop Master Plan for waterfront

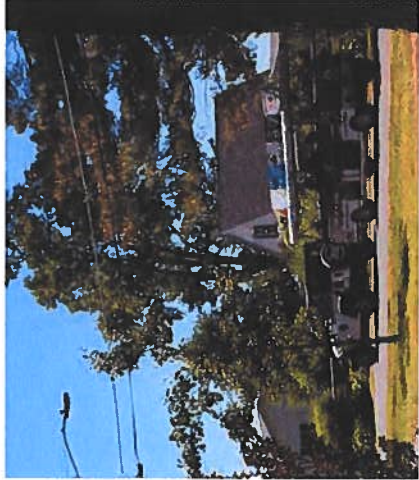


Figure 5 Rock Hall's "Tram" system serves the needs of both the residents and visitors

Main Street

The Town of Rock Hall is the first community designated as a Main Street Maryland Affiliate. The designation will assist revitalization and economic development in the town's downtown business district. The affiliate program assists communities that are trying to create a downtown revitalization strategy, are in the early stages of applying for a Main Street Maryland designation, or that may not be eligible for the designation but want to use the Main Street approach to address local housing and community development challenges.

Stories of the Chesapeake Maryland Heritage Area

Similarly, Rock Hall serves as an important destination as part of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area. Originally designated as a "Target Investment Zone" in the Stories of the Chesapeake Management Plan (2005), the Town is eligible to apply for the various grant programs of the heritage area and the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA).

Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway

Rock Hall serves as an important destination as part of the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway. National Scenic Byways are marketed extensively throughout the United States and are part of the State of Maryland's critical visitor infrastructure. The Maryland Office of Tourism Development (MOTD) uses Maryland's Scenic Byways as a foundation upon which other marketing efforts are built. Designation as a National Scenic Byway provides additional recognition within Maryland's enhancement related grant programs including Heritage Area and recreational trail grant funding programs.

Hazard Mitigation Plan for Kent County (2014)

As the adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Town of Rock Hall, the Hazard Mitigation Plan for Kent County identifies the nature of various hazards, history of previous occurrences, and the impact and potential severity of an occurrence. Rock Hall's waterfront is vulnerable to coastal hazards (hurricanes, coastal flooding, and winter storms) and any plans or recommendations for implementation should be consistent with the recommendations in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.



Figure 6 Main Street

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ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Rock Hall, not unlike other Chesapeake Bay communities, faces a range of issues that challenge both its economic and environmental health.

- The long term viability of commercial fishing enterprises depends upon stable infrastructure for watermen, including affordable slips and docking space, water access (depth), freight vehicle access, loading, storage, wharf conditions, fuel availability, waste oil disposal, maintenance and repair.
- The long term viability of Rock Hall's business community depends upon, in addition to the success of its marine industries, increasing economic activity in its downtown and its waterfront. Small business development and heritage tourism are two important assets that Rock Hall can use to increase economic activity.
- An increase in visitors to Rock Hall's waterfront and Main Street also requires an increase in visitor infrastructure such as services and amenities, power, water, sanitation, parking and better linkages between the waterfront, downtown and other attractions and services.
- Public access to the waterfront has to be both inviting to visitors while at the same time continue to serve the needs of commercial watermen. People are interested in visiting Rock Hall because it retains its working waterfront. Unlike other Chesapeake Bay communities, Rock Hall does not need to recreate or interpret its history. However, maintaining that working waterfront requires ongoing public and private investments.
- Facilitating those public and private investments requires supporting land use policies that encourage new and expanding business development.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

In order to gain additional insights into community values associated with Rock Hall's Waterfront, an on-line survey was distributed that included seven questions (see Appendix A) and was available in hard copy from August 10 through September 7, 2016.

The survey received 117 responses. As shown in Table 1, of the 109 answering Question 1, most (42%) were year-round residents of Rock Hall with another 18% self-identified as seasonal or part-time residents. A total of 60% of respondents lived in town full- or part-time. Four respondents identified themselves as an owner or employee of an existing waterfront businesses, while another 12 respondents identified themselves as a frequent customer of

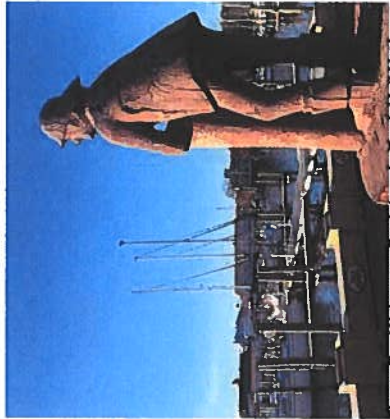


Figure 7 Waterman Sculpture in Rock Hall Harbor

TABLE 1: Survey Question #1: Which phrase best describes your relationship to Rock Hall's waterfront?	
Year-round resident of Rock Hall	42.20% (46)
Seasonal or part-time resident of Rock Hall	18.35% (20)
Owner or employee of an existing waterfront business	3.67% (4)
Use one of the Marinas to access the Chesapeake Bay	11.93% (13)
A frequent customer of an existing waterfront business (e.g. restaurant, marina, marine supply, repair, etc.)	11.01% (12)
Other - write in comment field below	12.84% (14)
Total	109

Table 2 Function of Rock Hall Waterfront

Key Attribute	Ranking						#	Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Serves as a destination for attracting new visitors to Rock Hall	39.05%	17.14%	10.48%	9.52%	8.57%	15.24%	105	4.23
Provides dependable water access for water-dependent commercial fishing operations	32.89%	18.42%	10.53%	7.89%	11.84%	18.42%	76	3.97
Provides public access for water-dependent recreational uses	13.79%	21.84%	19.54%	22.99%	12.64%	9.20%	87	3.74
Provides a dependable location for business operations that are enhanced by proximity to water	5.88%	21.18%	24.71%	23.53%	12.94%	11.76%	85	3.48
Serves as an amenity for residents of Rock Hall to increase the quality of life in the community	21.84%	17.24%	19.54%	13.79%	14.94%	12.64%	87	3.79
Provides a dependable location for business operations that offer goods and services to commercial fishing operations	4.65%	16.28%	18.60%	16.28%	30.23%	13.95%	86	3.07

Q2: Rank each of the following phrases as to their importance in defining the existing function of Rock Hall's waterfront area (with 1 being the most important):

those businesses. Of the fourteen comments from Question 1, many noted that they frequent Rock Hall businesses. Nearly one-quarter of the respondents identified themselves as boaters including 12% that "use one of the marinas to access the Chesapeake Bay" and another fourteen respondents self identified as a boater as written in the "other" category. Quite a few (13) expressed in the additional written comments to Question 1, that they frequent Rock Hall businesses. Several respondents were occasional boating visitors (transients) and several former residents answered the survey. It is fairly safe to assume that the survey provides a useful cross-section of mostly local, knowledgeable Rock Hall observers.

The respondents were asked to rank key attributes or "phrases as to their importance in defining the existing function of Rock Hall's waterfront area." The six choices received almost equal weight when tabulated as a weighted ranking (Table 2, far right column). The two that were clearly more highly ranked than others included: "Serves as a destination for attracting new visitors to Rock Hall" and "Provides dependable water access for water-dependent commercial fishing operations." It is not clear whether those ranking these phrases were making a judgment about the actual performance of the waterfront or whether these were viewed as aspirational, that is, guides to priority-setting.

Respondents were asked to assist with defining a "working waterfront." Table 3 displays responses, showing a high level of agreement with the definition and offering a certain sense

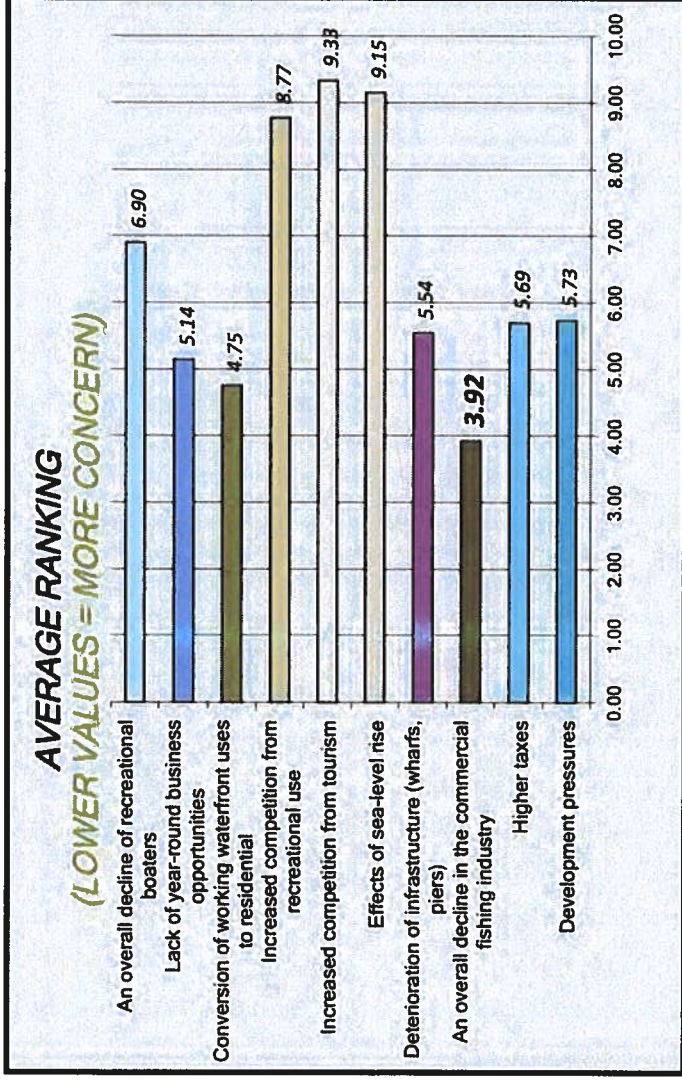
Table 3 Important Values of Rock Hall Waterfront

Element of the Definition	Definite Value	Some Value	Weighted Average
Provides physical access to the Chesapeake Bay	96%	4%	2.96
Provides a link between land and water	109	4	2.87
Provides economic value	88%	12%	2.87
Provides recreational values	98	13	2.78
Provides a location for infrastructure and services to marine-dependent industry	80%	19%	2.78
Provides social and cultural values	90	21	2.77
Provides environmental values	78%	21%	2.77
	88	24	2.68
	70%	28%	2.65
	78	31	2.57
	67%	30%	2.57
	76	34	2.57
	64%	29%	2.57
	72	33	2.57

Q3: A common definition of a working waterfront includes the sites and facilities providing physical access to the sea for commercial fishing and other marine commercial activities, including other facilities and services, which may not be located immediately at the shore, needed to support these activities. Other definitions of "other facilities and services" include the recreational boating industry. Which of the following do you feel are important values of Rock Hall's working waterfront?

of priority among the choices for emphasis on issues and actions for later use in planning. Perhaps the more interesting use of this question, however, was that it primed respondents for further thinking – 50 offered additional comments incorporated into discussion below of specific comments.

The analysis provided by the software program aggregates all answers and provides the snapshot in Table 4. An alternative analysis is to look at which answers attracted "top 4" concerns. "Overall decline in the commercial fishing industry" was by far ranked most often at 1, 2, 3, or 4 by all respondents (64 respondents out of a total of 115x4), followed closely by "conversion of waterfront uses to residential" (55). A virtual tie resulted among "development pressures" (46), "higher taxes" (47), "deterioration of infrastructure (wharfs, piers)" (45) and "an overall decline of recreational boaters" (42). Lumping answers for "conversion of waterfront uses to residential," "development pressures," and "higher taxes" (all of which are dimensions of the same overall concern about development pressure) would have development pressure outranking anything else, with a total of 148 rankings of 1, 2, 3, or 4. It was also useful to note that "increased competition from tourism" and "increased competition from recreational use" were rarely selected as "top 4" concerns. Only 11 people selected "deterioration of infrastructure (wharfs, piers)," "effects of sea-level rise," "increased competition from tourism," or "increased competition from recreational use" as #1 concerns.



Q4:
Rank the following issues as to which are the biggest threats to losing access to Rock Hall's working waterfront

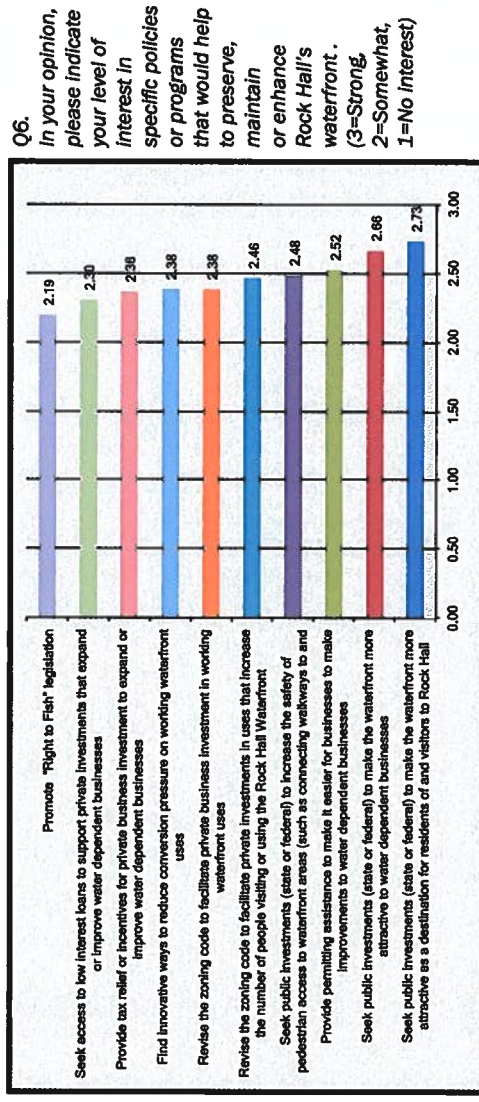
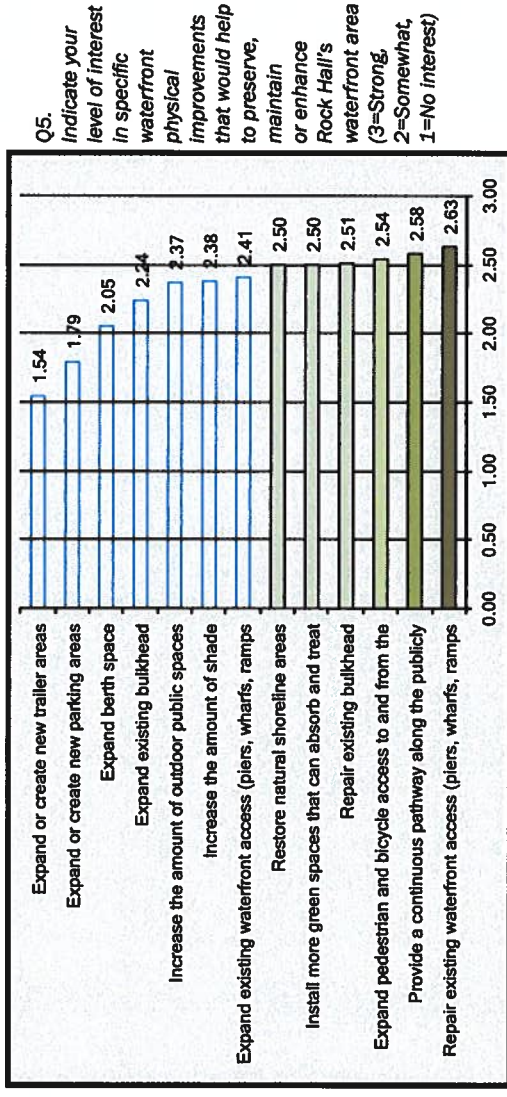
Tables 5 and 6 report on respondents' interest in certain preliminary ideas identified by the planning team early in the process. Respondents ranked physical improvements higher (Table 5) that emphasized repair of existing waterfront facilities (versus expansion) and adding elements that would help to establish the waterfront as more of a destination (such as more green spaces and a pathway along the waterfront). On the policy side (Table 6) respondents were most interested in seeking state or federal public investments to make the waterfront more attractive for both residents and visitors, followed closely by seeking investments to make it more attractive to water-dependent businesses. Revising the zoning code to facilitate private investments to increase visitors and waterfront users also ranked fairly high, along with providing permitting assistance to make it easier for water dependent businesses to make improvements. The fact that grant-seeking was ranked highest also indicates that respondents recognize that it is important to develop financing and regulatory incentive approaches alongside planning for actual physical change.

PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting was held on August 25, 2016 at the Town Hall inviting interested stakeholders to bring their ideas to help the committee address some common questions that people are asking:

- What can be done to help keep working watermen and the businesses that support them operating?
- What can be done to increase other business opportunities along the waterfront?
- How can the Town increase the role that the waterfront plays in making Rock Hall an attractive place to live, work, play and visit?

Notes from the meeting are included in Appendix B and ideas are incorporated into the master plan.



SYNTHESIS OF IDEAS

There is no shortage of good ideas among participants in the planning process. The following discussion synthesizes the initial ideas ranging from the quite general to the very particular. The challenge was to refine and sort these into sets of actions by identifying over-arching strategies and then setting priorities and identifying steps toward implementation.

Rock Hall's working waterfront has taken years to evolve. The challenge is to find ways to insert changes – in investment, policy, maintenance and repair, new facilities and construction – that reinforce the many positives that the planning process has revealed, while addressing the opportunities as well as the negatives.

There seems to be general agreement that Rock Hall is indeed unique and special among Chesapeake Bay waterfront communities. The opening public workshop reflected this general philosophy and emphasized that those who know Rock Hall appreciate both its attractive qualities today and its potential to become even more attractive. Many survey respondents expressed a wish to add to Rock Hall's tourism offerings, but in general these thoughts were tempered by such comments as the following:

- "Development requires caution and control. It is needed but public needs to come before profit."
- "Avoid waterfront areas from becoming residential development including condos or town houses - keep waterfront as originally intended for water related development."
- "Leave as much of the existing layout and uses AS-IS. Some upgrades/repairs may be needed but by suggesting major changes, you are opening the door to developers who see only \$\$ and will destroy Rock Hall's country setting and reputation. I lived [through] the same suggested zoning changes in southern Delaware and watched over-development squeeze out the beach life in those towns. Be very careful what you advise. We have been keeping a boat in town for 10 years and love the area. Keep it the way it is."
- "RH's waterfront is a treasure. Waterfront business that provides jobs should be a priority. Residential is less important. There should be clear guidelines for development that preserves the working waterfront for RH."
- "Revising zoning code could be a slippery slope...."
- "Rock Hall is beautiful quaint little town the way it is. It's one of the last small old commercial and recreational fishing towns that has not been destroyed by resort commercialism."

The public survey tested a set of policy ideas and a set of ideas for specific physical changes for the waterfront area. To those ideas, others offered by survey respondents through the “comment” process (a rich set of thoughtful ideas and comments) were added plus those developed during the October public workshop. Appendix B offers these ideas in their original form. The following synthesizes these ideas into the categories of working waterfront, heritage-based tourism and broadening the context to link downtown, the beach and the waterfront.

Addressing the Needs of the Watermen and Water-dependent Businesses

Town Council member and waterman Brian Nesspor stated that the waterfront ‘works well just the way it is for watermen – “fantastic”’. Although not many respondents self identified as a waterman, survey questions 5 and 6 provided some insights into the types of measures the community prefers to support watermen and water-dependent businesses.

Survey Question 5 identified those physical improvements with the strongest level of interest. Six of the listed improvements had a majority of “strong interest.”

- Repair existing waterfront access (piers, wharfs, ramps, etc.)
- Provide a continuous pathway along the publicly accessible waterfront areas
- Expand pedestrian and bicycle access to and from the waterfront area (to Main Street, neighborhoods, and other points of interest)
- Repair existing bulkhead
- Install more green spaces that can absorb and treat stormwater runoff from paved areas to keep Bay clean
- Restore natural shoreline areas

Three policy oriented approaches garnered a majority of strong support from respondents (Question 6)

- Seek public investments (state or federal) to make the waterfront more attractive as a destination for residents of and visitors to Rock Hall
- Seek public investments (state or federal) to make the waterfront more attractive to water dependent businesses
- Provide permitting assistance to make it easier for businesses to make improvements to water dependent businesses and revise the zoning code to facilitate private business investment in working waterfront uses



Figure 8 Loading area at Bayside Landing

Tourism

There is clear awareness that the commercial fishing industry will not dominate in Rock Hall's future, even though expressions of sympathy and support for that industry were clear. One survey respondent said, "Tourism is Rock Hall's present and future industry - invest in that while preserving the industry and heritage the waterfront has provided." Other respondents said:

- "The effect on the rest of Kent County as a pass [thru] to Rock Hall; if the boater and visitor cannot get access to the Bay, then it is negative on the rest of the county's support business. The county should be supporting the development of the waterfront for commercial waterman and the recreational boater and waterfront venues. There is huge potential if all would sit and create grand master plan. Look at Leonardtown, MD concept and as well master plan with entire county access - i.e., make a Kent County water trail supporting all kinds of water interest."
- "The future of Rock Hall is with tourism, like it or not. These tourists may also be future homeowners and a new tax base. Please think forward."
- "With a decline in commercial fishing & watermen, and an aging & dwindling boater population, we need to relax zoning regulations of the Maritime Water-Dependent district to encourage business development so tourists & visitors will want to come here."

In general, discussion of tourism development needs for Rock Hall falls more in the "general" category – a "more is more" kind of approach:

- For years my wife and I have loved visiting Rock Hall. We like the small town charm, food and friendly people. For a town that is located on the water it would be nice to see a bit more diverse waterfront dining and shopping."
- "The marina is beautiful but you have to make it more inviting for people to come there and things to enjoy because there's not much to do unless you have a boat."
- "I would think the tourists would like to see more restaurants, beach area, shops, and bike and walking friendly pathways. You can do this and still keep the small, quaint feel to it - look at Chesapeake City as a possible model to follow."

Specific ideas for improving Rock Hall's tourism offerings included the following:

- Increase the amount of outdoor public space and public recreational access
- Increase the amount of shade

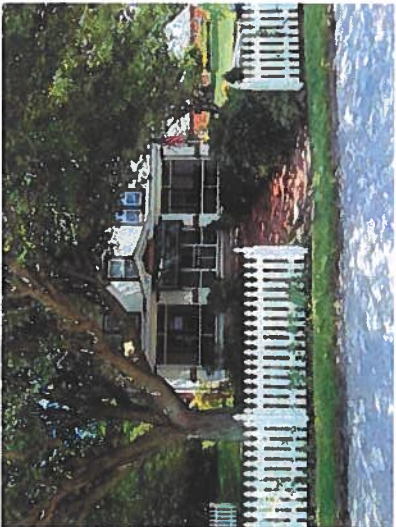


Figure 9 Black Duck Inn

- Expand pedestrian and bicycle access to and from the waterfront area (to Main Street, neighborhoods, and other points of interest) – see separate section below
- Provide a continuous pathway along the publicly accessible waterfront areas
- Attract visiting boaters – [offer] good food and drink at reasonable prices
- The restaurants need to be modernized
- Shore fishing or a fishing pier at the harbor: “it would bring people there to fish, crab and spend a day there and eat in the restaurants” [and] “would bring in a lot of people to watch the sunset - some of the best I have ever seen”; “make a place where you can actually go fishing with your kid without dropping 600 bucks”
- Figure out more activities for youth (Mobile App for youth also suggested for Rock Hall)
- Capitalize on the Mainstay
- Event board/banner/sign – had one but need someone willing to volunteer to manage – lots of work to keep up to date
- Enhance the viewing area from land for Waterman’s Day
- “Visitor Center” or suggestion for a kiosk with information about nearby services, restaurants, points of interest, etc. (e.g. like the scenic byway facility that already exists)
- Horse carriage tour

One area of comment centered on Rock Hall as a great environment, including interesting ideas for enlarging opportunities for both watermen and eco-tourism:

- “Develop a multi-use business/recreation area incorporating the area’s history and unique bay heritage with a semi park like area encompassing the waterfront from Waterman’s to Walnut Street”
- “What would make the waterfront attractive to visitors: increase the green space on the waterfront with parklike setting and allow businesses to open and thrive near the waterfront.”
- “I’d like to see the watermen get more involved with tourism when they can. There are tours that sell out at Smith Island...where people go on a working boat, eat out and stay overnight. We can expand that to include kayaking out of the harbor, bird watching. The watermen could get involved in some environmental studies which they’d be paid for.”
- “Let the watermen sell there [at the waterfront] - right off their boats!”



Figure 10 Fishing charters in Rock Hall Harbor

- "Embrace the heritage and ecological tourism mechanisms to expand interest in our community."
- "Replace the blacktop at the bulkhead with a less heat retaining surface."
- "Eliminate above ground power lines & have underground services rather than obstructing views."
- Install more green spaces that can absorb and treat stormwater runoff from paved areas to keep Bay clean
- Restore natural shoreline areas

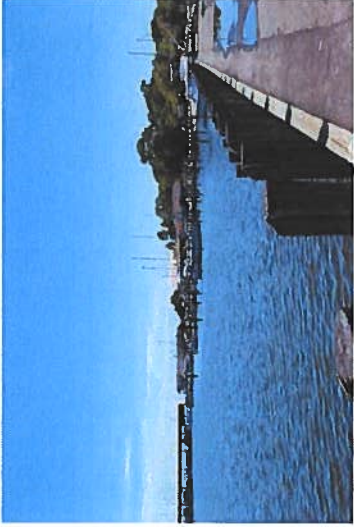


Figure 11 Public pier at Bayside Landing

"Enlarge the Pie"

The waterfront is clearly embedded in the larger Rock Hall. Both survey respondents and participants in the public workshop found it difficult to talk about just the harbor. Three areas were especially of interest: linkages, the beach, and the Main Street.

Main Street: In terms of the Main Street, comments were brief: "A better Main Street" and "Encourage and incentivize existing businesses to stay open year round." Public workshop discussion, however, clearly recognized the opportunity in the new Maryland Main Street affiliation and were aware of discussion at the town level about tackling the needs of Main Street. (One person, however, commented "The town could hold more activities at the harbor. Everything is up in Tiny Town which doesn't benefit from the lovely breeze.")

Linkages were a different matter. Both survey respondents and workshop participants provided many comments:

- "We love the shuttle that takes us around town; maybe a possible connection shuttle to provide trips to Chestertown."
- "We frequently anchor our boat in Swan Creek and never go to town due to lack of dinghy access and inconsistent land transportation and poor walkability from the Swan Creek side to Main Street and the main waterfront area."
- "Improve vehicle/pedestrian safety;" "restrict vehicular traffic on weekends (maybe make streets one way on weekends) to make bicycling/walking from Swan Point area past the beach to and around the harbor safer."
- "Promote pedestrian access and facilities at the water's edge."
- Night lighting for walking between Marina/downtown

- Trees and benches needed on Sharp Street
- Cycling groups are a hazard on State road to Eastern Neck Island - safety measures or a path could be funded through the FHWA Federal Land Access Program
- Downtown bicycle racks and a bikeshare program to link Marina's/downtown/beach
- Sidewalk on Bayside Ave.- sun glare during certain times of the day/year when sun lines up with roadway directly is very dangerous

Improve Rock Hall's beach: A focus on the beach experience emerged in both the survey and workshop. Following are ideas recorded through survey comments:

- Enlarge the beach by relocating beach front parking to pavilion area, and add volleyball
- Add a fishing pier to the popular fishing point at the beach
- Bring a food vendor with a quiet generator to the beach on weekends
- Maintain and clean the beach area
- Provide shade

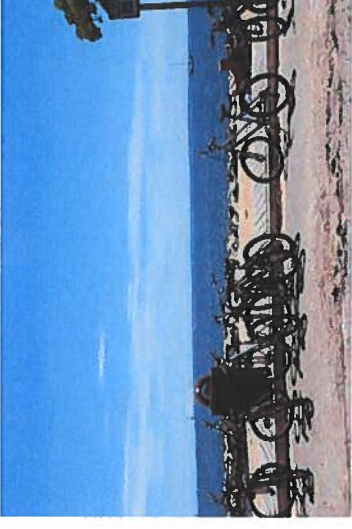


Figure 12 Town beach

Harbor Management/Recreational Boating Access

Many participants recognized that Rock Hall's future is in recreational boating and offered the following ideas for better management of the harbor area

- "Maintain the harbor depth through all the myriad of 'channels' in the harbor especially at the entrance jetties"
- "The primary reason that I removed my vessel from the Rock Hall area was the inordinate applied taxes to slip rates; the second reason for such removal of my boat was the lack of water depth (shallowing) of the harbor bottom."
- Create open anchorage/moorings in harbor
- Waterfront fueling facility
- Dinghy Docks: "Not having one also indicates a feeling of not being welcome";
- Modernize: Wi-Fi access outdoors/make Rock Hall the "Digital Harbor"
- Hospitality/good will: Create a harbor master program – hospitality focused
- Cleanup: Clean up the area adjacent to water ("empty trash bins more often to eliminate disgusting fish and crab rotting smell generated by local seafood restaurants")



EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section of the report outlines the existing physical conditions of Rock Hall's waterfront. The inventory and assessment documents the waterfront's context, which includes: existing land use and ownership patterns, existing working waterfront resources, flood prone areas, and shoreline conditions and access.

WATERFRONT CONTEXT

Several natural, recreational, and cultural resources that contribute to the overall character of Rock Hall are within walking distance of the working waterfront. By linking such resources with the waterfront community, residents, business owners, and visitors benefit from the positive effects of recreation and the natural environment. Pedestrian connections among the following nearby resources and the waterfront should be considered.

- Main Street**
 Downtown Rock Hall's Main Street commercial district is characterized by quaint shops, and its recently improved streetscape including sidewalks, street lamps, and plantings enhancing the pedestrian experience. It is most directly connected to the waterfront by way of Sharp Street.
- Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area and Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway**
 Rock Hall is linked to other Eastern Shore localities through regional cultural preservation efforts of the Heritage Area and National Scenic Byway, extending along Main Street and Rock Hall Avenue. These designations open the door to funding opportunities for waterfront enhancements.
- Ferry Park Beach**
 The sandy beach of Ferry Park is less than a mile west of the waterfront, though a pedestrian friendly route connecting the sites is not apparent. A gazebo, picnic tables, grills, and pavilions are available, along with notable views to the Bay Bridge and the sunset over the Chesapeake Bay.
- Blue Heron Park**
 Located just northwest of the waterfront, the marshes of Blue Heron Park can be accessed from an observation deck equipped with interpretive signage. Osprey nesting poles were added to enhance the wetland habitat.



Figure 13 Existing wayfinding signs



Figure 14 Rock Hall Visitor Center



Figure 15 Ferry Park Beach



Figure 16 Rock Hall MD Waterfront drone video by Steve Payne
(screen shot of video posted at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrWmJEsShPw>)

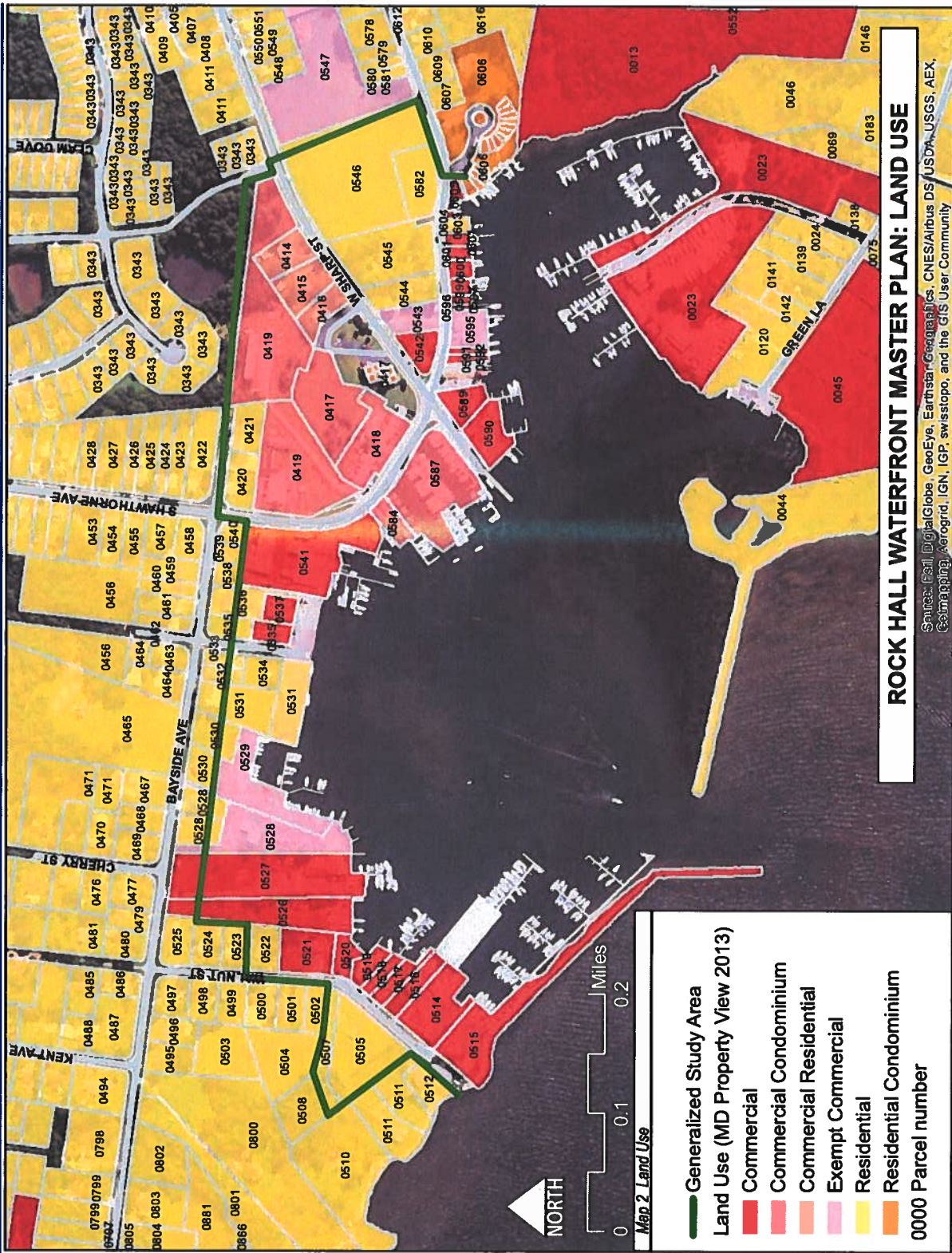
- **Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge**
Just eight miles south of downtown Rock Hall is the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, natural and recreational resource for birders, bikers, photographers, and nature-lovers. Amenities at the site include a visitor center, boat launch ramp, observation platform, and hiking trails.
- **Rock Hall Civic Center**
Baseball and softball fields and tennis and basketball courts are among the amenities available to the community at the Rock Hall Civic Center. A picnic pavilion and newly installed playground are also found at the Center, just south of Chesapeake Avenue and less than half a mile from the waterfront area.
- **Rock Hall Ball Park**
Two ballfields are located at the approximately 16-acre Rock Hall Ball Park in the northeast corner of town. Adjacent to the park is the wastewater treatment center.

EXISTING LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP PATTERNS

Waterfront study area land uses, according to Maryland Property View data (Kent County 2013), include the following:

- Commercial
- Residential
- Commercial Residential
- Exempt Commercial
- Residential Condominium
- Commercial Condominium

Specifically, these uses include commercial boat marinas, restaurants, warehouses, auto parking lots, a motel, single family dwellings, office buildings, condominiums and residences on commercial/industrial zoned land. Structures built as far back as the 1920s are extant. Commercial uses dominate the waterfront properties with the exception of Bayside Landing and a single residential dwelling (parcel 603). At least fifteen parcels currently contain 'standard unit' dwellings. Map 2 Land Use on page 23 depicts the land uses as recorded in the parcel data from Maryland Property View (NOTE: some of the parcel data may not accurately reflect actual land use due to the data source).



EXISTING WATERFRONT / COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Working waterfront resources range from public landings, private marinas and commercial charters, to dockside restaurants. There are no inventoried historic resources in the Study Area. The Rock Hall Historic District is located downtown and the Rock Hall Harbor is, in and of itself, a significant cultural landscape. The harbor retains a good mix of active fishermen and recreational boating. While not considered typically "historic" as being potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, for example, Rock Hall's working waterfront is culturally significant in conveying the history and traditional lifestyle of the Eastern Shore. The following list of resources, though not comprehensive, identifies current establishments that contribute to the Rock Hall waterfront community (see Community Resources map for locations on page 24).

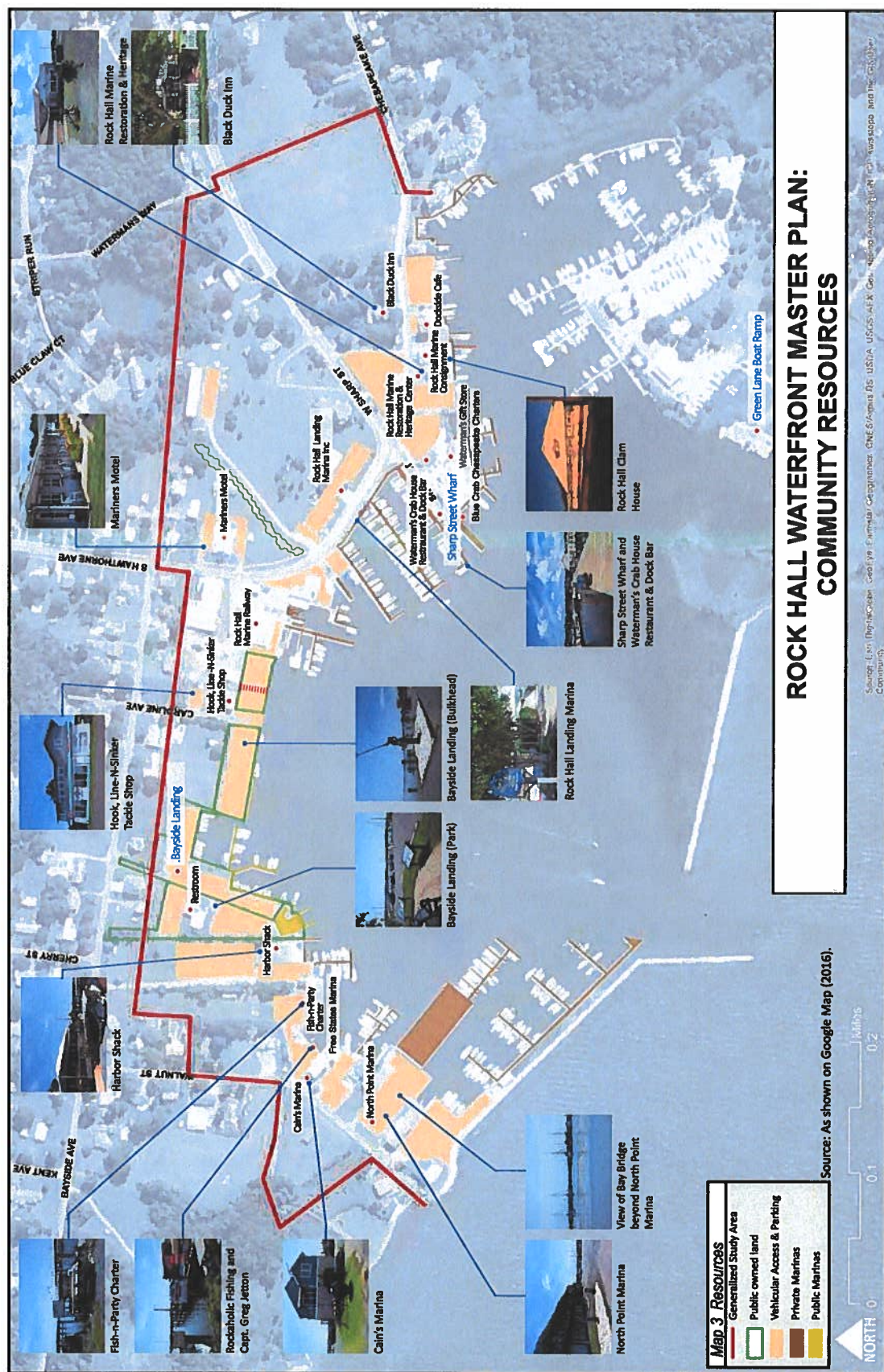
1. Marine Industrial/Marine Fabrication/
Maritime Heritage
 - Rock Hall Marine Restoration & Heritage Center
 - Rock Hall Marine Consignment
 - Rock Hall Marine Railway
2. Private Marinas and Landings
 - North Point Marina
 - Cain's Marina
 - Rock Hall Landing Marina, Inc
 - Harbor Shack Marina
 - Free States Marina
3. Public Marinas and Landings
 - Sharp Street Wharf
 - Bayside Park Landing & Bulkhead
 - Green Lane Boat Ramp
4. Hospitality - Inns/Motels
 - Black Duck Inn
 - Mariner's Motel
 - North Point Marina
5. Private Fishing Charters
 - Fish-n-Party Charters
 - Rockaholic Fishing
 - Captain Greg Jetton
 - Bayside Girls
 - Miss Carolyn II
 - Rock Bottom
 - Fish Fear Us Charters
 - Canvasback
6. Restaurants
 - Harbor Shack
 - Waterman's Crab House Restaurant & Dock Bar
 - Dockside Cafe
7. Commercial/Retail Stores and Gift Shops
 - Hook, Line-N-Sinker Tackle Shop
 - Waterman's Gift Store



Figure 17 Rock Hall Marine Railway



Figure 18 Rock Hall Clam House



FLOOD PRONE AREAS

Studies indicate that sea levels are rising and flood events are occurring more frequently. Natural hydrological forces are likely to impact the built environment and economic productivity of the waterfront if resilient construction practices and planning strategies are not implemented. The following flood and sea level rise maps reveal that almost all waterfront resources in the Generalized Study Area are in low lying areas and are subsequently vulnerable to the effects of flooding.

100 and 500-year floodplain (FIRM)

The Effective FEMA Floodplain data shown on Map 4 on page 27 illustrates the current (as of March 2016), official regulatory floodplain adopted by FEMA and the community for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Nearly all parcels in the Generalized Study Area are subject to a 100-year flood event (1% chance each year), less than 25% of the General Study Area is in the 500 Year Floodplain, and land in Upland (Zone X) is scarce.

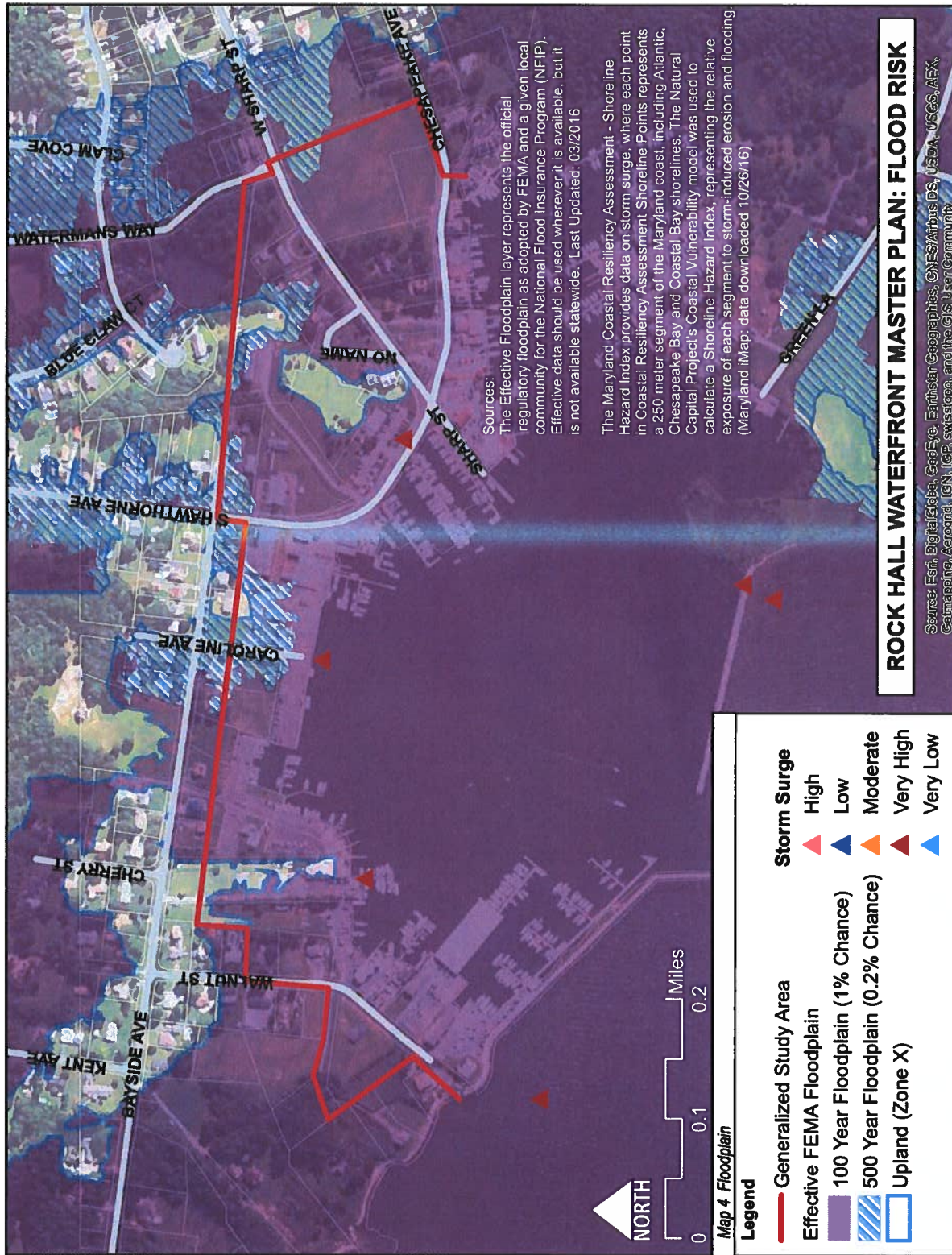
Storm Surge

A storm surge inundation map, Figure 19, created by the National Hurricane Center (NHC) Storm Surge Unit shows the highest degree of exposure to storm surge. The Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH) model is used to calculate storm surge heights and the extents of inundation for hurricane evacuation studies. Hurricane storm surge heights are influenced by many



factors, including hurricane intensity (categorized by the Saffir-Simpson hurricane wind scale, ranging from 1 to 5), size (radius of maximum winds), forward speed, the angle of approach to the shoreline, and the characteristics of the coastline. Since many factors influence storm surge heights, the maximum inundation from multiple storm surge scenarios are composited into one data layer.

Figure 19 Storm Surge Inundation Map for Rock Hall (red being most vulnerable to storm surge)
Source: <http://noaa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Storytelling/TextLegend/index.html?appid=b1a20ab5eec149058ba6c059635a82ee>





Sea Level Rise Vulnerability

Areas vulnerable to the effects of sea level rise are indicated on Map 5 on page 28. Maryland DNR provided the map data, which was derived from high-resolution topographic data (LiDAR). Three intervals of inundation are shown—zero to two-foot, two to five-foot, and five to ten-foot. Shoreline features—docks, ramps, bulkheads, marinas, and jetties—are subject to inundation at the zero to two-foot level. The majority of land area in the waterfront General Study Area is susceptible to inundation at the two to five-foot level. Several patches of upland areas are vulnerable to five to ten-foot level inundation.

SHORELINE CONDITIONS, PUBLIC WATER ACCESS, MARINAS AND MARINE SERVICES

Four public water access facilities and five commercial marinas are located within Rock Hall Harbor, accounting for the current shoreline conditions. Shorelines within the Generalized Study Area are all hard, built structures—no soft, living shorelines are present. The following sections provide additional details on the existing public water access points, shoreline conditions, marinas and associated marine services.

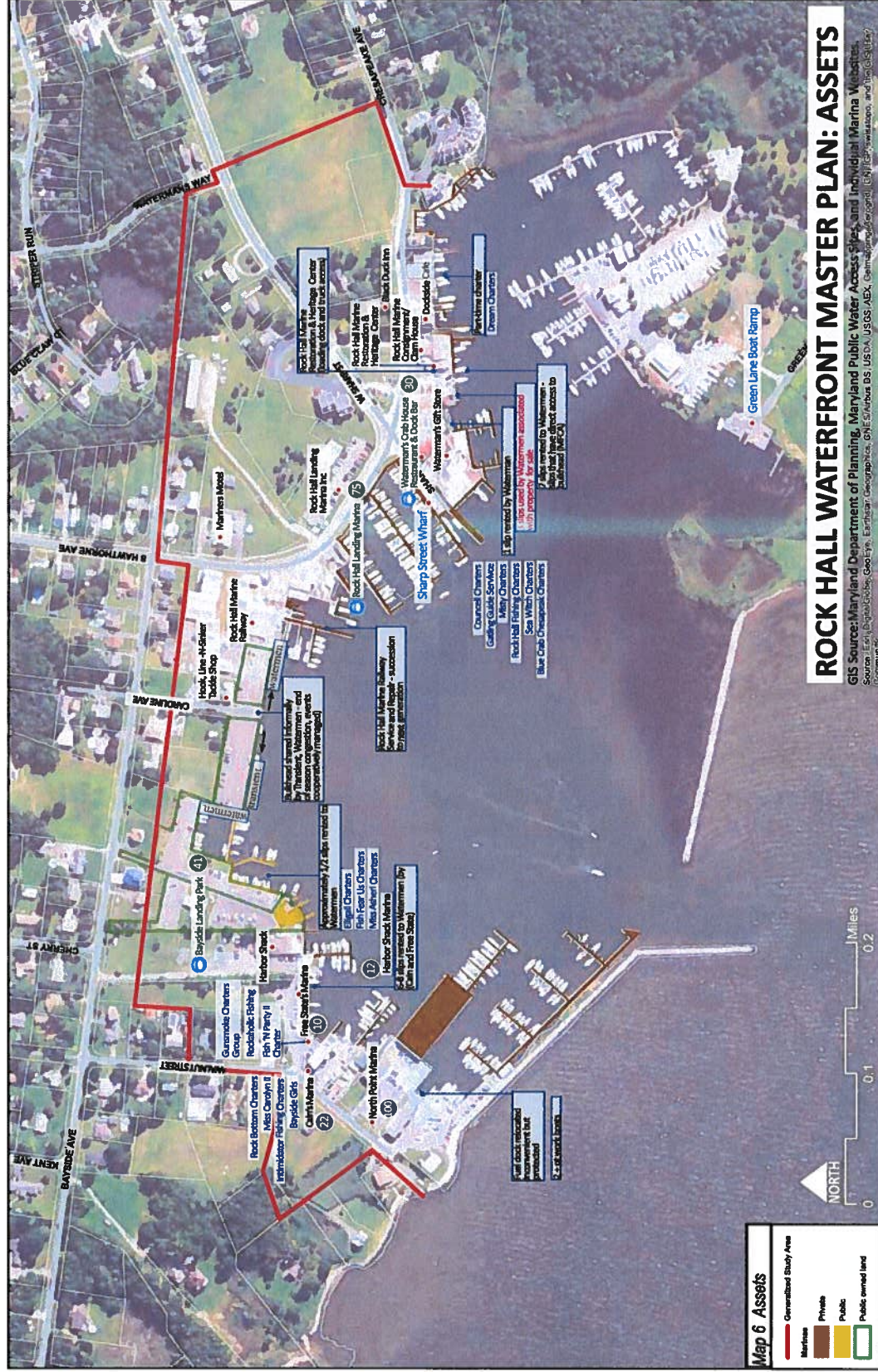
Existing Public Water Access

Bayside Landing, Sharp Street Wharf, and Green Lane Boat Ramp offer public water access to permitted boats and trailers. Map 7 Shoreline on page 32 shows locations of public water access points in addition to public and private water access structures.

- Bayside Landing** - Forty-one slips are available at Bayside Landing, as well as two concrete ramps and two piers. A public pool is located on site, as well as restrooms and a seating area with interpretive signage. The two sides of Bayside Landing—a bulkhead side and ramp side—are disconnected along the water's edge but connected by a walkway adjacent to the parking lots. The bulkhead side of the park can be accessed from Caroline Avenue. Access to the park from other community features is limited to vehicles, as sidewalks are not found along Bayside Ave. Large parking lots accommodate trailers and vehicles. The boat ramp is known as one of the best ramps in the County. A countywide trailer permit is required for all users. The County does not have ramp usage statistics for Bayside Landing Park or any other landing, but the County sells well over 2,000 ramp permits each year.



Figure 20 Waterman sculpture at Bayside Landing (Kent County)



- **Sharp Street Wharf** – Located at the end of Sharp Street, this facility includes one pier and one soft launch for permitted trailers and vessels. A large parking lot at Waterman's Crab House Restaurant & Dock Bar is at the intersection of Sharp Street and South Hawthorne Avenue.
- **Green Lane Boat Ramp** – Though not located within the working waterfront Study Area, this facility is found just across the harbor. Permitted access is allowed at this single concrete ramp.

An informational chart listing all water access facilities, among other features, within Rock Hall Harbor is on page 33.

Jetties, Piers, Bulkhead, Natural Shorelines

Stabilization structures frame the shoreline edges of the working waterfront. Marinas with slips, bulkheads, and wharfs are predominant, with pockets of riprap in a few areas. Wooden docks, piles, and piers and concrete bulkheads are commonly found. Two jetties with riprap partially close off the harbor to the surrounding Bay. A naturalized shoreline outside of the Rock Hall town boundary is in the general area west of Green Lane Boat Ramp, at the south side of the harbor. (See Map 7 Shoreline on page 32 for locations of stabilization structures.)

Marinas and Marine Services

The following marinas and marine services are establishments that bolster the working waterfront heritage that has sustained Rock Hall. Bayside Landing (Kent County) is the only public marina and landing. All 41 slips are rented each year and Bayside Landing has always been full since the County purchased the facility. There was only one (1) slip holder that did not renew in 2016 and the slip was taken by an individual on the waiting list. There are 33 individuals on the waiting list for boats under 38' in length and 22 for over 38' in length. The slips are available to all types of vessels (pleasure boats, sail boats, work boats and fishing party boats). The Kent County landings manager estimates that 50% of the slips are rented by watermen/fishing charter boats and 50% pleasure boaters.

Private Marinas and Landings

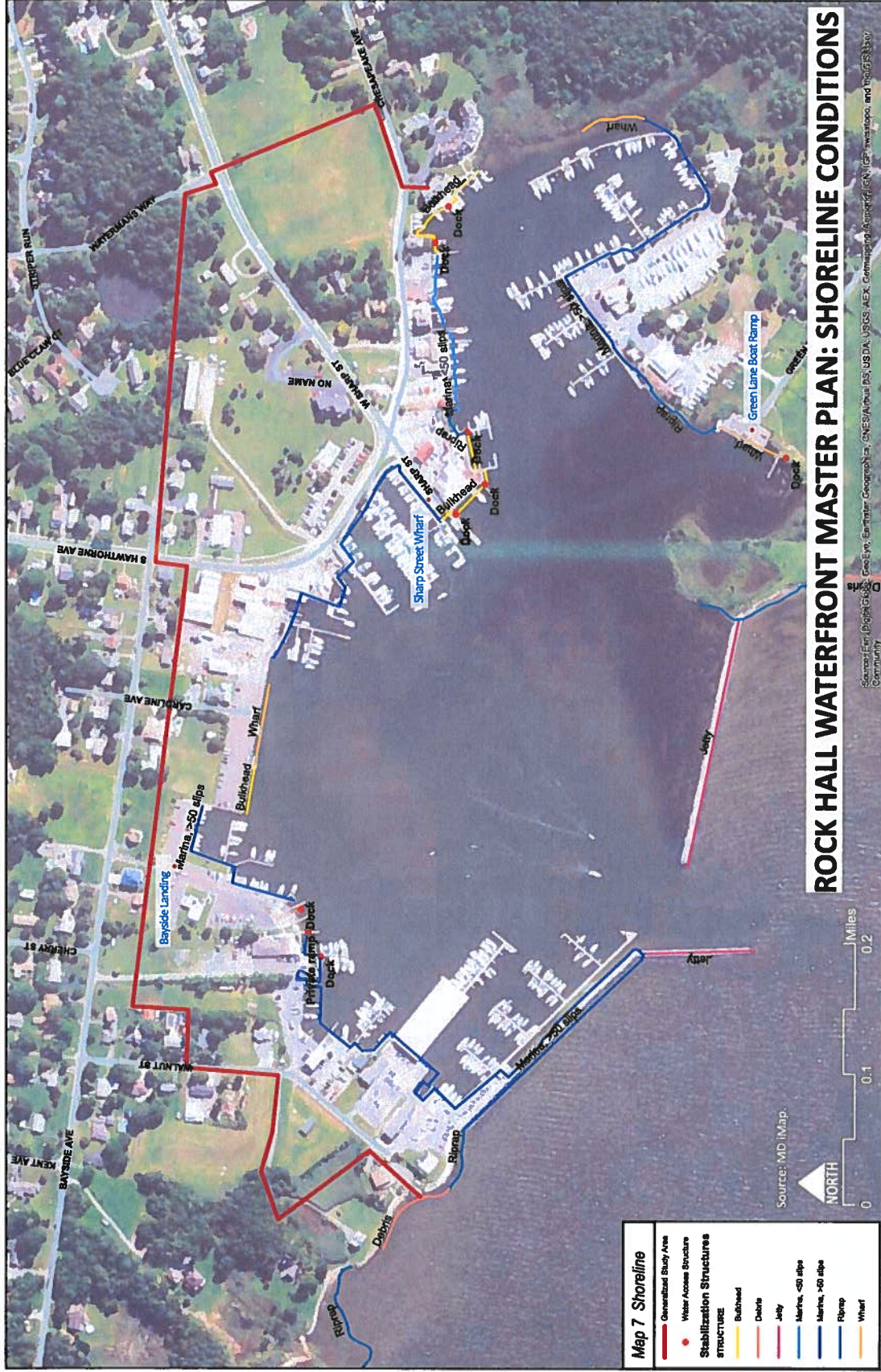
- Cain's Marina (Walnut Street) – offers 22 seasonal and transient slips, water and power at each slip and a bath house.



Figure 21 Entrance to North Point Marina



Figure 22 Cain's Marina



Water Access Facility	Public Access	Number of Slips	Number of Ramps/Landings/Launches/Piers	Notes/ Other Amenities	Rates	Web Source/ More Information
Bayside Landing Park	yes	39	two concrete ramps; two piers	Hours of operation - 5 am to 10 pm; Trailer permit is required. Permits available from the Public Works Department. Public pool on site. Please note that "large boats" is intended as a general reference to ramp capacity. Generally, vessels less than 16 feet in length are considered small and those greater than 16 feet as large. Seasonal and transient slips available, water and electric power at each slip; bath house	fee or permit required	https://webapps02.dnr.state.md.us/MDPublicWaterAccess/ShowWaterAccessToPublic.aspx?PKintID=415
Cain's Marina	no	22		Seasonal and transient slips available, water and electric power at each slip		
Free States Marina	no	10		Hours of operation - 5 am to 10 pm; Trailer permit is required. Permits available from the Public Works Department. Please note that "large boats" is intended as a general reference to ramp capacity. Generally, vessels less than 16 feet in length are considered small and those greater than 16 feet as large.	fee or permit required	https://webapps02.dnr.state.md.us/MDPublicWaterAccess/ShowWaterAccessToPublic.aspx?PKintID=417
Green Lane Boat Ramp	yes	N/A	one concrete ramp	Seasonal and transient slips available, water and electric power at each slip.	\$1.00/ft. overnight with complementary dockage for restaurant patrons while dining	
Harbor Shack Marina		12		Covered and open slips available. At each slip - electric 30, 50, or double 30 AMP, water; Protected Fuel Pier; pumpout station; ultra clean bathhouses; dinghy storage; dock box area; Ship Store; laundry room; meeting room; rental bicycles; Motel.	http://www.northpointmarina.net/marina-rates.html	http://www.northpointmarina.net/amenities.htm
North Point Marina	no			Transient dockage rates: Sunday - Thursday (excluding holidays and events): \$2.00 per foot \$7.50 for each 30 amp connection \$15.00 for each 50 amp connection \$5.00 for cable TV connection Fridays, Saturdays, Holidays, and Events: \$2.25 per foot* \$7.50 for each 30 amp connection \$15.00 for each 50 amp connection \$5.00 for cable TV connection		http://www.rockhallonline.com/
Rock Hall Landing Marina	no	75 deep water slips		Each slip has full electric, water, cable TV, and a dock box. Pumpout is available; swimming pool; laundry and bathing facilities; Boat rentals; Bicycle rental; Pet friendly. Boatel on site.	fee or permit required	
Sharp Street Wharf	yes	N/A	one pier; one soft launch	The hours of operation are 5 am - 10 pm. Permits available from the Public Works Department, 410-778-2600. Please note that this site does not have a boat ramp and is for loading and unloading only. It does not have any parking. Please note that "large boats" is intended as a general reference to ramp capacity. Generally, vessels less than 16 feet in length are considered small and those greater than 16 feet as large.		https://webapps02.dnr.state.md.us/MDPublicWaterAccess/ShowWaterAccessToPublic.aspx?PKintID=416
Waterman's Crab House Restaurant & Dock Bar	no	30 slips that can accommodate boats up to 85' 8" Draft		Seafood Restaurant	Slips are complimentary while dining (Weekends are limited to 2 Dock & Dine) Overnight slips are available. The cost is \$1.00 per foot plus electric. Slips with electric are limited. Dock assistance is available on Saturdays and Sundays from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.	http://www.watermanscrabhouse.com/dock-dine/
	no	Annual Slips: 165 Deepwater Slips for Boats up to 60'		8' MLW access to the marina; Immediate Access to the Chesapeake Bay; Large In-ground Pool; Park-like Grounds and Picnic Areas; Complimentary Coffee, Tea and Pastries; Ice; Free Waste Pump-Out; Luxurious Bath House; 200-foot Dock Overlooking the Harbor; Free Internet; Full Service Yacht Yard.	See Web link for current slip and storage rates.	http://thesailingemporium.com/wordpress1/ann-ship-slips/
The Sailing Emporium	no	Transient Slips: Weekly/Bi-Monthly rates available upon request		Main T-Head can handle up to a 120' vessel - twin 30 amp services or twin 50 amp services. Catamarans welcome. Car's Paw Boutique—Beautiful gift and clothing store; Ladies'/Men's' bikes use for FREE; Ice (7lb cube/block); Pump-out available-FREE; Depth is 8' MLW; FREE coffee and cookies; Large spandling pool; Air-conditioned lending library; Laundry facilities; Enjoy the views from the Sunset Deck; Take in the surroundings at our Rose Garden Gazebo or Nautical Bridge; Large hardware chandelier/variety engine parts (Nanni), 4/AC, bilge & water pumps, cleaners, solvents, etc...; Weekend ABYC technicians on-call; Emergency haul-out available. Groups are Welcome.	Daily rate \$2.00 per foot; Electric: \$8.00 per 30 amp; Electric: 50 amp or two 30 amp \$16.00	http://thesailingemporium.com/wordpress1/train-ship-slips/



Figure 23 Rock Hall Landing Marina

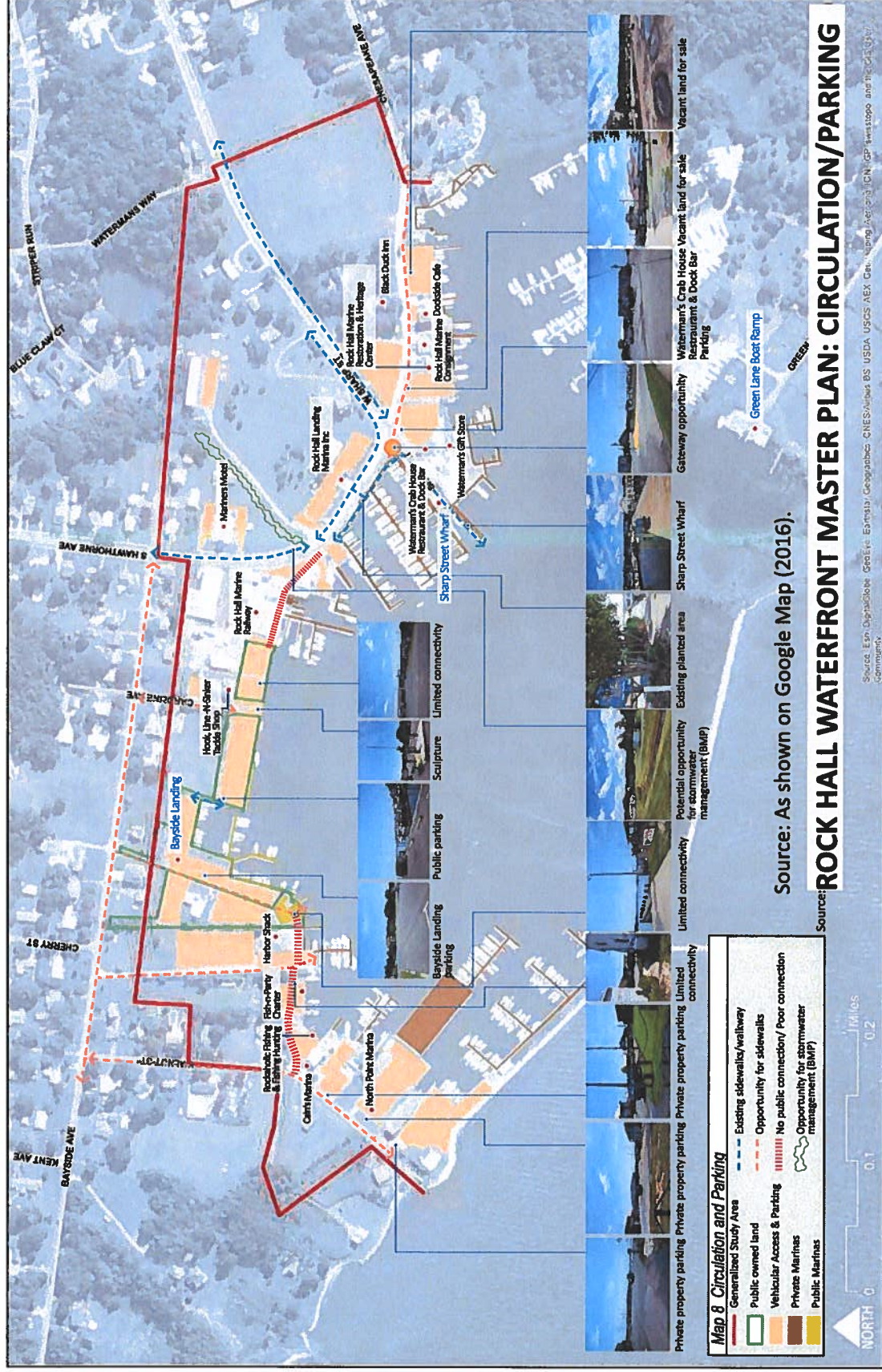
- Free State Marina – offers 10 seasonal and transient slips with water and electric power available at each slip
- Harbor Shack Marina – offers 12 seasonal and transient slips with water and electric power at each slip. Complementary dockage is available for restaurant patrons.
- North Point Marina – dominating the western corner of the harbor, this establishment offers covered and open slips with electric and water; a protected fuel pier; a pumpout station; bathhouses dinghy storage; dock box area; a ship store; laundry room; meeting room; bike rentals; and a motel. The total number of slips is not reported by the owners, but is estimated at 100 slips. (<http://www.northpointmarina.net/>)
- Rock Hall Landing Marina, Inc – This marina boasts seventy-five deep water slips with full electric, water, cable TV, and a dock box. Pumpout is available as well as a swimming pool, laundry, and bathing facilities. Boat and bicycle rentals are available and the marina is pet friendly. A boatel is on site. (<http://www.rockhalllanding.com/>)

Marine Industrial/Marine Fabrication/Maritime Heritage

- Rock Hall Marine Restoration & Heritage Center – This Maryland nonprofit is dedicated to curating, exhibiting, and interpreting maritime boats or other objects that contribute to the cultural traditions and everyday way of life in Rock Hall and greater Chesapeake Bay region. It is located at the Historic Rock Hall Clam House. (<http://www.rockhallheritage.com/>)
- Rock Hall Marine Consignment – Specializing in consignment of marine supplies, this store specializes in boat hardware, nautical housewares, and antiques. (<http://rockhallmarine.com/>)
- Rock Hall Marine Railway – Established in 1928, this facility is centrally anchored on the waterfront, offering the only railway in the area and three travel lifts capable of accommodating boats weighing up to 25 tons. A marine store offers "old fashioned wooden shelves filled with all of your modern boating necessities and three generations of family ownership that take pride in providing good service and quality workmanship." (<http://www.rockhallrailway.com/>)

HARBOR ACCESS, CIRCULATION AND PARKING

Rock Hall Harbor is most easily accessed by automobile from MD 20 to Main Street to Sharp Street. There is ample parking at both businesses and public lots as depicted Map 8 on page



35. Based upon the community survey and comments at the public meeting, there is little or no perceived need for additional parking.

Rock Hall Harbor is approached from the water through an entrance channel northward between converging breakwaters to two channels within the harbor — one to the west end of the harbor, and then traversing eastward along the waterfront to a basin at the east end of the harbor. The harbor channel was dredged in 2012 to a minimum of seven feet deep at low tide and was realigned to follow a straight, Coast Guard-marked channel. Some data reports, web sites and blogs have identified shallower depths (as shallow as six feet) as recently as September 27, 2015 (www.activecaption.com), although no specific measurements are available

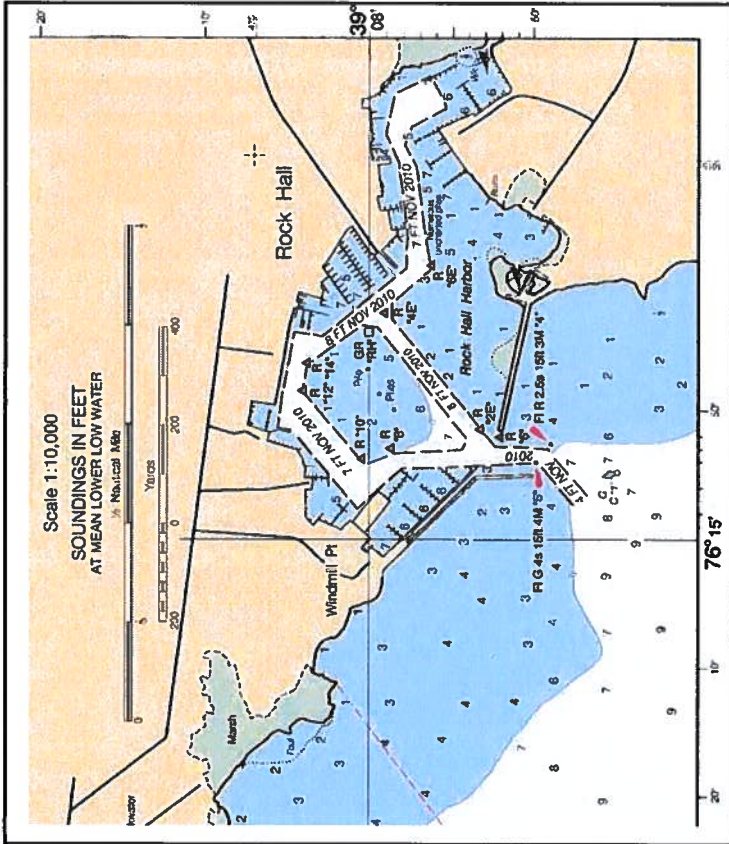


Figure 24 Excerpt from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Nautical Chart of Rock Harbor showing navigation channels (Source: www.charts.noaa.gov/OnLineViewer/12272)

VISION, GOALS & STRATEGIES

The Town of Rock Hall's 2010 Comprehensive Plan provides the following overarching vision against which proposals are evaluated:

- Rock Hall will build a sustainable community that meets the needs of townspeople, visitors, and the environment;
- Rock Hall will maintain its small town character and its particular sense of place while allowing planned change which will enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors of all income levels and ages; and
- Rock Hall will establish a strong economic base.

The needs relative to the Rock Hall Waterfront have changed in recent years, as the foundation of Rock Hall's economic base—fishing and seafood processing—have also changed. Rock Hall continues to maintain an active commercial fishing harbor, but the town's economy now also relies upon the sailing and recreational boating sector that bring in visitors from throughout the mid-Atlantic.

The strong interest in maintaining Rock Hall's small town character and sense of place, however, has not changed and there continues to be strong interest and support for preserving and enhancing Rock Hall's water-dependent businesses as well its Maritime Heritage.

At the same time, the goals and strategies that follow recognize the important role that Rock Hall's harbor and waterfront play in diversifying its economic base, especially relative to increasing economic activity associated with heritage- and nature-based recreational tourism.

The three goals and related strategies that follow were first developed based upon identified opportunities generated from the Town of Rock Hall's Comprehensive Plan, its Sustainable Communities application, a Community Survey, and the August 27, 2016 public meeting. The three goals should be seen as part of a three-legged stool - with each balancing the needs of the others, all working in tandem to achieve the Town's desired vision.

Discussions at the August public meeting resulted in an overall approach for balancing the needs of working watermen and opportunities for attracting more visitors to Rock Hall. The recommended approach is to first, preserve and maintain what is needed to support the watermen's needs (and perhaps some modest expansion) then identify enhancements that support increased economic activity through heritage- or nature-based tourism.

Rock Hall Comprehensive Plan:

"The Town is committed to maintaining a working harbor and assuring a place for local watermen in the Town's future."

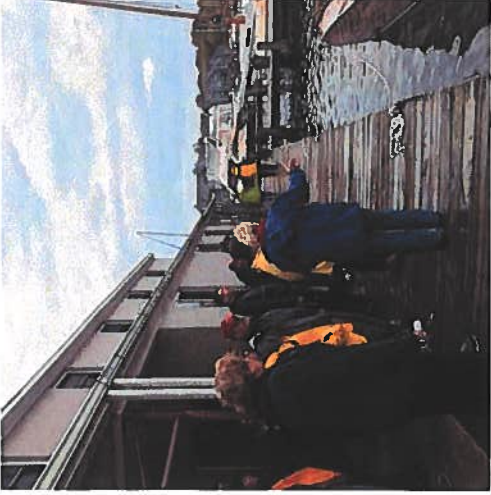


Figure 25 Waterfront Walking Tour at Clam House as part of October 27-28 Community Workshops

The initial list of goals and strategies were then reviewed by the Rock Hall Waterfront Committee (RHWC) at their September 29, 2016 meeting and then presented and discussed over a two-day community workshop conducted on October 27-28, 2016. The public workshops focused on three areas that emerged as having the strongest interest from the initial public meeting held last August and through the community survey:

- Preserving and maintaining opportunities for water dependent businesses
- Enhancing the waterfront to attract more visitors
- Managing the waterfront to increase economic activity through heritage- and nature-based tourism and improving linkages to Rock Hall's Main Street and nearby attractions

The meetings included the following sessions:

- Thursday, October 27 from 3-5pm
Waterfront Walking Tour
- Thursday, October 27 from 7-9pm
Community meeting to discuss strategies
- Friday, October 28 from 10am-Noon
Detailed discussion of heritage-based tourism and economic development strategies
- Friday, October 28 from 1:30-3pm
Detailed discussion of strategies to address flood risk and zoning
- Friday, October 28 from 4-5:30pm
Community meeting to wrap up and summarize the results of the two days of workshops and provide an opportunity for further input

The following revised strategies are organized according to the three goals identified from the August 27 public meeting. Each strategy includes a discussion of its rationale and a set of recommended actions needed to implement that strategy. Potential funding sources identified in the implementation notes have been added to reflect current programs that are either open, or have a high probability of continuing into the following fiscal year.



Figure 26 Community workshops provided hands on opportunities for public input to planning effort

GOAL 1: -PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN EXISTING WORKING WATERFRONT AREAS FOR WORKING WATERFRONT USES

The Town of Rock Hall's Comprehensive Plan (2011) recognizes the importance of the seafood and marine industries on the Town's economic base, both historically and moving forward. According to the Comprehensive Plan:

The Town of Rock Hall has been supported by its watermen and their harvest of fin and shellfish from the Chesapeake Bay. Despite setbacks in the restoration of the commercial fisheries, the contribution by local watermen is of major importance to the economy of the Town. Both commercial watermen and charter fishing guides contribute to the overall economy of the town. The softshell clam beds, oysters, blue crab, rock fish and such specialties as catfish and eels, provide many families in Rock Hall with a comfortable living. The impact of their earnings on both the Town and the County is substantial.

From the Town's establishment in 1707, Rock Hall first served as a commercial link to other populated areas and then later as a shipping point for seafood and agricultural products. As other modes of transportation evolved (rail and then trucking), fishing and seafood processing became the Town's largest industry. With the opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in 1952 and the 1985 striped bass moratorium, growth shifted towards recreational and second home development. In the 2000s, declines in Chesapeake Bay blue crab populations continued to exert pressure on Rock Hall's commercial watermen. Recent initiatives (aquaculture and specialty seafood) have presented new opportunities for growth.

At the same time, the Town acknowledges the significance and importance of marine-oriented businesses employing several hundred people on a full or part-time basis at marinas, marine related service businesses, sailing charter/rental businesses, yacht sales operations, and small recreational craft rental businesses. Many of these businesses are situated on the Harbor and depend on the town maintaining a working waterfront.

In the 1990s, Rock Hall made a strong commitment for preserving maritime water dependent uses with the adoption of a Maritime Water Dependent zoning district for the Rock Hall Harbor waterfront (see Figure 2 on page 2).

More recently, over the past several years, the Town continues to actively seek ways to diversify its economy through heritage and recreation-based tourism. Ongoing efforts are focused on Rock Hall's strengths—its maritime heritage, its boating visitors, and its character defining features associated with maritime heritage.

The following strategies and actions are recommended to meet this goal:



Figure 27 The Historic Log Canoe Glide at Rock Hall Marine Restoration & Heritage Center

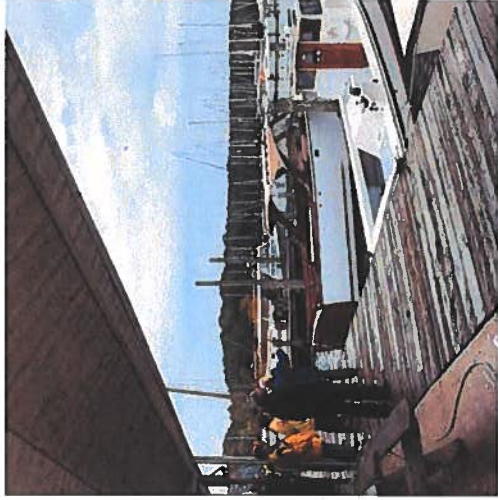


Figure 28 Slips leased to waterman at the Clam House (MFAC)

1.1 Identify and map working waterfront assets that support working waterfront uses

Rationale: Working waterfront assets have been inventoried as part of the Master Plan (see Map 6 Assets on page 30). The stability of many of the working waterfront assets inventoried rely upon informal arrangements among both public (Kent County) and private marina owners that lease slips to watermen. Several parcels that include slips used or leased to watermen are for sale (as of December 2016). Many of the slips in use are those that are situated along bulkheads and that provide access for loading and unloading.

Maintaining the current inventory of slips and access is critical to the commercial success of Rock Hall Harbor and for maintaining the economic benefits associated with maritime dependent businesses. As part of the inventory, efforts should be made to monitor vulnerable properties that affect working waterfront assets. The following actions are recommended:

- a. Maintain inventory and monitor potential changes to informal relationships that support working watermen; and
- b. Identify responsible organization that speaks for and advocates on behalf of Rock Hall Harbor (see 2.2).

1.2 Work with Kent County and state agencies to pursue and invest in the general maintenance of working waterfront resources

Rationale: The community survey identified maintenance of working waterfront assets (piers, wharves, and ramps) as the top priority followed closely by maintenance and repair of bulkheads. The Kent County landings manager noted a similar priority for Bayside Landing. The primary source of funding for maintenance is through the Waterway Improvement Fund, established in 1966 (Annotated Code of Maryland Sec. 8-707 of the State Boat Act) for the purpose of funding projects which improve and promote the recreational and commercial capabilities, conditions and safety of Maryland's waterways for the benefit of the general boating public. Revenues for this fund are primarily obtained from the one time 5% excise tax that is paid to the State of Maryland when a boat is purchased and titled in the state.

Where costs exceed \$100,000, there is a 50% matching requirement, further emphasizing the need to coordinate applications for these funds with Kent County priorities and with other related programs that might provide a source for the matching fund requirements.



Figure 29 Bayside Landing

In addition to general maintenance and repair, ongoing efforts are needed to increase the resiliency of the harbor in response to issues related to sea-level rise and the impacts of storm surge (see Map 5 Sea Level Rise Vulnerability (MD iMAP, DNR) on page 41).

The following actions are recommended:

- a. Coordinate funding applications for maintenance and repair of public wharves, piers, landings and bulkheads with Kent County's Landings Board to take best advantage of matching funding sources (e.g. applications for proposed waterfront walkway should be included as a single project application with bulkhead repair);
- b. Incorporate efforts to address sea level rise. As maintenance and repair projects are considered, efforts should include relevant recommendations of Kent County's Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Report; and
- c. Seek funding in support of a Rock Hall Harbor management plan to:
 - Identify maintenance needs and develop an annual maintenance statement of needs and responsibilities; and
 - Use statement to seek additional funding and resources to implement maintenance programs.



Figure 30 In addition to larger construction projects (up to 100,000 dollars), Waterway Improvement Grants provide financial support to local government and state agencies through grants not exceeding \$5,000 each, for projects such as minor construction, repair, and navigation projects at public boating facilities.

Waterway Improvement Grants

According to the DNR website:

"The Waterway Improvement Fund was established in 1966 (Annotated Code of Maryland Sec. 8-707 of the State Boat Act) for the purpose of funding projects which improve and promote the recreational and commercial capabilities, conditions and safety of Maryland's waterways for the benefit of the general boating public."

The Fund provides financial support in the form of grants and/or loans for capital projects and services that serve the boating public including the following selected project types directly relevant to Rock Hall:

- Marking of channels and harbors and establishing aids to navigation.
- Clearing of debris and obstructions from navigable waters of the state.
- Dredging channels and harbors, and constructing jetties and breakwaters, including those projects in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- Construction of marine facilities beneficial to the general boating public.
- Installation of marine sewage pump-out stations.
- Evaluation of water oriented recreation needs and capacities of Maryland waterways and the development of comprehensive plans for waterway improvement projects.
- Boating information and education.
- Construction of marine facilities for marine firefighting, police, first aid and medical assistance, and communications for promoting safety of life and property and general service to the boating public.

USDA Value Added Producer Grants

The VAPG program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based, value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the goals of this program. Up to \$75,000 is available for planning grants and \$250,000 for working capital grants. Grant applications must be matched with 50% of total project costs.

Independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures are eligible to apply for this program. Grant and matching funds can be used for planning activities or for working capital expenses related to producing and marketing a value-added agricultural product. Examples of planning activities include conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans for processing and marketing the proposed value-added product.

Excerpted from: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>

Maryland Economic Development

Assistance Authority Fund (MEDAAF)
A flexible, broad-based program providing below market, fixed rate direct assistance to growth industry sector businesses, locating or expanding in priority funding areas of the state. Funding for special purpose programs include Arts & Entertainment, Brownfields, Child Care Centers and Seafood and Aquaculture.

1.3 Seek public investments (state or federal) to make the waterfront more attractive to water dependent businesses

Rationale: Rock Hall's maritime water dependent business have supported Rock Hall's economic base since its founding in 1707. Rock Hall seeks diversify its economic base while simultaneously maintaining and/or expanding its traditional maritime businesses.

Rock Hall's Sustainability Plan (2015) identifies the waterfront as an economic engine as one of its economic strengths (along with its Historic Main Street and a wide variety of tourist-oriented outdoor activities).

Rock Hall's Comprehensive Plan identifies multiple strategies for meeting its economic development goals including: supporting current commercial and manufacturing enterprises; encouraging the formation of small businesses and the relocation to Rock Hall of small, locally managed businesses; and encouraging entrepreneurship by allowing a broad mix of home occupation businesses and supporting cottage industries, mentoring, and other programs of small business promotion.

Previous efforts related to the adaptive re-use of the Clam House included the potential for developing leasable space within the building. Other ideas for business development suggested at RHWC meetings, through outreach, and at public meetings included value added processing and/or marketing of seafood products, retail sales of seafood products, aquaculture facilities, and marine trades.

The following actions are recommended:

- a. Support existing marinas and marine commercial activities by identifying specific actions and rationale to maintain adequate channel depth (timing based upon recent dredging history of 5-7 years);
- b. Identify and prioritize new economic development initiatives to encourage business entrepreneurship focusing on value added activities related to marketing seafood from the Upper Chesapeake Bay and by linking the promotion and development of new forms of maritime-related commercial enterprises with Rock Hall's Maritime Heritage; and
- c. Seek funding for a feasibility study for business development initiatives focusing on new forms of maritime related commercial enterprises:
 - USDA Value Added Producer Grants (VAPG)
 - USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant

1.4 Provide permitting assistance to make it easier for businesses to make improvements to water dependent businesses

Rationale: The current zoning code is challenging to understand and use with any degree of confidence. The on-line version is not up to date, with many of the code's text amendments not included. Confusion also arises from a lack of consistency among the Code's definition section versus the language in the specific article (MWD).

The following actions are recommended:

- Update the on-line version of the zoning code to include all text amendments;
- Prepare an illustrated and user friendly "guide to renovating and expanding water-dependent businesses" which addresses zoning code, building codes, and floodplain and storm surge issues; and
- Incorporate images and graphics in a future update to the land use ordinance to illustrate the standards.

1.5 Revise the zoning code to facilitate private business investment in working waterfront areas

Rationale: The Marine Water Dependent (MWD) Zoning Ordinance needs to be modified to support the goals and strategies of this plan for the following reasons:

- The Town of Rock Hall through its Comprehensive Plan policies and its Marine Water Dependent (MWD) Zoning has retained a solid core of working waterfront assets as depicted on Map 6 on page 30.
- This plan recommends that due to changing economic and market conditions in the seafood industry, the MWD zoning code needs to be updated to facilitate and encourage new forms of maritime water dependent business, as outlined on page 42.
- This plan also recommends that the Town of Rock Hall enhance the waterfront to attract more visitors and manage the waterfront to increase economic activity through heritage- and nature-based tourism in a manner that builds upon and protects its working waterfront (see goals and strategies that follow starting on page 47).
- Maintaining (and possibly slight expansion of) working waterfront assets and enhancing the waterfront to attract more visitors requires modification to the MWD Zoning Code to permit uses that support heritage and nature-based tourism in places that will not affect working waterfront assets.



Figure 31 Hook Line and Sinker is a former restaurant now selling only marine retail in conformance with the MWD District



Figure 32 Waterman's Crab House at the end of Sharp Street is considered a non-conforming use within the MWD District - making it difficult to expand or remodel



Figure 33 Black Duck Inn operates conforming uses on the waterfront side of Chesapeake Avenue (above) and the bed and breakfast on the Maritime Commercially zoned side of Chesapeake Avenue (Figure 9 on page 16)

- The current MWD Zoning Code requires that new supporting commercial businesses cater to those arriving by boat. The number of people primarily arriving by boat to Rock Hall Harbor is on the decline due to competition, changing demographics and lack of services and facilities.
- The charter industry in Rock Hall is a strong part of the water-dependent business economy. The nature of the tourism industry is also changing, emphasizing experience-based travel with visitors seeking out a range of experiences around a home base. Rock Hall is uniquely positioned to take advantage of this trend as a means of both increasing more visitors and retaining its working waterfront assets.

Revisions to the Rock Hall Zoning Code for a targeted area (to be referred to as the "Waterfront Heritage Area") of approximately 15 lots currently classified as Maritime Water-Dependent (MWD) on the Zoning Map and located south of Chesapeake Avenue and East of Sharpe Street is recommended to reduce barriers to private business investment in existing working waterfront areas and to encourage appropriately-scaled new investment and redevelopment as a means of increasing economic vitality through cultural heritage tourism.

The primary objective of the proposed code revisions is to revise the MWD district provisions (Article V Sec. 10) to allow a broader range of hospitality, heritage tourism, appropriately scaled dining options, and supporting retail uses to be established and redeveloped in the target area, while at the same time continuing to promote and incentivize working waterfront uses (like boat service & repair, seafood-related, and water-dependent facilities).

The allowable uses proposed should stay focused on a designated "Waterfront Heritage Area" to stay consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. If there was supporting public interest in expanding the area, then it could be considered along with an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Further revisions to the entire MWD District are also discussed below that will address heritage tourism related businesses (supporting restaurants, marinas and retail uses) within the entire MWD District. Dining should also be considered in more detail as a conditional use in the entire MWD District.

The following changes are recommended:

- A definition of heritage tourism needs to be adopted. There are many definitions used throughout the country. The National Trust for Historic Preservation uses the term "cultural heritage tourism" and defines it as: "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources."

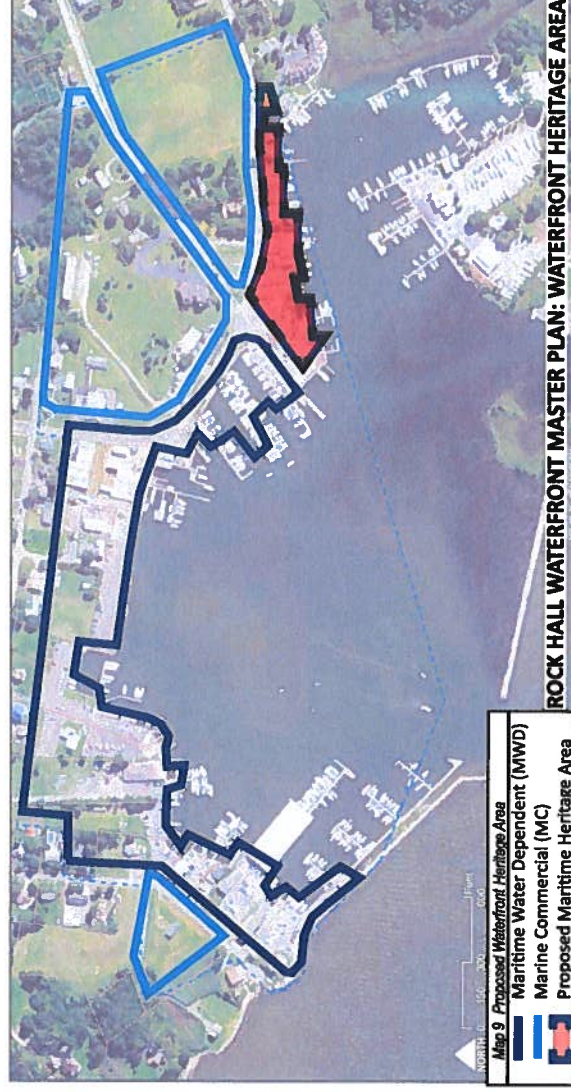
Proposed MWD District Changes

The following table summarizes the proposed changes to uses within the entire MWD District and the targeted "Waterfront Heritage Area" for consideration:

Heritage Tourism Uses	Existing MWD District	Change for entire MWD District	Proposed Waterfront Heritage Area
Hospitality (Bed and Breakfast)	X	X	A
Dining	X	C	A
Museum	C	C	A
Retail up to 10,000 GSF floor area	A (boat traffic only)	A (without boat access limitation)	A (without boat access limitation)

NOTE: All allowable uses would continue to require site plan review to address issues of compatibility.

- In addition to changes in the allowable uses in the target area, changes to the zoning code are needed to establish several new use-specific standards that address design and compatibility of hospitality, heritage tourism, dining uses, and supporting retail uses to ensure they are consistent with established community character (such as scale, massing, building placement, materials, view protection, parking location, and others).
- Further modifications to the Town's nonconforming use (Article 10) provisions may also be needed to further clarify and allow existing or recently discontinued hospitality, heritage tourism, dining, supporting retail and water-related uses to be re-established, continue, and potentially even expand, subject to compatibility provisions designed to ensure consistency with established character.
- Opportunities for establishing incentives for identified working waterfront uses, such as the possibility to relax some applicable parking, landscaping, and dimensional standards to ease redevelopment of these important uses are also in need of evaluation.
- Finally, minor changes to the parking standards (Article 8), relevant dimensional provisions in Article 9, and revisions to definitions (Article 14), may be needed as appropriate, to ensure internal inconsistency with the suggested use and use-specific standard changes suggested above.



Property Tax Credits

The Maryland General Assembly passed legislation in 2008 allowing local jurisdictions to provide a special use tax assessment for waterfront property to those commercial marinas that offer at least 20% of their slips to commercial waterman.

Benefits Of Arts And Entertainment**District Designation**

Maryland's Arts & Entertainment (A&E) Districts help develop and promote community involvement, tourism, and revitalization through tax-related incentives that attract artists, arts organizations, and other creative enterprises.

Designation as a Maryland Arts and Entertainment (A&E) District brings with it eligibility for various tax incentives. The benefits offered to designated districts include:

- 1) property tax credits for new construction or renovation of certain buildings that create live-work space for artists and/or space for arts and entertainment enterprises;
- 2) an income tax subtraction modification for income derived from artistic work sold by "qualifying residing artists";
- 3) an exemption from the Admissions and Amusement tax levied by an "arts and entertainment enterprise" or "qualifying residing artist" in a district.

The Maryland Arts Council suggests that Arts and Entertainment Districts succeed when:

- Designation is used as an effective "cultural planning" tool
- When designation and management is rooted in local efforts and support
- Thriving districts have multiple development designations:
 - A&E
 - Historic
 - Main Street

The following actions are recommended to begin the process of implementing these changes:

- a. Work with Kent County (planning official for Rock Hall) to develop suggested revisions to the Zoning Code that can be distributed and reviewed with the public;
- b. Proposed changes will need to be reviewed and discussed with the Rock Hall Planning Commission, the public, and the Town Council to determine feasibility and desirability; and
- c. To ease the review process, "redlined" text designed to be directly inserted into the code needs to be prepared. Some current standards will need to be modified or deleted to help ensure seamless integration into the code document. Additional discussion is needed regarding the desirability of additional images and graphics to illustrate some of the standards, such as those pertaining to compatibility, as per Strategy 1.4.

1.6 Consider developing incentives for targeted uses for Maritime Water Dependent (MWD) and Maritime Commercial (MC) districts

Rationale: In addition to both the perceived and real obstacles associated with the zoning code, additional incentives may be needed to facilitate the desired uses for Rock Hall's waterfront. Expanding existing businesses or starting new ones in Rock Hall generally, and the waterfront in particular, require a high degree of sensitivity to market conditions and financial constraints typically found in a tourism-dependent economy.

Incentives can include both tangible and targeted tax benefits along with intangible technical assistance and training needed to overcome gaps and obstacles that often constrain successful start-up and expansion activities (e.g. financing, space acquisition, build out, signage, employee development, permitting and licensing).

One example that should be looked at carefully is Maryland's state art district designation program that provides tax benefits, incentives, and other benefits to local jurisdictions working to develop and integrate arts-based community and economic revitalization strategies. Including both Main Street and the Waterfront as part of the arts district designation could serve as an economic engine for Rock Hall. The following action is recommended:

- a. Work with Main Street interests to determine the feasibility of establishing an "arts, entertainment and Waterfront Heritage" district that connects Main Street with the Waterfront.

GOAL 2: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL WATERFRONT ENHANCEMENTS TO ENCOURAGE AND ATTRACT MORE VISITORS WHILE PROTECTING WORKING WATERFRONT ASSETS

The Town of Rock Hall's Sustainability Plan identified the need to improve and maintain the condition and appearance of Rock Hall Harbor as a desired outcome for its environmental goal while at the same time establishing Rock Hall as a regional tourist destination offering diverse activities and events for different visitor populations (such as boaters, fishermen, sportsmen, and birders) as an economic goal.

Outreach conducted as part of the planning process with the RHWC, the community survey, and the two public meetings also recognized the need to attract more visitors and encourage them to stay longer as a means of increasing economic activity.

However, the very nature of the way in which people travel and visit an area is changing dramatically. Millennial Generation travelers are using many different modes of travel to reach the destination. Car-sharing, house sharing, bike-sharing, and even boat sharing have reduced the capital costs that have often limited younger travelers and families to seek out more active types of travel experiences. Where in the past, families would save for a new boat or a second home and then invest their time and money in using that boat or home in a single location, the next generation of travelers are looking for ways to actively experience a place, as if they were a long time returning traveler. But instead of a boat owner or house owner returning, a wider array of visitors may come once or twice to experience what a place has to offer and then they move on. That same boat or home may be used by many different people unfamiliar with an area and looking for that one of a kind experience.

For years, Rock Hall has depended upon the returning visitor—whether coming by boat or to a second home (or both). Transitioning to the sharing economy requires a different perspective on making these new visitors feel welcomed and blessed with local knowledge of the best things to experience. However, instead of the same visitor, it is a new visitor, using the same home or boat.

Rock Hall has the opportunity to tap deeper into potential audiences, sharing or otherwise, that may have already visited as well as those that would be interested in coming if there were more descriptive information about actual experiences when visiting Rock Hall rather than pointing to just a list of things to see and do.

The following strategies are recommended to attract more visitors while protecting working waterfront assets:

Audience for Heritage and Nature Based Tourism

Participants at the October 28, 2016 workshop on using the Waterfront to increasing economic activity through heritage- and nature-based tourism identified the following user groups as having the potential for lengthening visitor stays in Rock Hall;

- Slip holders
- Transients (overnight, day boaters/power boaters, sailors)
- Charters
- Motorcycle groups
- Bicyclists - touring and competitive
- Marathoners & independent
- Kayakers
- Birders (Eastern Neck) - programs/winter
- Jet skiers
- Lodging – boaters, vacationers (weddings & events)
- Hunters – seeking lodging
- Byway Travelers
- Wineries
- Events (extended stay opportunities)
 - Pirates and Wenches (run by non-profit organization)
 - 4th of July
 - Waterman's Day (July 3rd)
 - New Years Eve
 - Fall Fest
 - Halloween Parade
 - Triathlon (privately managed)
 - Easter Egg Hunt
 - 5K

Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) and Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPPIF)

According to its website, the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) "offers financial support to rural-serving nonprofit organizations that promote statewide and regional planning, economic and community development, and agricultural and forestry education efforts. The Fund also provides targeted financial assistance to community colleges that support small and agricultural businesses through enhanced training and technical assistance offerings."

The Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPPIF) supports the Rural Maryland Council's activities and the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF), which provides capacity-building funds to rural nonprofit service providers. It also supports the states' five regional councils, regional infrastructure projects, rural entrepreneurship development, rural community development, and rural health care organizations.

Grant applications were due in July and August of 2016, respectively for FY 2017 funding. For more information visit <http://rural.maryland.gov/maerdaf/>

2.1 Build upon Rock Hall's reputation as a friendly place by expanding hospitality services to visitors coming into the marinas or by automobile

Rationale: Rock Hall's watermen and marina operators collectively provide a strong and welcoming presence for visitors and encourage them to explore what Rock Hall has to offer. However, the traditional Rock Hall visitor is changing. The next generation of visitors are getting their information from many different sources, often well in advance of their stay.

When they arrive at a place they already have a good understanding of what is available but are seeking out less tangible information about the nature and the culture of the place. The hospitality services that have traditionally been employed at a visitor center or through front-line hospitality training rely upon relatively static information—lists of things to see and do, lodging and restaurants.

Rock Hall must capture more visitors from the next generation by changing the way in which it delivers its hospitality services. This includes web- and mobile-based "hospitality" that is more interactive and connects with people in the community who are willing to engage in the sharing economy (see Strategy 2.4, page 51). In addition to the web- and mobile-based initiatives, Rock Hall needs to retool its traditional hospitality approach with a more experience-based approach. Emphasis should be on an overall experience—Sail, Fish, Paddle, Bike, Bird or Walk. A more complete travel experience could feature local food and culture, or an excursion learning about the watermen culture and ending with special meal and an evening of music at the Mainstay.

Heritage-based hospitality training is different than traditional hospitality services. It provides an opportunity for front-line workers, business owners, and others to network together to learn to package experiences through cooperative ventures and how to get information out in real time about what is here now in Rock Hall's new sharing economy. The following actions are recommended:

- a. Seek funding in collaboration with partner regional organizations (District 4 Rural Development Council, Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, Washington College and others) to develop a hospitality training program aimed at the next generation of travelers.
- b. Implement hospitality programs as part of business development geared towards training small, hospitality-based business owners from around the region in the art of collaboration, partnership building, advancing web- and mobile based technology tools, and regional history and heritage.

2.2 Determine the best way of establishing a collective voice to advocate for the needs of the harbor business and user community

Rationale: There are many voices that are speaking out on behalf of Rock Hall Harbor including watermen, charters, marinas, property owners, restaurants, Maritime Heritage enthusiasts, recreational boaters, and environmentalists, among others. Many of these voices are speaking out on common issues with common points of view. For those issues, one strong voice is usually more effective than a dozen individual voices. Through the public planning process undertaken for this Master Plan, a number of common issues have emerged that would benefit from speaking as one instead of many:

- Maintaining (or expanding) working waterfront assets;
- Encouraging investments in maintenance of existing docks, piers, wharves, jetties, and bulkhead;
- Advocating for more clear and understandable development review procedures that continue to protect working waterfront assets and the character of the community while incentivizing existing businesses to expand or new businesses to be established;
- The need to reposition Rock Hall as a destination for Maritime Heritage and outdoor recreation based tourism experiences; and
- The need to maintain the quality of the harbor including its navigability and the integrity of its shorelines.

The existing Rock Hall Waterfront Committee (RHWC) includes representation from a cross section of harbor users and property owners. RHWC should continue to be the primary means through which the Town of Rock Hall implements the Master Plan (working with Town staff, Mayor and Town Council, and the Kent County Landings Board). RHWC needs to continue to reach out to watermen and maritime businesses that generally have not been involved in planning activities, but remain strongly interested. The following actions are recommended:

- a. Review and revise the Committee charge to refocus efforts on implementing the plan's priorities and serving as the primary voice on behalf of Rock Hall Harbor;
- b. Represent Rock Hall Harbor in addressing issues of management and maintenance;
- c. Represent Rock Hall Harbor in coordinated regional efforts to advocate on behalf of the harbor; and
- d. Serve as the point of contact for Kent County, Maryland DNR and other Maryland state agencies with regard to future funding requests and implementing priorities.

Maryland Heritage Areas Financial Assistance Programs (MHT):

The Maryland Heritage Areas Program provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to nonprofit organizations and government entities for capital and non-capital projects located within a Maryland Certified Heritage Area (CHA). Rock Hall is located within the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area. Grants can support projects involving historical, cultural or natural resources, sites, events or facilities. Eligible projects must have a heritage tourism component.

Non-Capital. Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for non-capital projects, which can include Planning (research, field investigation, data recovery, feasibility and planning studies, design documents and other planning activities that support the heritage area); Interpretation (exhibits, signage, pedestrian wayfinding signage, interpretive brochures, educational programs and materials, other interpretive activities that support the heritage area); and Programming (seminars, conferences, performances, reenactments, commemorations, festivals).

Capital. Grants of up to \$100,000 are available for Acquisition (fee title of real property, interest other than fee title (i.e. easement) of real property); Development (repair or alteration of an existing building, structure or site, new construction for heritage tourism purposes) among other purposes. For more information:

Jen.Ruffner@maryland.gov
Program Assistant Administrator

2.3 Develop a visitor information kiosk in a prominent waterfront location with current operating information for lodging, food, attractions and museums

Hospitality businesses can provide real time information about events, operating hours, menus, targeted marketing to nearby visitors, and other techniques that just a few years ago were just not possible. Technology is also available that allows that same web- and mobile-based content to be displayed outdoors as part of a stand-alone visitor information kiosk. A visitor information kiosk is needed at the primary entry (or gateway points) where visitors arrive to Rock Hall. For the waterfront, that location is at Bayside Landing at the bulkhead, perhaps in combination with the existing statue. The same kiosk could also be located at the other end of the waterfront in the vicinity of the Sharp Street Pier. The following actions are recommended:

- e. Seek funding from the Maryland Office of Tourism Development County Cooperative Grant Program for the development of the web-based visitor information content
 - a. Develop as part of an overall wayfinding and signage program, plans and specifications for a visitor information kiosk, including broadband access (see 2.4 below)
 - b. Seek funding from the Maryland Heritage Areas Financial Assistance Programs for the development of a wayfinding and signage program, followed by a priority implementation project to include the visitor information kiosks and high priority wayfinding signage



Figure 34 Example of outdoor kiosk with digital display and Wi-Fi stations (Source: <http://www.sustainablecitiescollective.com/dirt/>)



Figure 35 Example of more rustic design of outdoor kiosk with digital displays (Source: <http://www.sentios.co.uk/news/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Outdoor-Kiosk-3.jpg>)

2.4 Establish Rock Hall's entire waterfront as a "digital harbor" by providing public Wi-Fi, solar charging, and a digital kiosk (as part of mobile- and web-based visitor information program)

Rationale: Enhancing broadband services into Rock Hall has been and still is a priority which is being coordinated through Kent County Fiber Network (<http://fiber.kentcounty.com>). Once that regional infrastructure is in place, it may be easier to develop public Wi-Fi as part of the overall visitor information program. Adding amenities in the harbor area can serve commercial fishing operations, marinas and transient boaters, as well as the local businesses that support them. Certain public Wi-Fi systems have been developed that can be installed easily and at relatively low cost. The Town of Chestertown was able to install proper Wi-Fi equipment with money from a \$30,000 Maryland Community Legacy Grant in 2012. The following actions are recommended:

- Coordinate with Rock Hall's developing Main Street organization to study the feasibility of public Wi-Fi in Rock Hall Harbor and Main Street;
- Establish a web- and mobile-based identity for Rock Hall "digital harbor" and encourage local business content development and a marketing program to promote its use; and
- Establish a budget and hire a vendor to install and maintain the system.

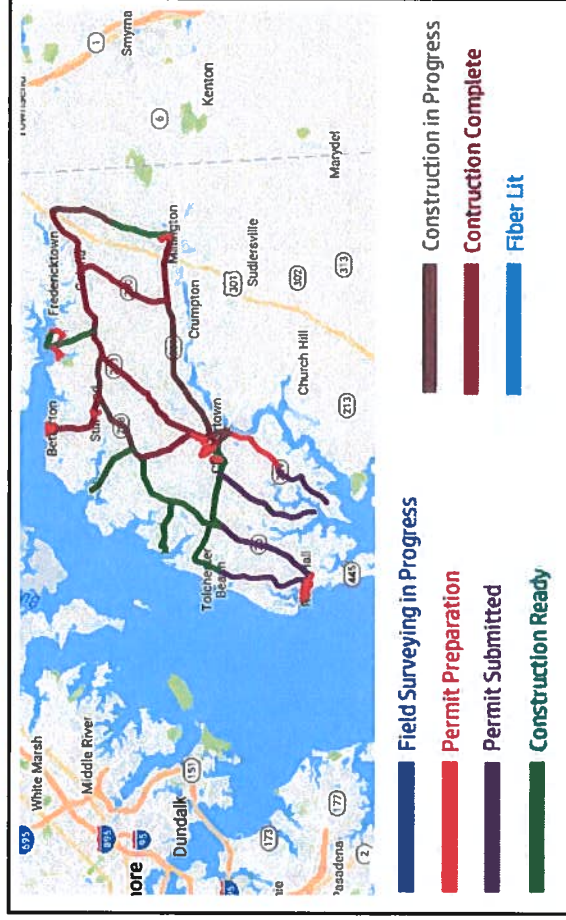


Figure 36 Status map of Kent County Fiber Network as of 12-20-16 (Source: <http://fiber.kentcounty.com>)

USDA Community Connect Grants
This program helps fund broadband deployment into rural communities where it is not yet economically viable for private sector providers to deliver service.

According to USDA, "funds may be used for the construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities, spectrum, land or buildings used to deploy broadband service for:

- All residential and business customers located within the Proposed Funded Service Area (PFSA)
- All participating critical community facilities (such as public schools, fire stations, and public libraries)
- The cost of providing broadband service free of charge to the critical community facilities for 2 years

Less than 10% of the grant amount or up to \$150,000 may be used for the improvement, expansion, construction or acquisition of a community center that provides online access to the public."

For more information see <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants>

2.5 Work towards establishing a Maritime Heritage Walkway along the waterfront

Rationale: Currently, visitors to Rock Hall by boat are met with a range of unwelcoming conditions making it difficult to reach nearby restaurants, stores or Rock Hall's Main Street without a car. Those that live in the area know how to move around on foot, but if new to the area or just visiting for the day it is difficult to know whether or not an area is public and/or open for walking. Some marinas, like Rock Hall Landing have built small sections of boardwalk (Figure 23 on page 34) along the bulkhead and made it generally accessible to the public. Kent County installed a short section of boardwalk connecting the boat ramp access and parking area with Bayside Landing, making it easier to walk to the nearby public restrooms from the bulkhead where transient boaters tie up.

The walkway should be built as close to the waterfront as possible, but respecting private ownership and other constraints. The walkway should serve to:

- Link together marinas and docks with restaurants, attractions and services;
- Establish a distinct identity to the waterfront through public art and design; and
- Provide additional opportunities for visitors to linger longer in Rock Hall.

Kent County's Landings Manager reviewed the initial ideas and suggested that imprinted asphalt could be used to delineate the walkway through Bayside Landing. A route was suggested as shown in Map 10 Enhancement Locations on page 53. The following actions are recommended:

- a. Develop a concept plan for use in securing design and engineering funding for the walkway. Map 10 on page 53 illustrates the proposed route. Figure 37 on page 54 illustrates the proposed route under consideration. The route through Bayside Landing will need to be confirmed with Kent County's Landings Board and the Landings Manager.
- b. Working with the two key anchors (Kent County / Bayside Landing and Maryland Food Center Authority / Marine Restoration and Heritage Center, the Town should seek funding for:
 - Design of the Maritime Heritage Walkway (to construction ready position)
 - Acquisition or easement for missing links (Chesapeake Avenue parcels)
 - Construction

Recreational Trails Program (SHA):

A federally funded program assisting development and maintenance of smaller scale motorized and non-motorized trail, trailhead and restoration projects. Examples of trail uses include hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, canoeing, kayaking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles. Recreational Trails is

now a part of the larger Transportation Alternatives Program due to the latest federal transportation law, but has retained dedicated funding for the following eligible activities:

- Construction of new trails;
- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails;
- Development/rehabilitation of trailside facilities and linkages;
- Purchase/lease of trail construction equipment;
- Trail/corridor easement and property acquisition; and
- Interpretive/educational Programs, signage and maps related to recreational trails use.

Funding source: Federal. Grant awards cannot exceed \$40,000 for new construction and \$30,000 for other projects; Local match: 20 percent of total project cost as a cash match.

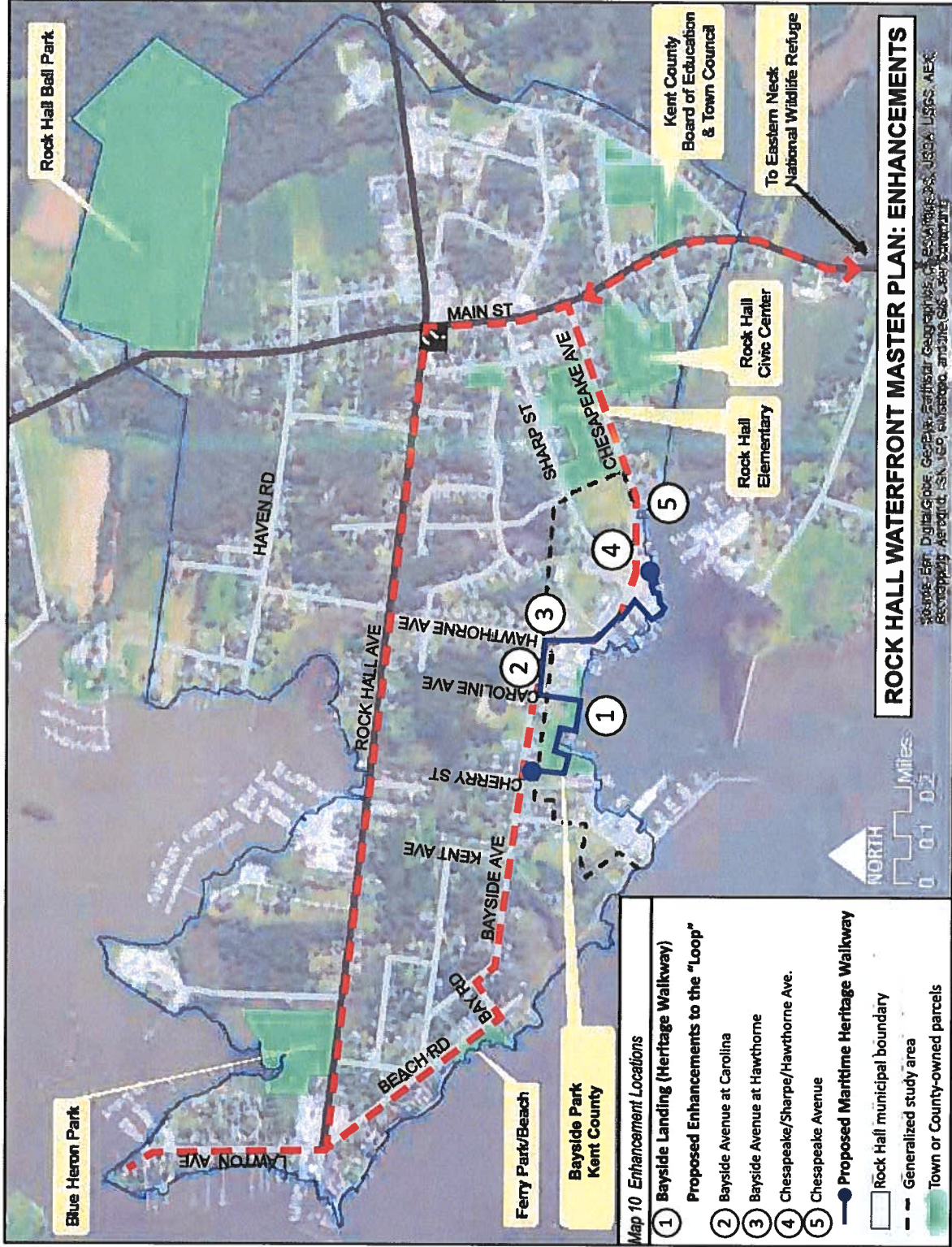
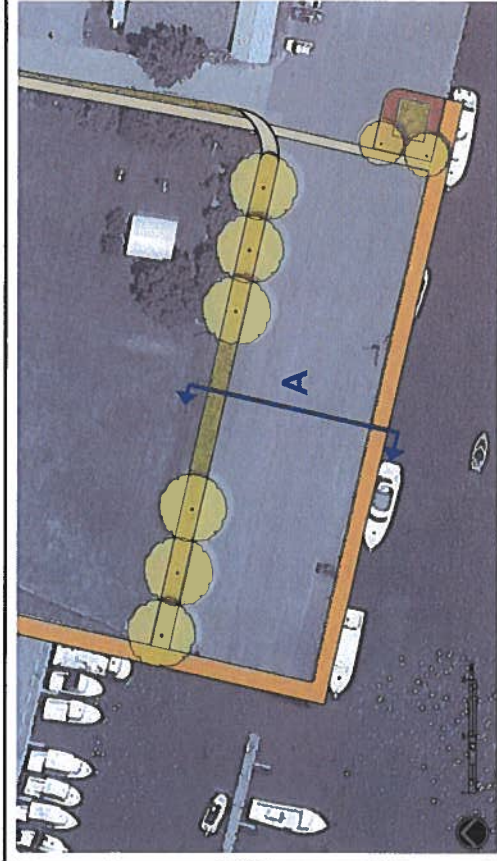
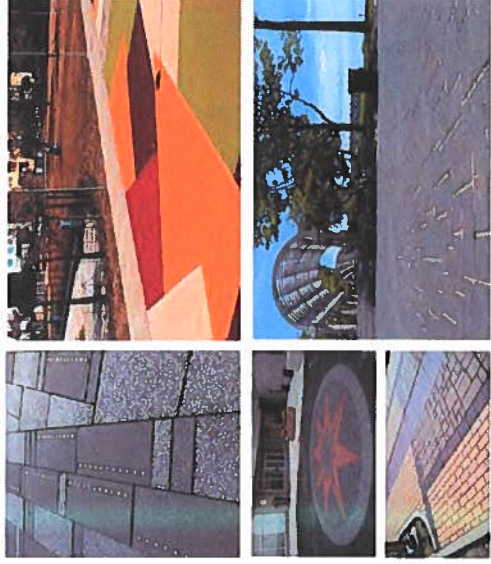




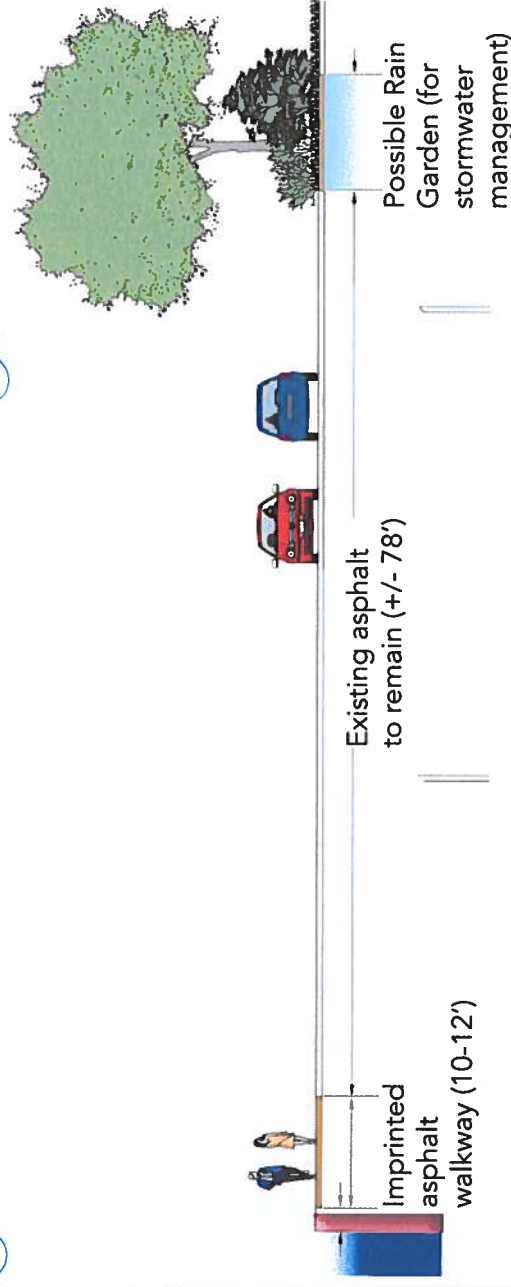
Figure 37 Waterfront Walkway Concept Diagram



1 Bayside Landing Walkway Detail



B Examples of imprinted asphalt patterns



A Cross-section through Bayside Landing

Figure 38 Maritime Heritage Walkway through Bayside Landing

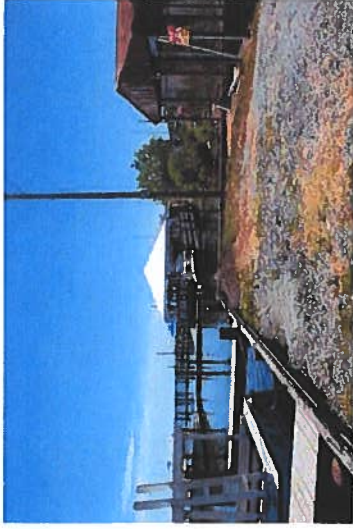


Figure 39 Waterfront lot for sale between the Clam House and Waterman's would preserve existing slips leased to watermen and potentially provide public accessibility to a waterfront walkway



Figure 40 Sharp Street Pier is worth studying to determine if additional pier amenities could be installed (seating, interpretation, etc.) while addressing access issues (such as the nets that are often left on the pier for weeks)

2.6 Develop new and enhance existing destinations to provide more activities at the waterfront

Rationale: Rock Hall's waterfront serves many needs in the community: working waterfront for commercial fishing operations; docking space for transient boaters; commercial and recreational marinas; supporting marine commercial uses; and for general recreational needs in the community.

Working waterfront assets have been inventoried and the needs of watermen established to ensure that existing assets are maintained. Vulnerable working waterfront properties have been identified where parcels that lease slips to watermen are for sale.

Goal 1, as noted on page 39, establishes the importance of first preserving and maintaining what is needed to support working watermen (and perhaps some modest expansion). Once identified and preserved, enhancements that support increased economic activity through heritage- or nature-based tourism can follow.

With that in mind, three specific areas are recommended for enhancements for the purpose of increasing the length of stay of visitors and for helping to tell the story of Rock Hall's Maritime Heritage:

- Work with Kent County and adjoining property owners on a willing seller basis to expand Bayside Landing Park and establish a large central green space to support existing and future events;
- Work to add or expand other pocket parks of green space that provide opportunities for telling the story of Rock Hall Harbor through interpretation and storytelling; and
- Enhance the Sharp Street Pier by working with pier users to enhance pier amenities while maintaining existing pier functions (including controlling unauthorized vehicular access on the pier).

The following actions are recommended:

- a. Design of Pocket Parks and enhancements to Sharpe Street Pier (as part of 2.5 above); and
- b. Seek Heritage Area funding to design and install interpretive exhibits and/or a web-based guide to Rock Hall Harbor's Maritime Heritage.

GOAL 3: MAINTAIN, EXPAND AND DEVELOP NEW PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND CIRCULATOR LINKAGES TO/FROM WATERFRONT, DOWNTOWN AND NEARBY DESTINATIONS

Rock Hall's Waterfront as well as Swan Creek's harbor area and Rock Hall's Main Street are closely linked from an economic perspective. The more robust the waterfront and harbor economy, the more patronage downtown merchants are likely to enjoy. The more vibrant and attractive the Main Street, the more likely Main Street and the waterfront is to attract local and more distant visitors.

With little visual connections between the waterfront and Main Street and with the unusual layout of streets, visitors have a hard time finding one or the other among the waterfront and Main Street. Rock Hall has developed "The Loop" as shown in Map 10 on page 53 and on the Town of Rock Hall's web page (<http://www.rockhallmd.com/sites/rockhallmd/files/pages/rockhall-loop-print.pdf>). The Loop is intended for walking, running, or bicycling the Town's main perimeter. The Town continues to enhance the Loop and more effort is needed to increase the routes attractiveness and safety. The Bayside Avenue section is included within the scope of this master plan. The following strategies are recommended.

3.1 Develop pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and safety measures on Bayside Avenue

Rationale: Bayside Avenue is perceived at certain times of the day and during the summer months as a particularly challenging portion of the route. There is a need to provide some separation between drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes are needed along with safety measures at intersections where traffic coming in and out of Bayside Landing conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists on the Loop. Measures are needed at these Bayside Avenue intersections that both increase pedestrian safety (such as crosswalks) while accommodating the turning radii for trailers.

A sidewalk along the south side of Bayside Avenue can be accommodated along with four-foot bicycle lanes without relocating existing utility poles. The following actions are recommended:

- a. Develop design and engineering plans for walkway and bicycle accommodations (Transportation Alternatives Program, MDOT Bikeway Program); and
- b. Seek phased construction funds for facilities as designed (Transportation Alternatives Program, MDOT Bikeway Program, Recreational Trails Program).



Figure 41 Bayside Ave. at Kent Ave (looking east)



Figure 42 Bayside Ave. at Caroline (looking west)

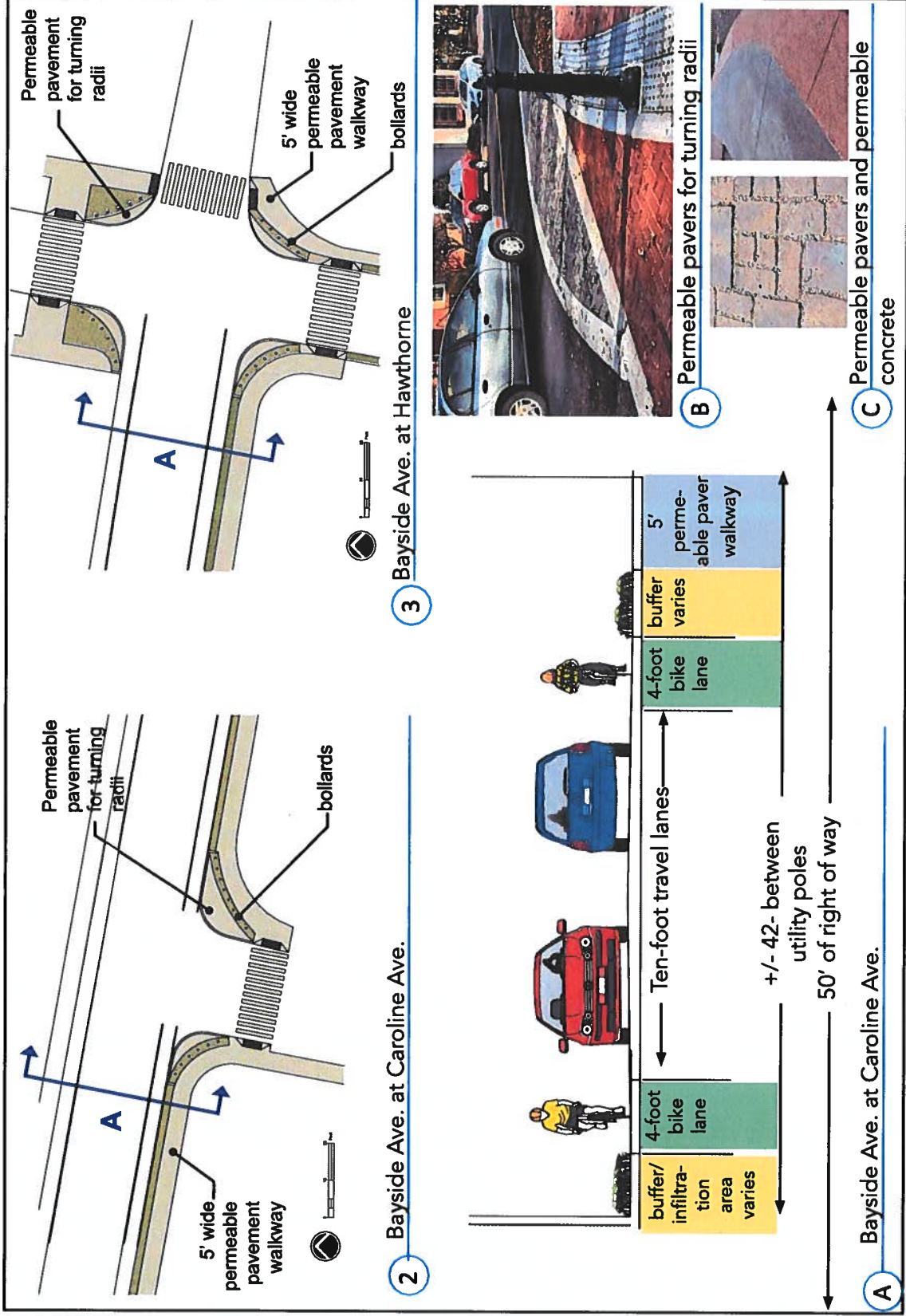


Figure 43 Bayside Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Enhancement Concepts

3.2 Enhance the Rock Hall ‘Loop’ to increase pedestrian and bicycle linkages between the waterfront, downtown, the beach and other attractions

Rationale: Rock Hall has promoted a loop route (see Map 10 Enhancement Locations on page 53) to provide a pedestrian and bicycle exercise and transportation route that connects Downtown with the Waterfront, the Beach, and Swan Creek’s harbor. Rock Hall also operates a trolley linking destinations.

The Loop provides an opportunity for healthy exercise, disperses summer visitors to multiple locations thereby reducing crowding. The Loop serves as a destination unto itself providing something for visitors and residents alike to do while on an extended stay. The longer people stay in Rock Hall the more economic activity is generated. The following actions are recommended:

- a. Develop a concept plan that establishes a distinct visual identity for the loop trail system, a signage system, typical street and sidewalk cross sections and typical cross sections for any separated multi-use pathways that may be created as part of the loop system;
- b. Using the budget established as part of the concept plan, combine a funding request with 3.1 (Bayside Avenue) and develop design plans and phasing recommendations to implement them over time; and
- c. Seek phased construction funds for facilities as designed (Transportation Alternatives Program, MDOT Bikeway Program, Recreational Trails Program).

3.3 Expand and improve the beach area to better accommodate both residents and visitors

Rationale: The Town’s sandy beach is an excellent opportunity for swimming, fishing, and sunsets with its western orientation. The sandy beach is the only such opportunity within Rock Hall and efforts are needed to expand the beach area, create a fishing pier at the existing fishing point and make more room for vendors by reconfiguring the parking to accommodate the expanded offerings. The following actions are recommended:

- a. Develop a concept plan that illustrates the proposed concepts and work with the community and neighbors to gain acceptance of the design and recommendations (addressing concerns about traffic, wetlands, storm surge, wind throw and erosion, and impacts to adjoining residences; and
- b. Consider an application for Community Parks and Playgrounds funding from (DNR).

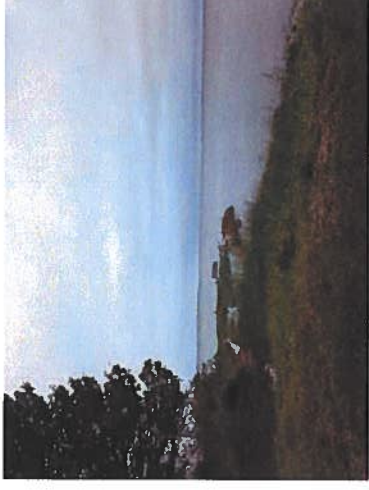


Figure 44 Possible location for a fishing dock on the southern side of the Town Beach.

3.4 Provide a dinghy dock or service in both Rock Hall Harbor and Swan Creek's harbor to increase access for boaters interested in visiting Rock Hall's waterfront, downtown and sandy beach

Rationale: Currently it is very difficult for transient boaters that are mooring in Swan Creek or near Rock Hall Harbor to visit the Rock Hall Waterfront using a dinghy or other small watercraft such as a sea kayak. Two dinghy dock sites have been identified in Rock Hall Harbor:

- On the west side of the boat ramp at Bayside Landing adjoining a small triangular grassy area that is already used by kayakers for access; and
- Along the bulkhead adjoining the parcel just east of the Clam House (private land that is currently for sale) - this area is fairly well protected.

As part of the Captain John Smith Water Trail, Rock Hall may be eligible to work with the National Park Service's water access program where they continue to look for fundable projects to meet their publicly stated goals. The following actions are recommended for the waterfront locations:

- a. Develop a feasibility study comparing the costs and benefits of the two options for dinghy dock access; and
- b. Using the study's recommendations, apply for funding to design and construct the waterway access project, such as through the Waterway Improvement Fund. However, priorities for this funding source need to be coordinated among multiple projects).

3.5 Provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge

Rationale: Connecting US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wildlife Refuges with nearby communities is a stated federal goal for the agency. The connection also meets the goal of providing additional destinations and high quality heritage- and nature-based recreation experiences for both visitors and residents of Rock Hall. The following actions are recommended:

- a. Working with County, Heritage Area, Birding and USFWS partners, apply for funding through the Federal Land Access Program to first develop a feasibility study and then request funding to implement the recommendations.



Figure 45 Possible location for a dinghy dock on the west side of the boat ramp at Bayside Landing.



Figure 46 Example of a dinghy dock in downtown Chincoteague's waterfront

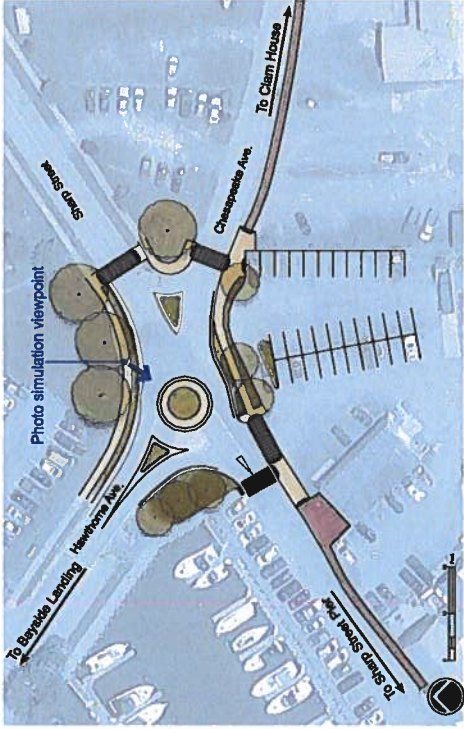


Photo simulation of a small roundabout at the intersection of Sharp St., Chesapeake Ave., and Hawthorne Ave.

4 Hawthorne/Sharp Street/Chesapeake/ Intersection



permeable
concrete walk

flush curb

5 Chesapeake Avenue Pathway Options



porous asphalt
choker course
geotextile
stone storage
geotextile
uncompacted
subgrade

flush curb

Figure 47 Pedestrian Safety Enhancements to the Rock Hall Loop



Figure 49 Waterman sculpture at Bayside Landing Park



Figure 48 Mural on Rock Hall Clam House and interior glide boat exhibit



Figure 50 Priscilla the Parrotfish, shown here on exhibit at the National Zoo, Washington DC, is an example of a large scale sculpture constructed entirely of plastics collected from a nearby harbor. According to the makers, there is no dye needed, plastic is made in all the necessary colors. (Credit: Washed Ashore)

3.6 Telling the story of Rock Hall Harbor as an integral part of the Maritime Heritage Walkway

Rock Hall's Maritime Heritage is a story worth telling. Rock Hall, as a destination along the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway and as an important destination as part of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is well situated to broaden its range of visitors. The waterfront itself serves as a destination for both marine and automobile travelers (as well as bicyclists and birders).

The Rock Hall Marine Restoration & Heritage Center (MRHC) and proposed Maritime Heritage Walkway can expand the way in which Rock Hall's marine heritage story is told. The existing mural on the Clam House and evolving exhibits within the Clam House are starting to serve visitors and school groups as well as special events. Extending the story to waterfront locations will help to capture visitors outside the operating hours of the MRHC.

An interpretive plan is needed to develop the themes, historic and maritime context, maritime stories, and the tools and techniques that can bring those stories to life. In addition to traditional interpretive techniques such as wayside exhibits, the interpretive plan should examine how to insert small scale elements and public art directly into the design elements associated with the walkway to help bring the story to life. Capturing additional themes related to marine and bird life would also help to expand the audience



Figure 51 Example of sign incorporating cell phone technology (left) and a completely low tech idea (right) at False Creek, Vancouver, BC (in front of Science World) courtesy of Rethink Canada

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the concepts proposed in the Rock Hall Waterfront Master Plan will require a suite of funding and financing strategies that can be implemented over time. The purpose of this section is to describe funding opportunities that should be considered for the plan's implementation.

There are two types of projects or programs proposed in the waterfront plan:

- Rural economic development - includes efforts to preserve and enhance working waterfront assets as a means of maintaining existing water dependent businesses; efforts to maintain and/or expand water dependent business that support Rock Hall's Maritime Heritage, and efforts to attract more visitors to Rock Hall's waterfront through heritage- and nature-based tourism efforts that build upon the assets of Rock Hall Harbor; and
- Public investments in infrastructure – these include modifications to streets, sidewalks, piers and other public spaces that make it easier and more attractive for transient and recreational boaters as well as scenic; byway and heritage area visitors to enjoy Rock Hall and support local businesses.

PRIORITIES

Based upon the results of the October 27-28 public meetings, the following strategies were identified as priorities along with the needed follow-up to implement those strategies: Priorities are ordered as presented in the plan and no hierarchy is implied below.

- 1.2 Work with Kent County and state agencies to pursue and invest in the general maintenance of working waterfront resources on page 40.

Discussion is needed to determine how to fund "maintenance". The Kent County Landings Manager has identified repair and maintenance of existing docks and piers at Bayside Landing as a top priority with the bulkhead as the 2nd priority.

- 1.5 Revise the zoning code to facilitate private business investment in working waterfront areas on page 43

Changes to the Maritime Water Dependent District (MWD) code is the most direct way to address the issues raised by the Committee and public regarding its challenges.

Some of the challenges apply only to proposed Waterfront Heritage Area along located south of Chesapeake Avenue and East of Sharpe Street. Other more limited changes are proposed for the entire district as well as minor changes to other related portions of the zoning code. Funding for these changes may need to be addressed by the Town and County.

- 2.4 Establish Rock Hall's entire waterfront as a "digital harbor" by providing public Wi-Fi, solar charging, and a digital kiosk (as part of mobile- and web-based visitor information program) on page 51

Chestertown was able to fund public Wi-Fi through a Community Legacy Grant. Rock Hall could follow suit depending upon other priorities and coordinate this with the Main Street revitalization efforts. USDA also has a broadband program that can be used for this purpose (USDA Community Connect Grants on page 51).

- 2.5 Work towards establishing a Maritime Heritage Walkway along the waterfront on page 52

Implementation of this effort will require the packaging of multiple funding sources, some of which, when paired, can serve as a match. Funding from the Recreational Trails Program (SHA): on page 52 and from Maryland Heritage Areas Financial Assistance Programs (MHT): on page 50) would work well in this case to serve to develop a plan and feasibility study for an interpreted trail along the waterfront that tells the story of Rock Hall's Maritime Heritage. The first phase of funding applications would be for the feasibility study including a master plan and the second phase would be for implementation. Calling the trail the "Rock Hall Maritime Heritage Walkway" would be one way to link the walkway to its heritage.

USDA Rural Economic Development funding could be another source for developing a feasibility study of purchasing the adjoining properties associated with the Clam House to preserve working waterfront (access to 7 slips at the Clam House and purchase of 3 additional slips leased to Watermen); and, to provide public access to the waterfront as part of the interpreted waterfront walkway.

- 3.1 Develop pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and safety measures on Bayside Avenue on page 57

Bayside Avenue enhancement could be funded through a combination of Transportation Alternatives Program funding through SHA, Recreational Trails funding (noted above) and through private sector funding related to "healthy communities".

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Potential funding sources for both types of projects and programs are incorporated into sidebars for the following key programs

- | | |
|---|----|
| • Waterway Improvement Grants | 41 |
| • USDA Value Added Producer Grants | 42 |
| • Maryland Economic Development Assistance Authority Fund (MEDAAF) | 42 |
| • Property Tax Credits | 45 |
| • Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) and Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) | 48 |
| • Maryland Heritage Areas Financial Assistance Programs (MHT): | 50 |
| • USDA Community Connect Grants | 51 |
| • Recreational Trails Program (SHA) | 52 |
| • Maryland Sustainable Communities Tax Credit Program | 67 |

In addition to the referenced sources listed in the sidebars, the following programs should be considered as potential funding sources for the identified priorities. Appendix D includes a list of federal funding programs as of 12-31-16. Additional state sources for financial and technical assistance are also found listed on the Maryland DNR Working Waterfronts Web Page at http://dnr2.maryland.gov/ccs/Pages/www_cr.aspx.

USDA Rural Business Development Grants

Most Recent Application Deadline: March 31, 2017

RBDG is a competitive grant designed to support targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private

businesses in rural areas that have fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenues. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities.

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants/md>

According to USDA's web site there is no maximum grant amount for enterprise or opportunity type grants; however, smaller requests are given higher priority. Generally, grants range from \$10,000 up to \$500,000. There is no cost-sharing requirement. Opportunity type grant funding is limited statutorily to up to 10% of the total RBDG annual funding.

Enterprise type grant funds must be used on projects to benefit small and emerging businesses in rural areas as specified in the grant application. Uses may include:

- Training and technical assistance, such as project planning, business counseling/training, market research, feasibility studies, professional/technical reports, or product/service improvements
- Acquisition or development of land, easements, or rights of way; construction, conversion, renovation, of buildings, plants, machinery, equipment, access streets and roads, parking areas, utilities
- Pollution control and abatement
- Capitalization of revolving loan funds including funds that will make loans for start-ups and working capital
- Distance adult learning for job training and advancement
- Rural transportation improvement
- Community economic development
- Technology-based economic development
- Feasibility studies and business plans
- Leadership and entrepreneur training
- Rural business incubators
- Long-term business strategic planning

Opportunity type grant funding must be used for projects in rural areas and they can be used for:

- Community economic development
- Technology-based economic development
- Feasibility studies and business plans
- Leadership and entrepreneur training
- Rural business incubators
- Long-term business strategic planning

*** Applicants should contact Business and Cooperative Programs Department at 302.857.3628 to discuss proposed projects with a Program Specialist prior to submitting an application.

Maryland Program Contact: Letitia Nichols, Business and Cooperative Program Director
302-857-3628

Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns

The Chesapeake Bay Green Streets-Green Jobs-Green Towns (G3) Grant Program funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region III (EPA), Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust), and the City of Baltimore Office of Sustainability with support from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, was created to support design projects, financing strategies, and/or implementation of green street projects. The goal of the is to help communities develop and implement plans that reduce stormwater runoff, increase the number and amount of green spaces in urban areas, improve the health of local streams and the Chesapeake Bay, and enhance quality of life and community livability. This collaborative effort supports implementation of the and serves as a key component of EPA's Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns (G3) Partnership. The G3 Partnership provides support for local, grassroots-level greening efforts to reduce stormwater runoff from towns and communities in urbanized watersheds.

Up to \$30,000 may be awarded for design projects. Up to \$75,000 for implementation projects.

Deadline: March 17, 2017 at 5:00 pm.

Maryland Sustainable Communities Tax Credit Program

The purpose of state and federal preservation tax incentives is to encourage private sector investment in the rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings and to promote investment in local economies.

Benefits: If you own a certified historic property in Maryland, you may have the opportunity to earn a state income tax credit on qualified rehabilitation expenditures. Whether you are planning to rehabilitate your primary or secondary residence or a commercial property, there are state incentives that may help.

Eligibility: Individuals and small businesses located in Sustainable Communities.

<http://mht.maryland.gov/taxCredits.shtml>

NOTE: The Rock Hall Marine Railway may be eligible for this tax credit if it were to be designated as a certified historic property in Maryland.

Community Legacy Program (DHCD):

The program provides local governments and community development organizations with funding for essential projects aimed at strengthening communities through activities such as business retention and attraction, encouraging homeownership and commercial revitalization. Projects must be located within an approved Sustainable Community to be eligible for funding. Bicycle and pedestrian opportunities include streetscape improvements and as part of mixed-use developments.

Contact: Kevin Baynes, DHCD Community Programs, 410-209-5823, kevin.baynes@maryland.gov.

Transportation Alternatives Program (SHA)

The program provides funding for projects that enhance the cultural, aesthetic, historic, and environmental aspects of the intermodal transportation system.

- Planning and design of bike/pedestrian facilities and safe routes for non-drivers (\$25,000 maximum);
- Construction of bike/pedestrian facilities;
- Construction of safe routes for non-drivers; and
- Conversion of abandoned rail to bike/pedestrian trails.

All TAP projects must meet the following criteria:

- Funding source: Federal. All TAP projects must comply with ADA, NEPA, Davis-Bacon wage rates, Buy America, and other applicable state and federal regulations;
- Local match: 20 percent of total eligible project costs as a cash match. A TAP grant can cover up to 80 percent of the design and/or construction costs. Prior project work and right-of-way acquisition and in-kind services match cannot be counted toward the 20 percent match requirement. In-kind services can be approved on a case by case basis;
- Open to the public and benefit all Marylanders, not a specific group or individual;
- Serve a transportation purpose, connecting two destinations (TAP projects cannot be solely recreational in purpose, but may be phased as long as each phase continues to serve transportation destinations);

- Unrelated to planned or existing highway projects, routine highway improvements, or required mitigation for a planned or existing highway project; and
- Located on publicly owned right-of-way or on right-of-way encumbered with a permanent easement held by a state agency or the government agency sponsoring or co-sponsoring the project.

Contact: Transportation Alternatives Program Coordinator, SHA Regional & Intermodal Planning, 410-545-5653, <http://www.sha.maryland.gov/Index.aspx?PagelD=144>.

Maryland Bikeways Program (MDOT):

The program supports projects that maximize bicycle access and fill missing links in the state's bicycle system, focusing on connecting shared-use paths and roads and enhancing last-mile connections to work, school, shopping and transit. The following projects are eligible for funding

- Feasibility assessments, design and engineering;
- Construction of shared use paths, cycletracks and bicycle lanes;
- Shared lane and other pavement markings;
- Bicycle route signage and wayfinding;
- Bicycle capital equipment (e.g. parking);
- Other minor retrofits to support bicycle routes; and
- Education materials to support bikeway projects.

Requirements:

- Funding source: State;
- Local match: Zero percent for Priority Minor Retrofit projects, 20 percent for other Priority Projects, and 50 percent for non-priority projects. Match may include cash or in-kind services contributing to the project, including expenditures up to 24 months prior to a Bikeways project award;
- All Bikeways Projects must meet at least one of the following criteria; and
- Located substantially within a Priority Funding Area, within 3 miles of a rail transit station or major bus transit hub;

- Provide or enhance bicycle access along any gap identified in the Statewide Trails Plan; and
- Identified as a transportation priority in the County's most recent annual priority letter submitted to MDOT.

Priority Projects are defined as any of the following:

- Enhance bicycle access within 3 miles of a rail transit station;
- Provide or enhance bicycle access along a missing link identified in the Statewide Trails Plan; and
- Enhance bicycle circulation within or access to a Sustainable Community, Designated Maryland Main Street, census tract at or below 60% of area median income, major university, central business district, or important tourist or heritage attraction.

Contact:

Marty Baker, MDOT Planning and Capital Programming, 410-865-1294, mbaker1@mdot.state.md.us, <http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/newMDOT/Planning/Bike/Bikeways.html>.

Program Open Space (DNR):

The program consists of two components, a local grant component often called Local side POS and a component that funds acquisition and recreation facility development by the State. The local side component provides financial and technical assistance to local subdivisions for the planning, acquisition, and/or development of recreation land or open space areas. Note that in order to be considered for this program, projects need to be referenced in the Kent County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (last updated in 2012 and due for an update in the near future).

Contact:

Program Open Space Local Support Staff contacts can be found at <http://dhr2.maryland.gov/land/Pages/ProgramOpenSpace/home.aspx>

Community Parks and Playgrounds (DNR):

The program provides funding to restore existing parks and create new park and green space systems in Maryland's cities and towns. Flexible grants are provided to local governments,

which help them rehabilitate, expand or improve existing parks. Funding can help develop environmentally oriented parks and recreation projects, create new parks, or purchase and install playground equipment in older neighborhoods and intensely developed areas throughout the state.

Contact:

Community Parks and Playgrounds Local Support Staff contacts can be found at <http://dnr2.maryland.gov/land/Pages/ProgramOpenSpace/cpp-Intro.aspx>

Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program, Region 5

Boating Infrastructure Grant Program - Overview

The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG) provides grant funds to the states, the District of Columbia and insular areas to construct, renovate, and maintain tie-up facilities with features for transient boaters in vessels 26 feet or more in length, and to produce and distribute information and educational materials about the program.

The BIG Program includes two funding tiers, Tier One (non-competitive) and Tier Two (nationally competitive). Under Tier One each state, the D.C. and insular area may receive funding for eligible projects up to \$200,000 annually. Tier Two funds are made available through a nationally competitive process. Tier Two proposals received are reviewed, evaluated and ranked by a national panel with the final decision for funding made by the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The ranking criteria, eligible projects and regulations are listed in 50 CFR 86.

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Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety Trust Fund (Dingle-Johnson/Wallop-Breaux):

This program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, may fund land acquisition and the development, operation, and maintenance of boating access facilities. Financial assistance requires a 25 percent match. NOTE: funding of approximately \$600 million per year for the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund was authorized under the FAST ACT. Another positive feature of the reauthorization is resilience language that charges

municipalities with designing infrastructure to withstand intense weather events, which will benefit fish and wildlife habitat connectivity. This program is accessed through state government.

Federal Lands Access Program (FHWA):

The program is intended to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. The program supplements state and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators. Bicycle and pedestrian opportunities include planning, design and engineering, construction, rehabilitation, and preventative maintenance of facilities accessing public lands.

Contact:

Frances Ramirez, Federal Lands Highways Program Coordinator, 202-493-0271, frances.ramirez@dot.gov; <http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/>.

National Park Service Maritime Heritage Grants

Funding available for education or preservation projects that support maritime heritage education and preservation. Projects that address different types of education or preservation activities focusing on various historic maritime resources are eligible. There are seven basic categories of Education Project activities and four basic categories of Preservation Project activities. Education and Preservation project categories serve as the basic guideline for identifying the types of projects and maritime resources which are eligible for funding considerations and for which proposals may be submitted.

Eligibility: Any State, Federally-recognized Tribal, or local government, or private nonprofit organization may apply for grants to support their maritime heritage education or preservation activities.

<http://www.nps.gov/maritime/grants/intro.htm>

ADDITIONAL PRIVATE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

There are a variety of other public and private grant opportunities available to fund bicycle and pedestrian projects. The specific project type is the first step to determining funding eligibility. Several examples are included below.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (<http://www.rwjf.org/>) invests in grantees (e.g., public agencies, universities, and public charities) that are working to improve the health of all Americans. Current or past projects in the topic area "walking and biking" include greenway plans, trail projects, advocacy initiatives, and policy development.

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