

Solomons Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance Update



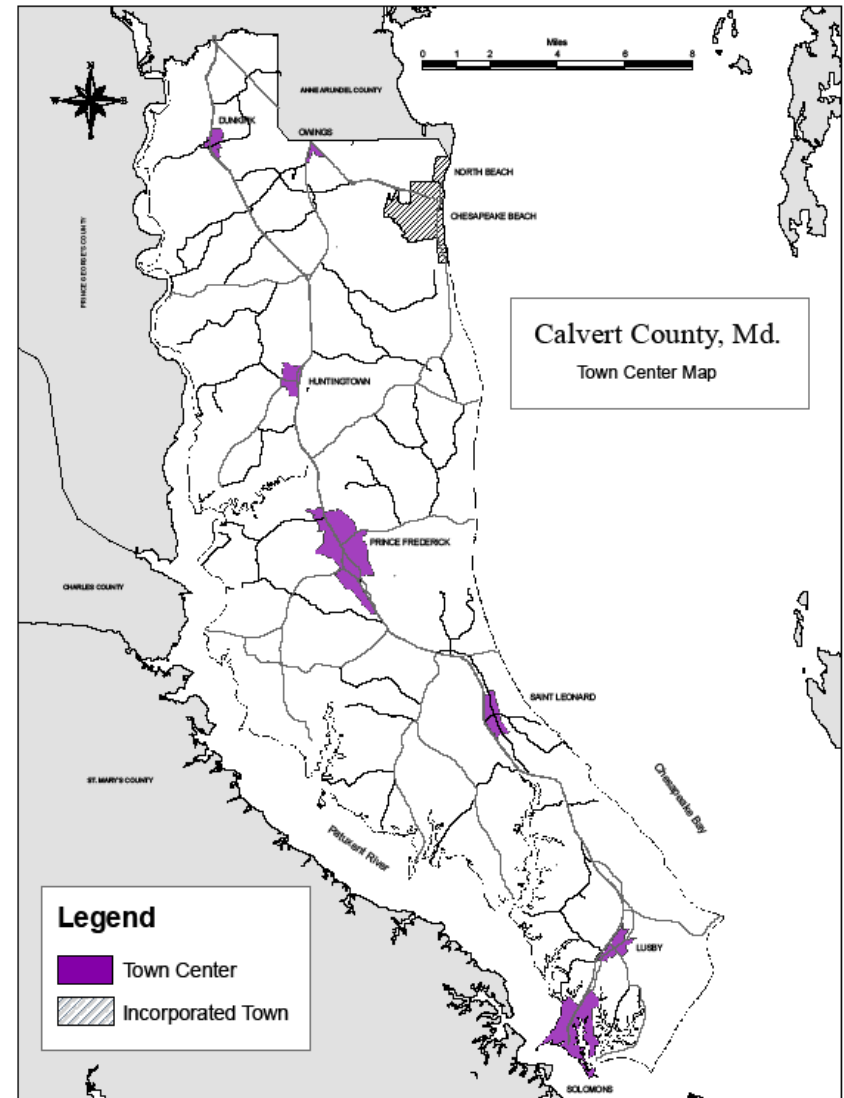
July 31, 2008
Calvert Marine Museum

Purposes of Town Centers

County established Town Centers in 1983

Purposes:

- Avoid scattered/ strip commercial development on MD 2/4
- Expand housing choice by providing zoning & infrastructure for multi-family developments
- Reduce dependence on vehicles
- Reduce growth within agricultural and forest areas



Prepared by: The Department of Planning & Zoning.

Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work, and shop



Pavilion photo by P. Berry

Threats to the Vision:

- Lack of adequate roads, sidewalks, public water and sewer.
- High development costs.
- Inability to attract households representing a broad range of incomes.
- Unsightly development.

Action Highlights:

- Provide planned roads, sidewalks, public water and sewer.
- Remove unnecessary impediments to growth.
- Provide parks, community centers, and public amenities.
- Continue architectural review.

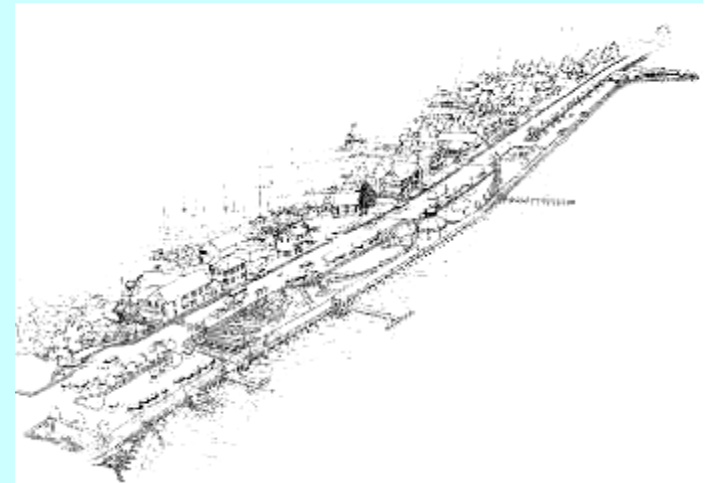
Tonight's Agenda

- **Review update process**
- **Briefly review current Plan & accomplishments**
- **Review issues & concerns identified by participants**
- **Overview of 1st draft of updated Master Plan**
- **Zoning Ordinance update kick-off**

Town Center Master Plan Update Process

General Steps

- 1. Reorganize all Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances – follow format of County Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Ordinance**
- 2. Conduct Special Area Studies (Solomons Island Village Core)**
- 3. Revise Master Plans**
- 4. Revise Zoning Ordinances**



Solomons Master Plan Update Meetings

- **Kick-off, May 8, 2007**
- **Results from Kick-off, June 26, 2007**
- **Boat, Bus, & Walking Tour, July 31, 2007, Harbor, Dowell peninsula, & Commercial Core**
- **Photo Survey by citizens**
- **Avondale Focus Meeting, Sept. 17, 2007**
- **Design Workshop/Charrette: Solomons Island Village Core, November 6, 7 & 8, 2007**



Solomons Master Plan Update Steps

- **Staff conducted public meetings for citizens and business owners to share their issues and concerns**
- **Staff prepares draft Master Plan and presents to the public (tonight's meeting)**



Solomons Master Plan Update Steps

- **Planning Commission holds Public Forum**
- **Planning Commission presents revised draft plan & holds public hearing (may be jointly held with County Commissioners)**
- **Planning Commission submits recommended plan to County Commissioners**
- **County Commissioners consider plan and vote on adoption.**



Solomons Town Center Master Plan - Background

- Solomons designated as a Major Town Center in 1983
- Solomons Town Center Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance adopted June 10, 1986
- First Town Center Master Plan adopted in Calvert County
- Result of extensive public participation process conducted in mid-1980s



Prepared by: The Department of Planning & Zoning.

Summary of Plan - Purpose

- Provide comprehensive policies and guidelines appropriate for each planning area.
- Direct future growth and development.
- Protect and enhance residential areas.
- Encourage compatible commercial and marine development.
- Preserve water resources, heritage and design character.

Master Plan Kick-Off Meeting

- Reviewed Master Plan update process
- Reviewed Plan content and accomplishments
- Conducted Small Group Exercises with citizens
 - Concerns and issues identified
 - Existing Master Plan policies reviewed
 - Special study area suggested

Plan Kick-Off Meeting Overall Themes

- Dowell Road corridor listed as a concern across all three exercises
- Concern was expressed about the tension between residential and commercial development
- General sense that Solomons' village atmosphere is under pressure



Plan Kick-off Meeting Issue Identification Results

- Dowell Road peninsula was most mentioned problem area, across a number of problem statements
 - Road upgrades
 - Over development
 - Include all of peninsula in Town Center or it leave out
 - Access to MD Route 2/4



Plan Kick-off Meeting

Issue Identification Results

- Significant cluster of problem statements concerned the tension between commercial and residential development
 - Noise
 - Over-concentration of bars/restaurants vs. other commercial development

Plan Kick-off Meeting Issue Identification Results

- Other notable issues mentioned
 - Harbor and water resource management
 - Transportation (sidewalks, access to and across MD Route 2/4)
 - Environment (loss of tree cover, water quality)



Photo by J. Gray

Plan Kick-off Meeting Policies Review Results

- Six (6) existing policies generally found to be still relevant
- Additional emphasis was suggested
 - Compatibility and mix of uses
 - Better definition of “sense of place”
 - Environmental and water resource protection

Updated Plan Highlights

Proposed Master Plan is

- Mirrors Comprehensive Plan format
- Recognizes accomplishments since the 1986 Plan
- Addresses concerns expressed during the 2007 public meetings
- Retains much of the original plan



**2004 Comprehensive Plan
Calvert County, Maryland**

Approved and Adopted
December 2004

Updated Plan Goal

New text in blue:

Develop the Solomons Town Center as an attractive, convenient, and interesting place to live, work, and shop while protecting the natural assets of the area and preserving the historic character for future generations.

Updated Plan Objectives

Revised six existing policies and added two new policies (new wording in blue):

1. Treat the entire Town Center area of Solomons as an economic, **environmental**, and aesthetic whole, except for the Solomons Annex of NAS PAX River, Planning Area A.
2. Recognize and provide for within the Master Plan all the water based activities of Solomons, including but not limited to, **commercial** and recreational boating, crabbing and fishing, **and public access to the water.**

Updated Plan Objectives

Revised six existing policies and added two new policies (new wording in blue):

3. Support and enhance a mix of uses in the Solomons Island Village Core that are family-friendly, encourage year round activity, and are visually compatible with Solomons architectural heritage that makes it a distinctive destination.
4. Protect and enhance established residential areas.

Updated Plan Objectives

Revised six existing policies and added two new policies (new wording in blue):

5. Encourage commercial development that is compatible with the environmental, cultural, historical, and aesthetic character of Solomons.
6. Promote a broad mix of commercial, office, residential, public and institutional uses within the Solomons Town Center.

Updated Plan Objectives

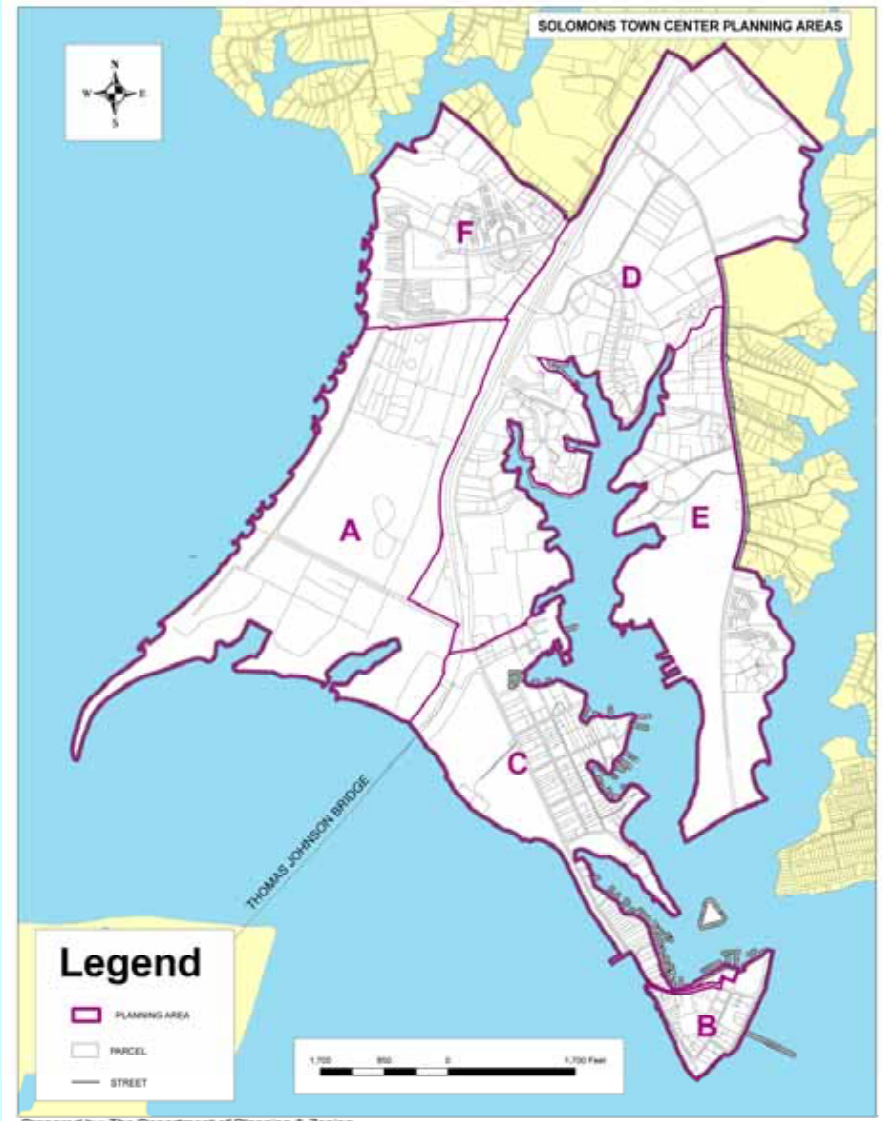
Revised six existing policies and added two new policies (new wording in blue):

7. Protect the environment.
8. Promote a balanced, complete transportation system to enhance mobility.

Updated Plan Highlights

Town Center Boundaries – no changes proposed

- A – NAS PAX River Annex
- B – Sandy Point area
- C – Lore Street south to Charles Street
- D – Lore Street north
- E – Dowell Peninsula
- F – Swaggers Point



Prepared by: The Department of Planning & Zoning

Updated Plan Highlights

- Town Center Boundaries – Participants’ opinions: include all of Dowell, or include none of Dowell
 - If area were included it would
 - Allow greater density
 - Would be subject to Architectural Review for new construction, additions, remodeling, fences or signs
 - Reduce confusion to what part of Dowell is in or out



Updated Plan – Vision Themes

Incorporated Recommendations from EDAW's
Solomons Island Village Core Design Plan and Work
Summary

- **Operational Priorities**
 - Promote multiple modes of transportation
- **Policy Priorities**
 - Provide development bonus for public benefit, such as public access, preferred uses, design changes
 - Encourage green technologies
 - Restrict free-standing sign height to a maximum of 4 feet in the Village Core.

Updated Plan – Vision Themes

- **Physical Priorities – Immediate First Actions**

- Celebrate the pavilion
- Connect the pavilion to the Harbor
- Improve arrival experience
- Buffer the Riverwalk with shrubs
- Reorganize parking spaces to be more efficient



Updated Plan – Vision Themes

- **Physical Priorities – Near Term Actions**
 - Fill in existing infrastructure gaps: breaks in the Riverwalk & sidewalk
 - Connect Waterman’s Park with the Harbor
 - Implement the walking trail along The Narrows to the parking lot



Updated Plan – Vision Themes

- **Physical Priorities – Long Term Actions**
 - Establish a harbor walk
 - Expand the existing beach



Updated Plan Highlights - Avondale

- Continue policy to maintain the residential zoning
- Evaluate the Solomons Zoning Ordinance land use charts for C5 and C6 (Avondale) for compatibility with maintaining the residential character of Avondale, except for the commercial use of The Avondale Center.



Updated Plan Highlights - Heritage

- Encourage retention of historic buildings
- Evaluate new construction/modifications to existing structures to ensure compatibility with Solomons' character
- Promote benefits of S. MD Heritage Area's Target Investment Zone to heritage tourism sites & tourism-related businesses



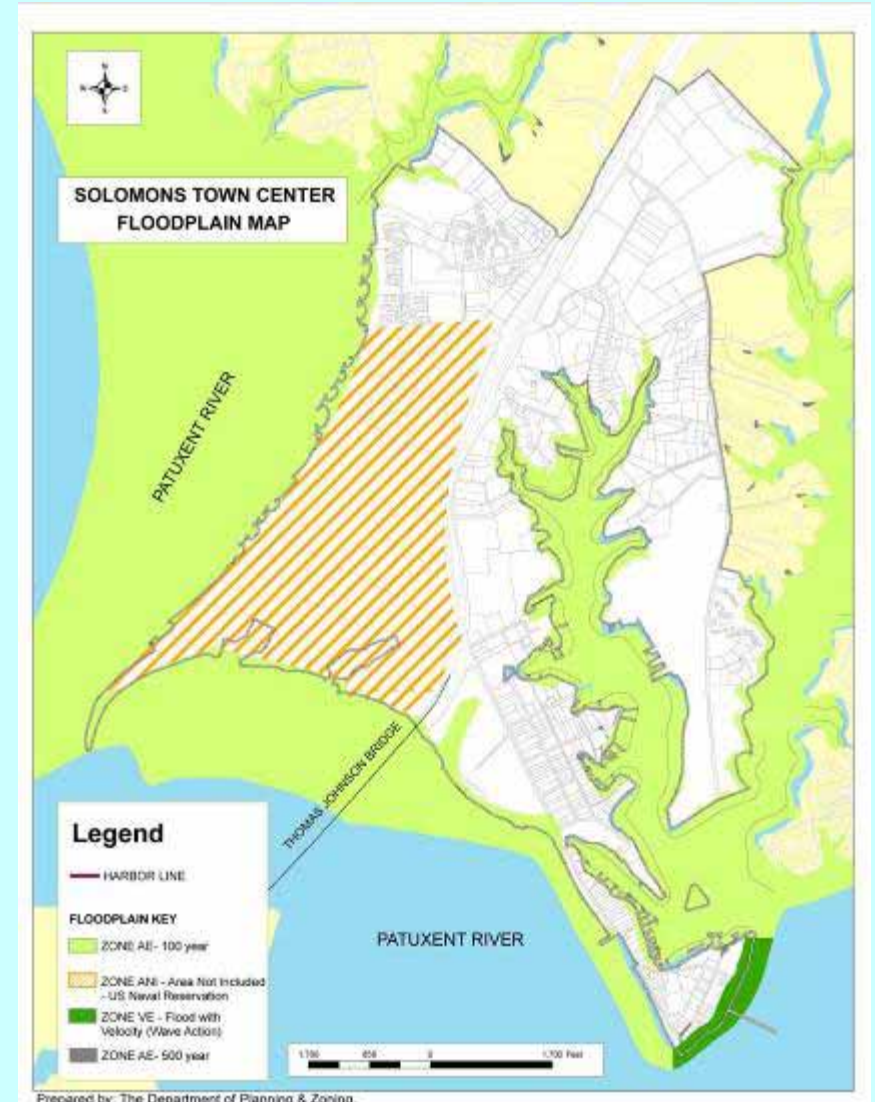
Updated Plan Highlights - Transportation

- Promote multiple modes of transportation
 - Reduce dependence on automobiles within the Town Center
 - Connect the Town Center with adjacent communities
 - Encourage water taxis, carpools, a trolley system, bicycle routes and storage, Segways, and electric cars.
- Rewrite includes sections on Motorists, Transit Users, Pedestrians, Bicyclists, and Boaters
- Actions include constructing sidewalks, developing a bicycle network, and conducting a harbor study



Updated Plan Highlights – Natural Resources

- New sections on climate change, tree cover, Mill Creek Watershed water quality studies, and Watershed Restoration Action Study
- New action to consider increasing the flood elevation requirements (freeboard) by 2 feet



Prepared by: The Department of Planning & Zoning.

Solomons Tree Survey

- Objective: Measure trees with a diameter of \geq two inches at the **DBH** (**D**iameter at **B**reast **H**eight) outside of the established forested area and the new forested and cut over areas.
- Data Collection:
 - Trees are measured (Height, DBH, and Radial Measurement of the Drip Line)
 - Trees given a health rating: Good, Fair, Poor, or Dead
 - Tree position logged into a GPS unit.
 - Positions are logged into GIS then applied to CITYgreen.



CITYgreen

- GIS application which estimates the value of trees through carbon storage and sequestration, storm water runoff reduction, water quality and air quality.



Tree Ordinance

- Primary goal is to:
 - Establish a permanent and official tree policy for the community
 - Define minimum standards for selection, planting and maintenance
- Should be developed in the early stages of a community's tree program.
- Should recognize the environmental, energy, and esthetic benefits.
- Communities with a tree ordinance: Chevy Chase, Easton, Rockville, Rehoboth Beach, . . .

Questions

- Should the Town Center boundaries be changed to include all of the Dowell peninsula?
- Should the number of sub-areas categories be reduced? Currently there are 21: 4 Bs, 7 Cs, 5 Ds, 3 Es and 2 Fs



Near-term Next Steps

- Public review of First Draft
- Submit comments to Planning Commission staff by Tuesday, September 2, 2008
- Staff to present comments to Planning Commission in September
- Planning Commission to host Public Forum in Fall 2008

How to Submit Comments

Submit comments by Tuesday, September 2, 2008.

- pz@co.cal.md.us
- Mail:
Jenny Plummer-Welker
Department of Planning and Zoning
175 Main Street
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
- Fax: 410-414-3092
- Hand deliver: 150 Main Street, Prince Frederick

