



# **South County Small Area Vision 2018**

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*Reviewed and endorsed by:*

## **South County Citizens organizations**

Chesapeake Environmental Protection Association  
Albert Tucker  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

Patuxent Riverkeeper  
Fred Tutman  
Riverkeeper and Chief Executive Officer

Davidsonville Area Civic Association  
Christopher Asher  
President

Fair Haven Cliffs, Inc.  
Wes Groves  
Secretary and Vice President

*Total membership of the above organizations in the South County Small Area exceeds 500 citizens.*

## **Members of the 2001 Small Area Planning Committee**

Paul Rensted

Charlotte Smutko

Joan Turek

Joseph Collinson III

## **Individual South County Small Area Residents**

Pamela Bush  
Lothian

*This vision document facilitated by Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities. Expressed views are solely those of signatories.*

Point of contact: Paul Christensen, [cpclaser@gmail.com](mailto:cpclaser@gmail.com)

# I. Framework for the Future of South County

Residents of South County are deeply invested in the future of their community. The 2019 General Development Plan (GDP) and subsequent comprehensive re-zoning process will play an important role in shaping that future. The undersigned organizations and individuals agree that the following five principles—which were first articulated in the 2001 Small Area Plan (SAP) for South County—remain the focal points of our shared vision for 2040.

## 1. Keep South County Rural

*Preserve the area’s farming communities; fields, forests, and natural resources; rural and scenic roads; quiet, slow pace; remaining historic resources, and low-density, small-scale development pattern.*

## 2. Maintain and promote sustainable agriculture

*Manage land use in a way that will maximize opportunities for sustainable agricultural uses, especially given the renewed interest in locally grown food supplies. Expand the acreage preserved as open space for agricultural and conservation purposes.*

## 3. Preserve, restore, and expand natural resources

*Protect the area’s natural resources, including aquifers, shorelines, streams, wetlands, forests, open space, and wildlife habitats. Expand the acreage preserved within designated Greenways and in areas identified as priority for preservation in the county’s recently completed assessments of the Patuxent River and Herring Bay watersheds.*

## 4. Align infrastructure with rural character of the area

*Ensure that growth does not worsen congestion on the main travel corridors that link the area to Annapolis and Washington, DC.; maintain the safety and viewsheds of rural, scenic, and historic roads for all users; ensure residents have access to community and recreational facilities; do not extend public water or sewer in areas designated as Tier 4 by the state; and maximize resiliency in adapting to changing environmental conditions, especially flooding and sea level rise.*

## 5. Foster a sustainable rural economy

*Promote businesses that protect South County’s rural character and agricultural and ecological resources; provide affordable recreational access to waterways while protecting needs of watermen; reclaim mining sites and landfills for beneficial uses; revitalize existing and industrially zoned land rather than creating new commercial or industrial parcels; and ensure that the location, size, intensity, and purpose of business activities are compatible with the character of the community and the environment.*

This vision for the future will benefit all of Anne Arundel County by maintaining a viable agricultural economy and safeguarding the county’s environmental, cultural, and historical assets. Keeping South County rural also will minimize infrastructure and service costs to taxpayers while providing opportunities for all county residents to enjoy our rich history, natural beauty, and agrarian bounty.

## II. Citizen Priorities: Results of Recent Polls and Surveys

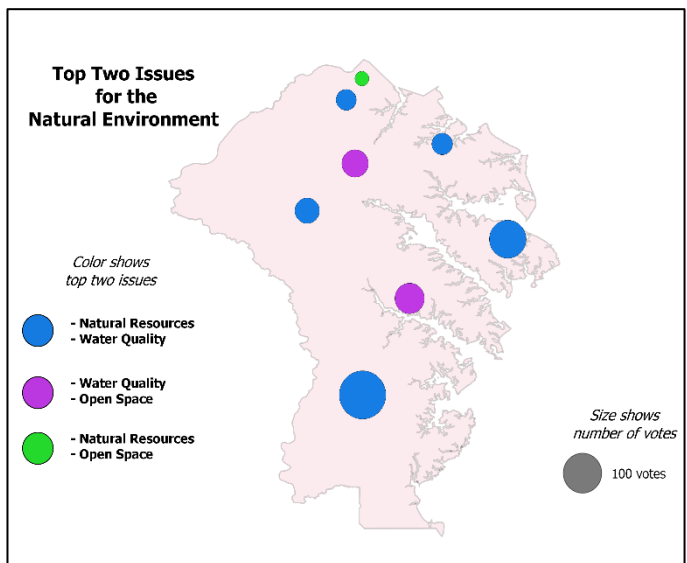
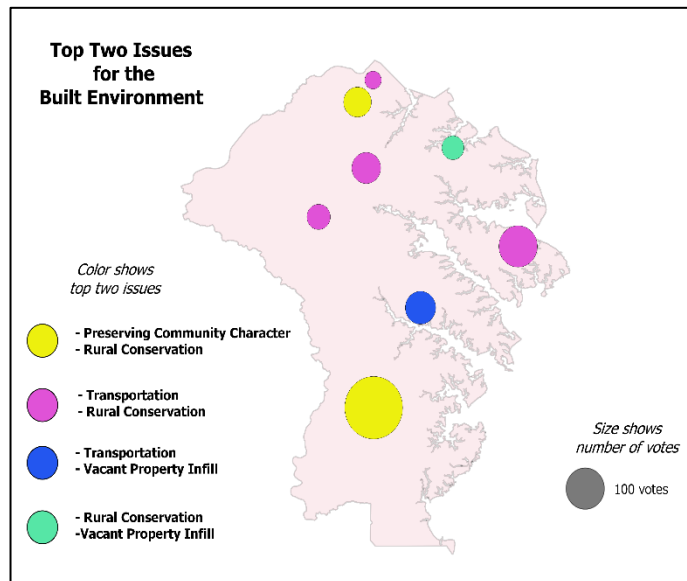
The eight 2018 GDP Listening Sessions conducted by the Department of Planning and Zoning asked respondents to choose top priority issues for the categories of Built Environment, Natural Environment, Healthy Economy, and Healthy Communities. Responses to the first two of these categories are particularly relevant to the Vision outlined above.

At the Listening Session conducted in South County, respondents overwhelmingly chose Rural Conservation and Preservation of Community Character as the top two issues for the built environment. Key issues for the natural environment were conservation of Natural Resources and Water Quality.

Similar choices were voiced by residents in local zip codes in an online survey that explored the same categories.

Although the Vision described in previous sections is derived from the 2001 SAP, this recent data shows that goals and values expressed in that plan are still valid.

*(Data source: ACo Dept. Planning & Zoning)*



## III. Looking ahead to the 2019 GDP

Much work will be required from both citizens and the County government to develop the details of citizen vision outlined above. It will be essential that the process for development of both the GDP and the Small Area Plan include many opportunities for citizen engagement, such



as online surveys and community meetings. Citizen groups in the Small Area are both willing and able to assist with outreach and plan development.

Key areas of citizen concern include the quality, quantity, and sustainability of the area's ground water sources and threats to the rural character carried by any extension of public utilities as are incompatible land uses that seek to capitalize on the relatively lower property costs in South County. Our vision for South County includes solar power and other alternative land uses, but with their implementation guided by service to three principles: 1) the preservation of and continuing use of agriculturally productive land in South County; 2) maintenance of the economic viability of family farms in South County by providing the potential of an additional source of income to the farm; and, 3) restoration of non-agriculturally productive land to environmentally productive uses.

All effective plans need to have goals and timelines to achieve their intended impact. It is important that plans for South County include specific tasks and implementation schedules as well as identification of departments or groups who will have responsibility for them. Finally, all citizens need to see, through regular reporting, that progress is being made toward their vision of the future.

## IV. South County At-A-Glance

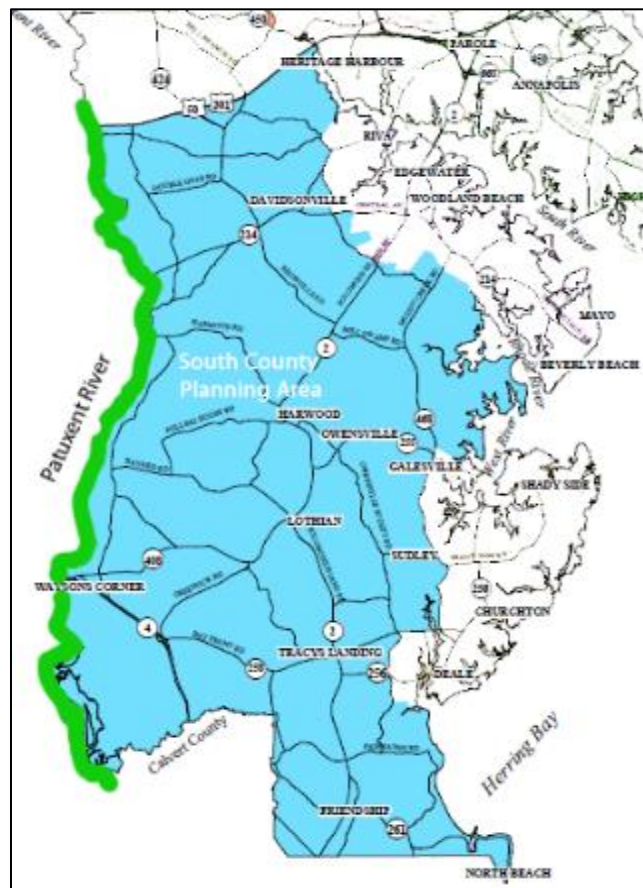
### Location and Regional Setting

The South County Small Area is located in the southern portion of the county and primarily includes all of the land south of MD 214, but also extends to just north of MD 50 on the western side of the County. The area is bounded by the Patuxent River on the west and the Chesapeake Bay and the Deale/Shady Side and Edgewater Small Planning Areas on the east.

### Demographics

The population data for the area show that it grew by 14 %; from 14,001 in 1980 to 16,035 in 1990 and by an additional 7.7% to 17,267 by January 2000. Projected population in 2020 is approximately 19,000. Racial composition of the area is 85% white, 7% black, 3.5% Hispanic, and 4.1% other races.

Median household income is approximately \$102,000 and median home value is about \$430,000.



## Land Use

The South County Small Area is about 66,000 acres, characterized by large expanses of rolling farmland and woodland, low density residential use, numerous historic structures and sites, and historic and scenic roads that traverse the landscape. The majority of the land is zoned as either rural-agricultural uses (RA) or Open Space (OS) open space (OS). Less than one percent of land, most of which is near the Patuxent River or Herring Bay, is zoned for residential density of R1 or higher. About one-third of the land zoned for maritime use in Anne Arundel County is in the Herring Bay watershed.

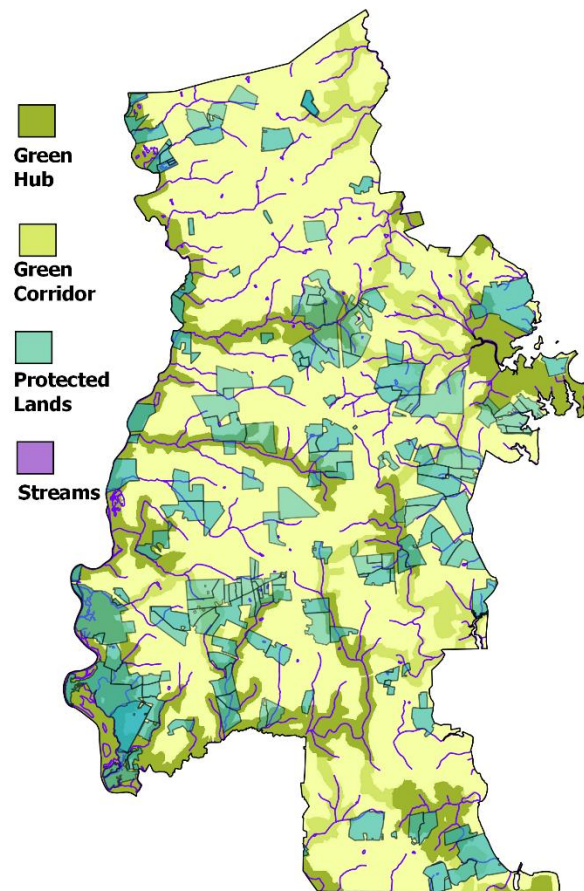


## Water and the Environment

MD Route 2 approximately divides the Area into two watersheds with the western side flowing into the Patuxent river and the eastern side accessing Herring Bay and the West, Rhode, and South Rivers. The areas surrounding the many rivers and streams in these watersheds form hubs of green infrastructure that have been designated as such in the MD Green Infrastructure Master plan. Many of the hubs are connected by designated corridors.

About 26 percent of the land area is protected from development by various types of conservation easements or purchase transfer agreements.

Low-lying coastal areas on Herring Bay and along the Patuxent River are at risk to sea level rise



## Economy

Roughly 21,000 acres is actively farmed to generate total agricultural income of about \$15 million. However, the majority of the workforce is not employed in agriculture. An estimated 70 percent of labor force drives to work with an average commute time of 33 minutes.

Major local employers include nurseries Homestead Gardens and Greenstreet Gardens, and Herrington Harbor (North and South).



## History

The South County Small Area has a rich history of human habitation. Pig Point, on the Patuxent River near Lothian, has yielded archaeological artifacts carbon-dated to 7,205 B.C., and has been described as the most important archeological site in Maryland.

Many historical homes and other structures exist, some of which can be traced to colonial times. Preservation of historical structures and their associated environment as well as archeological sites is important to the identity of the County and the Small Area in particular.

