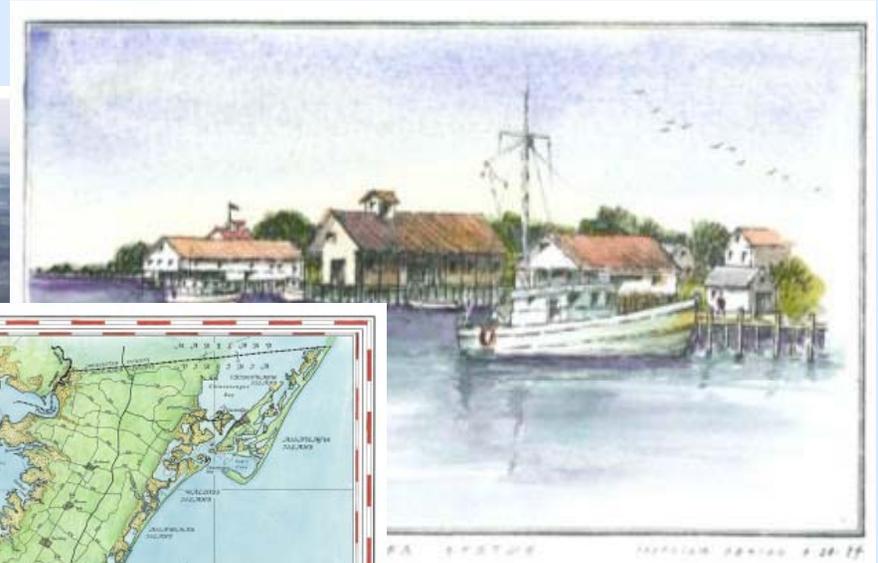
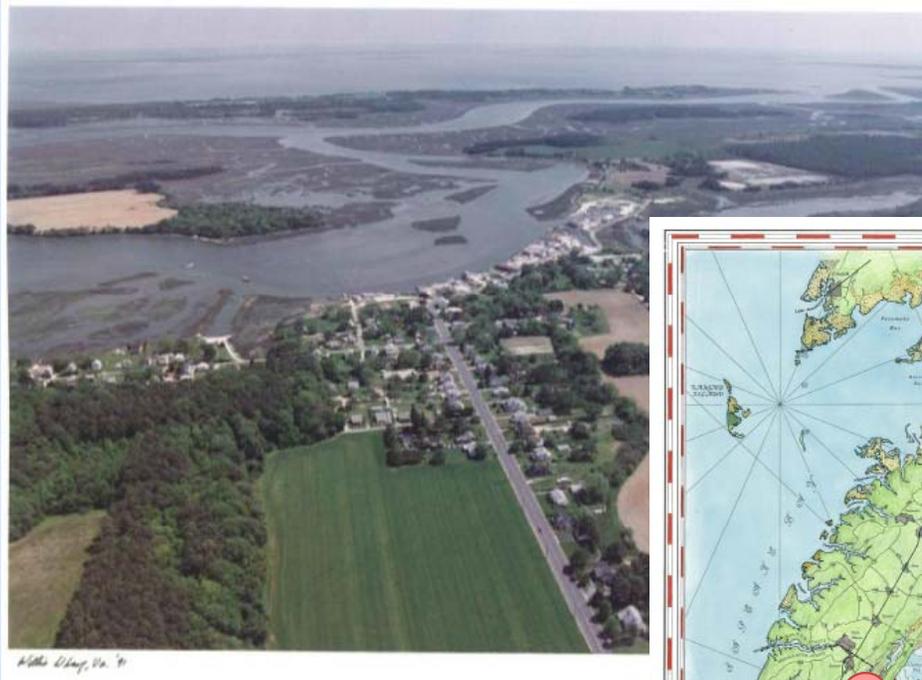


Northampton County, Virginia

Update of the Visions for the Villages of Willis Wharf and Oyster



Summary Report

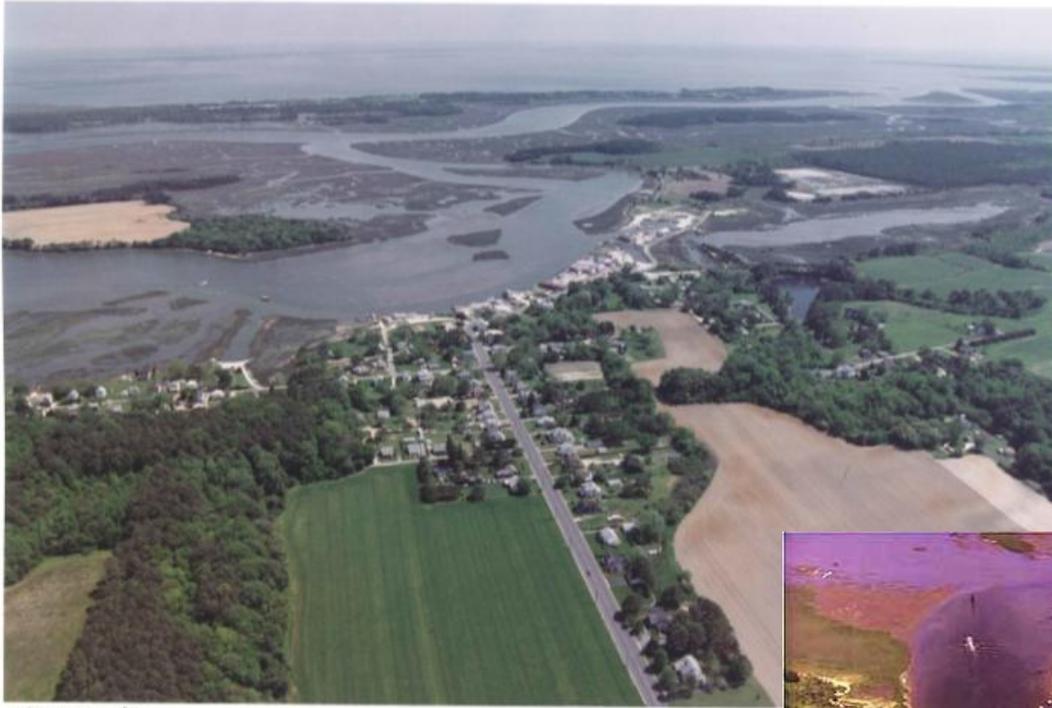
May 16, 2011

This report was prepared by Milton Herd, AICP of Herd Planning & Design, and Vlad Gavrilovic, AICP, of Renaissance Planning Group, in conjunction and with the assistance and support of the Northampton County Planning Department, and many citizens of Willis Wharf and Oyster.



This report was funded in part by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at the Department of Environmental Quality through Grant #NA10NOS4190205 of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA or any of its subagencies.





Willis Wharf, Va. '91



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Introduction and Overview

The Visions for the future of the Waterfront Villages of Willis Wharf and Oyster were created through the collaborative planning efforts of the citizens and the County several years ago – Willis Wharf in 1994, and Oyster in 2004. The Visions are formally included in the County’s Comprehensive Plan by reference, and have served as foundational policy guidelines for land use and infrastructure decisions since their adoption.

Since original adoption of these Visions, economic, demographic, and land use trends in and around the villages, have continued to change and evolve. The County has also continued its normal process of updating the Comprehensive Plan, as required by the Code of Virginia. In 2010, the County identified an opportunity to revisit the Visions and determine whether any refinements or additions would be appropriate, in conjunction with the broader update process for the Comprehensive Plan.

The effort was undertaken with no specific preconceptions, but rather simply to formally assess and determine if citizens see a need to refine the Visions in light of current issues, trends, and needs.

The County engaged the services of Milton Herd and Vlad Gavrilovic, who had served as planning consultants in the preparation of the original visions for Willis Wharf and Oyster, respectively.

The review and update process was built around two public, community workshops, held April 18 and May 2, 2011. The objectives for these meetings were as follows:

First Community Workshop - April 18

- Review background information & current Visions of the future for both villages
- Identify the major planning issues facing the villages now and in the future
- Begin to identify any needed refinements and updates to the Visions

Second Community Workshop - May 2

- Evaluate draft refinements to the Visions (and/or comprehensive plan)
- Affirm updated Visions and next steps

In between the sessions, the consultants compiled the results of the first meeting, and prepared draft language for Comprehensive Plan amendments to reflect the desires expressed by the citizens.





Summary of Results

First Workshop, April 18

Approximately two dozen citizens attended the meeting, roughly equally distributed between those from Oyster and those from Willis Wharf. Initial comments included the concern that if the villages did not want their Visions to change, then why was this meeting necessary?

After some discussion, those present decided to continue the discussion in order to formalize their input and to afford them the opportunity to consider ways to ensure a clear connection between the Vision statements and the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. After the initial plenary discussion, the citizens then broke into two groups (one focused on Oyster, the other on Willis Wharf) to identify opportunities and challenges facing each village.



Highlights of Trends, Opportunities & Challenges - Willis Wharf

- The similarities between the two villages are greater than the differences
- Pressure for change in Willis Wharf is from aquaculture
- Opportunity to protect working waterfronts – includes aquaculture
- How to avoid giving “carte blanche” to waterfront uses? – it’s difficult to define this in the Vision beyond current language.
- Clam and oyster aquaculture underpins clean water (fin fish more problematic due to waste)
- Keep the current Vision language as it is – consensus of all those present.

Highlights of Trends, Opportunities & Challenges - Oyster

- Fewer full time residents, Fewer locals, More second homes
- Board focused on changes to bring economic development
- Proposed zoning text changes (special use permit) - Potential for zoning text changes

- Anheuser Busch facility may expand; Aquaculture is expanding
- Trend of vacation rentals in homes
- New homes built on existing lots
- Harbor area and waterfront should be reserved for water dependent uses
- Clarify commercial not residential uses on the waterfront
- Possible opportunities for economic anchor to be a new compatible use for Cobb Island Station site.
- Strengthen Vision in the Comprehensive Plan by building it into the Land Use Plan and the policies of the plan
- [Some relatively minor changes to the village Vision Map were also identified]

Second Workshop, May 2

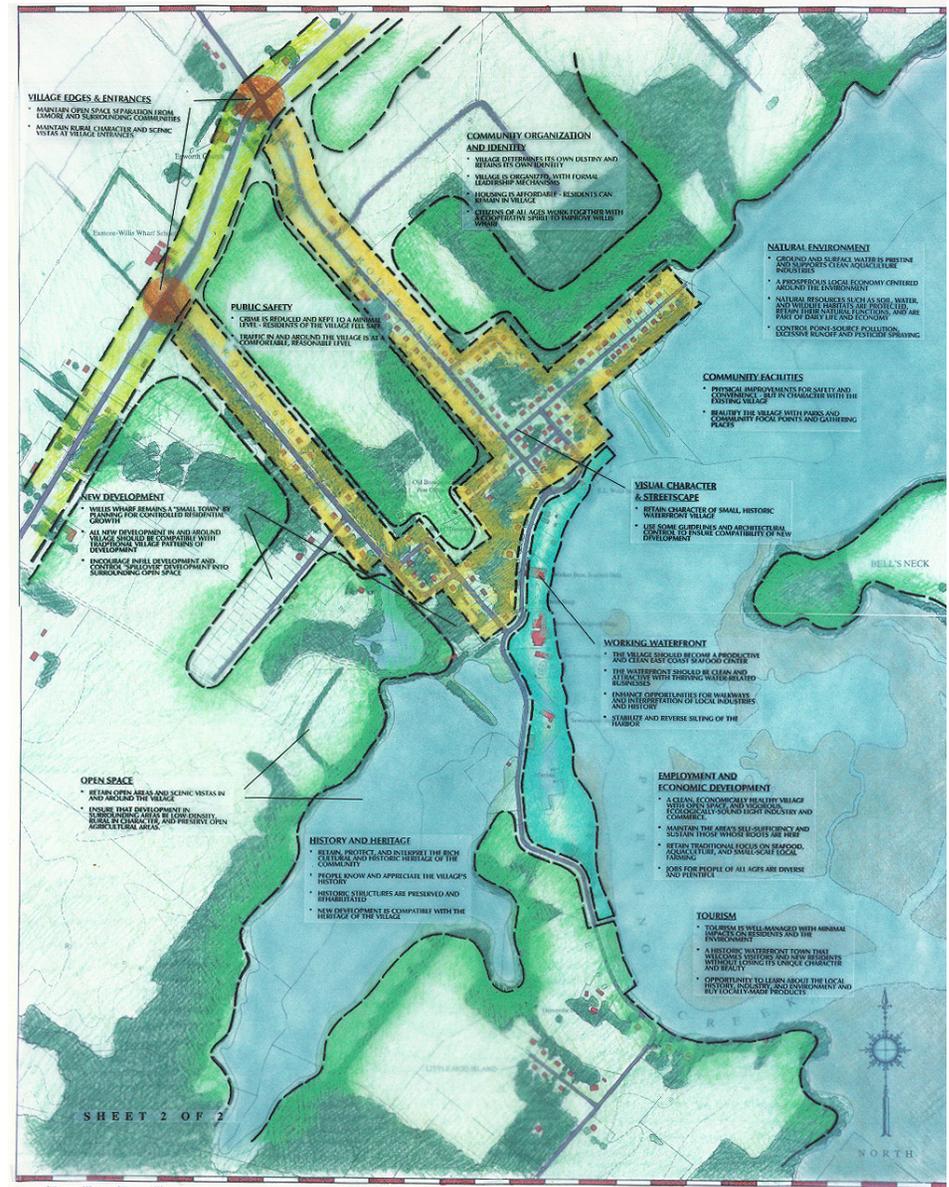
Approximately 30 citizens attended the meeting, with a slightly higher percentage from Willis Wharf than from Oyster. The consulting team presented a review of the results from the first workshop and some draft language for amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan based upon the input received from citizens at that meeting. (The only changes to either of the Vision documents was a minor change to the vision map for Oyster).

Citizens then broke into two groups again to review the proposed amendments, and then reconvened as a plenary group. After further discussion, those present reached consensus on the proposed amendments shown in this report under Specific Recommendations.

Specific Recommendations

Vision Documents

The citizens preferred that no changes be made to the Willis Wharf Vision. They felt that the original guiding principles had held up well and still pertained.

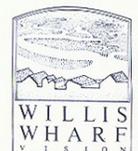


WILLIS WHARF VISION PLAN

prepared for: THE CITIZENS OF WILLIS WHARF

SUMMARY WILLIS WHARF VISION STATEMENT RESULTING FROM COMMUNITY FORUMS

Prepared by: HEED PLANNING & DESIGN - PARADIGM DESIGN NOVEMBER, 1994

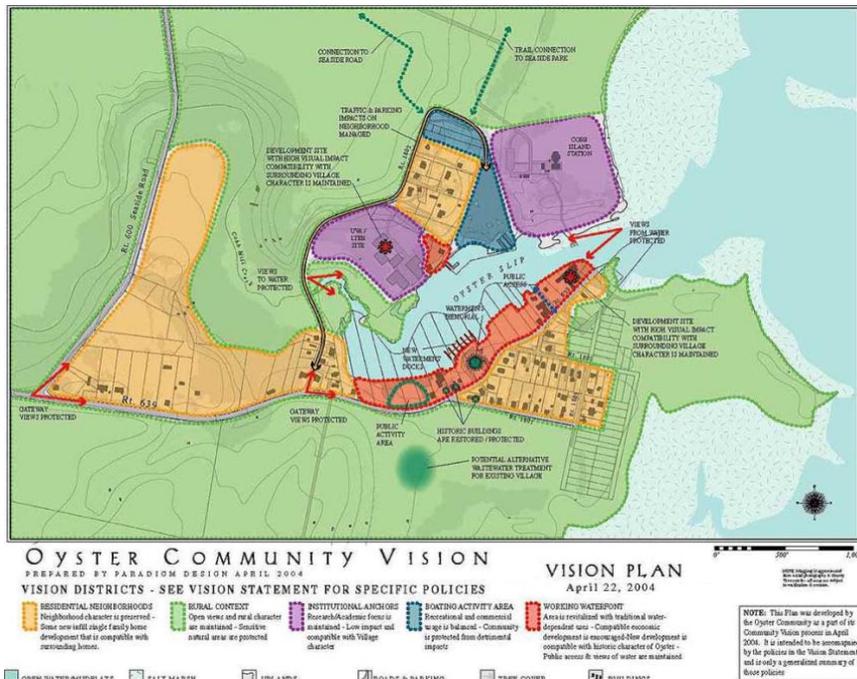


Original Willis Wharf Vision Plan

There was similar sentiment regarding the Oyster Vision, although they recommended that the Vision Map be changed to show a modified recommendation for the future use of the Cobb Island Station site. A revised version of the map showing this change follows in this report.

Comprehensive Plan

At the second workshop on May 2, citizens reviewed the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan text that the consultants prepared, based on the input received at the first workshop. Citizens from each village reviewed the language as a sub-group, and then reconvened as a plenary group to compare their opinions. After some discussion together, those present reached consensus on the following recommendations for amending the text of the Comprehensive Plan. (Proposed changes are shown as strike-through and underlined).



Original Oyster Community Vision Map

Overall Assessment and Conclusions

The two workshop sessions were attended by a range of stakeholders from both villages, and yet a clear and broad consensus emerged among them as to how best to update the Visions for the villages:

- The Vision for Willis Wharf should remain unchanged. It has served the village well for over a decade, and the basic goals and principles still reflect the desires and needs of the village inhabitants (even though many did not live in the village at the time of the original vision).
- The Vision for Oyster should remain largely unchanged except for a small modification to the future land use shown on the Vision Map for the Cobb Island Station site.
- The text of the Comprehensive Plan under Section 2.2.6 (Waterfront Village) should be amended as shown in this report – mainly to provide greater clarity and guidance for future land uses, structures, and wastewater disposal. The intent is to provide an even stronger linkage between the Visions and implementation actions such as rezoning approvals.

The recommendations from these workshops recognize that both villages are bound to change, along with changes in the economy, technology, state and federal regulations, and demographics. However, despite such external changes, the villages wish to maintain their essential quality and character, as small, seaside villages with economies based on the local land and water resources, rather than evolving into higher intensity commercial or residential resort communities.

**Draft Amendments based on Input from Citizens at
Workshops held April 18 and May 2, 2011
(shown as underlined and ~~strike-through~~)**

2.2.6 Waterfront Village

Waterfront Villages are existing, larger unincorporated Villages along the waterfront, and include the communities of Willis Wharf and Oyster. Waterfront Villages historically grew up at coastal locations with deep-water access. Although the Waterfront Villages do not have access to public sewer and water, they usually have a higher-density identifiable core that includes a mix of residential, business, industrial, and institutional uses clustered compactly around a working waterfront and harbor area. They are separate and distinct from nearby towns and other settlements, with an existing buffer of open farmland at their periphery. Waterfront Villages have served as, and will continue to serve as, focal points for marine-related industries and lifestyle in the County.

2.2.6.1 Waterfront Village Land Uses

- a. ~~f.~~ Any development proposed in the Waterfront Village of Oyster or the Waterfront Village of Willis Wharf will be reviewed for conformity with the Vision Plans adopted for those communities.
- b. ~~a.~~ Appropriate land uses in Waterfront Villages include a compact mix of residential and water-related commercial uses at higher densities than in surrounding rural areas. New development should be limited to undeveloped infill parcels and to adaptive reuse of existing structures.
- c. ~~b.~~ The working waterfront areas of Waterfront Villages should continue to support marine and water- ~~related~~ dependent industries, such as aquaculture, fisheries, seafood businesses, nature-based tourism and other compatible, non-polluting businesses, including very closely related activities such as boating goods and services, as well as accessory uses to the water-dependent uses. Any new

development that would be detrimental to the quality of area waters utilized by aquaculture or shellfish operators or residents should be discouraged.*

- *Chesapeake Bay Act regulations currently require 100-foot setback in the Resource Protection Area (RPA)*
- d. ~~e.~~ Rezoning to allow higher density or intensity uses at the edge of Waterfront Villages (generally, areas adjacent or to the east of the Seaside Road) is not recommended unless all of the following criteria are met: (i) any new development will be designed, built, and sited to be compatible with the existing character of the area, including but not limited to the style, height, scale and massing of the buildings in the Waterfront Village; (ii) adequate connections to existing streets are provided in appropriate locations; (iii) proposed new structures are adjacent to or near buildings and houses in the existing Waterfront Village settlement; (iv) connections to public or central utility systems are provided, and if such connections are consistent with County utility policies and feasible from an engineering standpoint; (v) the new development is designed so that a clear boundary, or edge, is provided between developed and undeveloped areas in the Waterfront Village community. Rezoning may also be appropriate for residential or nonresidential infill development that enhances community design by providing similarly scaled and compatible homes or small businesses similar to adjacent buildings. The proposed infill development should be compatible with adjacent uses in terms of scale, massing, and building type, and be supported by existing roads.
- e. ~~d.~~ The County will work with residents of Waterfront Villages to prepare and implement specific plans for areas around the individual Waterfront Villages (generally, areas adjacent or to the east of the Seaside Road), provided that such a planning effort is requested and supported by local residents.

- f. ~~e.~~ The County will encourage the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing structures in Waterfront Villages to maintain property values, to provide a range of housing options for all income levels, and to provide business opportunities.
- f. ~~Any development proposed in the Waterfront Village of Oyster or the Waterfront Village of Willis Wharf will be reviewed for conformity with the Vision Plans adopted for those communities. [moved to become item a. above]~~
- g. Waterfront Villages are appropriate locations for aquaculture uses, seafood harvesting and low-impact processing, and water-related recreational uses. The County may permit additional waterfront-related uses that support traditional local industries and recreational activities provided such uses are compatible in scale, proportion, and impact with the harbor area and the surrounding community.

2.2.6.2 Waterfront Village Community Design

- a. The viability and historic character of existing Waterfront Villages should be maintained by encouraging preservation of historic structures and preservation of the historic pattern of developed and undeveloped areas that define the Waterfront Village, its working waterfront area, and its boundaries.
- b. New infill development should be designed to maintain the compact traditional form of existing Waterfront Villages at development densities that are consistent with adjacent properties.
- c. A mix of housing types may be appropriate in Waterfront Villages outside the waterfront/harbor areas. New development should be visually compatible in scale, height, and character with existing structures. Alternative housing types such as accessory apartments and live-work units shall be encouraged in Waterfront Villages to expand the range of housing options available to County residents. In general, new residential development should not be developed

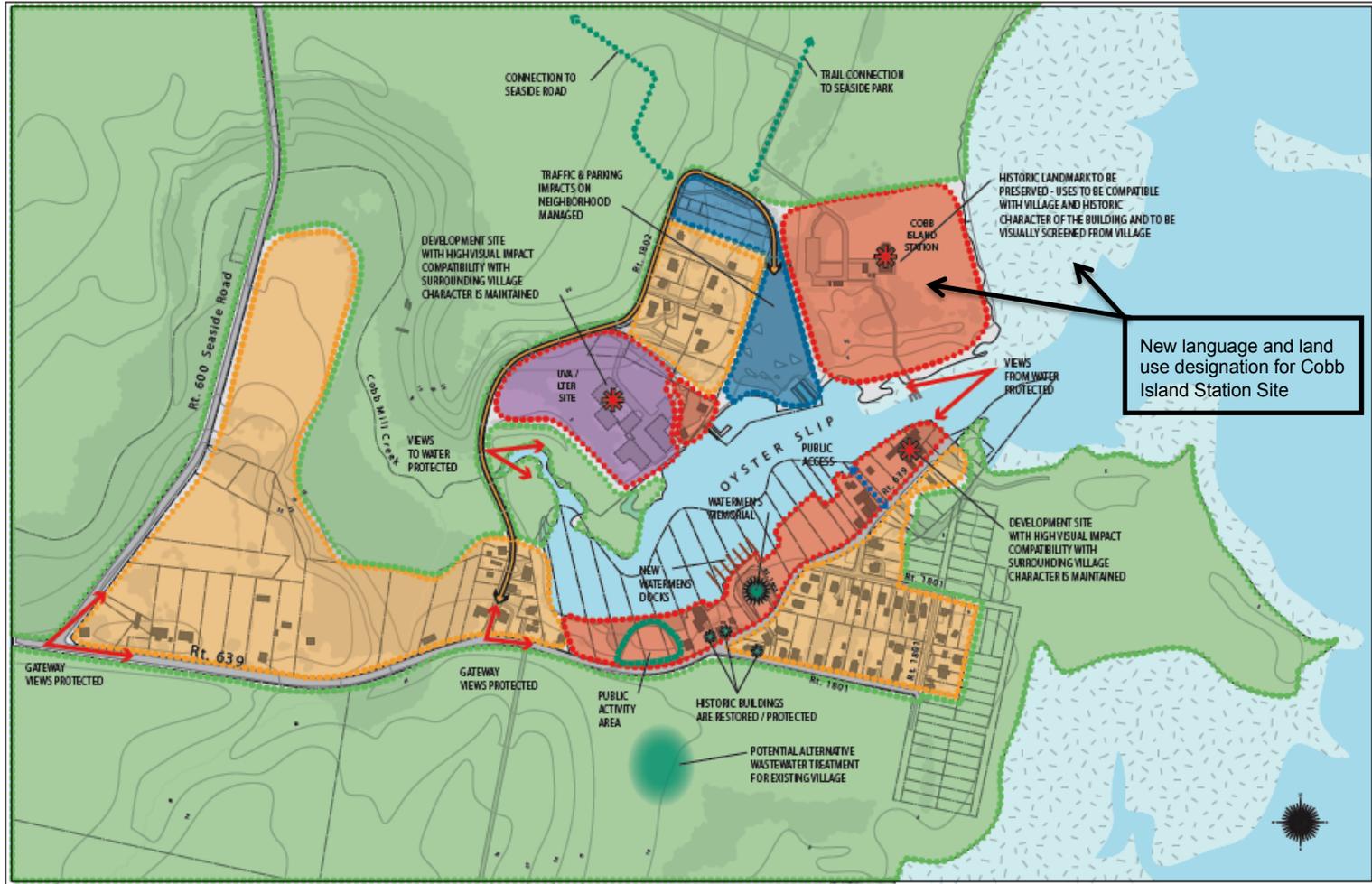
within the working waterfront and harbor areas of Waterfront Villages, unless it replaces existing historic residences that are part of the harbor area. New residential structures should be single-family detached or duplex structures with the size and massing of a single-family dwelling. Residential density should not exceed 2 dwelling units per acre.

- d. All new development within Waterfront Villages shall be related closely to the existing, historic design of the Waterfront Village. Design elements should include an interconnected street network, defined open spaces, multiple uses within a single building, multiple uses adjacent to one another, building fronts set close to the street, comfortable and safe pedestrian access between sites and along sidewalks, on-street parking, and parking lots and parking areas located behind buildings. Waterfront-related uses must be designed to be compatible with the character of the existing harbor area and to relate to the streets and buildings adjacent to the harbor area.
- e. Street design should be compatible with the historic character of the local roads in terms of pavement width, street sections and roadway standards, building setbacks, etc. [note that “roadway standards” replaces “typologies” to avoid jargon]
- f. No property-maintenance standards should be adopted that impinge on the ability of watermen to store and maintain, in an organized fashion, job-related equipment on properties under their control.

2.2.6.3 Waterfront Village Community Facilities and Utilities

- a. Any new development in Waterfront Villages should be supported by on-site water and wastewater systems, ~~in the absence of public water and sewer, and~~ so as not to exceed the capacities of existing natural resources and infrastructure systems, except that if a central or public wastewater system is established, it must be a bio-nutrient removal system with land application, and be environmentally acceptable to the needs of the village, and affordable to local residents and

- businesses. The use of off-site septic treatment systems is acceptable for the working waterfront provided that: (i) the carrying capacity of the village's natural resources is not exceeded, (ii) such systems do not cause a larger scale operation than would otherwise occur, (iii) the off-site septic system is within the Village [added for clarity], and (iv) such systems and the uses they support are compatible with existing and planned surrounding uses.
- b. The use of alternative on-site wastewater systems may be permitted in Waterfront Village areas to resolve existing public health threats. Individual alternative on-site wastewater systems may also be permitted to serve Waterfront Village-related uses, such as appropriately-scaled community-service public uses, if such systems are more ecologically or environmentally appropriate than traditional septic systems.
- c. The County supports the maintenance, enhancement and, where appropriate, the expansion of existing community facilities located in Waterfront Villages, such as County-maintained harbor facilities, observation platforms, and interpretive signage.
- d. Transportation access to Waterfront Villages is usually via existing collectors or rural highways, with a network of smaller streets serving the Waterfront Village center. New development in or adjacent to Waterfront Villages should connect to and reinforce the traditional Waterfront Village road network.
- e. New roads and road improvements within a Waterfront Village area should be designed to accommodate pedestrians as well as motor vehicles, and traffic-calming measures should be employed where possible.
- f. If, at any time in the future, the County determines that it is desirable to provide public sewer and/or water to a Waterfront Village for public-health reasons, the County will develop a planning process to work jointly with residents of the Waterfront Village and the surrounding area to define specific water and sewer-service boundaries and to prepare a Waterfront Village plan to guide development within the service-area boundary. Upon completion, any such Waterfront Village Plan should be adopted as an amendment to the countywide Comprehensive Plan.
- g. New uses and facilities proposed within the watershed should support the goals and functions of the waterfront villages.
- h. The County should cooperate with Accomack County to limit the impact of new uses and facilities on the waterfront villages.
- i. The County will support and encourage the use of low-impact stormwater management techniques.
- j. The County will encourage low-impact lighting techniques to limit light pollution and protect dark skies.
- The proposed amended Vision Plan Map for Oyster is shown on the following page.*



New language and land use designation for Cobb Island Station Site

OYSTER COMMUNITY VISION

PREPARED BY PARADIGM DESIGN APRIL 2004

VISION DISTRICTS - SEE VISION STATEMENT FOR SPECIFIC POLICIES

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS
Neighborhood character is preserved - Some new infill single family home development that is compatible with surrounding homes.

RURAL CONTEXT
Open views and rural character are maintained - Sensitive natural areas are protected

INSTITUTIONAL ANCHORS
Research/Academic focus is maintained - Low impact and compatible with Village character

BOATING ACTIVITY AREA
Recreational and commercial usage is balanced - Community is protected from detrimental impacts

WORKING WATERFRONT
Area is revitalized with traditional water-dependent uses - Compatible economic development is encouraged - New development is compatible with historic character of Oyster - Public access & views of water are maintained

- OPEN WATER/MUDFLATS
- SALT MARSH
- UPLANDS
- ROADS & PARKING
- TREE COVER
- BUILDINGS

VISION PLAN
April 22, 2004
UPDATED MAY 2, 2011



NOTE: Mapping is approximated from aerial photography & County Tax records - all areas are subject to verification & revision.

NOTE: This Plan was developed by the Oyster Community as a part of its Community Vision process in April 2004 **AND UPDATED IN MAY 2011**. It is intended to be accompanied by the policies in the Vision Statement and is only a generalized summary of those policies

Next Steps

The next steps in the process are for the County to formally consider the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that have emerged from this Village update process. The normal public hearing process before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will occur, and ultimately, the Board will decide whether and how to incorporate these recommendations into the plan.



Willis Wharf, Va. 11



Appendix

Agenda & Summary of First Workshop, April 18

First Community Workshop for Updating the Visions for the Villages of Oyster and Willis Wharf

April 18, 2011 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

at the Former Northampton County Middle School auditorium, 7247 Young Street, Machipongo

Note that this is the ***first of two*** community workshops to be held April 18 and May 2, 2011

AGENDA

The major objectives of this meeting will be to:

- Review some background data and current Visions for the future of both villages
- Identify the major planning issues facing the villages now and in the future
- Begin to identify any needed refinements and updates to the Visions

6:30 p.m.	Welcome and Introductions
6:40 p.m.	Overview of the Project, Today's Agenda, and Background
7:10 p.m.	General Q&A (whole group)
7:30 p.m.	Break into Groups to Assess Current Visions
8:20 p.m.	Break
8:30 p.m.	Reconvene to Review Results of the Groups
9:20 p.m.	Review of Next Steps
9:30 p.m.	Adjourn

Summary

Of First of Two Community Workshops for Updating the Visions for the Villages of Oyster and Willis Wharf Held April 18, 2011

At the Former Northampton County Middle School auditorium,
Machipongo

The meeting opened shortly after 6:30 pm and adjourned at roughly 9:00 p.m.

The major objectives of this meeting were:

- Review some background data and current Visions for the future of both villages
- Identify the major planning issues facing the villages now and in the future
- Begin to identify any needed refinements and updates to the Visions

General Discussion:

Approximately two dozen citizens attended the meeting, roughly equally distributed between those from Oyster and those from Willis Wharf. Initial comments included the concern that if the villages did not want their Visions to change, then why was this meeting necessary? After some discussion, those present decided to continue the discussion in order to formalize their input and to afford them the opportunity to consider ways to better link the Vision statements to the policies of Comprehensive Plan, and possibly to each other.

Overall Comments

- Need to discuss proposals for zoning changes in the villages
- Vision is what you want – zoning is how you get there
- Development proposal is a challenge to the vision
- Absence of certain stakeholders at this meeting is significant.

- Current County policies could be a challenge to the vision
- Oyster is not threatening Willis Wharf's Vision, nor vice versa
- Need something in Vision to tie the visions and destinies of WW and Oyster
- Both Visions have strong desire to preserve the village character and ensure that changes are compatible with the village character.
- The new Waterfront Village zone is a precedent for cooperation among the villages
- The main difference in current pressures is that Willis Wharf is facing pressures for aquaculture expansion and Oyster from residential [and commercial] expansion.
- Redistricting plan could have impacts on Willis Wharf and Oyster [by changing representation on the Board of Supervisors]

Break into Groups to Assess Current Visions

Oyster Group Discussion

Changes and Trends

- Fewer full time residents
- Fewer locals
- More second homes
- Board focused on changes to bring economic development
- Proposed zoning text changes (special use permit)
- Older house and new houses are ELEVATED above flood zone
- Coming of off shore wind farms will affect boat traffic in Oyster
- Clam plant is no longer there and development proposals
- Anheuser Busch facility may expand
- Aquaculture is expanding
- New waterman's docks built
- Trend of vacation rentals in homes
- New homes built on existing lots
- Nature conservancy is doing natural restoration on surrounding fields
- BECO property purchased by Medonias
- "living shoreline" added as demonstration project by nature

- conservancy
- Cobb Island Station ownership may change (opportunity and challenge) – could be opportunity for small inn/restaurant

Opportunities and Challenges

- Potential for zoning text changes
- Changes in [property] ownership
- The economy
- Potential policy changes from Board driven by need for economic development
- Opportunity to reaffirm Vision
- Opportunity to support offshore activities – e.g. wind, oil
- Septic system is a challenge
- Opportunity for expansion of research activities and support services.
- Flooding potential as a challenge

Vision

- Refine that harbor area and waterfront should be reserved for water dependent uses
- Clarify commercial not residential uses on the waterfront
- Possible opportunities for economic anchor to be a new compatible use for Cobb Island Station site.
- Strengthen Vision in the Comprehensive Plan by building it into the Land Use Plan and the policies of the plan - strengthen the comp plan policies on waterfront villages by building in some of the combined vision themes from both villages into the policy language of the comp plan.
- [Some relatively minor changes to the village Vision Map were also identified]

Willis Wharf Group Discussion

Opportunities and Challenges

- Oyster waterfront is [controlled mainly by] nature conservancy, UVA, County, developer
- Willis Wharf waterfront is aquaculture

- The similarities between the two villages are greater than the differences
- Pressure for change in Willis Wharf is from aquaculture
- Pressure for change in Oyster is from developer
- There is a threat of “divide and conquer” – condos in Oyster = precedent for Willis Wharf (potentially)
- Opportunity to protect working waterfronts – includes aquaculture
- Fine line / threat – support water businesses without becoming 3-story clam shacks lining the waterfront – concern is scale, form – the term “compatible” may be too general
- 3-bullet item not in Comp Plan now:
 - “Remain small, distinct...”
 1. Pristine quality...
 2. Support residents...
 3. Preserving
- Add “sustainable”?
- How to avoid giving “carte blanche” to waterfront uses? – it’s difficult to define this in the Vision beyond the current language.
- Clam and oyster aquaculture underpins clean water (fin fish more problematic due to waste)
- Threat from sea level rise – but it doesn’t change the Vision.

Vision

- Zoning is important – maybe link Oyster with Willis Wharf – still an open issue
- Keep the current Vision language as it is – consensus of all those present.

Reconvene to Review Results of the Groups

- For zoning, there has been discussion of separating the villages
- Would need to explore if the villages should be linked in the Comp Plan
- This meeting could at least prompt the dialogue of linking issues between the villages
- Both villages agree on need to clarify water-dependent uses on waterfront
- Emphasize need for Special Use process in Comp Plan

- Potential to look at existing Comp Plan policies that deal with waterfront villages – e.g. issues like zoning and sewer

Review of Next Steps

The consultants and the citizen participants acknowledged that the general desire of those present was to keep the Visions the same as now written, but to explore adding additional policies into the Comp Plan that would provide additional policy guidance in interpreting the broad Vision concepts.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned a little after 9:00 p.m., by consensus of those present.

Agenda & Summary of Second Workshop, May 2

Second Community Workshop for Updating the Visions for the Villages of Oyster and Willis Wharf

May 2, 2011 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

at the Former Northampton County Middle School auditorium, 7247
Young Street, Machipongo

*Note that this is the **second of two** community workshops to be held
April 18 and May 2, 2011*

AGENDA

The major objectives of this meeting will be to:

- Evaluate draft refinements to Visions & Comprehensive Plan
- Discuss Implementation Ideas
- Review next steps

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 6:30 p.m. | Welcome and Introductions |
| 6:40 p.m. | Review Project Background and Results of April 18 |
| 7:10 p.m. | General Q&A (whole group) |
| 7:30 p.m. | Break into Groups to Assess Draft Refinements |
| 8:30 p.m. | Reconvene to Review Results of the Groups |
| 9:20 p.m. | Review of Next Steps |
| 9:30 p.m. | Adjourn |

Summary

Of Second of Two Community Workshops for Updating the Visions for the Villages of Oyster and Willis Wharf

Held May 2, 2011

At the Former Northampton County Middle School auditorium,
Machipongo

The meeting opened shortly after 6:30 pm and adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

The major objectives of this meeting were:

- *Evaluate draft refinements to Visions (& Comp Plan)*
- *Discuss Implementation Ideas*
- *Review next steps*

General Discussion:

About 30 citizens attended the meeting, with a slightly higher percentage from Willis Wharf than from Oyster. The consulting team presented a review of the results from the first workshop and some draft language for amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan based upon the input received from citizens at that meeting. (The only changes to either of the Vision documents was a minor change to the vision map for Oyster).

Initial overall comments included:

- I support the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan as proposed by the consultants.
- I'm uncomfortable with specific references to "multi-family" (in W.W.) check the Vision for consistency.
- WW Vision discussions dealt with keeping multi-family away from the waterfront.
- I'm concerned that villages are not towns and are still governed by the County – all county citizens have a stake in the destiny of the villages.

Break into Groups to Assess Draft Comprehensive Plan Language

Oyster Group Discussion

Comments of the Oyster group included the following:

- Concern over how water-dependent is defined and it might be overly-restrictive.
- However, others support the use of the term.
- Small scale goods and services for boaters is not an incompatible use.
- Three great assets are land, water and history.
- Concern that most plans presented to the County don't deal with economic development.
- Need to make regulatory process simpler.
- Question of whether small inn is allowed on the waterfront by zoning?
- Need to be flexible on specific site plan.
- Tone down language on "provided by"
- Add specification to gateways.
- Concern about limited amount of available land on waterfront.
- Concern that off-site [septic] may be needed but also could create large-scale development that is undesirable.

Specific changes recommended by the Oyster group were the following:

- Change water-dependent to water-related (2.2.6.2.c.)
- Item 2.2.6.3.c – change so that public water and sewer is allowed.

Willis Wharf Group Discussion

The citizens from Willis Wharf reviewed each paragraph to evaluate the draft language, and after some discussion of each item, they reached consensus on the following recommendations for refinements, shown as double-underline and double strike-through (original draft amendments shown as single strike-through and underlined):

Section 2.2.6.1 Waterfront Village Land Uses

- c. ~~b~~: The working waterfront areas of Waterfront Villages should continue to support marine and ~~water-related~~ water-dependent industries, such as aquaculture, fisheries, seafood businesses, nature-based tourism and other compatible, ~~small-scale, water-dependent,~~ non-polluting businesses. Any new development that would be detrimental to the quality of area waters utilized by aquaculture or shellfish operators or residents should be discouraged.
 - The group noted the concern that ultimately, "water-dependent" needs to be clearly defined, and they acknowledge the definition now contained in the Chesapeake Bay Act regulations.
 - Add a footnote regarding the current setback requirements of the Resource Protection Area as set forth in the Chesapeake Bay Act regulations.
 - Strike "small-scale" because it is too vague a term.
- d. ~~e~~: Rezoning to allow higher density or intensity uses at the edge of Waterfront Villages (generally, areas adjacent or to the east of the Seaside Road) is not recommended unless all of the following criteria are met: (i) any new development will be designed, built, and sited to be compatible with the existing character of the area, including but not limited to the style, height, scale and massing of the buildings in the Waterfront Village; (ii) adequate connections to existing streets are provided in appropriate locations; (iii) proposed new structures are adjacent to or near buildings and houses in the existing Waterfront Village settlement; (iv) connections to public or central utility systems are provided, and if such connections are consistent with County utility policies and feasible from an engineering standpoint; (v) the new development is designed so that a clear boundary, or edge, is provided between developed and undeveloped areas in the Waterfront Village community. ~~and that existing views of the water are substantially maintained~~. Rezoning may also be appropriate for residential or nonresidential infill development that

enhances community design by providing similarly scaled and compatible homes or small businesses similar to adjacent buildings. The proposed infill development should be compatible with adjacent uses in terms of scale, massing, and building type, and be supported by existing roads.

- e. ~~d.~~ The County will work with residents of Waterfront Villages to prepare and implement specific plans for areas around the individual Waterfront Villages (generally, areas adjacent or to the east of the Seaside Road and outside the waterfront/harbor areas), provided that such a planning effort is requested and supported by local residents.

2.2.6.2 Waterfront Village Community Design

- c. A mix of housing types may be appropriate in Waterfront Villages outside the waterfront/harbor areas. New development should be visually compatible in scale, height, and character with existing structures. Alternative housing types such as accessory apartments and live-work units shall be encouraged in Waterfront Villages to expand the range of housing options available to County residents. In general, new residential development should not be developed within the working waterfront and harbor areas of Waterfront Villages, unless it replaces existing historic residences that are part of the harbor area. New residential structures should be single-family detached or duplex or small multi-family structures with the size and massing of a single family dwelling. Residential density should not exceed 2 dwelling units per acre.
- e. Street design should be compatible with the historic character of the local roads in terms of pavement width, street sections and typologies, building setbacks, etc.

2.2.6.3 Waterfront Village Community Facilities and Utilities

- a. Any new development in Waterfront Villages should be supported by on-site water and wastewater systems, ~~in the absence of public water~~

~~and sewer~~, and so as not to exceed the capacities of existing natural resources and infrastructure systems, except that if a central or public wastewater system is established, it must be a bio-nutrient removal system with land application and be environmentally acceptable to the needs of the village.

Add the following new items:

- g. New uses and facilities proposed within the watershed should support the goals and functions of the waterfront villages.
- h. The County should cooperate with Accomack County to limit the impact of new uses and facilities on the waterfront villages.
- i. The County will support and encourage the use of low-impact stormwater management techniques.
- j. The County will encourage low-impact lighting techniques to limit light pollution and protect dark skies.

Reconvene to Review Results of the Groups

The two village groups reconvened into the plenary group to compare their comments on the draft language. They discussed the various suggestions and ultimately reached agreement on key refinements to the draft language. While the Oyster representatives indicated they were generally okay with water-dependent and water-related terms, they did agree to the focus on water-dependent as shown below, in acknowledgment that the Chesapeake Bay regulations use the term “water dependent” and it’s a bit easier to define.

Consensus agreement is summarized as follows:

- Expand upon water dependent – allow boating goods and services and accessory uses. (The Oyster folks are generally okay with water dependent and water-related; the Chesapeake Bay Act regulations say

water dependent).

- General support for deleting the proposed reference to “multi-family”
- Add “affordability” as criterion for public water and sewer.
- For off-site septic – okay on working waterfront but:
 - Stay within carrying capacity
 - Don’t use it to expand the scale
 - Ensure compatibility

There was also general agreement to the other specific language refinements suggested by the Willis Wharf group except as modified by the above agreements.

Review of Next Steps

The consultants indicated that they will compile a summary of this meeting, and prepare revised Comprehensive Plan amendments reflecting the consensus of the whole group. These draft amendments will then be submitted to the County Planning Commission and will go through the normal public hearing process for such amendments.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at precisely 9:30 p.m., by consensus of those present.

Original Willis Wharf Vision

Following are key excerpts from the **1994 Willis Wharf Vision Plan**, showing the text of the Vision Statement and its subsections, and the overall Vision Plan Maps.

Summary Vision for the Future of Willis Wharf

Willis Wharf will be a small, thriving seaside village with a safe, quiet and inviting community that works together with its neighbors in a cooperative spirit to:

- *determine its own destiny and retain its own identity as a distinct community*
- *preserve its rich natural and cultural heritage and affordable residential neighborhoods*
- *maintain the pristine quality of the ground and surface waters and other natural resources in and around the community as part of daily life and the local economy*
- *support and retain its residents with traditional seafood, farming and related industries that are clean, low-key and ecologically sound*
- *grow gradually while preserving and enhancing the traditional village character and surrounding rural open space through well planned, managed and compatible development*

Vision Statements

Community Organization and Identity

- Willis Wharf is an active seaside village which controls its own destiny.

- Housing in the village is affordable, allowing residents to remain here.
- The village retains its own identity as a distinct community and remains physically and politically separate from the Town of Exmore.
- Willis Wharf develops and maintains cooperative relations with Northampton and Accomack Counties and with the Town of Exmore.
- Citizens think positively about their village and people of all ages are active in improving Willis Wharf, working together with a cooperative spirit.
- Willis Wharf is a quiet and respectable village.
- The village is organized, with formal leadership mechanisms.
- Willis Wharf is a diverse community with commercial, retail, residential and clean industry.

Public Safety

- Crime is reduced and kept to a minimal level and residents of the village feel safe.
- Traffic levels in and around the village are comfortable and reasonable.

Community Facilities

- People will enjoy the recreational benefits of the Willis Wharf area.
- Willis Wharf has roads, sidewalks and streetlights which provide convenience and safety, but are in keeping with the rural character of the village.

Employment and Economic Development

- Willis Wharf is a clean, economically healthy, small village with open space, ecologically sound light industry, and several vigorous businesses.
- The ground and surface water in the village area are pristine, and

support a vibrant aquaculture industry.

- The village has a prosperous economy centered around the clean air and water, and future generations enjoy a well kept village where people make a living from the ocean.
- The local economy is able to maintain the area's self-sufficiency and sustain those whose roots are here with plenty of good jobs for people of all ages.

Natural Environment

- The local water supply remains abundant and safe for drinking.
- The Willis Wharf area will be a high priority area for soil and water conservation and Best Management Practices.
- Natural resources such as soil, water, wildlife habitats are protected and retain their functions and are part of daily life and the local economy.

Waterfront

- The Willis Wharf waterfront is a beautiful area with clean water, productive aquaculture and a thriving community.
- Willis Wharf is a productive and clean East Coast seafood capital.
- The village has a vibrant, but low-key core of thriving businesses centered on the waterfront.
- The silting of the harbor is stabilized and reversed.

History, Heritage and Visual Character

- Willis Wharf is a modest village which retains its unique historic character - a working waterfront, early 20th century architecture and other physically attractive features.
- The beauty of Willis Wharf will continue to be enhanced as a well-kept, pleasant and inviting village.
- Historic buildings in and around the village are preserved, enhanced, and rehabilitated; new architecture is compatible with the old.
- The heritage of Willis Wharf is retained and people know and appreciate the village's history.

Tourism

- Tourism is well-managed with minimal impacts on residents and the environment.
- The village has a place to buy locally made arts and crafts, delicacies and watch watermen.
- Willis Wharf is a small, historic waterfront town which welcomes visitors and new residents without losing its unique character and beauty.
- Willis Wharf is a place for people to learn its history, alternate energy sources and enjoy tourist attractions in conjunction with local museums.
- Ecotourism is a thriving, well-managed and productive industry in and around Willis Wharf.

New Development and Open Space

- Willis Wharf remains a "small town" through well-planned, managed growth and controlled residential development.
- Willis Wharf and its surrounding area has plenty of open space with local farming, seafood industry, aquaculture and limited commerce of an eco-friendly nature.
- A peaceful coexistence is maintained between industry and people.
- All residential and commercial uses in and around the village are compatible with adjacent sites and traditional village patterns of development

Vision Maps (1994)

Following are two maps which illustrate key elements of the citizens' Vision Statements.

Original Oyster Vision

Following are key excerpts from the **2004 Oyster Vision Plan**, showing the text of the Vision Statement and its subsections, and the overall Vision Plan Map.

Final Vision Statement (2004)

Oyster will be a small historic seaside village that retains its safe, quiet and inviting village character and works cooperatively as a community to:

- *Preserve the Village's traditional continuity with its historic maritime culture and lifestyle.*
- *Maintain and enhance the quality of the natural resources around the Village as fundamental to the daily quality of life of its residents and as the basis for a compatible local economy.*
- *Support the needs of the commercial and recreational users of its waterfront without compromising the primarily residential character and rural village way of life of the Village.*
- *Allow for gradual and controlled change and improvement over time while preserving its traditional village character and surrounding open space.*

VISION STATEMENTS BY TOPIC:

Community Identity and Character

- Oyster has retained strong ties to working watermen and sustainable fishing and water-related industries
- Oyster preserves its rural village way of life, and maintains and enhances the sense of belonging to the Oyster community for all its members.

- Oyster is a good place to grow up and live and welcomes all age and income groups as a safe, quiet and clean community that remains affordable to its residents.
- Oyster has a strong social fabric and its residents and businesses have strong ties to the Village and its traditions and way of life.
- Oyster is welcoming to visitors and newcomers but retains its predominant focus for full-time residents.

Community Organization

- Oyster is an active village that has a say in controlling its own destiny, with formal community leadership and organization mechanisms.
- Oyster is an inclusive community, without competing neighborhood groups - all residents and business owners have an equal role and participation in determining the community's destiny.
- Oyster residents think positively about their village and all residents, business owners and stakeholders are active in improving the Village and protecting its way of life, working together in a cooperative spirit.
- Oyster develops and maintains close relationships with Northampton County and coordinates on planning and development issues which affect the community.

Natural Environment

- Natural resources such as surface and ground water, marshes, migratory bird and other wildlife habitats and surrounding open space are protected and retain their health and function as part of the local quality of life and compatible economy.
- The local water supply remains safe and sufficient for the needs of the community.
- Oyster's future change and growth are of a scale and character that do not harm its surrounding natural resources.

Waterfront & Harbor

- Oyster has a vibrant working harbor and waterfront that is consistent with its heritage as a small fishing village.
- The waterfront has a thriving but small-scale collection of water-oriented and compatible uses that preserves open views and public access to the waterfront.
- The harbor is visually attractive, clean and functional with silting stabilized and reversed over time.
- Use of the harbor accommodates the needs and balances the interests of residents, recreational users and commercial businesses.
- The waterfront retains a focus toward the needs of small-scale working watermen as it has in the past.
- The harbor accommodates out-of-town recreational users but the Village ensures that the scale and impacts of this use are consistent with the community's willingness and ability to accommodate it.

Commercial & Economic Development

- Oyster retains and further develops its economic potential for compatible locally-based and small-scale industries such as working watermen's markets, nature tourism and resident- and boater-services.
- The local economy in Oyster has job opportunities for the current and next generation of residents but should not be a primary center of economic development for the surrounding area.

Community Design and Physical Character

- Oyster retains and protects its historic physical character and traditional built and architectural form.
- The Village retains a basically rural atmosphere with pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets, low vehicular traffic and scenic vistas to surrounding open space and waterfront areas.
- Historical structures such as Travis Chapel, the Post Office and the Broadwater houses in the village are recognized, preserved and restored over time as a legacy of Oyster's historic past.
- New development in the Village's residential neighborhoods is predominantly infill with single-family

detached homes and is consistent with the scale and architectural character of the surrounding area.

- Lighting in and around the village is subdued and not detrimental to the rural atmosphere in the village and wildlife habitats in the surrounding area.

Community Facilities and Utilities

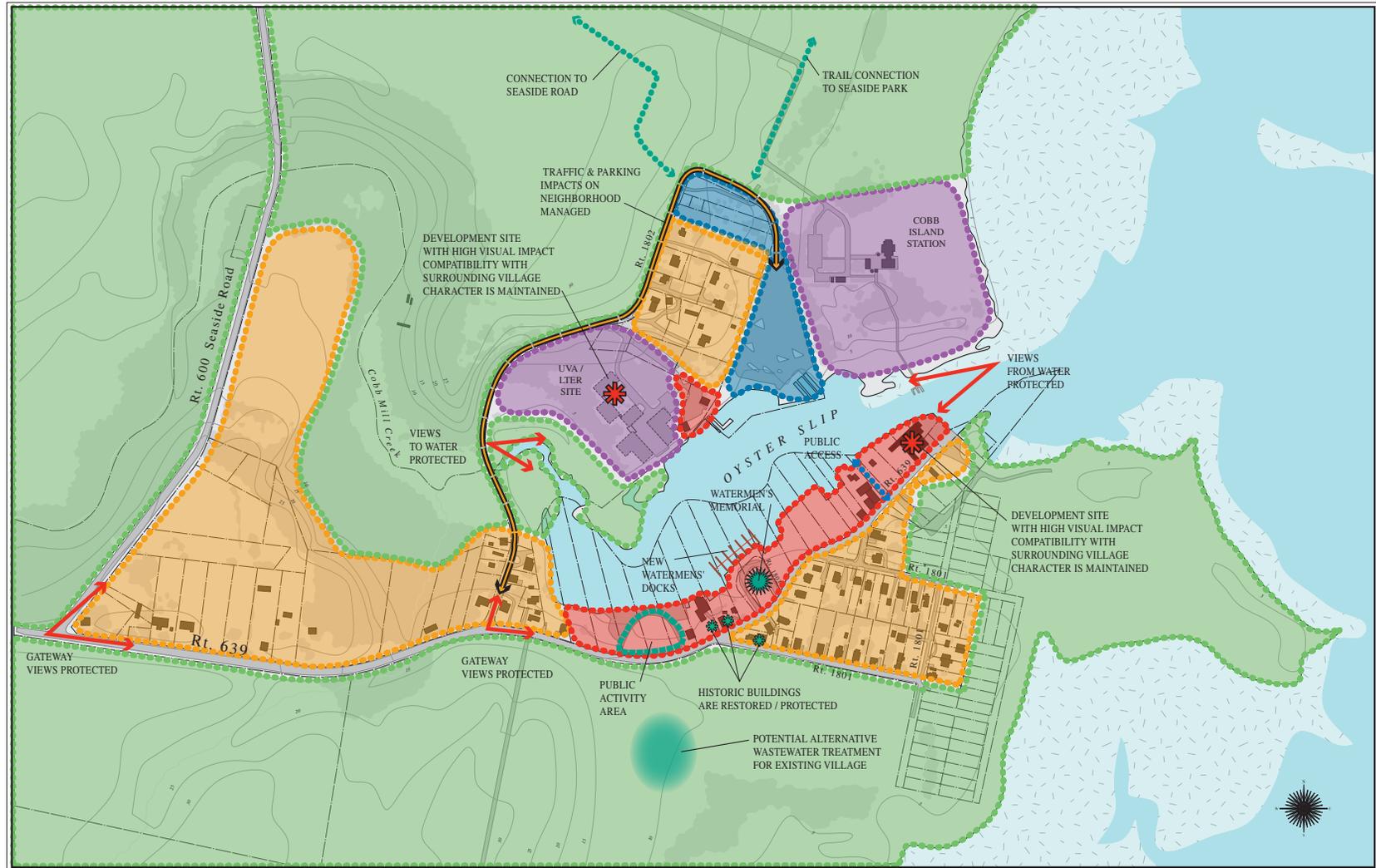
- Wastewater in Oyster is handled in a coordinated manner that doesn't degrade the local ground or surface water, serves the existing residents and businesses adequately and safely and doesn't encourage any additional growth or development in or around the Village, beyond what the community has called for in this Vision. • Oyster has a coordinated plan and improvements in place for addressing flooding, storm drainage and limiting pervious surfaces in the Village.
- There are opportunities for community gathering and recreation such as a small park with access to the water, birding areas and bike and walking trails linking Oyster to adjacent areas.

Community Growth and Change

- Oyster accommodates a limited amount of growth over time, based on the community's and the natural environment's ability to support it, both in the near term and long term.
- Any new development or redevelopment in or around the Village is low impact and compatible in terms of land uses, including single family detached residential, small scale commercial waterfront, research and education and nature or heritage-based tourism uses.

Vision Plan Maps (2004)

The following Vision Plan illustrates key elements of the Oyster Community Vision. The plan was developed from the group mapping exercises prepared by the citizens at the April 3, 2004 Public Forum. The Vision Plan was reviewed and affirmed at the April 22, 2004 Community Forum.



OYSTER COMMUNITY VISION

PREPARED BY PARADIGM DESIGN APRIL 2004

VISION PLAN

April 22, 2004

VISION DISTRICTS - SEE VISION STATEMENT FOR SPECIFIC POLICIES

-  **RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**
Neighborhood character is preserved - Some new infill single family home development that is compatible with surrounding homes.
-  **RURAL CONTEXT**
Open views and rural character are maintained - Sensitive natural areas are protected
-  **INSTITUTIONAL ANCHORS**
Research/Academic focus is maintained - Low impact and compatible with Village character
-  **BOATING ACTIVITY AREA**
Recreational and commercial usage is balanced - Community is protected from detrimental impacts
-  **WORKING WATERFRONT**
Area is revitalized with traditional water-dependent uses - Compatible economic development is encouraged - New development is compatible with historic character of Oyster - Public access & views of water are maintained

-  OPEN WATER/MUDFLATS
-  SALT MARSH
-  UPLANDS
-  ROADS & PARKING
-  TREE COVER
-  BUILDINGS

NOTE: This Plan was developed by the Oyster Community as a part of its Community Vision process in April 2004. It is intended to be accompanied by the policies in the Vision Statement and is only a generalized summary of those policies

NOTE: Mapping is approximated from aerial photography & County Tax records - all areas are subject to verification & revision.



Oyster

photo by Vladimir Gavrilovic, 2011