

# **Chapter 4**

# **Future Land Use Plan**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Future Land Use Plan depicts a generalized land use concept for Colonial Beach and the surrounding area. The plan is largely a representation of the existing land use pattern, with emphasis on development / redevelopment opportunities for the town's vacant and underutilized commercial areas.

The Future Land Use Plan continues to allow for new and infill development in the existing developed and undeveloped portions of town. At the same time, the plan strongly reinforces the current form of the town and recommends that new development should be an extension and revitalization of the traditional patterns of growth. It depicts land use designations and districts that are designed to support the community identified policies and top priorities over the next 15 to 20 years. It is important to note that the map only addresses broad density and land use objectives, not detailed standards. The chief intent of the Future Land Use Plan is to encourage an orderly, harmonious use and re-use of land, which will meet the present and future needs of the town.

## **2. Future Land Use Plan Designations**

The policies for each district shown on the Future Land Use Map are summarized below:

### *Conservation and Public Open Space*

#### ***Conservation District***

The Conservation District is comprised of all Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Areas, including area shorelines, wetlands, water bodies, and drainage ways. Some of these areas are still in their natural state, while others, in the more developed sections of town, have been modified. The need to preserve these areas has been a recurring theme throughout the development of this plan. These areas play an important role in the quality of life in Colonial Beach by providing important open space and recreational opportunities and improving the water quality of Monroe Bay and the Potomac River.

The purpose of this district is to identify and protect those areas that have not succumbed to development, and to work toward the environmental restoration of those areas that are in need.

Preferred uses for the Conservation District are limited to natural areas and public open space. Recreational amenities, such as trails, boat docks, and boat ramps are permissible, provided they are designed in an environmentally sensitive manner.

#### ***Public Open Space***

The Public Open Space Designation includes existing developed and undeveloped public parks, beaches, and trail corridors. These areas play an important role in the quality of life in Colonial Beach, and provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities. The need for additional recreational land is not a pressing issue for the town, except in the northern sections. Residents throughout Colonial Beach have expressed a desire for multi-use trails and greenways to serve their recreational needs. These needs can begin to be addressed along the unimproved Euclid Avenue right of way, which will spur the development of additional trails and greenways, and serve the need for recreational opportunities in the northern section of town.

The purpose of the Public Open Space district is to identify public open space opportunities throughout town to meet the existing and future open space demands.

Preferred uses for this district are limited to recreational amenities and facilities, such as trails, playgrounds, ball fields, beach and boat access, and public piers. The community survey results highlighted a preferred desire for swimming / beach access, boat access, fishing access, and walking / biking trails.

## *Municipal Districts*

### ***Municipal Service Facilities***

This designation includes all the town's various pump stations, well sites, the wastewater treatment plant facility, and the public works facility. These areas are scattered throughout town and play a vital role in the transfer of municipal services, such as water, sewer, and trash collection.

While these areas primarily serve a utilitarian function, it is important that they also incorporate important site design principals, such as appropriate materials, plantings, and screening as needed to ensure that they blend into the surrounding neighborhood.

Uses for the Municipal District are limited to municipal service facilities.

### ***School***

The School Designation includes all sites and facilities owned by the Colonial Beach School District. This designation encompasses two large land areas. One serves as the location of the Elementary and Middle School and the other, the High School.

Inherently, schools are very active locations with young adults and children of all ages throughout the day. Additionally, due to the town's small size, many students walk to school. The surrounding land uses and transportation patterns play an important role in the safety and security of these facilities and their students. These elements should be carefully considered when changes to adjacent land uses are proposed.

Uses for the School District are limited to educational buildings and facilities.

## *Residential Districts*

### ***Neighborhood Preservation***

The Neighborhood Preservation District includes all existing residential neighborhoods: Bluff Point, Riverside Meadows, Classic Shores, Central Area, and The Point. Each of these individual neighborhoods is unique in their housing stock, lot sizes, and development patterns. It is important that each existing neighborhood preserve their unique identity. The town supports the stabilization and preservation of its existing residential areas, while promoting rehabilitation and infill development as appropriate. New construction within developed areas should be in harmony with the character of the area.

The purpose of the Neighborhood Preservation district is to meet the present and future housing needs for the citizens of Colonial Beach while maintaining the existing residential character of each of these areas. As such, greater specific guidance relating to the defining characteristics of each of these neighborhoods is warranted. For simplification, several of the individual neighborhoods can be grouped together as follows and the following guidelines established.

*Bluff Point / Riverside Meadows*

These two residential neighborhoods are located in the northern section of town. They are comprised of single-family homes on large lots compared to other areas in town, averaging between 10,000 SF and 12,000 square feet (SF). Preferred uses for these areas should be limited to single family residential homes, private boat piers, and parks. Maximum lot coverage areas should be consistent with existing patterns.

*Classic Shores*

The Classic Shores residential area is located between Riverside Meadows and the Central Area. It is comprised of both vacant land and occupied single-family homes on very small lots, averaging about 3,000 SF. There is also a mix of several multi-family structures throughout the neighborhood. Preferred uses for this area should be limited to single-family residential homes, private boat piers and parks with opportunities for limited multi-family structures that maintain the character of the area. Maximum lot coverage areas should be consistent with existing patterns.

*Central Area / The Point*

The Central Area and The Point residential neighborhoods are located in the central and southern section of town, and are important components in the town's history and architectural styles. They primarily are comprised of single-family residences on lots averaging 7,500 SF. There are also a few multi-family structures mixed in among the single-family residences. Preferred uses for these areas should be limited to single-family residential homes that maintain the character of the area, private boat piers, and parks. Maximum lot coverage and other general design guidelines should be established for these areas to preserve the unique historic character of the neighborhoods while allowing for the redevelopment of the housing stock.

***Cluster Development***

The Cluster Development designation is utilized on all currently vacant and / or agricultural lands surrounding the town. However, it is understood that the town does not have the authority to enforce future land use decisions outside of its corporate limits. Ongoing discussions with Westmoreland County as to the appropriate use and development character for these areas will need to be conducted. This designation has been made to assist in those discussions and is the preferred development type for the areas surrounding the town's corporate limits.

Cluster developments differ in several ways from traditional developments currently found throughout the town. They usually site homes on smaller lots and there is less emphasis on minimum lot size. Sometimes densities are increased on a given acreage, but not all the time. The homes are clustered on a smaller portion of the land and the remaining land is converted into protected open space, and shared by the residents of the subdivision and possibly the entire community.

This designation was chosen due to its many advantages. The open spaces afforded through cluster developments create a sense of openness and assist in preserving the local rural character. The clustering of structures also decreases site development costs, preserves sensitive lands, and protects the natural features of a site.

Preferred uses for cluster development should be limited to a wide range of residential types, recreational areas, and natural areas. Commercial uses should not be allowed.

***Planned Unit Development***

The Planned Unit Development designation is located on a large portion of the Potomac Crossing Plan-

ning area. There is an approved site plan for this area comprised of a mix of residential structures, a golf course, and limited commercial development. The Planned Unit Development district's purposes are to encourage creative master planning for large-scale developments, which incorporate mixed residential densities, open space, commercial, and recreational facilities.

Key elements in the design of Planned Unit Development are the preservation of natural resources, the maximization of community open space, the mix of housing types, and commercial uses to form compact, walkable mixed-use neighborhoods.

### ***Medium Density Multi-Family Residential***

The Medium Density Multi-Family Residential designation includes all existing multi-family developments. No new multi-family residential designations have been made however, new multi-family developments may be permitted within neighborhood conservation areas provided they are designed in such a way to preserve and be harmonious with the general character of the area.

## ***Commercial Districts***

The types of commercial districts established within the town are classified into three general categories: General Commercial, Historic Resort Commercial, and Maritime Commercial.

### ***General Commercial***

The General Commercial district is located primarily along Colonial Avenue and sections of Rt. 205 surrounding its intersection with Colonial Avenue. The general commercial district has been limited to these areas to encourage redevelopment of existing commercial areas rather than expanding into other areas. Future land use in these areas should continue to be of a general commercial nature. Rehabilitation / redevelopment of older / blighted portions of the Colonial Avenue corridor should be encouraged and new businesses pursued.

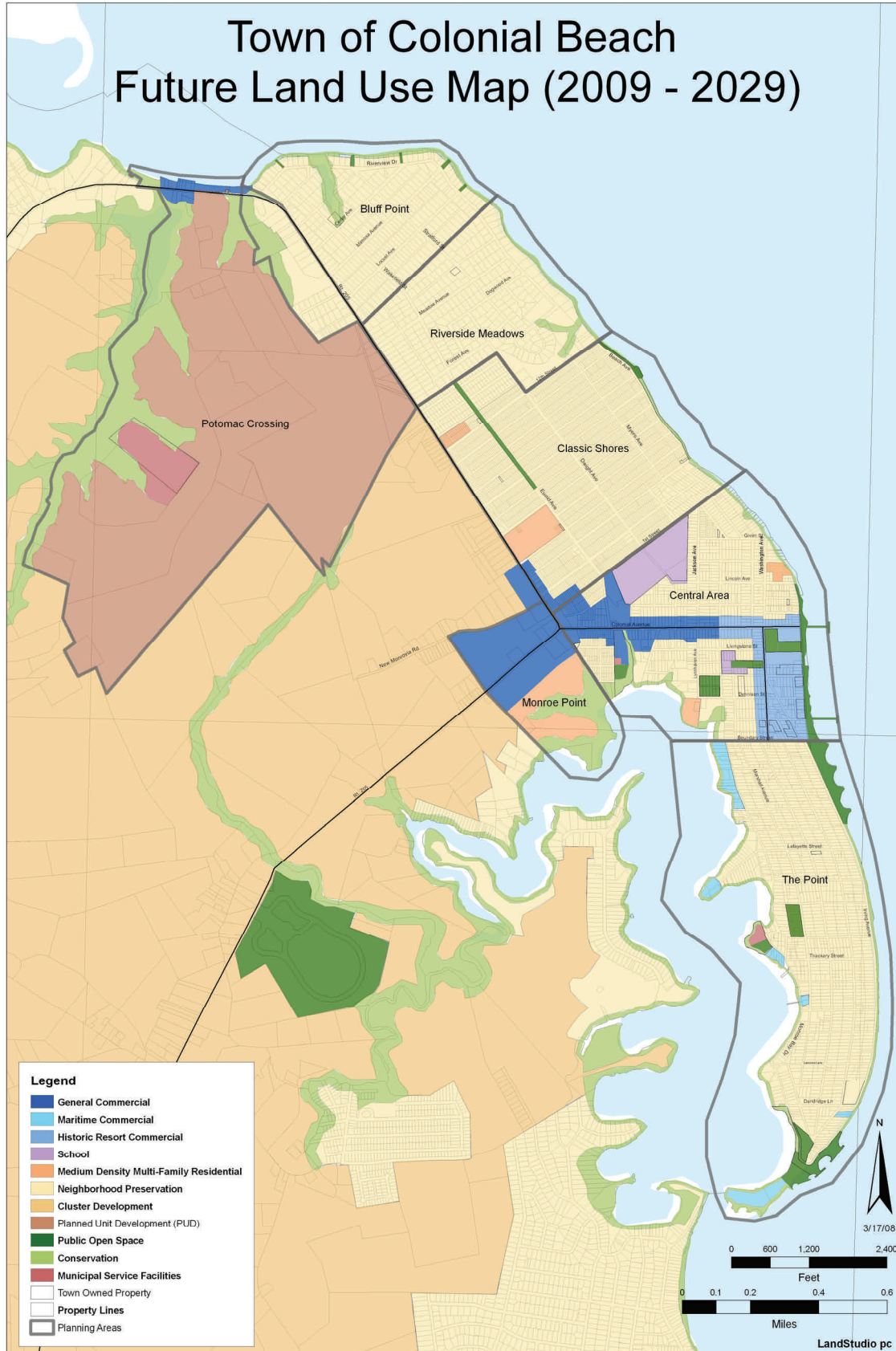
### ***Historic Resort Commercial***

The Historic Resort Commercial district is located in the Central Area, and encompasses all the parcels along Washington Avenue and east to the boardwalk. A smaller section extends west along Colonial Avenue. Future land uses in this area are intended to provide recreational and business opportunities designed to foster tourism. Any development in the district should preserve the historical integrity of the area. As such, a concept plan for the area should be developed, and the undeveloped land currently owned by the town utilized to instigate development of the area. The concept plan should address guidelines for architectural styles, building scale / massing, public open space, parking, and pedestrian mobility. Architectural styles, which complement the small town charm of Colonial Beach, pedestrian accommodations and plantings, are strongly preferred. Public open space should be a key element in any concept plan for the area.

Preferred uses for the district include restaurants (without drive in facilities), retail, arts and crafts studios, offices, municipal facilities, and public open space.

### ***Maritime Commercial***

The Maritime Commercial designation serves an important role in preserving the water dependent commercial establishments that are located adjacent to Monroe Bay and the Potomac River. Its purpose is to provide sufficient space in appropriate locations for a variety of water dependent commercial activities, such as marinas and commercial piers, as well as restaurants and inns. As such, all the existing parcels that currently fit this category have been designated as maritime commercial. As these areas are redeveloped, care should be taken to protect and buffer adjacent residential areas.



### **3. Specific Area Districts**

#### *Gateway and Intersection Improvements*

Gateway and Intersection Improvements have been identified at three locations in town, all located along Rt. 205. The two gateway designations occur at the town's corporate limits at the Tides Mill Stream to the northwest and just south of the Beachgate shopping center. Each of these areas should be enhanced with signage and plantings to welcome residents and visitors into the town.

Intersection improvements are needed at the intersection of Rt. 205 and Colonial Avenue, the town's primary gateway to its commercial corridor, public beaches, and historic resort commercial area. Improved signage and pedestrian / vehicular traffic patterns will identify this key intersection and invite travelers to visit the town. The dominating features of this intersection should serve as a reflection of the town's character.

#### *Overlay Districts*

A very useful zoning technique is the overlay zone. An overlay zone is simply a set of policies and regulations designed to implement additional land development regulations to protect a natural area, cultural resource or commercial corridor. An overlay zone is placed on top of one or more zoning districts so that it runs along the edge of the resource rather than along property lines. It supplements the regulation in the base zone. Landowners must follow the regulation of both the base zone and the overlay zone.

Overlay districts have been designated along the two primary roadways within town: Colonial Avenue and Rt. 205. These roadways serve between 5,000 and 6,000 vehicle trips per day, and are important corridors that help to define the identity of the town.

##### ***Rt. 205 Overlay District***

The Rt. 205 Corridor Overlay District's intent is to preserve the integrity of this important transportation corridor for the town and the region, as well as create an attractive roadway corridor to support its designation as a State Scenic Byway. District guidelines should encourage shared entrances and / or the assembly of multiple parcels to reduce entranceways. District guidelines should also address setback requirements that take into account the ultimate right of way of the roadway and elements related to the appearance of the corridor, such as the addition of native plant materials and signage guidelines.

##### ***Colonial Avenue Corridor Overlay District***

The Colonial Avenue Corridor Overlay District serves two main purposes: to improve the safety and mobility of all modes of transportation, and to spur redevelopment along the corridor through a variety of streetscape improvements. The town should work with Colonial Avenue businesses and property owners to identify a vision for the corridor, and develop district guidelines that address common building setbacks, entrances, lighting, utility locations, architectural features, building facades, signage, and landscaped areas. The town should also work with these individuals to identify desired improvements within the public right of way, develop a concept plan for the area, and pursue grant funding for its implementation.



## 4. Other Designations

Related to the Future Land Use Plan is the identification of two other area designations that the town should pursue and use as tools to assist in the preservation of the town's historic character, and to spur private investment and economic development.

### *Historic District*

The preliminary Historic District Designation includes a relatively large area of land encompassing The Point and the older sections of the Central Area. These areas were chosen due to the presence of many historic structures and their relationship to the events and activities that helped to shape the Town of Colonial Beach. This preliminary district area has been identified merely as a starting point and may need to be modified as additional discussions take place within the community and with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR).

A historic district is a geographical area recognized for its historical significance by formal listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The designation of a historic district requires research and documentation that provides a record of what exists. The research is then utilized to determine the eligibility of the area and determine its boundaries. Initial discussions with the VDHR staff have confirmed that a national historic district designation is probable.

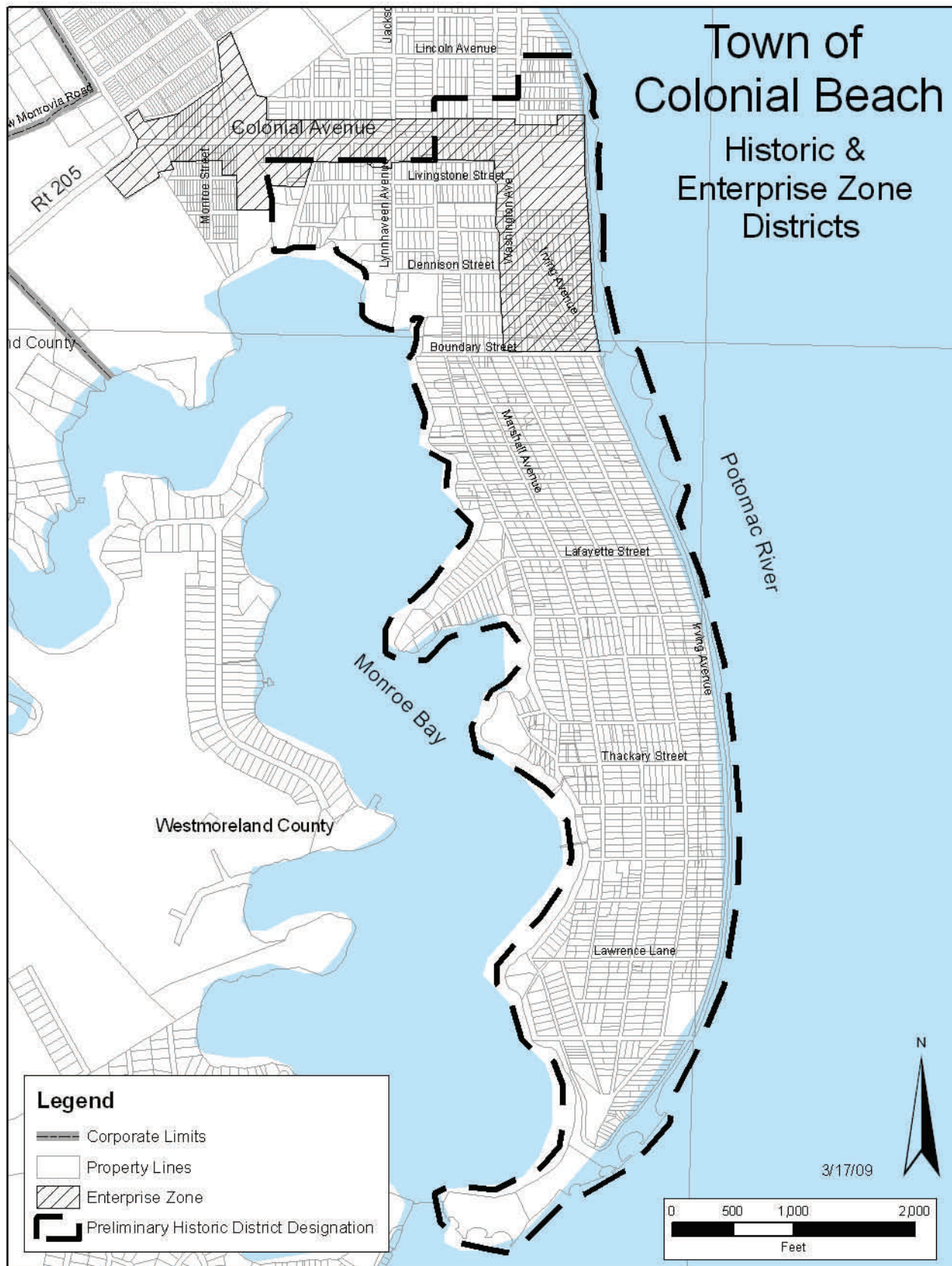
Listing an area as a Historic District is an honorary designation that has real benefits in bringing communities together to protect their unique cultural and historic assets. It also provides benefits to property owners who may be eligible for federal and state tax credits to rehabilitate their historic buildings, and benefits to local economies, who begin to see a revitalization of older sections of town and an increase in tourist visitation. Historic district designation does not require property owners to follow any particular rules, such as those relating to repair, restoration, maintenance, or construction of their homes. Designation does not involve any regulation of property in the district. For instance, landowners could still alter or even demolish a building within the district. Only locally designated historic districts are subject to local zoning ordinances, and procedures including local design review if desired.

Once the research and documentation has been completed for the national district designation, the town may want to assess the possibility of also designating a local historic district. Small town leaders and residents often do not realize the important role that the unique character and design of their town can play in economic development recruitment. A quality historic area however, is both an economic asset, and a source of community pride.

### *Enterprise Zone*

An Enterprise Zone is a designated area in which the state and local government partner together to encourage economic conditions through offering two grant-based incentives—one for job creation and one for property investments. The locality can also choose to offer a number of other incentives, such as tax cuts or other enticements to encourage businesses to come to the area; however, they are not required.

The identified Enterprise Zone area includes all of the historic resort commercial area and the Colonial Avenue Corridor out to Rt. 205. The Colonial Beach Enterprise Zone would be a part of the Northern Neck Enterprise Zone encompassing four counties and 740 square miles. Towns may not apply individually, but may be included within the geographic area of a county's zone. The Northern Neck Enter-



prise Zone is administered by the Northern Neck Planning District Commission. Zone amendments are only permitted once every twelve months. The Town of Montross is also interested in establishing a local enterprise zone, and Colonial Beach should request their inclusion concurrently with the Town of Montross, as each county is limited to a certain number of acres.

### *HUB Zone*

The Town of Colonial Beach is located within a designated HUBZone (Historically Underutilized Business Zone). The HUBZone Program resulted from provisions contained in the Small Business Reauthorization Act of 1997. Its purpose is to stimulate economic development and create jobs in urban and rural communities by providing federal contracting preferences to small businesses. These preferences go to small businesses that obtain HUBZone certification, in part by employing staff who live in a HUBZone and maintaining a “principal office” in one of these specially designated areas.

The HUBZone designation has been successful in recently encouraging a business to set up in Colonial Beach, and should be utilized as a tool to encourage other small businesses to locate there.

### *Virginia Main Street Designation*

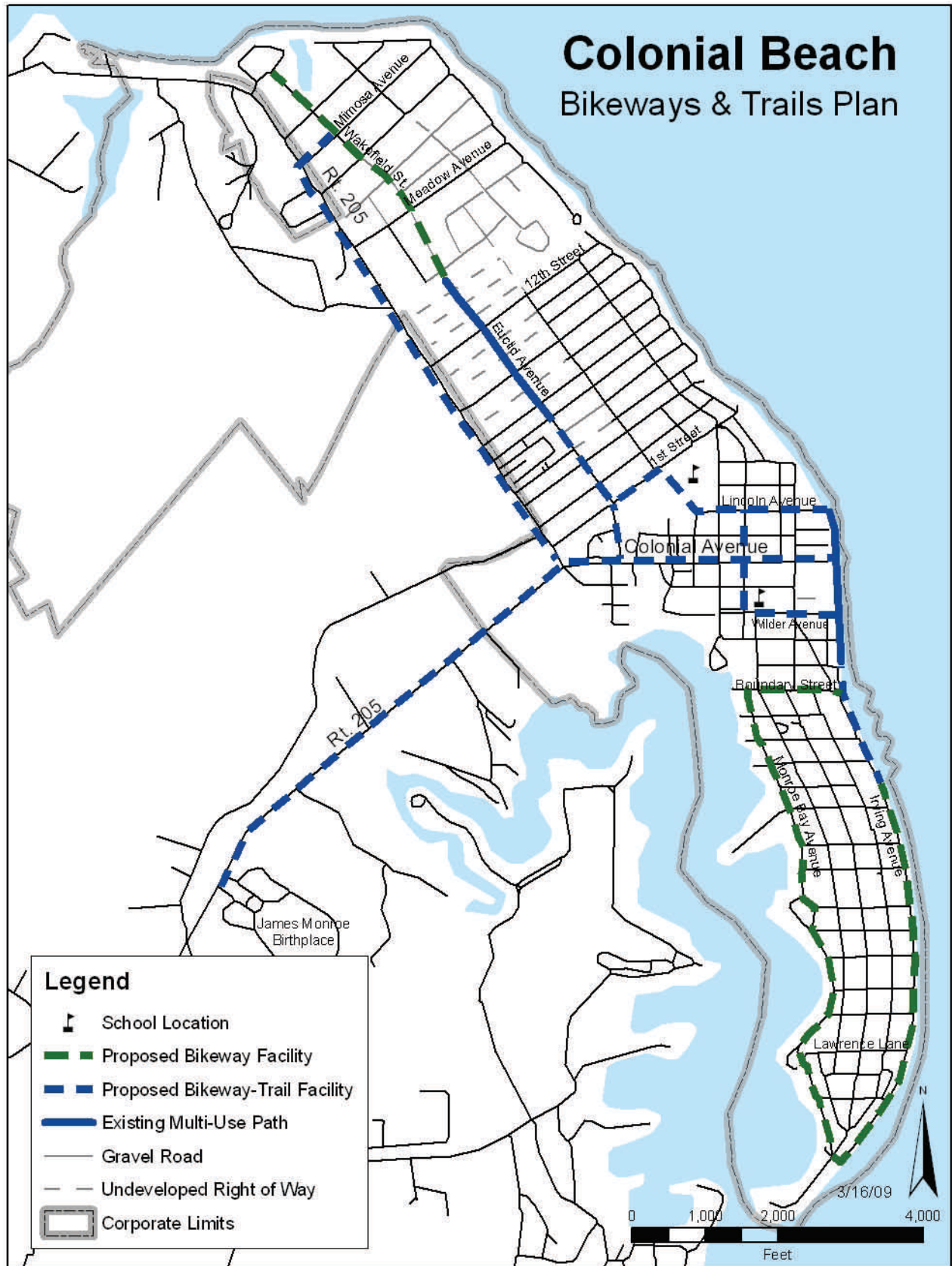
The Virginia Main Street program supports targeted revitalization efforts through a comprehensive, incremental approach to revitalization built around a community’s unique heritage and attributes. Using local resources and initiatives, Main Street helps communities develop their own strategies to stimulate long-term economic growth and pride in the historic community center.

The Virginia Main Street provides no cost assistance to train, prepare, and support a community’s revitalization efforts. Virginia Main Street does not offer funding, but is a valuable partner in a self-help program built on local commitment, initiative, and follow-through. Communities can seek the full Main Street Community Designation or join as an Affiliate Community, and receive ongoing assistance and support from Virginia Main Street. While the focus of the Main Street Approach has been developed for traditional commercial areas, its approach can be effectively utilized to assist in the revitalization of other commercial areas as well.

## **5. Bikeways and Trail Plan**

The need for the development of a comprehensive bikeways and trails network was identified as a high priority and referenced during several policy area discussions, including housing / neighborhoods, parks / recreation / open space, and transportation. Bikeways and trails provide numerous benefits to the citizens they serve and the communities in which they are located, from improved quality of life to increased economic investment. Increasingly, communities are recognizing the contributions of trails in reducing air pollution, reducing our dependency on fossil fuels, and preserving open space.

The map on the following page depicts a comprehensive trail network that builds on existing multi-use paths and links the major destinations throughout town, such as the beachfront, parks, schools, library, and businesses to residential areas. This trail network can be an important component in a Safe Routes to School Plan, and in providing additional recreational activities to area citizens and visitors alike. As roadways are improved along the network, every effort should be made to incorporate trail facilities within the existing right of way or, where feasible, seek funding to acquire additional right.



## 6. Illustrative Concept Plans

During the development of the Comprehensive Plan, two key areas were identified where public sector improvements could help spark private sector investments. The following sketches represent only one of many potential development scenarios for the areas highlighted. They illustrate how the spaces could be transformed in a way that responds to the desired future land uses and character of the town. These drawings are not intended to limit development options, but to illustrate potential improvements.

### *Colonial Avenue*

The Colonial Avenue corridor is the town's primary commercial corridor, and gateway to its historic resort area and beachfront. Currently, almost half of the commercial lots along the corridor are vacant and the expansive asphalt, narrow sidewalks, and overhead power lines do little to spur reinvestment in the corridor. The roadway carries over 6,000 vehicles per day and has been identified as the desired location to encourage future general commercial developments. Public sector improvements within the right of way are needed to stimulate private sector investments back into this key commercial corridor. The illustration below depicts just one option of how the area could be improved.



*Existing conditions along the Colonial Avenue corridor.*



*One option for improvements within the public right of way along Colonial Avenue.*

## Boardwalk

The boardwalk and beachfront areas have always been the jewel of the town, attracting many tourists, and providing recreational opportunities for town residents. The removal of many of the commercial buildings over the years, that previously lined the boardwalk, has changed the character of the area, but not its draw. There continues to be a lot of interest in the redevelopment of this area, and in recent years several businesses have located along the boardwalk to serve its users. The town owns several parcels of land along the boardwalk, and as such, can play a key role in determining how the area redevelops. The development of a detailed concept plan for the area, along with public sector improvements to the boardwalk itself, will ignite future redevelopment consistent with the desires of the community. The illustration below depicts a historical painting of the area, and represents the historic resort character of the area that many citizens would like to see again.



*Existing conditions along the boardwalk..*



*Established businesses along the boardwalk..*



*Historical painting depicting the resort commercial character of the area in the 1930's & 40's. Image taken from "Colonial Beach Virginia Another Time... & Now" by Joyce Coates and Jackie Shinn.*