

# BRYANS ROAD

## SUB-AREA PLAN

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RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ADOPTION  
FEBRUARY 27, 2023



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## Introduction

The Bryans Road community in western Charles County includes and is surrounded by a unique mix of historic villages and areas of cultural significance, large residential subdivisions, federal facilities, and disinvested commercial properties at various scales, all nestled between the Potomac River to the west and farms and forested lands to the east. Further east is the well-developed Waldorf area, which operates as the commercial center of the county and the primary north-south artery to Washington, D.C., and its employment-rich suburbs; just south of Bryans Road is the Town of Indian Head and Naval Support Facility Indian Head.

Although previously intended as a moderate-density, mixed use town center, the County and community's vision for the area has evolved. Now, a small "rural village" is envisioned with a mix of shops and services to support a smaller number of residents than may have been envisioned when the last Bryans Road subarea plan was adopted in 2021. In vision and concept, the rural village and its residents should be well connected to and mindful of preserving the area's high quality environmental assets: Mattawoman Creek and the Potomac River; Chapman State Park and Piscataway Stream Valley Park; honor its heritage of African American and Piscataway communities; and provide a high-quality of life for families and seniors who have chosen to live in an area that is fundamentally rural, albeit with increasingly suburban characteristics. Community and economic growth should be focused on responsibly redeveloping and strengthening existing neighborhoods and facilities.

This Bryans Road subarea plan further articulates the vision described above and establishes goals, objectives, and action items to be pursued by county and state agencies, community organizations, and residents of the area. Only through their collective action can the vision be realized.



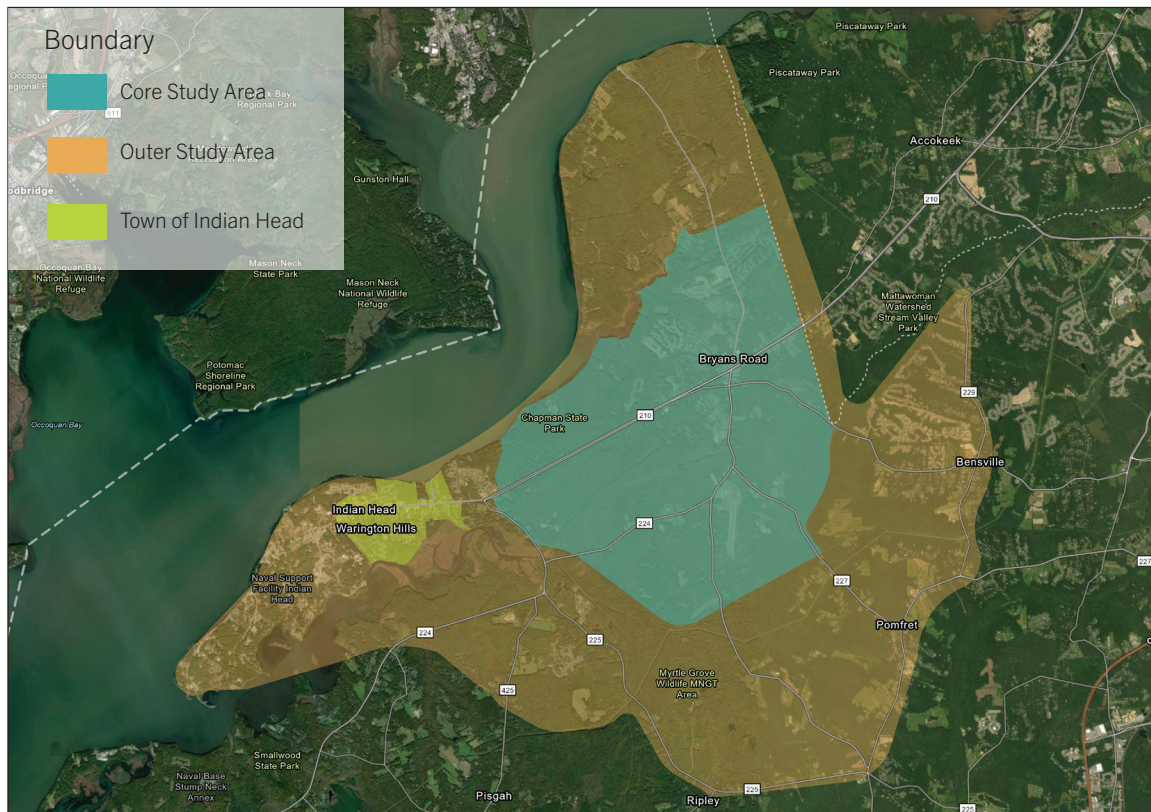
## Organization of the Plan

The first part of this document provides background information on the Bryans Road sub-area plan such as community history, demographics, and prior plans and studies conducted for the area. The second part describes the important issues that the community raised, which are the core of the plan. The third part is the plan itself – recommendations for consideration by the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

For users accessing this plan electronically, embedded links provide access to background documents and websites providing more detail about a specific topic. Sources of data are cited throughout the report. Where no citation exists, a datapoint is the subject of analysis prepared specifically for this plan.

The core geography of the Bryans Road subarea plan lies within an approximately 1.5-mile radius of the intersection of Livingston Road and Indian Head Highway. This includes the “development district” as it is currently shown in the County’s comprehensive plan and extends east to Pomonkey and the Maryland Airport, south to (but not including) Chapman State Park, north to the Prince George’s County line and west along Marshall Hall Road to the Strawberry Hills community. The core area is influenced by a broader study area that includes extends to many of the vital environmental and cultural resources of the region including the Mattawoman Creek and Potomac River, Piscataway National Park, and the Moyaone Reserve, and south to the Town of Indian Head. Most of the recommendations in the subarea plan relate to the core study area.

Figure 1. Area of Study





## PART 1. THE BRYANS ROAD COMMUNITY

Bryans Road – as it is now known – was established as a rural farming community (primarily tobacco) in the late 1600s, but the earliest settlements were those of the indigenous Piscataways nearly 16,000 years earlier. The area remained heavily rural until the 1890s when the Naval Proving Ground was established and began to develop as a suburb like other parts of the Southern Maryland region when Indian Head Highway (MD 210) was constructed during World War II. In the post-war suburban residential construction “boom,” Bryans Road grew significantly and in typical auto-oriented suburban fashion. By 1980, the population of Bryans Road was approximately 6,100. At the 2020 census, the population was 8,650, with growth occurring at a slightly greater pace than Charles County as a whole.

Demographically, the Bryans Road area has a greater percentage of African American residents, skews slightly less wealthy than the rest of Charles County in terms of median housing value and household income, and has lower computer ownership and broadband connectivity.

Table 1. Demographics

Characteristic	Bryans Road	Charles County
Residents Older than 65	14%	13%
African American Residents	62%	50%
Foreign-Born Residents	7.5%	8.1%
Households Owning a Computer	87%	92%
Households with Broadband Subscription	83%	88%
Residents with Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	27%	29%
Median Household Income	\$93,258	\$100,003
Median Property Value	\$274,000	\$313,300

Source: 2020 Census

### Planning & Land Use/Development History

Charles County has undergone tremendous growth in the past 40 years, although it was not until the 1990 Comprehensive Plan that the county began an aggressive posture of growth management. Over several comprehensive plan updates and small area plans, growth and development of the Bryans Road community has been a subject of intense debate. At times, Bryans Road has been slated for higher-density development (by suburban standards) and a node of activity between Waldorf and Indian Head, and within a reasonable commute to Washington, D.C., and federal facilities in southern Prince George’s County. At other times, a much less dense and conservation-oriented approach has been planned for Bryans Road.

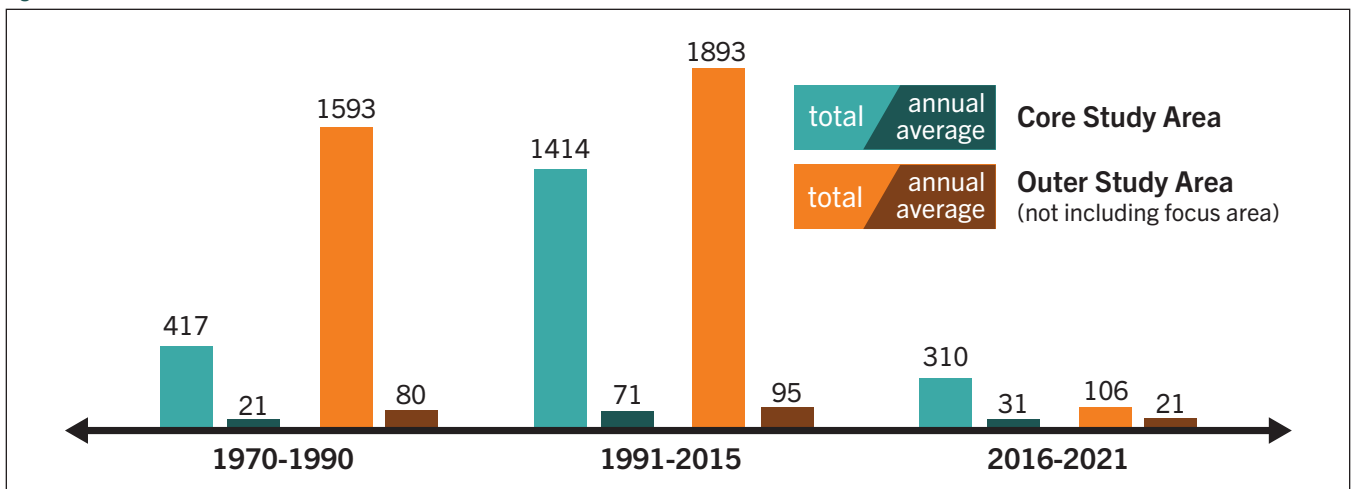
In December 2001, the Board of County Commissioners approved a Sub-Area Plan for Bryans Road and Indian Head designating approximately 2,000 acres centered on the MD 210/MD 227 intersection as the Bryans Road “Town Center.” The Town Center is where higher density residential development and associated commercial and services uses would be encouraged. The plan envisioned community open space surrounded by restaurants and shops, a concentration of office and employment developments, and new

roads to create small development blocks and a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment. Created with a 20-year horizon, the 2001 plan was to be supported by the since-cancelled Cross County Connector – a four-lane highway that would have connected MD 210 with Waldorf, generally following the current alignment of Billingsley Road. The Cross County Connector would have significantly increased the trade area of Bryans Road, bringing additional income that would have supported the town center vision. The added income also could have supported the types of retail, restaurants, and services that are sought today by area residents. The 2006 Comprehensive Plan effectively adopted the land uses in the 2001 Sub-Area Plan and retained Bryans Road in the County’s development district.

In 2016, the Board of County Commissioners set forth a new planning approach for Bryans Road and western Charles County with environmental preservation at the forefront. The Cross County Connector was removed from the County’s comprehensive plan, and approximately 21,000 acres in the Bryans Road area were placed into a Watershed Conservation District. This classification dramatically scaled back the amount of development that could occur in the area, limiting most new residential development to one unit per 20 acres. While these changes were heartily supported by environmental activists, many property owners and organizations representing the African American community opposed the changes as they devalued properties and made intergenerational wealth transfer more difficult.

The 2016 plan, however, did have the desired effect of directing growth into the core study area which is roughly within a 2-mile radius from the intersection of MD 210 and MD 227. In total, new residential construction in the overall study area dropped dramatically after 2016 in the outer study area. From 1990 to 2015, 1.3 residential units were built outside of the Bryans Road core for each unit built within the core study area. Between 2016 and 2021, that ratio flipped with 1.5 residential units were built within the core study area for each unit built further away. As of October 2021, there are approximately 250 lots which have been recorded in a subdivision but not yet constructed, most of which are in the core study area.

Figure 2. Number of Residential Units Constructed 1



Not surprisingly, land consumption slowed, too, since 2016 with an average of 38 acres per year being developed compared with 77 acres per year between 1991 and 2016 over the entire study area.

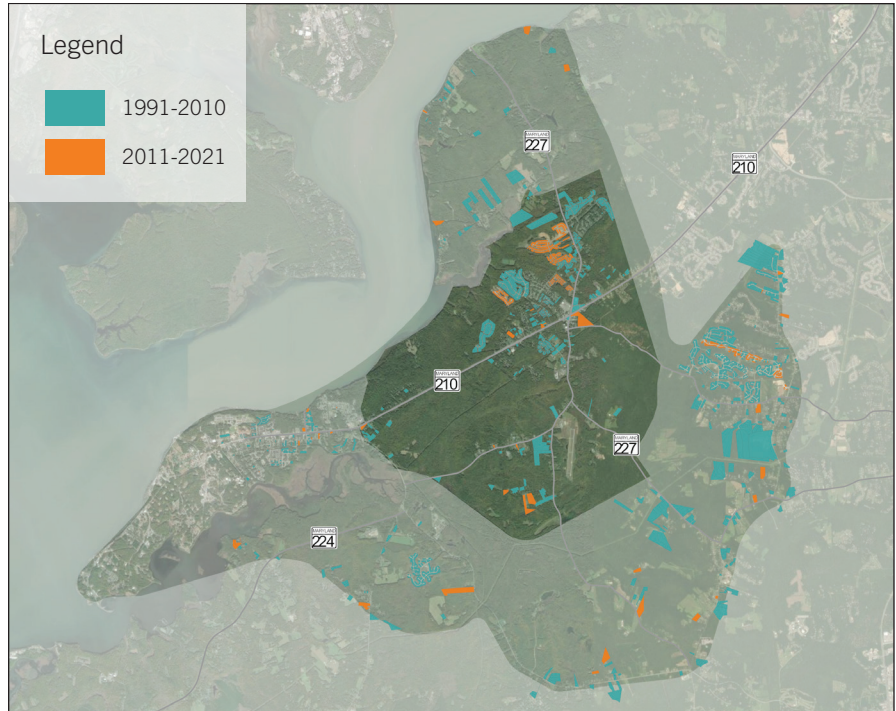
<sup>1</sup>Based on analysis of Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation master property file.

In 2021, the Board of County Commissioners began to rethink plans for the area. In October 2021, an amendment to the comprehensive plan changed the designation of 558 acres surrounding Maryland Airport for employment-oriented land uses. This Bryans Road subarea plan considers whether further changes should be made to encourage redevelopment or permit new development in the context of other policy goals.

Meanwhile, land preservation has been a priority in the Bryans Road area. Today, slightly more than 3,846 acres (39%) of the total land area in the core study area are protected by ownership of a local, state, or federal agency for purpose of environmental conservation, or through a forest conservation easement; 6,804 acres are protected in the outer study area bringing the total to nearly 60% of all lands which cannot be developed in Bryans Road. Among many others over the past two decades, two very significant properties have been acquired for conservation: Chapman’s Landing, a 2,200-acre site of forest and historic farm straddling Route 210 from the Potomac River to Mattawoman Creek, and 154 acres just west of Maryland Airport once planned as a technology park near Maryland Airport.

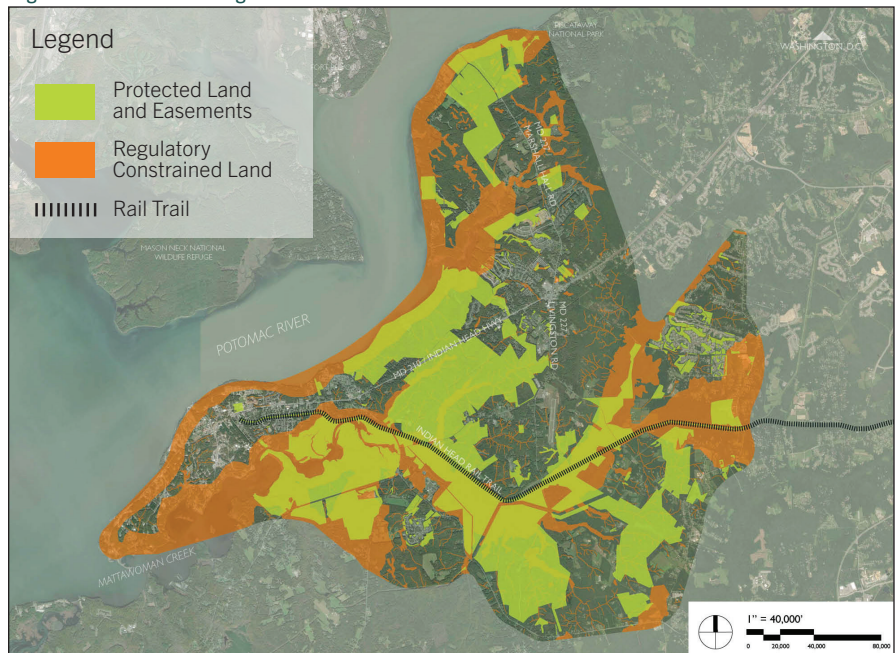
In addition, by regulatory measures related to steep slopes and wetlands, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area designation, etc., hundreds, if not thousands, of acres are effectively precluded from development.

Figure 3: Development Activity



Residential development has slowed significantly in the Bryans Road and surrounding areas since 2011 (shown in orange) compared to the prior twenty years (shown in blue.)

Figure 4: Protected and Regulated Land



Significant swaths of land in the Bryans Road are precluded or constrained from development in the Bryans Road area.



## Mobility & Connectedness

Bryans Road has a built-out network of roads sufficient to manage current development and some future growth; however, other forms of mobility and connectedness – the ability to walk or bike, use transit service are limited. Internet connectivity via broadband is less widely available and subscribed to in Bryans Road than elsewhere in Charles County.

### ROADS

Bryans Road is primarily served by two main roads: MD 210 and MD 227. MD 210 crosses Bryans Road along a slightly skewed east-west axis and connects it to Washington, D.C., to the north and Indian Head to the south. MD 227 crosses Bryans Road along a North-South axis and connects to Piscataway Park to the north, and the town of La Plata to the south. Both roads are owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA). South of MD 227 (Marshall Hall Road), approximately 10,800 vehicles travel MD 210; north of MD 227 traffic volume nearly doubles to 20,310. By way of comparison, US 301 carries approximately 51,000 vehicles per day through Waldorf and nearly 33,000 per day through La Plata. Secondary state-owned roads in the area (MD 224, MD 227, and MD 228) carry between 4,000 and 8,000 vehicles per day with higher volumes approaching Indian Head Highway.

A 2019 study conducted for a proposed residential development in the area as part of the county's adequate public facilities process found that the intersection of MD 210/MD227 operated within the MDOT SHA's level of service standards; however, Charles County's standards are more stringent and any future development in the area may require capacity improvements at or approaching the intersection. In addition, Charles County is currently designing a potential realignment of Billingsley Road to intersect MD 210 approximately 1/3 mile north of MD 227. This will address a longstanding safety issue and improve traffic operations in the area. Traffic safety is a significant issue along MD 210 with speeds well exceeding posted limits in Bryans Road; four fatal and 186 injury-involved crashes between 2015 and 2021 have occurred in the area, most notably at the intersection of MD 210 with MD 227. Further north in Prince George's County, automated speed enforcement cameras were authorized by the General Assembly to help control speeding. Similar roadway conditions – long stretches of flat, wide-open roadway with few traffic signals – exist approaching Bryans Road as well.

### BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Safe spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists are very disjointed throughout Bryans Road and especially approaching the main commercial area. Of the four main roadways approaching the shopping center, less than one-third of the approaching frontage within 1000 feet has sidewalks. No marked bicycle lanes exist in the immediate area nor connecting to the Indian Head Rail Trail, a significant recreational facility in the region. Nearby subdivisions do not have internal sidewalks either; however, none would likely be required under county building codes except along the frontage of primary roads.



*Courtesy of getty.com*

<sup>2</sup> MDOT SHA Traffic Volume Map, 2020

<sup>3</sup> Bryans Village Residential Development Traffic Impact Study, January 2019; Traffic Concepts, Inc.

## TRANSIT SERVICES

Transit service to the area is provided by VanGo, a county-operated system. Two routes travel through the Bryans Road area:

- **The Bryans Road route** runs between La Plata and Bryans Road. It services the Bryans Road Shopping Center and the College of Southern Maryland. The route has a 120-minute headway between buses.
- **The Indian Head route** runs between Waldorf and Indian Head. It makes a connection with the Bryans Road route. The route has a 60-minute headway between buses.

All routes travel via transfer point in either Waldorf or La Plata. Ridership through the Bryans Road area is sparse; most trips are made by individuals who do not own or cannot operate a vehicle. There is no commuter-oriented bus service between the Bryans Road/Indian Head area and Washington, D.C.

Figure 5: Areas of Missing Sidewalk

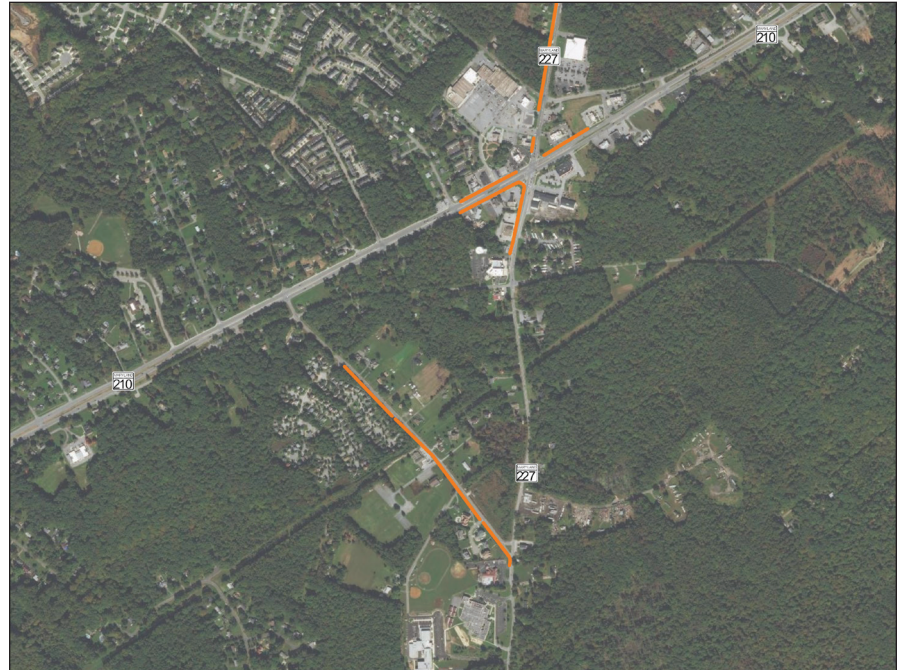
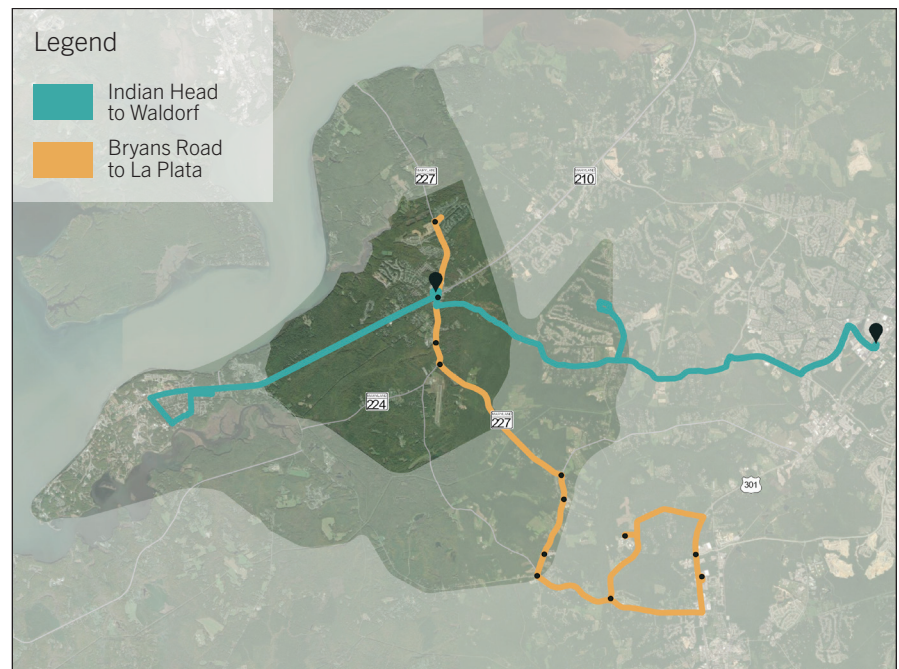


Figure 6: Bus Routes



## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Direct, physical access to goods and services is no longer just a function of the ability to drive, bike, or walk. Access to high-speed internet now brings telemedicine, online ordering and delivery services, distance learning, and other daily needs directly into the home, or facilitates commerce and economic development for certain types of firms. While official maps from the Federal Communications Commission indicate that at least 98 percent of all households in the Bryans Road area have access to high-speed internet through a traditional cable or fiber optic system, the real situation on the ground is far more nuanced. Cell towers have dead spots, and cable or fiber lines are in place along main roads but do not connect into many subdivisions, residences on large rural lots, and many businesses scattered across the area. Good data on the real scope of the problem is difficult to attain. While this problem is not unique to Bryans Road or to rural areas generally, the lack of reliable high-speed internet does inhibit community connectedness and exacerbates the lack of transit/micro mobility service in the area.



*Photos courtesy of getty.com*



## WHAT WE HEARD

Stakeholders in the area understood that, as a largely rural area, mobility other than by private automobile is likely to be challenging; however, it was also believed that solutions are available that have not been adequately explored and investments not yet made to improve the situation. For example, the one- to two-hour wait between trips on VanGo and fixed routes were perceived to be antiquated and insufficient to the mobility challenges faced especially by senior citizens. The lack of sidewalks or safe shoulders along county and state roads is of particular concern, especially approaching the intersection of MD 210/MD 227. Stakeholders also articulated concerns regarding speeding and crashes along MD 210, especially north of MD 227.

Residents expressed that the difficulty of reliable high-speed internet access was felt significantly during the year-long school closures due to the pandemic, and that even more routine online services (shopping, for example), which require less bandwidth can be problematic at times.

## Water Resources and Environmental Conservation

Bryans Road is home to some of Maryland’s highest quality water resources, important fisheries, and significant ecological communities. Many of these areas overlap with environmental constraints that limit the use of land and can help to direct conservation efforts. Older developed areas of Bryans Road have been the focus of restoration efforts to meet water quality improvement goals.

### WATER RESOURCES

Bryans Road drains to the Lower Potomac River, which is one of the major tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. The subarea includes portions of five smaller watersheds, with the Mattawoman Creek comprising the largest percentage (Table 1). Mattawoman Creek is one of the most productive spawning areas for anadromous fish (shad and herring) in Maryland and its estuary provides critical habitat for fisheries and supports a diverse tidal fish community. Mattawoman Creek is also prized for its largemouth bass fishery, providing important recreational and economic benefits to the region.

Bryans Road includes 289 miles of tidal and non-tidal stream, as well as significant areas of open water (Mattawoman Creek and Pomonkey Creek) and associated wetland complexes. The State of Maryland has designated all streams in Bryans Road for recreational use and nontidal, warm-water aquatic life use (Use I), while the open water tidal areas are designated for recreational use, estuarine and marine aquatic life use, and shellfish harvesting (Use II).

Figure 7. Watershed

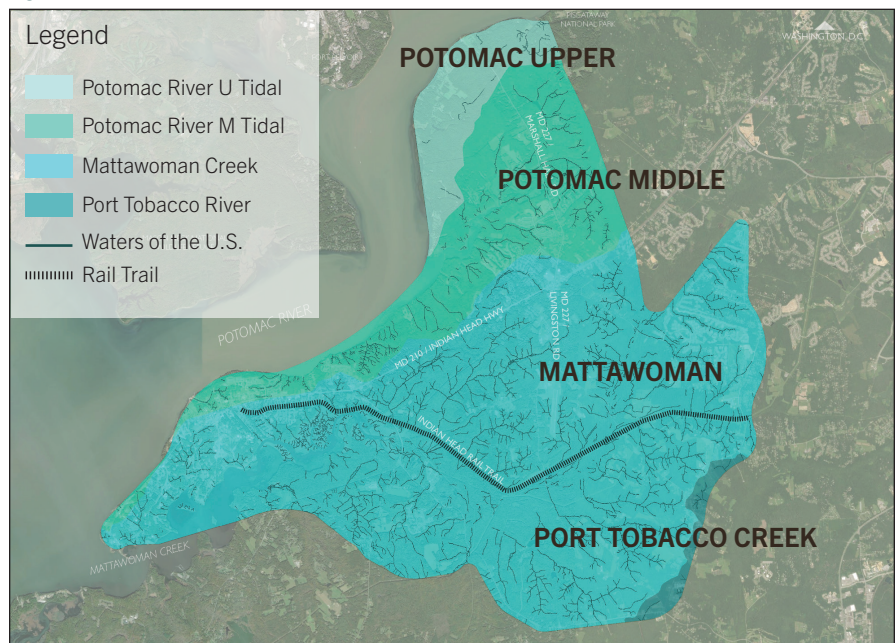


Table 2: Bryans Road Watersheds

WATERSHED	ACRES WITHIN BRYANS ROAD STUDY AREA	% OF BRYANS ROAD IN WATERSHED
Mattawoman Creek	24,034	72%
Nanjemoy Creek	2	1%
Port Tobacco Creek	491	1%
Potomac River Middle Tidal	6,845	20%
Potomac River Upper Tidal	2,136	6%

<sup>6</sup> Mattawoman Case Study (maryland.gov)

<sup>7</sup> Designated Use Classes for Maryland’s Surface Waters (state.md.us)

Some stream segments within the Mattawoman Creek watershed in Bryans Road have also been designated as Tier II High Quality Waters, meaning that their existing water quality is significantly better than the minimum requirements established by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). The Tier II designation requires all permitted activities upstream of these waterways to undergo a review process to determine if the proposed activities would degrade these high-quality waters. Importantly, some of the Tier II waters within Bryans Road have been identified by MDE as lacking any additional capacity to receive new pollutant discharges and maintain the existing level of quality. In addition, a 1,228 acre wetland near the Mattawoman Creek estuary has been identified by MDE as a Wetland of Special State Concern, which are nontidal wetland habitats designated for special protection by the State due to their exceptional ecological and educational value.

Every two years, MDE develops a list of waterbodies in the State that are considered impaired. In other words, water quality assessments show they do not meet established standards to attain their designated uses, such as recreation or aquatic life use. Table 2 lists the impaired waterbodies in Bryans Road. In some cases, total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) have been developed to quantify the pollutant reductions required to meet water quality standards, while in other cases a TMDL may need to be developed in the future. Note that while Nanjemoy Creek and Port Tobacco Creek also have impairments, they are not included in the table because the land area of these watersheds within Bryans Road is negligible.

Table 3: Impaired Waters in Bryans Road

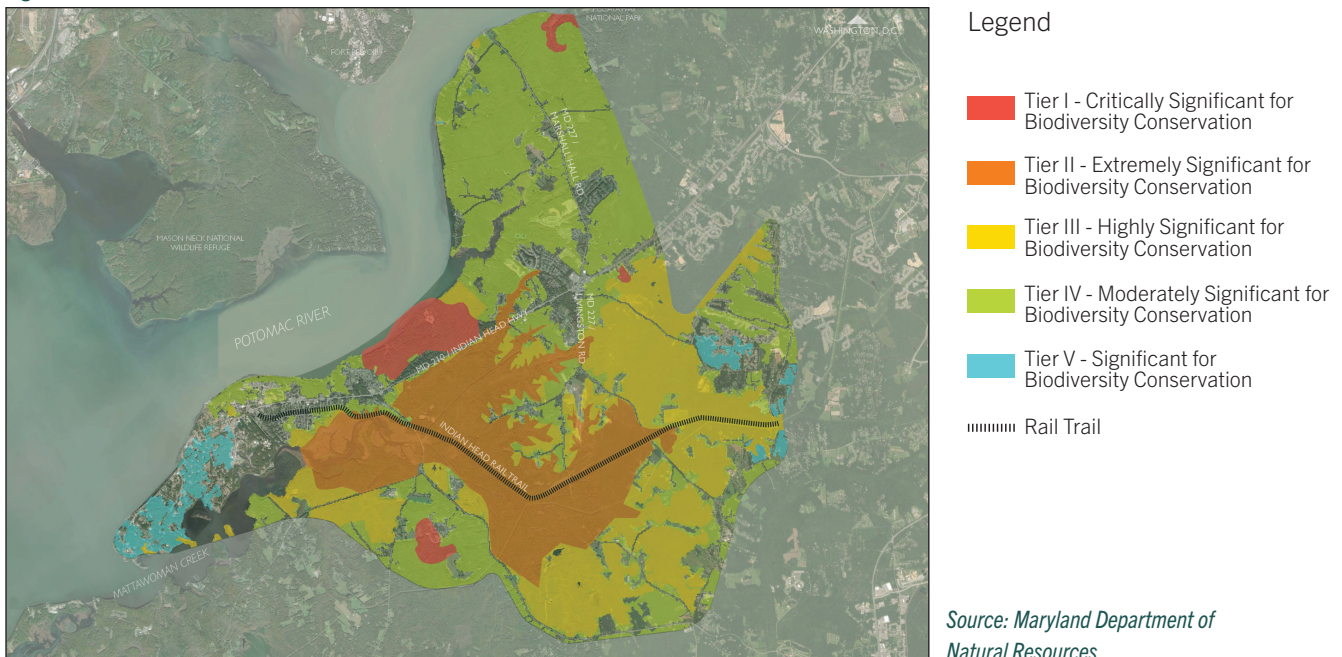
WATERBODY	IMPAIRMENT SOURCE	CAUSE OF IMPAIRMENT	STATUS
Potomac River <i>Upper Tidal</i>	<i>Habitat alteration</i>	<i>Channelization</i>	<i>Listed in 2018</i>
Potomac River <i>Upper Tidal</i>	<i>Sulfate</i>	<i>Urban runoff/ storm sewers</i>	<i>Listed in 2018</i>
Potomac River <i>Upper Tidal</i>	<i>Total suspended solids</i>	<i>Urban runoff/ storm sewers</i>	<i>Listed in 2018</i>
Potomac River <i>Upper Tidal</i>	<i>Chloride</i>	<i>Urban runoff/ storm sewers</i>	<i>Listed in 2018</i>
Potomac River <i>Middle Tidal</i>	<i>PCBs in fish tissue</i>	<i>Upstream source</i>	<i>TMDL approved in 2008</i>
Potomac River <i>Middle Tidal</i>	<i>PCBs in fish tissue</i>	<i>Upstream source</i>	<i>TMDL approved in 2008</i>
Mattawoman Creek	<i>PCBs in fish tissue</i>	<i>Source unknown</i>	<i>Listed in 2014</i>
Mattawoman Creek	<i>pH</i>	<i>Atmospheric deposition</i>	<i>Listed in 2014</i>
Mattawoman Creek	<i>Chloride</i>	<i>Urban runoff/ storm sewers</i>	<i>Listed in 2014</i>
Mattawoman Creek	<i>Nitrogen</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>TMDL approved in 2012</i>

### ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

Charles County is the most forested county in eastern Maryland, and the third most forested in the entire State. Not surprisingly, Bryans Road contains significant forest resources that include large contiguous forest tracts as well as a rare natural community known as Shell-Marl Ravine Forest on Chapman’s Landing. Because of a unique combination of soils, topography, and location, this type of forest contains rare and diverse flora and fauna. Approximately 73 percent of Bryans Road is covered by tree canopy, including forested areas as well as patches of trees and individual trees in developed areas.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR) operates several programs, such as the Biodiversity Conservation Network (BioNet) and GreenPrint, which identify areas across the State that are significant to the protection of species, natural communities, and other ecologically significant areas. Bryans Road contains numerous lands identified as important for conservation through these programs. These include 1,834 acres of land categorized as Critically Significant for Biodiversity Conservation (Tier 1), 0.6 acres of land categorized as Extremely Significant for Biodiversity Conservation (Tier 2) and 11,608 acres of land categorized as Highly Significant for Biodiversity Conservation (Tier 3) through BioNet. The types of lands included in the BioNet system include large, unbroken tracts of forest that support successful breeding of Forest Interior Dependent Species of birds, as well as communities that support rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species. The Maryland DNR Wildlife and Heritage Division has documented 14 rare species at Chapmans Landing. Bryans Road also contains 20,791 acres identified as GreenPrint hubs (contiguous forest) and corridors (linear forest features connecting hubs) having high ecological value for wildlife. MD DNR has also identified three waterfowl concentration and staging areas along the Potomac River in Bryans Road that warrant protection from development of water-dependent facilities (i.e., docks, piers, bulkheads, marinas, etc.).

Figure 8. Bio Tiers



<sup>8</sup> Charles County land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan, 2017

<sup>9</sup> Chesapeake Conservancy 2013-2014 high resolution land cover dataset

<sup>10</sup> 2001 Bryans Rd Subarea Plan

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

The core geography of the Bryans Road subarea plan lies within an approximately 1.5-mile radius of the intersection of Livingston Road and Indian Head Highway. This includes the “development district” as it is currently shown in the County’s comprehensive plan and extends east to Pomonkey and the Maryland Airport, south to (but not including) Chapman State Park, north to the Prince George’s County line and west along Marshall Hall Road to the Strawberry Hills community. The core area is influenced by a broader study area that includes extends to many of the vital environmental and cultural resources of the region including the Mattawoman Creek and Potomac River, Piscataway National Park, and the Moyaone Reserve, and south to the Town of Indian Head. Most of the recommendations in the subarea plan relate to the core study area.

In addition to the presence of significant water and natural resources in Bryans Road described above, several other environmental characteristics constrain how the land can effectively be used in the subarea. Typical environmental characteristics that render land as “unbuildable” are: located in a floodplain, has slopes greater than 15 to 25 percent, is located in a wetland or riparian buffer, or is subject to natural hazards. These and other environmental constraints in Bryans Road include:

- **Steep Slopes:** While the topography of Bryans Road is generally rolling, there are some extensive areas of steep slopes especially along the stream valleys. Charles County maintains a spatial data-set of areas with slopes greater than 15 percent. Within Bryans Road, there are 4,714 acres of land that fall into this category.
- **Floodplains, Wetlands, and Riparian Buffers:** Bryans Road includes 8,490 acres of wetlands, most of which are concentrated along the stream valleys, estuaries, and/or river. Charles County’s Resource Protection Zone encompasses the 100-year floodplain, non-tidal wetlands contiguous with or within 25 feet of a stream channel or 100-year floodplain, and a buffer.
- **High Water Table:** The dominant soils in the subarea are the Beltsville Series. These are moderately deep and moderately well drained but have severe limitations for septic drain fields.
- **Soils of Special Geotechnical Concern:** A large area north of MD 210 but also extending south of MD 210 west of Chapman’s Landing has potentially unstable soils with a high shrink-swell potential, known locally as “slippery” soils. There have been cases of cracked foundations in some subdivisions in this area due to these soils.
- **Critical Area:** All land approximately 1,000 feet inland from the Potomac River and along Mattawoman Creek inland as far as the Mattawoman Wastewater Treatment Plant is in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area and is subject to the County’s Critical Area Programs.
- **Community Flood Risk:** The MD DNR Chesapeake and Coastal Service has identified several areas with High or Very High flood risk in Bryans Road. The process for identifying these Coastal Community Flood Risk Areas includes ranking residential areas from very low to very high risk based on probability of exposure to a flood event, population density, and social demographics (age, income, and language proficiency).

<sup>11</sup> 2005 Estimating Residential Development Capacity

<sup>12</sup> 2001 Bryans Road Subarea Plan

<sup>13</sup> 2001 Bryans Road Subarea Plan

## CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION EFFORTS

Slightly more than 3,846 acres (39%) of the total land area in the core study area are protected by ownership of a local, state, or federal agency for purpose of environmental conservation, or through a forest conservation easement; 6,804 acres are protected in the outer study area bringing the total to nearly 60% of all lands which cannot be developed in Bryans Road. Among many others over the past two decades, two very significant properties have been acquired for conservation: Chapman's Landing, a 2,200-acre site of forest and historic farm straddling Route 210 from the Potomac River to Mattawoman Creek, and approximately 200 acres known as Pomonkey Forest, which had been planned as a technology park near Maryland Airport. Numerous agencies and organizations have a specific interest in the protection of Mattawoman Creek given its significant ecological value and recreational and economic benefit. Significant research and planning, public policy and regulatory efforts, and public and private investments have gone into maintaining or improving water quality over the past twenty years, including a 2011 report by the Interstate Commission on Integrating Priorities and A Sustainable Watershed Using the Watershed Resources Registry in the Mattawoman Creek Watershed; and a 2012 report by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, The Case for Protection of the Watershed Resources of Mattawoman Creek, which makes recommendations for management initiatives to protect the Mattawoman ecosystem. The County's adopted Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) also contains priority projects and preservation areas in the Mattawoman and beyond.

On a countywide scale, requirements for environmental site design, erosion and sediment control, forest conservation, and stormwater management have been improved in the land development process, as a way to protect existing natural resources from impacts when land is converted for urban use.

The County's Municipal Stormwater Restoration Plan adopted in December 2017 is the compliance document for the County's municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) Discharge Permit under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program. The plan identifies the causes of impairments in the County's watersheds and lays out strategies for reducing pollutant loads locally and to the Chesapeake Bay, so that designated uses can be achieved. Major sources of pollution identified in this plan include:

- **Septic systems** in the Mattawoman Creek watershed, numbering approximately 3,000, need to be upgraded to enhanced denitrification technology or connected to the sewer system, as the high water table facilitates the movement of nitrogen from these systems into local waterways. Specific areas of concern in Bryans Road are north of MD 210 to the west of MD 227.
- **Shoreline erosion** is one of the greatest sources of sediment and turbidity to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Along the Potomac River between Indian Head and the Prince George's County line, historical shoreline change rates vary from 0 to -2.0 feet/year. This relatively modest rate is due to the slumping high banks and reduced fetch exposures; however, a few residential properties have unstable banks, and concerns exist about top-down erosion from land development.

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<sup>14</sup> Assessment and Shoreline Management Plan for Reaching NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit (MS4) Goals for Charles County, Maryland (charlescountymd.gov), P 8



- **Stormwater runoff** from buildings, roads, parking lots and other paved surfaces is a major contributor to stream degradation. Concerns include the increased volume and velocity of runoff that occur as lands are developed, contributing to downstream flooding and stream erosion as well as loss of habitat. The mix of pollutants—including nutrients, sediment, bacteria, metals, chloride, and toxics—associated with this runoff also contribute to impairments. Of particular concern are urban areas that were developed before the adoption of Maryland’s stormwater management requirements for water quality treatment. Charles County’s MS4 permit requires the “restoration”—through the installation of best management practice (BMPs)—of 20 percent of these currently untreated impervious areas in each permit cycle. In Bryans Road, approximately 667 acres of impervious surfaces covered in the County’s permit have no runoff treatment, while another 212 acres have inadequate runoff treatment.

The 2017 Municipal Stormwater Restoration Plan identifies impervious restoration efforts such as new bio-retention facilities, filtration systems, stormwater pond retrofits, wetland creation, and dry swales, as well as “alternative” projects such as stream restoration. The master list of watershed restoration projects can be found in Appendix A of the restoration plan; those specific to the Bryans Road area are shown below. Other local watershed plans such as the 2016 Lower Patuxent River Watershed Assessment also identify specific restoration projects for implementation. Some recent restoration efforts in Bryans Road include:

- Nearly 200 septic improvements were made between 2000 and 2015, one-fifth of which were connections to the sewer system or technological upgrades of existing septic facilities. The balance were septic pump outs performed by the County.
- Dry swale and enhanced filter systems were installed near the Bryans Road Shopping Center, which improved treatment for nearly 10 acres of impervious surface.

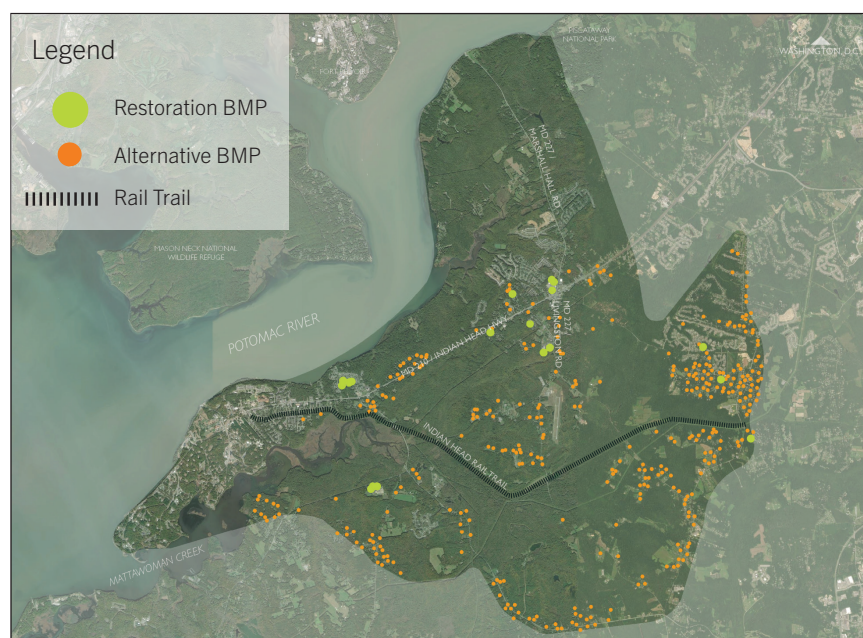


Figure 9. Potential Restoration Projects Map

- Commencement of stream restoration projects at the Ruth B. Swann Park.
- A living shoreline, a new stormwater pond, and 21 bioswales were installed in Potomac Heights.
- To bioretention facilities were installed at General Smallwood Elementary School.

### NANJEMOY-MATTAWOMAN RURAL LEGACY AREA

In November 2021, acting at the recommendation of the Charles County Commissions, the Maryland Board of Public Works established the Nanjemoy-Mattawoman Rural Legacy Area (RLA). The 40,000-acre RLA extends from the Potomac River north to a boundary that roughly follows MD 6 (Port Tobacco Road) and MD 344 (Chicamuxen Road). The area was prioritized for RLA designation based on a variety of criteria including natural resources, agricultural lands, and active forestry timberlands, as well as the county's planning and land-use strategies, cultural and historic resources, and proximity to the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. With the RLA designation, Charles County can access additional state resources to purchase conservation easements.



## WHAT WE HEARD

From longtime residents to new arrivals, there is a deep reverence for the farms, forests, and waterways in and surrounding Bryans Road. It is recognized that the value of conservation extends beyond ecological benefit; the Mattawoman Creek and Potomac River are economically important to the area both as a tourism destination and for retaining NSF Indian Head as a viable military facility.

While there is no shortage of land preservation and environmental restoration projects that could be undertaken, concern was expressed that there is no dedicated funding source for such efforts in western Charles County.

Concern was also raised about failing septic systems, invasive species, highly erodible soils, and that regulatory systems are not well enough enforced to prevent erosion and sediment control.

Finally, several stakeholders expressed an interest in improving access to public lands so that the benefits of conservation can be felt more widely.

## Community Resources and Services

One measure of a community's health is the extent to which public services, service organizations, and faith-based institutions are available to complement and/or supplement that which is available by businesses in area. When neighbors help neighbors and there is a strong sense of community identity, a community is more cohesive; when public agencies, non-profit organizations, and private businesses can work in partnership, synergies can be realized to meet the basic needs of daily living, enhance the quality of life, and make a community stronger.

The Bryans Road area has a wealth of resources and services, some of which are well-known and well-utilized; other resources are less well-known, less accessible, or struggle in terms of financial and human means to fully realize their mission. This section summarizes the public and private resources available to the community.

### EDUCATION

Bryans Road is served by the usual educational institutions one might expect to find in a largely rural environment, albeit one with some suburban characteristics. Kindergarten through twelfth grade is provided at JC Parks Elementary School, Matthew Henson Middle School, and McDonogh High School, respectively. School capacity is somewhat of a concern in parts of Charles County, although according to state capacity standards only Matthew Henson Middle School is overcrowded. As a result of the overcrowding, most new residential construction is restricted in the area. A new middle school for western Charles County is included in the school system's capital improvement program to be operational in school year 2026 which should alleviate the overcrowding.

In addition to K-12 schools, the College of Southern Maryland offers workforce and professional development courses such as Computer-Aided Design, Government Procurement, and Social Entrepreneurship, at the Velocity Center in Indian Head and a full offering of courses at its main campus in La Plata. The Potomac Branch of the Charles County Public Library is open Monday – Saturday.



*Potomac Branch Library*

### SOCIAL & RECREATIONAL

- BRSC Community Outreach Center provides monthly social events, holiday celebrations, and resource days. The center is staffed entirely by volunteers.
- Indian Head Senior Center offers many daily activities such as bingo, line dancing classes, sing-alongs, bridge, ceramics, knitting, safety and nutrition lectures, watercolor painting, billiards, and holiday celebrations. Any Charles County resident 60 years or older must register annually to participate in activities. Lunch is served daily for a small donation.

- Several public parks are available for passive and active recreation including Chapmans State Park, Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park, Piscataway National Park, Mattawoman State Natural Environmental Area, and Mason Springs Conservancy, as well as ballfields and playgrounds at each of the schools.
- Little League baseball, t-ball, softball, swimming, wrestling, football, soccer, and cheerleading are all available for youth in the area.
- Indian Head Rail Trail, 13.4 miles long, traverses east from Indian Head to connect to White Plains. Dispersed along the trail's length are parking and access at multiple locations.



*Indian Head Rail Trail*

### SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

- The Loyal Order of Moose, American Legion, and Bee Hive PHA Masonic Lodge are all active in the Bryans Road Area.
- The Bryans Road Volunteer Fire Department (BVFD) was organized in 1962 and is supported by a ladies auxiliary. BVFD also has a community hall available for rental.

### HEALTH & WELLNESS

Most primary care health services are available in La Plata, White Plains, and Waldorf; the Charles Regional Medical Center (hospital) is in La Plata. A few independent physician and dentist offices are in the study area; periodic health clinics are provided to residents at the Senior Center and at the BRSC Community Outreach Center.

### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Most governmental services are provided in Waldorf or La Plata, the county seat.



*Pomonkey School*



*Moyaone Reserve Historic District*

## Historic and Cultural Resources

Identifying and preserving historic and cultural resources is a key part of maintaining community identity. Cultural resources also provide a connection to the area's heritage and can be used to stimulate economic development through heritage tourism.

The Bryans Road area is rich in historic and cultural resources that are a source of great pride for many residents, and there are several organized efforts to preserve and promote those lands, landmarks, and ways of life. There are approximately 25 historic sites in the Bryans Road planning area listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Sites. Most of these sites are privately owned. Efforts are underway to designate Southern Maryland as a National Heritage Area, with Indian Head Highway (MD 210) through Bryans Road being a big part of that.

Among the most significant historical and cultural resources and communities are:

- **The land and waterways now known as Piscataway Park** have been the tribal homeland of the Piscataway People of Southern Maryland. Though many of the Piscataway descendants have moved away from their traditional lands, the heaviest concentration remains in Charles, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties. Their homeland centers on what is today Piscataway Park. The tribal homeland was first mapped by Captain John Smith in 1608. Conflict began to grow in the 1660s when the English began encroaching on Piscataway villages; this colonial expansion led to the first established treaty in 1666 between Lord Baltimore and the Tribal Leadership. A number of treaties followed, but all were eventually broken by the expansion of the settlers. Yet through it all, the Piscataway persevered and are here today. On January 9, 2012, the Piscataway Conoy Tribe was officially recognized by the State of Maryland. The Chiefdom encompassed most of what is now Southern Maryland, including under the Piscataway umbrella semi-independent nations ranging from Yeocomico near the mouth of the Potomac River to the Tauxenents near modern-day Washington, D.C. For Piscataways, this land is the burying place of countless ancestors, the place where the fundamentals of Piscataway society and culture were forged.

- **The Pomonkey Historic District** is a significant African American community in Charles County. It was established in 1868 as the location of a Freeman’s Bureau school and continued to grow into the late twentieth century, encompassing the time between Emancipation and passage of federal civil rights legislation. Its pattern of development, from the establishment of what is now Metropolitan United Methodist Church in 1868, to the founding of fraternal organizations and construction of major educational institutions in the early twentieth century, to the establishment of notable commercial ventures and newer and larger schools in the mid- to late twentieth century, is representative of the African American experience in Charles County.

Located at the intersection of Livingston Road (MD 227) and Metropolitan Church Road, Pomonkey is a rural crossroads community comprised of widely scattered development with a mix of residential, educational, institutional, and commercial buildings dating from the early to late twentieth century. The approximately 78-acre district includes three educational buildings, two social halls, and three residences associated with the other properties. There are also several sites associated with earlier educational buildings, as well as the sites of a grange hall and a community health building.

The historic district includes Heritage House, a museum housing artifacts and history of the local black community, and the Pomonkey High School, which was the first African American public high school in Charles County. In 2017, the Maryland Department of Planning’s African American Heritage Preservation Grant Program awarded \$100,000 for the Pomonkey High School Alumni Association to begin restoration of the school to become a cultural center and museum. Although not in Pomonkey, the family home of J.C. Parks, Superintendent of African American public schools in Charles, is located along MD 210 just north of the Bryans Road Shopping Center.



## WHAT WE HEARD

Advocates, activists, and community leaders for historic communities and sites and cultural resources have expressed immense pride in the heritage of Bryans Road and surrounding areas. However, there is a feeling that the area lacks cohesion and a sense of place that could amplify those historic and cultural resources. There is some excitement that the Southern Maryland Heritage area could bring momentum to efforts led by aging volunteers, which would in turn relieve concern that the historic and cultural resources could deteriorate.

Representatives of the Piscataway Conoy Nation and African American heritage communities expressed concern that their communities have been forgotten, marginalized, or pushed aside among the vast development that has occurred in Charles County.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Interview with members of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in October 2021, supplemented with information from Wikipedia.

- **Mount Aventine Mansion** was a grand manor house built by Nathaniel Chapman's great-grandson, Pearson, around 1840, after a fire damaged the original house near the river. The mansion, one of the best examples of 19th century homes in Southern Maryland, commands a prominent overlook and spectacular view of the Potomac River, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966. Mount Aventine is located in Chapman State Park acquired by the State of Maryland in 1998 as part of Program Open Space. Chapman State Park stretches from the Potomac River to Mattawoman Creek.



*Marshall Hall*

- **The Moyaone Reserve Historic District** encompasses a residential landscape of roughly 1,320 acres that spans parts of western Charles County and southern Prince George's County. This landscape is characterized by a topographically diverse terrain that creates a distinctive setting for residential development. It offers scenic hilltops, hidden valleys, and plenty of level ground for home building, and within its boundaries are 124 houses that contribute to the significance of the historic district, reflecting a range of late twentieth-century residential forms and styles.



*Marshall Hall Amusement Park (permanently closed in 1980)*

- Located in the historic viewshed of Mount Vernon (George Washington's estate) is **Marshall Hall**, part of the Piscataway Park operated by the National Park Service. Soon after the Civil War, the site became a highly frequented picnic ground because of its proximity to Mount Vernon. Steamship lines originally established to ferry tourists from Washington D.C. and Alexandria to/from Mount Vernon, discovered a new source of revenue in the park across from the historic estate. The area became one of the first amusement parks in the Washington, D.C., area in the 1890s, offering numerous "appliances of entertainment" (as one deed described them) for visitors who wanted to do more than picnic. Preservation efforts by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association led Congress to mandate that views from Mt. Vernon had to be protected to resemble the days when George Washington sat on his colonnaded porch and looked across the Potomac.

<sup>16</sup> Quick Facts: Bryans Road CDP, Maryland. [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) accessed on December 23, 2021

<sup>17</sup> Analysis of master parcel file, Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation, December 2021

## Housing, Community & Economic Development

As a largely rural area, housing and employment options in Bryans Road are limited. Bryans Road functions largely as a bedroom community for jobs in Washington, DC, and its suburbs, as well as to local job centers in Waldorf and La Plata. There are few local employers of significant size in the area; housing is largely suburban subdivision style of single-family homes on lots of varying sizes. Commercial and professional services are scarce in Bryans Road with most activity occurring to the east in Waldorf.

### HOUSING

Housing in the Bryans Road area is largely single-family units on large lots, although over the past 20 years lot sizes have become smaller as environmental regulations have emphasized cluster development and conservation of forested areas and best practices for stormwater management. According to the 2020 census, owners occupy 84 percent of housing units and the median housing value is \$274,000. There are just over 2,900 households in Bryans Road.

Approximately 19 percent of all housing units in Bryans Road have been built since 2011; 55 percent have been built since 1990. Nearly all the housing in Bryans Road is single-family detached and market rate, although there are approximately 100 townhome units located near the Bryans Road Shopping Center. There is no housing in Bryans Road specifically reserved for occupancy by senior citizens.

### RETAIL / COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Residents identify the US 301 corridor in Waldorf as the closest destination for quality options for everyday shopping – grocery, pharmacy, retail, and restaurants; however, residents also expressed admiration and appreciation for the locally owned and operated small businesses in Bryans Road including High Noon Southern Fine Cuisine, Bodi Oasis Wellness Spa & Salon, Chuck’s Butcher Shop, and Bryans Road Building Supply Company. A Food Lion located on MD 227 at Matthews Road is perceived to be inferior to the Safeway grocery store, which closed in 2018 at the Bryans Road Shopping Center. The shopping center was built in the 1970s and recently underwent a “facelift.” The Safeway was replaced by a self-storage center. When a “night out” or special occasion calls for dinner or entertainment, residents identify Old Town Alexandria in Virginia and National Harbor in Prince George’s County as the most likely destinations.

### EMPLOYMENT

Much of Bryans Road was built as a bedroom community to Naval Support Facility (NSF) Indian Head (and its predecessors); today, the workplaces of employment-age residents are more dispersed. While it is difficult to ascertain where Bryans Road residents travel for employment, based on discussions with residents and county staff, it is apparent that a large contingent of residents is employed by federal agencies and contractors; many others are employed by local and state agencies in Charles County and Prince George’s counties. Agricultural employment is a dwindling share of the employment base in western Charles County, and there are few, if any, non-retail firms with more than 25 employees in Bryans Road.



Approximately 558 acres surrounding the Maryland Airport were recently designated for “employment-related” land uses. If the land is re-zoned and developed, the Charles County Department of Economic Development believes that light industrial or flex space would be most likely to occur, however, there are no specific development plans in place.

### NSF INDIAN HEAD AND THE TOWN OF INDIAN HEAD

Although not in the core study area, NSF Indian Head is an important economic force in western Charles County and to some extent the Southern Maryland region. As described by staff at the NSF, there is an eclectic mix of research, testing, development, and production functions at the base. The number of personnel assigned to NSF Indian Head is approximately 3,800 of which 2,700 are civilian employees of the Department of Defense, 475 are contractor personnel, and 625 are military. The workforce is highly educated and tends to work a traditional 8-hour day. With few amenities in the area, workers tend to leave the area at the end of the day. The base has a convenience store selling dry goods but no commissary; the planned grocery store in Indian Head (see below) is part of a larger effort by the Military Alliance Council to strengthen community facilities and make NSF Indian Head an attractive place to work and live.

The Town of Indian Head, just south of Bryans Road, has recently shown momentum in its revitalization efforts. In 2020, The Velocity Center opened, providing conference and meeting space, shared workspace, and a makerspace. The Velocity Center is a tangible result of partnerships between the College of Southern Maryland, Naval Support Facility, and Charles County Department of Economic Development to develop a space to educate, train, expand, and retain the talent in Southern Maryland.



*Velocity Center*

Renovation of the Algonquin Building in Indian Head is being undertaken by local business owners for a grocery, Oasis Fresh Food Market, planned to open in 2022, with affordable housing units on the second floor. The Black Box Theater, opened in 2004, and Indian Head Center for the Arts is a community resource that provides social engagement through movie nights, meetings, and live theater, music, dance, and readings. More than 200 homes have been built since 2015 and plans are under development for a boardwalk and waterfront park along the Potomac River. Strong political leadership and the support of the Indian Head Military Alliance Council are uniting residents, civic organizations, and businesses to support and advocate for the town and the Naval Support Facility.



## WHAT WE HEARD

- The loss of the Safeway in 2018 was more than the loss of a grocery store; residents felt that it was another indication that Bryans Road is falling behind and being forgotten.
- The lack of housing options in Bryans Road including a place for seniors to retire or convalesce is a concern for longtime residents of the area.
- Many residents acknowledged that commercial development that occurs along US 301 in the vicinity of Waldorf, MD, doesn't fit with the character of the western part of Charles County, however, they do feel that improved retail and restaurant options are needed and can be accommodated within the existing commercial areas of Bryans Road and Indian Head.
- Many residents and business stakeholders were supportive (or at least, not opposed) to reclassifying Maryland Airport for employment-oriented land uses; however, most are unconvinced that there is real development potential.



**NOTE TO READER:**

*This section should be viewed as the considered opinion of the project consultant based on a review of existing conditions, economic and environmental analysis, and comments received through stakeholder engagement. The consultant team is led by Mead & Hunt with support from Floura Teeter Landscape Architects, Valbridge Property Advisors, and the Center for Watershed Protection.*

*This analysis is not necessarily the opinion of the Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management and is concurrently submitted to PGM and the community for review and comment.*

**Analysis of Existing Conditions**

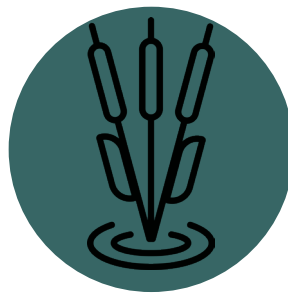
The Bryans Road area is rich in environmental, historic, and cultural resources and has maintained much of its rural character in the 40+ years since major population growth began in Charles County. As several residential subdivisions have been constructed within a one mile of the crossroads of MD 210 and MD 227, the population grew to approximately 8,650. However, in the past ten years Bryans Road has stagnated by virtue of land use policy decisions and economic shifts in western Charles County.

Cancellation of the Cross County connector from Waldorf to MD 210, designation of more than 30,000 acres of land as an ultra-low density watershed conservation district, when combined with existing environmental protections and very restrictive “school seat allocation policy” has dramatically reduced the amount of development that can occur in the Bryans Road Area. Under current zoning, only 500 – 600 units of housing can be built within 1.5 miles of the MD 210 and MD 227 and as practical matter, only 10 – 15% of all land in the Bryans Road is available for development. To the positive, that development which has occurred in the past fifteen years has been denser and consumed less raw land which is an important indicator of environmentally-responsible development in the Mattawoman watershed. Improvement in county development regulations, land preservation, environmental restoration has also contributed to maintaining the “Tier I” high-quality status of Mattawoman watershed.



**60% Protected  
from Development**

County, state and federally-owned lands; conservation easements, etc.



**25-30% Highly  
Regulated**

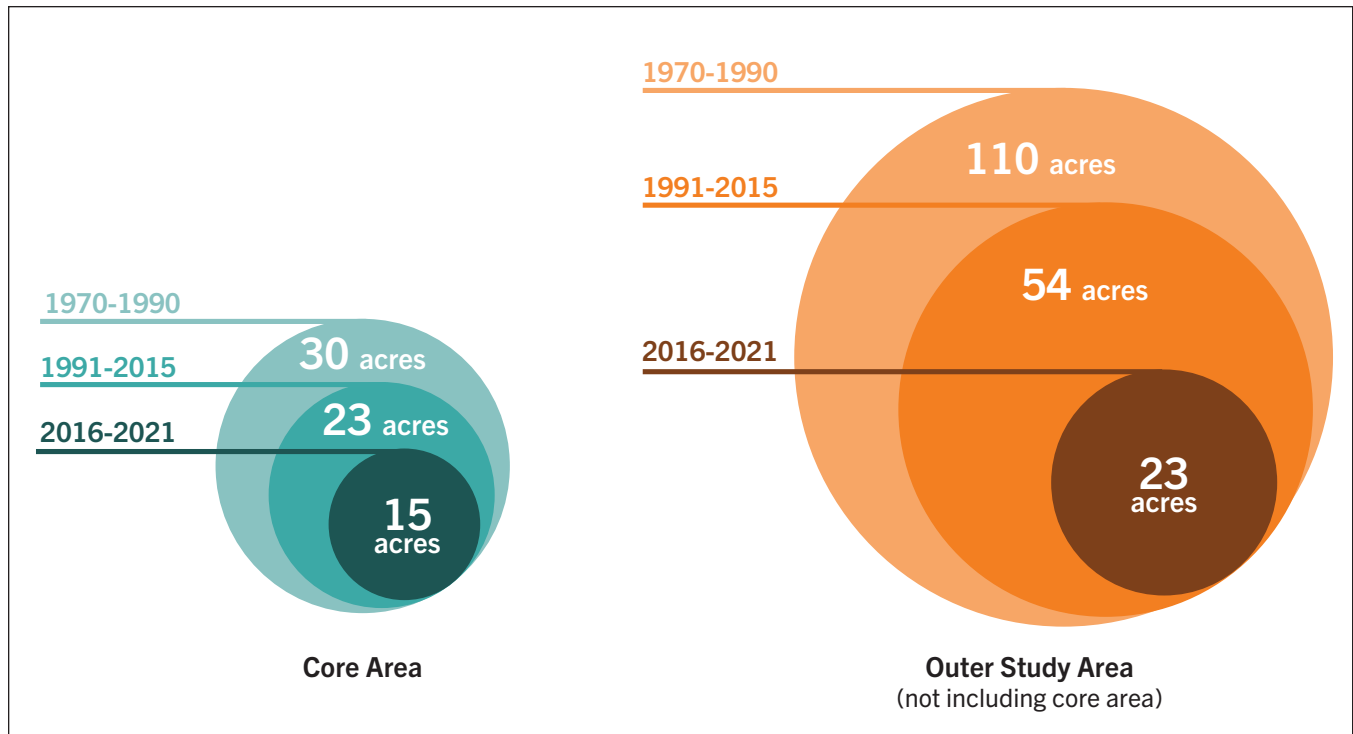
Steep slopes, buffers, wetlands, soils, etc.



**10-15% Potentially  
Developable**

Residential, commercial, industrial, mixed use, etc.

Figure 10. Annual Land Consumption for Residential and Commercial Development



On the economic front, Naval Support Facility Indian Head which once supported as many 7,000 military and civilian jobs was been pared back to approximately 3,800 on-base personnel. The economic strength of NSF that once extended to Bryans Road is less impactful today due to smaller headcount and to programming decisions that have the base tending to be more transient contractor positions. These positions do not necessarily lead to long-term residency in the area and result in a “get in, get out” commuting pattern that does not support the local service economy as it once did.

Community leaders in Bryans Road have pointed to recent efforts in the Town of Indian Head as a model for community and economic revitalization. The Town of Indian Head has continued to capture economic spin-off benefits through the Velocity Center and recent establishment of the US Bomb Technicians Association’s east coast headquarters; however, scale of those opportunities is not as large as it once was. It is important to note that is Indian Head is an independent municipality with its own elected officials, taxing authority, and strong connection to the naval base through the Military Alliance Council. While the Town of Indian Head has been able to generate attention and mobilize resources for revitalization, Bryans Road lacks a signature institution and cohesive advocacy for community and economic development to achieve the same focus.

While housing demand remains strong overall in Charles County, the above restrictions and the lack of a significant economic generator make it nearly impossible for Bryans Road to grow and support the types of amenities that are enjoyed in the rest of the county’s development district. Even though the average household income is quite high, there are simply not enough residents to support a high-quality, full-ser-

vice grocery store, multiple sit-down restaurants, and retail and professional services that residents of the area desire. In summary, Bryans Road is at-risk of becoming an island of disconnected subdivisions with an aging housing stock that does not grow in value. This will further cycle the area into disinvestment and commercial vacancies, ultimately requiring more public investment to stabilize Bryans Road.

### An Environmentally Responsible Growth Target

A target population of approximately 11,500 residents (up from 8,650) would make Bryans Road a far more viable and vibrant place from a community and economic development perspective – and is far less than current forecasts by regional and state planners through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. An environmentally responsible, community-sustaining growth scenario to increase the population of Bryans Road will require approximately 700 – 750 new residential units in addition to the 250 residential lots which have already been subdivided and can be constructed “by right.” On average, this this may result in approximately 40 new homes being constructed per year.

	Existing population plus current zoning and redevelopment	Growth Scenario (Any Year)			Agressive growth with potentially adverse environmental consequences
		Environmentally responsible, community sustaining growth	10%	20%	
Total Population	9,515	10,380	11,245	12,629	
New Residents	865	1,730	2,595	3,979	
Persons per HH (Census)**	2.69	2.69	2.69	2.8	
New DUs to achieve target pop	322	643	965	1,364	
Already recorded Lots	250	250	250	250	
Net New Lots Needed	72	393	715	1,171	
Annual DUs Constructed	13	16	39	57	

DU=Dwelling Unit  
HH=Household

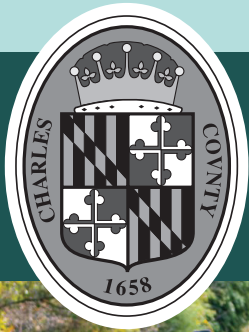
Current Population = 8,650

\*MWCOG Regional Forecast – Charles County apportionment between 2020-2045.

\*\* MWCOG forecast uses lower uses 2.8 residents per HH

This growth cannot and should not occur overnight. A well-planned approach that includes responsible environmental controls and sufficient road, school, water, and sewer infrastructure should be in place concurrent with new residential development. Heightened mitigation of development impacts, land preservation, environmental education, and restoration of prior impacts should also occur as new development is permitted. To attain a diverse range of housing types and affordability, the burden of environmental controls and restoration needs to be carried through both public and private investment, not simply added to the cost of new development. Opportunities for families to enjoy the vast environmental resources of the area should also be encouraged, and housing created that allows seniors to age in their community.

What is needed for Bryans Road to be a sustainable village is not a wholesale change in policy, but a course correction that allows private investment and targeted public actions to occur harmoniously.



# BRYANS ROAD

## SUB-AREA PLAN

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### Part 2: The Plan

RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ADOPTION  
FEBRUARY 27, 2023



## Introduction

The Bryan's Road Subarea Plan starts from one premise. Environmental conservation and community development can be reinforcing objectives. The health and beauty of the Mattawoman Creek watershed, and history and culture of the area are essential elements of what makes Bryans Road an attractive place to live. Equally essential to the quality of life in Bryans Road is amenities enjoyed by similar communities in the region: sit-down restaurants, pools and recreational activities, a grocery store with variety and fresh, healthy foods, and easy access to medical and professional services. This plan aims squarely at both objectives through strategies that will strengthen the residential and commercial core of Bryans Road, balanced with strategies that will protect and enhance the environment, culture and heritage of Bryans Road.

Public investments in community facilities are proposed in this plan to demonstrate the commitment of Charles County government to Bryans Road and other communities in the western part of the county. But public investments can only go so far to bring the desired amenities to the area. Government does not build grocery stores or restaurants, but government can make the conditions right for the private sector to make those investments. Charles County can strengthen the position of Bryans Road to be viable for the types of businesses that are desired through tax policy, infrastructure development, and land use planning that creates a sufficient market to support existing businesses and additional commercial development. As such, the land use element of this plan would anticipate growth of approximately 30% above the 8,500 or so residents who live in Bryans Road today.

The targeted growth areas in this plan are within 1.5 miles of the MD 210 (Indian Head Highway) and MD 227 (Livingston Road); none comes within one-third of a mile of the Mattawoman Creek. New residential growth in this plan must be supported by growth controls such as developing within the constraints of existing and planned infrastructure, strategically using the County's adequate public facilities ordinance, maintaining strict environmental and subdivision regulations, and providing incentives that support existing businesses, infill development and redevelopment of existing commercial properties. The county should facilitate planned infrastructure necessary to attract private investment while also targeting acquisition of easements to protect forests, farmlands and stream buffers — two sides of the same Smart Growth coin.

This plan is designed to strengthen the core of Bryans Road while preserving and enhancing the unique natural and cultural assets that can make it a great place to raise a family. Both objectives can be met through focused investments and balanced planning practices while implementing this plan.





## Planning for Growth & Community Development

The land use plan guides how and where Bryans Road should evolve over the long-term (typically ten to twenty years) to accommodate growth of housing, jobs, commercial activity, and community facilities.

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### Planning for Growth & Community Development

Strengthening the Core of Bryans Road

Preserving and Enhancing our Culture, Environment and History

Making it Happen: Plan Summary & Implementation



## Future Land Use Plan Summary

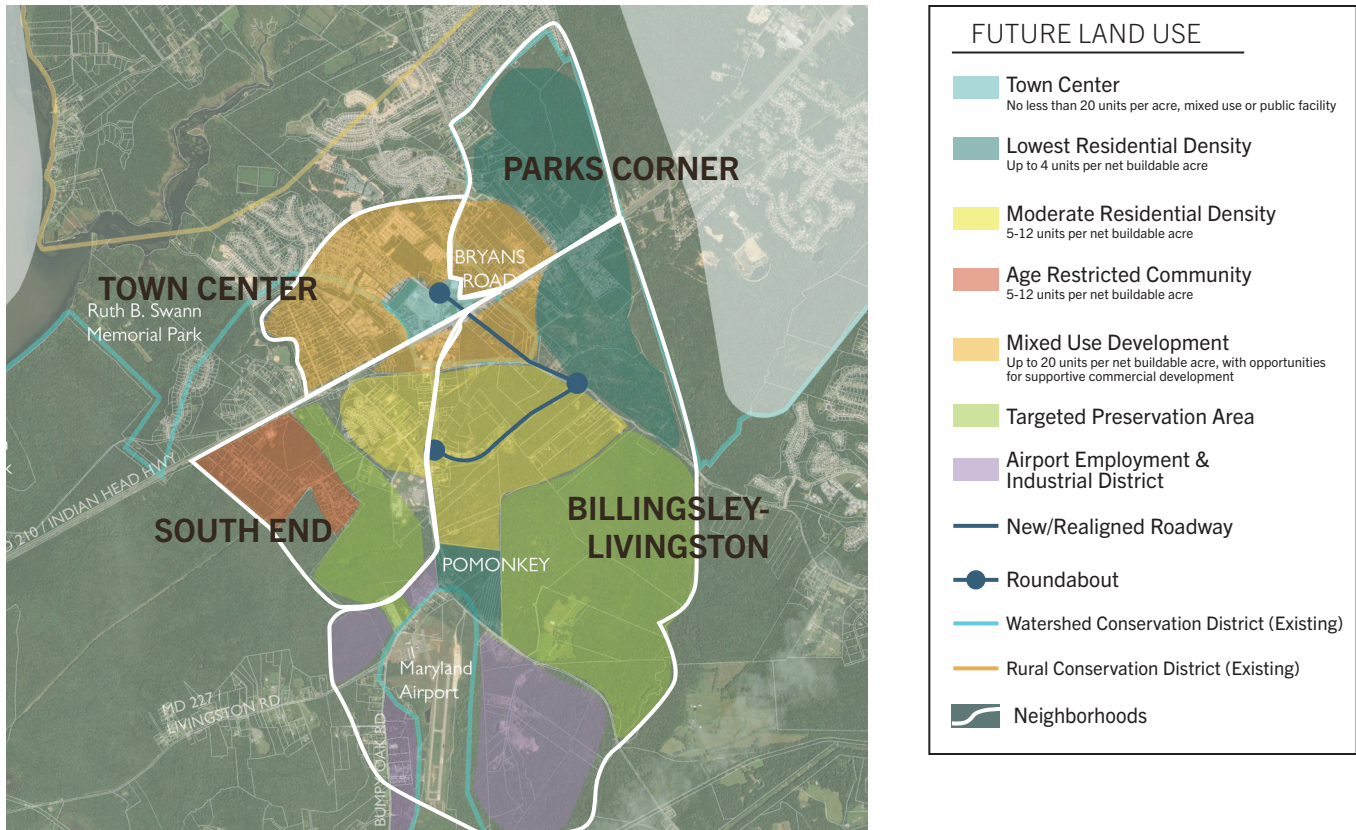
As indicated in the summary of existing conditions, opportunities for residential growth are significantly constrained with 60% of all lands in Bryans Road are protected from development by private conservation easements, or county, state, and federal ownership for conservation purposes. Another 25–30% of the land in and around Bryans Road is highly regulated through laws that prohibit building on steep slopes, stream buffers, wetlands, and other sensitive habitats. That leaves only 10–15% of the land available for development of residential, commercial, industrial or community facilities projects. Growth is also constrained by market conditions: the type and price of housing and people’s willingness to pay, the number of people searching for homes and the absorption rate (how many new homes can be purchased and occupied each year), population growth, and the regional and national economy; and growth is constrained by land use policies such as zoning and adequate public facilities requirements.

In that context, even a growth target of 30% new residents over the next 15–20 years will be difficult to attain. As has been the trend in Bryans Road and elsewhere the metropolitan Washington region, more housing will need to be built on smaller parcels of land. It is estimated that between market and environmental constraints it is likely that only 1200–1300 homes would be built, even if the area is zoned to allow more. Already, it is estimated that there are approximately 300–400 lots that are subdivided and could be built upon if the market were right and adequate public facilities existed in the western part of the County.

The proposed land use plan for Bryans Road implements the growth target with five guiding principles:

- Support existing businesses and residents while creating conditions to attract new private investment that creates good paying jobs.
- Minimize potential impact to environmentally sensitive areas by using environmental science to determine where development should be permitted.
- Work within existing and planned infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, and schools)
- Focus on areas close to existing and proposed community facilities
- Support opportunities for flexibility in the scale, phasing, and type of development permitted.

Four neighborhoods are described in the land use plan as shown in Map 1: Parks Corner to the northwest of MD 210 and MD 227; Billingsley-Livingston to the east of MD 210; the South End to the south and east of MD 210 and MD 227; and, Town Center which includes and surrounds the existing Bryans Road Shopping Center. Essentially, the proposed land use map is structured with the highest density and mix of uses at the Town Center, with density decreasing and lesser amounts of commercial land as development radiates from the core.



Map 1. Bryans Road Subarea Plan "Neighborhoods"

## WHAT IS A LAND USE PLAN? HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM ZONING?

A land use plan (also referred to as a Future Land Use Map) shows a vision of how and where an area might evolve over the long-term (typically ten to twenty years) to accommodate growth of housing, jobs, commercial activity, and community facilities. A land use plan usually also shows the general location of new roads or changes to existing roads, areas targeted for environmental conservation, and potential locations for new public facilities. The Future Land Use Map:

- must be recommended by the Planning Commission to and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.
- is an amendment to the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- does not affect the property rights of existing property owners.

A land use plan is typically followed by re-zoning of properties. Re-zoning typically defines the permissible uses of property in each zoning category, describes the physical characteristics of how development should occur (minimum lot size, height, and size of structure, etc.) and sets requirements for how the land must be developed (limits on tree clearing, amount of land dedicated to open space, etc.). Rezoning does not affect how property is currently used but may affect what can be built on the property in the future.

### DESCRIPTION OF LAND USE CATEGORIES

The description of land use categories below is intended to be general in nature; a re-zoning of the area following adoption of the Bryans Road Subarea Plan will give greater definition to each land use category, what can and cannot be built in the area, and how the design of the land and buildings should look and feel.

Land use categories also indicate a targeted amount of open space that should be incorporated in each area so classified. Open space requirements can be met through environmental conservation (retaining forested areas, stormwater facilities, etc.) and/or through active uses such as playgrounds, ballfields, and civic spaces.

<p><b>LOWEST DENSITY RESIDENTIAL</b></p>	<p>These areas should be targeted for four dwelling units per net buildable acre with a target open space requirement of 40%.</p>	<p><b>AIRPORT EMPLOYMENT &amp; INDUSTRIAL</b></p>	<p>This area will allow for employment and industrial uses that would support general aviation (small aircraft) needs, light manufacturing with storage and distribution, and flexible space of office, research, and development. Enhanced environmental regulations should be applied to protect streams and forested areas, including minimization of paved area.</p>
<p><b>MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL</b></p>	<p>These areas should be targeted 5–12 dwelling units per net buildable acre with a target open space requirement of 30%.</p>	<p><b>TOWN CENTER</b></p>	<p>The target for residential development in the town center should be 20 units per acre, allow a mix of commercial and public facility uses. The intended mix of commercial uses should orient towards sit-down restaurants, personal, medical, and professional services, etc. Automotive stores and facilities, drive-through restaurants, gas stations, and convenience-type stores should not be permitted in the Town Center.</p>
<p><b>MIXED USE</b></p>	<p>These areas should be targeted 16–20 units per net buildable acre with a target open space requirement of 20%. Some allowance should be made for small-scale commercial development integrated into a subdivision area provided that the use is appropriate, that there is no additional parking required, and the character of the area is maintained.</p>	<p><b>OPEN SPACE &amp; CONSERVATION</b></p>	<p>These areas are intended to remain undeveloped and could be targeted for conservation easements. Alternatively, the provisions of the Watershed Conservation District could be applied to these areas.</p>
<p><b>AGE TARGETED RESIDENTIAL</b></p>	<p>Age targeted communities should allow for a range of housing types such as cottages, apartments, or assisted living suites. Allowance should be made for personal and professional services that bear a relationship to the residential component.</p>		

## COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT

This plan recommends incentivizing and facilitating redevelopment of the traditional Bryans Road core, minimizing the need to increase the acreage of commercially zoned land. acreage for commercial development (office, shopping, etc.). The total amount of land currently designated for commercial uses should be more than sufficient for the retail and service needs of the Bryans Road community. When conducting a thorough rezoning of the area, the Department of Planning and Growth Management should carefully consider any net new acreage for retail development and closely examine permissible uses. Specific areas to examine should include all areas west of Matthews Road, and in the area bound by MD 210 (Indian Head Highway), MD 227 (Livingston Road), and Metropolitan Church Road. Community facilities should be permitted in these areas.

## URBAN DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

While other subarea plans include prescriptive urban design requirements especially for commercial areas, this plan makes no specific recommendations. In Bryans Road, a practical design approach is warranted. “New Urbanist” principles like shallow setbacks, continuous building edges, “live-work” type buildings with residential above retail, expensive streetscape treatments, and the like along MD 210 would be nice to have but development approvals should not be conditioned on them. Instead, the focus of regulatory review and enhancements should be on environmental design and conservation. To the extent that enhanced urban design goals are desirable, the County should find a means of offsetting other development fees and charges such as traffic mitigation requirements.

## Guiding Principles Define the Areas for Growth and Development

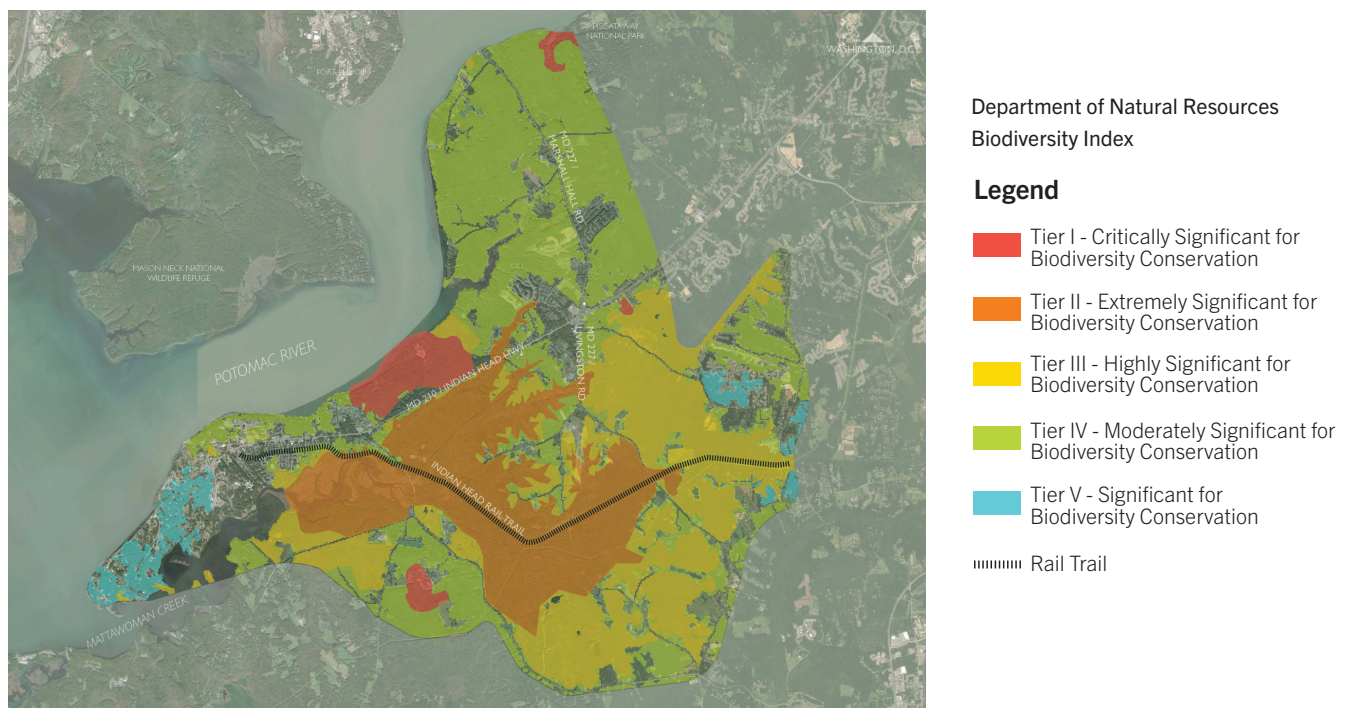
### FOCUS & INCENTIVIZE COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT AND ENACT POLICIES THAT WILL STRENGTHEN THE BRYANS ROAD CORE

It will take public intervention to change the trajectory of commercial and economic development in western Charles County. Coordinated land use planning, infrastructure financing and investment, and tax policy can work together to facilitate commercial redevelopment as occurs throughout the greater metropolitan area.

While reclassification of land uses near Maryland Airport may spur larger industrial investments and job creation, the core of Bryans Road can be a laboratory of policy innovation as the county evolves its economic development practices to focus on redevelopment of struggling commercial areas.

### USE ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE TO DETERMINE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Biodiversity Conservation Network (BioNet) provides a consolidated set of information for government agencies to use for various land protection needs, such as the location of habitats of the state’s rarest plants and animals, high quality and rare natural communities and other living resources of conservation concern. BioNet rates every piece of undeveloped land for its significance to maintaining biological diversity. To the extent that small pieces of Tier 3 land are within a growth area, conservation requirements of the future zoning ordinance can be used to protect these resources. Nearly all of the land proposed for growth and development is in BioNet Tiers 4 through 5, which are the least significant areas for conservation but still require careful environmental design.



Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Use of BioNet as an analytical tool is not intended to imply endorsement or this plan by DNR.

## WORK WITHIN EXISTING AND PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE

There are four elements of infrastructure that are critical to growing smart in Bryans Road: water, sewer, roads, and schools. According to the Department of Public Works Utilities Division, residential growth of 1200–1300 dwelling units over the next ten to twenty years can generally be supported by existing and planned water sources and sewer systems, although some pumping station capacity may be required depending on the specific area of development.<sup>1</sup> Existing road capacity meets county and state standards, although some roadway realignment and operational improvements may be required to improve safety and alleviate peak-hour congestion. School capacity is the most significant obstacle to permitting development in the western part of the County; however, the capital improvement program includes funds to open a new elementary and middle school by FY2026 that will alleviate overcrowding in western Charles County. The County’s “fiber to the premises” public-private partnership currently being deployed in Cobb Neck and Nanjemoy should next be targeted to the Bryans Road area.

### BRYANS ROAD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN A COUNTYWIDE CONTEXT

The purpose of a subarea plan with respect to economic development is to provide the land use and development environment that supports the County’s economic development goals and objectives and ensures its competitiveness as a business location within the region. The ability to create jobs, support growth with an expanding tax base, and to manage growth effectively is related in part to the balance achieved between commercial/industrial development and other plan elements.

The Charles County Comprehensive Plan incorporates a five-year strategic plan for economic development that includes strategies such as encouraging redevelopment and/or adaptive reuse of functionally obsolete commercial structures and developing incentives for commercial corridor revitalization that promote infilling of business uses. While the comprehensive plan and economic strategy emphasize the above efforts in Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor and the transit corridor from White Plains to the County line, the Planning Commission also believes it important recognize the needs of smaller communities like Bryans Road. The loss of the Safeway at Bryans Road Shopping Center in 2018 and its conversion to a self-storage facility was an inflection point for the community and should be a reminder to county officials that more aggressive efforts are needed to stabilize older commercial areas throughout the county.

While the Bryans Road Subarea Plan includes modest recommendations that would advance commercial and mixed-use development, such actions should be considered in a countywide context. To spur revitalization in Bryans Road and elsewhere, the Planning Commission recommends that the county give further consideration and/or more aggressive use of a redevelopment authority, acquisition of blighted properties, tax increment financing, land assembly, and increased use of tax incentives.

<sup>1</sup> The County’s capital improvement program includes funding for a new 2MG Water Tower to (FY2024) and waterline upgrades and interconnections in communities along Marshall Hall Road to increase system redundancy, water pressure, and fire suppression capabilities.

### FOCUS ON AREAS CLOSE TO EXISTING AND PROPOSED COMMUNITY FACILITIES

All the growth proposed in the land use plan is within one mile of at least three important community facilities such as: JC Parks Elementary and Matthew Henson Middle Schools, Potomac Branch Library, churches, small businesses along MD 210, the Bryans Road Shopping Center, US Post Office and grocery store. While walking and bicycling are not expected to be commonplace, the proximity of communities to these facilities does make it possible to do so — and further demonstrates this plan’s commitment to Smart Growth.

### SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FLEXIBILITY IN THE SCALE, PHASING, AND TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT PERMITTED

Regulations for the design of each neighborhood should encourage creativity by developers to meet the plan’s overall objectives of environmental conservation and community development. Many of the existing urban design guidelines are expected to be retained from prior plans, however, they should come with more flexibility that allows smaller scale development to occur. The County should encourage that the next few subdivisions to move forward occur nearest to the Town Center while allowing for environmental and infrastructure planning to occur further away from the core.



*Proximity of planned growth areas to key community facilities.*



## NEIGHBORHOOD: Town Center

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Town Center area of Bryans Road includes the Bryans Road Shopping Center and commercial properties situated opposite Matthews and Marshall Hall Roads, as well as the neighborhoods along South Hampton Drive and Matthews Road west of the shopping center. Most of the area is already developed with single family detached residences on less than ¼ acre per lot or townhomes organized in a grid or loop network. A small community of affordable housing sits just south of the shopping center. Much of the vacant land north and west of shopping center has already been subdivided and is awaiting building permit allocations per the County’s adequate public facilities ordinance. The area just south of MD 227 to South Hampton Drive is also within the Town Center neighborhood.

There are few environmentally significant resources in the Town Center area. A stream restoration project was completed between the shopping center and Ruth B. Swann Park in 2020; impervious surface removal or bioretention facilities have been proposed but not yet advanced to construction. The infrastructure for the Town Center area is fully developed.

#### Biodiversity Significance



#### LEGEND

- Tier I - Critically Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier II - Extremely Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier III - Highly Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier IV - Moderately Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier V - Significant for Biodiversity Conservation

#### Protected and Regulated Lands



#### LEGEND

- Protected Land and Easements
- Regulatory Constrained Land
- ▬▬▬▬▬▬ Rail Trail
- ▬▬▬▬▬▬ Targeted Development Area

**Current Land Uses:** medium and high density single-family residential, shopping center, fast food restaurants and gas stations/ convenience stores, other retail uses.

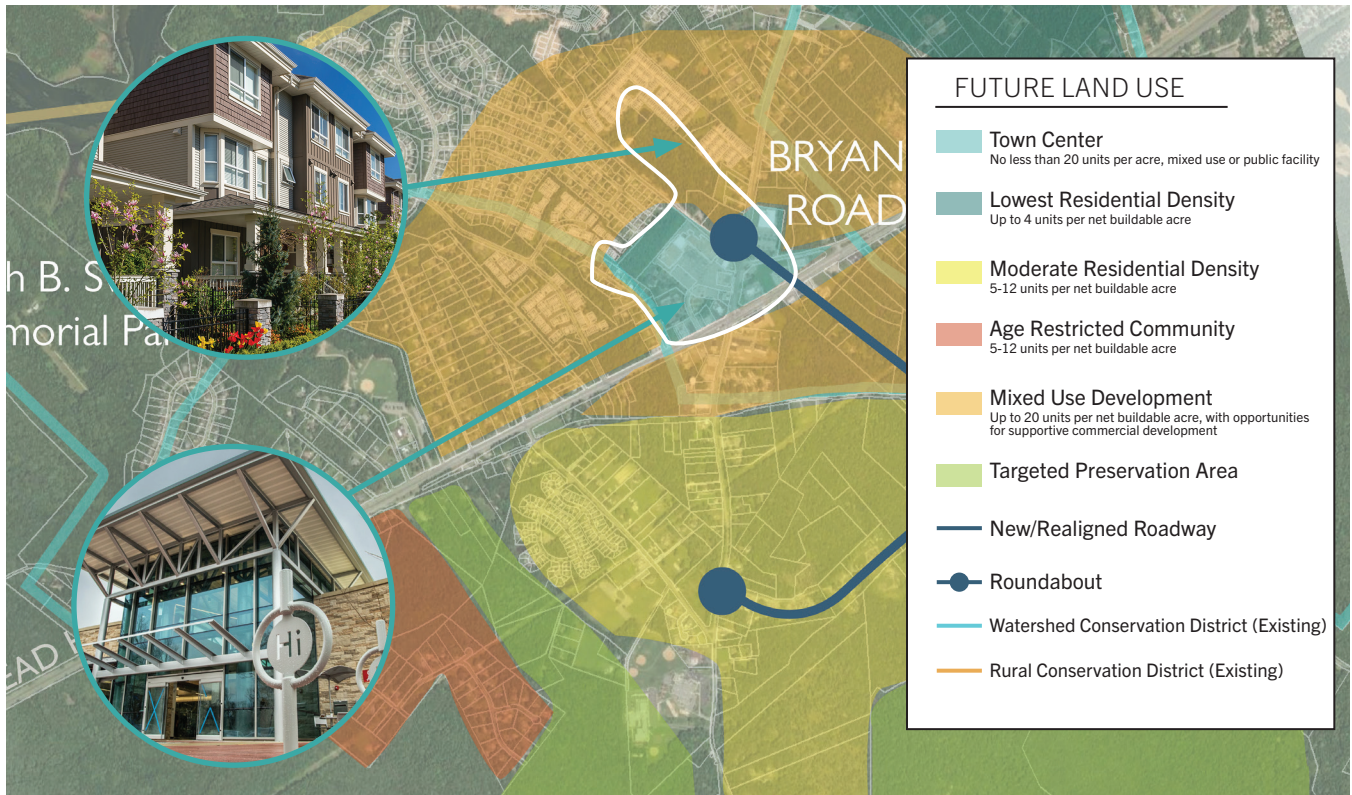
**Current Zoning:** Core Residential Retail, Medium and High Density Suburban Residential, Core Mixed Retail, Core Retail Residential.

<p><b>WATER</b> Served</p>	<p><b>SEWER</b> Served</p>	<p><b>ROADS</b> Overlapping Needs Depending on other development</p>
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### Town Center Recommendations

At most there is 20 acres of net developable land remaining in the Town Center other than that which has already been subdivided and property that is currently zoned for commercial use. This land could yield as many as 300 additional lots for high density residential units. This level of density (or greater, if warranted) is encouraged because it is the least environmentally significant and most walkable to shopping and community facilities.

It is strongly recommended that the County and owners of major commercial properties in the Town Center work together to create a cohesive development plan that can accommodate the proposed multigenerational community facility (see page 24) which should be the anchor of the Town Center. Efforts to further subdivide or re-subdivide the Bryans Road Shopping Center or properties in the triangle between Marshall Road, Matthews Road, and MD 210, or to waive certain design and use requirements, should be resisted until the County and property owners agree on a development plan for the entire commercial core. A mix of high residential (multistory) and commercial uses should be allowed, but “residential above retail” development should be incentivized rather than required as is currently in the zoning code. If the shopping center is every fully redeveloped, Bucknell Road should be extended through the property to Marshall Hall Road.



Targeted growth area in Town Center neighborhood



*Above is a conceptual layout for the Town Center neighborhood. The layout does not constitute endorsement by the primary property owners.*

### IN TOWN CENTER IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- Further subdivision of the Bryans Road Shopping Center property and waiver of existing design requirements should not be permitted until a redevelopment plan is jointly agreed upon by the property owners and Department of Planning and Growth Management.
- Minimum parking requirements should be reduced in the commercial portions of the Town Center, and instead focus on tree canopy and stormwater treatment in design of the parking area.
- The street frontage along MD 210 should be improved with streetscape, pedestrian, and traffic safety enhancements.
- The County should find ways to activate and program the park that was created along Olde Village Drive and organize development around the park to the extent possible.
- A better pedestrian connection should be created from the South Hampton Estates subdivision to the Bryans Road Shopping Center.

## NEIGHBORHOOD: Parks Corner

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Parks Corner area of Bryans Road is so named for its connection to JC Parks, the first Superintendent of African American schools in Charles County and whose family home is located along Matthews Road just north of Marshall Hall Road. The area is largely forested between the Strawberry Hills subdivision and Matthews Road and a few unnamed streams run through the area. Despite the natural features, BioNet rates the Parks Corner area as being only moderately significant from a biodiversity perspective. Along Matthews Road are several commercial operations; further north along Shiloh Church Road to the Prince George’s County line are scattered site residential properties and a small subdivision.

#### Biodiversity Significance



#### LEGEND

- Tier I - Critically Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier II - Extremely Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier III - Highly Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier IV - Moderately Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier V - Significant for Biodiversity Conservation

#### Protected and Regulated Lands



#### LEGEND

- Protected Land and Easements
- Regulatory Constrained Land
- Rail Trail
- Targeted Development Area

**Current Land Uses:** Single family residential, forests and streams, commercial

**Current Zoning:** Watershed Conservation District; Core Residential Retail surrounded by Medium Density Residential

#### WATER



**Currently served**  
From Marshall Hall Road  
and Indian Head Highway

#### SEWER



**Currently served**  
From Marshall Hall Road  
and Indian Head Highway

#### ROADS



**Approaching Capacity**  
On MD 210 at  
Marshall Hall Road

## Parks Corner Recommendations



Targeted growth area in Parks Corner

The recommended development area for the Parks Corner is approximately 225 acres although it is estimated that only 145 acres could be developed based on environmental constraints such as stream buffers and forest conservation requirements. On the western edge of Parks Corner, it is recommended to extend the street grid across Strawberry Drive to the point of a wide stream buffer; on the other side of the stream a more typical suburban development style is envisioned at up to four units per developable acre. If possible relative to environmental constraints, it is recommended that at least one of the streets connect from Strawberry Hills to the new subdivision. Behind the Food Lion property, a street grid is also envisioned with up to 20 units per developable acre and the potential for neighborhood scale commercial uses. Although the Parks Corner area could potentially yield as many as 840 lots, it is recommended that growth allocations in the area keep the number of dwelling units to no more than 300.

**IN PARKS CORNER IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:**

- Subject to the concurrence of the property owner, the JC Parks property should be placed in a preservation easement and maintained to serve as a gateway to the Parks Corner community.
- Development should be oriented towards MD 210 and linked to an intersection with the proposed extension of Billingsley Road to mitigate potential traffic impacts that would otherwise occur on Marshall Hall Road at MD 210. Consideration should also be given to extending Shiloh Church Road to Matthews Road to limit access to MD 210 only at signalized intersections.
- A 15–20% open space target should be established for mixed uses areas; and a 30–35% open space target for moderate density residential areas. Pathways be constructed from new residential areas to Strawberry Hills Park.
- Special attention be paid to high “shrink/swell” soils and other geotechnical concerns in land development projects; emphasis should be placed on controlling the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff in this area.

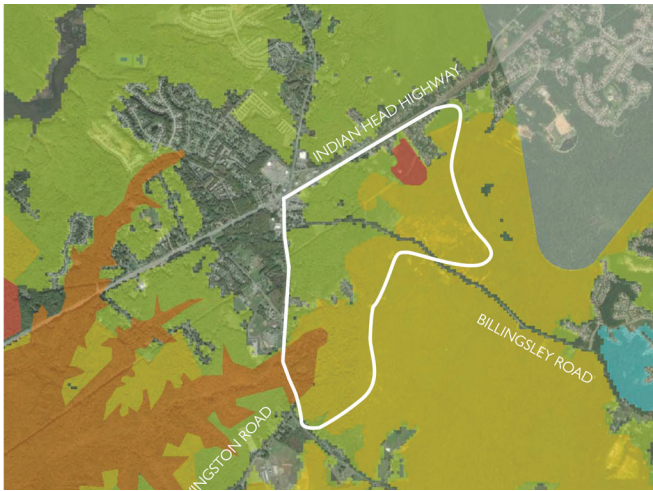
## NEIGHBORHOOD: Billingsley-Livingston

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Billingsley-Livingston area of Bryans Road is situated along and between MD 227 and MD 228 east of Indian Head Highway. At the southeastern edge of the Billingsley-Livingston area is the Pomonkey Historic District and just further southeast is the Maryland Airport. In 2021, the Board of County Commissioners established an “airport employment and industrial district” of approximately 558 acres surrounding the airport. Along both roadways are several single-family residences and blighted commercial properties on one to five acre lots; a mobile home community is situated at the intersection of Billingsley and Livingston Roads.

Mattawoman Creek runs across the eastern edge of the Billingsley-Livingston area. While conservation easements are in place as a stream buffer on the eastern edge of the creek, no land preservation efforts have occurred on the western bank of the Mattawoman. Much of the Billingsley-Livingston area is forested and a few unnamed streams run through the area; however, most of the proposed development area is rated by BioNet as only “moderately significant” for conservation. Some of the area along Billingsley Road was previously proposed for residential subdivision but those plans have since expired.

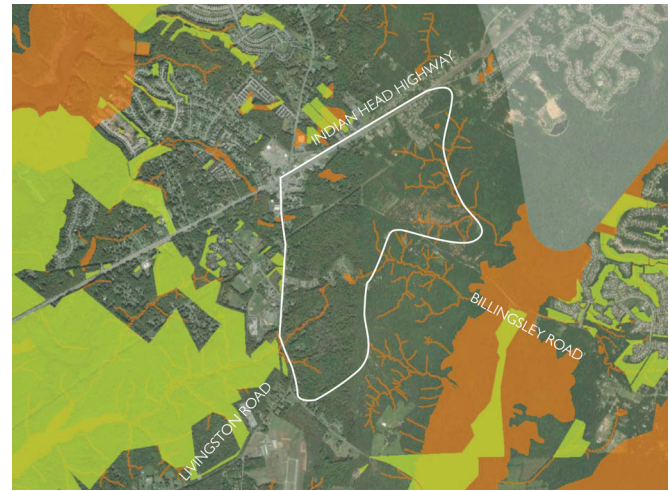
#### Biodiversity Significance



#### LEGEND

- Tier I - Critically Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier II - Extremely Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier III - Highly Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier IV - Moderately Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier V - Significant for Biodiversity Conservation

#### Protected and Regulated Lands



#### LEGEND

- Protected Land and Easements
- Regulatory Constrained Land
- Rail Trail
- Targeted Development Area

**Current Land Uses:** Low-density single-family residential, forests and streams, commercial

**Current Zoning:** Watershed Conservation District; Community Commercial; Planned Mobile Home Park; Core Development/Residential

#### WATER



#### Served In-Part

Extension of water would be needed along Billingsley Road

#### SEWER



#### Planned

Extension of sewer would be needed along Billingsley Road

#### ROADS



#### Improvements Needed

- Realign Billingsley Road to intersection MD 210
- New minor collector road between Billingsley and Livingston

## Billingsley-Livingston Recommendations



Targeted growth area in Billingsley-Livingston

The Billingsley-Livingston neighborhood is the largest recommended development area in Bryans Road at approximately 200 acres but it is likely that only +/- 130 acres could be developed based on environmental constraints such as stream buffers and forest conservation requirements. A large section of the area is intended to remain within the Watershed Conservation District with Catchpenny Place serving as the approximate dividing line with the development area. Four ‘neighborhoods’ are recommended in the Billingsley-Livingston area with density and land use flexibility increasing as development approaches the intersection of MD 210 and Livingston Road. Nearest to MD 210 would be a traditional street grid with up to 20 units per acre on either side of Billingsley Road which is to be extended. Moderate density residential would occur on either side of a new minor collector road between Billingsley and Livingston Roads. Two lower density neighborhoods would occur on the outer edge of the development area, one of which may connect only to Livingston Road to avoid a stream crossing. A pathway should connect the two neighborhoods.

### IN BILLINGSLEY-LIVINGSTON IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- Most development should be oriented towards the Billingsley Road extension to MD 210 and the proposed roundabout which are recommended to be constructed independent of any new development in the area. The extension will relieve existing traffic pressure on the intersection of MD 210 and MD 227. No other new access points should be allowed to MD 210. No more than 250 new residential units in the Billingsley-Livingston area should be permitted until the Billingsley Road extension to MD 210 is funded for construction.



- Construction of the Billingsley Road extension should include a 12–14' shared use pathway that could ultimately extend along land previously acquired for the Cross County Connector.
- Subdivisions between Billingsley Road and Livingston Road should feed to a new minor collector road with roundabouts on either end. The roundabouts should be designed and constructed by the county; the collector road would be built concurrent with development in the area. A specific alignment should be established to reserve this right of way some of which already functionally occurs as Catchpenny Place to the north. The minor collector should include incorporate a shared use path that encourages walking to the two schools and the Pomonkey Forest.
- The proposed roundabout at Livingston Road should be aligned with Metropolitan Church Road to the extent possible and become a placemaking opportunity and gateway to the Pomonkey Historic District.
- A 35% open space requirement be established, except in the mixed use area near MD 210 where a 15–20% requirement would be appropriate.
- Land preservation easements should be acquired to create a wide stream buffer along the Mattawoman Creek, like the buffer created by the conservation easements on the east side of the creek.
- The county should ensure that new residential development occur outside of the Runway Protection Zone<sup>2</sup> for Maryland Airport.

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<sup>2</sup> Runway protection zones are a trapezoidal area “off the end of the runway end that serves to enhance the protection of people and property on the ground” in the event an aircraft lands or crashes beyond the runway end. Runway Protection Zones underlie a portion of the approach closest to the airport. The primary purpose of the RPZ is the protection of people and property on the ground.

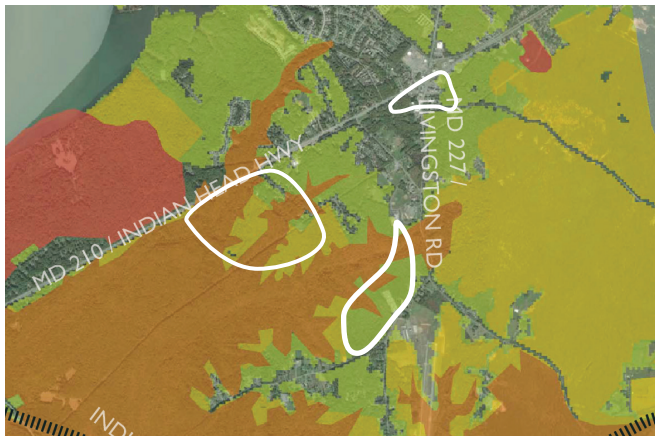
## NEIGHBORHOOD: South End

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

The South End of Bryans Road is defined as the area along east of MD 210, north of Laurel Drive to Livingston Road and west of Maryland Airport. Of the four areas being considered for new development, the South End has the greatest amount of biodiversity which should be conserved; this includes the 220-acre Pomonkey Forest, much of which is held in easement granted by the Board of County Commissioners to the Conservancy for Charles County. Several unnamed streams run through the area and forest cover is significant.

There are two residential subdivisions in the South End, one along Laurel Drive with approximately 35 homes on one to two acre lots; and the Brawner Estates community off of Metropolitan Church Road with approximately 100 homes on lots of less than ¼ acre each. The Masters Child Church and several residential properties front MD 210 until approaching the intersection of Livingston Road where there are several commercial properties. There are several small commercial properties along Livingston Road approaching Hungerford Road, along with the Bryans Road Volunteer Fire Department. Key places in the Pomonkey Historic District are located in the South End: Pomonkey School, Metropolitan Church and an associated cemetery. Other structures in the historic district are on the opposite side of Livingston Road.

#### Biodiversity Significance



#### LEGEND

- Tier I - Critically Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier II - Extremely Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier III - Highly Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier IV - Moderately Significant for Biodiversity Conservation
- Tier V - Significant for Biodiversity Conservation

#### Protected and Regulated Lands



#### LEGEND

- Protected Land and Easements
- Regulatory Constrained Land
- Rail Trail
- Targeted Development Area

**Current Land Uses:** Single family residential, forests and streams, churches, and a few commercial properties

**Current Zoning:** Nearly all of the South End is in the Watershed Conservation District (including the two residential subdivisions). Office-residential and commercial businesses also permitted in along MD 210 and Hungerford Road and at the intersection of Metropolitan Church Road and Livingston Road.

<p><b>WATER</b> Served Service varies by location</p>	<p><b>SEWER</b> Served Except southernmost area along MD 210</p>	<p><b>ROADS</b> Approaching Capacity On MD 210 at Livingston Hall Road</p>
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## South End Recommendations



Targeted growth area in South End

The recommended development envelope for South End consists of approximately 60 acres in three small pockets, although it is likely that only 40 acres could be built upon. Along MD 210 just north of Laurel Road, it is recommended that a senior living community be permitted on approximately 20 acres of property owned by St. Mary's Star of the Sea. Where Old Hungerford Road diverges from MD 210, approximately 30 undeveloped acres could be converted from commercial uses to mixed use; and on the southwestern corner of Livingston Road and Bumpy Oak Road, approximately 20 acres could be available for low-density residential development. Apart from the senior living community, approximately residential 100 lots could be created. A 30% open space requirement is recommended for these areas.

### IN SOUTH END IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT:

- Efforts continue to preserve and protect the Pomonkey Historic District and Pomonkey Forest, and to advance the concept of a Pomonkey Center for Cultural and Environmental Education (see page 29).
- No new access points should be allowed to/from MD 210; new residential development in the area should be accessed via Hungerford Road.
- Flexibility should be permitted in the type of age-targeted or senior living community that could be developed on the land owned by St. Mary's Star of the Sea, ranging from cottage-style houses to independent or assisted congregate housing. Allowance should be made in this area to permit supporting medical and professional services.

- A trail or shared use pathway should connect from the senior living community into (and through) Pomonkey Forest to the Pomonkey School area and then along the new residential collector roadway that continues to Billingsley Road. This would create a continuous path from the residential subdivisions in Billingsley-Livingston to the schools, Pomonkey and to a proposed highly visible pedestrian crossing of MD 210 to Ruth B. Swann Park.
- The county should ensure that new residential development occur outside of the Runway Protection Zone for Maryland Airport.



## Strengthening the Core of Bryans Road

People and places are the core of Bryans Road.

This section describes how we can provide support for members of our diverse community, improve mobility and connectedness, and create great places throughout Bryans Road.

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Planning for Growth & Community Development

### **Strengthening the Core of Bryans Road**

Preserving and Enhancing our Culture, Environment and History

Making it Happen: Plan Summary & Implementation



## Big Idea



### Creating a Multigenerational Community Facility

Western Charles County needs a hub for community connections, enrichment, and engagement of people of all ages and walks of life. A multigenerational community facility can breathe life into the Bryans Road commercial area. With a library at its core, the facility could also provide access to technology, a senior center, some recreation activities, and access to public services — and breathe life into renewal of the town center. Multigenerational facilities are becoming the norm across the country. This is not only because it is more cost-effective to build, operate and maintain one place, but because they build trust within communities as a neutral and visible space that is accessible to all. With services that span from early morning through late into the

evening, a multigenerational facility also brings “foot traffic” that strengthens the market for restaurants and retail in the Town Center.

Investment by multiple agencies including the Charles County Public Libraries, Department of Parks, Tourism, and Recreation, and the Department of Community Services, is necessary to bring this vision to life. A logical first step is to conduct a feasibility study to better define what services could be offered, what space is needed, which sites would be available and appropriate, and the cost of the project. A design and construction schedule of three to five years is realistic once a decision is made to proceed with the project and funding is allocated.

## Big Idea



### Investing in Affordable Senior Housing

Many families in Charles County are struggling with housing costs – whether seeking to purchase their first home, find an affordable apartment, maintain an existing home in good condition, or keep up with property taxes and utility bills. For older residents, the challenge is heightened by living on fixed income, higher medical expenses, and social isolation when they can no longer drive or have limited internet access. Programs like Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together, or state-supported occupational therapy and rehabilitation can provide “stop gap” solutions to keep seniors in their homes longer; however there is also a broader need for housing that is targeted to the older residents of Bryans Road and western Charles County whether it be low-income senior apartments, cooperative housing, assisted living, or skilled nursing care.

There are both for-profit and non-profit developers of affordable housing for seniors that can be recruited to come to the Bryans Road area. Organizations like Episcopal Communities & Services (ECS), Catholic Charities, The Enterprise Foundation, Homes for America, and others will respond and assess opportunities when they are called on to do so by local leaders. Because the need for affordable senior housing is so great across the nation, it requires local leaders to “recruit” these organizations, help them find and permit sites, and partner with them throughout the development process. The Department of Planning and Growth Management, the Department of Community Services and community leaders should create an organized effort to bring affordable senior housing to Bryans Road.

## Additional Recommendations to Strengthen the Core of Bryans Road

### EXTEND PERMITTING PRIORITY TO BRYANS ROAD

The County's "Priority Development Project" designation currently applies only to residential projects with certain characteristics in the Waldorf area. To spur the redevelopment envisioned in this plan, the Bryans Road area should be added to the PDP boundaries.

### USE PUBLIC INCENTIVES AND INVESTMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION

Charles County's commercial property improvement and rehabilitation tax credit defers and phases in new real estate property taxes that result from increased property value due to property renovations. One limitation of the program is that the increase in assessed value must be greater than \$100,000 meaning that many of the smaller commercial properties along Indian Head Highway (MD 210) and Livingston Road (MD 227) would have to make an investment that is disproportionate to the assessed value of the property. Charles County should explore ways to close the gap in this tax credit eligibility so that smaller commercial properties can benefit from the program. In the alternative, Charles County could provide façade improvement grants or make frontage improvements that make the area more attractive and commercially viable.

**Lead Agency: Department of Economic Development**

### EMBRACE THE MD 210 TECHNOLOGY CORRIDOR

Building on recent momentum in Indian Head, the County is considering designation of MD 210 as a corridor for incubation and growth of technology companies. The designation should lead to specific incentives and enhanced marketing to attract additional targeted technology companies and complimentary support services.

**Lead Agency: Department of Economic Development**

### FORMALIZE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BRSC COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER AND THE BRYANS ROAD BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Bryans Road community is fortunate to have volunteers filling gaps in social and health services, community resources, food distribution, youth activities and more since 2018 through the Community Resource Center (CRC) at Bryans Road Shopping Center. These efforts have been mostly organic and implemented through partnerships with other community-based organizations. Charles County government should take a larger role in supporting the work of the CRC through operating resources to purchase supplies and materials and hire a full-time activities director. The CRC could also serve as the home of a "leadership committee" of Bryans Road activists to steer and advocate for this plan. A similar level of effort should be made to support the Bryans Road Business Association which is organizing to promote small businesses in the area.

**Lead Agencies: Department of Community Services; Department of Economic Development**



### ANALYZE THE POTENTIAL OF IMPROVED BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY

Charles County has partnered with Think Big Networks, a private company, to construct a new fiber optic network to rural parts of the county including Nanjemoy and Cobb Neck. Other areas of the County are under consideration for a similar partnership, especially as new federal funds become available to expand connectivity to underserved areas. It is recommended that the County undertake a preliminary analysis of existing high-speed internet services in Bryans Road, market potential, and right-of-way constraints to determine if Bryans Road could be well positioned as one of the next areas to partner with Think Big Networks.

**Lead Agency: Department of Information Technology**

### CONSTRUCT MISSING SIDEWALK SEGMENTS

To make roads safer for all users, sidewalks should be constructed along the south side Metropolitan Church Road between Livingston Road MD (227) and Indian Head Highway (MD 210), on east Livingston Road between Matthew Henson Middle School, along Marshall Hall Road (MD 227) and Matthews Road to the furthest residential subdivision. These projects are listed as “under consideration” in the county’s FY23–27 capital improvement plan but not funded for design and construction; the County should also include these projects in its annual funding request to MDOT.

**Lead Agencies: MDOT State Highway Administration; Department of Public Works**

### CHANGE VAN GO TO AN “ON-DEMAND, AT-THE-CORNER” SERVICE

Rural areas are difficult to serve with transit because there is a very small pool of potential riders and key destinations are far apart. The two VanGo routes serving Bryans Road (connecting to Indian Head, La Plata and Waldorf) operate on limited hours and with 60–120 minutes between each bus. Routes only travel on the main roadways making it difficult to access the service for most residents because the walking distance to a main road can be quite far. Charles County should transition VanGo in the Bryans Road area to a more flexible service that deviates from the fixed route on request by a customer (typically scheduled in advance.)

**Lead Agency: Department of Planning and Growth Management, Transit Division**

### STRENGTHEN REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICES IN THE MD 210 CORRIDOR

As the pandemic recedes and more employees return to regular work schedules, MDOT should explore cost-effective options to restore transit service in the MD 210 corridor. Prior services such as the WMATA W-19 route to the Southern Avenue Metrorail station provided an important connection the growing to the Navy Yard and southwest waterfront area of Washington DC for many residents of western Charles County. As an alternative to restoring the W-19, MTA’s commuter bus route #650 could be realigned to meet the above need en route to its final destination at L’Enfant Plaza.

**Lead Agency: MDOT Maryland Transit Administration**

### IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE INDIAN HEAD RAIL TRAIL

Better access to the Indian Head Rail Trail is needed within the greater Bryans Road area. An excellent location for a small pull-off and parking lot is at Bumpy Oak Road near Lilly Pond where fishing and canoeing is popular. All the adjacent land south of the Rail Trail is owned by the Department of Natural Resources. A potential funding source for this project is the MDOT SHA Scenic Byways program or the Transportation Alternatives Program.

**Lead Agency: Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism**

### IMPROVE TRAFFIC OPERATIONS AND SAFETY

A few roadway improvements would improve traffic operations, safety, and congestion in the core of Bryans Road.

- **MD 210 at MD 227.** Preliminary analysis indicates that the westbound approach on MD 227 at MD 210 is approaching an unacceptable condition by county and state standards of traffic congestion. In the near term, optimizing the timing of signals to balance traffic in all directions would mitigate this issue. Striping the center lane to also function as a right turn lane would improve this condition.

**Lead Agency: MDOT State Highway Administration**

- **Billingsley Road Realignment to MD 210.** A long-term solution to congestion at MD 210 and MD 227 is to extend Billingsley Road to Indian Head Highway (MD 210) beginning just west of Catchpenny Place. Much of the right-of-way for this project already exists. A shared use path (typically 10–12' wide) should be constructed adjacent to the Billingsley Road realignment and further studied as part of other improvements currently being considered further east on Billingsley Road. The County's capital improvement program includes some of funding needed to design and construct this project.

**Lead Agency: Department of Public Works**

- **Deceleration Lanes Along MD 210 Southbound.** South of Camp Hedges Place, there is no southbound deceleration lane or shoulder for right turns into the businesses fronting MD 210. This causes confusion to motorists resulting in sudden stops and rear-end collisions. MDOT SHA should study this issue and make improvements if necessary.

**Lead Agency: MDOT State Highway Administration**



## Preserving and Enhancing our Culture, Environment and History

This section describes a cross-cultural approach to preserve and tell the stories of our shared history; and provides proactive strategies that will protect the Mattawoman Creek and rural landscape as Bryans Road continues to grow.

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Planning for Growth & Community Development

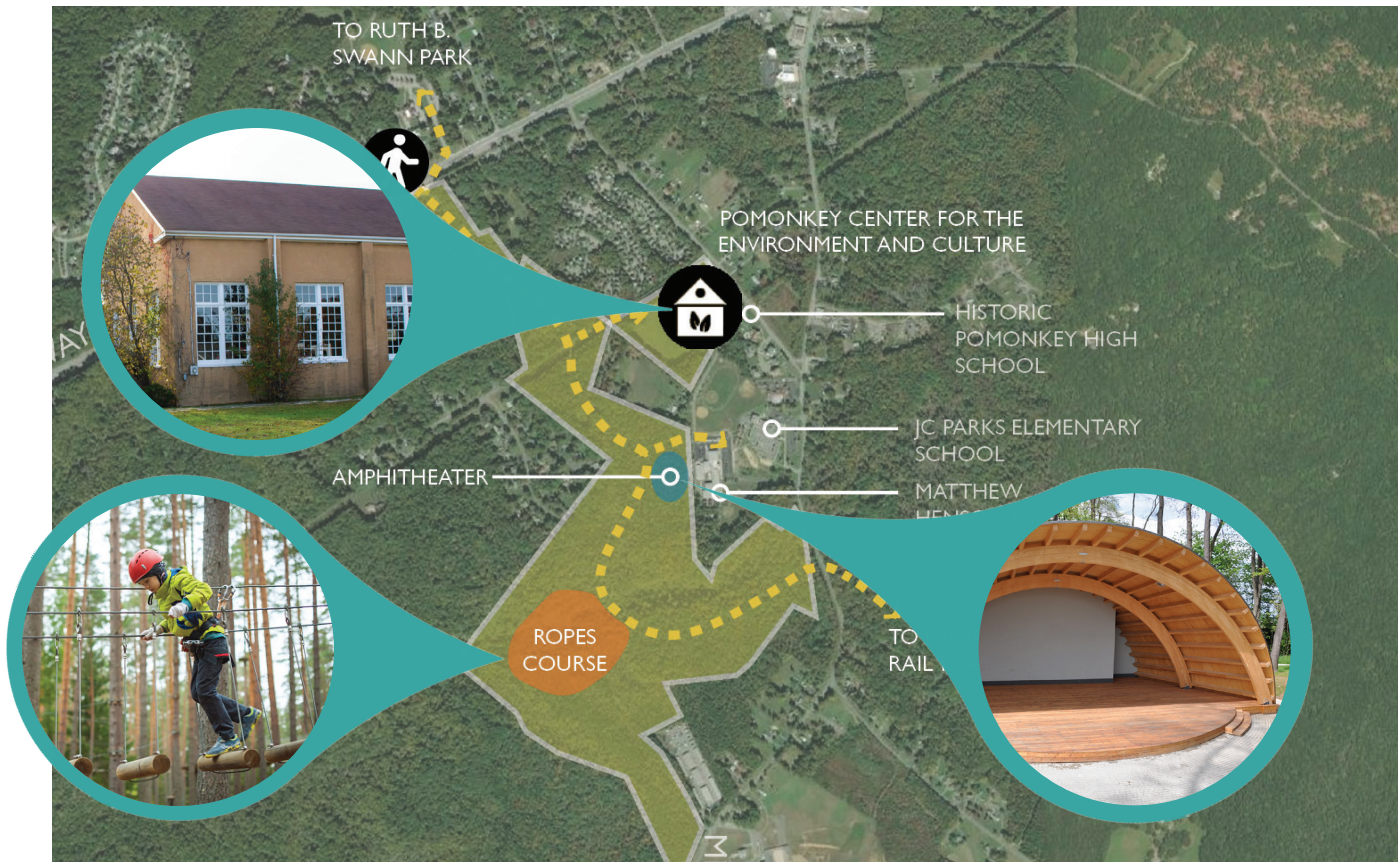
Strengthening the Core of Bryans Road

**Preserving and Enhancing our Culture, Environment and History**

Making it Happen: Plan Summary & Implementation



## Big Idea



### Establish the Pomonkey Center for Cultural and Environmental Education

For many years, it has been the dream of a small group of committed citizens to restore the former Pomonkey High School—the first African American public high school in Charles County—to be a cultural center and museum. This plan supports the vision of cultural preservation and recommends creating the Pomonkey Center for Cultural and Environmental Education at the former high school which sits at the southeastern edge of the Pomonkey Forest. When the forest was placed into conservation easement and transferred to the Charles County Conservancy in 2018, an environmental education center was included in the easement as an acceptable “conservation purpose.” Bringing together both the cultural and environmental education elements envisioned by the Pomonkey High School Alumni

Association and the Conservancy could yield a long-term opportunity for purposeful restoration of the high school. In addition, a role should be considered for the Piscataway People to use the space to tell their story of the land. The Pomonkey Center for Cultural and Environmental Education would provide an ideal location for indoor/outdoor space for programs, festivals, meetings and retreats, overnight camping for school groups, and a small ropes course.

Work on this project should be led through a partnership among Pomonkey High School Alumni Association, Accokeek Foundation, Charles County Conservancy, Charles County Public Schools, Departments of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, and others.

## Big Idea



### Create an Environmental Benefits District for Bryans Road

Environmental conservation in Bryans Road need not be limited to managing the potentially adverse impacts of development. Consider instead that new development could be the catalyst for improving the health of the Mattawoman Creek and other watersheds, improving access to natural resources, and retrofitting environmental infrastructure to the best available technologies and best management practices, by adjusting development fees and charges to target environmental conservation as the highest priority. The County should also evaluate whether certain activities which may have an adverse environmental impact (such as sand/gravel mining, timbering, take-offs/landings at airports, tire disposal, etc.) could be assessed a fee to support the environmentally beneficial activities such as stream restoration, impervious surface removal, or invasive species management. The environmental benefits district could also pursue grants and partnerships that are directed to the highest priority environmental conservation activities. Finally, the environmental benefits district could also include or take the form of an “overlay zone” where regulations allow site planning

flexibility and require that development proposals be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness in minimizing alteration of existing topography, vegetation, and the landscape setting for historic structures. Howard County’s “residential — environmental development district” could be looked to as a model. As part of the site plan flexibility, developers might be incentivized or encouraged to take additional steps to protect the environment by implementing one or more actions in a “Green Playbook” designed specifically for the Bryans Road area. The Green Playbook might include actions such as rainwater harvesting, use of permeable pavements, community gardens and composting areas, native plants in lieu of large lawns, reduced driveway sizes or use of concrete tire tracks rather than fully paved driveways, and off-the-grid solutions such as solar panel installation, solar streetlights, and micro wind turbines.

The Charles County Resilience Authority and Department of Planning and Growth Management should be charged with evaluating the opportunities for an Environmental Benefits District.

## Additional Recommendations for Preserving and Enhancing our Culture, Environment and History

### IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY OF WATER QUALITY MONITORING OF THE MATTAWOMAN CREEK

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and US Geological Survey (USGS) routinely collect data on stream health in the Mattawoman Creek. For many years, this data was uploaded to the website for both agencies; however, very little information has been reported since 2018. The County should encourage DNR and USGS to regularly update water quality data so that it can be used to inform land use and environmental restoration decision-making.

**Lead Agencies: Department of Planning & Growth Management; Maryland Department of Natural Resources**

### ENCOURAGE CODE ENFORCEMENT, COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP & INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL

Charles County's stormwater permit includes a requirement to proactively remove litter and debris throughout the watershed. The County currently operates an aggressive litter control program which utilizes three full-time crews who remove debris from County-maintained right-of-way throughout the workweek; however, these efforts can be supplemented by individual volunteers and community groups interested in environmental conservation. In addition, the county can provide information to property owners and users of the Indian Head Rail Trail and other natural resource areas, on how to identify and remove invasive species that are choking trees and native plants along Mattawoman Creek. The County's Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Program should continue to survey industrial and commercial properties on a regular basis and work with property owners to address items not properly stored outdoors that could be sources of water pollution such as used tires, scrap metal, and appliances.

**Lead Agency: Department of Public Works, Environmental Resources Division**

### BE AGGRESSIVE IN UPGRADING SEPTIC SYSTEMS

On-site sewage disposal systems (otherwise known as septic systems) pose among the greatest threats to the health of the Mattawoman Creek watershed. When the County has sought funding from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund to connect properties to a sewer line or upgrade to the best available technology in these communities, bureaucratic wrangling has ensued with MDE because the many of the properties are not located in a "Priority Funding Area" (PFA) under the state's Smart Growth law. While this public policy problem is not unique to Bryans Road, it does have an acute impact on public health area because of the high-water table. The County should make special efforts to document areas where septic systems are a concern to water quality and/or public health. Taking a programmatic rather than a property-by-property approach should help to expedite the State's PFA exception process for property owners applying for the State grants to connect their onsite septic systems to the public sanitary sewer.

**Lead Agencies: Department of Planning & Growth Management; Health Department; Maryland Department of the Environment**

### ADDRESS CURRENT FLOODING ISSUES & PROTECT AGAINST FUTURE PROBLEMS

The Strawberry Hills community and other areas Bryans Road experiences significant flooding during heavy rainfalls, and high shrink/swell soils in the area have been known to cause building foundations in the area to fail. There may be inaccuracies in the 100-year floodplain mapping and as a result development may be encroaching into the floodplain. It is recommended that the County complete a floodplain analysis to provide computations for major drainage courses of 30 acres or more that are not mapped by FEMA studies. Although additional mapping may help protect property owners against future flooding, more immediate solutions are needed to address flooding in the Bryans Road area through drainage evaluation studies. The County has engaged and should continue to engage environmental planning and engineering expertise to identify and carry out such measures as may be identified by such evaluations.<sup>3</sup>

**Lead Agencies: Department of Planning & Growth Management; Department of Public Works; Department of Emergency Services**

### FOCUS ON HIGH IMPACT STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

The 2017 Municipal Stormwater (SWM) Restoration Plan identifies impervious restoration efforts such as new bioretention facilities, filtration systems, stormwater pond retrofits, wetland creation, and dry swales, as well as “alternative” projects such as stream restoration in the Mattawoman Creek watershed. Several sizable projects have been installed over the past ten years including dry swale and enhanced filter systems near the Bryans Road Shopping Center, submerged gravel wetlands at the General Smallwood Elementary School, and over 1,700 linear feet of shoreline stabilization at Potomac Heights. The 2017 plan identified several small scale “best management practices” in the concept phase and three stream restoration projects to soon be constructed in the Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park. As feasible, it is recommended that the focus of SWM efforts be on projects that have secondary benefits such as improving public access to recreational opportunities. In addition, the County should consider adding bioswales within the public right of way (including, with permission, on MDOT SHA right of way.)

**Lead Agencies: Department of Planning & Growth Management; Department of Public Works; MDOT State Highway Administration**

### CONTINUE EFFORTS IN SUPPORT OF THE POMONKEY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Establishment of the Pomonkey Historic District in 2020 was a significant milestone in recognizing the foundational efforts of the African American community in Bryans Road, as are the efforts to restore the Pomonkey School. The County should continue to work with property owners and interested community groups to commemorate, preserve, and revitalize key historic structures, including seeking grants and promoting tax credits offered through the Maryland Historical Trust and others.

**Lead Agency: Department of Planning & Growth Management**

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<sup>3</sup>For additional information, see the Charles County Nuisance and Urban Flood Plan dated October 2020

### CONTINUE TO SUPPORT DESIGNATION OF SOUTHERN MARYLAND AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

In early 2022, the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium completed a feasibility study for designation as a National Heritage Area (NHA). The study found that “due to the significance, concentration, and integrity of the places and living traditions found in Southern Maryland, this region meets the necessary criteria for NHA designation. Southern Maryland’s history is readily visible in the small communities, rural landscapes, waterways, and coastline of the region.” Charles County should continue to support and advocate for the NHA and residents, organizations, and attractions in Bryans Road should participate in activities to earn the designation.

**Lead Agency: Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism**

### ENCOURAGE CONTINUED RECOGNITION OF THE PISCATAWAY PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

Southern Maryland is the homeland of the Piscataway People with the first settlements dating back thousands of years. Through continued archaeological discovery, development of interpretive works, and educational activities, the public will gain a deeper understanding of the people who lived in the Chesapeake region for centuries before the arrival of Europeans. As new public and community facilities are built such as schools, libraries, and parks, efforts should be made to incorporate culturally appropriate themes which recognize the contributions of the Piscataway People. Efforts to identify critical archaeological sites and landscapes of significance to the Piscataway cultural heritage should continue.

**Lead Agency: Department of Planning & Growth Management**

### BRIGHTEN GATEWAYS & INSTALL TOURISM SIGNING

Bryans Road has much to offer residents of the region and beyond in recreational and heritage tourism activities. Many of these sites are difficult to find and do not have welcoming entrances. Websites, brochures, and marketing efforts for these sites and activities tend to happen organically by the sponsoring organization or regional marketing organizations like the Southern Maryland Heritage Area. What is needed is clear and well-placed signage directing people to the historic, cultural, and environmentally important sites throughout the area. To do so, the County should work proactively with MDOT State Highway Administration to extend the Tourist Area and Corridor Signing Program to the Bryans Road area.

Additionally, monumental signage and improved landscaping at each of the major approaches to Bryans Road. Funding for these activities could be supported by a grant from the MDOT SHA Scenic Byways program.

**Lead Agency: Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism**



### ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF “BED & BREAKFAST” STYLE LODGING AND CAMPGROUNDS IN WESTERN CHARLES COUNTY

Visitors to the many cultural and environmental sites in Western Charles County have very few, if any options on where to stay, with only one small hotel in Indian Head, and no private campgrounds or bed and breakfast style facilities listed on travel and tourism websites. A limited number of campsites are available at Smallwood State Park, but a review of availability for summer 2022 finds that much of the summer inventory is already booked by early May. In support of ecotourism and agritourism, the county should explore and encourage the establishment of lodging options for Western Charles County.

**Lead Agency: Department of Economic Development**

### PROVIDE A NEW TRAILHEAD FOR THE INDIAN HEAD RAIL TRAIL

Better access to the Indian Head Rail Trail is needed within the greater Bryans Road area. An excellent location for a small pull-off and parking lot is at Bumpy Oak Road near Lilly Pond where fishing and canoeing is popular. All the adjacent land south of the Rail Trail is owned by the Department of Natural Resources. A potential funding source for this project is the MDOT SHA Scenic Byways program or the Transportation Alternatives Program.

**Lead Agency: Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism**

### CONSTRUCT NEW KAYAK & CANOE DOCK FACILITIES

Many visitors to the area and inexperienced paddlers are not comfortable hiking through the woods or along a trail to find an informal launch point for waterborne recreation. The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism currently intends to install a kayak launch at Masons Springs, located at the intersection of Livingston and Hawthorne Roads. Kayak launches should also be explored at Chapman State Park and Ruth B. Swann Memorial Park and at Lilly Pond or somewhere else on the eastern edge of the rail trail.

**Lead Agency: Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism**

### CONTINUE LAND PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The County should continue land preservation efforts for properties over 50 acres in size or adjacent to existing protected lands through programs such as Rural Legacy, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, Purchase of Develop Rights (PDR), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). Properties along the western edge of Mattawoman Creek should be high priority targets for conservation.

**Lead Agency: Department of Planning & Growth Management**

### PROTECT THE MT. VERNON VIEWSHED AND INDIGENOUS CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Much of the Bryans Road area is within the “area of primary concern” for protecting views from the historically significant Mount Vernon estate of General and President George Washington. Preliminary analysis indicates that only buildings exceeding 60’ in height in the proposed Town Center area would potentially be visible across the Potomac River. Still, the county should maintain its current practice of reviewing development projects to ensure that there is no impact to the viewshed. Properties critical maintaining the tree canopy in the Mount Vernon viewshed should be targeted for conservation easements. Additionally, the County should work with the tribal communities and Accokeek Foundation to support ongoing efforts to document significant aspects of the landscape from the perspective of native communities. These Indigenous Cultural Landscapes (ICLs) are places or areas valued by Native communities because of their long and complex relationship with the land. ICLs may include landscape features, archaeological sites, or environmental resources. In collaboration with conservation partners, Charles County should continue efforts in the Bryans Road area to document and develop conservation strategies to protect significant or endangered ICLs.

**Lead Agency: Department of Planning & Growth Management**



## Making it Happen: Plan Summary & Implementation

Over the next 10+ years, we can grow smart, protect our cultural, environment and heritage, and bring people together to achieve the full potential of Bryans Road. This section identifies the county and state agencies, businesses, community leaders and organizations, and others that need to work together and mobilize resources to implement the Bryans Road subarea plan.

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Planning for Growth & Community Development

Strengthening the Core of Bryans Road

Preserving and Enhancing our Culture, Environment and History

**Making it Happen: Plan Summary & Implementation**



The recommended growth of residential units in Bryans Road is not intended to be absolute. Growth controls, phasing, and conditions specific to Bryans Road should be established to ensure that the Guiding Principles are being followed and that the improvements described in this plan are being provided. While residential development is important for the vitality of Bryans Road, it is equally important to ensure that the needed infrastructure improvements and desired community amenities come online in a reasonable timeframe. The Department of Planning and Growth Management should track and annually report to the Planning Commission on development approvals in Bryans Road and the status of implementing the programs, policies, and projects in this plan. A description of responsible agencies and level of effort required for implementation is provided below.

	Involved Agencies													Expenditure Type (if any)				Potential County Fiscal Impact (if any)	
	Capital Services	Community Services	County Administration	Economic Development	Health	Planning & Growth Mgmt	Public Libraries	Public Schools	Public Works	Rec, Parks & Tourism	Resilience Authority	State/Federal	Other Party	County Operating	County Capital	State/Federal	Private	None/Low	Potentially Significant
<b>Land Use Plan -- Parks Corner</b>																			
As a condition of any development to the west of Matthews Road, the JC Parks House must be preserved and serve as a gateway to the Parks Corner community.						PZ										HT	DV		
Development should be oriented towards MD 210 and linked to an intersection with the proposed extension of Billingsley Road.						PZ										HW	DV		
Consideration should also be given to extending Shiloh Church Road to Matthews Road to manage access to MD 210 only at controlled intersections						PZ										HW	DV		
Pathways be constructed from new residential areas to Strawberry Hills Park						PZ											DV		
Special attention be paid to "slippery soils" and other geotechnical concerns in land development projects; emphasis should be placed on controlling the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff in this area						PZ											DV		
<b>Land Use Plan -- Billingsley-Livingston</b>																			
Development should be oriented towards the Billingsley Road extension to MD 210 and the proposed roundabout which are recommended to be constructed independent of any new development in the area.						PZ											DV		
Construct the Billingsley Road extension including a 12-14' shared use pathway that could ultimately extend to the properties previously acquired for the Cross County Connector						PZ													
Construct minor collector between Billingsley Road and Livingston concurrent with development. The minor collector should include incorporate a shared use path that encourages walking to the two schools and the Pomonkey Forest						PZ										HW	DV		
The roundabout at Livingston Road should be aligned with Metropolitan Church Road to the extent possible and become a placemaking opportunity and gateway to the Pomonkey Historic District						PZ										HW			
A 35% open space requirement be established, except in the highest density neighborhood near MD 210 where a 15-20% requirement would appropriate						PZ													
Acquisition of land preservation easements should be targeted to create a wide stream buffer along the Mattawoman Creek						PZ										NR, AG			
Ensure that new residential development occur outside of the Runway Protection Zone for Maryland Airport						PZ										AV			
<b>Land Use Plan - South End</b>																			
Efforts continue to preserve and protect the Pomonkey Historic District and Pomonkey Forest, No new access points to MD 210 be permitted should residential development occur in the area bordered also by Hungerford Road						PZ										HT	CC, MP		
Flexibility should be permitted in the type of age-targeted or senior living community that could be developed						PZ										HW			
A trail or shared use pathway should connect from the senior living community into (and through) Pomonkey Forest to the Pomonkey School area and new collector roadway that continues to Billingsley Road; create a highly visible crosswalk across MD 210 to Ruth B. Swann Park						PZ										HW	DV		
Ensure that new residential development occur outside of the Runway Protection Zone for Maryland Airport.						PZ										AV			
<b>Land Use Plan - Town Center</b>																			
Eliminate minimum parking requirements in the commercial portions of the Town Center, and instead focus on tree canopy and stormwater treatment in design of the parking area.						PZ										HW			
Rationalize the street frontage along MD 210 for parking, streetscape, pedestrian, and traffic safety																	MP		
Find ways to activate and program the park that was created along Old Village Drive and organize development around the park to the extent possible																	DV		
Create a better pedestrian connection from the South Hampton Estates subdivision to Bryans Road Shopping Center																	DV		

- Involved Agencies**
- AV MDOT Maryland Aviation Administration
  - ED Maryland State Department of Education
  - EN Maryland Department of the Environment
  - CE Code Inspections & Enforcement
  - HA Housing Authority
  - PZ Planning & Zoning
  - RD Roads Division
  - TR Transit Division
  - State/Federal
  - AG Maryland Department of Agricultural
  - AN Maryland Department of Aging
  - HC Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development
  - HT Maryland Historical Trust
  - HW MDOT State Highway Administration
  - IT Maryland Department of Information Technology
  - LB Maryland State Library Association
  - NR Maryland Department of Natural Resources
  - SO MDOT Secretary's Office
  - TR MDOT Maryland Transit Administration

- Other Party**
- DV Developer (of affected properties)
  - CC Charles County Conservancy
  - MP Multiple Potential Community-Based Partners
  - TB Thing Big Networks

- Expenditure Type**
- Operating Budget** indicates that this would be an ongoing expense to the appropriate agency.
  - Capital Budget** indicates that this project requires some combination of property acquisition, engineering, and construction which would take multiple years to complete through the County's capital improvement program.
  - State/Federal** indicates that the project/program could be either state-funded or a from federal pass-through formula or discretionary grant program.
  - Private** indicates that this would be a developer-led improvement or support could be provided by another party.

	Involved Agencies													Expenditure Type (if any)				Potential County Fiscal Impact (if any)	
	Capital Services	Community Services	County Administration	Economic Development	Health	Planning & Growth Mgmt	Public Libraries	Public Schools	Public Works	Rec, Parks & Tourism	Resilience Authority	State/Federal	Other Party	County Operating	County Capital	State/Federal	Private	None/Low	Potentially Significant
<b>Strengthening the Core of Bryans Road</b>																			
Create a Multigenerational Community Facility																HC, AN,			
Invest in Affordable Senior Housing	HA																	MP	
Change "Van Go" Routes to "On-Demand, At-the-Corner" Service																			
Strengthen Regional Transit Services in the MD 210 Corridor																			
Construct Missing Sidewalk Segments																			
Improve Access to the Indian Head Rail Trail																			
Develop Broadband Connectivity																			
Formalize a Relationship between the County and the BRSC Community Outreach Center																			
Embrace the MD 210 Technology Corridor																			
Use Public Incentives and Investments for Commercial Revitalization																			
Improve Traffic Safety and Operations																			
<b>Preserving and Enhancing our Culture, Environment, and History</b>																			
An Environmental Benefits District for Bryans Road																			
Pomonkey Center for Cultural and Environmental Education																			
Encourage Code Enforcement, Community Clean-Up, & Invasive Species Removal																			
Be Aggressive in Upgrading Septic Systems																			
Address Current Flooding Issues & Protect Against Future Problems																			
Focus on High Impact Stormwater Management Projects																			
Continue to Support Designation of Southern Maryland as a National Heritage Area																			
Encourage Continued Recognition of the Piscataway People in Community Facilities & Activities																			
Brighten Gateways & Install Tourism Wayfinding Signage																			
Encourage Development of Bed & Breakfast Style Lodging & Campgrounds																			
Provide a New Trailhead for the Indian Head Rail Trail																			
Construct New Kayak & Canoe Dock Facilities																			

**Involved Agencies**

- County**
- CE Code Inspections & Enforcement
- HA Housing Authority
- PZ Planning & Zoning
- RD Roads Division
- TR Transit Division
- State/Federal**
- AG Maryland Department of Agricultural
- AN Maryland Department of Aging
- AV MDOT Maryland Aviation Administration
- ED Maryland State Department of Education
- EN Maryland Department of the Environment
- HC Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development
- HT Maryland Historical Trust
- HW MDOT State Highway Administration
- IT Maryland Department of Information Technology
- LB Maryland State Library Association
- NR Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- SO MDOT Secretary's Office
- TR MDOT Maryland Transit Administration

**Other Party**

- DV Developer (of affected properties)
- CC Charles County Conservancy
- MP Multiple Potential Community-Based Partners
- TB Thing Big Networks

**Expenditure Type**

**Operating Budget** indicates that this would be an ongoing expense to the appropriate agency.  
**Capital Budget** indicates that this project requires some combination of property acquisition, engineering, and construction which would take multiple years to complete through the County's capital improvement program.  
**State/Federal** indicates that the project/program could be either state-funded or a from federal pass-through formula or discretionary grant program.  
**Private** indicates that this would be a developer-led improvement or support could be provided by another party.

## Project Team

### DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Jim Campbell, AICP, Chief of Planning and Zoning  
Charles Rice, AICP, Assistant Chief of Planning and Zoning  
Cathy Thompson, Supervisor, Preservation and Long Range Planning  
Amy Blessinger, AICP, Planner III (Project Manager)  
Karen Wiggen, Planner III  
Ashley Hudson, Planner I

### AGENCY LIAISONS

Dina Barclay, Department of Community Services  
Tim Drummond, Department of Recreation and Parks  
Doria Fleisher, Community Engagement Coordinator  
Tina M. Kozloski, Media Services Division  
Kenneth Wayne Thompson, Charles County Public Library  
Taylor Yewell, Department of Economic Development

### CONSULTANT PROJECT STAFF

#### **Mead & Hunt**

Jamie Kendrick, AICP, Project Manager  
Christine Kirsch, Graphic Design  
Sean Liu, Geographic Information Systems  
Roshan Singh, PE, Transportation  
Jennifer Satterhwaite, Historic and Cultural Resources  
Mark Sauer, Land Development

#### **Floura Teeter Landscape Architecture**

Megan Maffeo, Landscape Architecture and Community Facilities  
Joe Ignatius, Parks and Recreation

#### **Center for Watershed Protection**

Karen Capiella, Environmental Protection

#### **Valbridge Property Advisors**

Ed Steere, Economic Development

The Department of Planning and Growth Management and the consultant project staff wish to thank the extraordinary participation of community leaders in preparing the Bryans Road Subarea Plan.