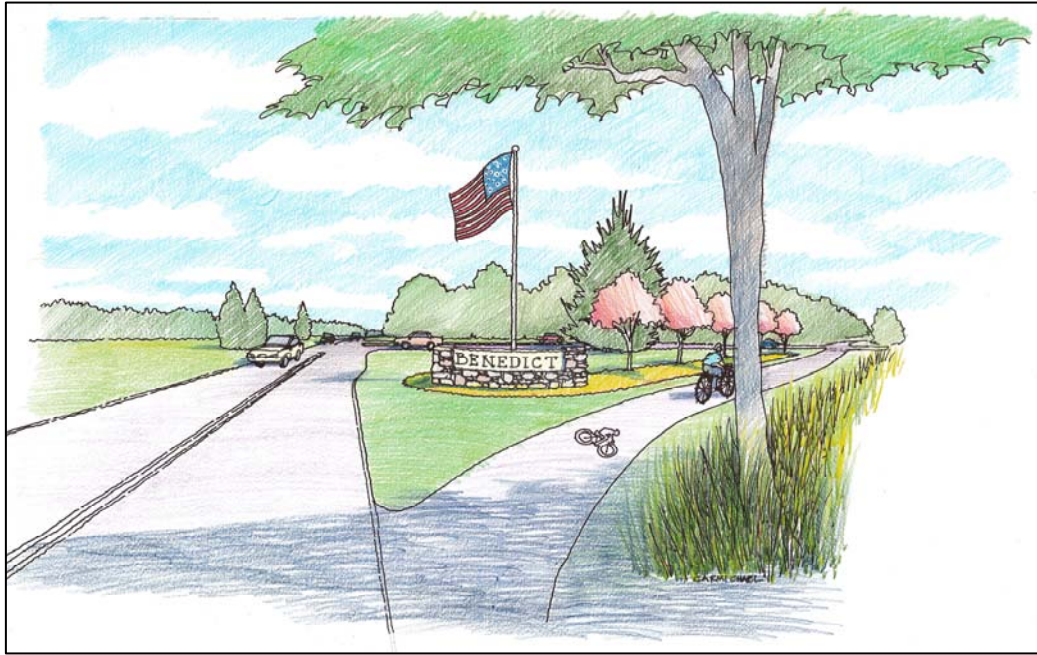


Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan



**Charles County, Maryland
January 24, 2012**

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Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan

**Charles County, Maryland
January 24, 2012**

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Consultant Team



History Matters, LLC

O. R. George & Associates, Inc.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION NO. 2012-09

WHEREAS, the Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan was initiated in 2010 to form a community-based vision for Benedict's future; and

WHEREAS, the Plan identifies and prioritizes physical improvements to enhance the image of Benedict as a unique waterfront area in Charles County; and

WHEREAS, public participation for this plan included public meetings on November 13, 2010 and January 22, 2011, interviews with key stakeholders, a community survey, visual preference exercise, historic village walk, community boat tour, and a project website; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the draft plan on May 23, 2011 to hear public comment followed by a work session on August 8, 2011 where the plan was recommended for approval by the Charles County Planning Commission with a unanimous vote; and


WHEREAS, a public hearing was held by the Charles County Commissioners on November 29, 2011 to hear public comment and a work session was held on January 24, 2012 at which time the plan was adopted with a unanimous vote.

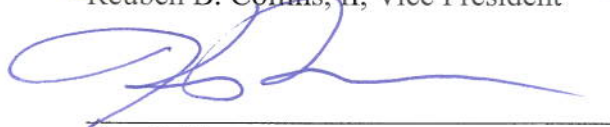
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, this 24th day of January, 2012, by the County Commissioners of Charles County that the document consisting of text, maps, and graphics, entitled *Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan, January 2012*, is hereby adopted by the Charles County Commissioners and will be incorporated by


reference into the 2012 Update of the Charles County Comprehensive Plan.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND


Candice Quinn Kelly, President

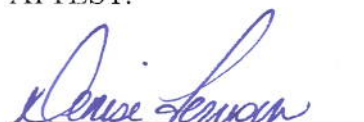

Reuben B. Collins, II, Vice President


Ken Robinson


Debra M. Davis, Esq.


Bobby Rucci

ATTEST:


Denise Ferguson, Clerk

Attachment A
Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan, January 24, 2012

A copy of the Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan, January 24, 2012, may be obtained from the Department of Planning and Growth Management, Planning Office, or online at www.charlescounty.org.

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Frontispiece: Benedict (star) is located in rural eastern Charles County on the Patuxent River.

1.0 Planning Context

1.1 The Study Area

The historic village of Benedict is located in the rural area of eastern Charles County, Maryland, on a narrow peninsula between the Patuxent River and Mill Creek (**Frontispiece**). The village has a rich maritime history spanning more than three centuries. Most notably, during the War of 1812 it was the landing site of the estimated 4,500 British invading forces that marched to Bladensburg and then to Washington, DC, where they burned the Washington Navy Yard, the Capitol, and the White House. Today, the village is located south of Prince Frederick Road and downriver from the Benedict Bridge (**Fig. 1-1**). It consists of approximately 150 acres and includes primarily single family residences as well as marinas and restaurants, a post office, firehouse, and a church. The river, creek, tidal wetlands, and surrounding farms and woodland comprise the village's rural context (**Exhibit 1**).

1.2 Study Purpose

Because of its strong historic themes, regional location, and abundant waterfront, Benedict was selected as one of the County's waterfront planning priorities by the Charles County Commissioners in 2009. The purpose of the Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan ("the plan") is to form a community-based vision for its future, including protecting its natural, historic, and other cultural resources and maintaining its physical integrity, small town scale, and distinctive character.

The plan identifies and prioritizes physical improvements to enhance the image of Benedict as a unique waterfront area in Charles County, including implementing planned sewer service improvements, defining appropriate land uses and infill development, and improving water access and amenities.

The plan was developed through the active engagement of local citizens, key landowners, and the business community in coordination with County planners.



Fig. 1-1 – A view of Benedict from the Patuxent River

1.3 The Planning Process

The planning process included two well-attended public meetings, a community survey, a visual preference survey, and stakeholder interviews with local land and business owners. Inventory and analysis of existing conditions and historical research identified the village character, historic resources, and revitalization opportunities. The results of these findings have been incorporated in the plan.

1.4 Village Assets, Issues, and Opportunities

A community survey and visual preference survey conducted during November-December 2010 provided valuable citizen input (see **Appendices 1 and 2**). Over 40 different issues were raised by respondents, identifying the village's assets, issues, and opportunities.

Benedict's assets are the special attributes of the village that residents express a desire to preserve and protect. It is a high priority that the ongoing planning process be respectful of the assets identified by the community, including:

- Benedict's unique character as a historic waterfront village;
- The surrounding natural environment of wetlands, farmland, and forests;



Exhibit 1-1. Study Area

- The sense of a family-friendly, small-town community;
- Community gathering places such as the Post Office;
- Unblocked river access and views of the water; and
- A safer environment due to low traffic volume and the lack of through streets.

Benedict's small town character is its most important asset. Defining elements of this character are narrow streets, single-family cottage residences with front porches, locally owned and operated waterfront businesses, the friendly informal lifestyle, and strong sense of community identity.

The issues identified in Benedict are areas of concern and needs for improvement, as identified by residents. Among these concerns are public infrastructure condition and maintenance, including roads and utilities; access, traffic, and pedestrian safety; respect for the quiet, family-oriented community; controlling costs; maintaining property values; and planning and growth management to protect the village's historic character.

Opportunities are those areas in Benedict where there is potential for improvement or enhancement, including infrastructure, transportation, and streetscape projects; land acquisition for community parks and historical interpretation; and development of appropriate land uses to serve the needs and ensure the viability and vitality of the community. Benedict is designated as a Priority Funding Area (PFA) under the Maryland Smart Growth Initiatives, making it eligible for grants, funding, and other assistance.

There are several opportunities in Benedict related to the planning now underway for the commemoration of the War of 1812 bicentennial, including ways to highlight Benedict as the invasion site, preserve and interpret its historic resources, and create the facilities necessary to accommodate the anticipated increase in visitors who will in turn support local businesses.



Fig. 1-2 – Tidal wetland vegetation protects the Mill Creek shoreline on the west side of the Benedict peninsula.

1.5 Challenges

Challenges to revitalization in Benedict are related to the natural environment, traffic and access, infrastructure, and local market conditions.

Environment: The entire peninsula is located within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (**Exhibit 1-2**). For Benedict, the critical area zoning overlay is the Limited Development Zone (LDZ). Low-lying areas are subject to flooding. Extensive tidal wetland marshes fringe the village in the northeast adjacent to Benedict Bridge and along Mill Creek to the east (**Fig. 1-2**). Along the Patuxent River, where some shorelines are subject to erosion due to wind and tidal impacts, structural erosion control measures may be required (**Figs. 1-3**). In less erosive areas, “living shorelines,” such as sills or breakwaters with native grass plantings, are recommended. In 2006 Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) listed Mill Creek as impaired by fecal coliform in a restricted shellfish harvesting area within the Lower Patuxent River Basin.

Public Infrastructure: Sewage disposal is achieved via individual on-site disposal (septic) systems (OSDS). According to the County, most of the existing OSDS in the village are over 20 years old and thus predate the more advanced sewerage disposal techniques that are available today. The need for mitigation of failing septic systems in the village is identified in the current Charles County Water and Sewer Plan, and a public sewer system is currently in the design / permitting stage.

The new sewer system is planned to be constructed within existing roads. With the exception of the rights-of-way of Benedict Avenue, Mill Creek Road, Hyatt Avenue, Patuxent Place, and Wilmott Drive, which are owned and maintained by the County, all other roads, lanes, or driveways are private (**Exhibit 1-2**).

Traffic Volumes and Speed: Due to Benedict's location on a peninsula, vehicular circulation has a single access point at the intersection of Prince Frederick Highway (MD Route 231) and Benedict Avenue. The existing configuration of this intersection includes a two-way "T" road and a one-way spur road. While there are warning signs, the intersection lacks acceleration / deceleration lanes. While traffic volumes are considered too low to warrant justification for signalization, there is community interest in traffic control and safety improvements at the intersection.

Parking: Uncontrolled, haphazard parking along roadsides and on vacant lots can be a challenge for pedestrians and village aesthetics (**Fig. 1-4**).

Pedestrian Access: Pedestrians and cyclists must share the road with vehicles. While traffic volume is generally low, the roads are narrow and lack sidewalks, defined shoulders, and streetlights.

Waterfront Access: Public access to the Patuxent River and Mill Creek is limited to the County-owned parcel adjacent to Benedict Bridge and potentially where public rights-of-way abut or terminate at the water (**Fig. 1-5**).

Zoning: Under current zoning regulations, the maximum residential densities and site design criteria are inconsistent with the established pattern of development in Benedict, resulting in underutilized lots and incompatible infill development.



Fig. 1-3 – The Patuxent River shoreline is subject to erosion due to wind and tidal impacts.



Fig. 1-4 – Uncontrolled, haphazard parking presents challenges for pedestrians and village aesthetics.



Fig. 1-5 – Public waterfront access is limited.

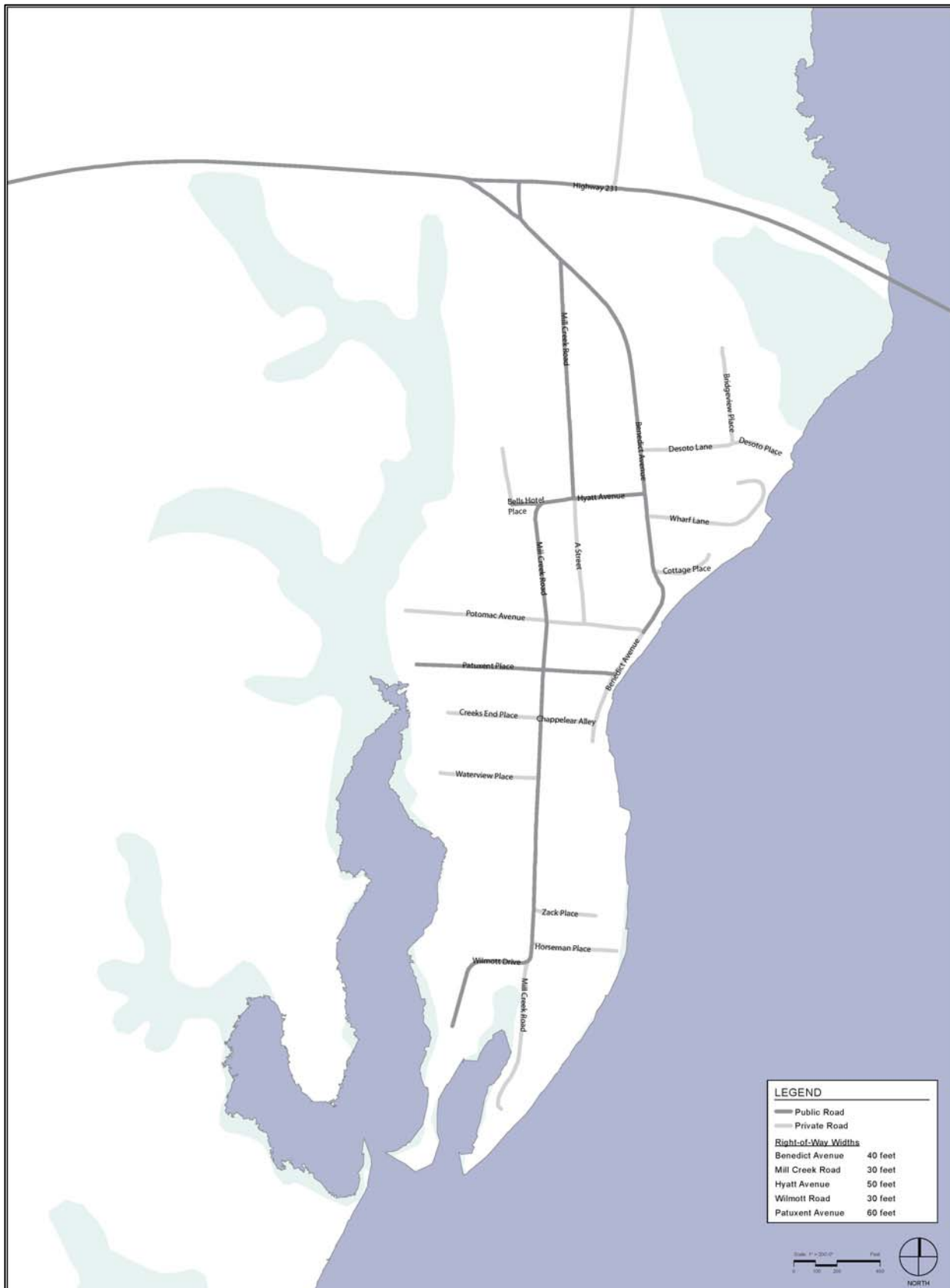


Exhibit 1-3. Existing Roads

2.0 Description of the Village

2.1 General Description

The population of Benedict is estimated at 197. Due to its small size, isolated location on a peninsula, and waterfront attractions, Benedict has always been a very walkable community. The peninsula is less than a mile in length and measures less than a quarter-mile at its widest point (**Fig. 2-1**).

2.2 Land Use

Existing land uses are residential, commercial, government, and institutional. Residences both permanent and seasonal are primarily single family with the exception of a small number of rental apartments. There are approximately 233 developable lots in Benedict, of which 123 contain existing dwellings.

The waterfront location is a major asset, and the presence of working waterfront uses provides a key aspect of Benedict's village character. Much of the waterfront is in private ownership, including commercial marinas, restaurants, and private residences (**Fig. 2-2**). The one exception is the County-owned parcel adjacent to Benedict Bridge where the ballfield is currently located. Parking lots are located at the church, the firehouse, Ray's Pier Restaurant, and Benedict Marina (**Exhibit 2-1**).

The Benedict Marina is part of the former Benedict Pier property which is currently on the market. In the two public meetings and in the community survey conducted during the Revitalization Plan process, residents recommended acquisition of the property in whole or in part for use as a county park with waterfront access and historical interpretation.

The surrounding area is largely rural, with agriculture and open space as the dominant land uses, including the privately owned Serenity Farm north of MD 231, the County-owned Maxwell Hall Equestrian Park further to the north, and the State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources Patuxent River Natural Resource Management Area to the west of Mill Creek.



Fig. 2-1 – Residents pick up mail at the post office at the corner of Benedict Avenue and Wharf Lane.

2.3 Existing Zoning

The two existing zoning categories are RV Village Residential Zone and CV Village Commercial Zone. According to County zoning regulations, these zones are located at existing centers of population or commerce in areas of the county outside the development district (**Exhibit 2-2**).

The RV zone directs new residential growth into villages by providing low- to medium-density residential development where the pattern of development has previously been established. The CV Zone, as defined by the County, provides for appropriate locations for limited commercial activities to serve the rural areas of the county.

The village is currently in the Limited Development Zone (LDZ) overlay, one of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area overlay zones.



Exhibit 2-1. Existing Parking Areas

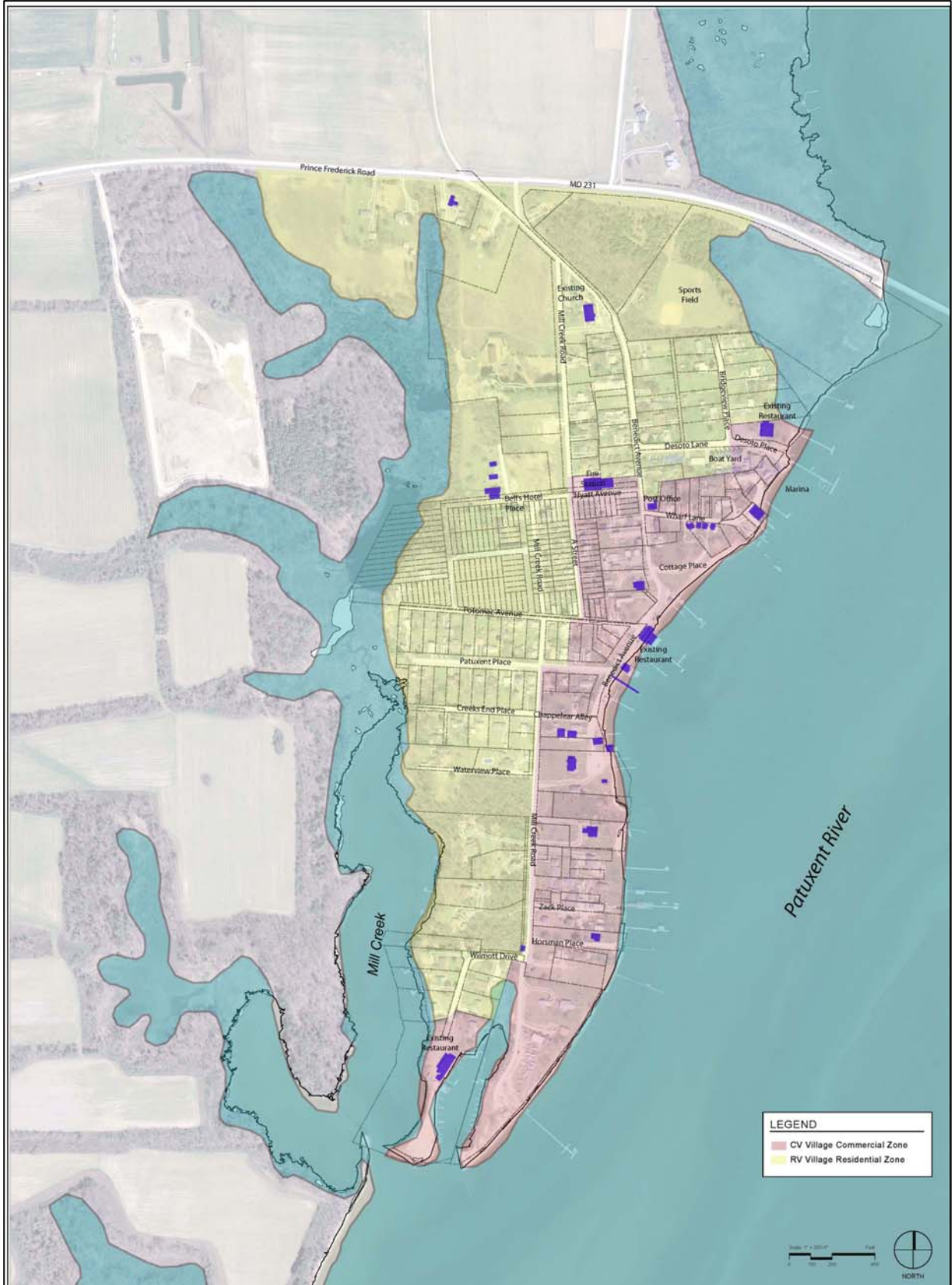


Figure 2-2. Existing Zoning

2.4 Historic Patterns and Sites

From its establishment as a port in the 17th century, Benedict developed by the mid-18th century into an organized town with a vibrant working waterfront, serving as a commercial center for the surrounding farmland. In the 19th and 20th centuries, while its importance as a commercial port gradually declined, additions to Benedict included summer homes, small resort hotels, waterfront restaurants, recreational piers, and marinas.

Although most of the buildings and structures existing in Benedict today were built in the 20th century, the historic patterns of the village and surrounding landscape represent and reveal the layers of the village's history.

Today, these patterns are evident in the village's enduring character-defining elements: the localized road patterns associated with small scale development, the sizes and boundaries of lots, the density and setbacks of residences, the relationship of building to road frontage, the fine grain of built fabric defined by single family residences with associated small ancillary structures, a small number of larger buildings, and the traditional uses of the land and waterfront.

The following four areas are the village's primary historical components:

“The Village of Benedict”: The original town site was platted as a roughly triangular area generally defined by the Patuxent River, Benedict Avenue, and Wharf Lane, including adjacent lots to the north and west (**Exhibit 2-3**). In its early years, the village was a thriving river port and a hub of commerce in this largely agricultural region. Now the core of modern-day Benedict, this area retains a distinctive village character. The original large lots front the west side of Benedict Avenue while small lots with closely spaced small-scale buildings line Wharf Lane between the post office and the historic waterfront sites of the tobacco warehouse and steamboat wharf.

“Benedict Farm”: The area known as “Benedict Farm” surrounding the village on the north, west, and south was composed of agricultural fields and small farm clusters set back from the road (**Exhibit 2-4**). Gradually, some of the farm roads



Fig. 2-2. Benedict Avenue leads to the river.

were improved as streets and parcels were subdivided and developed for residential use in the mid-20th century (**Exhibits 2-5 and 2-6**). Today, although the agricultural fields have reverted to woodland or grassland, this lower density area, with larger lot sizes and greater setbacks, continues to represent the community's farming history.

The Waterfront: The waterfront character of Benedict has evolved throughout its history, following changes in the regional economy, from maritime commerce and steamboat travel to water-based recreation. During its time as a commercial port, Benedict's riverfront bustled with shipping, oyster houses, fish packing, boat building, and other maritime business. In the early years, a tide mill in the backwater served local farmers. The steamboat pier served as a regional transportation hub from 1817 to 1937. The waterfront in the 20th century and today has become home to small-scale recreational and leisure uses, such as marinas, restaurants, fishing, swimming, and at one time, miniature golf.

Prince Frederick Road and Benedict Bridge: The opening of Maryland Route 231 in 1951 improved regional road access and increased traffic. Together with legalized gambling between 1949 and 1968, this new access stimulated the development of both waterfront recreational attractions and small residential subdivisions, many on private lanes, in and around the original Village of Benedict and Benedict Farm.



Exhibit 2-3. "Village of Benedict" Historic Map (overlay on 1938 aerial photograph)



Exhibit 2-4. Benedict Village is surrounded by farms in this 1938 aerial photograph.



Figure 2-5. Benedict in a 1952 aerial photograph



Figure 2-6. Benedict in a 1964 aerial photograph

Historic Sites

Following is a partial list of the historic and other significant community character-defining sites in and around the village of Benedict:

Benedict Avenue: Benedict Avenue is the village's historic main street (**Fig. 2-2**). While the preferred means of travel in Southern Maryland during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries were the waterways, for local farmers Benedict Avenue provided land access to the village and its port. The road appears on maps as early as 1794, connecting Benedict to Port Tobacco as well as to points to the north and west. Prior to the construction of Prince Frederick Road (MD 231) and the Benedict Bridge in 1951, all eastbound travelers followed the road that became Benedict Avenue and terminated at the Patuxent River. From this point travelers could continue eastward by means of a ferry to cross the river or by steamboat to reach more distant places. At the intersection with MD 231, the "spur road" on the west is the original alignment of Benedict Avenue; the perpendicular segment was constructed with MD 231.

St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church: Occupying the prominent site at the intersection of Benedict Avenue and Mill Creek Road near the village entrance this handsome building in a landscaped setting with a statue of the saint is the most recent church in this location, providing the opportunity to connect Benedict to the early history of Catholic settlement in Southern Maryland and the early tradition of religious freedom in the Maryland Colony (**Fig. 2-3**).

Tobacco Barn: Located west of Mill Creek Road opposite St. Francis de Sales Church, constructed circa 1955, the barn represents the importance of tobacco as a product of southern Maryland agriculture in the twentieth century (**Fig. 2-4**).

Original "Village of Benedict" port town site: This roughly triangular area, defined by Benedict Avenue, Wharf Lane, and the river, was the core of the earliest Benedict settlement. At one time it contained a colonial customs house, a tobacco inspection warehouse, stores, a wharf, and a ferry landing. Archaeological investigations in the area of the original settlement could add to knowledge of early town development in the Chesapeake region (**Exhibit 2-3** and **Fig. 2-5**).



Fig. 2-3 – St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church is located near the village gateway.



Fig. 2-4 – The tobacco barn is on the west side of Mill Creek Road a short distance from MD 231.



Fig. 2-5 – This residence stands on one of the original village's larger lots.

Wharf Lane and the former site of the Steamboat Wharf: The approach to the waterfront along Wharf Lane is the historic approach to the river through town. The end of the lane was once dominated by maritime commerce including the active steamboat wharf where commercial lines landed for more than 100 years (1817-1937). Residents relied upon the steamboat for long-distance transportation and commercial trade with Baltimore and points beyond.

“The Block”: A row of frame cottages built in the early 20th century on the south side of Wharf Lane by William Northam (1870 – 1959) for summer rental. Northam, who lived in Solomon’s Island, operated his oyster packing and shipping business from buildings that stood at the end of Wharf Lane.

Colonial Tide Mill: Records indicate that a grist mill powered by the movement of the tides in and out of Mill Creek operated at the southern end of the village during the 18th and 19th centuries. Archaeological remains may be extant in the marshes and channel where Mill Creek drains into the Patuxent River.

British Landing Site: Likely located between Wharf Lane and where Benedict Avenue approaches the Patuxent River. Between August 19 and August 30, 1814, British warships remained anchored off of Benedict in the Patuxent River during the invasion.

British Encampment Site: Located to the west and northwest of the village, the camp sites are likely on publically owned land (the Indian Creek Natural Resources Management Area [ICNRMA] managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources) or on private property protected by conservation easements (Serenity Farm). The site offers archaeological research potential.

Oyster Houses: Three former oyster houses remain along Benedict’s waterfront (Fig. 2-6). These utilitarian structures are physical reminders of the town’s significant oyster industry that flourished from the third quarter of the 19th century through the mid-20th century: Soller’s (near the end of Wharf Lane on the Patuxent River; operated 1930-1967), Shorter’s (waterfront at Patuxent Place; built 1953, operated into the 1970s), Messick’s (two buildings, ca. 1930 and post 1956).

Carpenter’s Yard Area: The area along the waterfront at the south end of Benedict Avenue is thought to be the traditional location of boatbuilding activities from the 18th through the 20th centuries. The workshop near the southwest corner of Benedict Avenue and Chappellear’s Alley was built circa 1960 as a boat shop. In addition, a marine railway remains at the water’s edge near this location. Twentieth century maritime activities in Benedict included recreational boating. The former “Green Top” store supplied boaters at mid-century; it stands at the end of Benedict Avenue.

Site of Camp Stanton (operated October 1863 – March 1864): Located west of the village within the Patuxent River Natural Resource Management Area, the former Union Army training camp for African American soldiers was dismantled after the Civil War. The site offers archaeological research potential. Commemorated by an interpretive sign at Benedict Marina across Mill Creek from the site (Fig. 2-7).



Fig. 2-6 – One of the three remaining oyster houses



Fig. 2-7 – The Camp Stanton interpretive sign

Site of Bowling’s Racetrack: Operated during the 1880s and 1890s, the racetrack was built by E. Gill Bowling on a site east of Bell’s Hotel.

African American Hotels and Resorts: There are two extant hotels that served African Americans during the period of 19th and 20th century racial segregation: **Bells’s Hotel** on Bell’s Hotel Place and **The Thomas Hotel** on the Patuxent River north of Zack Place (**Fig. 2-8**).

Benedict Schoolhouse (built circa 1886; MD Inventory of Historic Properties #CH-690); Benedict retains one of the few remaining 19th-century school buildings in Charles County. It is distinguished by its two-room plan. Located at the northern gateway to the town, the Benedict Schoolhouse provides the opportunity to tell the history of early public education in the county.

Messick’s Hotel: built in 1910 as a private residence; later enlarged and converted to a hotel; currently used as rental apartments (**Fig. 2-9**).

Horsman’s Hotel had two piers on the Patuxent River at Horsman Place and advertised inboard motor boats, fishing, crabbing, and refreshments.

Corner Shop: Located at the corner of Mill Creek Road and Wilmott Drive, this small wood clapboard structure with two doors and windows on the Mill Creek Road façade has served a variety of functions from ice cream sales to a cock-holding pen.

Site of Benedict Pier: This mostly vacant property is located at the southern tip of the village (**Fig. 2-10**). The Benedict Pier, which opened in 1959, once operated a restaurant, boat and fishing pier, adjacent to a manmade swimming beach, and a miniature golf course at the tip of the peninsula. The pier burned in 1989 and was rebuilt to a narrower width and without a roof.



Fig. 2-8 – The Thomas Hotel is now a private residence.



Fig. 2-9 – Messick’s Hotel is currently rental apartments.



Fig. 2-10 – Site of Benedict Pier in 2010.

2.5 Economic Assessment

Benedict and the surrounding area is economically stable and moderately affluent, relative to other nearby locations in southern Maryland. Most residents work away from the village however, commuting as much as 60 minutes a day, leaving a relatively small daytime, year-round population to support area businesses. Benedict acts as a rural bedroom community for larger population areas in the region. An approximate average count of 10,000 to 12,000 in drive-by traffic on MD 231 supplies some additional market opportunity as well as the seasonal residents during summer (Fig. 2-11).

Using an area encompassing 1.2 square miles, which is slightly larger than the village's approximately 150 acres, the total resident population is in the range of 197 to 206 people representing 95 households.

This larger area household group would be considered Benedict's day-to-day market from which primary business activity may be drawn. Over 74% of households live in owner-occupied units. The number of rental units has been slightly increasing over the past decade and is anticipated to continue to do so at a slow rate.

Median household income has increased from \$76,457 in 2000 to an estimated household income of \$89,727 in 2010. Median home value was \$218,333 for 2000; \$430,556 in 2010; and estimated \$595,593 for 2015.

Most economic activity is likely to be local serving businesses dependent upon inflow from travelers and visitors.



Fig. 2-11. Commuter traffic on Prince Frederick Road / Md 231 supplies some market opportunity. (Source: O. R. George & Associates)

2.6 Existing Traffic Conditions

An assessment of the travel characteristics within the local area of Benedict and vehicular access to existing and planned land uses within the Village identified the following opportunities and constraints.

MD 231 provides the sole vehicular access to the Village of Benedict. This roadway is classified as a "Rural Other Principal Arterial" on the State Secondary Highway System. Additionally, MD 231 is designated as a Scenic Byway Route, with the adjacent segment identified as part of the Star Spangled Banner Scenic Byway and National Historic Trail. This roadway is also designated as a bicycle route on the Maryland State Bicycle Map, which provides this activity on the eight-foot shoulders.

Access to the Village forms a "T" intersection with MD 231 and Benedict Avenue (**Figure 2-12**). It is further noted that a "spur" road from westbound MD 231 provides right-in access only to the Village. It is noted that the "spur" road is not equipped with a deceleration lane, nor is an acceleration lane available for eastbound traffic movement from Benedict Avenue. Advanced warning signs are posted along both the east and west approaches, alerting drivers of unexpected vehicular entries onto the State road.

This study recognizes the factor of seasonal variations in traffic flow along many State Facilities, particularly those situated in outlying rural and recreational areas, which serve both commuter, and visitor/recreational travel demands.



Fig. 2-12 – Prince Frederick Road / MD 231 and Benedict Avenue intersection existing conditions (Source: O. R. George & Associates)

Traffic volumes along MD 231 and those accessing the village have remained relatively stable over the last three to five years. Furthermore, levels of service for the Benedict access point are quite adequate and well within the Charles County planning standards. Based on Benedict's rural location and observations of the traffic volume data collected for this project the capacity of MD 231 presents no operational constraints.

Concerns about traffic delays at the Highway 231-Benedict Avenue intersection and traffic safety at that intersection as well as on village streets were among the issues raised by the community. Traffic analysis showed that delays at the Highway 231-Benedict Avenue intersection should typically be moderate, in the range between 18.4 and 23.6 seconds.

In order to evaluate the existing traffic safety situation in the vicinity of the study area, the most recent available accident (crash) data were obtained by the Charles County Department of Planning from the SHA Traffic Safety Analysis Division of the State Office of Traffic and Safety for the sections along MD 231 between MD 508 (Adelina Road) to the east and MD 381 to the west. This data covers MD 231, including its intersection with Benedict Avenue, and local roadways within the Village for the years 2006 to 2008. The data reflects no significant operational safety concerns. There were few accidents (1 to 3 per year) occurring along MD 231 within approximately 2 miles of the subject intersection with speeding being a major contributing factor. Only one (1) accident was recorded within the Village of Benedict.

Benedict is the only significant enclave of residential use mixed with business and recreational activities along the MD 231 rural highway corridor between Hughesville in Charles County and Prince Frederick in Calvert County. Because of this, there appears to be "dueling" expectations between the through traffic along the highway and Benedict residents and visitors. This is reflected in the comments regarding access onto MD 231 received from the community, including the Benedict Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad, the sole emergency response unit along the referenced section.



Fig. 2-13 – The existing County-operated community water supply facility adjacent to Benedict Avenue

2.7 Public and Privately Operated Facilities

Water and Sanitary Sewer: Benedict has a Priority Funding Area (PFA) designation under the Maryland Smart Growth Initiatives. The village has a County-operated community water supply (Fig. 2-13). However, sewage disposal is achieved via individual on-site disposal (septic) systems (OSDS). Most lots have 20-25 year old OSDS which predate the more advanced sewerage disposal techniques that are available today. The current Charles County Water and Sewer Plan identifies the need to mitigate the village's failing septic systems, one of the sources of fecal coliform in Mill Creek as determined by MDE.

The Benedict Central Sewer System Project for the collection, treatment, and disposal of sewerage is being planned for Benedict to improve the quality of receiving water bodies and to eliminate potential threats to valuable environmental resources (Exhibit 2-7). Currently, the project is in the design / permitting phase which consists of the design of approximately 11,300 feet of 8" gravity sewer, 12,485 feet of force main, a 237,000 gallon per day peak flow sewerage treatment plant, and a spray irrigation system for discharging the treated effluent from the plant. The annual removal of approximately 4,200 and 1,100 lbs of total nitrogen (TN) and total phosphorous (TP), respectively, will be realized as a result of the new system. In the meantime, an option for residents is Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund which provides funding for the replacement of failing and/or old septic systems.



Exhibit 2-7. Planned Sanitary Sewer System (Source: Charles County Commissioners)

Public Safety, Fire, and Emergency Services:

The Benedict Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad (the department) firehouse is located in the core of the village on the north side of Hyatt Avenue between Benedict Avenue and Mill Creek Road (Fig. 2-14). The department also owns the lots on the south side of Hyatt Avenue that are currently used for parking, training, and a playground. The firehouse is used often for community events.

The department is currently in the planning and approvals process to expand its existing facility. In the two public meetings and in the community survey conducted during the Revitalization Plan process, residents expressed support for the department while also expressing concerns about noise generated by its operations, the scale of the planned expansion, and the larger facility's potential impact on the village. An alternative concept to relocate the firehouse to vacant land fronting MD 231 was developed as part of the Revitalization Plan.

In addition, the department is seeking a new boat ramp to launch fire boats, a place to store the boat over the water to improve response time to emergency calls, and an additional facility with an unobstructed view of the river.

Recreation and Open Space: Existing public recreation and open space within the village is limited to the 14.6-acre County Parks and Recreation parcel in the northeast corner of the village adjacent to Benedict Bridge. Of this parcel, approximately two acres are occupied by a ballfield, about a half acre by the County's pump station for the village water service, about 7.5 acres are tidal wetland marsh, and the balance is forested.

Nearby recreation areas include the County-owned Maxwell Hall Park Equestrian Area at the end of Maxwell Drive north of MD 231 and the State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Patuxent River Natural Resource Management Area west of Mill Creek and adjacent to MD 231 (Figs. 2-15 and 2-16).

In the two public meetings and in the community survey conducted during the Revitalization Plan process, residents recommended acquisition of the Benedict Pier property, which is currently up for sale, in whole or in part for use as a county



Fig. 2-14 – The existing firehouse



Fig. 2-15 – Maxwell Hall overlooks the Patuxent from a high point of the park and equestrian area.



Fig. 2-16 – DNR land is on the far side of Mill Creek

park with waterfront access and historical interpretation. Community enhancements include sidewalks with trail connections to the Patuxent River Natural Resource Management Area.

2.8 Conclusions

The following conclusions summarize community issues and concerns, identified needs, and policy implications.

Summary of Community Issues and Concerns

In response to the community survey, the following issues were identified by the community:

Historic Waterfront Village and the Environment

- Maintaining the rural character of the village
- Shore erosion, shoreline
- Keep it the way it is
- Peace and quiet
- Small, sleepy waterfront town
- River access and views are not blocked
- Historic preservation, preserve surviving historic structures
- Retain community charm
- Water
- Environmental protection and water quality
- The “farm look,” lots of open land

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

- Speeding cars and delivery trucks through town
- Sidewalks
- Streets and street lights

Public Infrastructure and Services

- New sanitary sewer service
- Be sure to keep the Post Office

Family and Community

- Everyone knows everyone
- Privacy
- No crime

Cost Control

- Keep costs down
- High taxes

Real Property

- Property maintenance
- Property values



Fig. 2-17 – Boaters enjoy the view of the historic waterfront village.



Fig. 2-18 – Along the waterfront, pedestrians walk on the asphalt shoulder of Benedict Avenue.



Fig. 2-19 – Three community issues: control traffic, improve pedestrian safety, and keep the post office.

Planning and Growth Management

- A central public area with the necessary amenities and points of interest
- A common area on the water
- One respondent stated, “Upgrade the central core of Benedict, the two main streets and the wharf area around the restaurants – good streets, good parking, a walkable central core. Low level retail, general store, and antique shop might need to be encouraged. A central public place near the water that is easily maintained and attractive...to...visitors. One should be able to park and walk to the river, a restaurant, and historical points.”
- Businesses
- No condominiums on the pier property
- Lack of direction by County for future
- River access and views are not blocked
- Lack of land to develop
- Lack of vision – planned expansion / growth
- Commercial resources
- Not becoming Waldorf, MD
- Not become too commercialized
- One respondent stated, “Acquisition of property on the south end of town: This is probably the most important to all citizens... Acquiring the land will provide space for a recreational area, playground..., parking, a public boat ramp, fishing piers, and even the War of 1812 memorial. It would provide an area for locals and out-of-towners ... to enjoy the town and something to be proud of.”

In response to the community survey, the following aspects of the village were identified by the community as not to be changed:

Small Town Character

- Waterfront fishing village,
- Hometown
- Peaceful and quiet
- Small town feel
- Keep it the way it is
- Historical value
- Smaller cottages that have been here since the early 50's
- Single family homes
- No townhouses
- It's look



Fig. 2-20 – The central core of Benedict today.

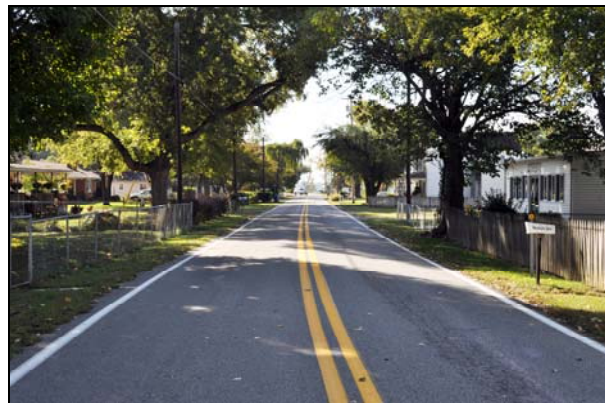


Fig. 2-21 – The view down Benedict Avenue to the river.



Fig. 2-22 – Benedict's small town character is exemplified by its traditional tidewater architecture.

- Anything historical, history of the town
- The architecture
- Its friendly, informal atmosphere
- Island atmosphere

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

- Conducive to walking, bike riding, not a lot of traffic
- Lack of congestion, traffic

Public Services and Infrastructure

- Post Office
- Don't add any more public access to the water
- Shoreline

Costs

- Taxes not increased



Fig. 2-23 – Benedict's roads are shared by motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.

In response to the community survey, the following public and private improvements were proposed for the village:

Infrastructure and Public Service Improvements

Of these the top three focus on infrastructure and public space improvements, specifically (1) the new sanitary sewer and waste water treatment system, (2) street lights, and (3) sidewalks. The suggested infrastructure and public service improvements included the following:

- New sanitary sewer and waste water treatment system
- Street lights
- Sidewalks
- Add a traffic signal at 231 with fire station control
- Road system upgrades including paving roads and adding sidewalks
- Put utility lines underground
- Speed zones and speed bumps
- Storm water management
- Shoreline protection
- New Post Office
- Move the fire department to 231 and make a community center.
- Fireboat ramp, storage, lift, and command center over the water
- Police presence

Public Open Space Improvements

Also suggested were these public open space improvements:

- Nice entrance way
- A “Welcome to Benedict” sign
- Landscaping
- Town clock
- Scenic waterfront
- Community waterfront area, like Leonardtown
- Improved water access
- Boat ramp
- Up-to-date safe playground
- Acquisition of property on the south end of town for a town park for kids, picnics, with historic information

Service and Entertainment Retail Facilities

Several responded that they would like more convenient service and entertainment retail, including:

- General store or country store
- Gas station, but not in the village
- Craft store, with gas
- Retail stores
- More good restaurants
- Refurbish the marinas
- Waterfront event facility
- Small water park

In response to the community survey, the following village elements were proposed to be removed:

Historic Waterfront Village and the Environment

- The right to add a boat lift at the edge of the property line, no setback currently required in Charles County, views get blocked

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

- Speeding

Public Infrastructure and Services

- Gravel and dirt roads
- Firehouse – siren no longer needed

Public Nuisances

- Noisy motorcycles
- Loud music
- Marina
- Bars

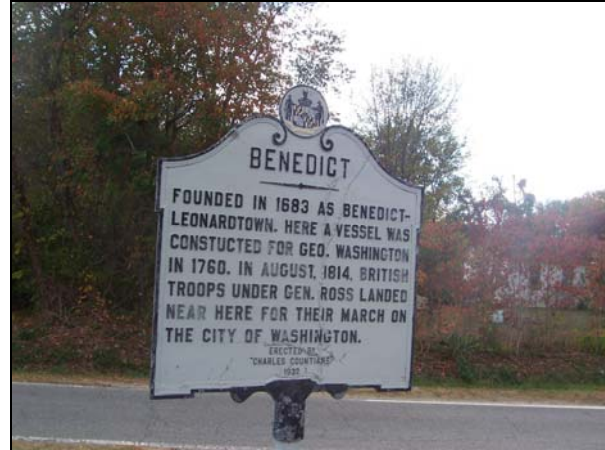


Fig. 2-24 – Existing historical marker



Fig. 2-25 – A Charles County country store



Fig. 2-26 – An unimproved private road in Benedict

Real Property

- Lack of care of property
- Rundown brick apartments on the Benedict Avenue riverfront
- Rundown housing and other areas
- Apartments, townhouses, and low income rentals
- Tear down old, abandoned buildings, build a hotel
- Rehabilitate the marina
- Garbage around the Oyster House and apartments
- Junked cars, untagged cars
- The junk yard
- Cluttered areas
- Trash



Fig. 2-27 – Example of structural erosion control on a shoreline

Planning and Growth Management

- County interference
- Building controls
- Developers
- No condos

Summary of Identified Needs

The following identified needs provide the basis for development of a vision for the village, plan goals and objectives, development concepts, recommendations, and implementation strategies.

Land Use Needs

- Protect the integrity, scale, and character of the village with infill development that respects the established development pattern, density, design, land uses, and amenities.
- Protect natural and cultural resources.
- Create a low interest loan mechanism for private property owners to construct shoreline erosion control measures.
- Change zoning regulations to support village revitalization efforts while protecting the character of the village and respecting the established development pattern.

Transportation Needs

- Create better visibility and identity along MD 231.
- Improve village access / egress at MD 231 and Benedict Avenue.
- Establish traffic calming measures in the village.

Public Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services Needs

- Create new sanitary sewer system to reduce environmental impacts and adequately meet current and future user needs within the village.
- Create a safe and walkable streetscape in the center of the village.
- Create public access to the shores of the river, creek, and wetland areas.
- Create public parks and trails with interpretive signage about village history.
- Provide adequate public and private parking facilities appropriately located to support current and future uses.
- Accommodate expansion of the fire department while protecting the integrity, scale, and character of the village.
- Provide adequate public safety.

Design, Aesthetics, and Beautification Needs

- Create better village identity along MD 231.
- Promote architectural integrity consistent with the character of the village.
- Make streetscape improvements, including sidewalks, lighting, street trees, signage, and pedestrian crossings.

Economic Development Needs

- Develop tourism opportunities to take advantage of War of 1812 commemoration and other historical themes associated with the village.
- Provide incentives for small-scale commercial establishments.
- Identify appropriate uses for vacant and under-utilized sites and buildings, including adaptive reuse, consistent with the character of the village.
- Promote appropriate infill development / redevelopment consistent with the integrity, scale and character of the village.



Fig. 2-28 – During the War of 1812, the U. S. flag was distinguished by 15 Stars and 15 Bars.

Summary of Policy Implications

The following is a summary of policy implications with respect to population, land use, natural and historic resources, transportation, economic assessment, and public and private facilities.

Population Characteristics

- Development / redevelopment efforts should recognize local and regional population trends and the attractions of the small town / waterfront lifestyle.
- The demand for services in Benedict will grow within the established zoning limitations based on location and growth projections.

Land Use

- The maximum allowable density for residential use is not consistent with the established development pattern and may discourage development / redevelopment of vacant and underutilized property.
- Infill development use and scale must be compatible with the village to maintain village integrity, scale, and character.
- Design guidelines for site and architecture should be crafted to protect and enhance village integrity, scale, and character.
- Applicable Scenic Byway policies should be reviewed with respect to village gateway improvements, including signage, streetscape, setbacks, and design.
- Development standards should be modified to allow mixed use development.

Natural Resources

- Protection of environmental resources, including loan mechanisms for construction, should be incorporated into land use, recreation and open space, and village revitalization and enhancement strategies.

Historic Patterns, Themes, and Sites

- Benedict's historic resources should serve as the foundation for economic development and revitalization strategies.
- Take advantage of federal, state, and local preservation programs to preserve village resources and protect the character of the village.



Fig. 2-29 – Houses with front porches and lawns facing the street are characteristic of Benedict.

Economic Development

- While the area is economically stable and moderately affluent, the daytime population of the village is small so economic development initiatives should focus on MD 231 drive-by traffic and attracting tourists and recreational visitors to support limited small local serving businesses and commercial services.
- The village should provide limited employment opportunities, taking into consideration median income levels and housing costs.
- Vacant and underutilized lots and buildings present infill development and/or redevelopment opportunities.
- As a Priority Funding Area (PFA) under the Maryland Smart Growth Initiatives, Benedict is eligible for grants and other funding and assistance to achieve revitalization objectives.

Transportation

With respect to transportation, village enhancements and revitalization efforts shall adhere to the following County policies in the 2002 Enhance Comprehensive Transportation Strategy and Comprehensive Plan:

- Maximize transportation options
- Coordinate land use and transportation planning
- Improve traffic safety along major corridors.
- Transportation improvement shall be funded through public / private partnerships.

- Coordinate transportation improvements with the County, Maryland Department of Transportation, and Tri-County Council.

Public and Private Facilities

- The planned sanitary sewer system shall serve the village only to maintain village character and density.
- Design of expanded or new fire department facilities shall be compatible with the village integrity, scale, and character.

2.9 Opportunities and Constraints

Based on the findings of the site analyses (existing land use, zoning, natural and historical resources, traffic and infrastructure, and economics), five primary nodes are identified as the focus for village improvements and enhancements: Village Gateway, Town Park, Village Green, Riverfront, and Benedict Point, along with the public streets that connect them (**Exhibit 2-8**).

Opportunity Areas shown on Exhibit 2-8 are those sites that are vacant, under-utilized, or have strong potential for reuse and redevelopment that would support the overall community vision for Benedict. Some Opportunity Areas, such as the oyster houses, historic schoolhouse, and Messick's Hotel, have strong historic significance and, therefore, are ideal candidates for preservation and adaptive reuse. Other Opportunity Areas, such as the Village Gateway and DeSoto's Landing, have potential for targeted commercial or mixed use redevelopment. Still other Opportunity Areas are appropriate for residential infill development.



Fig. 2-30 – An example of an Opportunity Area with potential for infill development is the vacant lot in the foreground located at the core of the village along Hyatt Avenue between Benedict Avenue and the firehouse.



Figure 2-8. Opportunities and Constraints

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3.0 Revitalization Plan

3.1 Vision Statement

Benedict Waterfront Village is:

- a livable, walkable small town with a rich maritime history,
- the site of the British invasion in the War of 1812, and
- a community of residents and business owners committed to protecting the village's integrity, scale, and character while ensuring its viability as a place to live, work, and play for today's and future generations.

3.2 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

This section presents the goals, objectives, and policies of the Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan. The goals are the overarching principles that are intended to guide the decision-making process. The objectives of the plan are the actions that are recommended toward achieving the goals in a measurable way. The policies are the measures to be taken by the County to facilitate implementation of the plan.

Goal 1: Protect the integrity, scale, character and environment of the village.

Objective 1: Develop new zoning codes and design guidelines to protect the integrity, scale and character of the village with development and infill development.

Policy 1: Zoning standards will respect the established development pattern, density, design, height, land uses, and amenities, and be consistent with the scale and character of the village as expressed in this revitalization plan.

Policy 2: Develop general design guidelines for site and architecture that will be applicable to new development and redevelopment.

Policy 2: Recommend archaeological review before major improvement projects in the village.

Objective 2: Develop environmental protection and sustainability improvement plans.

Policy 1: Recognize Benedict in the Critical Area Program to promote growth allocations in accordance with the direction of this plan and within sustainable development practices.

Policy 2: Develop shoreline erosion improvement plans and propose such for future funding through the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Policy 3: Explore environmental improvement grant funding opportunities with State and Federal agencies to fund and implement shoreline erosion improvement plans.

Goal 2: Improve public infrastructure and transportation circulation for the village.

Objective 1: Create transportation improvement plans for better visibility, access and village identity along Prince Frederick Road / Maryland 231; and promote pedestrian circulation and safety within the village.

Policy 1: Engineering plans will be designed to improve village access, egress and safety at Prince Frederick Road / MD 231 and Benedict Avenue in conjunction with phasing, funding, and implementation strategies and potential land acquisition.

Policy 2: Develop traffic calming measures for the village streets as deemed necessary.

Policy 3: Develop a village parking plan to support current and future uses in conjunction with design guidelines to determine appropriate locations, limit size, and protect views. Include acquisition of key sites if needed.

Objective 2: Build a new sanitary sewer system for the Village of Benedict

Policy 1: Phase urban design, streetscape, and sidewalk improvements to occur in conjunction with the sanitary system improvements.

Policy 2: Fund final design and construction of the sanitary sewer and streetscape plans in the

County's Capital Improvements Plan to complete this project over the next five year cycle.

Goal 3: Create a safe and walkable streetscape in the center of the Village.

Objective 1: Design and implement public access pedestrian plans in accordance with the direction of this plan.

Policy 1: Confirm public access to the shores of the river, creek, and wetland areas at county owned lands and rights of way; and develop plans to improve, enhance, and expand public access through potential land acquisition in conjunction with the direction of this revitalization plan.

Policy 2: Design and fund a low impact village trail pedestrian system to connect to adjacent environmental amenities as illustrated on the Village Concept Plan.

Policy 3: Develop village streetscape and landscape improvement plans including sidewalks, lighting, benches, planter boxes, street trees, and crosswalks in conjunction with phasing, funding, and implementation of the planned sanitary sewer system project.

Goal 4: Create public parks that interpret the unique history of Benedict

Objective 1: Develop a village parks and trails layout and signage plan including use of existing County- and State-owned land and rights of way and potential land acquisition.

Policy 1: In advance of the War of 1812 commemorative events, develop a tourism facilities plan including tour bus and private vehicle parking, visitors center and museum, and pedestrian connections to the village with directional and interpretive signage. This can be a first phase of a longer term implementation plan. Incorporate these facilities into the "Village Gateway" area and adjacent County park land.

Policy 2: Develop a streetscape and landscape improvement plan for the Village Gateway entryway, including signage, lighting, a War of 1812-era U. S. flag, and planning in conjunction with a phasing plan and sanitary sewer improvements.

Policy 3: Consider public acquisition of the "Point Property" for a public park as depicted on the Concept Plan and propose such as a part of the County's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

Goal 5: Promote limited and focused economic development consistent with the direction of this plan

Objective 1: Pursue grants, incentives, or other economic development assistance to help finance and fulfill the intent and direction of this plan.

Policy 1: Submit grant applications for public improvements and to enhance historic and cultural resources as recognized in the Village Concept Plan to help offset implementation costs.

Policy 2: Examine incentives to help existing restaurants, marinas, and other village businesses.

Policy 3: Promote a new general store, limited retail / office at the Village Gateway to provide services to the Village.

Policy 4: Inventory vacant and underutilized land for infill and allow for such as consistent with the direction and intent of the Village Concept Plan.

Policy 5: Investigate opportunities to relocate the fire station from its current location at the core of the village to a new site along MD 231 and the creative reuse of the existing firehouse building and site.

Objective 2: Research and create zoning tools that will allow appropriate infill and redevelopment at designated Opportunity Areas.

Policy 1: Research the development of a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) zone.

Policy 2: Review the existing Mixed Use Planned Unit Development Zone to determine if it would be appropriate for the Village.

3.3 Village Concept Plan

The Village Concept Plan emphasizes physical improvements that will enhance Benedict's image as an historic waterfront community. The plan includes improved village identity at the Prince Frederick Road / MD 231 and Benedict Avenue intersection, streetscape and landscape improvements to create a safer and more attractive environment, improved access to waterfront areas, protection of natural and historic resources and viewsheds, and facilities for historic resource interpretation, cultural events, and recreational activities (see **Exhibit 3-1**).

The plan focuses on open space improvements on publicly-owned land and rights-of-way in conjunction with potential land acquisition in the following five (5) areas of the village with streetscape improvements along the streets that connect them.

Village Gateway: In addition to traffic safety improvements with new acceleration / deceleration lanes, the gateway is enhanced with identity signage, a War of 1812-era U. S. flag, lighting, and planting. On adjacent private land there is potential for mixed use development of a Village Gateway Center with local serving retail, such as a new general store possibly in conjunction with a visitors center / museum and shared parking. This development could also accommodate an alternative location for the fire department with the advantage of drive-through lane capability (**Fig. 3-1** and **Exhibit 3-2**).

Town Park: This large but relatively under-utilized County-owned park occupies a key location at the head of Benedict Avenue with visibility from Prince Frederick Road and Benedict Bridge. The plan envisions visitor facilities and space for reenactments and other events in association with the commemoration of the War of 1812 bicentennial (**Exhibit 3-2**).

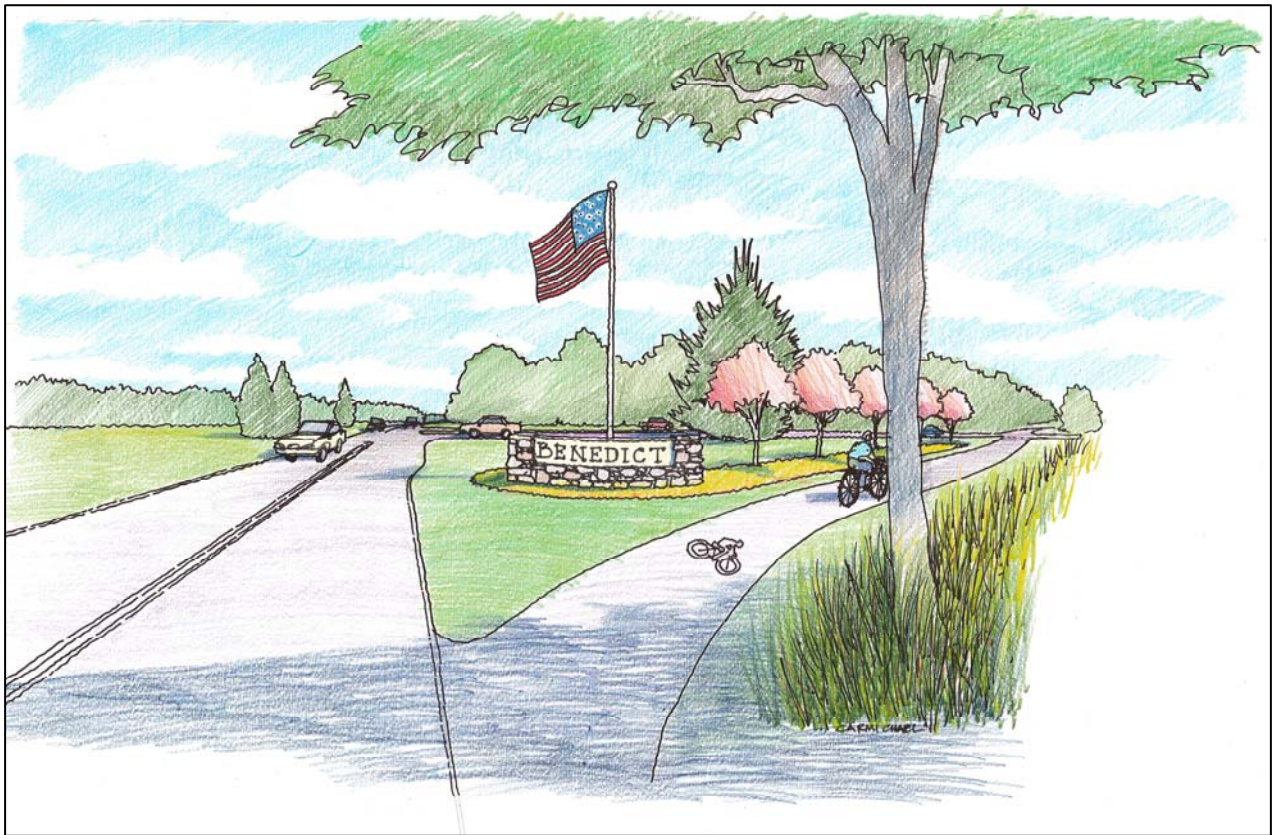


Fig. 3-1. Proposed Village Gateway improvements



Exhibit 3-2. Village Concept Plan Detail: Village Gateway Entry Feature

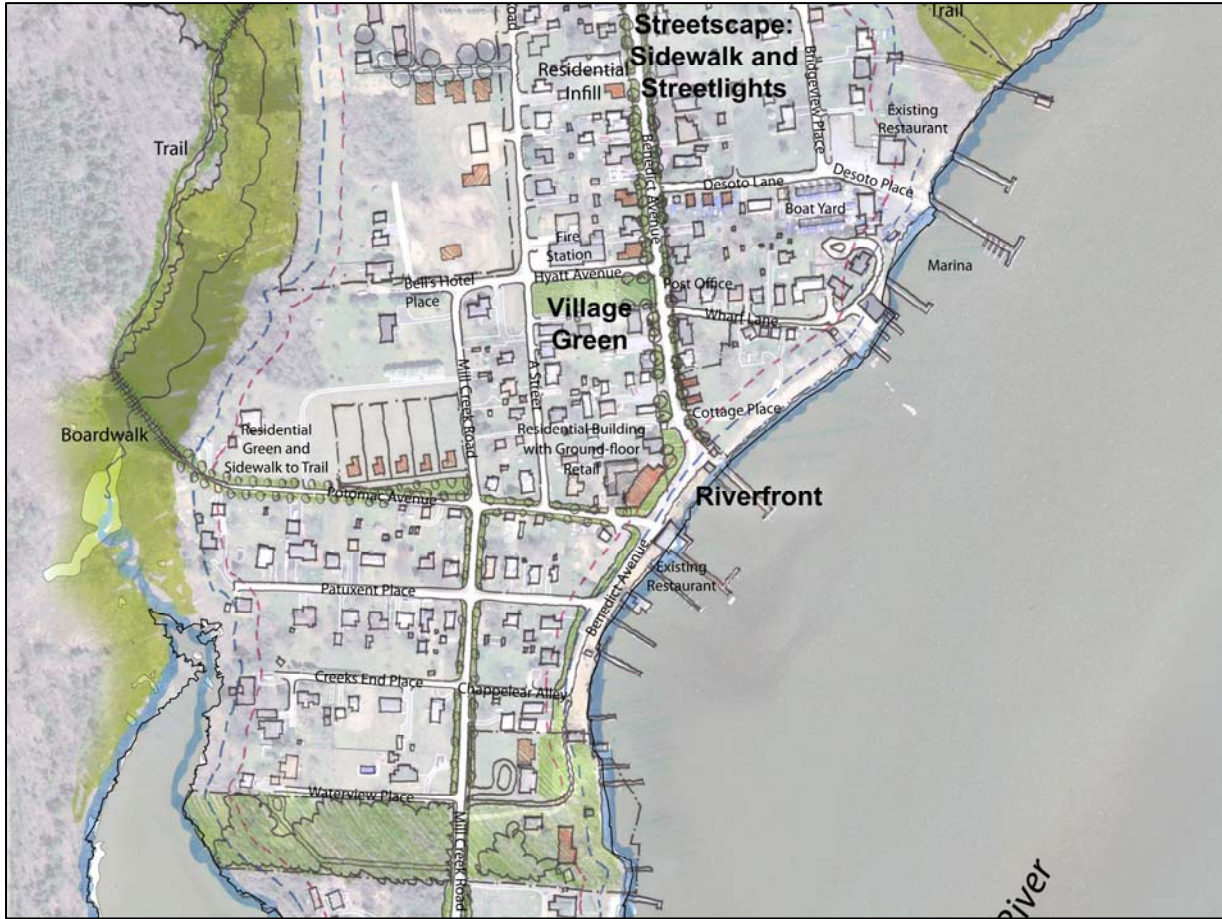


Exhibit 3-3. Village Concept Plan Detail: Village Green and Riverfront

Riverfront: Where Benedict Avenue meets the riverfront, a new pathway with benches, interpretive signage, and lighting highlight the site of the British invasion during the War of 1812 and the village’s rich maritime history (**Exhibits 3-3** and **3-6**).



Exhibit 3-4. Village Concept Plan Detail: Benedict Point Park

The Point: The former site of Benedict Pier is currently largely vacant, underutilized, and up for sale. The County would consider acquisition of the “Point Property,” in whole or in part, to create a placid waterfront park with informal paths, benches, and interpretive signage (**Exhibit 3-4**).

Village Green: This central open space on the south side of Hyatt Avenue between Benedict Avenue and Mill Creek Road in the village’s historic core is currently the fire department’s parking lot, training area, and playground. The plan transforms the space into a village green, with pathways, benches, lighting, shade trees, a gazebo / bandstand with a town clock, and an update of the playground to modern standards (**Exhibit 3-3, Figs. 3-2**). If the fire department were to relocate to MD 231 as proposed during the planning process, the existing firehouse might become a combination community center / farmers market with its truck bays open to the street during good weather (**Fig. 3-3**).



Fig. 3-2. Proposed Village Green and Post Office Renovation



Fig. 3-3. Proposed Village Green with Option for Potential Firehouse Adaptive Reuse

BENEDICT AVENUE

Proposed improvements within the existing 40' right-of-way are a 5-foot pedestrian path of porous paving adjacent to the existing cartway and street lights.

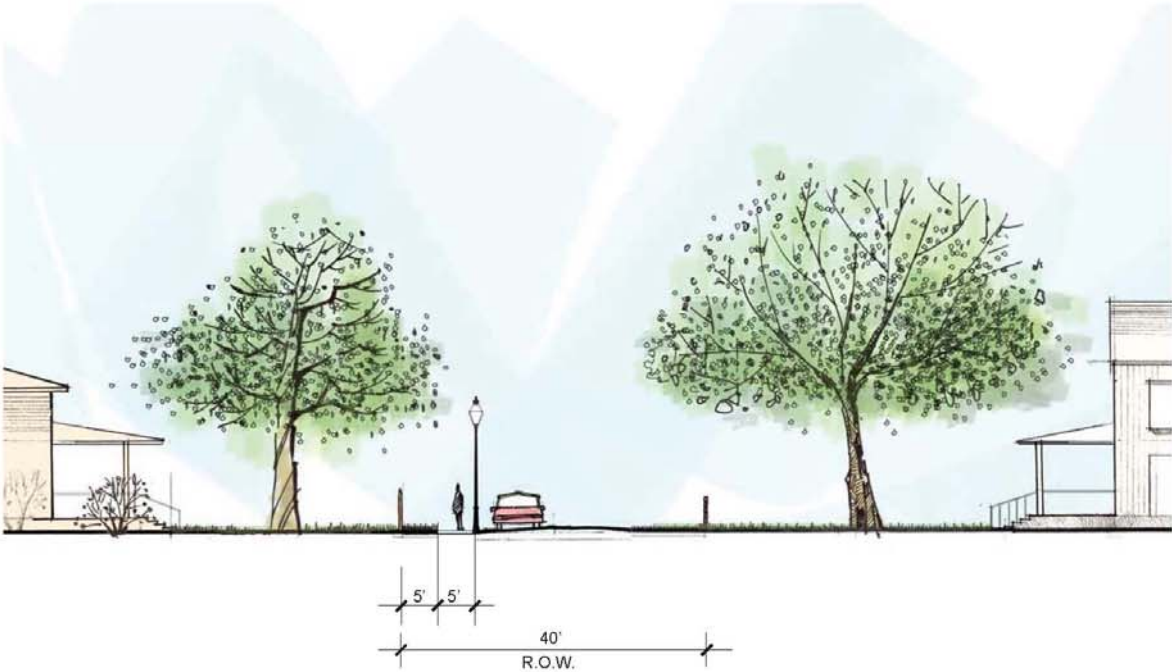
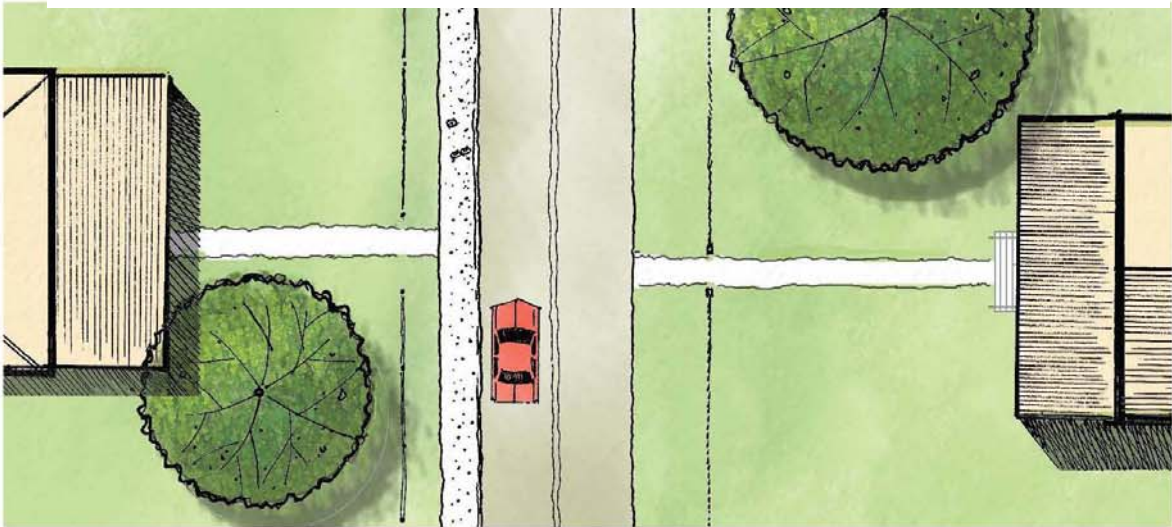


Exhibit 3-5. Benedict Avenue Streetscape Improvements

RIVERFRONT

Proposed improvements within the existing 40' right-of-way are a 5-foot pedestrian path of porous paving adjacent to the existing cartway, street lights, benches, flower boxes, and a wayside interpretive marker about Benedict's maritime history.

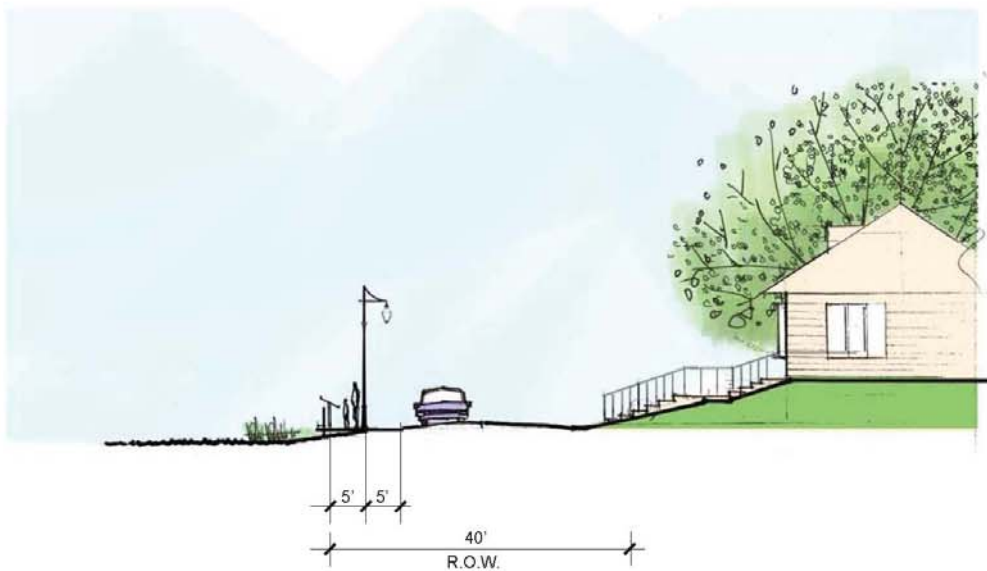
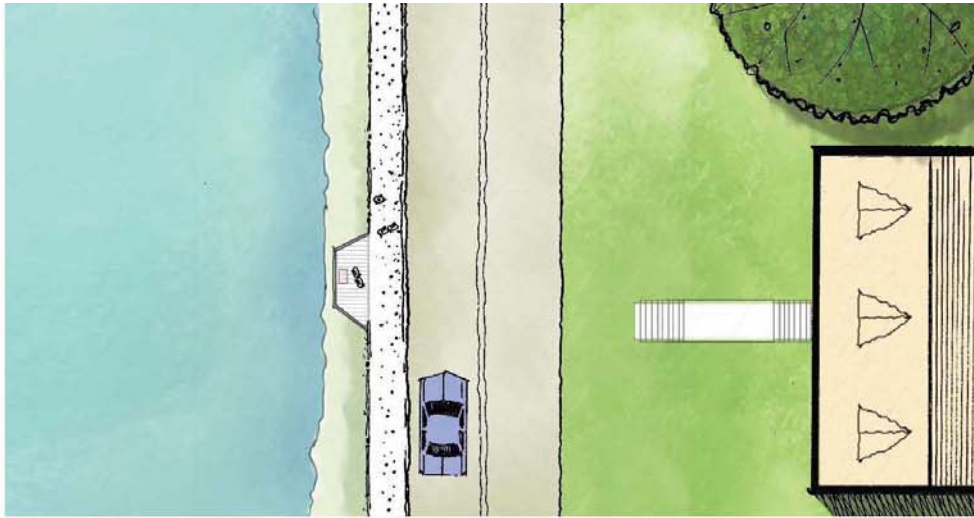


Exhibit 3-6. Benedict Avenue Riverfront Improvements

MILL CREEK

Proposed improvements within the existing 30' right-of-way are a 5-foot pedestrian path of porous paving adjacent to the existing cartway and street lights.

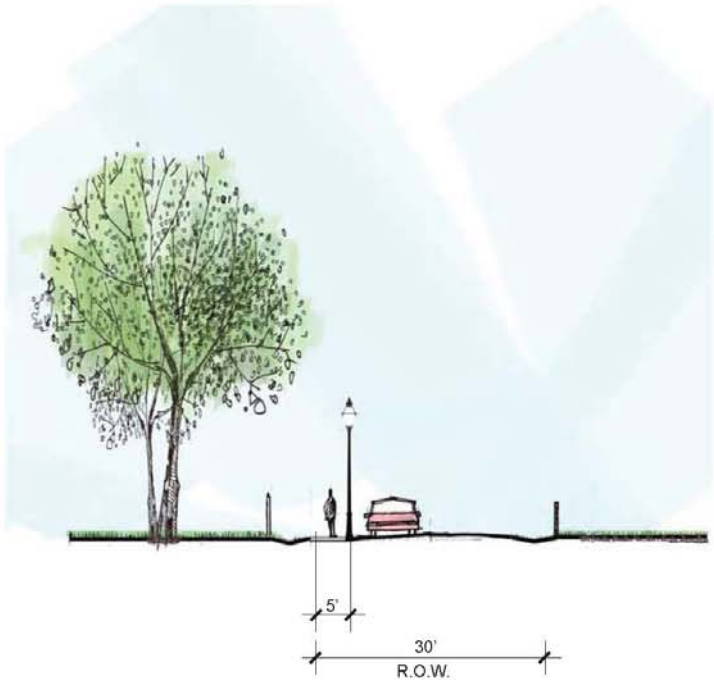
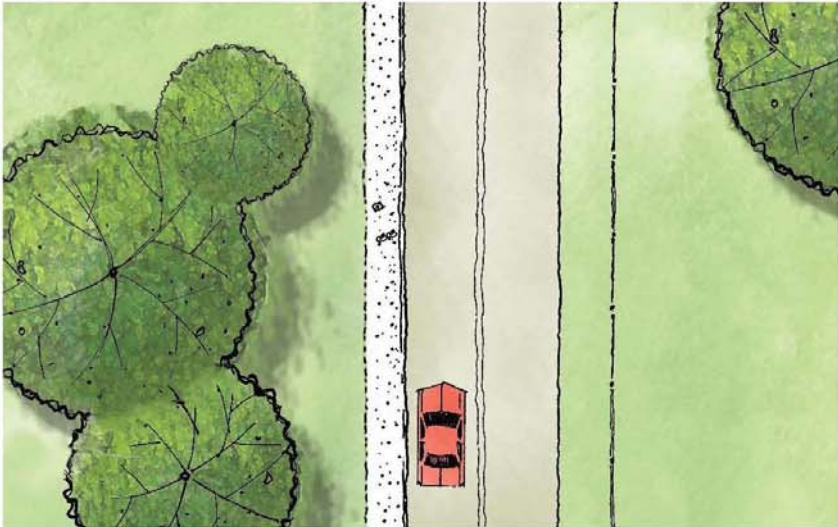


Exhibit 3-7. Mill Creek Road Streetscape Improvements

3.4 Opportunities for Revitalization

The Benedict community has determined that it prefers a limited development strategy. Therefore the economic revitalization opportunities should be viewed in light of that community preference by focusing on simple and achievable small business opportunities and less on broader residential development beyond infill development on available residential lots.

The best new business development opportunity may be found along the highway and may be in the form of a small retail/ food service/ auto service station facility associated with a new firehouse. Gourmet grocery and convenience stores generally range from 1,242 – 3,988 square feet in size, with annual productivity of a median \$203 per square foot. Adding a liquor or wine section to the store could add additional sales, as well as a café/ice cream/sandwich shop and service station would provide a base of goods and services that would appeal to in-flow traffic on the highway and provide for local area consumers. Food and beverage service beyond the sandwich shop should be left to the existing restaurants. An additional restaurant would only reduce sales for the existing businesses.

Some seasonal opportunities may also be present related to water-based recreation, as well as special event sales to any visitors associated with anticipated War of 1812 events.

3.5 Future Traffic and Access

The data presented in earlier sections show that traffic volumes along MD 231, and those accessing the Village of Benedict, have remained relatively stable over the last three to five years. Furthermore, levels of service for the Benedict access point are quite adequate and well within the Charles County planning standards. In addition, the following key factors are noted:

- a) Preliminary analyses show that the volumes utilizing the Benedict Avenue intersection do not satisfy any of the State’s warrants for signalization;
- b) There are local factors which make the Benedict Avenue access point unique and worthy of special consideration based on the “dueling” expectation;
- c) The development scenarios arising out of the community planning exercise indicates that future development within the Village environs are likely to be relatively modest. Future development may consist of in-fill residential, a mixed use Village Gateway Center off MD 231, and potential relocation of the Village’s firehouse on a parcel with frontage along MD 231.

- d) The development activity noted in Item (c) should not be significantly constrained by roadway capacity considerations. However, earlier analysis provided to AECOM documented certain deficiencies in the roadway geometry and controls in the vicinity of the Benedict access.

Based on the above factors, this assessment finds that basic improvement will be needed at the intersection and along the frontage of the Village Gateway Center. These are included in Exhibit 5. One of the major features of the proposal would involve the traffic signal. The Consultant is of the view that further analysis and interaction with the State will be necessary in order to give consideration to the unique situation and circumstances within the Village of Benedict.

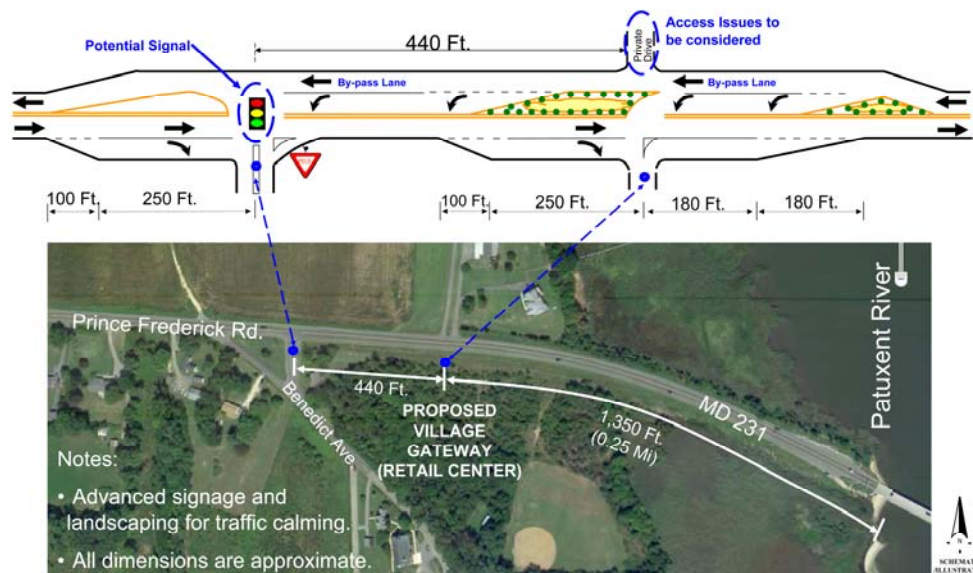


Fig. 3-4

Preliminary Concept for Village Gateway Access Improvements (Source: O. R. George & Associates)

3.8 Historical Themes

The village's connection to important events in local and national history is one of its major assets. Benedict offers a place-based opportunity for residents and visitors to understand early American boatbuilding and transatlantic commerce as well as Maryland's experience during military conflicts of the 18th and 19th centuries. Longtime residents as well as newcomers can take pride in Benedict's history and the stories of its past can help them feel connected to the place. This connection to their rich historical legacy can inspire the community to invest in preserving its special character. The celebration and interpretation of Benedict's history can draw visitors who come to learn, discover, and experience the historic village and its scenic and natural assets.

In 2003, the State of Maryland recognized Southern Maryland's historic and cultural significance when it designated the region a certified state Heritage Area. Maryland's Heritage Areas are locally designated and State certified regions where public and private partners make commitments to preserve historical, cultural, and natural resources for sustainable economic development through heritage tourism. Managed by the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium who coordinates regional tourism and preservation efforts, the Southern Maryland Heritage Area (SMHA) Management Plan defines and acknowledges Southern Maryland's unique story and its place in Maryland history. Eight broad themes were identified to structure the interpretation of the region's history and culture:

Colonial Settlement: Maryland's Beginnings
Native American Heritage
Agriculture/Tobacco Culture
War and Conflict
Maritime Culture
Religion
Nature and Eco-Tourism
African American Heritage

Benedict's story relates to all of these regional historic and cultural themes.

An assessment of Benedict's history and historic resources identified five primary historic themes

which make up a recommended framework for telling Benedict's story. Each theme is briefly described below along with a list of potential interpretive sites (see **Exhibit 3-5**).

Early Settlement & Commerce

SMHA Themes: "Colonial Settlement: Maryland's Beginnings," "Religion," and "Agriculture/Tobacco Culture"

Established in 1683, Benedict was one of the earliest port communities in Southern Maryland. In the 1760s and 1770s, it grew to be Charles County's second largest town, and an important deepwater port that served the transatlantic tobacco and slave trades. Throughout the 18th century, Benedict boat builders produced boats and ships that plied the Patuxent River and the greater Chesapeake region. Local tradition claims that, in 1760, George Washington commissioned a boat from one of Benedict's boat builders.

As an early Southern Maryland settlement and an active port of trade throughout the 18th century, Benedict retains many connections to the early settlement of the state and region. Although no buildings or structures remain in the village from the early settlement period, several sites exist where Benedict's early history could be interpreted.

- St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church
- Original town site
- Colonial Tide Mill

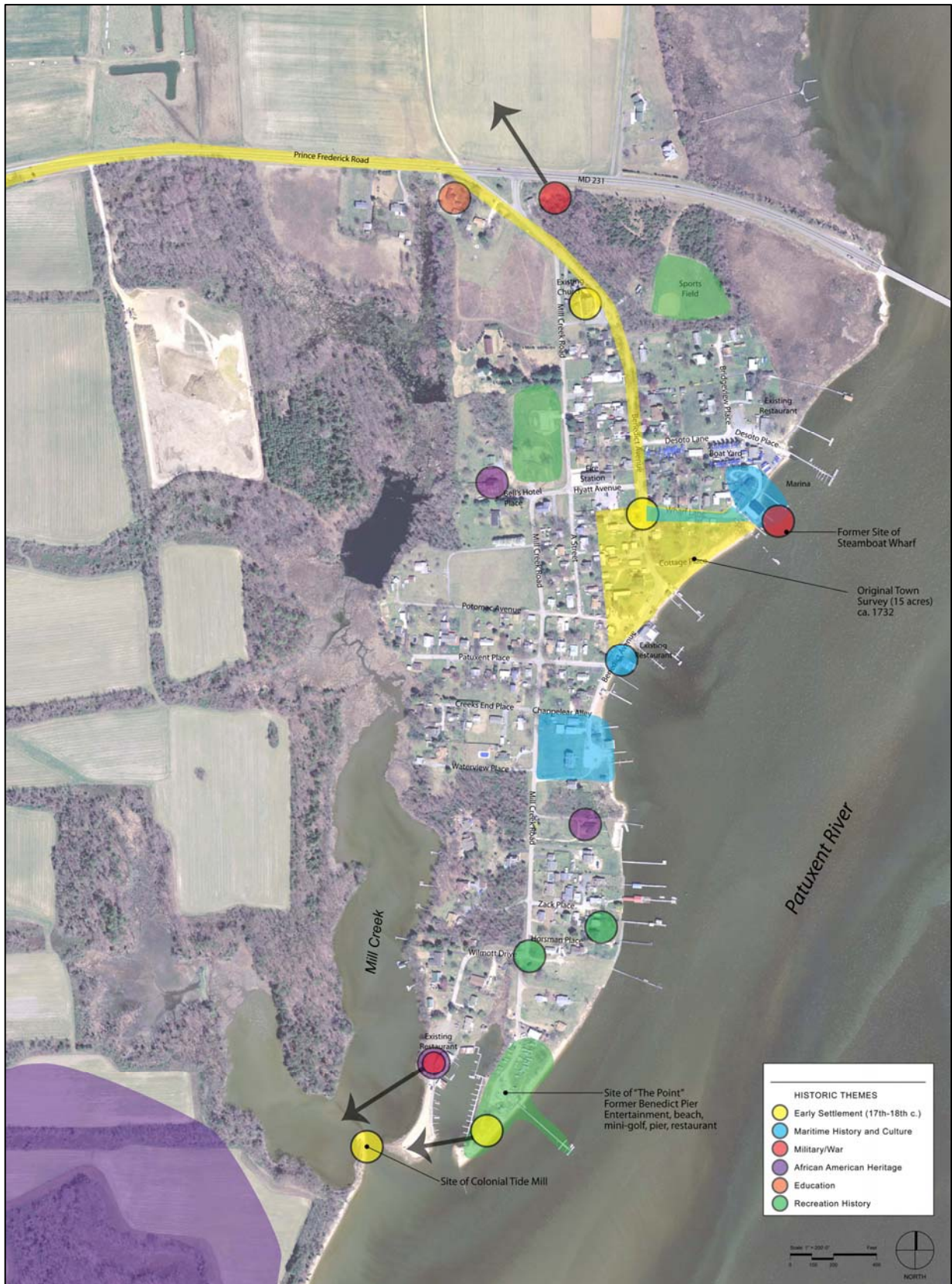


Exhibit 3-8. Historical Themes

Maritime Culture

SMHA Theme: "Maritime Culture"

Since its founding, Benedict's existence has been directly tied to its location on the Patuxent River. Throughout its history, maritime industry and commerce have dominated its economic activities. Boatbuilding, commercial fishing and oystering, recreational boating and transatlantic and regional steamship travel have shaped Benedict's development. Private piers still define the village waterfront today. The town's entire waterfront provides opportunities to interpret Benedict's important maritime history. Primary interpretive locations include:

- Wharf Lane and the former site of the Steamboat Wharf
- Oyster Houses: Soller's, Shorter's, and Messick's.
- Carpenter's Yard Area

Military – Fire & Sword: War Comes to Benedict

SMHA Theme: "War and Conflict"

Benedict experienced significant military activity during the War of 1812 (1812-1815) and the American Civil War (1861-1865). During the War of 1812, British forces landed at Benedict in August 1814 and set up an encampment just west of the town. From there the invaders proceeded to Washington, DC where they sacked and burned the Capitol and the White House. As federally occupied territory during the American Civil War, Benedict was host to Camp Stanton, a Union Army recruitment and training site for African American soldiers.

- British Landing Site
- British Encampment Site
- Site of Camp Stanton

African American Heritage

SMHA Theme: "African American Heritage"

- Camp Stanton
- African American Hotels and Resorts: Bell's Hotel and Thomas's Hotel

Education & Recreation

SMHA Theme: "Maritime Heritage"

- Benedict Two-Room School

Because of good transportation connections during the 19th and 20th centuries, Benedict developed a robust tourism and recreation industry. Vestiges of the town's recreational history remain in several locations:

- Messick's Hotel
- Horsman's Hotel
- Cock-holding pen
- Benedict Pier
- Site of Bowling's Racetrack
- "The Block"

3.9 Conceptual Design Guidelines

The CV Village Commercial Zone is subject to the Charles County Architectural and Site Design Standards within the Development District, and it is a recommendation of this plan to apply these standards to development and redevelopment projects in Benedict. Currently, the standards do not apply to RV Village Residential Zone, and it is a recommendation of this plan that this be changed to include RV and apply these standards to development and redevelopment projects in Benedict. It is also recommended that the Charles County Historic Preservation Commission should have review authority for proposed developments in Benedict. As an addendum to the Architectural and Site Design Guidelines and Standards, the following is a partial list of recommended village-specific design guidelines for site and architecture:

- Retain and maintain open views to the Patuxent River.
- Design and site new buildings in such a way that they are compatible with the village's existing fabric.
- Retain the character of the village through maintenance of individual architectural elements as well as the overall landscape.
- New buildings and additions to existing buildings shall be compatible with existing nearby buildings in siting, height, scale, massing, and architectural style.
- Maintain setbacks and build-to lines for new buildings that are consistent with existing nearby buildings.
- Consider using character-defining elements of nearby buildings and structures in new design, such as rooflines, front porches, fenestration, materials, finishes, and colors.
- Ensure the compatibility of proposed elements by appropriately responding to the village's existing character and scale.
- When possible, rehabilitate and continue to use village buildings rather than demolishing them. Consider adaptive reuse opportunities to retain existing structures. If demolition is necessary, consider replacing the lost building with a new building of similar height, scale, and massing to adjacent buildings.



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4.0 Implementation

4.1 Strategies

Implementation of the Revitalization Plan will require the cooperative efforts of village residents and local businesses, property owners and investors, Charles County Government, and Federal, State, and local agencies. Several of the first steps toward implementation are outlined in Chapter 3.0, Section 3.2.

The revitalization strategy is focused at the outset on public open space improvements to create a safer and more attractive environment for residents, business owners, and visitors. Available funding for the planned commemoration of the War of 1812 bicentennial, scheduled for 2012 to 2014, is an important catalyst for the implementation of the initial phases of visitor facilities, pedestrian paths, and interpretive signage.

4.2 Organizational Structure

Implementation organizational structures in a small community such as Benedict need to be kept relatively simple. A community volunteer committee that allows maximum opportunities for participation and a social element often works well. The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Center and Maryland's Main Street program have organizational information available. The National Main Street Center has worked with communities with populations of less than 1,000 and has developed modified program structures for small, rural areas.

Similarly, design review in small communities such as Benedict is difficult as neighbors have relationships and are sometimes reluctant to enforce guidelines. The process likely will be more of a mediated process than a formal review procedure. For architectural and site design review to be most effective, a majority of property owners need to agree with the underlying philosophy of design management and the review process.

The Charles County Site Design and Architectural Review staff has review authority for projects in the CV Village Commercial Zone. Consideration should be given to granting review authority for single family subdivisions in the RV Village Residential Zone or any other zone. Similarly, the Charles County Historic Preservation Commission should have a role in the review of proposed developments in Benedict.

4.3 Historical Interpretation

This section outlines strategies for interpreting the various historic themes at specific sites and linking them through signage and trails. Opportunities exist in Benedict to promote the village's history through a variety of interpretive strategies.

Since most of the buildings and structures from the 17th through the 19th centuries are no longer standing, signage, tours, reenactments, public archaeology programs and interpretive brochures are good strategies for locating and telling stories from those eras. Twentieth century architectural tours, development of museum sites, and the preservation and restoration of key properties would bring to life Benedict's 20th-century history.

There is great potential for further historical, architectural, and archaeological research to clarify locations, expand our understanding of local lore, and connect local histories to national and regional contexts. By encouraging and pursuing additional research, the county and the town will build a database of information to draw on as interpretive materials are developed. Distributing and sharing the town's history will help residents and visitors recognize and respect the importance of the place.

The primary historic interpretive strategy is to place signage on public sites and link the sites with pedestrian-friendly trails. Below, some potential interpretive sites and strategies are discussed.

- At the entrance to Benedict at Route 231, install a flagpole with a 15-star United States flag, like the ones that were in use at the time of the 1814 British invasion. This will provide a visual link to the important War of 1812 events associated with the village.
- Near the entrance, in the vicinity of the proposed Village Gateway, place interpretive signage about the War of 1812 and the British 1814 encampment site which is visible to the west. Signage would allow visitors and community members to visualize the events and sites associated with Benedict's role in the war.

- The ball field and public park just south of Route 231 and east of Benedict Avenue is a potential venue for commemorative events, including War of 1812 programs.
- Interpretive features might also be placed near the end of Wharf Lane to commemorate the British landing in 1814 and to demarcate the boundaries of the original town.
- The extant oyster houses along the waterfront offer an important opportunity to reuse historic buildings to tell the story of Benedict's rich 20th century maritime history and industries. Exhibits, lectures, and walking tours could be based at one or more of these sites.
- The remaining historic hotels also provide venues for explaining the important role that recreation and African Americans have played in the town's development.
- The proposed Interpretive Center in the Carpenter's Yard area should incorporate interpretation of the recreational and maritime history intrinsic to that site. Interpretation might include exhibits, signage, and archaeological investigations.
- The proposed village or county park on the former Benedict Pier property offers a wide variety of historic interpretive opportunities. This might include the placement of a commemorative monument to the town's role in the War of 1812. Also, a series of markers or signs could present the Colonial Tide Mill history, the history of Camp Stanton (site visible across Mill Creek), and the boating and recreational history of the town. In addition, the park would allow for educational opportunities related to Benedict and the Patuxent River's natural history and ecosystems.

4.4 Resources and Partners

Public Programs & Partners

This section lays out potential funding sources and public / private partnerships.

The following is a partial list of publicly and privately funded history-based programs, initiatives, and organizations that offer resources and cross-marketing opportunities to help Benedict as it develops its historic interpretive programs and tourism initiatives (*listed alphabetically*). Partners and programs marked with an asterisk (*) provide relevant financial assistance.

Charles County African American Heritage Society

Charles County Historic Preservation Commission

Chesapeake Bay Trust grants program:
<http://www.cbtrust.org/site/c.miJPKXPCJnH/b.5457271/k.C58E/Grants.htm>

Civil War Preservation Trust
<http://www.civilwar.org/>

Conservancy for Charles County, Inc.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources –
Indian Creek Wildlife Management Area
*Sites associated with the 1814 British invasion and Camp Stanton are located in DNR-controlled land west of Benedict.
Rural Legacy Program*

*Maryland Historical Trust
<http://mht.maryland.gov/>
*Non-Capital Historic Preservation Grants
Capital Historic Preservation grants (FY 2011 not funded.)
Museum Grants*

*Maryland Humanities Council www.mdhc.org

*Maryland Office of Tourism, Maryland Scenic Byways Program
<http://www.visitmaryland.org/Pages/STAR-SPANGLEDDBANNERTRAIL.aspx>
<http://www.marylandroads.com/Index.aspx?PageId=567>

*Star Spangled Banner Trail
Religious Freedom Byway*

*Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Ocean Exploration
<http://explore.noaa.gov/research-funding-opportunities>
Offers Marine Archaeology grants.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Small Watershed Grants:
http://www.nfwf.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Chesapeake_Bay_Stewardship_Fund&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=46&ContentID=15358

National Park Service

*Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network
<http://www.baygateways.net/>
Benedict should pursue gateway designation.

*American Battlefield Protection Program
<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp/>
Funding is available for research and documentation of battlefields and battle-related sites. This could include both the War of 1812 associated sites and Camp Stanton (American Civil War).

Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail
<http://www.nps.gov/stsp/index.htm>

*Preservation Maryland

www.PreservationMaryland.org

PreserveNet

www.preservenet.cornell.edu/links.html#grants

*Southern MD Heritage Area Consortium

<http://www.southernmdisfun.com/>

Southern Maryland Studies Center, College of
Southern Maryland

<http://www.csmd.edu/library/smsc/>

Potential Private Partners:

- Local property owners
- Local business owners

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<http://www.nps.gov/stsp/parkmgmt/upload/Final-STSP-Interpretive-Plan-1-26-2011.pdf>

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Appendices

- A. Community Survey
- B. Visual Preference Survey
- C. Summary of Meetings

Appendix A.

Community Survey

The logo for Benedict Waterfront Village features the word "Benedict" in a large, elegant, gold-colored script font. Above the "Benedict" text, "Charles County's" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. Below "Benedict", the words "WATERFRONT VILLAGE" are written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, underlined. The background of the entire page is a faded image of a waterfront with a boat docked at a pier.

Charles County's Benedict WATERFRONT VILLAGE

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: 13 November 2010

Meeting Location: Benedict Fire Station

Project: Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan

Attendees: Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management Staff:
Steven Ball, Cathy Thompson, Jason Groth, Aimee Dailey, and Beth Groth

Consultant Team: AECOM Dennis Carmichael, David Bennett, Cary Simmons,
HISTORYmatters Kathryn Smith

Members of the public

Purpose of Meeting: Public Meeting No. 1

Meeting Notes:

1. Director of Planning and Growth Management Steven Ball introduced the planning staff and consultant team. He explained the process whereby the Planning Commission selected Benedict as a priority site for a revitalization plan.
2. AECOM facilitated two exercises, a questionnaire and an image preference exercise, to give individuals the opportunity to provide feedback to the County and the consultant team about Benedict. Following each exercise, AECOM facilitated general discussion with input from County staff. During the discussions, several members of the public offered their reasons for their responses to the questionnaire and the image preference exercise. In general, there was widespread sentiment for maintaining Benedict's unique sense of place and small town character.
3. AECOM presented the 9-month project schedule and the opportunities for continuing public feedback, including the questionnaire (deadline for submission: December 17, 2010), a follow-up public meeting to be announced early in 2011, and public hearings during Planning Commission and County Council review sessions.
4. Project documents will be posted on the Benedict website:
<http://www.charlescounty.org/benedict/>
5. During the afternoon, members of the public joined County staff and the consultant team on walking tours, boat tours, and a history tour conducted by Mr. George Howard Post.

Please address any comments or questions to Attn: Ms. Cathy Thompson
Charles County Government
P.O. Box 2150, 200 Baltimore Street,
La Plata, MD. 20646



Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan

Public Meeting

Saturday, November 13

Benedict Volunteer Fire Department

AGENDA

Morning Session.....10:00 AM to Noon

- Welcome and Introductions
- Project Overview: What is a Revitalization Plan?
- A Brief Questionnaire
- Vision Exercise
- Q & A
- Next Steps

Lunch On Your OwnNoon to 1:00PM

Afternoon Session1:00PM to 4:00PM

- Village Walking Tours
- Boat Tours
- History Walking Tour by George Howard Post (3:00PM to 4:00PM)

Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management

AECOM Team Participants:

Dennis Carmichael, David Bennett, Cary Simmons,
Kathryn Smith (HistoryMatters)



COMMUNITY SURVEY - Nov. 13, 2010 (deadline for response Dec. 17, 2010)

1. Where do you live?

- In Benedict
- Near Benedict in Charles County
- Outside of Charles County

How long have you lived there?

- 1 to 5 years
- 5 to 10 years
- More than 10 years

2. Where do you work?

- In Benedict
- Near Benedict in Charles County
- Outside of Charles County

3. What is the most important issue in Benedict?

4. What characteristic of the Village should not be changed?

5. If you could add one public improvement to the Village, what would you add?

6. If you could take away one element of the Village, what would you take away?



7. Of the following list of land uses, check the ones that you would like to see in Benedict:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retail shop | <input type="checkbox"/> Single Family Home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant | <input type="checkbox"/> Townhouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gas Station | <input type="checkbox"/> Apartments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience Store | <input type="checkbox"/> Condominiums |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Use | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Store | <input type="checkbox"/> Marina/Maritime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Boat Building and Repair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> House of Worship | <input type="checkbox"/> School |

8. Should Benedict grow as a tourist destination?

9. What place have you been or seen that reflects your vision of Benedict in the future?

10. What else should we know about Benedict?

Please return survey (mail, fax, or email) to Cathy Thompson by **December 17, 2010:**

Attn: Ms. Cathy Thompson
Charles County Government
P.O. Box 2150, 200 Baltimore Street,
La Plata, MD 20646

email: thompsca@charlescounty.org, fax: 301-645-0638



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22314
www.aecom.com

January 7, 2011

Mr. Steven Ball, Planning Director
Ms. Cathy Thompson, Community Planning Program Manager
Department of Planning and Growth Management
CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
200 Baltimore Street
P.O. Box 2150
La Plata, MD 20646

RE: Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan

Dear Steve and Cathy,

We are pleased to submit for your review and comment the attached Memorandum on the responses to the Community Survey. We introduced the survey at the first public meeting held in Benedict on November 13, 2010, following which it was posted on the project webpage up to the response deadline of December 17, 2010. We received a total of 84 written responses to the survey from local citizens – a significant number considering the population of the village. Their feedback is invaluable to the revitalization plan process and our work with you and County planning staff to formulate the planning concepts. We think you will find their responses, suggestions, and creative ideas to be quite informative about their aspirations for the future of Benedict.

The goals for the plan for Benedict arise out of these public comments and the findings from the 11 stakeholder interviews conducted with local business and land owners on November 29 and December 15, 2010, and these goals include:

Protect the integrity, scale, and character of the village

Create a safe and walkable streetscape in the center of the village

Create public access to the shores of the river, creek, and wetland areas

Create better visibility and identity along Highway 231

Create public parks that interpret the unique history of Benedict

We look forward to working with you on the next steps of the revitalization plan. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Best regards,

David H. Bennett, ASLA LEED AP
Senior Associate / Project Manager

cc: Dennis Carmichael

Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan

Memorandum on Responses to the Community Survey

(November 13 to December 17, 2010)

The Community Survey was initiated at the first public meeting held at the fire station in Benedict on November 13, 2010, and conducted up to the December 17, 2010, response deadline. The survey posed 10 questions. We received 84 written responses to the survey (79 handed in during the meeting plus 5 submitted before the December 17 deadline). A summary of the responses received follows each question below:

Question 1 – Where do you live?

52 responded that they live in Benedict or 62% of the total respondents. Of 32 additional respondents, 18 live near Benedict within Charles County and 14 live outside of Charles County (mostly elsewhere in southern Maryland).

Question 1 (continued) – and how long have you lived there?

63 respondents, or 78% of the total, have lived in the area for more than 10 years. Several responded that they have lived in Benedict for decades, 20, 40, 50, even 80 years – many for their entire lives. One responded that the family has been in Benedict for 6 generations.

Question 2 – Where do you work?

Only 7 (less than 10%) responded that they work in Benedict. There was a fairly even split between those working near Benedict in Charles County (37%) and those working outside of the County (33%). Slightly over 20% responded that they are retired.

Question 3 – What is the most important issue in Benedict?

Over 40 different issues were raised in the responses. They include preserving and protecting the character of the historic waterfront village and the environment, addressing traffic and pedestrian safety, improving public infrastructure and services, respecting family and community, controlling costs, real property, and planning and growth management. In general, there is widespread sentiment for maintaining Benedict's unique sense of place and small town character.

Of these, the issue mentioned most often is the new sanitary system currently in design.

"Replacing aging septic systems requires the installation of mound systems which use up what little land each lot does have."

"IF Benedict gets sewer PLEASE do not allow higher density development. The River and Bay NEED sewer instead of old leaky septic systems. But please don't ruin Benedict in the process."

Historic Waterfront Village and the Environment

- Maintaining the rural character of the village
- Shore erosion, shoreline
- Keep it the way it is
- Peace and quiet
- Small, sleepy waterfront town
- River access and views are not blocked
- Historic preservation, preserve surviving historic structures
- Retain community charm
- Water
- Environmental protection and water quality
- The "farm look," lots of open land

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

- Speeding cars and delivery trucks through town
- Low volume of traffic
- Sidewalks
- Streets and street lights

Public Infrastructure and Services

- New sanitary sewer service
- Be sure to keep the Post Office

Family and Community

- Everyone watches out for everyone (one large family)
- Privacy
- No crime

Question 3 (continued)

Cost Control

- Keep costs down
- Keep expenses low (taxes, water, sewage)
- High taxes

Real Property

- Individual home owners care of property
- Shabby appearance
- Property values

Planning and Growth Management

“Focus on upgrading the central core of Benedict, i. e., the two main streets and the wharf area around the restaurants – good streets, good parking, a walkable central core. Low level retail, i. e., general store and antique shop might need to be encouraged. Needs to be a central public place near the water that is easily maintained yet nice and interesting enough to draw visitors. One should be able to park and walk to the river, a restaurant, and historical points.”

- River access and views are not blocked
- Critical area restraints inhibit improvements and the ability to draw people to support businesses
- A central public area with the necessary amenities and points of interest
- A common area on the water
- Businesses
- The rumor that there will be condos. No condominiums on the pier property
- Lack of direction by County for future of Benedict
- Lack of land to develop
- Lack of vision – planned expansion / growth
- Commercial resources
- Not becoming Waldorf, MD
- Not become too commercialized
- One respondent stated:

“Acquisition of property on the south end of town: This is probably the most important to all citizens... Acquiring the land will provide space for a recreational area, playground..., parking, a public boat ramp, fishing piers, and even the War of 1812 memorial. It would provide an area for locals and out of towners the ability to enjoy the town and something to be proud of.”

Question 4 – What characteristic of the village should not be changed?

Respondents identified at least 20 characteristics that they cherish or would not like to see changed. Mentioned most often in the responses is Benedict's small town feel as a peaceful and quiet historic waterfront fishing village and a hometown.

Small Town Character

- Waterfront fishing village,
- Hometown
- Peaceful and quiet
- Small town feel
- Keep it the way it is
- Historical value
- Smaller cottages that have been here since the early 50's
- Single family homes
- No townhouses
- It's look
- Anything historical, history of the town
- The architecture
- Its friendly, informal atmosphere
- Island atmosphere

3

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

- Conducive to walking, bike riding, not a lot of traffic
- Lack of congestion, traffic

Public Services and Infrastructure

- Post Office
- Don't add any more public access to the water
- Shoreline

Costs

- Taxes

Question 5 – If you could add one public improvement to the Village, what would you add?

While 6 responded that they wanted nothing added, others suggested over three dozen public improvements that they would like to see added in Benedict. Still others commented that the village should take more advantage of its several historic aspects while individual homeowners should take more responsibility for the care and appearance of their property.

Infrastructure and Public Service Improvements

Of these the top three focus on infrastructure and public space improvements, specifically:

(1) the new sanitary sewer and waste water treatment system, (2) street lights, and (3) sidewalks. The suggested infrastructure and public service improvements included the following:

- New sanitary sewer and waste water treatment system
- Street lights
- Sidewalks
- Add a traffic signal at 231 with fire station control
- Road system upgrades including paving roads and adding sidewalks
- Put utility lines underground
- Speed zones and speed bumps
- Storm water management
- Shoreline protection
- New Post Office
- Move the fire department to 231 and make a community center.
- Fireboat ramp, storage, lift, and command center over the water
- Police presence

Public Open Space Improvements

Also suggested were these public open space improvements:

- Nice entrance way
- A “Welcome to Benedict” sign
- Landscaping
- Town clock
- Scenic waterfront
- Community waterfront area, like Leonardtown
- Improved water access
- Boat ramp
- Up-to-date safe playground
- Acquisition of property on the south end of town for a town park for kids, picnics, with historic information

Service and Entertainment Retail Facilities

Several responded that they would like more convenient service and entertainment retail, including:

- General store or country store
- Gas station, but not in the village
- Craft store, with gas
- Retail stores
- More good restaurants
- Refurbish the marinas
- Waterfront event facility
- Small water park

Question 6 – If you could take away one element of the Village, what would you take away?

To this question, 11 of 75 responses (15%) stated that nothing should be taken away because they like the Village the way it is. 2 responded that nothing should be taken away, instead the Village should be added to and improved. Some communicated their distrust of local government and developer interests. Respondents would like to see the following elements taken away – removed, eliminated, banned, or otherwise revised, rehabilitated, replaced, or controlled.

Historic Waterfront Village and the Environment

- The right to add a boat lift at the edge of the property line, no setback currently required in Charles County, views get blocked

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

- Speeding

Public Infrastructure and Services

- Gravel and dirt roads
- Firehouse – siren no longer needed

Public Nuisances

- Noisy motorcycles
- Loud music
- Marina
- Bar room at marina
- Type of clientele at Gray Goose Landing Bar
- Bar rooms

Cost Control

- County taxes

Real Property

- Lack of care of property
- Rundown brick apartments on the Benedict Avenue riverfront
- Rundown housing and other areas
- Apartments, townhouses, and low income rentals
- Tear down old, abandoned buildings, build a hotel
- Rehab the marina
- Garbage around the Oyster House and apartments
- Junked cars, untagged cars
- Cluttered areas
- Trash

Planning and Growth Management

- County interference
- Building controls
- Developers
- No condos

Question 8 – Should Benedict grow as a tourist destination?

“There is a lot of history in this area, along both sides of the river.”

Benedict is a tourist destination on the Maryland Scenic Byway of Highway 231 for sightseers who are interested in southern Maryland culture and history and wish to enjoy the village’s quaint charm, waterfront restaurants, and recreational boating. In the past, Benedict had hotels and summer cottages and was a regular stop on the steamboat line until 1937. For a brief period, Benedict also offered the added attraction of gambling with slot machines. The opening of the Benedict Bridge in 1951 increased traffic on Highway 231, bypassing Benedict.

On Question 8, slightly more than half of the respondents (47 out of 83, or 56%) stated that they would like to maintain the status quo and would not like to see Benedict grow as a tourist destination. This would indicate that some are satisfied with the existing restaurants, small marinas, and limited historical signage and that visitors are welcome but not in larger numbers than currently visit Benedict. 44% support Benedict’s potential growth as a tourist destination, at least on a small scale, recognizing its accessibility and historical importance. One respondent draws this distinction:

“Benedict has historical destinations. [However,] to make it a tourist attraction? Big control on size + location [is needed.]”

Additional comments included:

- Drive through / short stop, restaurant, historical markers
- Yes, if done without ruining the quiet, safe, peaceful town
- Yes, but on a small scale, quaint tourist destination
- Carefully
- Publish more of the history
- Yes, for arts and crafts
- Only locally

Question 9 – What place have you been or seen that reflects your vision of Benedict in the future?

This list compiled from the survey responses includes waterfront towns in southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore or further afield in Virginia, South Carolina, and Florida.

Maryland

- Solomons as it was 40 years ago, smaller scale and not intensively developed
- Chesapeake Beach on a small scale
- Historic Leonardtown – town square area / wharf area / waterfront recreation center
- St. Leonard Town Center, mainly residential with wharf
- Swan Point as is
- Broomes Island
- Old Town Fredericksburg
- Annapolis
- St. Michaels
- Baltimore Harbor
- Berlin, near Ocean City, with Main Street
- Ellicott City
- Jefferson-Patterson Park
- Chestertown
- Maryland Beach
- Benedict unchanged – small, rural, undeveloped
- Benedict as it was in 2000

Delaware

- Lewes

Virginia

- Kilmarnock
- Old Towne Alexandria
- Colonial Beach
- Williamsburg, the historic areas
- Gainesville

South Carolina

- Aiken, South Carolina – modern conveniences but still a quiet, rural town, nice balance

Florida

- Florida Keys

13 (about 15%) responded that Benedict is a unique place:

“There is no place like home, here in Benedict.”

The following places were mentioned as not good models for Benedict:

- Solomons – not like it is today with too much commercial
- Not Chesapeake Beach - too many townhomes and apartments
- Swan Point – not as potential growth outlined
-

One respondent offered, *“Try looking at other efforts that kept the towns small + visitor friendly. Create something unique.”*

Question 10 – What else should we know about Benedict?

Benedict is...

“centrally located but does not take advantage of that.”

“a good place to live, [with] small community feel.”

“historical.”

“where the British landed to march onto Washington and burn the Capital.”

“a town with 2 streets going nowhere!”

“a private place.”

“private people.”

“a great place for children to grow up.”

“a family town[. T]ry to keep it that way.”

Benedict offers:

“the opportunity to design for the future.”

“a quietness that is liked by those who live here.

It is a good place to raise kids. A good country feel.”

“[the] best fishing in southern Maryland.”

“African –American history.”

“no crime.”

“not a lot of traffic.”

And you should also know that:

“Very few are aware of what Benedict has to offer.”

“Its history is awesome.”

“Many generations of people stay in town + continue to raise families here. We are 6th generation.”

“We should make sure we don’t overbuild Benedict and at all cost preserve its history and the bond the community has.”

“I want to ensure the survival of Benedict and provide a safe but fun place for its current and future residents... I respect the thoughts of the older citizens that are resistant to change. I will

do my best to help them realize what is right for the town's future while keeping its historic and sleepy little town setting."

"Why not make Benedict a model of what can be done to both improve the town while at the the same time preserving the river and the Bay? 'Going Green' is a draw."

"I truly appreciate what you are trying to do... Benedict could certainly benefit in many ways."

"I am willing to help make [the revitalization plan] happen."

"People are happy with the way it is."

"[The] Fire Dept. is a big support of the community, has always been the town center for meetings and social functions."

"We don't want to revitalize, fine the way it is."

"Residents enjoy the river, i.e. fishing, kayaking, etc."

"Land owners are restricted in developing homes due to critical area restrictions – how can development of entire town be possible within those limitations?"

"The shorelines were once an open trail from the beginning of the shoreline all the way to the end – along the front waterfront."

"70% of the people have lived here over 20 years."

"[C]lean up the public beaches."

"We don't want it commercialized."

"Keep our village a village."

"The Firehouse is in the process of a major renovation. They are working with the county to help preserve the historic characteristics, as well as modernizing the station. They are in need of facilities to launch and store the fire boat on the river."

"Acquisition of the property on the south end of town is probably the most important to all citizens."

"[Let's] come together as a town and work positively with the wonderful opportunity Benedict has to get a well-deserved facelift."

"Thanks for doing this."

[End of Document – Community Survey Summary]

Appendix B.

Visual Preference Survey

“GREEN DOT / RED DOT”

In this exercise, attendees were given the opportunity to choose images they most liked and most disliked. Each attendee was given 4 green dots (for MOST LIKED) and 4 red dots (for MOST DISLIKED) to apply to their individual selections of liked and disliked images on the following 4 exhibit boards:

BUILDING TYPES, VILLAGE WATERFRONT, COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE, and HIGHWAY 231 GATEWAY.

Two copies of each board were available during the exercise in order to accommodate the large number of attendees at the meeting.

Benedict Waterfront Village Public Meeting No. 1 11/13 Dot Exercise Results

	Red	Green
Building Types		
Waterfront Houses	4	3
Adaptive Reuse of Existing Building	0	3
Single Family House	0	13
Riverfront Multi-family Residential	36	3
Waterfront Bungalows	2	6
Townhouse Development	30	1
Riverfront Restaurant	2	10
Village Cottages	0	1
Historic Inn and Restaurant	0	6
Waterfront Estate	5	0
Resort Hotel and Conference Center	32	0
Resort Hotel	33	0
Village Waterfront		
Tall Ship Dock	3	0
Waterfront Boardwalk	9	1
Maritime Museum	2	6
Creekside Nature Trail	0	14
Waterfront Restaurant	1	6
Boat Maintenance Yard	0	4
Riprapped Riverfront	0	21
Naturalized Marsh Riverfront	0	13
Public Boat Dock	18	0
Private Marina	0	2
Kayaking and Canoe Rental	0	6
Riverfront Park	8	0
Community Open Space		
Maritime Heritage	0	3
Playing Fields	0	5
Public Art	0	1
Historical Reenactment	0	5
Roadside Pedestrian Path	2	15
Bike Rentals	9	0
Park Visitor Facilities	2	0
Fairs and Festivals	2	0
Wayfinding and Historical Signage	0	2
Maritime-themed Playground	1	12
Recreation Trail	0	11
Outdoor Entertainment	10	0
Highway 231 Gateway		
Shopping Center	20	0
Corner Store	0	16
Farmer's Market	1	4
General Store	0	17
Townhouses	42	0
Single Family Houses	1	4
Gas Station / Convenience Store	15	2
Scenic Overlook	0	1
Roadside Directional Signage	0	14
Decorative Entrance Signage	0	14
Historical Marker	0	26
Sculpture	0	2
Total Votes		
	290	273



Shopping Center



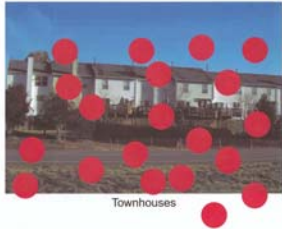
Corner Store



Farmer's Market



General Store



Townhouses



Single Family House



Gas Station / Convenience Store



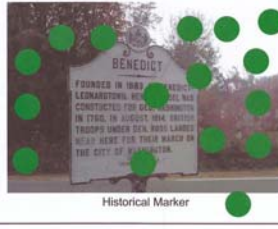
Scenic Overlook



Roadside Directional Signage



Decorative Entrance Signage



Historical Marker



Sculpture



Highway 231 Gateway

November 13, 2010
AECOM



Shopping Center



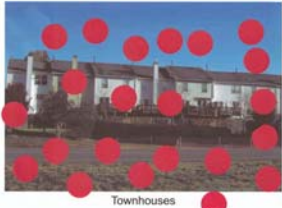
Corner Store



Farmer's Market



General Store



Townhouses



Single Family Houses



Gas Station / Convenience Store



Scenic Overlook



Roadside Directional Signage



Decorative Entrance Signage



Historical Marker



Sculpture



Highway 231 Gateway

November 13, 2010
AECOM



Waterfront Houses



Adaptive Reuse of Existing Building



Single Family House



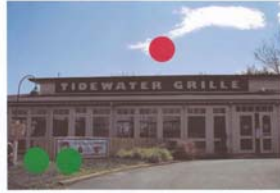
Riverfront Multifamily Residential



Waterfront Bungalows



Townhouse Development



Riverfront Restaurant



Village Cottages



Historic Inn and Restaurant



Waterfront Estate



Resort Hotel and Conference Center



Resort Hotel



Building Types

November 13, 2010
AECOM



Waterfront Houses



Adaptive Reuse of Existing Building



Single Family House



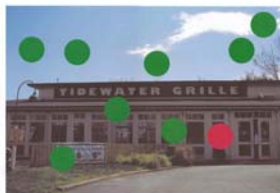
Riverfront Multifamily Residential



Waterfront Bungalows



Townhouse Development



Riverfront Restaurant



Village Cottages



Historic Inn and Restaurant



Waterfront Estate



Resort Hotel and Conference Center



Resort Hotel



Building Types

November 13, 2010
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Maritime Heritage



Playing Fields



Public Art



Historical Reenactment



Roadside Pedestrian Path



Bike Rentals



Park Visitor Facilities



Fairs and Festivals



Wayfinding and Historical Signage



Maritime-themed Playground



Recreation Trail



Outdoor Entertainment



Community Open Space

November 13, 2010
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Maritime Heritage



Playing Fields



Public Art



Historical Reenactment



Roadside Pedestrian Path



Bike Rentals



Park Visitor Facilities



Fairs and Festivals



Wayfinding and Historical Signage



Maritime-themed Playground



Recreation Trail



Outdoor Entertainment



Community Open Space

November 13, 2010
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Tall Ship Dock



Waterfront Boardwalk



Maritime Museum



Creekside Nature Trail



Waterfront Restaurant



Boat Maintenance Yard



Riprapped Riverfront



Naturalized Marsh Riverfront



Public Boat Dock



Private Marina



Kayaking and Canoe Rental



Riverfront Park



Village Waterfront

November 13, 2010
AECOM



Tall Ship Dock



Waterfront Boardwalk



Maritime Museum



Creekside Nature Trail



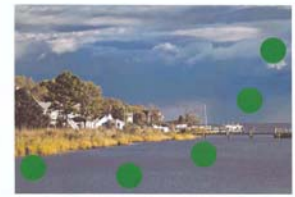
Waterfront Restaurant



Boat Maintenance Yard



Riprapped Riverfront



Naturalized Marsh Riverfront



Public Boat Dock



Private Marina



Kayaking and Canoe Rental



Riverfront Park



Village Waterfront

November 13, 2010
AECOM

Appendix C.

Summary of Meetings

1. October 6, 2010: Project Kick-off Meeting, Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, La Plata, MD.
2. November 1, 2010: Client Meeting, Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, La Plata, MD.
3. November 5, 2010: Client Meeting, Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, La Plata, MD.
4. November 13, 2010: First Public Meeting, Walking Tour, Boat Tour, and History Tour, Benedict, MD.
5. November 29, 2010, December 15, 2010, February 14, 2011, May 16, 2011: Stakeholder Meetings, Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, La Plata, MD.
6. December 21, 2010: Concept Plan Workshop with Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, at AECOM, Alexandria, VA.
7. January 22, 2011: Second Public Meeting, Benedict, MD.
8. May 23, 2011: Planning Commission Briefing, La Plata, MD.
9. August 8, 2011: Planning Commission Work Session, La Plata, MD.
10. November 1, 2011: County Commission Briefing, La Plata, MD.
11. November 29, 2011: County Commission Public Hearing, La Plata, MD.
12. January 24, 2012: County Commission Work Session, La Plata, MD.

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