

## INTRODUCTION

On July 10, 1990, the Town Commissioners of Sudlersville adopted a new Comprehensive Plan to guide and direct land use and growth decisions for the Town. This action was supplemented in the late 90's when the Plan was revised to include a Sensitive Areas Element. This action was taken within the framework of new guidelines for Comprehensive Plans as outlined by the State of Maryland in the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992. This Act amended Article 66B of the State Annotated Code (i.e. the Planning Enabling Legislation for some counties and all municipalities) to require, among other things, certain new Elements (e.g. Sensitive Areas) in local Comprehensive Plans, as well as a schedule for updating these plans.

In 1997, the State took an even stronger step in influencing statewide growth patterns when the Legislature passed the Smart Growth Initiatives. In a nutshell, these initiatives directed all State growth-related spending to existing communities with the hope of halting, or at least slowing, the spread of development outside of such areas.

Thus, Sudlersville was targeted, along with all other municipalities in the State, as growth areas. Sudlersville had the confounding circumstance of being located in Queen Anne's County, where growth and development issues were at the forefront. In fact, in the 1990's Queen Anne's had the second highest rate of growth of any Upper Eastern Shore County (behind only Cecil) and the third highest on the Eastern Shore as a whole (trailing both Cecil and Worcester). This followed the decade of the 80's when Queen Anne's growth rate was the highest on the whole Shore (and fourth highest in the entire State). Yet despite all these outside influences that would seem to promote growth in Sudlersville, our population actually declined in the decade of the 1990's from 428 in 1990 to 391 in 2000.

It is within this background that this Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Sudlersville has been prepared in 2002. In many ways our town personifies small-town rural America. However, it does so while being located in a rapidly growing County and at a time when State policies direct growth to municipalities, even though our Town has experienced a decline in population in recent years. It is therefore critical for our community to determine and communicate the type of place we hope to become over the next ten to twenty years. This Comprehensive Plan is the first step in this process.

Article 66B of the Maryland Annotated Code, entitled *Zoning and Planning*, delegates basic planning and land use regulatory powers to the Town of Sudlersville. When these powers are exercised, they must be exercised in accordance with the applicable provisions of the statute. Accordingly, this Comprehensive Plan for Sudlersville is prepared in compliance with Sections 3.05, 3.06, 3.07, and 3.08 of the statute. Sections 3.05 and 3.06 address the Plan's content and organization, and Sections 3.07 and 3.08 address procedures for the Plan's review and adoption.

Article 66B specifies that the minimum requirements of a Comprehensive Plan shall include the following:

- A statement of **goals and objectives, principles, policies, and standards** which shall serve as a guide for the development and economic and social well-being of the jurisdiction.

- A **land use element** which includes proposals for public and private land as far into the future as is reasonable. Such land use may include public and private, residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational land uses.
- A **transportation element** which includes proposals for traffic routes and general circulation of persons and goods as far into the future as is reasonable. Such proposals may include all types of highways or streets, railways, waterways, airways, routings for mass transit, and terminals.
- A **community facilities element** which includes proposals for the general location, character, and extent of public and semipublic buildings, land, and facilities as far into the future as is reasonable. Such facilities may include parks and recreation areas, schools, and other educational and cultural facilities, libraries, churches, hospitals, social welfare and medical facilities, institutions, fire stations, police stations, jails, or other public office of administrative facilities.
- A **mineral resources element** that identifies undeveloped land that should be kept in its undeveloped state until the land can be used to provide a supply of minerals, as defined in Section 7-6A-01 (i) of the Natural Resources Article. It should also identify appropriate post-excavation uses for this land that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- An **element** which contains the planning commission's recommendation for land development regulations to implement the plan that encourages:  
Streamlined review of development applications; flexible development regulations that promote innovative and cost-saving site design while protecting the environment; economic development in designated growth areas through the use of innovative techniques; and inclusion of areas of critical State concern, if any.
- A Sensitive area element that at a minimum addresses:  
Streams and their buffers;  
100-year floodplains;  
Habitats of threatened and endangered species; and  
Steep Slopes.

The sensitive areas element may also include other areas in need of special protection, as determined in the Plan.

- The Plan may also include any additional elements that, in the judgment of the Planning Commission, will further advance the purposes of the Plan.

The Sudlersville Comprehensive Plan establishes Town policies relative to the most desirable development patterns for Sudlersville and environs. It identifies in both narrative and graphic form, proposed areas for living and working activities and related services which are required to assure a quality environment for all residents. Implementation proposals are included as methods for coordinating public and private development activities, which together will influence development form and function. Attention is also given to the Town's role in the development of Queen Anne's County.

The Sudlersville Town Commissioners are responsible under Maryland Law for adopting the Plan. The Town Planning Commission is responsible for general administration and enforcement of the Plan. All development proposals should be reviewed for conformance to basic policies and programs identified by the Plan.

The general purpose of the Sudlersville Comprehensive Plan is to guide and achieve coordinated and harmonious development in the Town and its planning area. Also, the plan promotes health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity, and the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the development process. Plan goals include adequate provisions for traffic, adequate provisions for light and air, conservation of natural resources, the prevention of environmental pollution, the promotion of the healthful and convenient distribution of population, the promotion of good civic design and arrangement, wise and efficient expenditure of public funds, and the adequate provision of public utilities and other public requirements.

After adoption, the Plan will serve as:

- A unified statement of desirable development policies.
- A framework within which specific development issues can be evaluated and public policy effectuated consistent with the long-range growth and development goals and objectives of the Town.
- An information document for local elected officials, citizens, developers, and special interest groups concerning critical development issues as well as Town development policies.
- A decision-making tool when reviewing subdivision and site plan proposals.
- A tool to help establish capital needs and budgets.

The content, focus, and thrust of the Sudlersville Comprehensive Plan are guided by the following eight visions, taken from State law, which provide the framework for growth management and sound planning within our Town and its environs:

- (1) Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
- (2) Sensitive areas are protected;
- (3) In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;
- (4) Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay is a universal ethic;
- (5) Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced.
- (6) To assure the achievement of Visions 1 through (5) of this subsection, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.
- (7) Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the Town are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur.
- (8) Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

## PLAN BACKGROUND

### Introduction

Before jumping to the main purpose of a Comprehensive Plan, namely outlining our community's preferred future and the method by which to realize that future, it is first helpful to provide some background information. Such things as the history of a community, as well as the demographic profile for both the community and the region within which it is located, provide the context for planning, as the Comprehensive Plan is prepared. Thus this chapter will examine the historical, regional, and demographic setting of Sudlersville in September 2002.

### Historical Setting

Sudlersville traces its origins to 1713 when the Sudler home, "Sledmore" was built. By the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century a small community had developed around what would later become known as Sudler's Cross Roads. Settlers came here to market tobacco and corn. After the Revolutionary War, grains and other farm products replaced tobacco and were shipped to the bigger cities by water.

Churches have a long history in our community. Dudley's Chapel located just 1.5 miles west of Town, was built in 1783 and provided a preaching station for Bishops Coke and Asbury. It is the oldest Methodist Church still standing in Queen Anne's County and one of the oldest in the nation.

The first Church built within the Town was St. Luke's Episcopal in 1729. It has been demolished. The present St. Andrews Chapel of Ease was built at the same time as the Asbury M.E. Church South in 1878. In 1884, the present day Calvary-Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church was built.

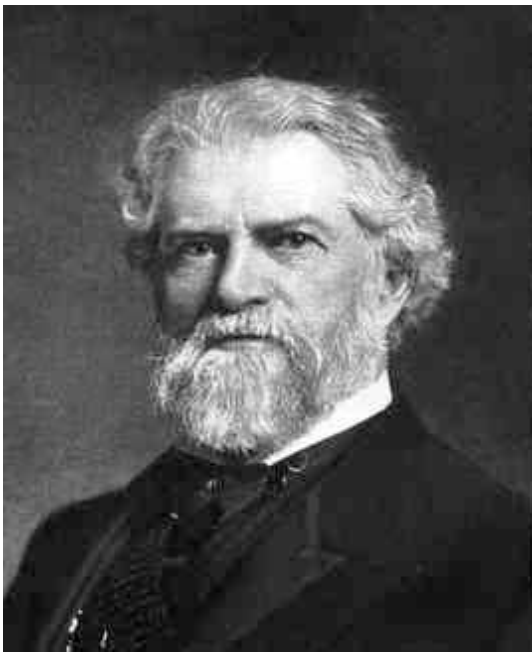
Postal service was established in Sudler's Cross Roads in 1811. In 1839, the Town officially changed its name to Sudlersville. We incorporated as a Town in 1870.

The period of greatest growth in Sudlersville's history centered around the arrival of rail service. In 1869 when the railroad first came to Town, Sudlersville consisted of 15 houses, connected by muddy roads, a Methodist Church and its parsonage, a blacksmith shop, the post office, and a school. By 1885, the number of homes had more than doubled to 39.

For such a small community, Sudlersville has been home to some famous citizens in a wide-variety of fields. One of our early schools, the Academy, provided Simon Newcomb, a famous astronomer, a place to continue his teaching career. Simon was born in Nova Scotia, Canada, but moved to Maryland when he was about 19 years of age. In addition to being an astronomer with the American Nautical Almanac, he was a professor of mathematics and astronomy at Johns Hopkins University from 1884 to 1893. He was a founding member and first president of the American Astronomical Society and served as president of the American Mathematical Society. One of the craters of the moon is named in his honor.

James E. (Jimmie) Foxx was born in Sudlersville in 1907. Among his many accolades, Jimmie was the first American Leaguer to be elected league Most Valuable Player two times (in 1932 and 1933). He would add a third MVP in 1938, one of only four American League players with 3 MVP Awards. In 1933 Jimmie won baseball's Triple Crown, one of only 14 times in the history of the sport that feat has been accomplished. He was the second player ever (after Babe Ruth) to hit more than 500 career home runs. In 1951 "Double X" became the youngest player ever elected to Baseball's Hall of Fame. In 1999 he was named to Major League Baseball's "All-Century Team."

Other local "celebrities" include Dr. Hayden Metcalfe, who was the first doctor on the East Coast to diagnose Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever in 1933. Also, Dudley G. Roe was elected to the United States Congress from Sudlersville in 1945.



*Simon Newcomb*



*Jimmie Foxx*

## Regional Setting

When planning for the future of Sudlersville, it is vitally important to consider the location of the Town and its interdependence with other geographic and economic regions, such as Queen Anne's County, the Eastern Shore, the Delmarva Peninsula, and the larger metropolitan areas within close proximity, one of which Queen Anne's County is actually a part of.

Sudlersville is a classic rural crossroads community. It is situated in eastern Queen Anne's County approximately 6 miles from the Maryland-Delaware boundary at the intersection of two State highways, MD Rte. 300 and MD Rte. 313. According to the 2000 Census, Sudlersville was at that time (April 2000) home to 391 residents on about 220 acres of land. The 391 residents represent a decrease of 37 residents from the 1990 Census. In the scale of Eastern

Shore municipalities, Sudlersville’s 391 residents place it between Kent County’s Betterton (376) and Millington (416), which is split between Kent and Queen Anne’s County’s.

Queen Anne’s County, in the north-central portion of the Eastern Shore, is characterized by gently rolling land areas bounded on the west by the Chesapeake Bay. The Eastern Shore’s major link to the rest of Maryland is via the Chesapeake Bay Bridge which is located at the western boundary of the County. Queen Anne’s 2000 population was 40,563, larger than either of its Eastern Shore neighbors (Talbot, Caroline, and Kent). The 40,563 residents represented a 19.5% increase over the 1990 population of 33,953.

The Eastern Shore of Maryland contains nine counties with a 2000 population of 395,903. This represents an increase of 15% over the 1990 population. An abundance of fresh water and favorable soil characteristics enhance the Eastern Shore’s value for agricultural purposes. Industrial activity in the region has historically been related primarily to agricultural activities and processing of seafood taken from the Bay and its numerous tributaries. However, since 1970 several industries have located on the Shore that are not reliant upon food products. These include manufacturing, electronics assembly and commercial services, resulting in significant industrial diversification.

“Delmarva” is a term that describes the 6,057 square mile peninsula encompassing the nine Eastern Shore of Maryland Counties (although some descriptions of the region do not include Cecil County, for the purposes of this Plan it is included), all of the State of Delaware, and the two counties on Virginia’s Eastern Shore. In 2000 the population of Delmarva was 1,230,901. 55% of the land area and roughly 1/3 of the population of the Delmarva Peninsula is in Maryland. The peninsula is bounded by the Chesapeake Bay on the west and south, and the Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean on the east. The peninsula lies almost entirely within the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

Table 1 below lists the population of Sudlersville, Queen Anne’s County, and the Eastern Shore since 1960. This table demonstrates the small town nature of Sudlersville as we have consistently provided a very small proportion of the residents of Queen Anne’s County and the Eastern Shore.

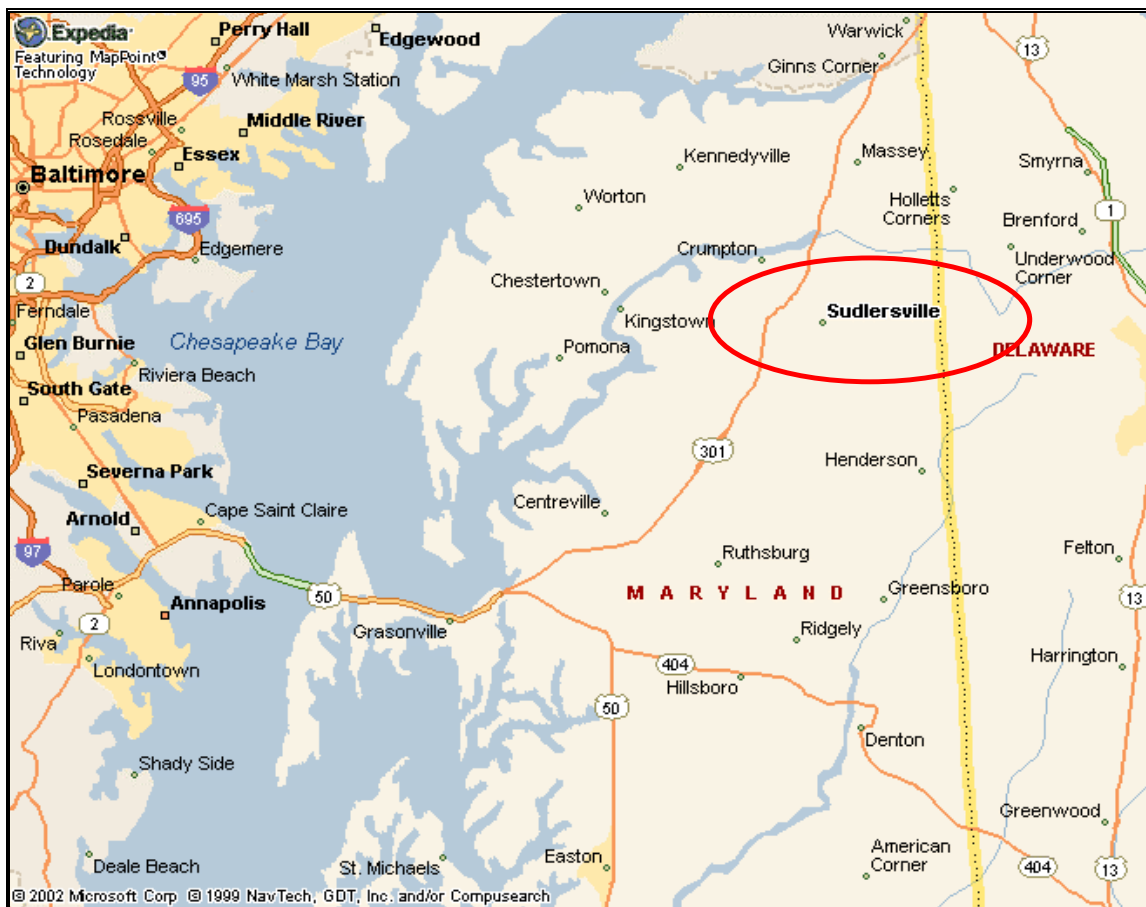
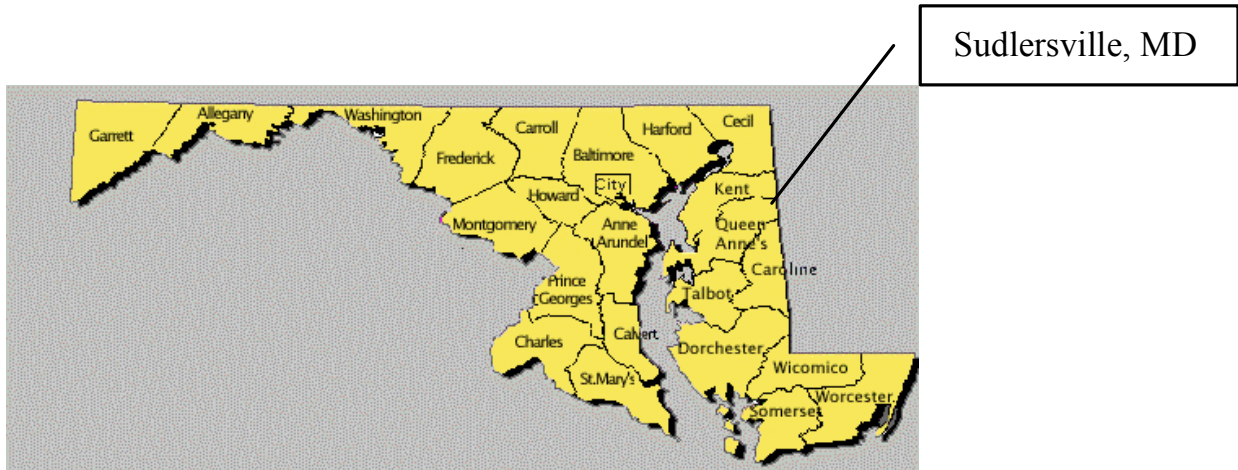
Table 1, 40-Year Population Comparison

	2000	Sudlersville as %	1990	Sudlersville as %	1980	Sudlersville as %	1970	Sudlersville as %	1960	Sudlersville as %
Sudlersville	391	---	428	---	443	---	417	---	394	---
Queen Anne’s County	40,563	1.0%	33,953	1.3%	25,508	1.7%	18,422	2.3%	16,569	2.4%
Eastern Shore	395,903	0.1%	343,769	0.1%	296,620	0.1%	258,329	0.2%	243,570	0.2%

One factor, which may make Sudlersville specifically, and the Eastern Shore in general, more attractive to both people and businesses looking to relocate, is its relative proximity to surrounding states and economic markets. Sudlersville is approximately 6 miles from Delaware, 50 miles from Pennsylvania, and 85 miles from Virginia. The Town enjoys excellent access to major cities. From Sudlersville it is 74 miles to Baltimore, 75 miles to Washington, 49 miles to Wilmington, Delaware, and 79 miles to Philadelphia. The Capital’s of five states are

also located nearby. Sudlersville lies only 49 miles (via highway) from Annapolis, 21 miles from Dover, Delaware, 186 miles from Richmond, Virginia, 112 miles from Trenton, New Jersey, and 128 miles from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Thus Washington, D.C. and five state Capitals are within approximately three hours driving time of Sudlersville (see Map 1).

figure 1, Regional Location



The distances given above are road mileage. That is important because with today's modern highway facilities, distance ceases to be as important a consideration as travel time. In addition

to the places described above, Sudlersville is also located just on the fringe of the fourth largest consumer market in the United States, the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan area. The anchor cities of Baltimore and Washington are just over an hour away. Two even larger consumer markets, Philadelphia and New York, are within 2 to 3 hours travel time from Sudlersville. Finally, while Sudlersville in many ways is the epitome of a rural small town, within 350 miles of the Town live approximately 34% of the U.S. population and 40% of the U.S. industrial market. As it becomes less and less important for business executives to be actually located in the same place as their businesses (due to the advent of fax machines, cellular phones, and e-mail), the potential exists to attract these executives to places like the Eastern Shore, possibly including Sudlersville to the extent that its “pace” and quality is viewed as one these folks would like to become a part of.

## Demographic Setting

Information from the 2000 Census is in the process of being released in stages. Some has yet to be released, but much is available at this time. Table 2 below provides some of the highlights from the Census data that has been released. It does so for not only Sudlersville, but also for Queen Anne’s County and the State of Maryland as a whole.

Subject	Sudlersville	Queen Anne’s Co.	Maryland
Total Population	391	40,563	5,296,486
% Male/Female	46.3/53.7	49.8/50.2	48.3/51.7
Median Age	39.3	38.8	36.0
% < 18	23.0	25.4	25.6
% 65+	20.2	12.9	11.3
% White	93.4	89.0	64.0
% Black or African American	4.6	8.8	27.9
Total Households	167	15,315	1,980,859
Average Household Size	2.31	2.62	2.61
Total Housing Units	178	16,674	2,145,283
% Owner-occupied	65.3	83.4	67.7
% High School Graduate or higher	72.9	84.2	83.8
% Bachelor’s Degree or higher	15.0	25.4	31.4
% born in MD	59.4	63.7	49.3
Average (mean) commute	23.8 minutes	33.6 minutes	31.2 minutes
Median Household Income	\$42,656	\$57,037	\$52,868
Median value of owner-occupied homes	\$99,200	\$160,000	\$146,000
% lived in home 10+ years	42.2	38.1	36.5
Growth Rate in 90’s	-8.6	19.5	10.8

One of the things that jumps out when examining this table, is that Sudlersville appears to be a community with an older population than Queen Anne’s County or the State of Maryland. This is clear in the difference in median age. It may also explain the difference in some of the other characteristics, such as the average household size, the mean commute time, and median household income.

Table 3 looks in more detail at one of the sets of data that has been released, age, sex, and racial characteristics of Sudlersville. The corresponding data for Queen Anne’s County is provided for comparison purposes.

<b>Table 3 – Age, Sex, and Race Characteristics from 2000 Census Sudlersville and Queen Anne’s County</b>				
	Sudlersville		Queen Anne’s County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	391	100	40,563	100
Total Male	181	46.3	20,195	49.8
Total Female	210	53.7	20,368	50.2
Under 5	29	7.4	2,591	6.4
5 – 9	20	5.1	2,936	7.2
10 - 14	23	5.9	3,114	7.7
15 - 19	32	8.2	2,503	6.2
20 - 24	19	4.9	1,510	3.7
25 - 34	48	12.3	4,724	11.6
35 - 44	58	14.8	7,471	18.4
45 - 54	46	11.8	6,048	14.9
55 - 59	22	5.6	2,561	6.3
60 - 64	15	3.8	1,878	4.6
65 - 74	25	6.4	2,995	7.4
75 - 84	41	10.5	1,715	4.2
85 +	13	3.3	517	1.3
Median Age	39.3	--	38.8	--
18+	301	77.0	30,257	74.6
Male	138	35.3	14,879	36.7
Female	163	41.7	15,378	37.9
21+	280	71.6	29,115	71.8
62+	89	22.8	6,250	15.4
65+	79	20.2	5,227	12.9
Male	29	7.4	2,402	5.9
Female	50	12.8	2,825	7.0
White	365	93.4	36,120	89.0
Black or African Amer.	18	4.6	3,560	8.8
Amer. Indian or Alaskan	1	0.3	90	0.2
Asian	0	0	232	0.6
Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islanders	0	0	10	<0.1
Other Single Race	2	0.5	173	0.4
Two or More Races	5	1.3	378	0.9

Table 4 below looks at educational characteristics of the populations of Sudlersville and Queen Anne’s County from the 2000 Census.

Table 4 – Educational Characteristics of the 2000 Population of Sudlersville and Queen Anne’s County
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	Sudlersville		Queen Anne's County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>School Enrollment</b>				
<b>Population 3+ enrolled in public school</b>	61	100.0	9,899	100.0
Nursery school, preschool	6	9.8	645	6.5
Kindergarten	0	0	616	6.2
Elementary School (grades 1-8)	20	32.8	4,828	48.8
High School (grades 9-12)	21	34.4	2,270	22.9
College or Graduate School	14	23.0	1,540	15.6
<b>Educational Attainment</b>				
<b>Population 25+</b>	306	100.0	28,018	100.0
< 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	35	11.4	1,182	4.2
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma	48	15.7	3,258	11.6
H.S. Graduate (includes equivalency)	107	35.0	8,462	30.2
Some College, No degree	54	17.6	6,272	22.4
Associate Degree	16	5.2	1,721	6.1
Bachelor's Degree	32	10.5	4,606	16.4
Grad. or professional degree	14	4.6	2,517	9.0
% High School grad. +	72.9	--	84.2	--
% Bachelor's degree +	15.0	--	25.4	--

Table 5 provides a glimpse of the employment characteristics of Sudlersville and Queen Anne's County.

Table 5 – Employment Characteristics of the 2000 Population Of Sudlersville and Queen Anne's County

	Sudlersville		Queen Anne's County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Employment Status</b>				
Population 16 + years old	348	100.0	31,417	100.0
In labor force	225	64.7	21,849	69.5
Civilian Labor Force	225	64.7	21,796	69.4
Employed	224	64.4	21,186	67.4
Unemployed	1	0.3	610	1.9
% of Civilian Labor Force	0.4	--	2.8	--
Armed Forces	0	0	53	0.2
Not in Labor Force	123	35.3	9,568	30.5
<b>Commuting</b>				
Workers 16 + years old	213	100.0	20,852	100.0
Drove alone	171	80.3	16,520	79.2
Carpooled	16	7.5	2,430	11.7
Public Trans./ Taxi	0	0	127	0.6
Walked	10	4.7	412	2.0
Other	0	0	215	1.0
Worked at Home	16	7.5	1,148	5.5
Mean Travel Time	23.8 minutes		33.6 minutes	

Table 6 below compares income characteristics of Sudlersville and Queen Anne's County.

Table 6 – Income Characteristics of the 2000 Population Of Sudlersville and Queen Anne's County		
	Sudlersville	Queen Anne's County

	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Income in 1999</b>				
Households	179	100.0	15,346	100.0
<\$10,000	18	10.1	816	5.3
\$10,000 - \$14,999	17	9.5	652	4.2
\$15,000 - \$24,999	17	9.5	1,454	9.5
\$25,000 – \$34,999	23	12.8	1,382	9.0
\$35,000 - \$49,999	30	16.8	2,088	13.6
\$50,000 - \$74,999	35	19.6	3,727	24.3
\$75,000 - \$99,999	31	17.3	2,557	16.7
\$100,000 - \$149,999	8	4.5	1,708	11.1
\$150,000 - \$199,999	0	0	488	3.2
\$200,000+	0	0	474	3.1
Median Household Income	\$42,656	--	\$57,037	--
With Earnings	143	79.9	12,973	84.5
Mean Earnings	\$45,277	--	\$66,865	--
W/Social Security Income	52	29.1	3,954	25.8
Mean SS Income	\$16,912	--	\$11,879	--
W/ Supplemental Security Income	11	6.1	404	2.6
Mean Supplemental Security Income	\$4,173	--	\$6,564	--
W/ Public Assistance Income	2	1.1	223	1.5
Mean Public Assistance Income	\$4,000	--	\$1,599	--
W/ Retirement Income	37	20.7	3,117	20.3
Mean Retirement Income	\$14,746	--	\$21,468	--
Per Capita Income	\$19,528	--	\$26,364	--
Families below poverty level	7	6.0	505	4.4

Finally, Table 7 below provides selected housing characteristics of Sudlersville and Queen Anne’s County.

Table 7 – Housing Characteristics of the 2000 Population Of Sudlersville and Queen Anne’s County				
	Sudlersville		Queen Anne’s County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent

<b>Total Housing Units</b>	183	100.0	16,674	100.0
Year Structure Built				
1999 – March 2000	2	1.1	685	4.1
1995 - 1998	7	3.8	2,015	12.1
1990 - 1994	12	6.6	1,711	10.3
1980 - 1989	21	11.5	3,915	23.5
1970 - 1979	15	8.2	3,273	19.6
1960 - 1969	12	6.6	1,254	7.5
1940 - 1959	47	25.7	1,725	10.3
1939 or earlier	67	36.6	2,096	12.6
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	173	100.0	15,315	100.0
Year Householder moved into unit				
1999 – March 2000	14	8.1	2,480	16.2
1995 - 1998	40	23.1	4,555	29.7
1990 - 1994	46	26.6	2,443	16.0
1980 - 1989	43	24.9	3,187	20.8
1970 - 1979	8	4.6	1,585	10.3
1969 or earlier	22	12.7	1,065	7.0
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	2	1.2	120	0.8
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	0	0	56	0.4
No telephone service	2	1.2	315	2.1

These statistics provide a useful profile of Sudlersville for a variety of purposes. Perhaps the most crucial purpose is the background it provides for preparing population projections. These are an important part of any Comprehensive Plan because they shape much of the overall growth philosophy of the Plan.

Unfortunately the preparation of growth projections for Sudlersville has two major obstacles that make this exercise particularly difficult. The first is that past growth rates reveal no clear pattern, or at least not one that we'd like to project. As depicted in Table 1, our Town grew in the 60's and 70's, but declined in the 80's and 90's. Thus from a purely statistical standpoint, it would appear that the Town's population peaked in 1980 and a logical conclusion would be for our Town to continue to become smaller and smaller. This implies that this Plan should advance policies that promote growth or at the very least stabilize the population decline.

The second obstacle in preparing population projections for Sudlersville, as is the case for many Eastern Shore communities, is that mathematical models or techniques are much less reliable when the population that is being projected is small. While it is relatively easy to project a continuation of past trends and/or to adjust those projections to account for anticipated or planned policy changes, it only takes one or two unexpected events to render these projections essentially useless. That being said, we still must look ahead and provide our best guess as to what the future population of our Town might be. To that end, Table 8 below provides a series of possible future populations for Sudlersville.

Table 8 Population Projections						
	2000 (actual)	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
*MDP projections for QA Co.	40,563	44,600	48,500	52,400	55,800	58,000
1.0% of County Population	391	446	485	524	558	580
Continued Decreasing % of County Population	391	401	388	367	335	290
Slightly Increasing % of County Population	391	491	582	681	781	870
0.6% Annual Growth Rate	391	403	415	428	441	454

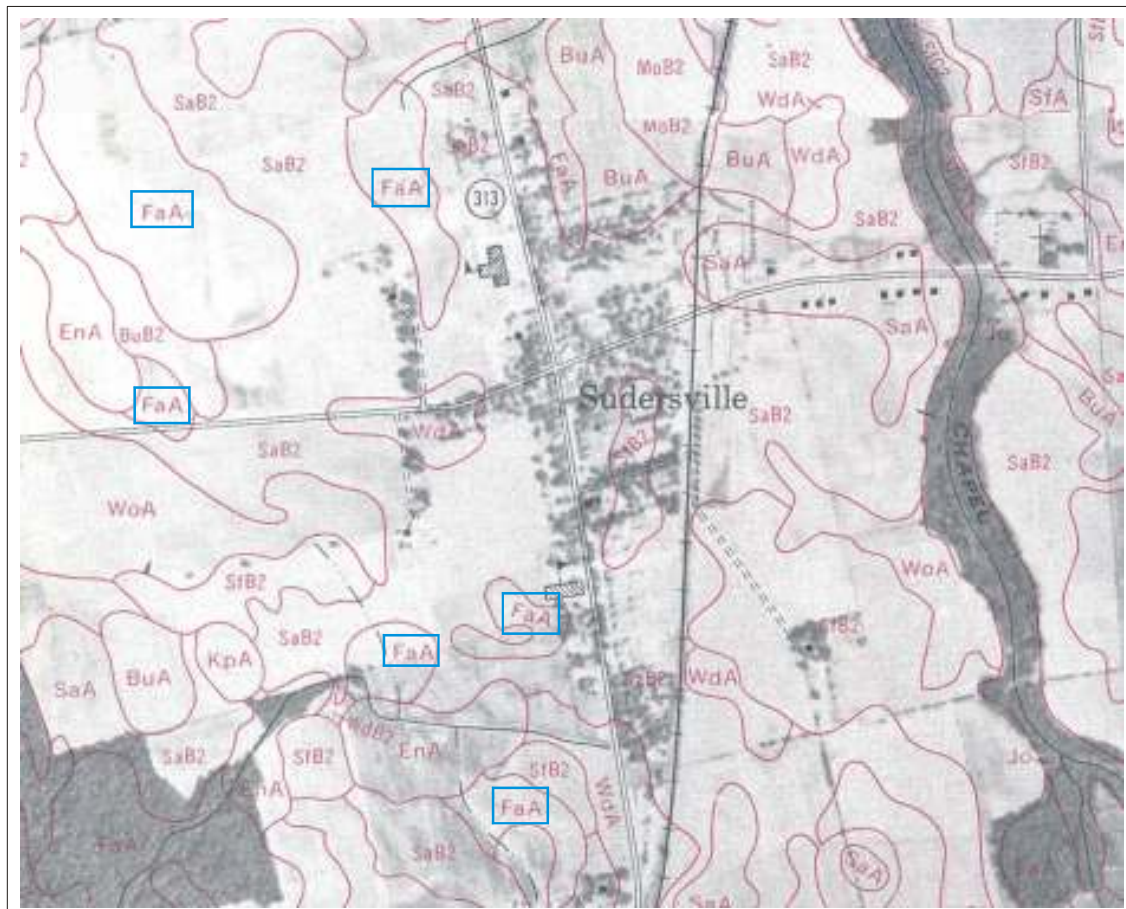
\* Maryland Department of Planning

The projections presented above represent four different scenarios of future population growth, any one of which may be reasonable depending upon, among other things, the growth policies of this Plan, as well as those of Queen Anne’s County as a whole. The first scenario is that Sudlersville will continue to represent 1% of the overall County population, as was the case in the year 2000. This would represent a stabilizing of a trend whereby we have comprised a smaller and smaller percentage of Queen Anne’s population in each Census since 1960. To that end, the second scenario projects our population based on the assumption that it will represent an increasingly

smaller percentage of the County population (decreasing by 0.1% each five years). This would represent a continuation, but slowing of the trend of the declining proportion of Queen Anne's County that Sudlersville represents. This may be reasonable given County and State policies that direct growth to municipalities such as Sudlersville. That is also the philosophy behind the third scenario, which projects a reversal of this trend and projects our population as an increasing percentage of that of the County (increasing by 0.1% every five years). Finally, the fourth scenario is not based on the overall County population at all, but instead looks only at Sudlersville's population and assumes that our declining population trend will indeed be reversed. In this scenario, a 0.6% compounded annual growth rate is used to project future Town populations. This corresponds to the growth rate that we experienced during the period 1960 to 1980.

### Physical Setting

Sudlersville lies on a generally flat terrain. The Town's waterways are very limited, consisting mainly of Chapel Branch Ditch and several small streambeds. A treed corridor runs along the Chapel Ditch and a larger grouping of trees is located around the Ditch in the northeast quadrant of the Town. Most of the vegetated cover within Town is either crops or residential landscape material (i.e. lawns, shrubs or shade trees). Soils in and around Town are mostly Sassafras loam (SaB2, SfB2, and SaA), which are well drained and have only slight limitations for building sites. Other, less prevalent, soil types in the area include Fallsington (FaA), Woodstown loam (WdA) and Butlertown silt loam (BuA). These other soils have moderate to severe limitations for building sites tied to seasonally high water tables. Of these, Fallsington loam soils have the worst drainage characteristics.



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following are the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan. Also included are suggested policies designed to help achieve these goals and objectives. Succeeding chapters of this Plan are built upon these premises.

### General Goals

1. Sudlersville will concentrate development in suitable areas. Further, we will coordinate our planning activities with the County to establish a mutually agreed-upon Urban-Rural Demarcation Boundary (U-RDB) that encompasses lands suitable for both municipal and County growth.
2. Sudlersville will protect its sensitive areas from the adverse effects of development and the improper management of resource lands. The U-RDB will avoid sensitive areas, or protect them as public open space or with innovative and flexible development regulations.
3. The Town will work cooperatively with the County to encourage it to protect rural resources beyond the U-RDB, which affect the environment, setting, character and economies of the Town.
4. The Town will promote stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land and will encourage a universal stewardship ethic that guides actions of both the public and private sectors. Stewardship principles will also guide preparation of land use regulations and capital programs, and be promoted through incentives and community volunteerism.
5. The Town will conserve its land, water and other valuable resources through programs and policies that will reduce resource consumption by both the public and private sectors. The Town will promote efficient and pedestrian-oriented patterns of land use, energy saving measures for residences and businesses, and recycling.
6. In order to achieve Visions One through Five, above, the Town will encourage economic growth through the policies and recommendations of the Plan and will practice regulatory innovation, flexibility and streamlining. Specific economic development and revitalization strategies for designated parts of Town will be developed consistent with the Plan.
7. The Town will address funding mechanisms to achieve the preceding Visions. The Town budget, capital improvement program, tax structure and fees will be reviewed and revised where needed to ensure implementation for the Plan and to promote the community's Vision for the future. The Town will pursue appropriate State and federal grants, forge grant partnerships with the County in areas of mutual interest, review Town capital projects to ensure consistency with the Plan, and encourage State and County capital projects that support the Plan.

### Land Use Objective:

Land use in Sudlersville will be managed to maintain and improve the community character and quality of life for all residents.

### **Land Use Policies**

- ❖ The Comprehensive Land Use Plan represents Sudlersville’s official policy for land use, development, and growth; shall be the basis for the Town’s Comprehensive Zoning Map and other implementation tools; and shall guide inter-jurisdictional coordination activities with the County, particularly with respect to implementing the U-RDB.
- ❖ Development shall avoid designated Sensitive Areas and employ best management practices to minimize adverse impacts on water quality. Use of resource lands including agriculture, forestry and mining shall employ best management practices to minimize adverse impacts to water quality and habitat.
- ❖ Approvals of subdivision of land, rezoning, special exceptions, variances and capital expenditures shall be consistent with the Land Use Plan.
- ❖ Water and sewer service, transportation and other community facilities will support the land use pattern indicated on the Land Use Plan.
- ❖ The timing and pace of new development will be managed to be compatible with the Town’s ability to provide adequate public services and to ensure that the character of the Town is protected.
- ❖ Sudlersville shall encourage and support County policies that channel appropriate types, scales and mixtures of growth to the Town and within the U-RDB.
- ❖ The Town shall give priority to neighborhood, business and commercial projects that have a reasonable expectation of being a catalyst for revitalization in designated areas of the Town.
- ❖ The Town shall establish agreements with the County regarding the phasing and funding of growth and infrastructure investments in the vicinity of the Town, consistent with the Land Use Plan and the U-RDB.
- ❖ The Town shall discourage inefficient use of land planned for development within the U-RDB and shall encourage the County to prevent sprawl residential development and resource-consuming patterns of growth within and beyond the U-RDB.
- ❖ The Town shall coordinate with and encourage the County to locate schools, other community facilities and community services within the U-RDB.

### **Development Objective:**

To maintain cost efficiencies in delivering services to citizens and to minimize the need for future tax increases, new development and growth within the municipal portion of the U-RDB will be directed to areas with existing or funded infrastructure.

## Development Policies

- ❖ The Town will encourage and facilitate development in existing water and sewer service areas and on vacant and under utilized parcels through regulatory innovation, flexibility and streamlining.
- ❖ Redevelopment and re-use of vacant buildings will be encouraged and facilitated.
- ❖ New development and economic growth will be directed to lands served by or programmed for water and sewer service and away from sensitive areas.
- ❖ New development shall be compatible with the character of the Town. New development abutting existing neighborhoods shall provide continuity for vehicular and pedestrian movement by maximizing connectivity to the extent consistent with good site planning.
- ❖ Larger developments, if approved, will be phased in sections that make economic sense yet do not strain the capacity of existing infrastructure. Sewer capacity must be maintained at levels sufficient to meet the potential requirements of existing lots of record and existing residents who may want to renovate or expand their homes.
- ❖ Very large developments may require the upgrade and expansion of sewer capacity or the creation of public water services. If required, these infrastructure improvements will be bonded and constructed to the Town's specifications and in locations established by the Planning Commission at the developer's expense.
- ❖ Development of appropriately scaled and compatible mixed uses shall be encouraged to reduce dependence on automobile travel and the need for road expansion and new parking lots.
- ❖ The Town will encourage the County to protect sensitive areas and rural resources beyond the U-RDB. Of primary importance for protection are farm and Forestland along entrance corridors of the Town, the stream floodplain and adjacent steep hillsides.
- ❖ The Town will encourage the County to protect rural character, support agriculture and minimize forest loss beyond the U-RDB.
- ❖ The Town shall not extend public facilities or provide services beyond the confines of the U-RDB.
- ❖ The Town shall establish a maximum lot size in certain zoning districts to prevent inefficient use of land and public infrastructure investment, consistent with the Town's physical character.
- ❖ New community facilities such as schools, parks and libraries will be located within or immediately adjacent to residential areas of the Town so that citizens may easily walk to facilities.

- ❖ Through coordination and attendance at public workshops and proceedings, the Town shall participate in land use and transportation planning and decision making of the County in order to further the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including adherence to the U-RDB. Participation shall include review of proposed plans and ordinances; development projects which are adjacent to or near Town borders; and proposals beyond the U-RDB that have reasonable potential to adversely or positively affect the environment, rural setting or character of the Town.

### **Transportation Objective:**

The safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout Town shall be maintained and enhanced, and particular emphasis shall be given to facilitating pedestrian travel and other alternative to the automobile.

### **Transportation Policies**

- ❖ The transportation system plan shall address all applicable modes and shall consider the land use and transportation plans for adjacent areas outside of Town.
- ❖ New streets and sidewalks shall be designed to fit in with existing neighborhoods and shall facilitate circulation within the community.
- ❖ Street patterns, as described in the Transportation Element, will be used to define access to land and are recognized as important public spaces whose layout and character are of major importance in achieving the land use goals, objectives, and policies of this Plan.
- ❖ The transportation system should provide options to help separate through traffic from local traffic and maintain the paramount importance of pedestrian safety.
- ❖ Where lacking, existing streets shall be improved with walkways to better accommodate pedestrian and bicycle movement.
- ❖ Where feasible, new development shall include sidewalks or trails that provide linkages to existing path systems in Town and conduits to nearby public buildings, commercial neighborhoods and open space.
- ❖ Both public and private development shall incorporate accessibility and safety for pedestrians and the disabled, and shall include, whenever possible, benches and other pedestrian amenities at strategic locations.
- ❖ Where feasible, transit services shall be encourage to minimize dependency on the automobile and to serve those who cannot drive or do not own automobiles. The Town shall participate in County and region wide transit service programs.

### **Infrastructure Objective:**

The location, timing and pace of new development shall be compatible with the Town's ability to secure and program capital funds to maintain and provide

sewer, water, transportation and community services.

## **Infrastructure Policies**

- ❖ The Town will review its Comprehensive Plan map, relevant portions of the County’s Water and Sewerage Plan and existing Town infrastructure to identify areas where community facilities need upgrading, added capacity or extension. Priorities will be established according to need and recommendations of the Plan and provided for as feasible in the Town’s Capital Improvement Program.
- ❖ Subdivision applications and other development requests will be reviewed for adequacy of sewer and water infrastructure. Approvals may be deferred, phased in, or conditioned upon the availability of adequate infrastructure and treatment capacity.
- ❖ Development proposals for projects to be built within our identified growth area that require a community water system, should plan and size such systems such that they can ultimately be expanded to tie in with a Town-wide water system at minimal public expense.
- ❖ Residential development proposed on individual septic systems in areas planned for future public sewer, and proposed lower-than-zoned density, will be encouraged to use a design which provides subsequent opportunity for increased density (i.e., additional development), such as through infill development and re-subdivision, at such time that public sewer becomes available.
- ❖ Subdivision applications and other development approvals will be reviewed for adequacy of streets and roadways. Approvals may be deferred, phased in, or conditioned upon the availability of adequate capacity.
- ❖ Vehicular, biking, and hiking linkages to community facilities within the Town and to major activity centers beyond the Town shall be encouraged in the review of development proposals.
- ❖ Developer-constructed infrastructure shall meet Town standards and be inspected and approved by the Town prior to final acceptance.
- ❖ An adequate “buffer” capacity shall be maintained in the Town’s sewer system to accommodate wet weather flows and the needs of existing Town residents, especially those who have paid for but not yet utilized capacity.
- ❖ Developers of large scale projects that will exceed the “buffer capacity” established by the Town Commissioners may be required to replace the capacity they consume. If the required capacity expansion is relatively small and/or the cost for replacing capacity is not economically feasible, then the Commissioners may require the developer to pay a capacity fee proportional to the actual cost of replacing capacity based on technologies and estimated costs suggested through the technical assistance of the State of Maryland or other professional sources.

- ❖ Adequate performance bonds shall be a part of subdivision approvals that require new public infrastructure.
- ❖ Sewer and water, transportation facilities, and community services under municipal jurisdiction shall be properly maintained by the Town.

### **Housing Objective:**

The Town will encourage and provide opportunity for development of safe and affordable housing for its residents.

### **Housing Policies**

- ❖ At a minimum, the Town will strive to provide its “fair share” of affordable housing opportunities in the region.
- ❖ Housing affordability will be promoted by flexible zoning, such as mixed use zoning and planned unit development options; zoning incentives, such as density bonuses for providing housing in a certain price range; and by facilitating the creating of accessory housing in certain neighborhoods.

### **Economic Development Objective:**

The Town will encourage retention of existing businesses, promote location of certain new businesses in Town, provide for traditional neighborhood businesses, and encourage business and commercial revitalization.

### **Economic Development Policies**

- ❖ Regulations will be streamlined and flexible to encourage economic growth projects in Town.
- ❖ Large scale regional “big box” or highway oriented retail commercial developments are not in keeping with the goals and objectives of this Plan and are discouraged.
- ❖ Convenience franchise stores may be permitted, but their design shall be so modified as to blend in with the Town’s existing character. Parking will be in the rear of buildings and well landscaped, including shade trees.
- ❖ Businesses that support the Town’s resource-dependent economies, such as the sale of agricultural goods, nursery products, and lumber, shall be encouraged to remain or move to the Town through regulatory flexibility, incentives, and promotional efforts.
- ❖ Traditional business activities that support residential areas shall be encouraged as part of the Town’s redevelopment efforts. Low impact businesses, such as catalog sales, telecommuting, and other forms of home-based businesses shall be encouraged through revisions to the Town’s Zoning Ordinance.

### **Municipal Expansion Objective:**

The Town shall grow in accordance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, particularly with regards to plans for municipal annexation and implementation of the Urban-Rural Demarcation Boundary.

### **Municipal Expansion Policies**

- ❖ The Future Land Use Map shall guide the location and general land uses for annexed properties. Lands within the Planning Area, but not within the Urban-Rural Demarcation Boundary, shall not generally be eligible for annexation to the Town within the immediate six-year planning period.
- ❖ Soil suitability for development will be considered when annexation is proposed. Additional soil studies or other technical evaluations may be required by the Planning Commission or the Town Commissioners to properly evaluate annexation proposals for their development suitability and appropriate proposed zoning.
- ❖ Land considered for annexation shall be adjacent to existing developed areas and within the Urban-Rural Demarcation Boundary.
- ❖ Land to be annexed by the Town shall be developed at a density, scale, and character that is compatible with the Town and this Comprehensive Plan.
- ❖ The Town shall encourage the County's Comprehensive Plan to designate certain lands within the U-RDB as suitable for municipal land uses and densities so as to avoid the need for County waivers under the State annexation statute. Alternatively, the Town shall encourage the County to grant waivers in advance for those lands within the U-RDB.

### **Community Character Objective:**

The Town's physical, natural, and socio-economic characteristics that contribute to the quality of life that resident's value shall be protected and enhanced.

### **Community Character Policies**

- ❖ The Town shall retain and shall encourage the County to retain a clear and well-defined edge where growth and development in and around the Town ends and rural areas begin.
- ❖ This edge effect shall adhere to the U-RDB.
- ❖ Transportation projects shall be evaluated for impacts on local street traffic and on existing and planned land uses. Transportation projects shall not physically divide or otherwise adversely affect established residential and commercial neighborhoods.
- ❖ Strip commercial development shall be prohibited.

- ❖ Large residential and commercial lots shall be discouraged.
- ❖ Yard setbacks, bulk standards and height restrictions that retain or promote desirable community character shall be established.
- ❖ Site designs that retain or create a pedestrian-friendly community shall be encouraged and facilitated.
- ❖ Where possible, all redevelopment and new development shall retain the pattern, scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- ❖ Cul-de-sacs will be avoided, except where they are the only feasible means to prevent disturbance of sensitive areas.
- ❖ Street trees and trees in public open spaces shall be retained. Landowners shall be encouraged to plant additional trees on their property.
- ❖ The scale, character, number and location of signs shall not be detrimental to the Town's character.
- ❖ The review of development proposals will place priority on protection of historic and culturally significant buildings, monuments and spaces, which contribute to the character of the Town.
- ❖ The Town shall retain and acquire adequate public open space to enhance the Town's character and quality of life.
- ❖ Town boundaries and gateways, as identified on the Plan Map, will be enhanced. Connections to the rural landscape will be maintained by encouraging protection of farm and forestland outside the County-Town boundary.
- ❖ New construction shall be architecturally compatible with existing structures so that the character of Sudlersville can be maintained.

**Sensitive Areas Objective:**

To protect and enhance the Town's air and water quality, important habitats and other natural features that contributes to the Town's quality of life.

**Sensitive Area Policies**

- ❖ The Comprehensive Plan designates land with any of the following features as sensitive areas:

Steep slopes (land having more than 15 percent grade within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area streams; all other land having more than 20 percent grade).

Perennial streams and the riverfront, including banks and a 100-foot buffer.

Intermittent streams and their banks and a 50-foot buffer.

The Town's wells and a 100-foot buffer around each well.

Areas within the 100-year floodplain extending beyond stream buffers.

Habitat of threatened and endangered species listed by the State's Natural Heritage Program.

Non-tidal wetlands.

- ❖ Development will avoid sensitive areas. Development regulations including yard setbacks, lot coverage and height will be revised to provide flexibility for avoiding development in sensitive areas.
- ❖ Flexibility in lot size standards will be used so that developers can protect sensitive areas.
- ❖ Review of site plans for proposed development will ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to protect sensitive areas both during and after development.
- ❖ The Town will maintain maps of streams and buffers, wellfields, floodplains, habitat areas and wetlands for reference by landowners and developers.
- ❖ Project and permit review and approval for development located away from sensitive areas in the U-RDB will be streamlined.
- ❖ When it is not possible for development to avoid sensitive areas, such as roads crossing over floodplains or stream corridors, developers will use development techniques that minimize impacts and shall otherwise mitigate adverse impacts.
- ❖ In redevelopment areas, buffers will be re-established in natural vegetation to the extent practical.

### **Inter-jurisdictional Coordination Objective:**

To ensure that the County and State governments are aware and supportive of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, particularly with regard to County and State plans, capital projects, funds, permits and technical assistance.

### **Inter-jurisdictional Coordination Policies**

- ❖ When the Town Plan is revised in the future, the process shall include meetings with relevant County and State officials.
- ❖ The Town shall continue to work with the County to maintain the U-RDB and to accomplish strategic planning with regard to annexation potential.

- ❖ The Town shall provide notices to the County of proposed actions within the Town and U-RDB, which may be of interest to the County. The Town shall work with the County to arrange reciprocal notification of nearby proposals that may be of interest to the Town.

## **Land Use and Growth**

### **Introduction**

The Background Element of this Plan provided the context within which this, the central element of the Plan, Land Use and Growth, is presented. Through the years since Comprehensive Plans first became relatively common, they have come to include many things encompassing an ever-broadening scope. At their heart, however, they remain focused on questions of land use and growth.

Comprehensive Plans basically provide a blueprint for how the existing land within a jurisdiction should be used as well as how that jurisdiction should expand its boundaries in the foreseeable future. This Element of the Sudlersville Comprehensive Plan is no different in this regard as herein we will lay out what we see as a logical development pattern for our Town in both the immediate term (within the next 6 years) and the longer-term (up to 2025).

### **A Growth Strategy for Sudlersville**

Growth concerns in Queen Anne's County in 2002 are at the forefront of so many actions and decisions. They have shaped the County Commission election to the extent that a new attitude seems certain to be coming from the Commissioners after the General election, as all 3 incumbent Commissioners were defeated in the primary election. In short, there is a feeling amongst many County residents that growth in Queen Anne's County is out of control, particularly on Kent Island and in the Queenstown and Centreville areas.

This now seems likely to change. The important question for Sudlersville is what will a new growth policy mean for our Town? The fear is that as the clamps are tightened on development in what has recently been the County's growth area, the growth pressures will shift to the north to places like Sudlersville. This is worrisome not because we do not desire to grow. To the contrary, this Comprehensive Plan in general and this Land Use element in particular, will prescribe a very pro-growth strategy for our Town. The worry, however, is that growth pressures will cause more growth than we desire or can accommodate without irreparably damaging our quality of life. Make no mistake, we desire growth, but we do not desire to lose our small town quality and charm that makes our Town so special.

With this in mind, the first component of our growth strategy is to establish a reasonably sized "planning area." This area is depicted on Map 1 on the following page. At first glance it may appear that we are planning on growing into a small city based on the size of our planning area. However, this would be a misunderstanding of our concept of the planning area.

Planning area graphic map1

The size of this Planning area was selected because that is the area that we would like to reserve for two purposes. First, it is the area within which we envision our Town growing. This “growth area” however only represents a small fraction of the Planning Area. The second purpose for the Planning Area, as we have selected it, is to establish an area within which no incompatible development is expected to occur under Queen Anne’s County regulations. Such development would be to our disadvantage for two reasons. First, it could establish development that is out of character with what we envision our Town becoming (i.e. a slightly larger small town). Second, it could forever hinder or prevent our ability to grow in a manner consistent with our Plan and to control the character of that growth in the event it is preempted by County development approvals.

The second phase of our growth strategy involves looking at what kind of growth and development we’d like to see within our existing Town limits. In other words, this part of our growth strategy describes the kind of growth (e.g. residential, commercial, etc...) we want and the form we want that growth to take (e.g. Town-scale residential, neighborhood-style commercial, etc...).

To begin this exercise we first looked at our existing Town. Sudlersville is in many ways a classic rural crossroads community. As such, it has many of the qualities that planners and developers are trying to replicate in such “hot” development trends as “Traditional Neighborhood Development,” “New Urbanism,” or “Neo-traditional development.” These types of development seek to build whole new communities based on the premise that they should look and feel like old-fashioned villages or small towns. Among other things, this means that lot sizes are relatively small, houses are built close to the street, and developments incorporate neighborhood, convenience type commercial uses within the residential component, rather than building it at a separate remote location. The pedestrian scale is favored over the automobile and civic and community/open space is vitally important.

In Sudlersville, it is not necessary to recreate this kind of development, because by and large, what these “New Urbanists” are trying to create is what we already have. Our challenge is to insure that any new development that occurs within our Town compliments and perpetuates the development pattern that is Sudlersville. Among other things, this means new development should:

- Occur within Town rather than leap-frogging to outlying parcels.
- Have housing of a scale and character consistent with and complimentary to the houses in our current Town.
- Be served by a grid or modified grid street system (rather than cul-de-sacs or dead-end streets). Larger developments should have multiple entrances and connections to our existing circulation pattern.
- Contain commercial and civic uses, but only at a scale that serves our community (i.e. we have no desire to become a regional shopping or entertainment destination).
- Have architectural and design features that compliment and enhance our Town.
- Include pedestrian circulation systems (i.e. sidewalks, trails) and connect to other such systems that either exist in our present Town or are planned to be constructed in the future.
- Include ample open space to afford recreation opportunities.
- Incorporate extensive landscaping utilizing native species as much as possible.

- Incorporate large shade tree species for street tree plantings and parking lots, as suggested by the State’s urban forestry experts.

In the matter of what kind of growth (in terms of uses) we want to see in Sudlersville, we again look to our present Town. Map 2, on the following page, depicts the land use pattern of Sudlersville as of October 2002. It shows a Town that is predominately residential, but not exclusively. We have some commercial activity, particularly at and near the intersection of MD Rtes. 313 and 300. We have some institutional/civic uses including two schools and the Town Office. We have a limited amount of industrial activity, and we have one large park located just beyond the current Town boundary.

Map 3, the Future Land Use Map, is described in greater detail in the Implementation Chapter of this Plan. In short, it depicts basically the status quo within the current Town Boundary and a continuation of this pattern of land use and development in areas into which we foresee our Town growing in the next 6 to 10 years. The outer limits of our Map depict areas that while we do not foresee any development occurring there even in our long-range horizon, we prefer to maintain some control in what happens here because it is close enough to our Town to affect the quality of life in our community. We want to be consulted, and our approval requested, by the County in the event development is proposed in areas in proximity to Sudlersville.

Inappropriate development in these areas will diminish the quality of life of Sudlersville. It may even render our efforts at sound planning for our Town futile. In this area, we envision only agriculture, forestry and other natural resource focused activities. Residential development is extremely limited. It should include only the residence of the farmer with perhaps the opportunity for limited intra-family subdivision. Such land use in this outlying area will do much to enhance the quality of our Town and maintain our sense of place. For one thing it helps to assure that we are surrounded by rural land and that our Town has a nice, crisp, clean edge so that there is no doubt when you are “in-Town” and when you are “in the country.” This policy also provides our very-long term future residents with someplace to grow, should that ever be necessary, in a manner consistent with our existing and planned Town.

Map 2

map 3

The final part of our growth strategy for Sudlersville is to look at where, and by how much, we'd like to expand our Town limits. First though, we recognize that there is still room to grow within our current Town boundaries. Development of vacant parcels and redevelopment of underutilized parcels within our present Town limits, offer potential for accommodating some growth without having to expand our boundaries at all. As for future growth areas, we believe that we can easily accommodate all the growth that we desire within the immediate six-year planning period, by limiting annexation to two parcels, the Coleman parcel and the Scheaffer parcel. These two parcels were selected because they are contiguous to the current Town boundary and because the level of interest in them by potential developers further makes them "ripe for development." This is not to suggest, however, that all of these parcels need be developed in the next six years. Development in accordance with this Plan may well spread the build-out of these parcels well beyond this planning period. These two parcels total over 336 acres. At a maximum we envision our Town doubling the number of housing units we have in the next ten years. We now have in the neighborhood of 200 units. That means adding another 200 units over the next ten years. In fact, something more on the order of 100 acres should be adequate to accommodate the projected new units plus the additional neighborhood-level commercial, industrial, open space, and civic or institutional space that we want to see developed in conjunction with the houses over the next six years.

One question on the mind of some Town residents may well be, why should we grow at all? This is certainly a legitimate question, particularly in the time and place that we are today as described previously in this Plan. It is only proper then to outline our reasons for suggesting that we in fact do grow.

The first reason that we wish to grow is that we foresee major costs on the not-too-distant horizon. Such things as municipal water service and significant waste water system upgrades are possible, if not probable, and could cost several million dollars. Without growth, all of these costs would have to be borne by existing Town residents and/or businesses. At a minimum, growth expands the Town's tax base and thus provides more people among whom to spread these costs. It is expected that a substantial portion of such costs to be borne entirely by new development.

The second reason for promoting growth is to expand the realm of goods and services that are available to our existing residents. Wouldn't it be nice, for example, to be able to pick-up a few convenience items when you think of them at, say 10:00 p.m.? A larger Town population increases the likelihood that such an establishment will open in Sudlersville. The same is true for a host of other goods, services, and entertainment.

The third reason to encourage growth is less concrete, but nonetheless important. It has to do with the image of the Town. Towns that do not grow often present an image to outsiders of a place that is backwards, declining, with little or no future. In short, such places are not viewed as a desirable place to live, work, or visit. Worse yet, this image can become a self-fulfilling prophecy? Why fix up a building in a place without a bright future?

Fortunately the reverse of this is that places with reasonable growth are seen as vibrant, "happening" places. New development can actually stimulate rehabilitation and redevelopment, as it suddenly seems worthwhile to fix up that declining property if new growth is causing property values to rise.

We must limit the rate of growth to a sensible level. Growth itself is not bad. In fact, it is inevitable. The key, of course, is achieving the right balance. As explained above, communities without growth may be forced to raise taxes on existing residents and businesses since the tax base does not expand. On the other hand, unchecked, unmanaged growth can also cause problems. In particular, it is important to achieve the right balance of growth among the various land uses in a community. For example, a community that focuses primarily on residential growth may become a bedroom community where the residents are forced to travel to other places for everything from work to shopping. A community with an overabundance of commercial development invites traffic congestion. And, unless the community has adequate design standards, whatever development occurs may well be viewed by existing residents as undesirable. With this in mind, we propose the following principles for the future development of Sudlersville:

### **Future Development Principles:**

- ❖ We must preserve and maintain our high quality of life. The residents of Sudlersville and the surrounding area enjoy a slower pace of life, surrounded by farmland, woodland, scenic beauty and nature. We have less traffic, less hassle and less inconvenience than other places. These are values to preserve.
- ❖ We must protect our rural way of life. Sudlersville is a rural town and it should stay that way. We must absolutely maintain our agricultural heritage, our surrounding environment and natural beauty and our friendly, small town atmosphere.
- ❖ Growth becomes a problem when it gets out of control, overwhelming our town, the environment and our ability to control it. We must decide now how much we want to grow and then place strict limits based on these decisions. We believe that Sudlersville should grow by no more than 15% per year.
- ❖ We must put growth where it belongs. New growth should be within, or immediately adjacent to and contiguous with our existing town of Sudlersville. New growth should be within a state Priority Funding Area (PFA), a local Planned Service Area (PSA), and a locally designated Growth Area. We do not want new buildings, houses or developments scattered all over the place. This is senseless, wasteful and ugly. We do not want growth to overwhelm our town. Growth does not belong in the environmentally fragile areas of our town or the surrounding area and the removal of forests or the clear cutting of natural, wild areas for the placement of new houses or developments is unacceptable. New developments or houses should not only fit in with the character of the town but should fit in nicely with the surrounding natural environment.
- ❖ We must encourage new development to focus on revitalizing the run down and/or ugly areas of our existing town. We must take advantage of our historic buildings and underutilized properties before we start developing large tracks of farmland. We must plan our town's growth while simultaneously ensuring that inappropriate growth does not spread through the rural countryside. Our zoning, water and sewer plans as well as all other policies must reflect and reinforce our Comprehensive Plan.

- ❖ We must put into place strong and strict policies for preserving our agriculture history and heritage, our surrounding open spaces, forest space and green areas and we must either develop an easement program or work with organizations that have easement programs for land owners who wish to protect their properties from development or limit the amount of growth on their properties. Easement programs and development must coexist and work together to achieve the desired growth.
- ❖ We must insist on a high standard for all new development. New development should have proper size, style, and density. They should be architecturally consistent with the historic style of the town and should reflect the unique qualities of our town. New residential developments should be no larger than 15% of the number of existing units in the town, and phased so that the town grows by no more than 7% per year, which equates to a doubling of the size of Sudlersville in 10 years. New development should be beautiful and of high quality. We must have strong design standards to enforce these needs. New developments should be as attractive and walkable as Sudlersville with sidewalks, shady tree lined streets and streetlights. It should be easy for people to walk to stores, schools, post office, parks, etc. We must create "Gateways" to our town so that visitors can see that they have entered a special place. Ill-designed, hastily designed and ugly buildings, homes and developments reflect poorly on who we are. We must make sure that new developments do not destroy existing areas of our town, but improve them and generate new opportunities and revitalization.
- ❖ We must coordinate transportation infrastructure with new development. New development should preferably be within an area that already contains an adequate transportation network or infrastructure that can be utilized or tapped into. We must not allow new development without considering the effects that it will have on transportation. Also, we must not build new roads or streets without understanding that they will create pressure for new development.
- ❖ New development should be well integrated into the town and surrounding community. New development should be integrated into the town through a series of roadways, sidewalks, bike lanes, and other connections, create a sense of continuity from one area to the next, rather than a sense of isolation, and foster community input and collaboration in the development's planning process and decision-making.
- ❖ New development should enhance our quality of life. New development should provide, or be within walking distance of, ample public outdoor space, including squares, greens and parks, be within walking distance of daily needs such as grocery stores, post office and the like, include street trees, appropriate street lighting, sidewalks and other landscaping designed to enhance the pedestrian experience and slow traffic down with narrow lane widths, tight radius intersections with reduced distances at crosswalks and stop signs to protect children, pets and pedestrians from drivers.
- ❖ New development should protect the environment. New development should minimize the unnecessary consumption of land, to decrease the impact on ecosystems, protect as many existing, mature trees as possible, prevent polluted runoff by minimizing the amount of impervious cover in streets and parking lots, promote the natural infiltration of water through the use of rain gardens, water recycling, and other ecologically-oriented landscaping practices and encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic, discourage

unnecessary car trips, and make future transit use possible even if none is currently available.

- ❖ New development should serve the needs of all residents, and promote diversity within our community. New development should be capable of providing a mix of housing types that meets the needs of the people who work in the area while maintaining the appropriate architectural size, style, density and consistency with the historic style of the town. New development should be capable of supporting a wide range of ages, from young families to senior citizens.
- ❖ New development should improve the local and regional economy. New development should make it easy for people to do business at locally owned businesses, particularly those in Sudlersville and the surrounding local area. New development should strive to employ locally based contractors, architects, and engineers and be serviced by adequate public facilities, or made to pay for all capital and maintenance costs of new facilities required by the development.

## **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

A relatively new term in the field of planning is “green infrastructure.” It refers to the system of parks and open spaces in a community, as well as the linkages or connections between these areas. A community’s green infrastructure is important because just as the more commonly known infrastructure (i.e. roads, water, sewer, etc…) is essential to support a community’s physical development, so too, a community’s green infrastructure supports its ecological functions. It also is important for making communities more livable.

The Conservation Fund defines green infrastructure as “the Nation’s natural life support system - a strategically planned and managed network of wilderness, parks, greenways, conservation easements, and working lands with conservation value that supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources, and contributes to the health and quality of life for America’s communities and people.”

There are numerous benefits provided by a system of green infrastructure. These include both ecological and economic benefits. From an ecological perspective the benefits include:

- Ensuring plant and animal biodiversity.
- Creating pathways to allow for interchange between native plant and animal communities.
- Maintaining the health of native ecosystems and landscapes by sustaining their physical, chemical, and biological processes.
- Filtering pollutants from air, water, and soil.
- Helping to cool streams and soil through shading.
- Buffering developed areas from floodwaters.

The economic benefits include:

- Increasing property values as homes located near parks and greenways sell for more than those that are not.
- Raising the community’s quality of life. Communities that have planned systems of open space, including greenways, parks and trails, generally develop the reputation of

- being desirable places to live. Seattle, Washington, Boulder, Colorado, Portland, Oregon, and Raleigh North Carolina are examples of such places.
- Attracting businesses. The communities cited above, not coincidentally, also have had great success in attracting new businesses as often times a community's quality of life is a key factor for businesses when deciding where to relocate or open a new business.
  - Increasing tourism and tourism-based businesses.
  - Attracting environmentally sensitive development and the developers who specialize in that niche.

Given these benefits, as well as the existence of at least an informal, skeletal system of green infrastructure, it seems like a classic “no-brainer” for Sudlersville to develop a more formal and planned green infrastructure system. We have therefore included such areas on our Future Land Use Map and prospective developers should be prepared to preserve the areas identified on this Map when any part of this system is on their property. Development projects should also propose connections or extensions to the identified green infrastructure to begin to build it beyond the “skeletal” system it is today. In contrast to the other uses on the Future Land Use Map, these areas of Green Infrastructure represent the places within which development should not occur.

The soils inventory on page 15 also indicates pockets of soils that exhibit poor drainage characteristics. These soils, especially Fallsington loam, should remain in open space where possible. However, development may be considered where it is part of a larger project and determined to be necessary for harmonious design, such as when a site plan is needed or for a major subdivision, where overall design considerations may result in lot and street pattern layouts that extend into or through such soils of limited suitability. Discretionary powers will be under the control of the Planning Commission as part of its normal review and approval authority.

### **Adequate Public Facilities**

Currently, the public facilities of interest to Sudlersville include sewer, emergency services, roads, sidewalks, schools, libraries, parks and other recreational facilities, and our Town Office. Of these, the Town is most concerned about sewerage treatment capacity and road capacity. There currently exists an undocumented degree of wet weather inflow and infiltration. That problem needs to be studied further to determine a cost-effective solution. There are also 17 vacant privately owned parcels and 3 vacant municipal parcels that may need sewer service in the future. The Town has an obligation to ensure adequate service capacity is reserved for these existing parcels. That equates to approximately 5,000 gallons per day of treatment capacity. Some additional capacity should also be reserved for potential expansion/increased flows from the renovation and remodeling of our existing housing stock. For planning purposes, and until the Town Commissioners establish a more refined number, we will use a 10,000 gallon per day set aside which will be deducted from our permitted discharge capacity to be our “measure of adequacy.” Projects may be approved if review by the Planning Commission discloses that there is “adequate available capacity” in the sewerage treatment system. In the event that a development project, subdivision, or an extension of services agreement related to an annexation proposal will utilize or require more than the available capacity, approval of said project may be contingent upon the applicant providing the necessary capacity in a manner acceptable to both the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Town Commissioners of Sudlersville. However, in no instance may any single project monopolize all of the available

capacity. For phased projects, approval for subsequent phases will be dependent, among other issues, upon sufficient available capacity to ensure connections, treatment, and discharges within the limits of our system and discharge permit.

It is not our intent to “front load” the costs for expanding system capacity in a speculative manner. Our intent is to protect the existing residents and taxpayers from unnecessary financial burdens. Developers must pay their own way. In accordance with this policy, the Town of Sudlersville may entertain developer proposals that include funding for capacity expansions. However, this policy in no way commits nor requires the Town to approve any such development proposal. Project approvals shall be contingent upon “findings of adequacy” or contingent upon the provision of system improvements to ensure adequacy.

Public water is not now provided by the Town of Sudlersville. However, in the event of large scale development, the Town may require public water service in areas proposed for growth and development. If such a public water system is required, it shall be designed in such a way that service can also be extended in the most efficient manner to the rest of Town, that lines are designed to be looped to ensure consistent pressure, and that capacity be sufficient for fire flow requirements. Fire suppression hydrants may also be required. The Town Commissioners, with the recommendation of the Planning Commission, shall determine under which circumstances a public water system, including fire hydrants, may be necessary for the well-being of the Town.

Streets and sidewalks are under the jurisdiction of both the State Highway Administration and the Town Commissioners. The adequacy of our streets and highways shall be evaluated by the Planning Commission in the course of potential annexation reviews, major subdivision reviews, and site plan reviews. The review of road impacts and the determination of “adequacy” will include an estimate of the number of trips per day a project will generate, the peak traffic loads, the number of vehicles involved, and such design considerations as the number of intersections and access points, distances between intersections, and the average vehicle length to establish a likely level of congestion and intersection loadings. A grid or modified grid, as specified in the Transportation Element, will have the effect of increasing the number of intersections, access points, and traffic flow alternatives, thereby maximizing the efficiency of the existing and proposed circulation system. Project approval will be dependent upon a “finding of adequacy” or contingent upon the provision of system improvements to ensure adequacy.

Schools are provided by Queen Anne’s County. The Planning Commission will notify the Queen Anne’s County Board of Education and seek its input when reviewing potential major subdivisions. Queen Anne’s County collects a public school impact fee that is collected throughout the County. Fees collected must be used within the service areas they are collected in to provide capacity and ensure that a “rational nexus” exists between the properties that are being assessed the service fee and the service area, or school districts, that serve those properties. If capacity is not provided within a reasonable time frame, the impact fees so collected must be refunded.

Emergency services are provided by the Sudlersville Volunteer Fire Company. That organization will also be contacted regarding potential impacts posed by large scale developments, and suitable developer contributions will be negotiated as part of the subdivision review process.

Our principal recreation facility is the County-owned Sudlersville Park. Large scale residential developments may generate their own need for tot lots, pocket parks, and neighborhood oriented recreation facilities. The Planning Commission will consider these needs and may require the developer to include such facilities within his project. Potential homeowners associations may be required to own and maintain such facilities at the discretion of the Planning Commission. Community open space, walking, bicycle, and or equestrian trails should be designed to connect with adjoining parcels to facilitate their coordinated future extension and to coordinate and integrate their design with our existing system of walks, ways, trails, and green infrastructure.

The Town Commissioners, in consultation with the Planning Commission and any other parties of their choosing, will prepare an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) in conformance with the enabling language in Article 66B §10.01. The form and content of the APFO will be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance and into the Sudlersville Subdivision Regulations. Additionally, the Town Commissioners may enter into Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreements (DRRA), in accordance with §13.01, that further define the roles and respective responsibilities of the public and private parties involved in the provision and extension of services to large scale projects. Planning Commission approvals may be contingent upon satisfactory execution of a DRRA, as appropriate. Construction permits may not be issued until any required DRRA has been signed by all parties and a copy placed on file in the Town Office. The costs to the Town with regard to the preparation and review of these legal instruments will be covered by a schedule of fees, to be established by the Town Commissioners, that will be applied as a processing fee for major subdivisions and site plans that meet a size threshold set by the Town Commissioners. These review fees shall be collected by the Town Clerk as a condition of including these major development proposals on the Planning Commission agenda.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

### Introduction

The Land Use and Growth Element of this Plan described growth policies to accommodate an ambitious rate of growth, but also to contain this growth within a clearly defined boundary. Thus the Plan has so far talked about how fast we want to grow and where we want to grow. The task is incomplete, however, unless we also talk about what that future growth looks like. This refers to how new buildings are arranged on the land, as well as what we want those new buildings to look like. Issues such as these are the subject of the Community Character Element of the Plan.

It is our over-riding desire to develop strategies to ensure that our Town does not sprawl indiscriminately until it ultimately blends in with the same kind of sprawl from the next Town such that it is hard, if not impossible, to distinguish Sudlersville from the next Town. We also do not wish to see our quaint little crossroads town surrounded by tract housing with large lots and cul-de-sacs, with no connection to the rest of Town. This would be the quickest way to destroy our sense of place. Methods for avoiding such destructive development and maintaining our quality of life that we all know and love, are discussed below.

### Vision for Growth

Sometimes what we want to *avoid* is easier to describe than what we want to achieve. The American author and urban design/planning critic James Howard Kuntsler has put it rather succinctly when he says:

Eighty percent of everything ever built in America has been built in the last fifty years and most of it is depressing, brutal, ugly, unhealthy, and spiritually degrading: the jive plastic commuter tract wastelands, the Potemkin village shopping plazas with their vast parking lagoons, the Lego-block hotel complexes, the "gourmet mansardic" junk food joints, the Orwellian office "parks" featuring buildings sheathed in the same reflective glass as the sunglasses worn by chain gang guards, the particle board garden apartments rising up in every meadow and cornfield, the freeway loops around every big and little city with their clusters of discount merchandise marts, the whole destructive, wasteful, toxic, agoraphobia inducing spectacle that politicians proudly call "growth".

James Howard Kuntsler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-made Landscape*

That is precisely what we want to avoid happening to Sudlersville. We see it happening in other parts of Queen Anne's County as well as in surrounding counties and we say it will not happen to us in our Town! We refuse to become the latest community that is just another "Anyplace USA." Instead, we wish to maintain our small-town, rural identity. What we see in our crystal ball for Sudlersville, is basically just a larger version of what we already have.

We want our Town to expand along a gridded street system, with sidewalks and with houses that are built to roughly the same setbacks and scale as the existing houses in Sudlersville. We want ample parks and open spaces to be provided in future annexed areas and ideally, these open areas will be connected to those that currently exist in the Town. In short, we want a community that we will still be proud to call our home.

### **2003 Design Principles for Sudlersville**

In order to realize our Vision, we believe that future growth and development must occur in a certain way. That way can best be described by a series of design principles.

#### *Design Principle # 1 – Mixed Uses are Desirable*

One of the biggest failures of Planning over the last 50 years or so has been the emphasis, primarily through zoning, on separating uses. Thus we have created whole communities where the houses are in one place, the jobs are in another, generally isolated, place, and amenities like shopping, services, institutional or cultural uses, are likewise segregated in separate districts. The end result is that our towns no longer consist of a series of interconnected neighborhoods. Instead, they are made up of a series of disconnected, single-use “developments”.

Future development in Sudlersville should include a mixture of uses. It should do so, however, in a manner that does not tip the balance too far towards any particular use. As we stated in the previous chapter, we do not desire to have any kind of regional-scale retail shopping. That kind of shopping is relatively easily available to our residents in nearby places like Annapolis, Easton, Dover, and Centreville. We do, however, want to see neighborhood-convenience level goods and services available to our citizens. Depending on the size and scale of a given development, this may mean different things. At first it will probably mean simply expanding the range of goods and services available in our Town. Eventually, particularly with larger-scale developments, it may mean duplicating some of what is already in Town so as to keep the most basic of convenience items within easy walking distance of every resident of Sudlersville. Ideally, every resident should be able to walk to a convenience or small grocery store (or, given our Town’s unique nature, an old-fashioned Country Store) in no more than 15 minutes. This corresponds to about a quarter-mile.

At the present time, commercial uses are concentrated at the heart of Town around the intersection of MD Routes 313 and 300. Should development spread much beyond a quarter-mile from this intersection, it will be time to consider locating additional such uses in as close proximity to a half-mile away from this intersection as is feasible. In the meantime, the emphasis should be on augmenting the variety of goods and services we already have.

Providing an overall mix of uses in a community is important not only from a community character point-of-view, but also for fiscal reasons. Subdivisions of simply single-family housing generate a large number of school children, as well as a large number of automobile trips unless the subdivision is exclusively expensive housing. Such developments create a negative budgetary impact. That is, they cost more for the Town to serve than they create in tax revenue. Commercial and industrial development, on the other hand, usually has a net positive fiscal impact. The goal is to have the two impacts balanced within the same

neighborhood (thereby reducing traffic and further reducing costs for the Town) rather than having pockets of positive and negative fiscal impacts spread around Town.

### *Design Principle #2 – Natural Features Should Determine Design*

The Maryland Smart Growth Initiative that presently shapes so much of what happens relative to growth and development in Maryland is both a pro-growth and a pro-environment program. The issue is not growth or no-growth. Rather, the issue is one of location. Smart Growth dictates that growth should occur in places with the infrastructure in place to handle it, and should not occur in rural, undeveloped areas. Occasionally, these goals come into conflict when, for example, a site is proposed for development within a Town, but that site also contains environmentally sensitive areas. This is most often the case when development is proposed on the undeveloped periphery of the Town.

This Design Principle is about finding the right balance between these two competing goals. It does not mean that all sites within a municipality should be leveled, filled, and developed with no regard for the environment. Nor does it mean that sites with special environmental features should be totally precluded from development. Instead, the Design Principle, “Natural Features Should Determine Design” means simply that sites should be planned based on the environmental resources present. For example, it means that a site with trees should not be clear-cut and then built-upon, with the final step ironically being the developer or new home-owner planting new landscaping trees when, with a little forethought they could have kept many of the existing trees and had a new home with mature landscaping from the day they move in.

Similarly wetlands should be protected, but that does not necessarily mean that they are left on the developed periphery or designated as part of the required open space. They also can be a site amenity as well as an environmental resource.

Under the general theme of this Design Principle, there are several objectives that should be followed in order to achieve environmentally responsible and sensitive design. These include:

- Neighborhoods should only be located on land suitable for development.
- Development should avoid impacts to air, land, water, and vegetation. Any negative impacts on these resources should be mitigated.
- Site landscaping should utilize existing vegetation complemented with native species.
- Important visual features should be preserved and made an integral part of the design of the site.
- Site design and development should consider noise and light impacts on adjacent properties.

Above all else, neighborhood development can be environmentally responsible by providing adequate opportunities for walking to jobs, convenience retail, and community facilities, thereby reducing automobile usage.

### *Design Principle # 3 – Automobiles Should Not Determine Design*

This Design Principle would, at first glance, seem to go without saying. However, so much of what is wrong with contemporary development is directly related to the automobile. It begins with the very location of uses that have been separated and isolated, in part, because of the general availability of automobiles. With the explosion of automobile ownership after World War II, it became less important, from an availability perspective, to locate jobs and commercial shops and services within walking distance of residences. Now of course this is viewed as a root cause of the demise of the true neighborhood and thus we are trying to get back to the way development used to occur.

The separation of uses only describes the problem that the influence of the automobile has from the macro perspective. There are even more problems on the micro scale. These include:

- In many cases garages have become the most prominent feature of single-family homes. They are often times quite large, set closer to the street than the house and have the door opening facing the street.
- Many streets are much too wide. This is not only unattractive, but is also unnecessarily expensive, invites speeding, and negatively impacts water quality.
- Parking lots are generally the least attractive site feature in commercial developments and yet they are usually located such that they are the most prominent site feature. Too frequently parking lots are inadequately screened and are placed between the street and the front of the building.

This design principle is all about reversing this trend. The desire to return to growing by mixed-use neighborhoods was described previously. That will require the acceptance and implementation by the Town of a broad policy concerning how we will grow in the future. The three bulleted points above, however, refer to very specific issues that can be addressed with a few amendments to various Town Ordinances and Regulations. The first issue concerning garages can be addressed simply by adding standards to the Town's Zoning Ordinance specifying a maximum size and the preferred (or required) orientation of the structure. The encouragement of the use of alleys in new development can also go a long way towards alleviating the problem described above.

Street widths are a little trickier in Sudlersville in that there is not much we can do about our two main thoroughfares because they are State Highways. Moreover, given their function, they are probably appropriately sized. What we can control is the width of streets that are internal to subdivisions by being sure that our Town Specifications and Standards do not require roads that are overly wide. They should be of a width sufficient enough to accommodate rescue equipment in the event of an emergency, but no wider. Narrower streets also have a side benefit in that they encourage social interaction. In many communities, the zoning and design standards are such that houses on opposite sides of a street are so far apart that in order for the neighbors to speak to one another from their front porches, they need to do so via their cordless or cellular telephones. That was not the case in

old-fashioned neighborhoods. Perhaps it is no coincidence that such places were viewed as more tight-knit communities.

De-emphasizing parking lots is also fairly easy to accomplish through zoning standards. Landscaping both around and within parking lots should be required. Also, requiring that none, or no more than a certain percent, of the spaces are located between the front façade of the building and the street can diminish the visual impact of parking lots.

*Design Principle # 4 – Ample Open Spaces should be Provided Within and Around the Development*

Open Spaces are a valuable element of design for numerous reasons. They provide recreational opportunities, preserve environmentally sensitive areas, act as a sort of terminal for pedestrian circulation systems, serve as community gathering places, and provide buffers between incompatible land uses.

In obtaining and enhancing Sudlersville’s open space, there are several points that need to be emphasized to ensure that we get the kind of open space that we want. First, developers need to provide significant, usable open space as part of their projects. In many communities, the open space often appears to have been an afterthought. Even more often the open spaces that are included as the developers attempt to satisfy a Town’s open space requirements are the lands that are otherwise not developable anyway. Second, Town officials need to look at ways to make our open spaces more valuable. In some cases this might mean enhancing existing open space areas. In others it might mean planning open space or wildlife corridors so that larger protected areas are actually connected via the “green infrastructure” described in the Land Use and Growth Chapter of this Plan. Finally, the Town should examine its Subdivision Regulations to insure that we are getting the right amount and right kind of open space as part of the required improvements for subdivisions.

*Design Principle # 5 – Substantial Landscaping Should be Incorporated in the Design*

Landscaping is crucial to enhancing the appearance of development, particularly in areas of little or no natural vegetation prior to its development. Landscaping also provides shade, serves as a windbreak, creates benefits for wildlife, screens or buffers unsightly elements (i.e. dumpsters, loading areas, parking lots, etc...) and helps to separate incompatible land uses.

A community’s landscaping standards are typically found in its Zoning and/or Subdivision Regulations. We will ultimately do likewise by adding substantial landscaping requirements to these documents. When doing so, we must remember that communities will only obtain from developers what they require through these Ordinances and Regulations. Thus we must be very clear and explicit.

One of the problems with landscaping standards, especially in places that have only recently enacted them, is that the initial impact may seem minimal. This is because, obviously, it takes many years for landscaping to mature. Thus what members of a Planning Commission or the general public may envision in the way of landscaping when they look at a site plan may not be realized until several years after the build-out of the development. There are, however, a few steps that communities can take to help diminish this problem. These include:

- Require developers to leave as much existing forest and trees as possible rather than clearing and leveling the site prior to development.
- Require large, healthy (i.e. nursery stock) landscaping.
- Require replacement and maintenance bonds to insure the survival of the desired landscaping.
- Use native species as much as possible. Native species are adapted to our environment and thus more likely to survive here, even through climatic extremes.

The Town government can also do its part by installing and maintaining street trees along existing public rights of way. The Town should also set the example for the community by extensively landscaping its Town-owned facilities and properties.

*Design Principle # 6 – Architecture Should Reflect Sudlersville’s Traditional Development*

This is perhaps the most important Design Principle in the struggle to make Sudlersville a unique place, rather than the latest version of “Anywhere USA.” The mix and layout of development was discussed above and it emphasized that the Town desires to look at the past for a blueprint of the future. Much is the same relative to architecture. New development in Sudlersville should look to the historic core of our Town for an example of what to emulate.

One thing that is clearly not welcome in Sudlersville is generic, corporate franchise architecture. This is especially true for commercial development, but also is a concern for new housing as well. Too often franchise commercial development looks nearly the same, if not identical, in community after community. Take a photograph of a McDonald’s, for example, and ask someone to identify the community it is from. Chances are that unless it was taken in one of the small (but growing) number of communities that insist on unique designs for their town, it would be impossible to do. To the extent that we will see new commercial development, we wish to be one of those communities that require unique buildings. Commercial buildings in Sudlersville should look like they belong in a small, rural, crossroads village, because that is what we are and that is the image we wish to maintain and perpetuate.

Although it is less often a concern, the same argument for architectural uniqueness rings true for residential development. One of our biggest fears is that the next wave of development on our horizon will surround our quaint town center with generic tract housing. We see such housing popping up all around the Eastern Shore like a cancer and we do not want it in our community. Such development features houses that are out of scope and scale with the rest of the community. Architectural diversity within the subdivision is minimal, often times consisting of a small handful of house styles all constructed by a single builder. The end result is a subdivision that not only wastes land because the streets are too wide, the lots are too big, and the houses sit too far from the street, but it is also just plain a generic, boring, “sterile” kind of place.

Following the completion of this Comprehensive Plan, our Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations will be revised to avoid these problems. We will establish standards

that help to ensure that the future of our Town is just a larger version of what we already have, not the next Town on the Eastern Shore to be “discovered” and suburbanized.

Prospective Developers who read and follow these Design Standards when developing their site plans should have a relatively easy path to getting them approved, provided we have the infrastructure to handle it. Those that ignore these guidelines should realize that to the extent they are trying to make Sudlersville like “Anyplace USA” or into something that we do not desire; their plans will not be welcome. Simply stated, we do want growth and development in our Town, but it must be on our terms.

The following images depict design elements that future development should emulate. This does not mean these exact images should be duplicated. Rather, prospective developers should examine these images for things like the scope and scale of the development, setbacks, architectural style, etc... As we’ve said throughout this chapter, if one wants clues as to what to build in the future in Sudlersville, one should look to the past in Sudlersville and borrow from the best elements of what we already have.



*Memorial to Sudlersville's Jimmy Foxx located at the intersection of MD 300 and MD 313 in center of Town.*



*Nice older home on Maple Avenue. Note the interesting architecture in contrast to modern tract-development.*



*Homes along South Linden Avenue. Note fencing, mature landscaping, and setbacks.*



*Homes along East Main Street. The architecture and setbacks are particularly appropriate for Sudlersville.*



*Nice home on North Church and Miller Avenue. Note the architecture, setback, and privacy fence in rear yard.*



*Excellent example of architecture appropriate for Sudlersville from this home on North Church Street.*



*Another good example of architecture and landscaping at this home on South Church Street.*



*A more modest home, but still a good example of an architectural style and scale appropriate for Sudlersville.*



*A great example of civic/public buildings with class at Sudlersville Elementary.*



*Approaching the intersection of MD 313 and MD 300. While these buildings are in need of maintenance and/or repair, they still represent a good example of commercial development in the Town Center in terms of scope, scale, and pedestrian orientation.*

The preceding images are intended primarily to provide prospective developers with a sense of the type of development we would like to see in future private sector projects. The private sector is not alone, however, in contributing to a community's character. Government, be it at the Town, County or State level, has a role to play as well.

It is important for government to set the stage for community character by constructing buildings that our citizens are proud to call our own. This is not only important for community character, but it is also fiscally responsible in the long run. Buildings that are top quality rather than economically built for short-term budget reasons, will last longer because they are more durable and they offer greater flexibility and opportunity for expansion. It is, after all, more than a little hypocritical to require the highest standard from private developers, while at the same time skimping on public buildings.

This is not to suggest, however, that any particular public building or facility need be demolished and reconstructed immediately. Rather, when things like the Town Office building, the Post Office, or either of our two schools, needs to expand, we should utilize that opportunity to ensure that such expansion is off a character befitting our Town.

# TRANSPORTATION

## Introduction

The modes of transportation available to a community have a great deal of influence on how that community grows. Such is the case in Sudlersville. From the brief historical overview provided in the Background Element, we know that our Town's period of most rapid growth occurred in conjunction with the arrival of the railroad. More recently, we have seen the influence of roads on our Town. We are centered on the crossroads intersection of two State highways. That is the area where development has been concentrated and it has been skewed along both highways heading away from that intersection.

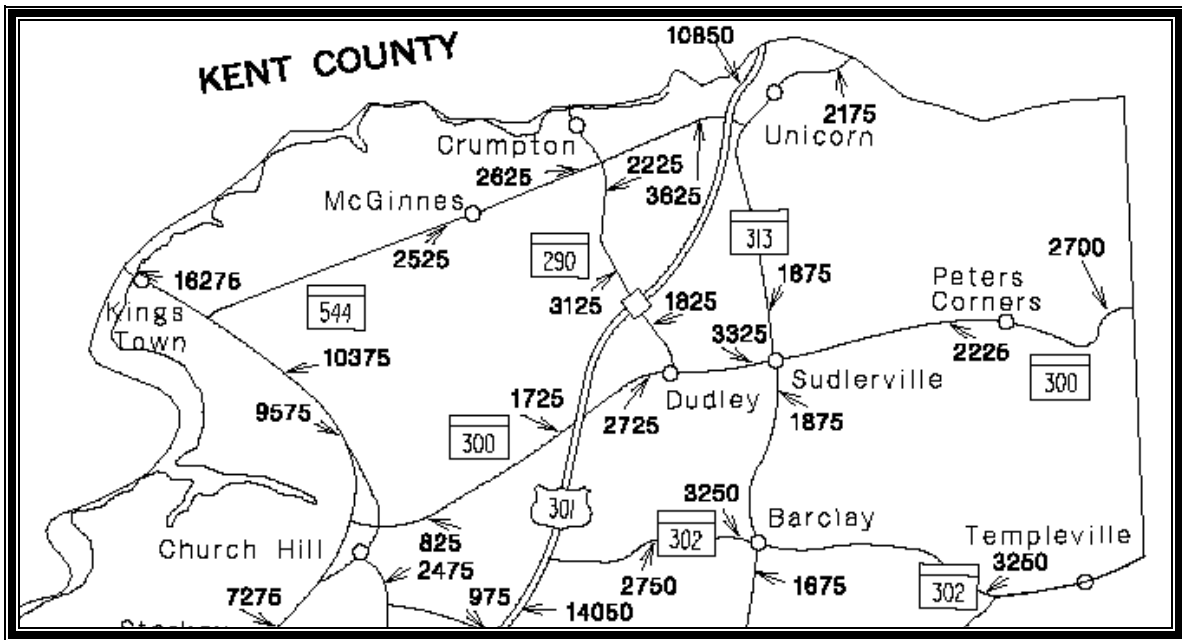
Transportation can play an important role in the future of a community as well in terms of helping to establish the character of development that will be encouraged. We have seen, for example, that the use of cul-de-sacs and overly wide roads has contributed to what can most charitably be described as "characterless" subdivisions.

This chapter of the Sudlersville Comprehensive Plan will examine our transportation system. It will assess the state of this system today and describe how we would like to see it evolve in the future.

## Existing Situation

As has been pointed out many times in this Plan, Sudlersville lies at the intersection of two State highways. MD Route 313 runs in a north-south direction and becomes Church Street within our Town boundary. MD Route 300 runs east-west and is our Main Street. These are the primary routes into and out of our community. MD 313 runs from Massey, a few miles north of us in Kent County, to Mardela Springs where it ends at US Route 50, about 12 miles east of Salisbury. With this route to Route 50 and soon thereafter, US Route 13, as well as easy access to MD Route 404, 313 is a favored truck route. MD 300 extends from Church Hill to our west through Sudlersville and over to the Delaware line where it becomes DE 300 and continues to nearly Smyrna Delaware. With these easy connections to the Delmarva Peninsula's major routes, not to mention our connection to US Route 301 approximately 4 miles to our west via MD 300, we enjoy easy access and connectivity to much of the east coast, particularly the Philadelphia-Wilmington and Washington-Baltimore metropolitan areas.

Map 5 below depicts the most recent State Highway Administration traffic counts in and around Sudlersville.



Map 5: Average Daily Traffic Volumes for 2001 in Sudlersville and northern Queen Anne's County.

This map depicts the Average Daily Trips (ADTs) for State highways in our vicinity. ADTs are the total number of vehicles that pass over a given point on a single day. This shows that in comparison to other northern Queen Anne's County roads, we have it relatively quiet here in Sudlersville. The ADT for MD 313 both north and south of Town is 1,875. The ADT on MD 300 west of Town is 3,325 and east of Town is 2,225. This contrasts to MD 213, where stretches of that State Road exceed 10,000 ADTs and MD 301, which has ADTs as high as 14,050 along portions of that road located in our vicinity. ADTs are simply an indication of traffic volumes and those within our Planning Area are not of a serious concern. Current and expected traffic levels are acceptable.

Another aspect of roads to consider is their function. Classifying roadways accomplishes this task. Queen Anne's County has done this for the roads within the County. They list five classifications of roads as follows:

**Principal Arterial:** This type of road provides for high volume. It is a controlled access facility. Service to abutting land is subordinate to travel service.

**Minor Arterial:** This type of facility provides services for intra-area travel (between principal traffic generators such as towns, employment nodes, Growth Areas). Service to abutting land is subordinate to travel service.

**Major Collector:** This type of facility provides access to both property and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods and commercial/industrial areas. The system collects traffic from minor collectors and local roads, serves residential neighborhoods and disperses traffic to the arterial system.

**Minor Collector:** This type of facility provides access from local neighborhoods and rural communities to developed areas and traffic generators.

**Local Road:** This type of facility includes all roads not included in other classifications. These roads facilitate direct access to abutting land, connect to the higher order roadways, and offer the lowest level of mobility.

The County Comprehensive Plan classifies MD 313 as a Major Collector and MD 300 as a Minor Arterial. All other roads, both in the Town and our Planning Area, are considered Local Roads. There are no planned improvements to any of these roads.

The other major aspect of our transportation system that requires examination is the most elemental of all, our system of sidewalks and trails for use by pedestrians (and possibly bicyclists). Preceding chapters of his Plan, described how such systems will be important requirements in future developments. Missing so far, however, is an assessment of the state of the pedestrian/bicycle system at the present time.

The following information summarizes the status of roads and sidewalks within Town.

<u>State roads</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Sidewalks</u>
300	22' - 40'	.59 miles	partial
313	22' - 40'	.92 miles	partial
Church Circle (Rt. 837)	40'	.12 miles	no
<u>Town roads</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Sidewalks</u>
Charles S	35'	.09 miles	yes
S. Linden	20'	.26 miles	one side
N. Linden			no
Maple	18'	.11 miles	one side
Miller	27'	.17 miles	yes
R.R. Ave.	10'	.06 miles	no
Wayne	30'	<u>.07 miles</u>	no
		.76 miles	

The conditions of the sidewalks that do exist vary in different parts of Town. Many are in need of some level of repair. The cost of such repairs is a concern to the Town due to limited funds. However, at least for those sidewalks along State highways, State funding is available through the Maryland State Highway Administration's Retrofit Sidewalk Program. This program is aimed at providing or improving safe pedestrian access along state routes in

existing communities, especially in the vicinity of schools. The State Highway Administration, working in partnership with counties and local communities identifies and prioritizes a list of proposed sidewalk locations. The guidelines used in the selection of projects include the following:

- Sidewalks must be along a State Highway
- The project should demonstrate safety benefits to pedestrians.
- It should provide or improve mobility for the general and disabled populace.
- Priority is given to projects that demonstrate that the addition of sidewalks will benefit revitalization by providing access to business, commercial and/or recreational areas that does not currently exist. Projects that are within Smart Growth Areas designated by local governments according to State criteria can be funded totally through this program. Projects not within these designated areas are only funded for 50% of the cost
- The local jurisdiction should show evidence that they are in support of pedestrian facilities.
- It should be evident there is either existing or projected pedestrian traffic.
- The project should have the support of the adjacent local community that will be the potential users of the community.

These conditions would seem to apply in Sudlersville and we should further investigate the possibility of utilizing this program to improve our sidewalks, and possibly add other amenities such as new redesigned street lights, trash receptacles, and benches.

The only other elements of the Transportation system in Sudlersville are train and transit. The rail line through Town is still active and in fact is being upgraded. It is owned by the State of Maryland's Mass Transit Administration (Office of Rail Freight Service). The line which runs through our Town is classified as a short line. It runs from Townsend, Delaware to Centreville, a distance of 29 miles. Over the last three years more than \$1 million has been spent to stabilize and upgrade this line.

The rail line is open for use by any type of freight. Currently, the MTA acknowledges that this line needs to expand its usage or it will begin to have financial difficulties within the next four years. In the near future, the last four miles of the line at the southern terminus will be shut down. At that time the line will end at Tidewater Publishing near Centreville. Queen Anne's County is in the process of working with the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development to bring more business to the end of the line in order to help insure the financial viability of the line.

If the rail line should cease operation, it will likely happen at or near the end of the six-year planning period. Thus a possible re-use of the line can be discussed in greater detail in the next Comprehensive Plan Update, should that prove to be necessary. Three possible uses come immediately to mind. (1) Use by another entity as a freight line, (2) use as a passenger train line for tourism, or (3) conversion of the line to a pedestrian/bicycling trail (i.e. Rails-to-trails). Each option has positive and negative aspects and will be evaluated further in the next Comprehensive Plan should it appear likely that the use of the rail line will cease (or, obviously, if at that time it has recently done so).

The County Ride Public Transit System provides transit service to Sudlersville. The North County Route of this system provides service to residents north of State Route 19. Stops are

in Crumpton, Sudlersville, Barclay, and Millington with daily trips to Chestertown. Two stops for this service are provided in Sudlersville. One is located at Dogwood Village and occurs at 9:30 a.m. The other is at Chestertown Bank at the intersection of Main and Church Streets and occurs at 9:40.

## **Future Transportation System**

As indicated above, the County plans no improvements to the road system in our Planning Area. The nearest anticipated improvement is along Route 301 which is identified for intersection improvements and/or grade separated interchanges for much of its length within Queen Anne's County, including the intersection just west of us at MD 301 and MD 300. This particular intersection is identified as "hazardous" in the County Plan.

Future road improvements in Sudlersville will almost certainly come in conjunction with new development. It is critically important for maintaining the community character that we desire, that these new roads be constructed in a certain way and that they include enhancements to our pedestrian/bicycle circulation system. Among the desired characteristics of our future transportation system are the following:

- In the future, as growth and development increase pedestrian/vehicular conflict, we will encourage new sidewalks and/or paths and bikeways as part of the subdivision process. The location and linkages of pedestrian and bicycle ways should connect with the existing network. Future recreation sites should be accessible by footpath or bicycle path if possible.
- Future streets should be compatible with the existing character and alignment of roads. A modified linear/grid system will be most appropriate which "loops" traffic through primary access points. Multiple points of access should be provided. This will help continue neighborhood cohesiveness and identity. Cul-de-sacs should be discouraged.
- New roads should promote and enhance a "traditional" village atmosphere and character by including rights of way no wider than thirty feet. Design review should provide flexibility to reduce cart way widths and not necessarily require curbs and gutters. Open section drainage flow is consistent and compatible with water drainage management in many neighborhoods. Nonstructural nonpoint pollution control measures should be encouraged as part of future roadway designs where feasible.
- Pedestrian and bicycle circulation routes should be encouraged within open spaces created by potential residential "clustering" in new subdivisions. Rear yard alleyways may also be appropriate when larger scale subdivision is contemplated. Alleys provide convenient access for rear facing garages, trash collection, and alternative utility corridors. Alleys, if created, should be screened with trees and made into attractive assets that encourage pedestrian usage.

- New roadways should be platted in such a manner that the overall circulation network is convenient, safe, and efficient. Logical extensions should be easily recognized and in keeping with existing neighborhood and community character. Block lengths should be kept to lengths that do not create too much traffic through residential neighborhoods and do not overload capacity at new or existing intersections. Sight lines and natural topography should be important considerations in approving the layout of new streets. Sufficient information, including photographs and sketches of "before" and "after" conditions, should be provided to the Sudlersville Planning Commission at the sketch plat or concept stage of development. This will allow ample time to clarify and resolve design and character questions as well as technical issues before project-engineering costs begin to make changes more difficult. This will enable the Planning Commission, Town officials, and residents to better visualize and understand development proposals and thereby provide better, more informed guidance. Developers will also benefit by being assured that their proposals are well understood and have the necessary local support to see them move smoothly through the approval process thus saving time and potentially costly revisions later.

The images on the following three pages illustrate the concept of expanding the Town's road network in a modified grid system. These are aerial photographs with possible future roadways superimposed thereon. They are not intended to suggest any particular route, but rather to depict conceptually how the expansion of a modified grid system might be accomplished. Future developers are urged to emulate the concept and not be hung up on the location of any "proposed road" depicted on these illustrations.

Aerial 1

Aerial 2

Aerial 3

## Community Facilities and services

Community Facilities and Services refer to the community's infrastructure. These include facilities such as water and sewer systems and services such as police and emergency (fire and rescue) services. We have no plans to expand the existing scope or capacity of the services provided.

### *Sewer Service*

Our sewage collection and treatment plant are adequate to service the projected growth we envision for the planning period. According to the Queen Anne's County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan, at the present time the rated capacity of our Sewage system is 90,000 gallons per day (gpd). The demand on the system today is 38,000 gpd. This means that we have an available capacity of 52,000 gpd. Since the current system services 168 homes, this means that factoring in non-residential users, each home uses just over 225 gpd. Assuming the same ratio of non-residential use, we should have capacity for approximately 230 new homes. This would accommodate our goal of doubling our population in ten years and means we would not have to begin planning for increased capacity until about the time of the next update of this Comprehensive Plan.

Any changes to this policy will be addressed through amendments to this Comprehensive Plan and appropriate changes in Queen Anne's County's Water and Sewerage Plan. Amendments will also be required to the County Water and Sewerage Plan to accommodate any growth beyond our current Town boundaries as the only area shown with service is the existing corporate limits of the Town. All other areas, including the two parcels we have identified as appropriate growth areas, are shown as "No Planned Service."

***Potential future system expansions, including interceptors, and possible pumping stations, as well as system capacity upgrades, should be paid for by developers whose projects necessitate the system expansion. It is not our policy to fund expansion costs on the basis of speculated growth and development.***

### *Water System*

The Town does not have a public drinking water system. Potable water is provided by individual private wells. We have no plans to create a public water supply system, unless such a system is necessitated by new development. In such a case, the developer of the project that necessitates the system should bear the burden of paying for a proportionate cost of such a system.

COMAR regulation 26.04.03.03 A (5) provides: where community sewerage is available and individual water supply systems must be utilized, the minimum lot area shall be 10,000 square feet with a minimum width of 75 feet. This minimum lot area may be increased to assure the safety of individual water supplies due to such factors as steep slope, erodible soils, and surface or subsurface drainage problems.

Future development of the two parcels targeted for growth during the Planning Period will likely be of a scale and density that will require some sort of community water system. This is

appropriate within a municipality. Inasmuch as the existing Town does not have a municipal water system, we not only encourage the development of community systems for future development areas, but we also want to see them sized and planned to accommodate an eventual Town-wide water system. To the extent we can legally do so, we will require developers to contribute towards the achievement of such a system.

### *Solid Waste*

We will continue to contract with a private hauler to collect trash from Town residents. Recycling is encouraged for all residents and businesses. Currently recycling collection facilities are available to the general public behind Southern States. The Town may want to reassess whether this is the best location for such facilities. Generally public or quasi-public buildings such as the Town Office, the schools, and the Firehouse, as well as the County Park, would be the most likely locations for igloos or other receptacles. The Town should consider whether relocating these facilities to one of these locations might not better serve the needs of Town residents.

### *Emergency Services*

We have no plans to establish a police force. We will continue to rely on the County Sheriff's Department and the Maryland State Police for law enforcement.

Similarly, we will continue to rely on our volunteer fire company to provide fire and emergency medical services. At some point the fire company may decide a new fire hall is necessary. If this occurs, we strongly encourage the fire company to remain within the planning area.

If a new fire hall is constructed this Plan anticipates residential or mixed-use reuse of the existing fire hall. Other uses may also be appropriate (cultural/public use of building). However, any new fire hall will be dependent upon the determination of need by the fire company and funding.



*Sudlersville Firehouse*

### *Town Hall*

The current Town Hall is located on South Church Street across from the Post Office. It is a small facility and houses the Town Clerk, Town Manager, and a small meeting room in which the Town Commissioner's and other Town Board's and Commission's meetings are held. There are no plans, beyond normal maintenance, to make any changes or additions to the Town Hall. The Town Hall is shown in the picture below.



**Sudlersville Town Offices**

### *Schools*

Sudlersville is home to two schools, something quite rare these days for a small town like ours. Sudlersville Middle School is located on North Church Street. Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 attend this school. The students in Sudlersville Middle School are those who attended elementary school at either Sudlersville Elementary or Church Hill Elementary. Sudlersville Elementary School is located on South Church Street. It houses students from pre-k through fifth grade. According to the Queen Anne's County Education Facilities Master Plan, the student rated capacities of these schools are 359 and 450 respectively. The September 2002 projected enrollments at these schools were 352 and 376. Thus the Middle school is operating at almost 100% capacity, while the Elementary school has some excess capacity. The Education Facilities Master Plan calls for no improvements at the Elementary School as it was extensively renovated in 1999. The Middle School is planned for "modernization" beginning in FY 2007.



**Sudlersville Middle School**



**Sudlersville Elementary School**

### *Recreation*

Sudlersville Park is a 36.5-acre County-owned park, located just outside the Town boundary, immediately adjacent to Town near Maple Avenue and South Linden Avenue. Queen Anne's County classifies it as a Community Park. The park, acquired by the County in 1986, contains football and soccer fields, a volleyball court, horseshoe pits, picnic areas (including tables, grills, and a pavilion, trails, and a tot lot. Automobile parking via the main entrance off of East Main Street is provided and there is a pedestrian access off of Maple Avenue. Given the size of this park, development of the adjacent parcel (if/when it occurs) should satisfy its park/open space requirement at the opposite end of that site.

Recreational opportunities are also provided at the two schools located in Sudlersville. The Middle School has tennis courts and ball fields and the Elementary School has ball fields, playground equipment, and a basketball court. These are important community assets and we encourage the County Board of Education to make these facilities available to the general public during non-school hours.



*Sudlersville Park as seen from pedestrian connection to Maple Avenue/Avondale Lane.*

### *Other*

Facility construction and maintenance decisions regarding our post office are made by the United States Postal Service. We strongly encourage retaining a postal facility in Sudlersville. The current facility is located on South Church Street across the street from the Town Office. This is a convenient location for residents of our Town.

Sudlersville has a small Town library located on West Main Street. This is an independent facility (i.e. it is not affiliated with either Queen Anne’s County or the State of Maryland). It currently houses approximately 10,000 volumes and is in the process of being computerized (for internal use). In March of 2003 the library plans on augmenting their video services by offering DVD’s. This facility is a great amenity for our residents and we encourage its continued presence.

There are two churches in Sudlersville. These are Calvary-Asbury United Methodist Church and St. Andrew’s Chapel Episcopal Church.

Finally, there is a small museum located at the Train Station near the intersection of the rail line and East Main Street on South Linden Avenue.



**Sudlersville Post Office**



**Sudlersville Library**



*St. Andrew's Chapel*



*Railroad Museum*

## Sensitive Areas Element

### Introduction

The requirement to include a Sensitive Areas Element is relatively new, having become law when it was added to Article 66B in 1992. In order to fulfill this requirement, a number of communities, including Sudlersville, simply amended their Comprehensive Plans by adding a Sensitive Areas Element.

In as much as Sensitive Areas deal with the natural environment, nothing has changed in this area since we adopted our revised Comprehensive Plan. Thus our Sensitive Areas Element is simply reproduced below from the existing Comprehensive Plan.

The only addition necessary is to address mineral resources (a different requirement of Article 66B). That is simple in our case because we possess no known mineral resources either in our Town or Planning Area.

This element supports and addresses Vision Two: *Sensitive areas are protected.*

The four sensitive areas mandated for management and protection in Article 66B of the Annotate Code of Maryland include:

- streams and their buffers;
- 100-year floodplains;
- habitats of threatened and endangered species; and
- steep slopes.

There are no slopes equal to or greater than 15% within our planning area. There are no 100-year floodplains within our planning area. We are not aware of any habitats of threatened or endangered species in Sudlersville. However, we will coordinate with the Natural Heritage program in the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to ensure that appropriate protection and management strategies are in place if future information confirms the presence of such habitat areas in our Town. We encourage landowners to retain existing trees and plant native, locally grown species to increase the amount of vegetation that may be utilized by various birds and animals in our area.

The graphic on the following page is based on the United States Geological Survey map of our area and identifies Chapel Branch Ditch, a tributary of Unicorn Branch, as the only named stream in our immediate area. Intermittent streams act as tributaries to Red Lion Branch west of Town. We will adopt a 25-foot "nondisturbance buffer" for new construction to protect the streams where they may be located inside Town and work with Queen Anne's County to protect the streams within our planning area. In the event that existing uses are located within the stream buffer, we will use discretion in approving renovation, rehabilitation or alteration of uses that exist at the time this element is adopted.

*Protection and improvement of water quality and wildlife habitat is our overall goal for managing "sensitive areas."*

## **Goals**

The natural ecosystem and functions of streams and stream buffers are preserved and enhanced.

Riparian forest ecosystems are enhanced and restored.

Storm water is managed to prevent degradation of streams.

## **Objectives**

The Quality of runoff from developed areas that enters tributaries and streams shall be improved.

Develop a storm water management plan and program for the Town that uses retrofitting measures to address existing storm water management problems.

Provide incentives for developers constructing new storm water management structures to address areas that currently do not have storm water management.

## **Policies**

New development shall not be permitted within stream buffers.

Alterations to existing uses located within stream buffers shall be handled with discretion to minimize potential disruption to streams and their ecosystems.

Alterations of streambeds or stream banks, except for Best Management Practices to reduce erosion or for stabilization shall be prohibited.

Disturbance to natural vegetation within stream buffers including tree removal, shrub removal, clearing, burning or grubbing shall not be permitted.

## Sensitive Areas Map

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Introduction

As much as any element in the Comprehensive Plan, this one ponders the future. In particular it considers the future that the rest of the Plan envisages and describes the means to make that happen. It also addresses certain requirements of State law. Finally, it touches on the general topic of inter-jurisdictional coordination. Specifically it will describe how Sudlersville's Plan relates to Queen Anne's County's Plan for the same area and discuss the roles of the two governing bodies in making these Plans happen as envisioned.

The stage for much of what will be written in this chapter has been set in previous elements of the Plan, particularly the Land Use and Community Character chapters. This chapter will take the discussion one step further by tying the whole discussion together, and proposing concrete actions that will be necessary to make the vision of this Plan a reality.

### A Growth Management Strategy For Sudlersville

In contemplating a growth management strategy for Sudlersville, it is necessary to first consider what, if anything is wrong with the current situation. In doing so, it is apparent that there are still many great aspects to this Town. What drives the desire for a growth management strategy is the recognition of trends contrary to these great things. These include:

- Development that is too wasteful. Density within the Town of Sudlersville is two to three times as dense as that found in the subdivisions of the last 20 to 30 years developed in parts of the County and other parts of the Eastern Shore.
- Development in our region, especially commercial development, that is too ubiquitous. That is to say, it is virtually indistinguishable from that in any other community.
- The fear of sprawl. In recent years it has become apparent that sprawl is no longer just a Western Shore phenomenon. There is concern amongst many folks that development on the Upper Shore in general and in Queen Anne's County in particular, is spreading too far, too fast. Much of this problem relates to the first point above. That is, since density is relatively low in many places, more and more land is necessary to accommodate even a constant rate of growth, let alone an increasing growth rate.
- The construction of single-use subdivisions rather than neighborhoods. Again, this causes a need for more land and also necessitates increased automobile usage.

With this as the backdrop, the following Growth Management Strategy is proposed.

### ➤ **Contain Sprawl with an Urban-Rural Demarcation Boundary (U-RDB)**

The first step in Sudlersville’s proposed Growth Management Strategy is designed to contain outward expansion of the Town. This will be accomplished through the establishment of an Urban-Rural Demarcation Boundary (U-RDB). The concept is similar to that of an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). An UGB is essentially “a line in the sand.” On the Town side of this line town-scale development will occur. On the other side of the line, development is much less dense.

We also see the need for a second line. This one corresponds to our Planning Area Boundary. While we envision the U-RDB as differentiating between “Town and Country” for the short-intermediate range, we also would like to see development controlled within a slightly larger area for our longer –term interests. Furthermore, we see relative permanence in the location of this Planning Area Boundary and we would like to see it become more permanent by bounding it on the County side of the line with a greenbelt. This would be a green ring surrounding the future ultimate Town limits consisting of forests, wetlands, and farms. This greenbelt would become a top priority area for land preservation programs and initiatives at the County level.

Under this scenario, development would occur outward in roughly concentric rings. At the heart (or bull’s eye if you will) is the current Town limit. Lands within the U-RDB surround this area. The land presently located between the Town boundary and the U-RDB is seen as ultimately being developed as part of our Town. It is not as permanent as the Planning Area Boundary as its time frame is only the life of this Comprehensive Plan (i.e. six years). Thus it will potentially be adjusted again in six years.

The land between the U-RDB and the Planning Boundary represents our long-range potential. It is important both from the standpoint of maintaining a desirable quality of life/community character as well as the aspect of being able to responsibly serve those areas with municipal services, that this area be protected from inappropriate County-level development as well as leap-frog municipal development. This becomes a challenging area to plan for then. On the one hand, we do not want to permanently preserve this land because we may ultimately want to see it developed as part of Sudlersville. On the other hand, if development regulations are too loose here, both our quality of life and our ability to grow in the future could be seriously impacted in a negative way. For this reason, we must work closely with Queen Anne’s County to craft development regulations for this area that preclude thus from happening. The right to develop within this area should be restricted to such things as agriculture, forestry, and extremely low-density development.

Finally the area beyond the Planning Area Boundary represents the area beyond our scope of concern. We would like to see this area surrounded by a greenbelt to provide us with some level of permanence and thereby protect our quality of life. We believe that it makes sense for this area to be targeted at the County-level for long-term protection through purchase of development rights or easements, designation as TDR sending areas, etc..., but that is clearly a County policy to be made.

### ➤ **Enable Town-scale Development and Prohibit Suburban Style Development**

Perhaps the most readily apparent difference between the Sulderville that so many people love and hope to see replicated and the newer “suburban” scale development that has occurred all

over the Eastern Shore in recent years, is the density of these two types of development. Accomplishing the first step in the Growth Management Strategy, establishing an Urban-Rural Demarcation Boundary, will accomplish little if within its borders development occurs at the suburban scope and scale.

Suburban style development stands apart from traditional town-scale development in two distinct ways. First, density of suburban style development is generally much lower than one finds in traditional towns. Second, the mix of uses is much more homogenous. Usually there is only a single use, whereas traditional towns contained a mix of all types of uses in a relatively confined area, sometimes even within the same building.

At a minimum, future residential development in Sudlersville should meet the State's Priority Funding Area guidelines. The minimum density necessary to qualify as such is 3.5 dwelling units per acre (net). In order to achieve this goal, drastic changes are required to Sudlersville's development regulations. First, in order to enable the development of true neighborhoods rather than single-use subdivisions, standards must be put in place to permit, if not require, mixed-use, high-density development of a character acceptable to the Town. Second, suburban-style subdivision must be made difficult (if not impossible) to get approved. Finally, even if a suburban-style subdivision is approved, it must be at a more logical density.

In order to accomplish development of this nature, the following changes are recommended to Sudlersville's Development Regulations:

- Create a TND (Traditional Neighborhood Development) Zone or Development Option. The development standards should read similar to that outlined in the text box below.

### **TND Traditional Neighborhood Development Zone**

Minimum Lot size:

5,000 sq. ft. single-family detached

3,000 sq. ft. single-family attached

Maximum Lot size:

12,500 sq. ft. single-family detached

7,500 sq. ft. single family attached

Minimum Setback:

5' (0' for commercial uses)

Maximum Setback:

15' (10' for commercial)

Maximum Block Length:

480'

Density (per net acre):

Minimum - 3.5 du/ac

Maximum - 5 du/ac

All subdivisions shall include open space, civic space, office or industrial, and neighborhood commercial space in accordance with the following schedule. At least 3 of the 4 land uses shall be provided at the ratio specified:

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Ratio</u> <sup>1</sup>
Common Open Space	35% <u>including</u> a minimum of 1200 sq. ft. per dwelling unit for parks
Neighborhood Commercial	Minimum: 26 square feet gfa per dwelling unit Maximum: 52 square feet gfa per dwelling unit
Civic Space	300 square feet per dwelling unit
Office or Industrial	187.5 square feet gfa per dwelling unit

Subdivisions prepared in accordance with these standards shall be processed per the Town of Sudlersville Subdivision Regulations.

Subdivisions with only two of the land use elements at the ratio outlined above (or with three or more of the land uses but at less than the prescribed ratio) may be approved by the Sudlersville Town Council via the PUD process.

Subdivisions with more than 2 of the land use elements missing shall be prohibited. Renderings or conceptual architectural elevations shall be provided for each building type in the neighborhood and shall be subject to approval by the Planning Commission.

A minimum of 75% of the lots shall have access via an alley.

### ➤ **Improve Design**

The steps outlined above will go a long way towards making Sudlersville a better place to live. The establishment of a U-RDB and a Planning Area Boundary will contain the outward spread of development and the establishment of a greenbelt in the County adjacent to the Planning Area Boundary will offer some permanence to this limit. Building neighborhoods rather than subdivisions or developments will dramatically improve the livability of Sudlersville and will decrease traffic by offering more goods and services within walking distance of where people live. Still, with all these changes, the Town will not be as nice as it could be unless we take steps to insure that future development looks the way that we want it to, namely like our existing Town. In order to accomplish this, the following recommendations are offered:

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<sup>1</sup> The ratios included herein are from nationally recognized standards. Especially helpful in developing this list was Anton Nelessen's *Visions for a New American Dream* (1994, American Planning Association).

- Vigorously and consistently promote and require compliance with the “Design Principles for Sudlersville” as described in the Community Character Element.
- Add Design Guidelines for specific uses to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Particular emphasis should be given to those uses that we recognize as necessary, but which have the greatest potential to develop in a manner which would detract from the community character we desire.
- Retroactively add trees to enhance sparsely landscaped areas of Town.
- Improve the major thoroughfares in Town (Main and Church Streets) by working with the State Highway Administration to replace sidewalks, add pedestrian-scale street lighting, street furniture, and landscaping to these streets.
- Work with local utility companies to get transmission lines relocated underground.

#### **Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination**

Throughout this Comprehensive Plan there have been numerous references to Queen Anne’s County and the relationship between Sudlersville’s Planning effort and that of the County. This suggests the strong need for inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation between these two entities. This subsection of our Plan will outline steps that we think should be taken to initiate this inter-jurisdictional coordination.

One of the more obvious first steps in this process is to review Queen Anne’s County’s Land Use Classification and Zoning Classification for the lands within our identified Planning Area that are outside of the current Sudlersville Town limits. The Land Use classifications in the County Plan focus on the identified Growth Areas (i.e. the Kent Island and Grasonville-Quenstown-Centreville areas). The Countywide Comprehensive Land Use Map (Map LU-1) indicates that within our Planning Boundary, there is one “established residential area” at the intersection of MD 300 and MD 290 (Dudley’s Corner). It also shows the incorporated Town of Sudlersville, and indicates that the balance of our Planning Area is either identified as “Permanently Preserved Land” or “Rural-Agricultural Areas”, which have a 15% maximum theoretical development potential. The “Generalized Zoning Districts/Election Districts” Map indicates the incorporated area of Town, surrounded by almost entirely “Countryside/Agriculture” with one area of Residential Zoning located at the edge of our Planning Boundary at the intersection of MD 300 and MD 290, corresponding to the “established residential area” described above.

The County Comprehensive Plan also depicts “Conservation Areas.” Several such areas exist within our Planning Area and these areas may go a long way towards maintaining the rural setting around our Town that we desire. In addition to the County Park, there are three types of Conservation Areas. The first is deed-restricted open space. These areas would seem to be relatively permanently protected, except for the recently enacted policy by the County whereby such easements can be discontinued upon annexation into a municipality. This works well with our Plan as such areas will either be developed under our Town guidelines, or remain in open space.

The second type of Conservation Area within our Planning Area is Agricultural Districts established via the State and County’s Agricultural Land Preservation Program. These areas are guaranteed to remain in agricultural use, but for only five years at a time. However, they are the first step necessary to becoming the third type of Conservation Area, which are lands

on which the State/County hold Agricultural Easements on the land. These have much longer-term protection from development in that they are established in perpetuity. They do have a buy-back provision, but only after 25 years and only if (1) profitable farming is no longer feasible on the land and (2) both the County and the State agree to the buy-back. While under the easement, the only development that is permitted is the subdivision of 1 acre lots for the landowner and each of his/her children, limited to a maximum of ten lots and provided that a density of 1 du/20 acres or less is maintained.

Our Planning Area Boundary encompasses an area of approximately 7,850 acres excluding the existing Town limits. If not already obvious, this helps to clarify why we do not envision the entire Planning Boundary as suitable for development. Again, the Planning Area Boundary is not necessarily a Town Growth Area. In fact in some ways it represents a Town no-growth area as what we really want to see happen there is very little development. Our reason for identifying this area is that we are concerned that it may develop under County guidelines in a manner that we deem inappropriate in such close proximity to our Town. Specifically, we do not want to see this area subdivided. By and large the uses permitted in the County's AG zoning district are in line with what we envision happening in this area, but the potential for subdivision, even clustered subdivision has the potential to create an environment we consider inappropriate.

For these reasons, we will need to develop a process for working together with the County to review and regulate the use of land within our Planning Area. It may be as simple as developing a Memorandum of Understanding that specifies a process for these areas, whereby development proposals that are submitted for County lands must be reviewed by our Planning Commission and/or Town Commissioners in conjunction with the County review process. The County already has a very elaborate development review process. It would be relatively easy and add little, if any, time to this process to have the Town included.

Another option for the Town to consider is proactive annexation. Obviously, this is not going to be the solution for the full 7,800 or so acres within our Planning Area. However, we can gain ultimate control over the development of some of this area by bringing it under our jurisdiction through annexation. In some cases this may require incentives for the landowners. In others, it may only be necessary to assure the landowner that agriculture will be a permitted use within the Town and that the Town will continue to recognize their "right to farm." This combined with a deferral of Town taxes until such time as Town services are actually utilized by the landowner, will be sufficient to convince some to consent to annexation. Others may require more elaborate incentives.

Finally, it may be in the Town's best interest to contribute funds to the County's Agricultural Preservation Program, with the stipulation that our funds will go towards the purchase of easements on properties that we identify with the County as appropriate for preservation for the purpose of maintaining our crisp town/country edge as well as the rural atmosphere we desire within our environs.

## **Future Land Use Map**

The Future Land Use Map for Sudlersville, included in the Land Use and Growth chapter, graphically depicts the arrangement of land use that we envision for our Town in the future.

It is really a simple concept. We show our existing Town with a traditional Town Center, a couple of isolated Commercial and Industrial areas, and the balance, representing the majority of Town, is shown as Residential. We depict two parcels as short-term growth areas. These are the 240.96-acre Scheaffer parcel on the southeast side of town and the 96 acre Coleman parcel on the southwest side of town. These are depicted as future residential, although as we have described throughout, we envision these parcels to develop in a traditional manner. The characteristics of this type of development have been described throughout this Plan, so they will not be repeated here. Suffice it to say, we would like to see these parcels developed in much the same way that the existing Town of Sudlersville is developed, both in terms of scale of development, and type of development.

The area beyond our existing Town boundary or the two parcels identified as growth areas, up to our Planning Area Boundary, is identified for Agricultural/Resource Protection Land Uses. This is the area within which a portion may eventually be designated as a growth area in a future update of this Plan. Primarily, however, this is the area within which we are concerned about inappropriate development under the terms of Queen Anne's County's development regulations. We think it imperative that this area remains in predominately agricultural or other natural resource-based land uses in order to maintain a strong sense of place for Sudlersville proper.

Finally, we also depict the areas that we believe should be "off-limits" for development forever. These are the places that make up our "Green Infrastructure" as we described earlier in this Plan.

Taken altogether, we believe the Future Land Use Map presents a blueprint for a great small town. We believe the key to our future is largely to build upon, rather than destroy or denigrate, what we already have in Sudlersville. This Plan mentioned previously that our existing Town is in many ways what contemporary developers are trying to recreate in neo-traditional or new urban development schemes. We should take that as a compliment and as a clue as to how to develop in the future. Specifically we want to expand and ultimately replicate our quaint little Town. Our challenge is to do so in a logical and efficient manner. We believe this Plan is the first step in that direction.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

This Comprehensive Plan cannot ultimately become a reality without the effort of lots of people. In order to ensure that this Comprehensive Plan is consistently followed and implemented in the spirit in which it was prepared, a large number of groups and individuals must take on various responsibilities. First let's start with a discussion of responsibilities shared by all parties.

This Comprehensive Plan should be consulted whenever a decision is to be made relative to growth and land use. In so doing, the proposal should be examined in terms of whether or not it is consistent with this Plan and if not, whether or not there are extenuating or extraordinary circumstances that warrant the support of the proposal despite it's not being consistent with the Plan. It should also be remembered that it is simply not possible to anticipate every scenario that might occur over the next six years. There will undoubtedly be proposals for which this Plan offers no direction at all. A common mistake is to interpret this as meaning that the Comprehensive Plan does not support the action. This is not necessarily the case. It simply means that those preparing this Plan did not consider the proposal as something that was likely

to come up during the plan period (i.e. 2003-2009). In such cases it is essential that those reviewing the proposal do so with the spirit, rather than the letter, of this Plan in mind. If necessary, the Planning Commission and/or the Community at large should be "reconvened" for their input on the matter. If it is determined that it is appropriate, the Plan can be amended at that time. State law only mandates the maximum amount of time that can pass between comprehensive updates. It does not preclude more frequent updates or amendments that are less than comprehensive. Some responsibilities lie primarily with one group or another. The preparation of budgets and the initiation or modification of Town programs in a manner consistent with the Plan is the responsibility of the Town Commissioners. Similarly, on many issues of inter-jurisdictional coordination, the decisions must be ratified, if not initiated, at the Town Commissioner level. Finally, while the Town staff and Planning Commission have the responsibility for preparing development-related regulations, the Town Commission is the only body authorized to adopt them.

Sudlersville's Planning Commission has the primary responsibility for reviewing various development proposals and assessing their level of compliance and consistency with the Plan. This group also is charged with annually preparing a report on the growth and development process and recommending methods by which it might be improved. This offers a continuing opportunity to reassess the progress towards satisfying the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies of the Plan.

The Town planning staff has the greatest day-to-day responsibility for implementing the Plan. It is incumbent upon them to inform potential developers early in the process as to how the Comprehensive Plan views their proposal. The planning staff also should consult the Plan during the review of development proposals and the preparation of staff reports, drafting of Ordinances and Regulations, etc.

Finally, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that this Plan is faithfully and consistently implemented and that it does not simply sit upon the shelf of Town Hall lies with the general public. If you believe in the goals and policies of this Plan, remind Town officials and staff of them at every opportunity for public comment. Write letters of support for proposals that are consistent with the Plan, rather than showing up only when it is time to oppose something. Encourage Town policies and programs that are consistent with the Plan. Oppose those that are inconsistent (and point out why they are so). Above all else, help the Town Planning Commission and their staff stay focused on the Plan by attending Planning Commission meetings and, most especially, by participating in the next update of this Plan beginning in 2008.