



**2015 ANNUAL REPORT  
OF  
THE MATHEWS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

**January 19, 2016**

## INTRODUCTION

Section 15.2-2221, Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, prescribes the duties of the local planning commission. Among other things, these duties include a requirement to make recommendations and provide an annual report to the governing body concerning the operation of the commission and the status of planning within its jurisdiction;

This report generally describes the activities of the County of Mathews, the Planning Commission, and other local and regional agencies during calendar year 2015.

### ZONING ACTIVITY

Zoning Permits	185
911 Plate	13
Business Permits	47
Rezoning	1
Septic Permits	13
Site Plans	1
Plan of Developments	16
Conditional Use Permits	5
Variances	2
Administrative Variance	0
Erosion & Sediment Permit	28
Subdivisions	26
Appeals	0
Amendments	2
Wetlands	21

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mathews Main Street, Inc. continues to implement A Vision for the Future for Mathews Courthouse. Through the work of this organization, the county has received Transportation Enhancement Grant funds from VDOT to pay for design and engineering work for the section of Main Street from Hyco Corner south to Brickbat Road. During the year, VHB, Inc., the county's consulting engineer, worked on preparing and submitting design plans for Phase I of the project to be reviewed by VDOT. VHB has completed the plans and bid documents for the proposed improvements and the County has requested authorization to advertise for bid from VDOT for Phase I of the project. It is anticipated that the work will begin in the spring or summer of 2016.

The County submitted an application for construction funding from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in March, 2013 for various improvements along Main Street. In December, 2013, the Governor's Office announced that the County had been awarded \$666,696 for the proposed improvements. In 2014, the County executed a contract with DHCD to implement the project. During the year, the project architect, PMA Architecture, has been working with property owners to identify improvements to the exteriors of their buildings. They have been working to provide work write-ups and budget estimates for the facade work to the owners. Once approved by the owners and a Façade Advisory Committee, comprised of local residents, the work will be advertised for bid beginning in the first quarter of 2015. Two façade improvements have been completed and others are expected to be advertised for bid and completed in 2016.

Land Studio, PC, the project engineer for this project, has completed 100% drawings for improvements to sidewalks on the west side of Main Street south of Brickbat Rd. and along Brickbat Rd. west of its intersection with Main Street to the County-owned property adjoining Put-in Creek. The work has been advertised for bid and is expected to begin in the spring of 2016.

The County also submitted an application for the construction of a boardwalk and canoe/kayak launch facility on the former HRSD wastewater treatment facility site to the National Park Service. The Park Service awarded the County \$88,000 for the construction of these improvements in September, 2013. Land Studio, PC finalized the plans for the kayak launch in 2014 and submitted and had approved a Joint Permit Application from VMRC, DEQ and the Army Corps of Engineers. The work was advertised for bid and construction of the kayak launch/boardwalk was completed in December, 2015.

Planning staff worked with property owners in flood-prone areas of the County to apply for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds to elevate their houses above the identified Base Flood Elevation for the Special Flood Hazard Area where their properties are located. Working with Community Planning Partners, Inc., the County was awarded the following grants in 2014:

HMGP – 4042 - 012 (Louisa Earthquake) – Elevate 9 homes and acquire 3 homes---1 home has been acquired and two homes will be advertised for bid in January, 2016.

HMGP – 4045 – 002 (Tropical Storm Lee) - Elevate 9 homes---2 homes have been elevated and one home is scheduled to be elevated in April, 2016.

HMGP – 4092 -002 (Hurricane Sandy) – Elevate 11 homes and acquire one home---3 homes have been elevated and 2 are scheduled to be elevated in March or April, 2016.

## ENVIRONMENT

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) deemed in March 2008 that Mathews County was in compliance with Phase II of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. The County remains in compliance, as follows:

- 1. Establish a mandatory Septic Pump-Out Program**  
The County was given five years to comply. Staff completed notification in four years (one year ahead of schedule). Staff continues to monitor the septic pump-out program. Another round of reminder notices will be sent the end of January 2016.
- 2. Implement a checklist to include all requirements in Section 22.26 – Site Plan – to be documented on Plans of Developments (PODs)**  
The County has implemented a Plan of Development checklist and continues to document Plan of Development requirements.
- 3. Implement a program to ensure the regular maintenance and tracking of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure a continuous long-term performance**  
Staff maintains a database of BMPs and performs regular follow-ups to ensure regular maintenance is being performed.

4. **Require the submission of a Water Quality Impact Assessment (WQIA) as a tool to review any proposed land disturbance, development or redevelopment activity within the Resource Protection Area (RPA).** Staff maintains a database of WQIAs and monitors development/redevelopment activity within the RPA on a regular basis.
5. **Implement the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) document between the County and landowner for approved removal of vegetation in the Resource Protection Area and to ensure mitigation for the removed vegetation.** Staff maintains an MOA database and monitors the removal of vegetation in the Resource Protection Area (RPA).

Planning staff worked on developing a Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) in conformance with the state's mandate to establish this program by July 1, 2014. A draft Stormwater Management Ordinance was submitted by the County to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for its review prior to January 15, 2014. Subsequent to this time, however, the General Assembly passed legislation that made it an option for localities to opt-in to the program, if they chose to do so rather than making it mandatory. The County chose not to opt-in as being a VSMP authority. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), therefore, serves as the VSMP Authority for the County. The Department of Planning & Zoning, however, continues to administer the Erosion & Sediment Control Program and the Chesapeake Bay Act Program.

DEQ has also adopted a TMDL Implementation Plan to identify measures to improve impaired shellfish waters in the County. The impairment is due to high levels of *fecal coliform* contamination. These areas include Cobbs Creek, Queens Creek, Stutts Creek and other bodies of water flowing into the Piankatank River and Milford Haven.

### GENERAL AND FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Through the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League, the County monitors pending legislative actions and their effects on localities. County administration and the Board of Supervisors continue to meet with various members of the State legislature and agency representatives to discuss the impact of these legislative actions on rural governments in general and Mathews County specifically. However, unfunded mandates and other factors continue to strain the budgetary and physical operations of local government.

The Planning Commission prepared the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), Fiscal Years 2012-2016 for the County. The CIP builds upon previous efforts and provides a better picture of existing and proposed capital projects and their fiscal impact. An updated CIP needs to be reviewed by the Planning Commission this year and a recommendation will be made to the Board of Supervisors.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION

No approval of any zoning request has resulted in the destruction, loss, or damage of historic features.

The New Point Lighthouse Task Force was organized in order to create a Master Plan for the preservation and maintenance of the County's most recognizable landmark. A study funded through a

matching grant from the Virginia General Assembly has resulted in a plan to increase protection around the lighthouse island. The work to reinforce the island on which the lighthouse sits with rip rap revetment was advertised for bid this year and a construction contract was awarded. This work has been completed. The next phase will be to preserve the lighthouse.

The Historical Society applied for and received a matching grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) to perform a survey of archeological and architectural resources in the County. The Board of Supervisors provided funds to satisfy the match requirements.

### HOUSING

The county continued its Section 8 rental assistance certificate program through the Virginia Housing Development Authority, the state agent for HUD. Additional units need to be obtained or developed to meet the demand for this type of housing. The Middle Peninsula Rental Assistance office located in Gloucester locally administers the Section 8 program.

The County's 2030 Comprehensive Plan identifies the development of "senior-housing" as a development policy and strategy to be addressed by the Planning Commission. In 2014, a developer submitted a site plan to the Planning & Zoning Office for review for the development of a sixty-six (66) unit "senior-targeted" housing complex within the Village Mixed Use (VMU) Zoning District. The plans were reviewed by Planning & Zoning and various outside agencies and approved. Construction began on the project in 2015.

### LAND USE

In 2015, the Planning Commission considered two (2) applications for a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance:

#### Zoning Text Amendments:

- 1-ZA-15:** A request from an applicant to amend Section 2.2 "Flexible Residential/Business Use" of the Zoning Ordinance to allow a mixed use structure **without public central sewer** with an approved CUP in the B-2 Zoning District. The Board of Supervisors approved this amendment.
- 2-ZA-15:** The Planning Commission considered a request from the Board of Supervisors to amend the Zoning Ordinance to change "community operated playgrounds, parks and similar community recreational facilities" from uses permitted by right to conditional uses in the RU, R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts. The Board of Supervisors approved this amendment.

In 2015, the Planning Commission considered one (1) application for rezoning.

#### Rezoning:

- 1-RZ-15:** A request from the Brambles to rezone Tax Map Parcel 26A3 (A) 115 from B-2 to R-2 to allow a single-family dwelling as a group home. The Board of Supervisors approved this request.

## **WATERFRONT ACCESS AND FACILITIES**

Mathews County continues to be a member of the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority. This regional group is responsible for managing and preserving public access sites. Mathews County Administrator, Melinda Conner, represents the County on the Authority.

The Public Access Authority acquired a property along Billups Creek in 2013 through a donation by Conrad Hall. The County and the Access Authority have been considering requests from a non-profit organization to develop the property for recreation and public water access purposes. No decision has been made yet, however.

The County continues to repair and improve the public waterfront access sites. The county purchased the East River Boatyard at the end of Mill Lane Road. The long term plan for this site is to develop a public fishing pier and a boat ramp to provide public access to the water for county residents and visitors. In 2013, the County applied for funding from the Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) for a boat launch and a pier. No development of the site occurred in 2015, however.

The Mathews County Land Conservancy continues to pursue the development of the Williams Wharf Landing. This project will provide enhanced water access for motorless watercraft including use by the Mathews High School Crew team.

## **SOLID WASTE**

The Virginia Peninsula Public Service Authority (VPPSA), on behalf of Mathews County and other authority member communities, continues to update its regional solid waste disposal and management techniques. VPPSA provides a recycling program for paper, cardboard, aluminum, metals, glass, oil, antifreeze, and some plastics at the solid waste transfer facility. VPPSA continues to explore the possibility of adding other recyclable materials to its current program.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The County has contracted with Bay Transit, a not-for-profit transit organization serving the region, to provide limited public transportation for County Residents. Continued participation in the ride share program sponsored by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC) remains one of the county's primary alternative transportation modes.

The County is continuing to evaluate, and to recommend various traffic safety changes such as speed zone reductions and intersection improvements at Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings. The Comprehensive Plan identifies various transportation improvements for the County within a twenty-year timeframe. VDOT has included funds for design and engineering for drainage improvements for Main Street within its six-year plan for the county. A public meeting was held in December, 2012 to solicit public input on the proposed drainage improvements in the Court House Area. In 2013, VDOT completed the design and engineering and is in the process of acquiring easements for the improvements from property owners in the project area. It is anticipated the project will be advertised for bid by VDOT in 2016.

## WASTEWATER

In 2002 the Board of Supervisors appointed a Sewer Study Committee in order to study the current central sewage collection and treatment situation in the Mathews Courthouse village and develop recommendations regarding the future of the system. The Committee submitted their report to the Board of Supervisors in November of 2002. The Committee recommended the construction of a sanitary sewer transmission force main (TFM) to transport sewage out of the county for ultimate treatment at a regional plant. The committee also recommended that the Board provide a careful review of existing land use ordinances and make appropriate alteration to these ordinances to ensure that the construction of a TFM does not encourage growth and development in areas not so designated in the county's comprehensive plan. The Board of Supervisors requested HRSD to put together a proposal to construct a TFM along routes 198 and 3. The County received the long term plan in 2007. Engineering for the TFM was completed and the installation of the force main line and construction of three (3) pump stations have been completed within the county.

The Planning Commission was tasked with studying a possible expansion of the sanitary district. The Commission prepared a report to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration as they plan for the future wastewater treatment needs of the Court House Village. The 2005 report noted that if the district was to expand it should do so along Route 14 towards Wards Corner. The plan specifically stated that any possible expansion of the district should be done in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and should not be done to support additional residential development in the area.

The Planning Office performed Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Determinations for thirteen (13) new septic permits during 2015.

## COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFFING

In 2015, the Planning Department did not have any staff changes. The Department consists of the following staff members: John W. Shaw, Director of Planning and Zoning; Thomas Jenkins, Planner / Wetlands & Marine Projects Coordinator; Susan Thomas, Environmental Code Compliance Officer and Elizabeth Whitley, Zoning Technician.

In 2015, the Planning Commission consisted of the following members: Jim Robinson (Chairman); Tom Ingram (Vice-Chairman); John Shaw, Director of Planning & Zoning (Secretary); Bill Whitley, Bill Leary, Tim Hill; Danette Machen and Beth Davis. Board of Supervisor member, Jack White, served as ex-officio.

## GOALS FOR 2015 – STATUS

As a result of a review of events and actions of 2014, the Mathews County Planning Commission adopted the following Goals for calendar year 2015:

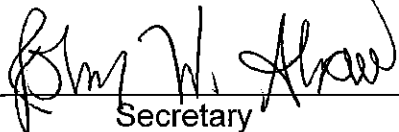
- Undertake a review and update of the zoning and subdivision ordinances with specific attention to developing/amending:
  - Additional zoning districts for consistency with the future land use recommendations identified in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan – **In Progress**
  - Zoning district regulations to address recurrent coastal flooding– **In Progress**

In addition, the Planning Commission should:

- Provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, as requested, to delineate additional sanitary sewer service areas along the sanitary sewer transmission force main line - **Completed**
- Review and update the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) – **In Progress**
- Monitor the maintenance and improvements at public water access sites – **In Progress**
- Perform other reviews as requested by the Board of Supervisors and the Board of Zoning Appeals - **Completed**
- Comprehensive Plan Review for Potential Updates to Conform to the *Code of Virginia* regarding coastal resource management guidance and transportation planning – **In Progress**

#### GOALS FOR 2016

- Consider information provided by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC) for possible land use policies and long-range planning regarding the potential impacts of recurrent flooding on floodprone areas of the county.
- Work with staff of the MPPDC to review/update the 2030 Comprehensive Plan for its five-year review.
- Work with the Planning Commission and County Administration to update the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).
- Consider text amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to address various uses that are not enumerated or need to be changed from “by-right” to conditional uses or vice versa.

  
Secretary

  
Chairman