

# **VIENNA COMMUNITY VISION PLAN**

**JANUARY 2003**



**PREPARED BY THE CONSERVATION FUND IN COLLABORATION WITH THE TOWN OF VIENNA**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Vienna Community Vision Plan was prepared by the staff of The Conservation Fund (TCF) working in close collaboration with the Town of Vienna. This Plan is a testament to the creativity and vision of the citizens of Vienna and the surrounding area. We would especially like to thank the 29 individuals who participated in our community interviews, the 110 individuals who attended our October 2, 2002 Community Meeting, and the 65 individuals who attended the final presentation of the Vision Plan on November 19, 2002. In particular, we are grateful to Mayor Russ Brinsfield and Town Council members Tom Gebert and Phyllis Murphy for their leadership and vision and Circuit Rider Glen Steckman for his steadfast support.

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## **ABOUT THE CONSERVATION FUND**

The Conservation Fund, a nonprofit organization, acts to protect the nation's legacy of land and water resources in partnership with other organizations, public agencies, foundations, corporations, and individuals. Seeking innovative conservation solutions for the 21st century, the Fund works to integrate economic and environmental goals at the community level. Since its founding in 1985, the Fund has helped its partners safeguard wildlife habitat, greenways, community "greenspace" and historic sites totaling more than 3.5 million acres throughout the nation.

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## OVERVIEW

### Purpose

Vienna is a small town located on the tidewater shores of the Nanticoke River in Dorchester County. One of the oldest settlements in Maryland, the town has long been known as the “Pearl of the Nanticoke.” In its heyday it rivaled Baltimore as a center of commerce, and has a long, proud tradition as a community of farmers and watermen. Vienna is now poised to become a conservation gateway to the Chesapeake – a perfect introduction for visitors to the vast resources of the Nanticoke River, Fishing Bay, and the lower Chesapeake Bay. Facing the potential for significant growth and change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the town of Vienna has a tremendous opportunity to protect and link important natural, cultural, and recreational opportunities while accommodating new residential and commercial development and a new civic core.

The Vienna Community Vision Plan represents the culmination of an intensive six-month process that began in July 2002. It illustrates the community’s vision for how Vienna can grow over the next twenty years, while retaining

its small town character, serving as a gateway for recreation and tourism, and emerging as a model of conservation development in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This document memorializes the work performed by The Conservation Fund working in close collaboration with the community especially Mayor Russ Brinsfield and Town Council members Tom Gebert and Phyllis Murphy. It stands as a testament to the creativity, vision, and initiative of the community and will be used to help guide the comprehensive planning process scheduled to begin in 2003.

### Goals

The Conservation Fund worked with the Mayor and Town Council to develop the following goals to guide the visioning process.



*Vienna has long been known as the “Pearl of the Nanticoke.”*

## **GOALS:**

- Accommodate future growth and appropriate economic development while maintaining the small town character and setting of Vienna.
- Enhance quality of life in Vienna by providing community amenities for residents and visitors.
- Enhance and protect the significant cultural and natural resources within Vienna and the surrounding area.
- Maintain the rural legacy of the Vienna area by protecting significant scenic vistas, farms and forests surrounding the Town.



*The Conservation Fund evaluated views and development patterns, and sought community input to develop the Vision Plan.*

## Process

The Vienna Community Vision Plan was developed based on a physical assessment of the Town, community input, and an assessment of economic, recreation, and conservation opportunities in the Nanticoke watershed. The physical assessment evaluated land use, circulation, community amenities, ecological resources, visual resources, and development potential in the area surrounding the incorporated Town of Vienna.

Community input was gathered through a public opinion survey designed and conducted by PACE at Salisbury University, through community interviews conducted by The Conservation Fund, and two community workshops held by the Town Council and conducted by Mayor Russ Brinsfield and The Conservation Fund.

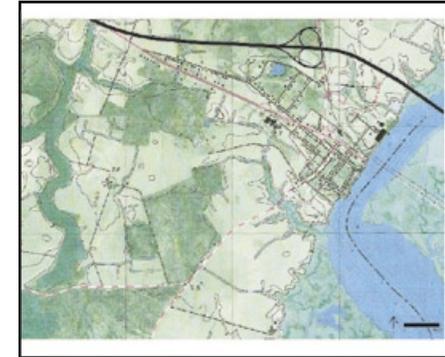
The Conservation Fund also looked at strategies used by other communities facing similar challenges to evaluate planning options for Vienna. Using public input, information collected during the physical assessment, and the case studies, the Vienna Community Vision Plan outlined at the end of this report was developed to guide appropriate growth, encourage economic development, and

improve and protect environmental resources and community life.

## PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

Based on numerous conversations with Town leadership, a study area was agreed to that included a broad area beyond the incorporated boundaries of the Town. A physical assessment of the study area was conducted to understand the potential for growth and the need for conservation, preservation and restoration of the area's natural and historic resources. This assessment focused on evaluating the town itself, its surrounding landscape, and the relationship between the two.

TCF evaluated the major elements of Vienna's community design, including the Town's historic evolution and current configuration. This evaluation included an inventory and photographic documentation of community features, including streetscapes, gateways, important buildings, the full range of housing types, and the surrounding landscape. TCF also mapped parcels, streets, and building footprints, and evaluated the Town's streets.



*Study area*



*Intersection of Market and Race Streets*



## Historic Evolution

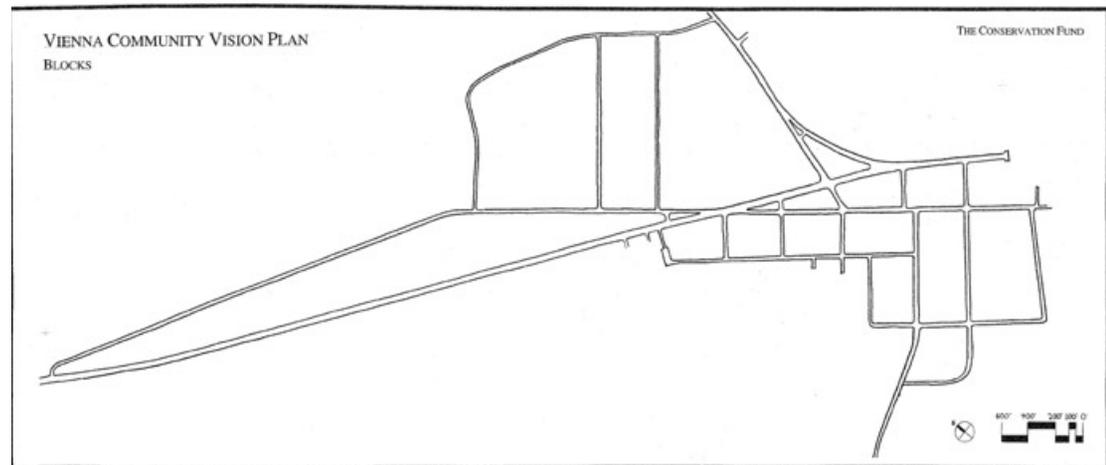
We researched the original town plan – a copy of which was found reproduced in *“The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States”* written by John W. Reps. The Mappe of Vienna Towne on Nanticoke River was originally laid out in 1706. It included a total of 12 blocks, six streets, 100 lots, and two public spaces. The plan was configured as a simple rectangular grid of streets, formed by three streets parallel to the Nanticoke River (Back Street, High Street, and The Strand Called Thames-Street) and three streets perpendicular to the river (Low, Middle, and Broad Streets). The lots depicted were long and narrow. The plan designated a narrow strip of public open space immediately adjacent to the river and a fairly large rectangular block of land at the edge of town known as “Publick Lands of Vienna Towne”.

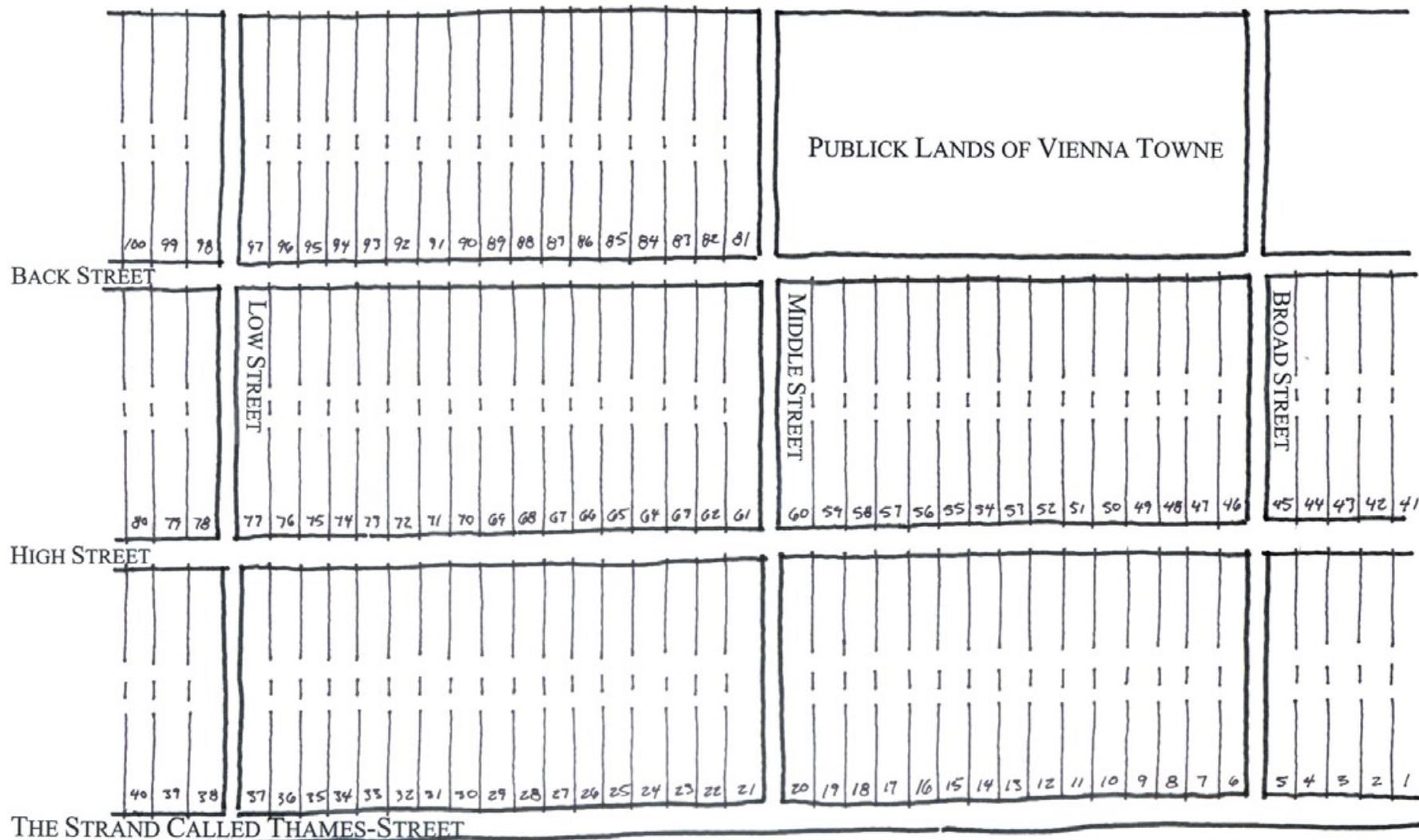
According to Reps, the plan of Vienna is one of the few surviving examples of Maryland’s experiment with wholesale town planning. Reps cites a town development law passed in 1683 and supplemented by additional acts in 1684 and 1686 as precedent for the development of the plan of Vienna. These acts desig-

nated more than 50 sites for new towns, each to be 100 acres in size. The Maryland legislation called for each new town to be “*staked out and devided into Convenient streets, Laines & allies, with Open Space places to be left on which may be Erected Church of Chappell, & Marckett house, or other publick build-ings, & the remaining part of the said One hundred acres of Land as neare as may be into One hundred equall lotts*”.

The original plan of Vienna serves as an important remnant of a long history of colonial town planning in the American colonies, as well as a major influence on the current configuration of the Town.

Vienna’s current block configuration





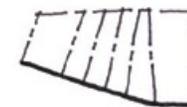
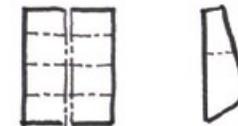
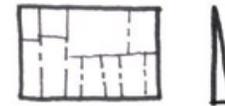
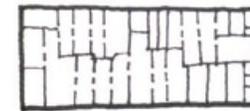
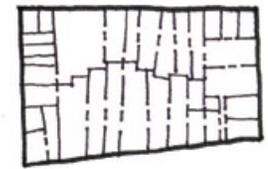
**THE MAPPE OF VIENNA TOWNE ON NANTICOKE RIVER: 1706**

## Road Network and Block Structure

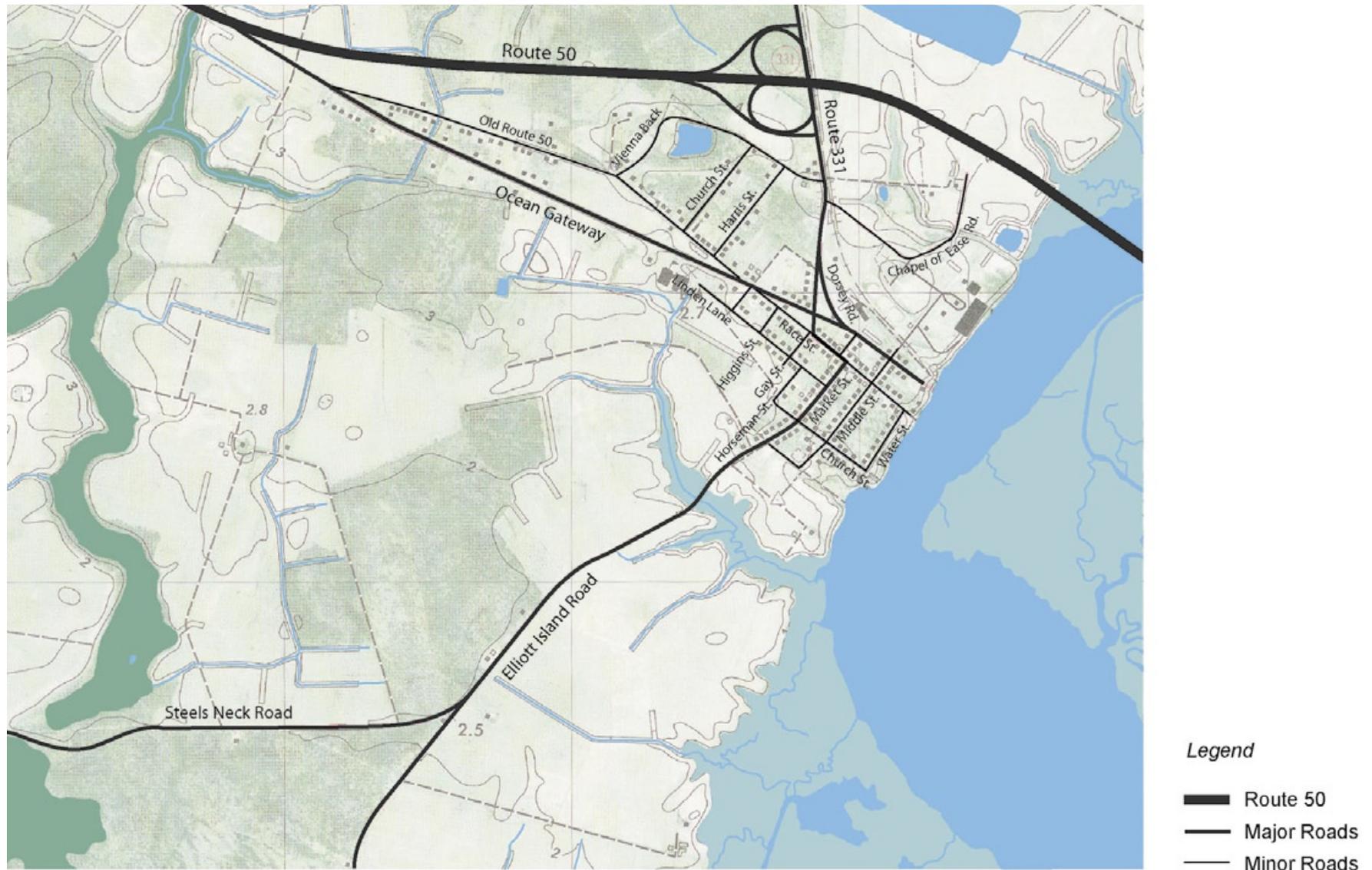
Vienna is easily accessible via Route 50. It lies halfway between Cambridge and Salisbury and is just over two hours from downtown Washington, DC. Vienna still retains much of its original layout created by the plan of 1706, including Market Street, Race Street, Church Street, and Water Street. Though they vary in width and condition, the original streets of Vienna are part of a generally well proportioned, interconnected grid system that provides for walkability, ease of navigation, and efficient circulation. However, the creation and subsequent relocation of Route 50 and Ocean Gateway created several awkward intersections that serve as the major entry points to downtown.

Blocks range in size from approximately three acres to 9 1/2 acres. Within this block structure, lots range from slightly less than 5,000 square feet (0.11 acres) to more than 50,000 square feet (1.15 acres). However, most lots range from 9,000 square feet (0.2 acres) to 16,000 square feet (0.37 acres). Development densities range from approximately 2.7 units per acre to nearly 5 units per acre. In the older sections of town, densities are typically 3.5 to 4.5 units per acre,

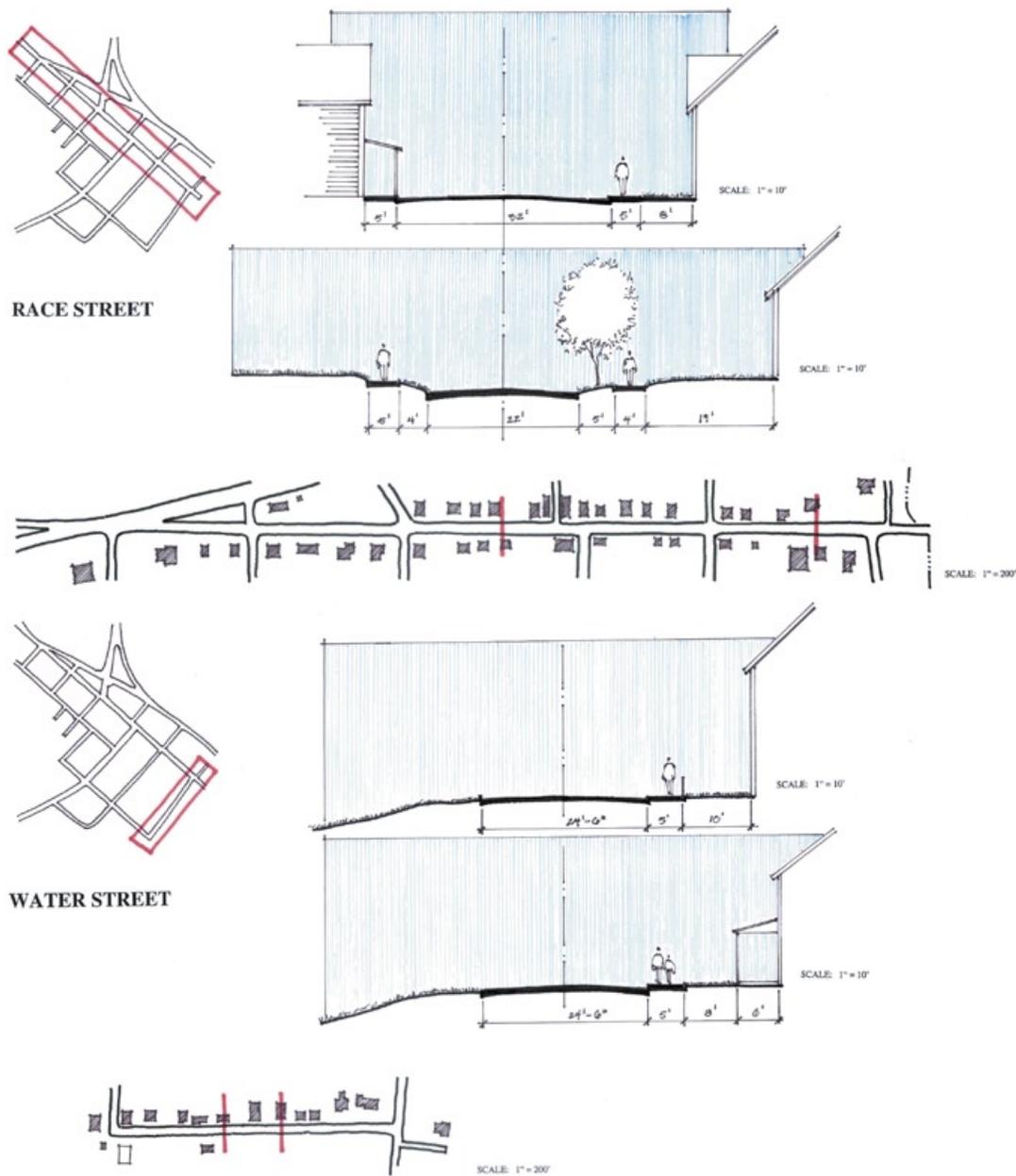
while in newer sections of town densities hover around 2.7 to 3 units per acre. Older lots are typically between 50 and 60 feet wide, although a few lots are as narrow as 30 feet and some are up to 200 feet wide. Some of the newer lots in town are 100 to 110 feet wide, but 50 to 70 feet is a typical width throughout the town. The diversity of lot sizes, setbacks, street widths, architectural styles, and house sizes all contribute to the unique character of Vienna.



*Vienna Block Studies*



## ROAD NETWORK



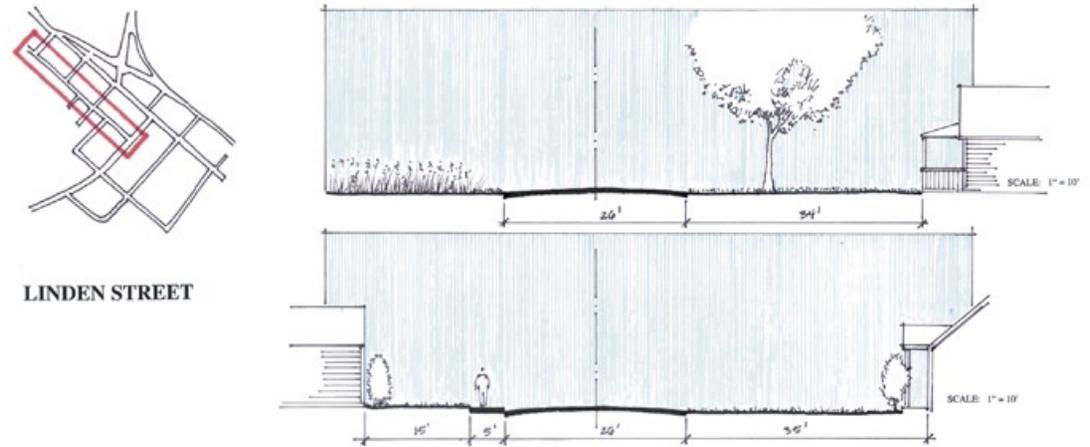
Race Street



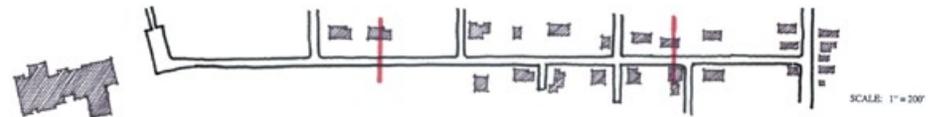
Water Street



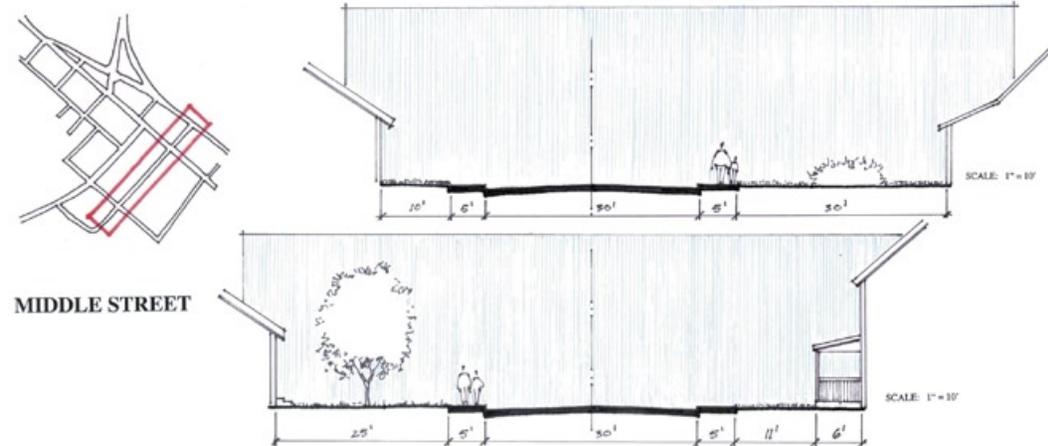
Linden Street



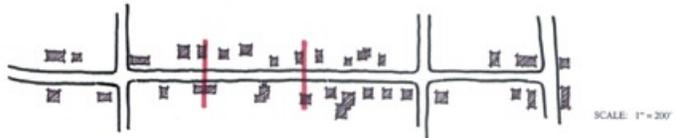
LINDEN STREET



Middle Street



MIDDLE STREET



## Hydrologic Features

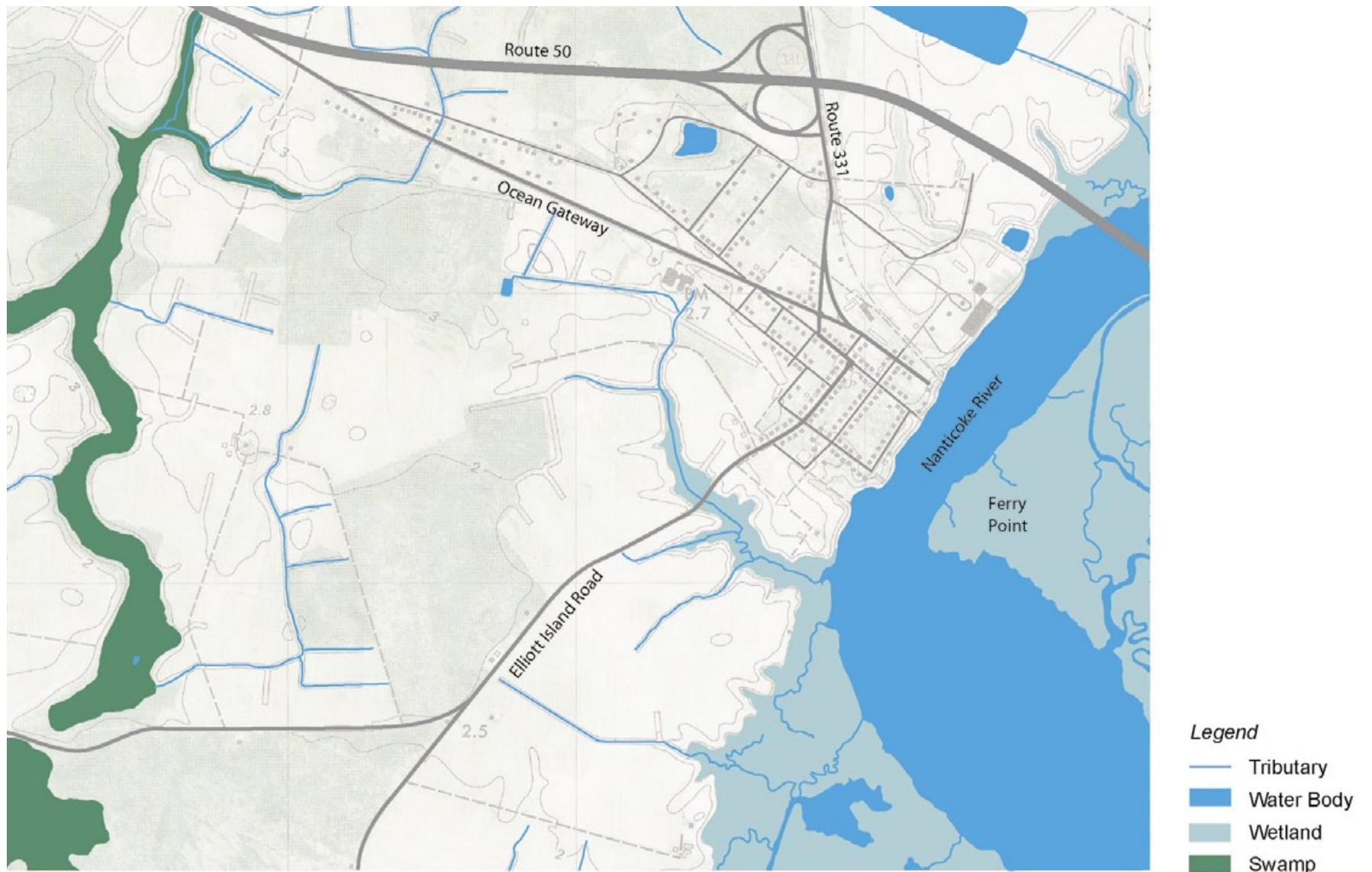
The Town of Vienna is situated on the Nanticoke River, one of the most pristine undeveloped rivers on the eastern shore. In addition to the river, which forms the eastern boundary of the town, Vienna is surrounded by significant hydrological features including tidal and freshwater wetlands, tidal creeks, and woodland swamps. This complex hydrological system represents a tremendous natural asset, but also presents unique challenges, especially given the existing stormwater drainage problems on the west side of Vienna.



*The Nanticoke River is one of the most pristine rivers on the eastern shore.*



*The complex hydrological system in and around Vienna is a tremendous asset.*



## HYDROLOGICAL FEATURES

## Land Cover

Vienna is a compact town of approximately 105-acres. It contains about 140 homes surrounded by agricultural fields, meadows, and woodlands. It has not experienced the suburban sprawl that is characteristic of many communities on the Eastern Shore. Its rural character reflects the agricultural history of the area and contributes to Vienna's quiet, small town setting.

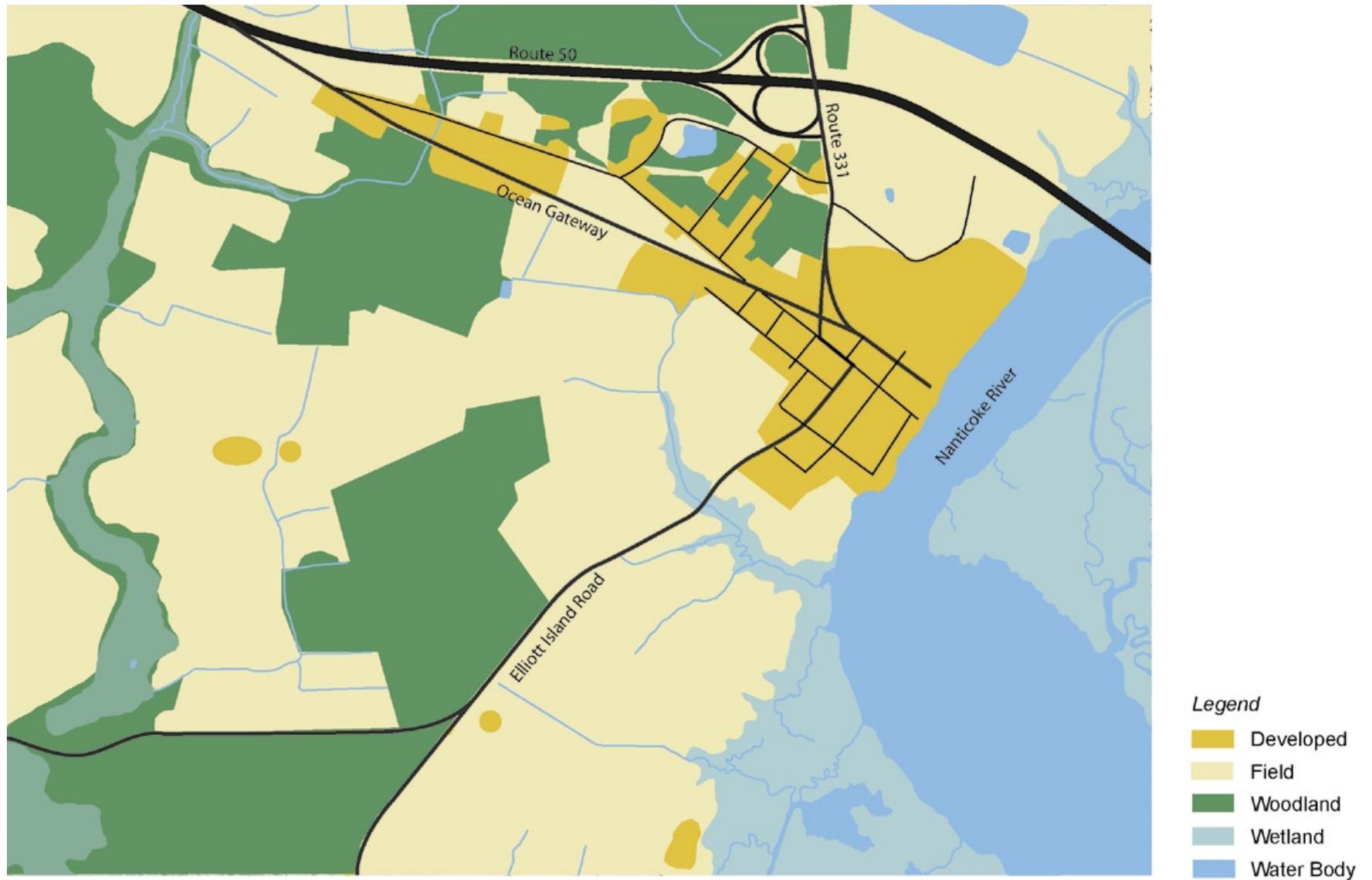
The area immediately northeast of Town is the site of a power plant that was once a major regional employer. The areas to the south and west of town are characterized by the open fields and hedgerows typical of an eastern shore working landscape.

Further south is a tremendous tidal wetland complex that spans both sides of Elliott Island Road - this complex is recognized by most residents as "the edge of town." Beyond the agricultural fields west of town are several large areas of woodlands.

The area north of Ocean Gateway and west of Route 331 is a matrix of woodlands, fields and developed properties. Immediately east of town is the Nanticoke River itself and a spectacular complex of tidal wetlands.



*Woodlands beyond agricultural land, west of town.*



## LAND COVER

## Community Facilities

The Town of Vienna once had a thriving downtown commercial district, complete with a grocery store, gas stations, an opera house, and several small retail shops. With changes in the local economy, including the steady decline of local fishing and Vienna's waterfront commerce, multiple relocations of Route 50, and automation of the power plant, much of Vienna's original commercial fabric has disappeared.

In recent years, however, Vienna has experienced a small revival. Abandoned and dilapidated buildings have been torn down, several new houses have been constructed, several historic buildings have been renovated and a few new businesses have opened. New commercial establishments include a new laundry and beauty shop. Community facilities have also been improved. A children's playground and picnic pavilion were constructed near the Town Hall, a waterfront boardwalk and wetland restoration project were completed along the Nanticoke River and the Vienna Heritage Museum opened near the intersection of Market and Race Streets. These facilities combined with the Town's long history, rich heritage, and

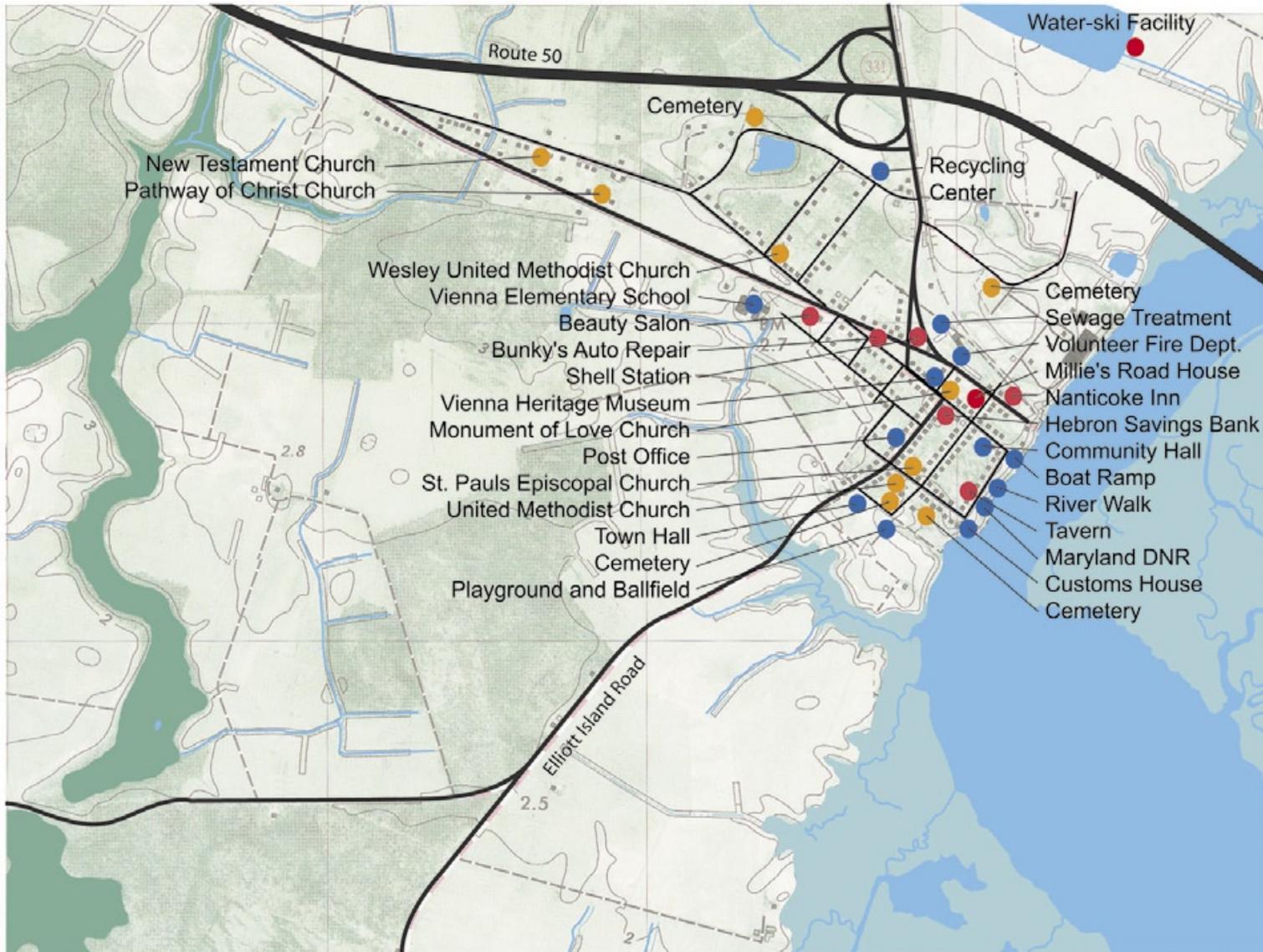
many religious institutions, establish a solid base upon which to build Vienna's future.



*Vienna Heritage Museum on Race Street*



*Vienna Elementary School*



- Legend*
- Community Facility
  - Religious Facility
  - Commercial Facility

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## Regulatory Context

### *State Regulations*

Under Maryland's Smart Growth Act, the sewer and water district served by Vienna has been identified as a Priority Funding Area (PFA) is eligible for special State funding grants.

### *County Zoning*

The majority of the study area under Dorchester County Zoning is designated as an Agricultural Conservation District (AC), which typically allows one unit per fifteen acres. A large area has been designated as a Suburban Residential District (SR) permitting four units per acre. The Neighborhood Business (B-1) and General Business (B-2) Districts permit commercial development and the Light Industrial (I-1) and Heavy Industrial (I-2) district permit industrial uses.

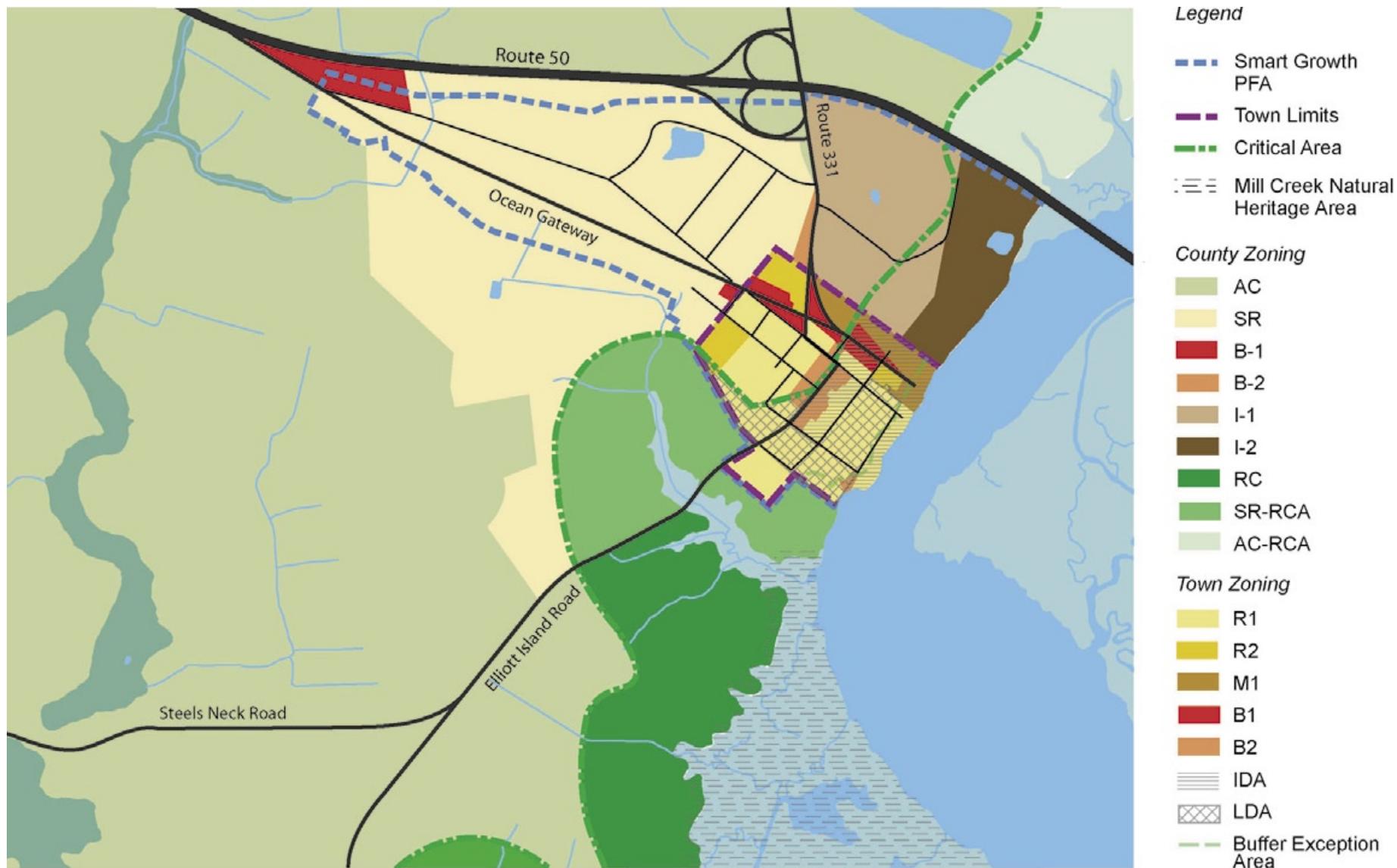
Land within the Critical Area Zone (defined as land within 1,000 feet of tidal water) is categorized as part of an Agricultural Conservation Resource Conservation Area (AC-RCA), Resource Conservation (RC) or Suburban Residential Resource Conservation Area (SR-RCA) District - each permitting one residential

unit per twenty acres. The County may grant a special growth allocation of four units per acre within the SR-RCA if water and sewer service is available.

### *Town Zoning*

Under Town zoning, single family residential, agriculture, and park uses are permitted throughout Residential Limited (R1) and Residential General (R2) areas, as well as within Business Neighborhood (B2) and Industrial General (M1). Special exemptions are required for multifamily housing, light industrial uses and special structures, such as churches.

Land within the Critical Area Zone is designated as part of a Limited Development Area (LDA) or Intensive Development Area (IDA). The LDA permits four units per acre with environmental mitigation and the IDA permits unlimited commercial and industrial development. While zoned as part of the Town, permits within this zone are regulated by Dorchester County.



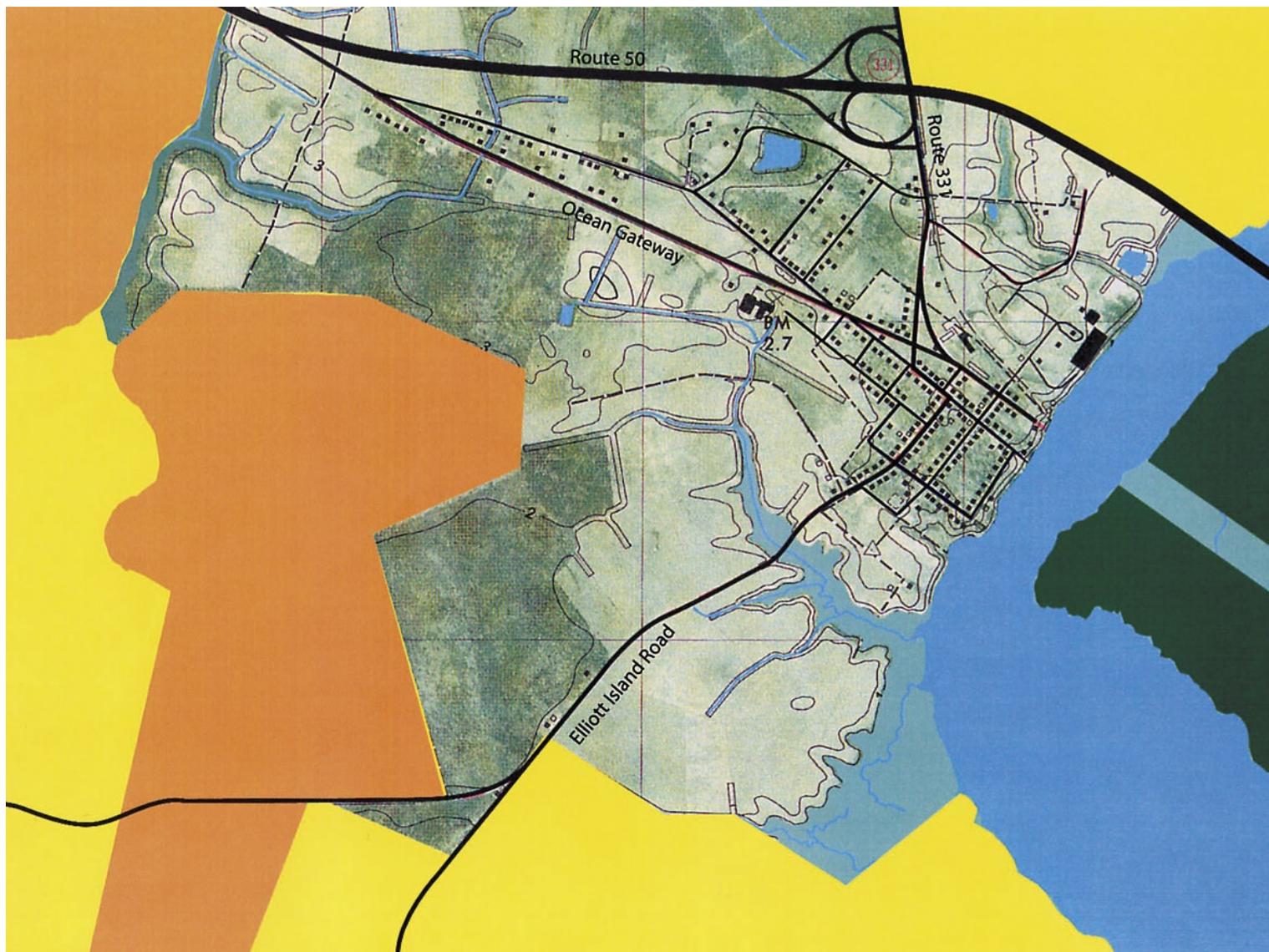
## REGULATORY CONTEXT

## Land Protection

Efforts are underway to protect 21,000 acres of privately-owned farmland in the region surrounding the Town of Vienna as part of the Nanticoke Rural Legacy Area (RLA). A joint proposal from The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, and Dorchester County was submitted to MD DNR in January 2001. Seeking \$2 million in funding for easement acquisition, the application received letters of support from Dorchester County Commissioners, the County Planning Commission, the County Agricultural Land Preservation Board, the Town of Vienna, Maryland Environmental Trust, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and MD State Delegate Addie Eckardt. The Nanticoke RLA was approved and received Rural Legacy funding in 2001. To date, two tracts west of town have been protected by conservation easement. Several other tracts are under negotiation.

In addition to the Rural Legacy program, there are several other land protection efforts underway around Vienna. The wetlands of Ferry Point, located directly across the Nanticoke River from the

Town, have been purchased and are now protected and managed by The Nature Conservancy. The Mill Creek Natural Heritage Area is located directly south of Town along the western shore of the Nanticoke.



*Legend*

-  Protected by Easement
-  Protection Proposed Under Rural Legacy Program
-  Owned by The Nature Conservancy

**LAND PROTECTION**

## Visual Quality

The visual quality of the area surrounding Vienna is quite extraordinary. Characterized by working farms, vernacular architecture, and pristine wetlands, the flat, open nature of this classic Eastern Shore landscape provides long vistas of the river and distant woodlands. Vienna's rural identity is rooted in this landscape and the connection of residents and visitors alike to the natural and agricultural environment surrounding the Town. Therefore, much of the surrounding landscape has been classified as high quality scenic landscape.

Areas of moderate visual quality are located along Ocean Gateway and Route 331 - the primary entrances to Town. These areas are generally attractive, but could be improved with landscape and streetscape treatments, such as tree plantings, lighting, and signage.

The power plant and sewage treatment plant are the only areas with low visual quality. The power plant dominates views of the Town from Route 50. It also provides an unsightly backdrop from some locations within the Town. Fortunately, despite its dominant physical presence, the power plant is remarkably

invisible from many locations within the Town itself. There are opportunities to plant trees and shrubs and create visual buffers to further mitigate the adverse visual effects of the power plant.

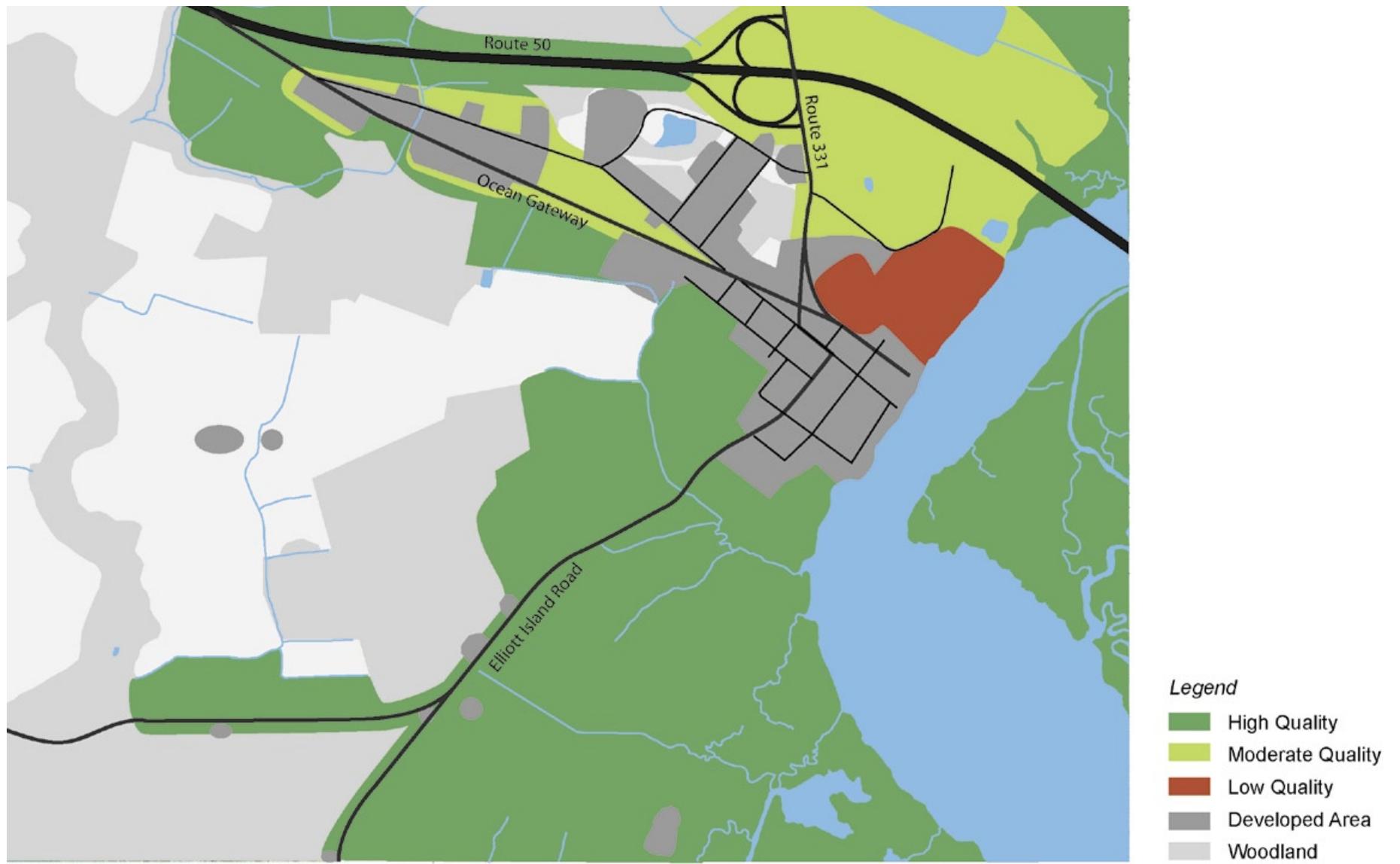
The sewage treatment plant and fire station can be seen from both Ocean Gateway and Route 331, creating a marginal first impression of Vienna from the Town's major entrance roads. Again, there are opportunities to buffer the views and create an appealing gateway experience.



*Scenic farmland surrounding the Town*



*The power plant to the northeast of the Town*



## VISUAL QUALITY

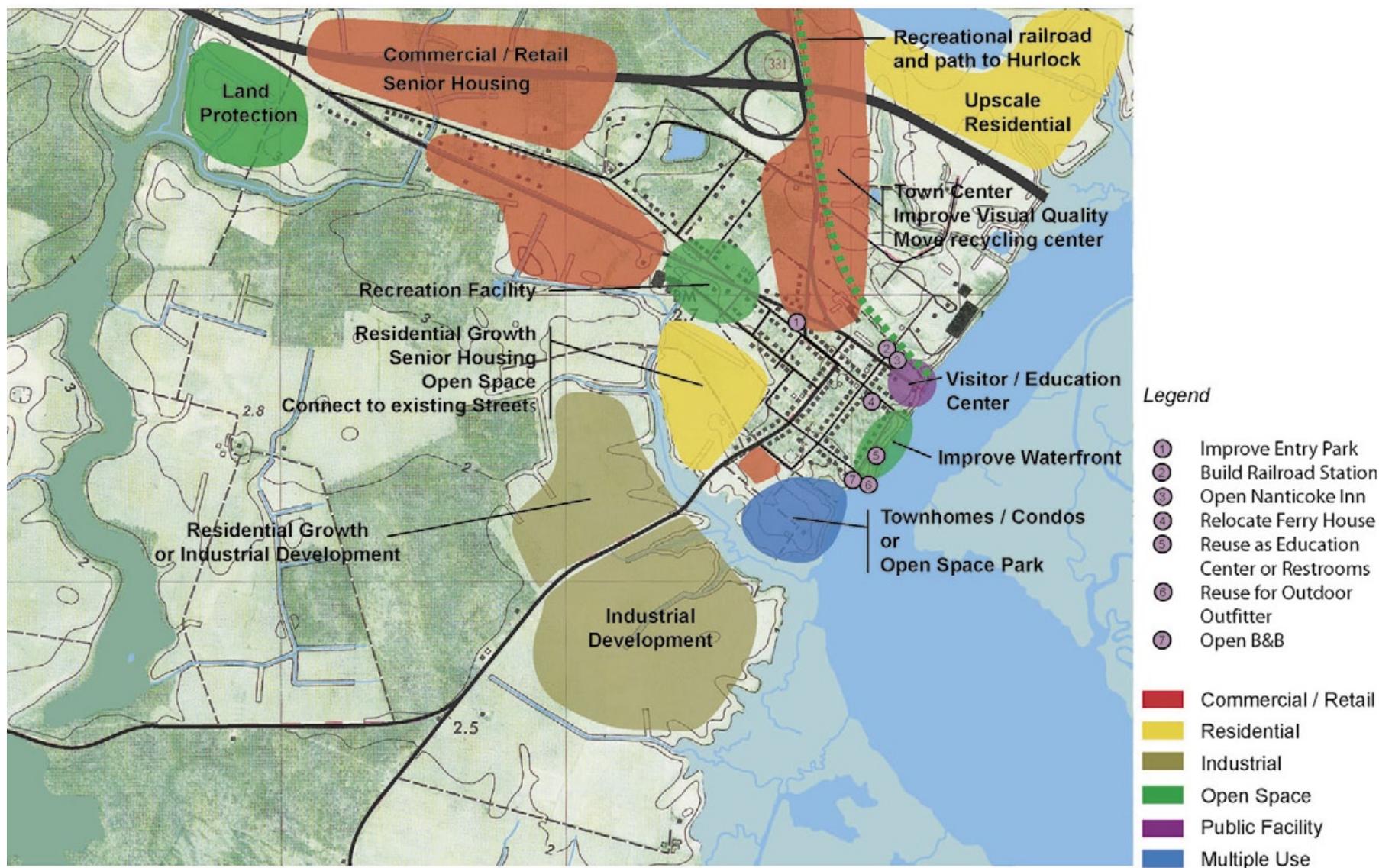
## COMMUNITY NEEDS

In preparation for the Comprehensive Plan Update, Vienna's Town Council asked the Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE) at Salisbury University to survey Vienna's residents to better understand their opinions and attitudes as they consider the Town's future. The Conservation Fund supplemented this survey through community interviews with individuals and small groups of residents.

### PACE Citizen Opinion Survey

PACE interviewed 110 residents, approximately half of Vienna's adult population. The following points summarize some of their preliminary findings:

- Residents like Vienna because it is a **quiet, safe, small town** with **friendly people**.
- People **dislike** the **lack of close-by stores, condition of streets and sidewalks, condition of some buildings** and the **quality of drinking water** in Vienna.
- In choosing a new business for Vienna, the majority of residents would like a **grocery store** as their first choice and a **drug store** or a **hardware lumber store** as their second choice.
- Almost all of the residents believe that it is important or very important for Vienna to retain its **small town charm**.
- Approximately half the respondents support **low to moderate growth** that would attract new residents through the construction of residential developments and the encouragement of more retail stores, while the rest were split between no to low growth and moderate to high growth.
- Highest priority for Town programs was given to: **improve job opportunities, improve Town's infrastructure** such as sidewalks and streets, **remove/renovate old buildings** and **encourage protection of farmland and open space**.
- People believe there is a **need** for **moderately priced, senior** and **affordable housing**.



## COMMUNITY IDEAS

## Community Interviews

The Conservation Fund interviewed 29 community members, including 14 born in Vienna, seven who moved here long ago, five who moved here within the past 10 years, and three who work in Vienna and live elsewhere.

- People value most the **small town character, quiet setting, friendly people** and **location** of Vienna.
- People **dislike** most the **lack of services and amenities** and the **rundown properties** in Vienna.
- There is overwhelming consensus in town to **attract new, young people** and **provide activities for youth**.
- The major **challenge** facing Vienna is how to **accommodate growth, while maintaining its small town character**.
- In 20 years, people want to see commercial growth with a **grocery, drug store,** and **upscale restaurant**.
- People want community facilities such as a **pavilion, trails, boat docks, improved waterfront,** and **medical clinic**.
- People believe there is a **significant need** for **senior** and **affordable housing**.
- Most people believe that **growth is coming** and the community should prepare for it.

- Vienna should capitalize on the River and its history to **promote tourism**.
- Most residents believe that **farms, rivers, and wetlands** surrounding Vienna **should be protected**.



People like Vienna's small town character.

## NOTICE:

# Vienna Community Vision Plan



### *You are invited to help shape the future of Vienna.*

In preparation for the 5-year update of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Vienna is developing a Community Vision Plan to define how Vienna will grow over the next twenty years. Please come give your ideas and help us refine the plan for our future. Your contributions are critical to creating a sound vision that will strengthen our community and improve the quality of our lives.

**COMMUNITY HALL  
RACE STREET, VIENNA  
OCTOBER 2, 2002 7:00 PM**

## VISION ALTERNATIVES

Based on the physical assessment of the Town and the community interviews, The Conservation Fund prepared four alternative development scenarios illustrating options for how Vienna can change in the future. The scenarios, shown on the following pages, were titled "Build Out," "Historic Village," "Commercial Center," and "Town Green." They were presented to the community on October 2, 2002.

## Alternative 1: Build Out

To provide community members with a snapshot representation of permissible land uses and all current development opportunities within Vienna, a review and assessment of existing zoning regulations was conducted. Alternative 1 illustrates the maximum build out potential based on current zoning. While it is only representative of what could happen and it is unlikely that all of the units shown would be approved and/or constructed, this scenario accurately depicts the current potential for growth.

### *Economic Development*

Significant strip commercial (50 units) and industrial development (100 units) is located near Route 50 and near Ocean Gateway.

### *Residential Development*

Sprawling residential development includes over 1200 units of tract housing absorbing much of the agricultural lands west and southwest of town.

### *Recreational Facilities and Tourism Enhancements*

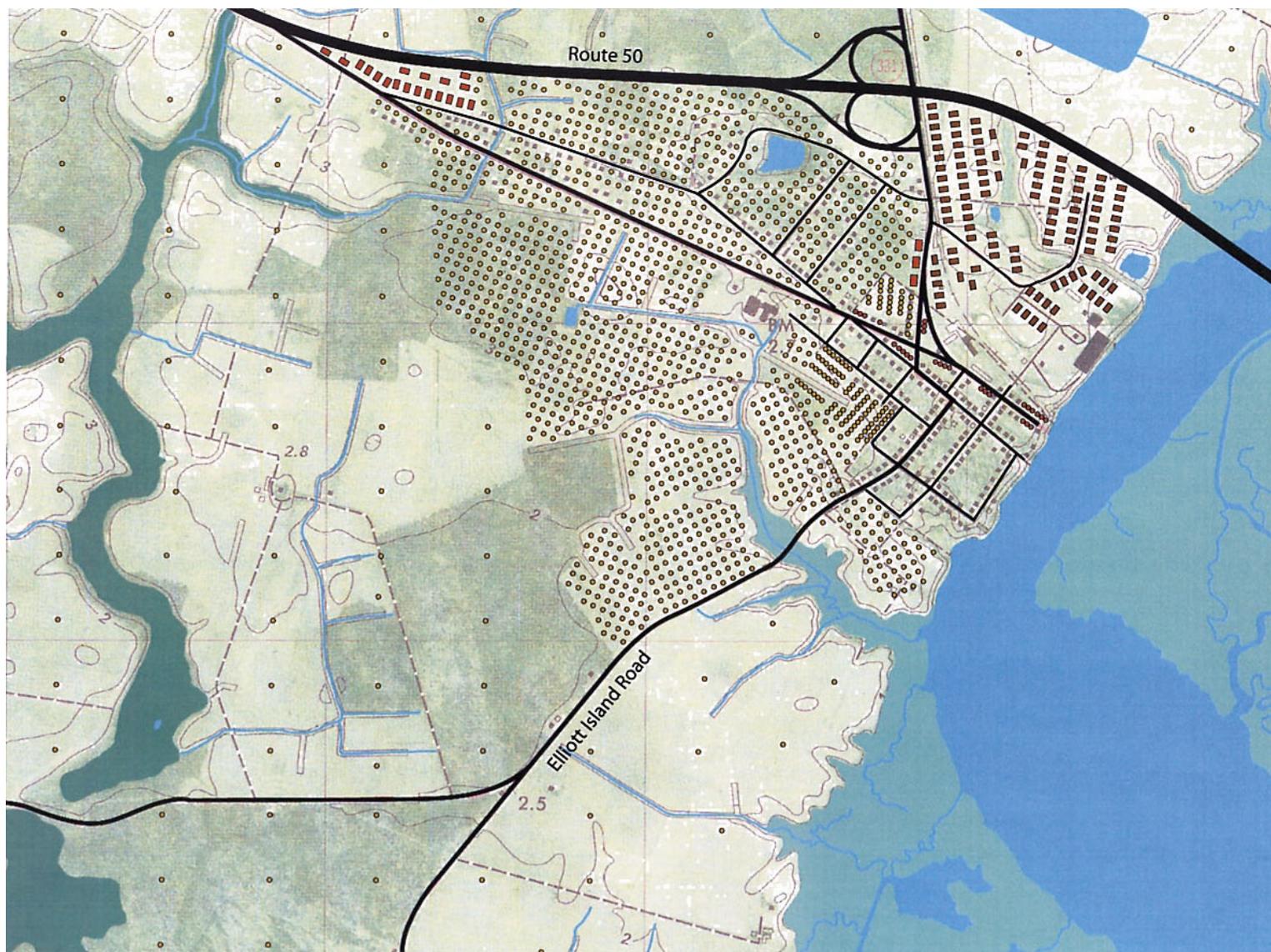
Waterfront improvements including boat docks and tree plantings are installed at the waterfront park. No additional recreational facilities or other community amenities are developed.

### *Infrastructure Improvements*

Town boundaries remain the same and no additional land protection efforts are undertaken.



**Case Study:** As part of the plan for Cooks Hope, Maryland, land is set aside as protected working farmland. There are also several on-site ponds and restored wetlands that form the backdrop for residential development, such as the multifamily housing shown here.



- Legend*
- House
  - Town Commercial
  - County Commercial
  - Industrial

### ALTERNATIVE 1: BUILD OUT

## Alternative 2: Historic Village

Alternative 2 is designed to preserve the historic character and setting of Vienna while accommodating limited residential and commercial growth. New development is concentrated within currently developed parts of town. The addition of a few modest amenities adds to the quaint appeal of Vienna.

### *Economic Development*

Concentrating on the existing center at Market Street, 5-6 small commercial businesses are established. These may include a country store, an antique store, a seasonal cafe or an ice cream shop. The new businesses provide approximately 20 new jobs.

### *Residential Development*

Infill residential development is emphasized throughout the existing Town. Limited residential growth is located to the southwest.

### *Recreational Facilities*

The river walk is extended from the waterfront to reach the ball field and playground. Improvements to the wa-

terfront park include benches, trees and signage. A fishing pier provides the community with better access to the Nanticoke River.

### *Tourism Enhancements*

A small Interpretive Center is established on the waterfront park to provide information on local heritage and river life. Public restrooms and designated parking for public events are provided for tourists. The train to Hurlock is re-activated. A public rail-trail is developed on the old the railroad line. Plaques are placed on historic buildings.

### *Infrastructure Improvements*

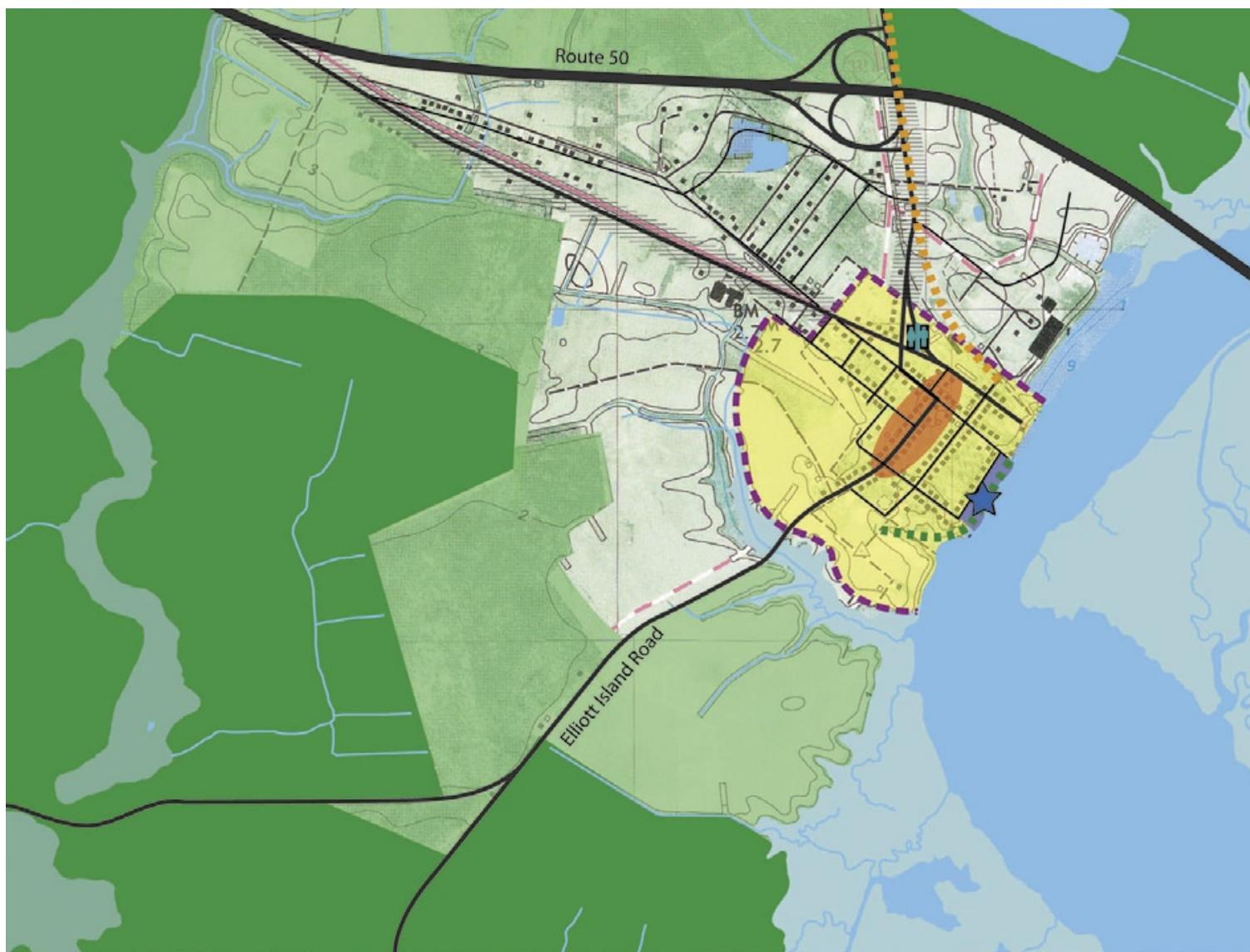
Market Street is extended north, lengthening the Town core. Abandoned and dilapidated properties in Town are improved. Improvements to the streetscape, including pavement repairs, sidewalks and better signage, are made throughout the Town. Limited areas to the southwest and west of Town are protected from further development. The Town boundaries are expanded slightly to the southwest.



**Case Study:** A refurbished train depot in Hurlock, Maryland serves as an important piece of the town's civic infrastructure. Vienna's old train station could be brought back to create a recreational rail connection to Hurlock and a rail-trail as part of the Town's green infrastructure.



The old ferry house can be relocated back to the waterfront to be interpreted as part of the Town's history.



*Legend*

-  Rural Legacy Area
-  Additional Land Protection
-  Public Restrooms
-  Commercial
-  Park Improvements
-  Interpretive Center
-  Residential
-  Town Boundary
-  River Walk
-  Railroad
-  Visual Improvements

**ALTERNATIVE 2: HISTORIC VILLAGE**

### **Alternative 3: Commercial Center**

Alternative 3 focuses on attracting new residential and commercial development, enhancing community amenities, and drawing tourists to the Town from Route 50. State land conservation priorities are protected by creating a band of open space around the Town.

#### *Economic Development*

A new commercial center is developed around the junction of Ocean Gateway and Route 331. New businesses may include a grocery store, a drug store, a hardware store or cleaning services. Light industrial businesses are located near the commercial center. Approximately 20-50 jobs are created.

#### *Residential Development*

New residential development is situated along Ocean Gateway and Old Route 50 and southwest of the existing Town core. New waterfront housing is located south of Town.

#### *Recreational Facilities*

The waterfront park is improved with landscaping, picnic tables, a pavilion,

and additional signage. A loop trail encircling Town and the Commercial Center links the commercial center, the waterfront, school, ball field and the new Recreational Facility located west of Town. The ball field is outfitted with stadium lights to promote evening games.

#### *Tourism Enhancements*

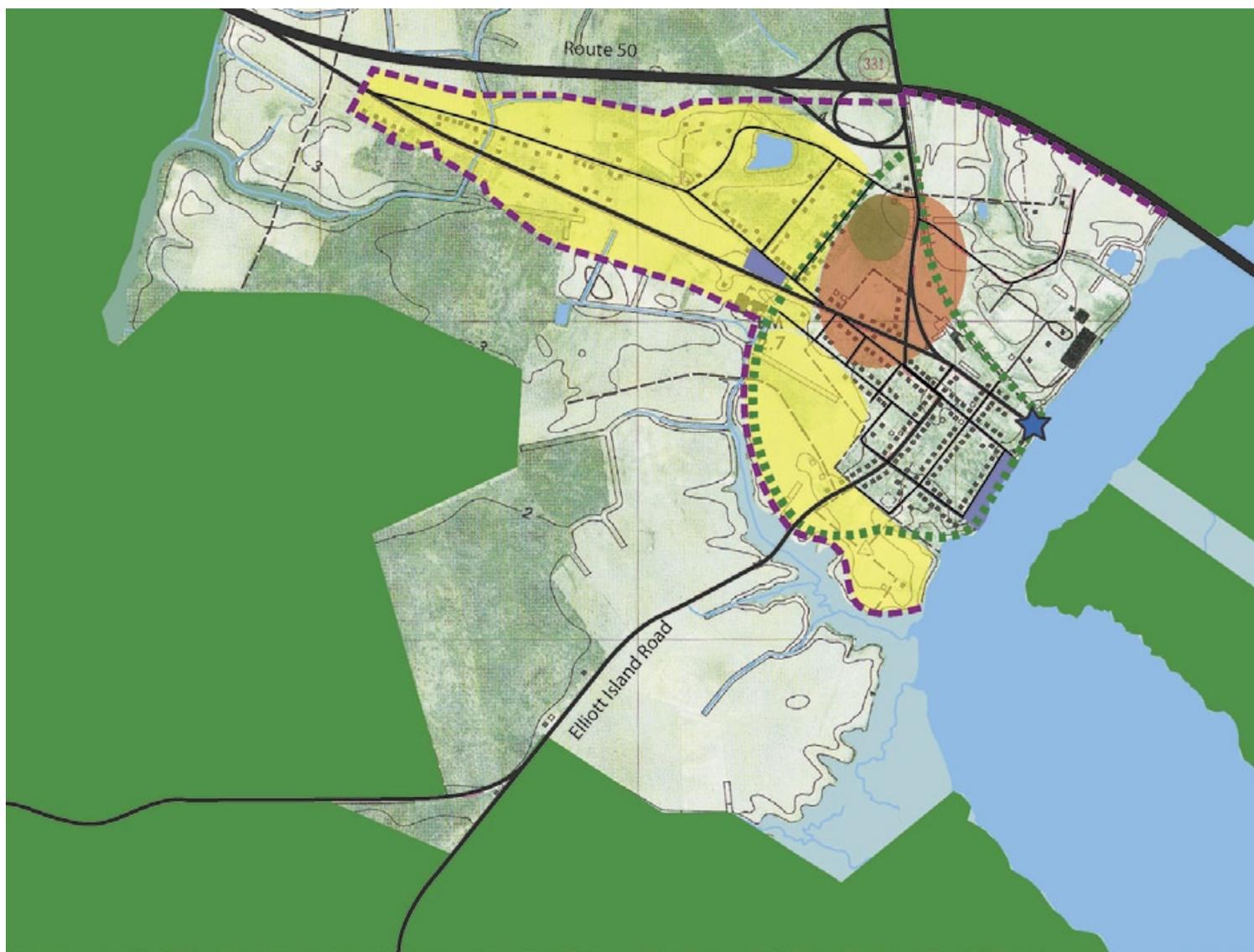
A new Interpretive Center focuses on regional heritage and natural resources. A small marina is added along the waterfront, providing boat tours and increased access to the Nanticoke. The local museum and visitor facilities are expanded and made available seven days a week.

#### *Infrastructure Improvements*

The Vienna Town Recycling Center is moved from the entrance to Town. Streets are extended from the existing street grid to accommodate new commercial and residential growth. Land within the Rural Legacy Area is protected. The Town boundaries are extended to the designated Smart Growth Priority Funding Area in order to capitalize on State infrastructure funding.



*This church on Church Street is part of a network of important community facilities.*



- Legend**
- Rural Legacy Area
  - Commercial
  - Interpretive Center
  - Residential
  - Town Boundary
  - Light Industrial
  - Loop Trail
  - Park / Recreation Facility

### ALTERNATIVE 3: COMMERCIAL CENTER

## Alternative 4: Town Green

Alternate 4 establishes Vienna as a model conservation-oriented waterfront community with a new Civic and Commercial Center surrounding a Town Green. Significant recreational and visitor activities attract new commercial development, residents and an active tourist industry.

### *Economic Development*

Civic and commercial uses include an upscale restaurant, a grocery store, retail gift and clothing shops, daycare facilities, a bookstore or a medical clinic, as well as a new Town Hall and a library. A light industrial park is established on the north side of Town. New development is estimated to create more than 50 jobs.

### *Residential Development*

Clusters of residential development surrounded by open space are located south, west and north of Town. New residential development includes elderly, affordable and rental housing.

### *Recreational Facilities*

A new trail network links residential areas to the Waterfront, the Civic/Commercial

Center, and recreational areas, including a new recreational facility located near the Elementary School. Improvements to the school playground and new summer programs provide additional recreational opportunities for youth. Boat docks are constructed on the Waterfront.

### *Tourism Enhancements*

A Regional Interpretive Center focuses on local history, the heritage of the working waterfront, the Nanticoke River watershed, water quality, and restoration. The Nanticoke Inn Museum of Nanticoke Folklore is reopened. A seasonal outdoor outfitter supports recreational activities on the Nanticoke. An annual Town Carnival highlights the rich heritage of Vienna as Gateway to the Chesapeake.

### *Infrastructure Improvements*

Wetlands are restored and improvements are made to the stormwater system. Land protection is focused on the Rural Legacy Area and natural systems surrounding the Town. Bordered by protected land, the Town expands to incorporate new growth.



**Case Study:** *The Village Green at Hidden Springs in Boise, Idaho, is surrounded by residential development on two sides and commercial, retail, and civic uses on the other two sides.*



**Case Study:** *Built in the first phase of the Hidden Springs, this post office/general store/ice cream parlor faces the village green, which functions as a community gathering place and backdrop for seasonal events.*



### ALTERNATIVE 4: TOWN GREEN

## Community Input

At the October 2nd meeting, consensus emerged around several core issues as outlined below:

- The community supports **residential and commercial growth**
- **New residential neighborhoods** should be located in discrete areas surrounded by **open space**
- A **diversity of housing types** should be offered
- **Market Street** should be preserved and maintained as an **historic commercial district**
- The Town boundaries should eventually be expanded to include the **area west of Vienna**
- Recreation and interpretive opportunities should be developed on the **waterfront**
- An open space **trail network** should be established through and around the Town
- A **recreation facility** should be located near the school

Based on these core issues and specific feedback on the four alternative visions, The Conservation Fund drafted more specific objectives for each of the four original goals, shown on the following pages.



*Recreation and interpretive opportunities should be developed on the waterfront.*



**Alternative 3: Commercial Center**  
Vienna Community Vision Plan



**COMMUNITY INPUT**

**GOAL #1: Accommodate future growth and appropriate economic development while maintaining the small town character and setting of Vienna**

**Objectives:**

**A. Locate **commercial** and light manufacturing in appropriate areas**

- Concentrate new commercial development between Route 331 and Ocean Gateway
- Identify potential sites for commercial infill along Market Street
- Locate light manufacturing on the west side of Route 331
- Locate tourism-oriented businesses, such as restaurants or gift shops, on Ocean Gateway near the Nanticoke River

**B. Encourage development of **residential** “pods” integrated with open space**

- Create residential zones west and southwest of town
- Encourage residential development that includes open space and is integrated into the existing town fabric
- Encourage development of elderly, affordable and rental housing

**C. Expand and improve **infrastructure** systems**

- Modify and extend existing streets, such as Market Street and Church Street, to link to new development
- Make improvements to stormwater management system
- Improve and expand sidewalks, add streetlights and street trees
- Create new streets to integrate areas west and south of Vienna into existing community

**GOAL #2: *Enhance quality of life in Vienna by providing community amenities for residents and visitors***

**Objectives:**

**D. Create a new **civic center****

- Locate new buildings such as a Town Hall, Library, and / or Day Care around a new Town Green
- Create appropriate streetscape on streets adjacent to the Town Green

**E. Improve “**Gateways**”**

- Enhance intersections at entrances to Town (planting, signage, etc.)
- Improve streetscapes of streets leading into Town
- Create signage to direct visitors to downtown and waterfront

**F. Expand **recreational** opportunities for residents and visitors**

- Develop a new open space trail network, including land, water and railroad trails
- Develop a new recreation center near school and Town Green with ball field, basketball and tennis courts
- Open seasonal outdoor outfitter on the waterfront

**GOAL #3: *Enhance and protect the significant cultural and natural resources within Vienna and the surrounding area***

**Objectives:**

**G. Protect and interpret the **historic Market Street** area**

- Study feasibility of establishing a historic district
- Update town walking tour and develop historic building tours
- Place plaques on historic buildings

**H. Make the **waterfront** a destination for residents and visitors**

- Activate the waterfront park with picnic tables, benches, improved plantings and signage
- Develop a Discovery Center focusing on local history, Nanticoke River watershed, water quality, and restoration techniques
- Interpret the heritage of the working waterfront through signage, landscape installations, and historic artifacts
- Provide dock facilities

**I. Improve and interpret the **natural environment****

- Encourage ecological restoration of wetlands
- Extend waterfront boardwalk to provide access to wetland and other natural areas

**GOAL #4: *Maintain the rural legacy of the Vienna area by protecting significant scenic vistas, farms and forests surrounding the Town***

**Objectives:**

**J. Protect important **scenic land** surrounding the Town**

- Pursue priority protection areas identified under Rural Legacy
- Expand area for protection through easements, management agreements, design standards, etc.
- Encourage landowners to find conservation-based development alternatives for accommodating growth while protecting resources

**K. Protect and enhance nearby **farmlands** and **forests****

- Encourage and support Vienna's heritage of working landscapes - farms, woodlands, waterways.
- Encourage use of sustainable forestry techniques
- Encourage wildlife habitat enhancements in woodlands and around farmfields

## COMMUNITY VISION

Based on the physical assessment of the Town, community interviews, and the outcome of the October 2nd meeting, The Conservation Fund prepared the Community Vision Plan - an expression of the goals and objectives expressed by the community.

### Vienna Community Vision Plan

Vienna is envisioned as a gateway to the Nanticoke River and a model conservation-oriented community that respects its heritage while planning for the future.

#### *Tourism Center*

A new Discovery Center focusing on local history, the heritage of the working waterfront, the Nanticoke River watershed, water quality, and restoration will be constructed at the end of Ocean Gateway as an anchor to the Waterfront Park. A seasonal outfitter housed in the steamboat warehouse at the other end of the park will support canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and river tours. Other tourist activities will be located near the Discovery Center on Ocean Gateway,

including a recreational railroad and railroad station, the Nanticoke Inn or other upscale restaurants, a new bed and breakfast, and the newly expanded museum. The ferry house will be moved back to its original location to be interpreted as part of the waterfront history. Plaques will identify historic buildings within the Town core.

#### *Market Street*

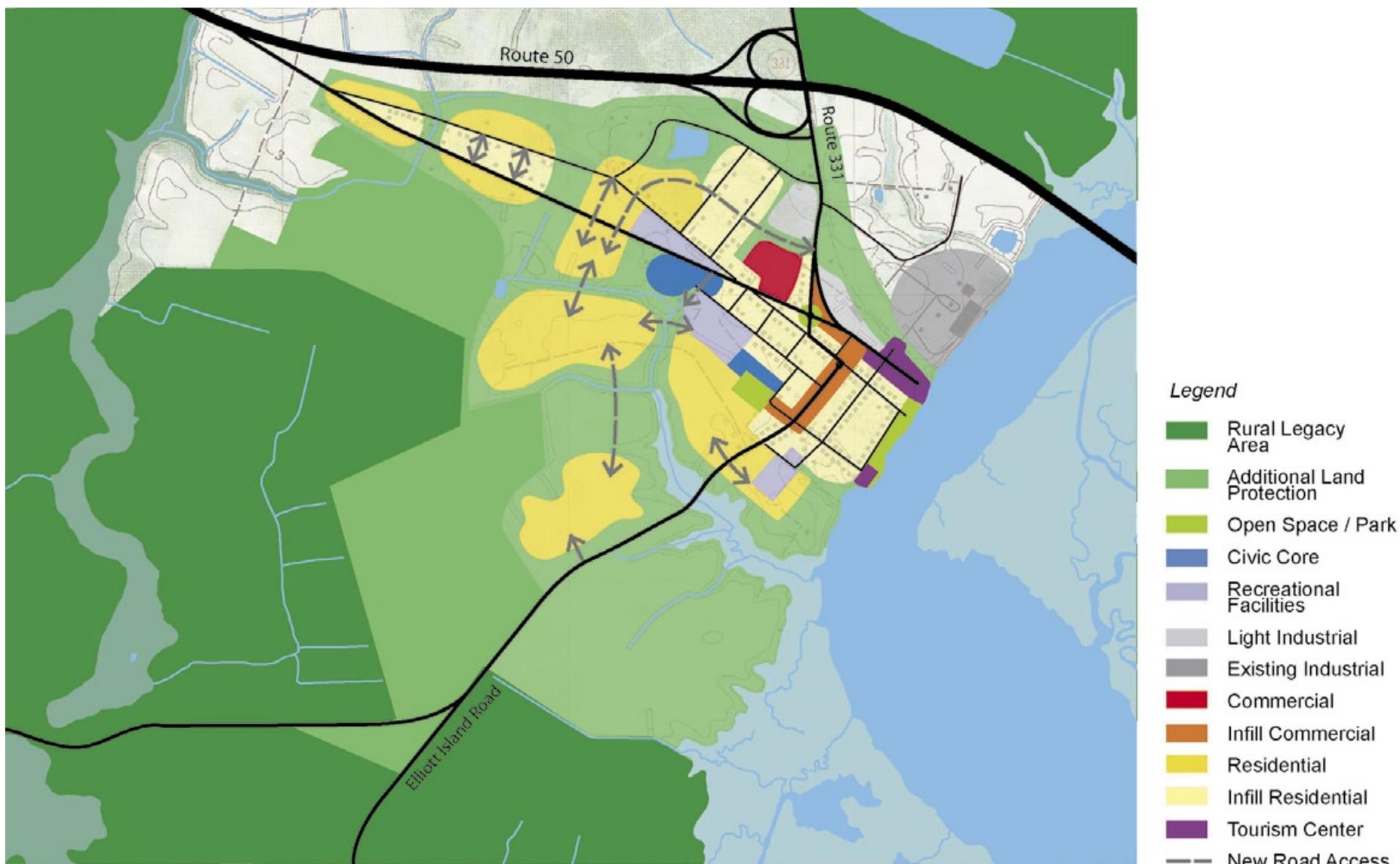
Market Street will become the “Main Street” of Vienna, with small shops and restaurants housed in historic buildings. New uses may include antique shops, a cafe, a bookstore, retail gift and clothing shops, and a barber shop.



**Case Study:** *Prairie Crossing*, a 678-acre conservation development located northwest of Chicago, has nearly 70% of the land set aside as permanently protected open space, including a 20-acre lake and wetland system.



**Case Study:** *An integrated system of regional trails connects Prairie Crossing to the Liberty Prairie Reserve and the train station. Local trails connect residential development to the school, community center, and village green.*



### VISION PLAN: A MODEL CHESAPEAKE COMMUNITY

### *Ocean Gateway Commercial Center*

A new commercial center that is accessible from Route 50 will be created north of Ocean Gateway. The commercial center will include larger retailers, such as a grocery store, a drug store, a hardware store, and fast food franchises. A light industrial park with three to five business, such as a box making factory, shipping company, or assembly plant, will be located north of the commercial center and west of Route 331.

### *Residential Development*

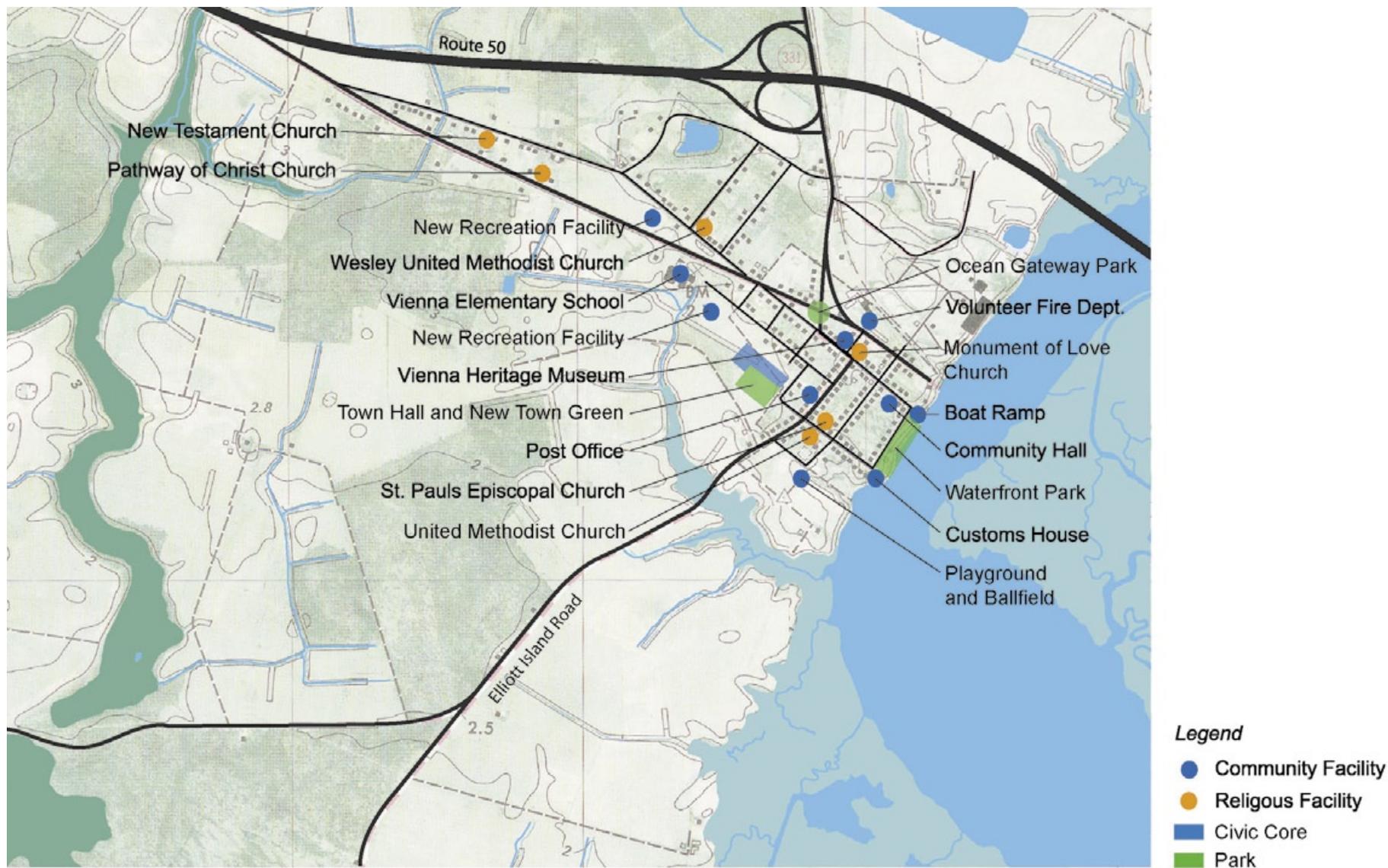
New residential development will be focused southwest and west of Town, and infill development will be emphasized within the existing Town and in the area west of Vienna. Streets will be extended beyond the existing street grid to integrate new residential development. Housing that is affordable, senior housing, and rental housing will be encouraged. New housing will be integrated with open space and connected to community amenities.

### *Civic Infrastructure*

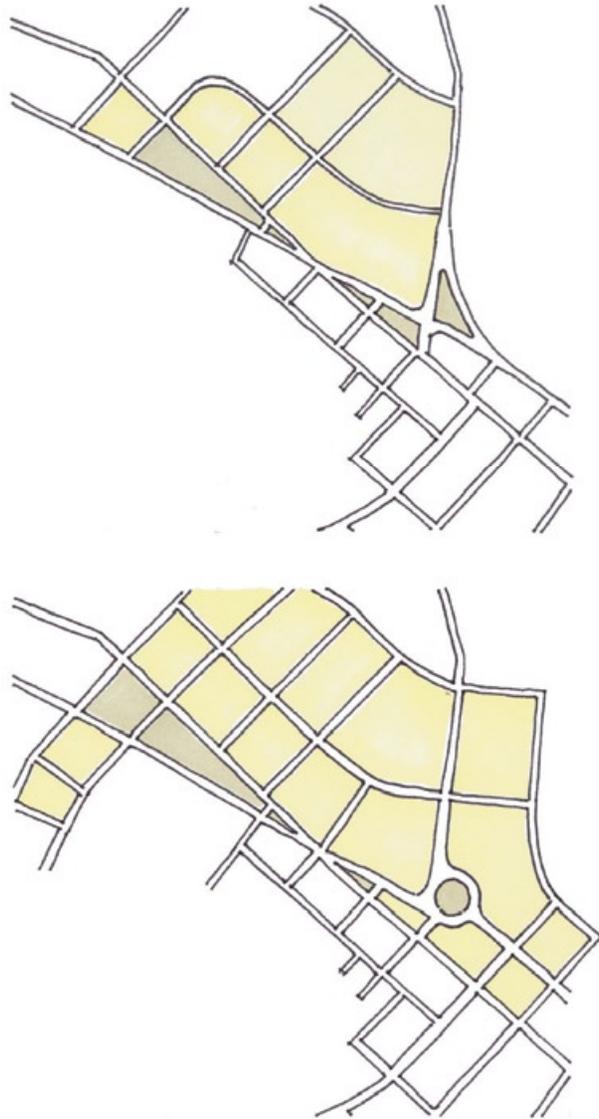
Vienna has an important existing network of public and semi-public facilities that make up the Town's civic infrastructure, including the school, churches, and parks. The civic infrastructure network will be supported by new recreational facilities and improvements to the Waterfront Park. The Town's major gateway at the intersection of Ocean Gateway and Route 331 will be reconfigured to create a new park and new development opportunities. A civic center developed around a new Town Green could include a Town Hall, library, medical clinic, post office, small professional offices, and day care facilities.



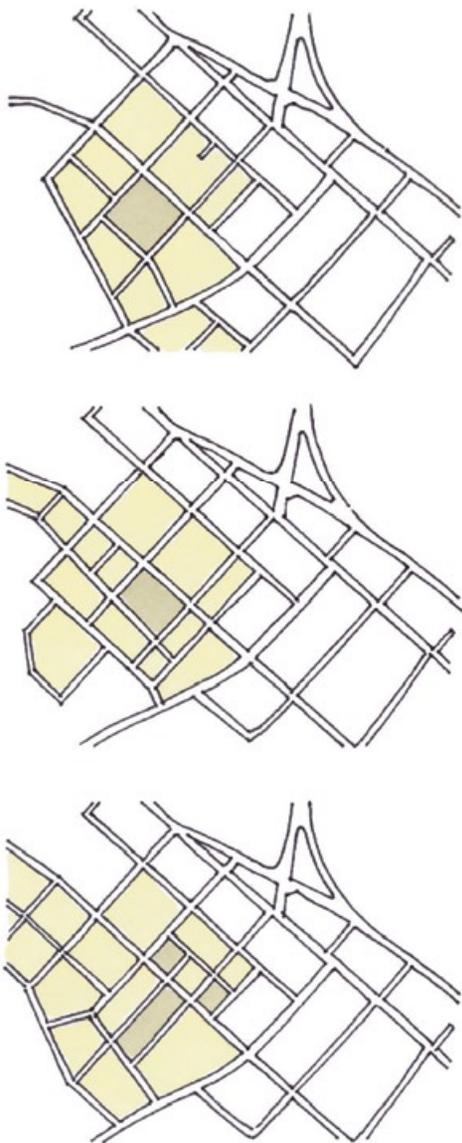
**Case Study:** Located outside of Easton, Maryland, Cooks Hope is a residential development set amid a working farm and cattle operation. In addition to a range of residential uses, the project includes a small marina, walking trails, and a community center complete with an exercise room, tennis courts, and a small garden.



## CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE



## OCEAN GATEWAY PARK



## TOWN GREEN

### Green Infrastructure

An open space trail network that integrates new and existing residential areas, the waterfront, and recreation areas will be developed throughout the Town. The existing River Walk along the waterfront will be extended to the south and west, connecting to the existing playground and ballfield.

New green spaces, such as Ocean Gateway Park, the new Town Green, and a new recreation center near the

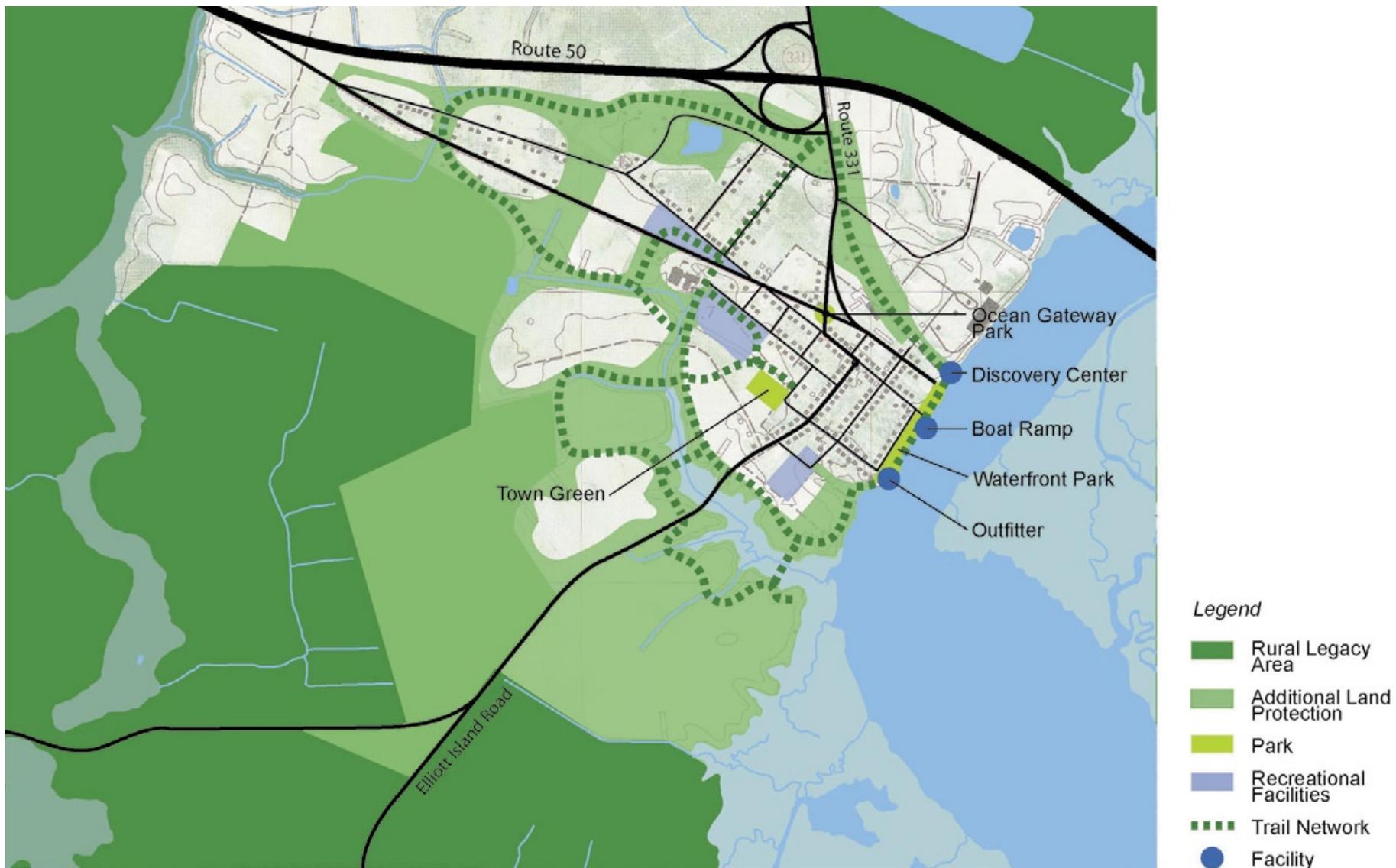
school, will welcome locals and visitors alike. The Waterfront Park will be enhanced by the addition of a regional Discovery Center, a new boat ramp, and an outfitter, as well as benches, walkways, trees, and signage. Ecological restoration of nearby wetlands will improve water quality and wildlife habitat.



*Relationship of new residential development, Town Green, Ocean Gateway Park and Waterfront Park*



## WATERFRONT IMPROVEMENTS



## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

## NEXT STEPS

The Community Vision Plan outlined in this report will become the basis for updating the Town's Comprehensive Plan in the spring of 2003. In addition to updating the Comprehensive Plan, the Town may wish to implement several projects in the near term in order to position Vienna as a model conservation-oriented community and lay the groundwork for attracting new residents, new businesses, and visitors.

Initial projects could include:

- Improvements to Ocean Gateway and Route 331 leading into Town, including plantings, sidewalks, paving and signage
- Improvements to major Town "Gateways", including plantings, lighting and signage
- Improvements to the existing Entry Park on Ocean Gateway, including plantings, benches, and paths
- Extension of Market street between Race Street and Ocean Gateway
- Construction of new boat docks on the waterfront
- Adaptive re-use of waterfront structures to house an outdoor outfitter

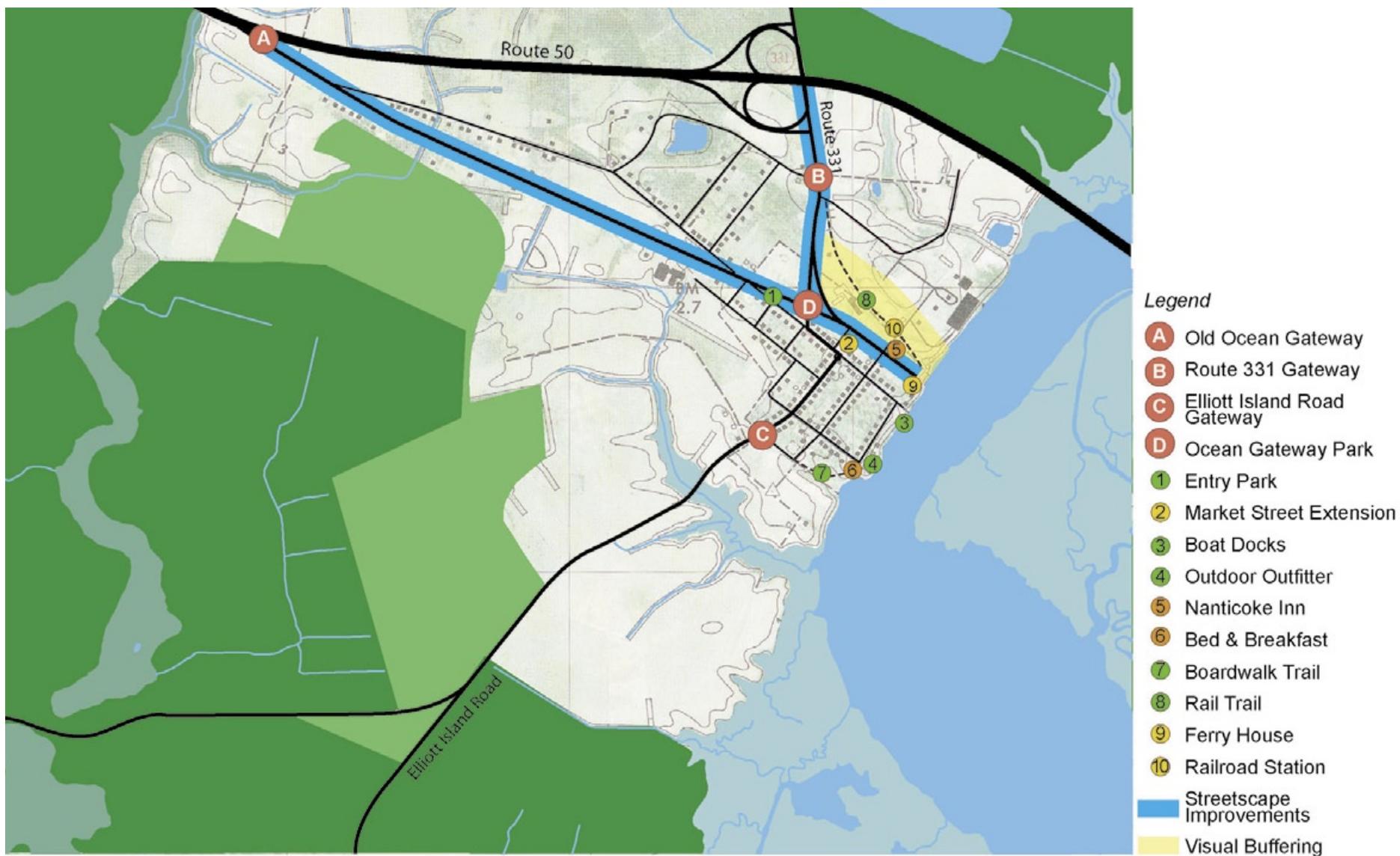
- Reopening of the Nanticoke Inn or other upscale restaurant on or near the waterfront
- Reopening of historic bed and breakfast on the waterfront
- Extension of boardwalk trail from waterfront, to connect to existing recreational area
- Construction of rail trail along old railroad right-of-way
- Relocation of the Ferry House back to the waterfront
- Reconstruction or relocation of old railroad station as tourist information center
- Plantings to buffer view of power plant from Ocean Gateway and Route 331



**Case Study:** *Elements of Burlington, Vermont's industrial past have been preserved and interpreted as part of a waterfront redevelopment. Vienna's working waterfront heritage has tremendous potential for interpretation and education.*



*The historic bed and breakfast on the waterfront could be reopened.*



## INITIAL PROJECTS