



Downtown Denton

CHAPTER ONE

HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT ON THE UPPER EASTERN SHORE

Few places in America enjoy the calm beauty, recreational opportunity, and rich history of Maryland's Upper Eastern Shore. These qualities have drawn people here for hundreds of years. In the past this area has spoken for itself. Now, however, heritage development is a promising approach to improving and preserving the unique way of life on the Upper Eastern Shore, an approach that deliberately seeks new ways to allow visitors and residents to discover and learn about the qualities of this special place.

THE MARYLAND HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND TOURISM AREAS PROGRAM

In the spring of 1996, Governor Glendening signed House Bill 1, which created the Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program to be overseen by the

Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA), which was also established in the legislation. The program was designed to link the preservation of historic, natural, and cultural features with tourism development. Previously, historic preservation and land conservation were viewed as prescriptive measures aiding the cultural and environmental health of Maryland with the cost regarded as high by localities that did not see the fiscal benefits or opportunities that could be achieved through large-scale preservation efforts or regional heritage development. Linking tourism development to historic preservation, land conservation, and heritage development gives communities access to a revenue-generating industry.

In Maryland, tourism generates more than \$4 billion annually and supports more than 70,000 jobs. On the Eastern Shore, the majority of the tourists are not seeking cultural experiences. Most tourists entering the Upper Eastern Shore are passing through to the beach resort areas. An increasing number, however, are visiting this region and participating in many of the annual festivals, visiting local museums, and vacationing near recreation areas. This market can be expanded. Heritage and cultural tourists are interested in engaging the history, architecture, landscapes, and natural resources of a place. These visitors tend to stay longer than recreation tourists, spend more money than recreation tourists, tell their friends, and return.

COUNTY PROFILES

The Upper Eastern Shore Heritage Area lies within four counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, and Talbot Counties offer similar heritage tourism experiences resulting from their common history and unifying themes. After three centuries of life on the water, among the marshes, and across the fields, communities of the upper Eastern Shore have forged a unique identity. Their social and economic differences are minor compared to the shared psychology and history of the area.

While the four counties cover a large geographic area, more than a thousand square miles, the population is relatively small, fewer than 120,000 people. Compared to other Maryland heritage areas, this is not a large number. The largest segment of the population are young to early middle-aged (ages 20 to 44). As a result, the Upper Eastern Shore is noticeably family oriented. The majority of the population (almost 84%) is of European descent and probably largely descended from the early English settlers. The median household income is about \$40,000 a year, which is \$7,000 less than the median for the state.

Among the counties, the demographic break down reveals slight differences in historical economic development. Kent County has the smallest population on the Upper Shore. In 1995, there were just under 19,000 people living in the county, fewer than 5,000 in Chestertown. Queen Anne's County has the largest population. In 1995, more than 37,000 people lived in the county, just under 13,000 on Kent

Island. One possible cause of this difference is the presence of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge which lands upon the Eastern Shore at Kent Island. Economically, the median household income in Queen Anne's County was \$46,200 in 1995. This was the highest on the Upper Eastern Shore but still lower than the state median. The lowest median household income was \$32,000, in Caroline County.

VISION

The MHAA guidelines for recognition require a succinct description of what will be different in the proposed heritage area resulting from its success. Over the last year, five workshops have gathered public input on potential goals and visions for the area. The first workshop, held at Chesapeake College, was sponsored by US Senator Paul S. Sarbanes to gauge local support for heritage development and to begin crafting a vision for the region. The workshop drew more than a hundred people from different regions and backgrounds. Participants expressed their primary goals for their area:

1. Preserve small towns and their unique social and cultural aspects.
2. Preserve and enhance open space and rural character.
3. Present and interpret the connection between the people of the region and the Chesapeake Bay. Maritime history and access to water were stressed.
4. Protect natural resources and increase opportunities for recreation.
5. Preserve the authenticity of the region's heritage, landscapes, architecture, and transportation systems.
6. Improve opportunities to educate future generations about the importance of preserving community identity, architecture, and landmarks of history.

Following this workshop each county hosted other workshops to uncover specific recommendations and concerns. These workshops were heavily attended demonstrating large public support for the project. Attendees greatly supported the development of a heritage area and contributed greatly to this report. In general, the vision that emerged from those workshops can be summarized as:

In years to come, the Upper Eastern Shore Heritage Area program will successfully protect the beauty and heritage of the region, improve the quality of life for its residents, and craft an enriching experience for visitors.

The following detailed list reflects the goals articulated by the region's residents in the four county workshops. The items are grouped by general topic:

Agriculture

- Protect rural character

- Protect farms and farm families

Education and Interpretation

- Develop more house and garden tours
- Foster greater appreciation of regional authenticity
- Encourage residents to be stewards of local historic, natural, and cultural resources
- Develop curricula for local school systems
- Develop educational programming for adults and children
- Develop interpretation programs based on prehistory: Indian paths
- Develop more interpretation of African American history
- Make historic sites more accessible and improve the quality of the interpretation

Maritime

- Develop house tours by water
- Promote and preserve maritime heritage
- Develop more opportunities for water access: bay and rivers
- Develop tours of boatbuilding sites

Nature

- Develop wildlife and natural history interpretation (flyways, wildlife areas, forests, parks)
- Protect open space and natural areas
- Develop a relationship with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Open protected lands for public access

Preservation/protection

- Foster more historic preservation efforts: public and private
- Preserve threatened structures
- Develop protections for locally and nationally significant historic sites; encourage more nominations for the National Register
- Develop more historical markers
- Protect open space, small town character, and natural areas
- Encourage counties to adopt preservation ordinances
- Encourage strong comprehensive planning and land use management

Recreation

- Develop more opportunities for recreation
- Develop rail trails, water trails, greenways, and other trails
- Create more parks

Tourism

- Expand heritage tourism, agri-tourism, eco-tourism, and birdwatching
- Attract heritage tourists who spend more, stay longer, and learn
- Expand the tourism season
- Enhance and develop the product of the heritage of the Upper Eastern Shore