

Claiborne

Introduction and Purpose

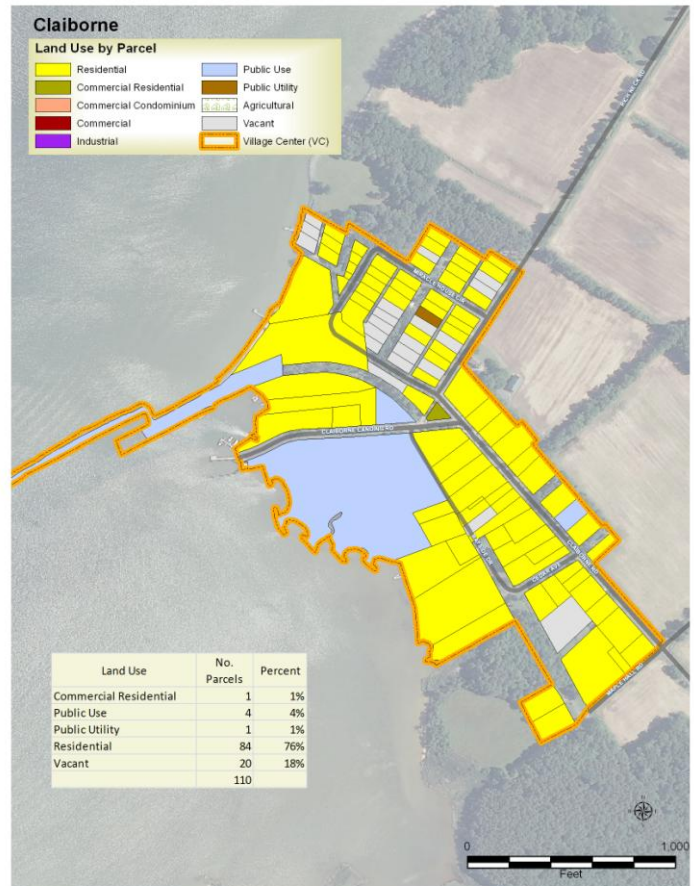
The residents of Claiborne have developed a plan to describe our village and to present a vision for the future of our unique community. This abbreviated plan has been prepared as an annex to the revision of Talbot County's 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

Characteristics and History

The earliest development in the area followed a land patent issued in 1652 for Rich Neck Manor. Around 1867 a town, now known as "Old Claiborne", was laid out at the head of Tilghman Creek to support the Tunis lumber business which had mills along area waterways. Later an oyster company, a boatyard, and two steamboat wharves were created. By 1893 plans for developing that village ceased.

Present day Claiborne was planned as Bay City in 1886 by members of the Tunis, Seth, Lowe and Cockey families. Ferry service between Bay Ridge on the Western shore and Claiborne brought vacationers to a resort community and railroad service enabled some of them to continue on to ocean communities and resorts. More importantly it sent Eastern Shore grain, lumber, seafood and produce to city markets across the Chesapeake Bay and returned mail and other commodities. Car ferry service gradually edged out passenger service and in 1928 the rail spur from McDaniel into Claiborne was discontinued. Ferry service ended after the Bay Bridge was opened in 1952.

Although business activity eventually ceased, Claiborne's location on the water and proximity to St Michaels contributed to its continued vitality. Because of its location on Eastern Bay at the end of a single road Claiborne has developed into an unusually



cohesive community of long time residents, retirees and newcomers who love the isolation and beauty of the area.

Location and Activity

Claiborne is located in the portion of Talbot County known as Bay Hundred, on a point that juts into Eastern Bay at the base of the peninsula dividing Eastern Bay from the Miles River. It is bordered on the north and east by farmland that lies between Eastern Bay and Tilghman Creek and on the west and south by Eastern Bay.

The primary physical features include the harbor, boat ramp, jetty, old ferry wharf, a saltmarsh wetland and a broad shallow cove that attracts waterfowl, parasailors, iceboaters and fans of spectacular sunsets. The built features are the late 19th and early 20th

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century streetscape, the Miracle House property, the former church (now the Village Hall), the building that housed the Claiborne Supply Company and several single-family houses that were once stores or bakeries.

Claiborne is very small at under 60 acres. Claiborne Road and Claiborne Landing Road form the primary street running through the village and ending at the county wharf. Cedar Street and Maple Hill Road are perpendicular and Bayview Drive is parallel to the main street. Rich Neck Road and Miracle House Circle are the other streets.

There are 63 homes in the village. Outside the area designated as the Village Center there are 40 or so rural homes, largely within the Critical Area, and within postal code 21624.

About two-thirds of the homes are occupied full time. Several of those residents were raised in the area, worked away for most of their lives and returned for retirement. Others were raised in the area or moved here for retirement or because of jobs in St. Michaels and Easton.

Commercial activity is limited to home-based businesses. Full time residents' occupations include waterman, nurse, sign maker, artist, computer sales and repair, real estate sales, construction manager, website developer, massage therapist, builder, art gallery owner, hunting and fishing guide, mason, management consultant, carpenter, coffee

entrepreneur, mental health professional and financial advisor. Several of the houses are available as short-term summer rentals.



Residents in the immediate area are engaged in social work, commercial embroidery, construction, consulting, folklore interpretation, solar installation, and carpentry. Several watermen from nearby use the county wharves.

Land Use and Facilities

The area designated as the Village Center is about 90% developed. The bulk of the farmland bordering the village is protected from development activity by a private conservation easement created by the late Ella Burling, the previous owner of Rich Neck Manor. More than 781 acres of land are now protected. Other landowners have also taken steps to prevent future development of their land. Altogether, more than 68% of the open land in the 21624 zip code is under ownership that precludes future development.

Talbot County now owns the old ferry wharf in the Village Center, where it maintains a boat launch facility, and an adjacent 8.5 acre saltmarsh wetland. The county also leases from the US Army Corps of Engineers the jetty that was built for the passenger ferry and railroad terminus. A public picnic area and small beach adjoin the jetty. In addition, the county owns a wharf on Tilghman Creek.

Village Activities

The community is an active, close-knit place. Community events include an annual picnic

and a Fourth of July parade. A village newsletter, now 7 years old, and a Website keep residents informed.

In 2010 residents of the Claiborne postal code formed a non-profit corporation and purchased the former United Methodist Church property. The old church is now the center of village activities and contains the village postal station.

The Association coordinates social activities and philanthropic endeavors, and aspires to conduct outreach to avoid social isolation of rural residents and support for the sick and homebound. Association meetings, potluck dinners, weekly movie nights in Winter, events for children, music programs in partnership with Carpe Diem Arts on-the-shore and other events are held at the Village Hall.

We recognize that we live in a community that is vulnerable to storm and flood risk. The village is working with Talbot County and the State of Maryland to create a Village Resilience Center at the Village Hall that will increase residents' ability to recover from potential wind and flood damage and extended loss of power caused by a major coastal storm or hurricane.

Vision for the Future

The residents of Claiborne consider this village to be a unique place. We greatly value the tranquility of Claiborne and its

connections to the past. We have identified the elements of a vision for the future and actions we believe can be taken by the

Claiborne community and Talbot County to protect and preserve our community.

Our highest priority is protecting the health and safety of community residents. Our second priority is maintaining the visual character of the main street as an example of late 19th and early 20th century residential construction, with the massing, setbacks, designs and appearance of that era.

Another element of our vision is maintaining the accessibility and quality of Claiborne's harbor for watermen and recreation. Maintaining the character of the village while improving our infrastructure, septic treatment and water quality of nearby waters is part of our vision. We also envision increasing our community activities in support of residents and improving our sustainability in cases of disaster.

Actions

Our highest priorities are to:

Protect and maintain the health and safety of community residents:

- Improve fire and rescue response time
- Expand the emergency health capabilities of the village
- Reduce Village speed limit to 25 and institute a plan to calm traffic
- Prepare a disaster plan and realistic evacuation plan



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- Develop an emergency recovery capability
- Identify sources of assistance to homeowners for septic improvements.

Preserve the rural character, small village atmosphere and close community feelings:

- Prevent out-of-scale in-building and renovations on the main street
- Lower the maximum residential building height to 30 feet in the Village Center
- Continue improving the Village Hall
- Develop educational programs for children and adults
- Limit additional development if a sewer connection to the Rio Vista Waste Water Treatment Plant is constructed.

Protect and maintain the Wharf, Jetty, Public Beach and Wetland:

- Maintain access to the water for watermen and recreational users
- Periodically dredge the harbor for shallow draft boats
- Resolve maintenance responsibility and make repairs to the Jetty
- Control invasive species such as phragmites.

Make Claiborne a “Bay Wise” community to protect water quality of the Bay:

- Develop a plan for removing non-native species and replacing them with native plants
- Replace trees on the main streets
- Install rain gardens and catch basins.

Make Claiborne a more sustainable, “green” community:

- Reduce the number of trash haulers serving the village
- Encourage recycling
- Use solar power to reduce electricity costs
- Identify sources of funding assistance for residents to install solar arrays.

Develop a more resilient community:

- Develop an emergency recovery and resiliency center in the Village Hall

- Protect village water supplies from flooding
- Stockpile emergency supplies in the Village Hall
- Encourage community participation in emergency training to increase our ability to take care of ourselves.
- Provide emergency generators for water and electricity at the Village Hall
- Connect the Village Hall to a water supply
- Install a septic system and bathroom
- Expand the emergency telephone tree
- Expand Village web site and list serve use.

Prepare for long term infrastructure improvements:

- Map Village infrastructure
- Develop a plan and schedule for improvements
- Purchase and develop a Village park
- Improve storm water drainage
- Eliminate infrastructure redundancies.

