

# Land Protection and Transportation Design

## Brief to Calvert Environmental Commission

by Frank Allen, President Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT)

Growth in traffic has exceeded growth in population





What is PTLT  
and why do we  
care about  
transportation?

## PTLT background

PTLT is a local land trust  
incorporated to protect land  
in: Calvert, St. Mary's,  
Charles, Anne Arundel,  
Prince Georges



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## Mission Statement:

“Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust preserves rural lands for current and future generations through conservation easements and environmental stewardship.”

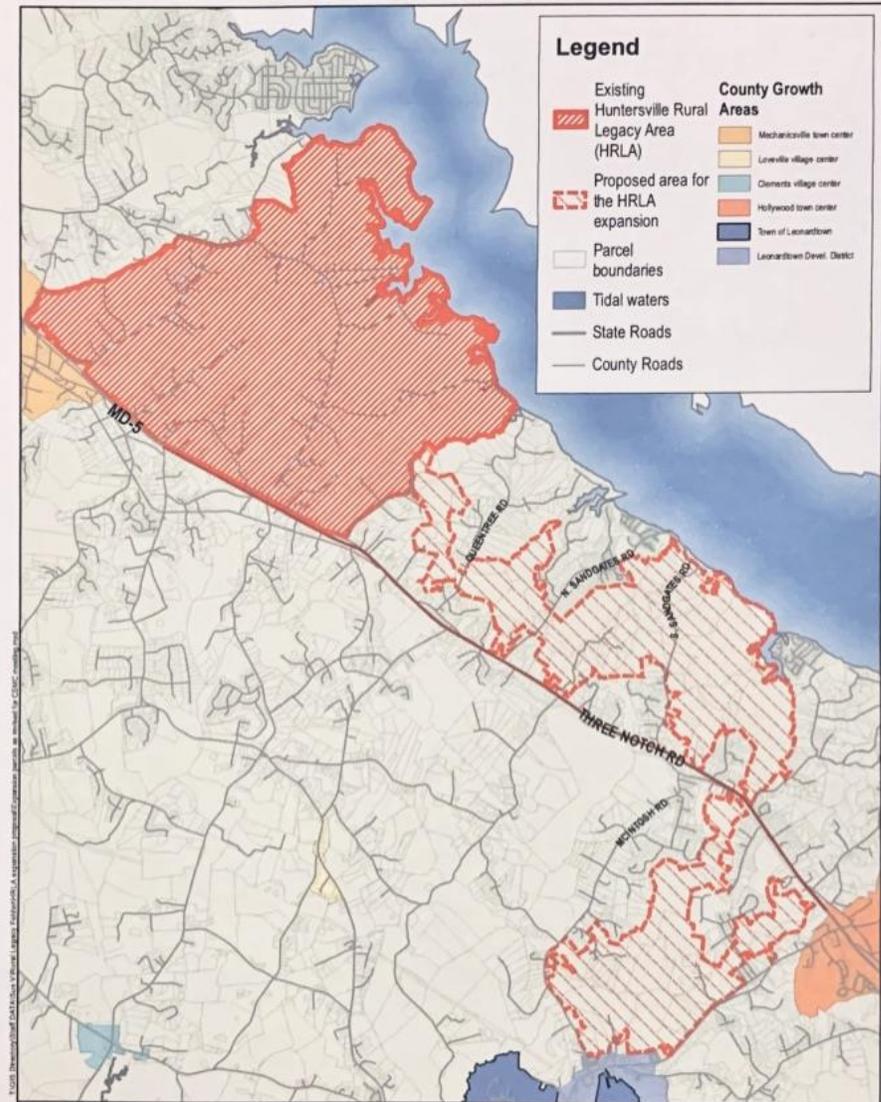


We have protected  
over 5400 acres  
from development  
through  
(volunteer)  
conservation  
easements.  
– We acquire  
development rights



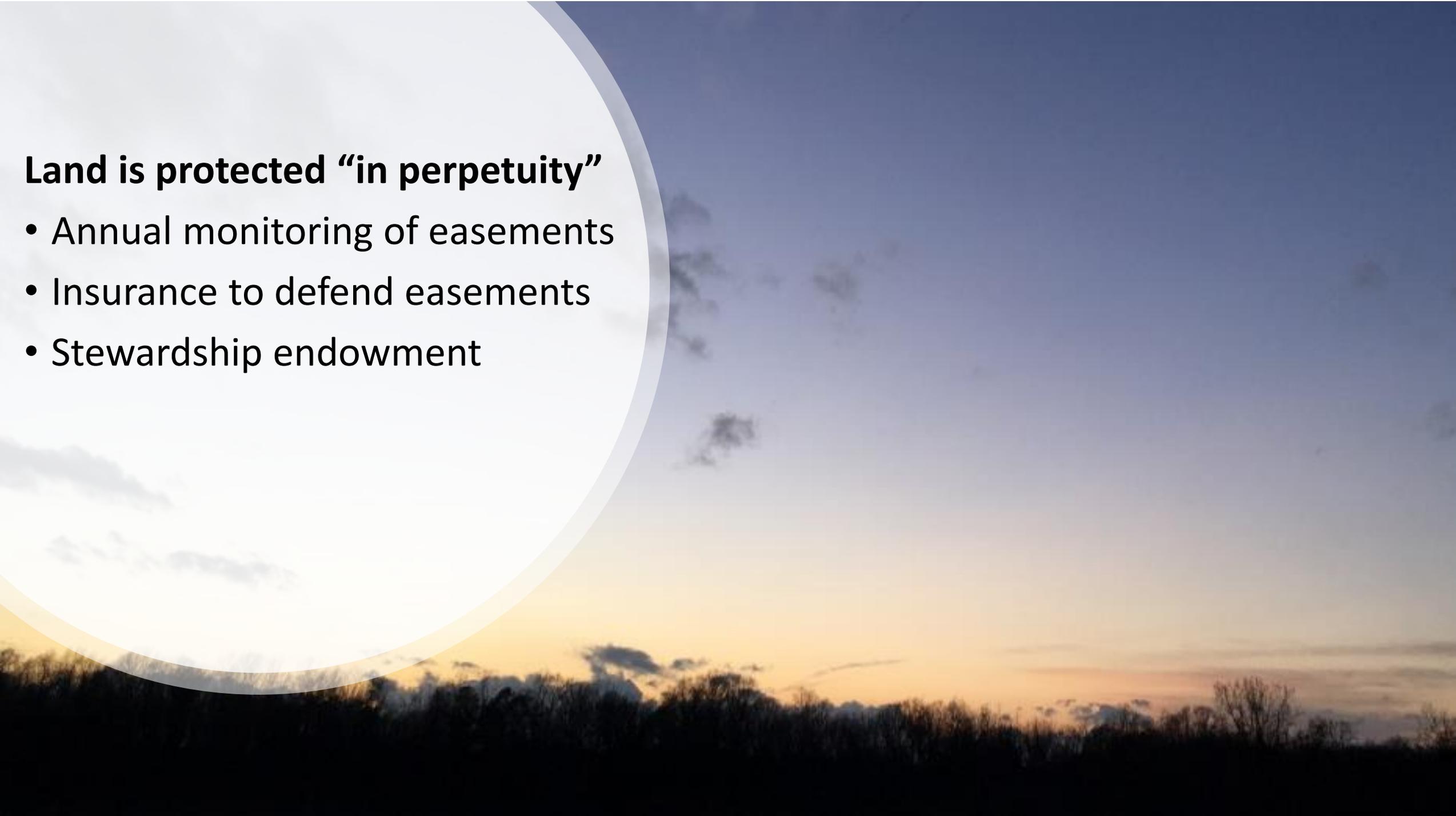
# Strategic Plan- Watershed Protection

Hunterville Rural Legacy area  
proposed expansion goal is to  
protect headwaters of the  
MacIntosh Run



PROPOSED FINAL BOUNDARY MAP FOR  
EXPANSION OF THE HUNTESVILLE RURAL LEGACY AREA

0 0.5 1 2  
Miles

A sunset landscape with a large white circle on the left containing text. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a bright orange and yellow near the horizon, with silhouettes of trees and clouds. The white circle has a thin grey border and contains the following text:

## **Land is protected “in perpetuity”**

- Annual monitoring of easements
- Insurance to defend easements
- Stewardship endowment

## What is the Rural Legacy Program ?

The Rural Legacy Program provides funding to preserve large, contiguous tracts of land to enhance natural resource, agricultural, forestry and environmental protection while providing a sustainable land base for natural resource-based industries.

The program creates public-private partnerships and allows those who know the landscape best – farmers, land trusts, and local governments – to determine the best way to protect the lands that are critical to our economy, environment and quality of life.

The program encourages local governments and land trusts to work together and determine how to protect their vital working landscapes.

Conservation investments are targeted to protect the most ecologically valuable properties that have the greatest habitat and most directly impact Chesapeake Bay and local waterway health.

We reach out to  
the community  
through talks  
and events



We provide testimony of importance of land protection – and the threats of sprawl development



...at local and state level

# So, why does a land trust care about transportation?

- New highways and sewer line extensions threaten remaining rural lands
- New roads = impervious surfaces vs. open space
- More road and extended sewer lines mean more sprawl and loss of farms/forests/open space



# Demands for new roads and zoning are closely linked



Suburban/exurban model (as in Calvert) separates uses:

- Businesses, schools, hospitals, parks, houses of worship, residences, etc. are all separated from one another

This zoning model results in high demand for car use

- More and wider roads
- More parking (at each venue)\*





- Car-centric design provides strong disincentive for pedestrian and bicycle use
- Also this has been a golden age for car ownership
- However, those without cars, or unable to drive, are left with a severe disadvantage

Our local government appears unwilling to provide good alternatives to the car culture



## A classic example of the sprawl model is in Prince Frederick



SHA built a bypass for Route 2/4  
bypassing the old town center

↘ Traffic flowed very smoothly at first

↘ Developers saw a wonderful place to  
build their stores – along the new bypass

↘ Thus, a new “town center”, AKA strip mall

↘ Result: new housing developments, strip  
malls, ever more traffic lights, traffic tie-  
ups

↘ Solution would typically be to build a new  
bypass...

There is another way



One very good model is outlined in  
**“Walkable City Rules”** by Jeff Speck

This book provides 101 “rules” that make  
communities more people focused





Might want to consider zoning that requires mixed use zoning – maybe 3 story shopping centers (residences over stores)

Make “towns” more pedestrian and bicycle friendly

-Need for reasonable public transportation is becoming ever more essential

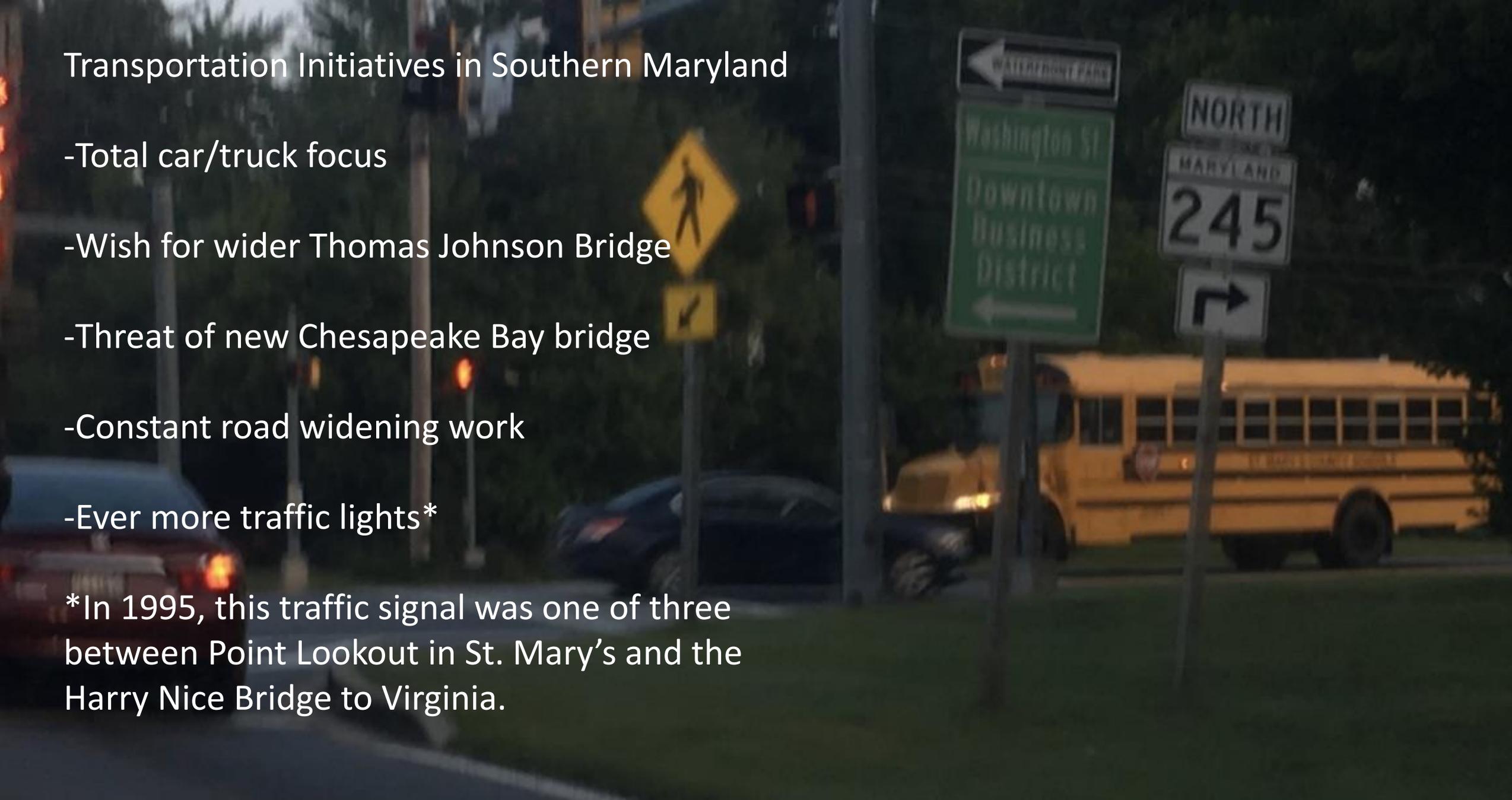
-Complete streets goal as cited in draft Comprehensive Plan would help



## Transportation Initiatives in Southern Maryland

- Total car/truck focus
- Wish for wider Thomas Johnson Bridge
- Threat of new Chesapeake Bay bridge
- Constant road widening work
- Ever more traffic lights\*

\*In 1995, this traffic signal was one of three between Point Lookout in St. Mary's and the Harry Nice Bridge to Virginia.



So far, only lip service to bicycle/pedestrian facilities

-“Share the Road”

-Adding bicycle lanes or shoulders “too difficult”



# All of this threatens the land we are trying to protect.

The land we are losing to sprawl is valuable:

- Farms
- Forest
- Habitat for birds, mammals, insects, and amphibians
- Protects streams from flash flooding and erosion
- Protects fisheries and the Chesapeake
- Acts as a carbon sink
- Place for passive recreation and spiritual recharge



There are some local projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian access.



Three Notch Trail and Indian Head Trail



- St. Mary's County is painting lines to mark (narrow) shoulders on roads that are wide enough. As a bonus, car and truck travel speeds drop.
- There are no lane markers on very narrow roads. As a bonus, car and truck travel speeds drop.



Local transportation focus teams:

### **Tri-county Council**

I am a member of the **Bicycle Infrastructure Advisory Committee**

### **Calvert/St. Mary's Metropolitan Planning Organization**

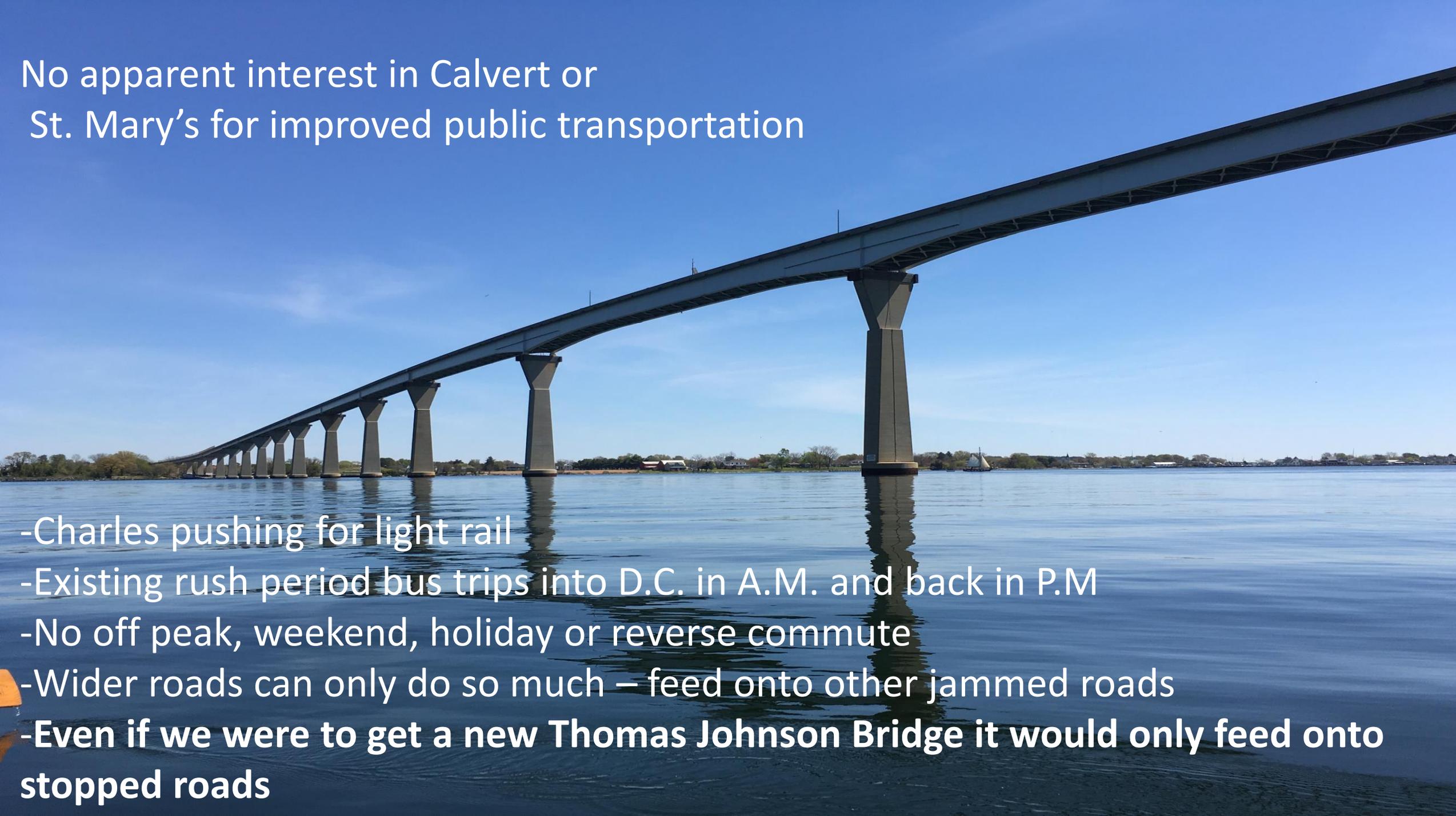
Some transportation studies initiated, highway focus

### **NAS Pax/ SOMD Planning Meetings**

Focus on Pax base access – road widening, car and van pools, possible bicycle access

Primary concern is commuter traffic – only one component of our traffic mess



A long, multi-span bridge with several concrete piers extends across a wide body of water under a clear blue sky. The bridge's structure is a series of connected spans supported by tall, rectangular piers. The water is calm, reflecting the bridge and the sky. In the distance, a shoreline with some buildings and trees is visible.

No apparent interest in Calvert or  
St. Mary's for improved public transportation

- Charles pushing for light rail
- Existing rush period bus trips into D.C. in A.M. and back in P.M
- No off peak, weekend, holiday or reverse commute
- Wider roads can only do so much – feed onto other jammed roads
- Even if we were to get a new Thomas Johnson Bridge it would only feed onto stopped roads**

## Again, need for improved public transportation



-Pros/cons of Uber-type service

-High speed bidirectional service to Washington and to Annapolis/BWI

-Need to prove use of corridor(s)

Catch 22 – MD will not build light rail or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) w/o demonstrated passenger use of corridor. No interest on their part for heavy rail (high speed would require grade separation)

However, if the Navy wants improved commuter service, it is likely to be funded.

- Thus, need to **upgrade existing bus service to peak, off-peak, weekend and holiday ...** and bidirectional service
- Need to get **expanded service ASAP** if we want to get service upgrades
- Would provide alternative mode of transport
- Potential impact on parking requirements
- Potential for greatly improved city access for commuters, elderly, handicapped, etc., without parking concerns.
- Could **reduce needs to widen highways or add new highways (saving land)**



Note: better public transportation unlikely to solve current traffic woes

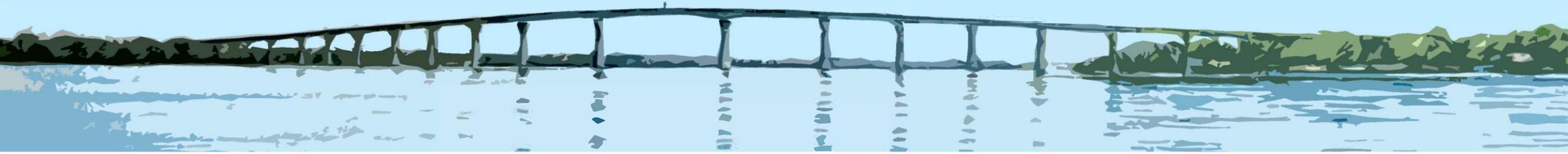
## Conclusions:

- We have little time to save our open space before it is gone.
- Land planning and zoning need to change to prevent sprawl.
- No new roads.
- Improved public transportation is essential.

# Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust

P.O. Box 1955, Leonardtown, MD 20650

[www.PTLT.org](http://www.PTLT.org)



Frank R. Allen, President  
Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT)

[Frank@ptlt.org](mailto:Frank@ptlt.org)

[www.PTLT.org](http://www.PTLT.org)

301-862-3421