Bloxom Town Plan

Amended ____, 1996

Prepared by:

Bloxom Planning Commission

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Technical Assistance Provided by:

Accomack-Northampton
Planning District Commission
P. O. Box 417
Accomac, Virginia 23301

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is an official public document adopted by a local government to be used as a guide for making policy decisions about the physical development of a community, including providing public services for community residents. A comprehensive plan is general in nature and is used as a basis for the zoning ordinance.

The Virginia General Assembly, recognizing the need and value for local planning within each area of the Commonwealth, adopted Section 15.1-446.1 of the Code of Virginia (1950) as amended on July 1, 1980 which requires that each city, county or town develop and adopt a comprehensive plan. Section 10.1-446.1 states, "The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of the inhabitants."

In addition to the above mandate, the Virginia General Assembly, recognizing the economic and social importance of ensuring the long term viability of state waters and in particular the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, enacted the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act of 1988 (Act)(§ 10.1-2100, et seq., of the Code of Virginia). The Act is a cooperative effort between the state and local governments with a water quality improvement and protection focus.

Section 10.1-2109.B of the Act states that "Counties, cities, and towns in Tidewater Virginia shall incorporate protection of the quality of state waters into each locality's comprehensive plan consistent with the provisions of this chapter." The Town of Bloxom recognizes the importance of maintaining the integrity of state waters and the Chesapeake Bay to the citizens of the Commonwealth and of Bloxom. The waters of the Chesapeake Bay have been degraded significantly by many sources of pollution, including nonpoint source pollution from land uses and development. Certain lands that are next to the shoreline have intrinsic water quality value due to the ecological and biological processes they perform. Other land areas have severe development constraints as a result of flooding, erosion, and soil limitations. With proper management, these lands offer significant environmental benefits by providing water quality maintenance and pollution control, as well as flood and shoreline erosion control.

To achieve these ends, the Town Council and Planning Commission of the Town of Bloxom have developed the following Comprehensive Plan. Once the plan is adopted by the Town Council, the Plan controls the general location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan. Before any public area, facility or use can be constructed or established, the Planning Commission must approve it as being substantially in accord with the adopted Plan. The

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Commission forwards its recommendations on such proposals to the Town Council. Once the Plan is adopted, it should be used as the basis for guiding and regulating land use and physical development.

Plan Amendment

It is necessary, due to the nature of the Comprehensive Plan and its purpose, that the Town Council regularly review the Comprehensive Plan and update the goals to keep pace with events and development affecting the Town's well being. As required by the Virginia State Code, the document shall be reviewed at no less than a five-year interval.

II. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Overview

The Town of Bloxom, with a population of 357, is located in Accomack County. on the Eastern Shore of Virginia (See FIGURE 1). The Eastern Shore of Virginia is located at the southern tip of the Delmarva Peninsula, bordered to the north by the State of Maryland, to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, and to the south and west by the Chesapeake Bay.

Bloxom was established in the early 1880's, on the farmland and forest land of the Bloxom, Hinman and Godwin families. In 1884, the railroad came through town and Bloxom continued to grow. By WWI, in 1914, Bloxom was a major produce shipping point. In its prime, Bloxom had seven stores, two banks, two barber shops, two doctors, and three churches - Episcopal, United Methodist and Pilgrim Holiness. Then, in the 1930's, the population began to decline as farm labor needs decreased. In 1950, Bloxom's high school was closed and in 1952, the Pennsylvania Railroad ceased passenger service.

The Town of Bloxom was incorporated in 1951 by founding Town Council members John Somers, Will Littleton, John Bowdoin, Henry Parker and King Godwin. The first Mayor, R. Barton Bull, served for 30 years. A prominent citizen of Bloxom was Melvin Shreves, who served in the Virginia House of Delegates. The Bloxom Volunteer Fire Department was founded in 1955, with the purchase of an old fire engine. The fire department and the churches continue to be the major focus of town social life today.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Bloxom experienced a 12% population loss between 1980 and 1990, while the population of Accomack County increased by 1%. In 1990, the age characteristics of Bloxom's population generally reflect that of Accomack County, as shown in Table 1.

From 1980 to 1990, the percentage of children in Bloxom has experienced a decline of 23%, while the percentage of adults aged 65 and older has increased by 28%. This suggests the outmigration of young people, fewer births, and the aging of the adult population.

Bloxom has a very different racial composition than that of Accomack County. In 1990, the population of Bloxom was made up of 91% white residents and 9% black residents, while the County population was 65% white residents and 35% black residents.

Table 1
Population Characteristics
1980 - 1990

	1980				1990			
	Accomack County		Bloxom		Accomack County		Bloxom	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Age								
0-17	8,151	28%	94	23%	7,521	24%	72	20%
18-64	17,907	55%	259	64%	18,331	58%	216	61%
65 +	5,210	17%	54	13%	5,851	19%	69	19%
Total	31,268		407		31,703		357	
Race								
White	19,753	63%	393	97%	20,499	65%	325	91%
Non-white	11,515	37%	14	3%	11,204	35%	32	9%

Sources: 1980 U.S. Census STF-1A; 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

In September, 1990, the Town of Bloxom, feeling that the 1990 U.S. Census was not accurate, conducted a door-to-door population count. The town population count found 384 people living in Bloxom, 27 more people than the 1990 U.S. Census figure.

NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

To insure that future development in Bloxom is compatible with the natural environment, it is necessary to understand the natural resources which exist in the Town. This section of the Town Plan summarizes the natural resources within Bloxom, and discusses problems associated with those resources.

FIGURE 2, Natural Resources, indicates that there are still some farmlands, woodlands and wetlands in Bloxom. The farmlands in Town are connected to larger farm tracts outside the Town limits. The wetlands and forest lands are located on hydric soils which are unsuitable for development. These types of undeveloped lands have potential for future parks and open space, groundwater recharge areas, and resource conservation areas.

Topography

The elevation of Bloxom has a range of approximately 15 feet, from a high point of 35 feet near the junction of Shoremain Drive and Bethel Church Road, to a low point of 20 feet where Mason Road crosses Guilford Church Branch. The elevation change of 20 feet results in an average slope in Bloxom of less than 1%, which may result in flooding due to poor drainage. Drainage and stormwater management are important considerations for future development.

Flood Hazard Areas

Most of Bloxom is not located in the Accomack County 100-year flood plain. The Town's location has been classified as being in Zone C (areas with minimal flooding) by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wave Study for Accomack County. The Town is not likely to be affected by a 100-year flood; however, it is possible for the Town to be affected by a flood of that magnitude due to flat topography, a high water table, and poor drainage.

Watershed

A watershed is a region or area that drains into a body of water. The entire Eastern Shore lies within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Two small streams, locally known as creeks or branches, run through Bloxom and drain the town: Muddy Creek drains the northern part of town and Guilford Church Branch drains the southern part of town.

Drainage

Since the topography in Bloxom is flat, with slopes of less than 1%, an adequate town drainage system needs to be maintained to prevent local flooding. However, stormwater disposal needs must be met while considering groundwater recharge and surface water pollution. Because of the flatness of the land in Bloxom, the Town experiences drainage problems. Several drainage ditches are located in Town which lead toward Muddy Creek and Guilford Church Branch. VDOT maintains some of these ditches, but the system needs to be improved.

Wetlands

Only a small portion of the land area in Bloxom contains wetlands, as shown in FIGURE 2. These non-tidal wetlands are located on the banks of Muddy Creek, and Guilford Church Branch. There is also an area of non-tidal wetlands located to the east of Rt. 316. Protecting wetlands is important because they filter water as it passes through which reduces sediment flows into open water and remove nutrients and chemical and organic pollutants. Wetlands also assist with flood control and serve as groundwater discharge and recharge areas.

Groundwater

Ground water management is an important concern for Bloxom, which relies on groundwater for domestic, industrial and agricultural use. The predominance of hydric and highly permeable soils in Bloxom, as shown in FIGURE 3, indicate a high potential for groundwater contamination. Hydric soils are primarily wet and poorly drained, and highly permeable soils are extremely susceptible to pollutant leaching and have a high potential for groundwater pollution. Contamination of groundwater can be caused by septic system failure, underground fuel storage tanks, improper solid waste disposal, and improper application and disposal of industrial and agricultural chemicals. All of these uses are potential sources of groundwater overuse and contamination.

Removing vegetation and increasing the amount of impervious surface, such as roads, parking areas and roofs, can result in increased surface discharge and decreased groundwater recharge. By providing recharge areas for stormwater, groundwater equilibrium can be maintained. Excessive groundwater withdrawal, such as for irrigation and industrial use, can lower the water table resulting in less productive or dry wells. An optimum balance between withdrawal and recharge, defined as the safe yield, should be maintained through the continuous observation of water levels and water quality.

Specific data on groundwater conditions in Bloxom do not exist. However, the town should monitor applications for major groundwater withdrawals by nearby users. Proper septic system maintenance and solid waste disposal by town residents and businesses should be encouraged.

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act

In 1988, the Commonwealth of Virginia enacted the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (Bay Act), which provides localities with the framework to protect water quality and environmental features through land use planning techniques. The waters of the Chesapeake Bay have been degraded significantly by many sources of pollution, including nonpoint source pollution from land uses and development. The citizens of Virginia are dependent upon the economic benefits derived from the Chesapeake Bay, and the Town recognizes the importance of the Bay Act in maintaining the integrity of state waters and the Chesapeake Bay.

The objectives of the Bay Act are to protect the quality of state waters. While point source water pollution regulations are ineffective in dealing with nonpoint source pollution, local land use regulations can reduce water pollution by requiring development setbacks from shorelines, and allowing natural vegetation to prevent erosion and filter stormwater. The Bay Act requires that Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas be delineated by the Town of Bloxom and certain land use criteria be applied to these areas. Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas are lands "which, if improperly developed, may result in substantial damage to the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries." Development in these preservation areas must meet general performance criteria that are designed to reduce nonpoint source pollution and protect sensitive lands from disturbance. Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas include Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) and Resource Management Areas (RMAs).

Resource Protection Areas

RPAs are lands at or near the shoreline containing components which have important value to the water quality of the Bay. RPAs include tidal shores, tidal wetlands, nontidal wetlands which are adjacent or connected by surface flow to tidal wetlands or tidal shores, and a 100-foot buffer landward of these features. As shown in FIGURE 4, only small part of the Town lies within the RPA, which is limited to the 100 ft. buffers landward of Muddy Creek and Guilford Church Branch.

In land designated as an RPA, only water dependent uses, such as marinas and commercial fishing facilities, can be constructed. Redevelopment of existing uses are also allowed in RPAs, but new development of homes, businesses and related structures are not allowed. None of the land in the RPA is developed.

Resource Management Areas

RMAs include land adjacent to and landward of RPAs. The purpose of the RMA is to provide additional water quality protection and to minimize pollution impact to the RPAs. RMAs include land types that, if improperly developed, have the potential for causing significant water quality degradation or for diminishing the functional value to RPAs. RMA components include floodplains, non-tidal wetlands not included in the RPA, sensitive soil types, and other lands necessary to protect water quality. In Bloxom, all of the land which does not lie within the RPA

is classified as an RMA.

In an RMA, any land use which is allowed under the existing zoning ordinance is permitted. All development and redevelopment activities in an RMA must meet the general performance criteria of the Bay Act, which includes preserving natural vegetation, minimizing land disturbance, minimizing impervious cover, and controlling stormwater runoff.

Soils

Soil characteristics are important in determining land uses. Characteristics such as texture, permeability, wetness and depth to water table can affect development activities. Because all residents in this planning area are served by on-site septic systems, soil suitability for on-site sewage treatment is important in determining which areas are suitable for development.

Bloxom, along with the entire Eastern Shore, lies within the geological region known as the Atlantic Coastal Plain, which is a low-lying region composed of sands, silts and clay. The individual soil groups in Bloxom, along with their characteristics are shown in FIGURE 5 and described in the following soil characteristics summary.

Arapahoe Loam (ArA)

Nearly level, very deep, and very poorly drained soil that is located on falats and in depressions of Carolina Bays. Suited for woodlands and wildlife, or cropland when drained. In Bloxom this soil is located east of the railroad tracks near Mitchell Road.

Bojac Loamy Sand (BhB), 2-6% slope:

Gently sloping, very deep, and well drained farmland. Moderately rapid permeability and soil instability limit community development and cause a hazard of groundwater pollution when used for septic systems. In Bloxom this soil is located in the northeastern part of town, on the east and west sides of Bethel Church Road.

Bojac Sandy Loam (BkA), 0-2% slope:

Nearly level, very deep, and well drained farmland. Moderately rapid permeability and instability of the soil are limitations to community development and cause a hazard of groundwater pollution when used for septic systems. In Bloxom, this soil is located in the southeastern part of Town, near Hall Street.

Dragston Fine Sandy Loam (DrA), 0-2% slope:

Nearly level, very deep, and somewhat poorly drained. Used mainly for cultivated crops and some woodland. Seasonal high water table, rapid permeability, poor filtering capacity, and hazards of seepage limit this soil for community development. In Bloxom, this soil is mainly located in and near Hearn and Liberty Streets.

Munden Sandy Loam (MuA), 0-2% slope:

Level, deep,, and moderately well drained. Seasonal high water table, and rapid permeability are limitations for community development and result in hazard for groundwater pollution when used for septic fields. In Bloxom, this so il is located east of the railroad tracks near Parks and Bull Streets.

Nimmo Sandy Loam (NmA), 0-2% slope:

Nearly level, deep, poorly drained. Used for farmland when drained. Seasonal high water table, seepage, and rapid permeability are limitations for community development and cause a hazard of groundwater pollution when used for septic fields. Limited for roads and streets. In Bloxom, this is the dominant soil type, covering much of the western and northern parts of Town.

Polawana Loamy Sand (PoA), 0-2% slopes:

Nearly level, very deep, and very poorly drained floodplain soil. Found in drainageways along small freshwater streams. Rapid permeability, ponding, flooding, and high seasonal water table are limitations for community development. In Bloxom this soil is located along Muddy Creek and Guilford Church Branch.

The Building Site Development Limitations Summary, shown in Table 2, indicates that most of the soils in Bloxom are unsuitable for septic tank filter fields. This is mainly because of the hydric soils in Bloxom and the shallow depth to groundwater. Most of Bloxom has a very shallow depth to groundwater, between 0 and 18 inches. The presence of groundwater near the surface can cause septic system failure, resulting in groundwater contamination and a public health danger. Since all of the soils in Bloxom are hydric or highly permeable, there is a danger of groundwater contamination from failed septic systems, industrial waste, and the improper use of agricultural chemicals.

Table 2
Building Site Development Limitations Summary

Soil Type	Dwellings Without Basement	Dwellings With Basement	Small Commercial Buildings	Septic Systems	Roads
Arapahoe ArA	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness, poor filter	Severe: wetness
Bojac BkA, BoA	Slight	Moderate: wetness	Slight	Moderate: wetness	Slight
Dragston DrA	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness, poor filter	Moderate
Munden MuA	Moderate: wetness	Severe: wetness	Moderate: wetness	Severe: wetness	Moderate: wetnesss
Nimmo NmA	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness
Polawana PoA	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness	Severe: wetness, poor filter	Severe: wetness

Source Accomack County Soil Survey, Tables 10 & 11.

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF POLLUTION

Failing Septic Systems

The Town of Bloxom relies completely upon private septic systems for household, commercial and (??industrial) waste water treatment. There are approximately 163 septic systems known to be operating within the Town. Health department records indicate the failure rate for septic systems operating within the Town to be ___ (waiting for data from health dept.)

Underground Storage Tanks

According to the Virginia Water Quality Assessment for 1992, underground storage tanks are the primary source of groundwater contamination in Virginia. Underground storage tanks are particularly dangerous because they are out-of-sight out-of-mind. Often, leaks are not detected until substantial contamination of the surrounding soils has already occurred. Further, tanks which were abandoned before more stringent regulations were put in place often pose an unwanted and potentially expensive liability on the property owner or the Town.

Underground storage tanks are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency under the authority of the federal Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1970, as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976. Underground storage tanks are regulated if the tank system, including its piping, has at least 10% of its volume underground and contains a regulated substance. Subtitle I excludes several different types of underground tanks including but not fully inclusive of the following: (1) farm or residential tanks of 1,100 gallons or less storing motor fuel for noncommercial uses, (2) tanks for storing heating oil for consumption on the premises where stored, and (3) septic tanks.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has adopted the EPA rules with the exception that individual fuel oil tanks with the capacity to contain over 5,000 gallons are regulated in the same manner as other regulated tanks. The Virginia Water Control Board (VWCB) is responsible for enforcing underground tank regulations in the Commonwealth. The enabling authority for the VWCB is Article 11 of the State Water Control Law which prohibits any introduction of petroleum or other harmful products that could potentially affect state waters including groundwater. Under these regulations, the VWCB must keep track of and inventory all underground storage facilities within the state. The state deals with all aspects of underground storage tanks including design, construction installation, compatibility standards, leak detection, record keeping, reporting, closure, corrective action, and financial responsibility. The VWCB is also responsible for ensuring that tanks installed prior to 1989 are upgraded to new tank standards before December of 1998.

According to the VWCB records, there are ___ (waiting for numbers from VWCB) registered businesses or residences with underground storage tanks within the Town of Bloxom. Between these registered businesses or residences, there are a total of __ underground storage tanks in the Town. A liquid propane gas (LPG) storage facility is located in Town on the east side of

Bayside Drive just north of Shoremain Drive. The storage facility is used to refill LPG gas delivery trucks. The LPG is delivered to the storage facility by railroad tank car and is piped from the railroad yard under Shoremain Drive to the storage tanks. Town residents are concerned about the safety of this facility and do not want to permit additional LPG storage facilities in town. (is this facility still in operation?)

Above Ground Storage Tanks

Individual above ground storage tanks are regulated by the federal government through the Clean Water Act of 1972, which requires owners of single tanks with a capacity greater than 660 gallons or multiple tanks with an aggregate capacity greater than 1,320 gallons to register and formulate a "Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan." The Commonwealth of Virginia, which controls above ground storage tanks through the VWCB, has adopted requirements for tank owners to present an "Oil Discharge Contingency Plan" (ODCP) before a storage tank may be registered. The purpose of an ODCP is to have a plan of action in the event of a catastrophic release of oil from the largest tank. The plan must also identify what the impact of such a discharge will be on the environmental receptors and what will be done to mitigate those impacts in the event of a spill.

Individual tanks with a capacity of less than 660 gallons or multiple tanks with an aggregate capacity of less than 1,320 gallons are not currently regulated by the state or federal government. Most home fuel oil tanks are typically only 200 to 660 gallons and are not regulated. It is therefore up to the individual owner to ensure that leaks and spills do not occur.

According to the VWCB, approximately 90 percent of releases from individual tanks are as a result of overfill or the tipping over of the tank. Overfill can occur if the driver/filler is not paying attention or if it is not known what the capacity of a tank is. To reduce the risk of an accidental spill, the homeowner or fuel oil company should inspect a tank before filling to ensure that it is sturdy and does not exhibit signs of corrosion. An owner should also have the capacity of the tank clearly marked on the tank and specifically indicate the filling cap location.

EXISTING LAND USE

Residential

FIGURE 6 shows the existing types of land uses in Bloxom. The predominant land use in Town is residential. Housing in Bloxom consists of 175 dwelling units, including 141 single family units, 3 multi-family units and 25 mobile homes. Most houses in Bloxom are owner-occupied; only 25 are rental units. The majority of housing in Bloxom is in good condition, with the exception of some areas on the west side of Town.

Deteriorated housing conditions exist on Back Street, including housing with no indoor plumbing. The 1990 census indicated that 29 units in Bloxom lacked complete plumbing facilities. The Town was awarded $500,000 in Community Development Block Grant Funds to rehabilitate some of these units. Rehabilitation has begun and is expected to be completed by the end of 1996. Improvements include the rehabilitation of 21 units with 10 units receiving first-time indoor plumbing. Eight units have been completed.

Commercial

The majority of commercial land use in Town is located along Bayside Drive and Shoremain Drive, as seen in FIGURE 6. Commercial land uses in Town include a florist shop, a grocery store, a go-cart race track, a used furniture store, a nursery, (add to this list).

There are no sidewalks in Town, and residents have expressed interest in having sidewalks built along Shoremain Drive, in the Business District.

Agriculture

There is minimal agricultural land use in Town. Most of the existing agricultural land use is located on the southeast side of Shoremain Drive, as shown in FIGURE 6.

Zoning

Zoning in Bloxom consists of residential and business districts. Most of the Town is zoned residential. The business district is concentrated along the intersection of Bayside and Shoremain Drive. More specific information about zoning in Bloxom can be found in the Bloxom Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 1992.

Transportation

Bloxom is served by a sufficient road system. Routes 316 and 779 provide good north-south access for the Town, and Route 187 provides east-west access. U.S. Route 13, located approximately two miles east of Town, provides regional access. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) reported that in 1989, 2,565 vehicles per day traveled on Route 187 between Bloxom and Nelsonia. (UPDATE FIGURES) On Route 187 from Bloxom to Guilford, 1,400 vehicles travelled per day. On Route 316 between Bloxom and Parksley, 3,505 vehicles travelled per day.

Town residents complain of speeding on the main roads through town and would like to have the town speed limit reduced to 25 mph. The intersection of Route 187 and Mason Road in the southwest part of town is a dangerous intersection and a stop sign needs to be installed there. VDOT crash statistics show that in 1989 there were three crashed in Bloxom, one of which was alcohol related, but no injuries or deaths involved in these crashes.

Community Facilities

School
Bloxom contains one school, Bloxom Primary School, which serves approximately 360 children from Bloxom and Accomack County in grades K-3. This school is the former Bloxom high school, which closed in 1950. Older students attend North Accomack Primary School, Parksley Middle School and Arcadia High School.

Other Facilities
Other facilities in Bloxom include a Town Hall and a Post Office, both located on Shoremain Drive.

Recreation
While the Eastern Shore provides excellent outdoor recreation opportunities, especially for boating, fishing and hunting, few community based recreational opportunities exist. Bloxom is fortunate to have the Bloxom Primary School located in Town. The school's playground and playing field provide a recreational opportunity unavailable near the homes of most children on the Eastern Shore. If the School should be relocated in the future, town residents have expressed interest in using the school grounds as a town park.

Solid Waste

Public Safety
Police protection is provided by the Accomack County Sheriff's Department and the Virginia State Police. The Bloxom Rescue Squad provides ambulance service. Fire protection is provided by the Bloxom Volunteer Fire Department.

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Employment

In 1989, there were 265 persons in Bloxom between the ages of 16-65. Of these working age persons, 150 were employed, which is 57% of the working age population. Table 3, Employment By Industry, shows that three industry categories employed over half of working Bloxom residents: Manufacturing, Retail Trade and Professional Services.

Table 3
Employment By Industry
1990

	ACCOMACK COUNTY		BLOXOM	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining	1,278	9%	6	4%
Construction	1,065	8%	15	10%
Manufacturing	2,573	19%	30	20%
Transportation, Communication, Public Utilities	448	3%	8	5%
Wholesale Trade	799	6%	4	3%
Retail Trade	2,562	19%	32	21%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	364	3%	5	3%
Business and Repair Services	558	4%	9	6%
Personal, Entertainment, and Recreational Services	595	4%	8	5%
Professional Services	2,403	17%	27	18%
Public Administration	789	6%	8	5%
Totals:	13,690		152	

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STF 3.

Income

Table 4 indicates that Bloxom's median household income of $16,538 in 1989 was about 19% less than the Accomack County median household income of $20,431. 45% of households in Bloxom had incomes below $15,000 in 1989, compared to 37% of households in Accomack County as a whole.

Table 4
Household Income in 1989

	Accomack Co.	Percent	Bloxom	Percent
Less than $5,000	1,355	11%	21	14%
$5,000 - $9,999	1,582	12%	27	18%
$10,000 - $14,999	1,697	13%	19	13%
$15,000 - $24,999	2,958	23%	34	23%
$25,000 - $34,999	2,226	18%	18	12%
$35,000 - $49,999	1,596	13%	14	9%
$50,000 or more	1,232	10%	17	11%
Totals:	12,646	100	150	100
Median Household Income:	$20,431		$16,538	

Source: 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990, STF 3.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES

Goal: PROTECT AND MANAGE GROUND WATER RESOURCES WITHIN THE TOWN.

Objectives:

Work with Virginia State Water Control Board and Accomack County toward long term protection and management of the ground water resources of the Eastern shore of Virginia.

GOAL: IMPROVE DRAINAGE CONDITIONS WITHIN THE TOWN AND COUNTY.

Objective:

Develop a plan to maintain and improve the existing drainage system.

GOAL: IMPLEMENT REGULATIONS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY PRESERVATION ACT.

Objectives:

Develop zoning and subdivision ordinances which include a storm water management component.

Develop and implement a local Chesapeake Bay Program that is based on the criteria set forth in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act regulations as adopted by the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Board.

GOAL: PARTICIPATE IN LAND USE DECISIONS AFFECTING THE AREA ADJACENT TO BLOXOM.

LAND USE

GOAL: PROVIDE LANDSCAPING AND SIGN REGULATIONS THAT PROMOTE ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS ACTIVITY AND SAFE TRAVEL.

Objective:

Develop a town zoning ordinance that provides landscaping and sign regulations that promote attractive business activity and safe travel.

GOAL: IDENTIFY AND DEMOLISH STRUCTURES UNFIT FOR REHABILITATION.

Objective:

Identify and demolish unsafe structures within town that cannot be rehabilitated. If an unsafe structure is occupied as housing, assist residents with temporary relocation while housing is replaced or rehabilitated.

GOAL: MAINTAIN EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SUCH AS STREET LIGHTING AND STREETS. AND PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIDEWALKS, LANDSCAPING, AND TOWN RECREATION FACILITIES.

GOAL: INSURE THAT FUTURE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES LANDSCAPING FEATURES THAT ADD TO THE AESTHETIC APPEAL OF THE TOWN.

HOUSING

GOAL: TO PROTECT THE RESIDENTIAL, BUSINESS, AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN TOWN FROM INCOMPATIBLE USES.

Objective:

Develop town subdivision and zoning ordinances to protect residential, business, and agricultural uses from incompatible uses.

GOAL: PROMOTE BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN TOWN THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH RESIDENTIAL USES.

Objective:

Develop town subdivision and zoning ordinances that promote business activity in town that is compatible with residential uses.

GOAL: DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING PROGRAM TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE RESIDENTIAL BASE IN TOWN.

Objectives:

Explore funding sources to address housing needs, including: housing rehabilitation, single-family new construction, multi-family new construction, and replacement of unrepairable housing, with temporary relocation of affected families.

Encourage innovative residential development techniques, such as apartments, town houses, garden-style units, and other forms of cluster housing development to occur where appropriate.

GOAL: TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS WITHIN BLOXOM.

Objective:

Develop zoning and subdivision ordinances which insure that adequate buffers are present to protect the character of existing neighborhoods from intrusion by adjacent land uses.

GOAL: DEVELOP GUIDELINES WHICH CAN BE EMPLOYED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL IN MAKING DECISIONS REGARDING THE LOCATION OF SINGLE-WIDE MOBILE HOMES WITHIN THE TOWN LIMITS.

Objective:

Develop within the Bloxom Town Plan Future Land Use Map guidelines for the location of single-wide mobile homes within the Town.

GOAL: PROMOTE SAFE AND QUIET SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS WHILE ALLOWING FOR SOME APARTMENTS AND MOBILE HOMES.

Objective:

Develop town subdivision and zoning ordinances that promote safe and quiet single-family residential neighborhoods while allowing for some apartments and mobile homes.

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL: PROMOTE SAFE TRAVEL IN THE TOWN OF BLOXOM.

Objective:

Contact State Police land Accomack County Sheriff's Dept. to develop a speeding enforcement program for the Town of Bloxom.

Work with VDOT in identifying and eliminating traffic hazards in Town.

Develop a town zoning ordinance with adequate setbacks to maintain visual sight lines at intersections.

Insure that new development will not obstruct sigh lines.

Develop a zoning ordinance with regulations and design guidelines for signs and billboards to promote safe and aesthetically pleasing travel through Bloxom.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL: MEET VIRGINIA MANDATES FOR SOLID WASTE PLANNING.

Objective:

Develop, adopt and implement a solid waste management plan for the Town, or participate in a regional plan.

GOAL: PROVIDE CENTRAL WATER AND SEWER FACILITIES FOR THE TOWN.

Objective:

Participate in discussions with Accomack County officials regarding regional central water and sewer facilities.

GOAL: DEVELOP A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN TO ENSURE THAT COMMUNITY FACILITIES ARE MAINTAINED, IMPROVED AND EXPANDED.

GOAL: CREATE A PROGRAM TO DEVELOP A TOWN RECREATION FACILITY.

ECONOMY

GOAL: IMPROVE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLOXOM RESIDENTS.

Objective:

Develop Town Council and local resident participation in economic development activities on the Eastern Shore.

GOAL: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE VITALITY AND APPEARANCE OF BLOXOM'S BUSINESS DISTRICT.

Objective:

Develop a commercial revitalization plan for Bloxom which includes town identification, parking, landscaping, sidewalks, and business district appearance improvements.

GOAL: SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF US ROUTE 13 CORRIDOR PLAN

GOAL: IDENTIFY, PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE HISTORIC QUALITY OF BLOXOM.

Objective:

Develop a zoning ordinance which includes protection for historic structures within the Town.

PLAN

NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN

1. Develop a working relationship with the Virginia State Water Control Board (VSWCB) and Accomack County in the management and protection of ground water. The first step in this process would be to participate in the activities of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Study Committee. This Committee is in the process of developing land use guidelines for the protection of ground water. The recommendations should be reviewed by the Town for local implementation.

2. The Town Council should adopt a policy for commenting on permits issued by the VSWCB that require a public hearing. The policy should: 1) establish a review committee, 2) establish a procedure for the committee's recommendation to be presented to the Town Council, and 3) establish a procedure for the Town Council to provide written comments as part of the VSWCB public hearing record.

3. The Town Council should adopt a local Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Program through revisions to the Town zoning and subdivision ordinances, as required by the regulations adopted by the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department.

LAND USE

The land use plan for Bloxom in shown in FIGURE __. The Future Land Use Map guides decisions regarding land use within the Town. The map should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the concepts described continue to meet the changing needs of the Town. The land use plan proposes three categories of land use: two residential categories, including a floating mixed residential category, and a business category. These categories are described below:

Residential
Single-family homes should be the dominant land use within this category. Any other land uses that would be allowed should be compatible with single family dwelling units. The needs of single family residential development (safety, reduced traffic, noise, and other nuisances) should be considered first in making land use decisions. Examples of secondary uses appropriate to this district include some two-family attached dwellings, home occupations, and open space areas.

Residential-Mobile Home:
This land use category recognizes the importance of mobile homes as an affordable housing option. The Residential-Mobile Home category allows for the location of single-wide mobile

homes in an area where mobile homes are the dominant housing type.

Residential-Mixed
This land use category proposes to allow for a mixture of single-family homes, duplexes, and apartments to provide additional housing opportunities in Town, particularly replacement housing. the Residential-Mixed category is not identified on the Future Land Use Map because it is a floating category. A floating category is "anchored" when a suitable location is reviewed and approved by the Town Council.

Business:
This land use category proposes to promote business uses and offices that serve local or neighborhood needs as well as general business needs. In the zoning ordinance business activity may be divided into two districts, business-neighborhood and business-general. The business-general district would include retail trade, wholesale trade, warehousing and other general business uses.

HOUSING
The majority of residential housing stock in Bloxom is in good condition. However, housing conditions data indicates that 14% of the total housing stock as being in substandard condition. In order to develop a comprehensive housing plan for improving the housing stock, Bloxom should conduct a housing survey. The town should then apply for a Va. Dept. of housing and Community Development Planning Grant. The planning grant would be used to develop a plan to improve the existing housing stock. The grant work should then be followed by a VDHCD Block Grant application to implement the recommendations of the Planning Grant.

In addition to the Planning Grant, the town should develop land use regulations to protect residential areas from encroachment by traffic congestion, noise, pollution and other nuisances that may be created by adjacent land uses. The Bloxom Future Land Use Map should define areas within the Town to be set aside for a variety of land uses including: single family, multi family, and single wide mobile home residential uses.

Plan:

1. Apply for a planning grant to begin development of a program to reduce substandard housing in Bloxom.

2. Revise the town zoning ordinance to require buffers between residential and other land use activities.

3. Define, through the Bloxom Future Land Use Map, areas within the Town to be set aside for single family, multifamily and single wide mobile home residential uses.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

Community facilities include services that the town provides through tax collection. The town should develop a plan for the construction of sidewalks. This plan should take the form of a capital improvements program. A capital improvements plan is a five or six year plan that identifies major projects needed by the Town. A capital improvements plan provides cost estimates, funding sources, proposes a priority and time schedule for each project and identifies funding sources and coordinates projects with the Town Plan.

1. Develop a capital improvements plan for the construction and maintenance of sidewalks, drainage ditches, and other community facilities.

2. Work with Accomack County to develop and adopt a solid waste management plan.

3. Develop a Town of Bloxom recreation facility.

4. Develop a strategy for the removal of buildings that can not be rehabilitated and structures which pose a danger to the general health, safety and welfare of town residents.

5. Participate in discussions with Accomack County officials regarding regional central water and sewer facilities.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The VDOT prepares traffic counts and projections for future use of US Route 13 on an annual basis. Traffic counts and projections indicate the volume of cars and trucks on US Route 13 has and will continue to increase. In fact, projections indicate that in the future trucks will completely dominate the right hand land of the highway. VDOT has prepared a corridor study for US Route 13 to improve safety. The Town should encourage implementation of this study.

1. Work with the State Police and county sheriff's departments to develop a speeding enforcement program in Bloxom.

2. Work with VDOT to identify and eliminate traffic hazards in The Town of Bloxom.

3. Work with VDOT to implement the US Route 13 Corridor Plan by expressing this to VDOT and the Accomack Board of Supervisors for its inclusion in the six-year transportation plan.

4. Revise the town ordinance to provide design guidelines for billboards.

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ECONOMIC PLAN

Economic opportunities within Accomack County and Bloxom are presently limited. Residents of Accomack and Northampton Counties have some of the lowest average income levels in the state. Employment in Bloxom is for the most part limited to retail services and agriculture. however, in order to provide more residents opportunities for economic improvement, there is a need to diversify the economy. This includes participating in regional economic development and educational efforts to attract industry and provide a skilled work force.

1. The Town should participate in regional economic development and education efforts to attract industry and train a skilled workforce.

2. The town should develop a program to revitalize vacant commercial buildings in the business district.