

TOWN OF ONLEY

TOWN PROFILE

Onley is located near the central spine of the Eastern Shore in south central Accomack County and encompasses approximately 486 acres. The Town was originally known as Cross Roads until its name was changed to Onley after the name of Virginia Governor Henry Wise's home on Onancock Creek in the latter part of the 19th century. The Town, like a number of other Eastern Shore towns, developed around a railroad station built following the construction of the railroad in 1884. The railroad spurred a thriving downtown which included the headquarters of the Eastern Shore Produce Exchange. The Produce Exchange was the first cooperative marketing organization and proved to be a vital component of the flourishing potato market on the Shore. The Town was incorporated in 1950 and experienced a series of fires in the early 1970s that destroyed much of its business district. At that time the Town's commercial activity began to relocate westward to Route 13. Today, the western portion of Onley along Route 13 is the site of the largest concentration of commercial activity in Accomack County and the remainder of the Town remains largely residential. (Onley Comprehensive Town Plan, 2010).



Figure 1: Onley Aerial Imagery

SOCIO-ECONOMIC

Part of assessing hazards in relation to their risk is understanding the people affected. Not all people are affected equally. Some are affected by the factors that relating to their ability to understand risks posed by hazards, and some by their ability to remove themselves from harm’s way. Those factors include age, mobility, income and the languages individuals speak and the languages in which individuals are able to access information. The following sections are intended to provide insight in the make-up and characteristics of the community and how it relates to hazard vulnerability.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Town’s population grew from 415 in 1960 to an estimated 530 in 2015 (U.S. Census, 1960; John Pavlik, Zoning Administrator, personal communication, February 18, 2016). The median age for residents in 2014 was 50.0, signifying an older population than the national average (American Community Survey, 2014). Often older populations are considered vulnerable populations with respect to hazardous or emergency situations in the area.

Although the 2010 U.S. Census median household income seems very high, one justification could be that there was a large portion of the population nearing retirement and at their highest of their pay range.

Table 1: Onley Demographic Information

	2014***	2013**	2010*	2000****
Population	502	598	516	496
Median Age	50.0	45.3	48.6	46.3
Disability	31	33	NA	NA
Income				
Median Household Income	59,643	80,813	74,417	36,750
Poverty Level	13.3%	10.9%	NA	NA
Language				
Only English	87.8%	89.8%	97.0%	91.3%
Other	12.2%	10.2%	3.0%	8.7%
Spanish	8.0%	9.6%	3.0%	3.8%
Indo-European	4.2%	0.5%	0.0%	1.1%
Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%

Eastern Shore of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan

* U.S. Census 2010, ** American Community Survey 2009 – 2013, *** Annual Estimates of the Residential Population: 2010 – 2014, **** U.S. Census 2000

WORKFORCE

Employment patterns are important to examine for two reasons. It can help to identify concentrations of people for hazard information dissemination or hazard rescue and evacuation. It can also identify where disruptions in employment and income might occur in the aftermath of a disaster.

The majority of the workforce in Onley works in education, health, and social services. There are also substantial portions of the population that work in wholesale trade and construction. While wholesale could indicate seafood distributors, who would probably not be quick to rebound following a large storm event, however, those employed in construction would most likely have many opportunities for contracts. The Eastern Shore regional hospital is relocating just west of the Town limits and it's expected that commercial growth associated with the hospital will increase along the Route 13 corridor in Onley.

Table 2: Onley Local Workforce Industry

Civilian Employed Population								
Industry	2014*		2012*		2010*		2000**	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing/hunting, or mining	3	1.1%	0	0.0%	10	3.0%	9	3.9%
Construction	27	9.5%	38	10.7%	16	4.8%	15	6.5%
Manufacturing	23	8.1%	17	4.8%	0	0.0%	28	12.1%
Wholesale trade	30	10.6%	54	15.3%	49	14.8%	3	1.3%
Retail trade	14	4.9%	35	9.9%	45	13.6%	11	4.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	7	2.5%	8	2.3%	0	0.0%	5	2.2%
Information	0	0.0%	38	10.7%	39	11.8%	9	3.9%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rentals	3	1.1%	20	5.6%	24	7.3%	19	8.2%
Professional, scientific, waste management	13	4.6%	9	2.5%	17	5.1%	11	4.7%
Educational, health care, social services	123	43.3%	98	27.7%	91	27.5%	59	25.4%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, food	12	4.2%	9	2.5%	0	0.0%	37	15.9%
Public Administration	17	6.0%	16	4.5%	23	6.9%	15	6.5%
Other	12	4.2%	12	3.4%	17	5.1%	11	4.7%
TOTAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION	284	-	354	-	331	-	232	-

Source: *ACS, 2010 – 2014, ** U.S. Census 2000

BUSINESSES

Business data provides basic information used in projecting potential economic losses from business and employment disruption, along with wage losses to employees. It can also serve as an indicator of community recovery resources. Finally, it can help to prioritize restoration of utility and infrastructure functions following a high-intensity hazard.

Town of Onley

Onley is one of the larger commercial centers of the Virginia Eastern Shore. Because of its location on Route 13, this area is the County's hub of commercial activity. Businesses located adjacent to Route 13 include a variety of retail stores and services, restaurants, a grocery store, three banks, two motels, and professional offices. A Wal-Mart is built on land adjacent to Onley's southern border. The Town is already showing an increase in the number of businesses (Table 3), and with the new hospital set to open in the beginning of 2017, we can expect further increases in the number of support businesses, such as hotels and restaurants.

Table 3: Onley Business Types

Industry Code Description	Total Establishments		
	2013*	2011*	2009*
Construction	6	6	7
Manufacturing	1	1	1
Wholesale Trade	1	3	2
Retail Trade	27	28	30
Information	1	2	2
Finance and Insurance	6	7	8
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3	3	4
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3	3	4
Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	1
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2	2	2
Educational Services	1	0	0
Health Care and Social Assistance	10	9	9
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1	3	4
Accommodation and Food Services	14	12	14
Other Services (Except Public Admin)	12	14	16
Total, All Establishments	88	93	104
Total Employees	1,273	1,230	1,138

Source: *Census Zip Code Business Patterns, 2013, 2011, 2009

BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE

Housing units, community facilities, and transportation are all important factors when considering hazard resiliency. They provide the social services necessary during hazardous scenarios, safe cover for those wanting to stay, and a way to leave towards safety.

HOUSING UNITS

Knowledge of a community's housing base contributes to hazard and vulnerability analysis by identifying how many homes are at risk. Vehicles available to households is one indicator of a household's ability to evacuate when necessary.

Eastern Shore of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan

Between 2000 and 2010, there were a significant number of housing units constructed, with the majority of them being single-family residential (U.S. Census, 2000, 2010). Although Town representatives indicated that the number of vacant housing units indicated in Table 4 was too high for each year, they confirm that there seems to me an increase in the number of homes that are occupied by renters as opposed to owners (John Pavlik, Zoning Administrator, personal communication, February 18, 2016). Several of the houses scattered throughout the Town are in various states of disrepair and are in need of rehabilitation (*Town of Onley Comprehensive Plan, 2010*).

Table 4: Onley Housing

	2014*	2010**	2000***
Total Housing Units	403	377	271
Occupied	313	321	223
Vacant	90	56	48
Owner-Occupied	198	229	166
Renter-Occupied	115	92	57
Median Housing Value	166,700	NA	NA

Source: * American Community Survey, 2009 – 2013, ** U.S. Census 2010, *** U.S. Census 2000

TRANSPORTATION

U.S. Route 13 provides north-south access, and State Routes 179 and 789 providing east-west, making automobile traffic very convenient for Town residents. Streets in Town are maintained by VDOT and are generally in good condition. Public transportation is available through STAR Transit, with bus routes along Route 13. STAR Transit offers weekday bus service from Cape Charles to Chincoteague with stops at all major communities, shopping centers, health care facilities, and government offices.

The Bay Coast Railroad runs through the eastern portion of Town, serving as freight carrier connecting Hampton Roads with the Delmarva Peninsula. As part of its daily operations, however, the Railroad does not make a stop in Town. The Railroad right-of-way is maintained by Town Public Works. An old freight station is located on the right-of-way, which is currently leased by the Town of Onley until the year 2034. The station is undergoing renovation by a civic organization, the Society of Preservation of the Onley Train Station.

Sidewalks in Onley are maintained by VDOT, and many of the sidewalks are in various states of disrepair. Approximately 25% of the streets in Town are serviced by sidewalks (*Town of Onley Comprehensive Plan, 2010*).

Table 5: Vehicle Availability (per residence)

Vehicles Available	2014*	2010*	2000**
None	34	4	21
One	67	53	79
Two	116	70	72
Three or more	96	70	47

Source: * American Community Survey, 2009 – 2014, ** U.S. Census 2010

Looking at Table 4 and 5, it can be determined that of the 313 occupied housing units, 34 of them have no vehicle. In the case of an evacuation or an emergency situation which required immediate relocation, this portion of the Town's population is extremely vulnerable and would be in need of additional attention.

COMMERCIAL AREAS

Town of Onley

The majority of the commercial land is located along Route 13. There are various shopping plazas along the main corridor of the highway, including the Four Corners Plaza and opposite shopping areas. There is also a small concentration of businesses along Main Street, the Town's original business district (*Town of Onley Comprehensive Plan, 2010*). Just outside of the Town limits are additional concentrated business areas such as Chesapeake Square and a Wal-Mart, which is actually built partially in the Town limits and partially in the unincorporated area of Accomack.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities include the services and functions provided by the Town government, in coordination with other public and private agencies. Such facilities are essential to support the Town and its development to enhance the overall quality of life for its residents. Community facilities include necessities such as public safety services, solid waste collection, mosquito control, and street lighting (*Town of Onley Comprehensive Plan, 2010*).

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police protection is provided by five sworn officers employed by the Town, with back up service provided by the Onancock Police Department, Accomack County Sheriff's Department, and the Virginia State Police. Fire protection and ambulance service are provided by the Onley volunteer Fire and Rescue Company, which is equipped with two ambulances, two pumpers, brush truck, and rescue squad. Accomack County Public Safety Department staffs the Onley Fire and Rescue Company with Fire-Medics on a 24 hours basis seven days a week (*Town of Onley Comprehensive Plan, 2010*).



Figure 2: Onley Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department. Photo by Ann Devletian, 2003-04

TOWN OFFICE

Onley's Town Office, built in the late 1970s, houses the Town's administration services and Police Department. The Town employs a Town Treasurer, a part time clerk, and a part time Zoning Administrator, to carry out administrative, zoning, and financial functions of the Town.

The Town has purchased land adjacent to the existing Town Hall to construct a new Town Office. Once constructed, the Police Department will be the sole occupant in the existing building. The Town is interested in constructing the new facility to more stringent building codes that would lessen the risk of flooding and wind damage.



Figure 3: Onley Town Office & Police Department. Photo by Ann Devletian, 2003-04

PARKS AND RECREATION

There are no Town owned park facilities in the Town, but the Town does own the land where the train station once stood.

SOLID WASTE

The Town of Onley provides weekly residential trash collection services, contracted out to Davis Disposal. Private contractors are responsible for emptying large dumpsters within the Town that are used primarily by commercial establishments (Town of Onley Comprehensive Plan, 2010).

WATER SUPPLY AND WASTEWATER

Residents and businesses in Onley rely on individual private wells for their water supply. All residents use private on-site septic systems for sewage and wastewater disposal, and the majority of businesses treat wastewater and sewage through mass drain-fields. Several businesses on Route 13 utilize a sewage trunk line which is connected to a wastewater treatment facility in Onancock (*Town of Onley Comprehensive Plan, 2010*). The Wal-Mart, only partially within Town limits, has its own sewage disposal system.

DRAINAGE DITCHES

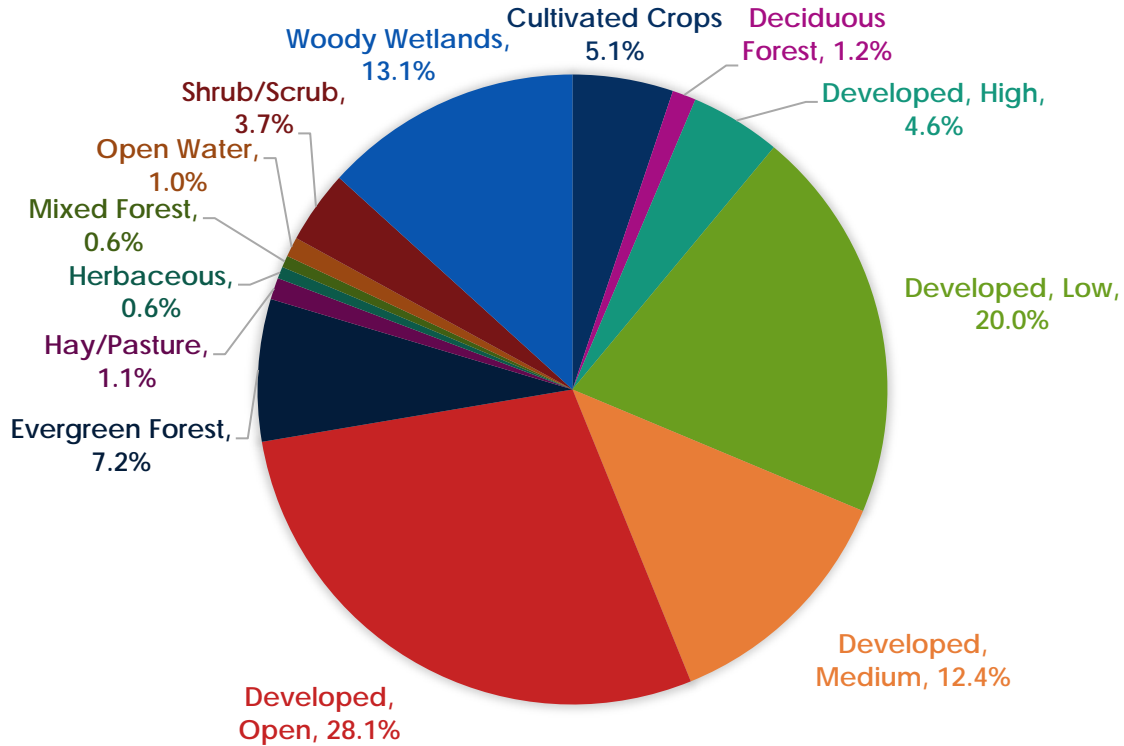
The Town subcontracts trash removal services for the ditches in order to help prevent stormwater flooding. It is the responsibility of VDOT to provide further maintenance of state roadways.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Elevations in Onley range from approximately 35 to 45 feet above mean sea level. Surface water in the Town is limited to the end segment of Joynes Branch, a small tributary stream of Onancock Creek and the Chesapeake Bay which extends approximately 700 feet into the Town forming a short segment of the Town's northeastern boundary (*Onley Comprehensive Town Plan, 2000*). Soils in Onley are a major limiting factor to development due to their ability to support on-site septic systems.

LAND USE LAND COVER

Town of Onley



Source: USGS, National Land Cover Dataset, 2011

Figure 4: Onley Land Use Land Cover Percentages

The total land use of the Town is 486 acres. Figure 4 reveals that of this, 65.1% is developed. The majority of the residentially-zoned developed land is single-family housing. Commercial land use accounts for 20% of the total acreage in Onley, most of which is concentrated around Route 13 (*Onley Comprehensive Town Plan, 2010*). There is 34.9% of land that is undeveloped in Onley, some of this is composed of wetlands that are important to filter storm water runoff (*Onley Comprehensive Town Plan, 2010*).

GROUNDWATER

Residents of Onley obtain their drinking water through individual private groundwater wells. There are 83 acres of Onley contained within the recharge spine. This recharge spine is important to maintain good quality of ground water for Eastern Shore residents. Onley is located in Wellhead Protection Area C – Perdue Area. Major water withdrawals from this area are the Perdue Poultry Processing Plant, Pacific Tomato Growers packing facilities, Helena Chemical in Tasley, the towns of Onancock and Parksley, Riverside Shore Rehabilitation Center, Nandua High School, and Nandua Middle School. This Wellhead Protection Area is the largest on the Shore.

HAZARD PREPAREDNESS & COMMUNITY CAPABILITIES

PLANNING

Onley has participated in the hazard mitigation planning process since 2011, before then the Town defaulted to the County plan. The Town’s primary risk is associated with storm water flooding.

Table 6: Town of Onley Hazard Mitigation Resources

	Ordinances, Plans, & Publications													Resources, Committees						
Authority	Building Code	Chesapeake Bay Act	SWMP	Hazard Mitigation Plan	Comprehensive Plan	Ordinance	Storm Water Regulations	Transportation Infrastructure Inundation Vulnerability Report	All Hazards Preparedness	Emergency Operations Plans	Mutual Aid	Agreements/Documents	Neighborhood Emergency Help	Viginia Hurricane Evacuation	Oil & HazMat Response Plan; HazMat Commodity Flow	Ground Water Committee	Navigable Waterways Committee	Climate Adaptation Working Group	ES Disaster Preparedness Coalition	
Local		*			*	*														
County	*		*																	
Regional				*				*	*	*	*				*	*	*	*	*	*
State		*					*							*						
Federal		*																		

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM & HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM

NFIP

The Town does not participate in the NFIP, and has not expressed interest in participating.

HMGP

Onley has not participated in the HMGP.

HAZARD PROFILE

Storm water flooding poses the greatest risk to the Town and has the most frequent impact.

WIND

No parts of Town lie in the wind-borne debris hazard area. This area extends 1-mile inland from the coast. The Town lies in the 110-120 mph design wind zone (Accomack County Building Code).

Most of the residential areas are older and have mature trees in and around the homes. During a high wind event falling branches or trees may damage some structures and cause power outages as much of the Town is served by aboveground power lines. Historically, hurricanes and northeasters have caused damages in Town.

COASTAL EROSION

No structures are at immediate risk to coastal erosion.

COASTAL FLOODING

No portions of the Town lie within a Special Flood Hazard Area or within the X zone, which is the 500-year floodplain. The threat of coastal flooding within the Town is considered to be minimal.

STORM WATER FLOODING

Storm water flooding poses the greatest risk to the Town and has the most frequent impact. Approximately 40% of the Town contains hydric soils that are unsuitable for drainage and readily retain rainwater. The Onley Town Comprehensive Plan indicates that the Town's hydric soils are located primarily on the eastern side of Route 13 with minimal areas on the western side of Town. The depth to ground water in these areas is typically less than three feet. The hydric soils within Onley are a major limiting factor for development as there are severe limitations with respect to their capacity to support on-site septic systems. All residents in Onley utilize on-site septic systems for residential waste disposal. Flood septic drain fields can pose a health risk to residents during and following a storm event. A secondary hazard from standing water associated with poorly drained hydric soils is the potential for mosquito-borne diseases that could impact the health of residents. The Town does implement a mosquito-control program to mitigate this problem.

The Town relies on the Virginia Department of Transportation to perform maintenance on the main drainage ditches within the Town limits.

Eastern Shore of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan

Beginning with the November Northeaster of 2009, the Town experienced prolonged and extensive storm water flooding throughout the winter of 2009-2010. Transportation in the Town was restricted by flood waters throughout the winter. Historically, flood waters have had prolonged retention times due to poorly drained soils and inadequately maintained and designed drainage ditches in Town. The Town wishes to remediate storm water flooding hazards by cooperating with VDOT and implementing mitigation strategies.

Areas which experience the most significant flooding are:

- Drainage from the Wal-Mart property to adjacent areas in Town
- Drainage adjacent to Rat Trap Creek on the southern and eastern portions of Town
- Along Forest Street
- Along Badger Lane
- Main Street near the eastern boundary of Town
- Residential area between Coastal Boulevard, Main Street, and Route 13

HAZARDS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

GROUND WATER CONTAMINATION

The Town faces a threat of ground water contamination from several sources including failed septic systems within Town, leaks and spills of petroleum based products from underground storage tanks, and major industrial facilities within the area. In Onley, all residential treatment of wastewater and sewage is done through on-site septic systems with approximately 253 on-site septic systems within Town limits. The majority of commercial sewage and wastewater is treated at four mass drainfields that exist in or adjacent to the Town (Onley Comprehensive Town Plan, 2010). The Town has no public water supply and residents and commercial users are solely reliant on private wells. Large withdrawals of ground water in the vicinity increase the possibility of well interference, salt water intrusion, and a deterioration of water quality (Onley Comprehensive Town Plan, 2010).

In April of 2016 the petroleum storage tanks for the Valero gas station were removed. New tanks were installed west of Route 13 with the new Royal Farms gas station and shop. The Wine Rack Exxon station recently replaced their tanks (John Pavlik, Zoning Administrator, personal communication, February 18, 2016). Aged tanks can pose a threat to the groundwater supply.

SNOW AND ICE

A large ice storm impacted the Town in the late 1990s. The ice storm downed tree limbs and power lines and also forced local businesses to close for several days. Residents also had no electricity for several days.

FIRE AND SMOKE

In the 1970's there was a fire on Main Street that destroyed a majority of those buildings. They were rebuilt with a lower profile.

CRITICAL FACILITIES

The following table lists the critical facilities and their relative importance to the Town.

Table 7: Onley Critical Facilities

Facility	HMP 2006	HMP 2011	HMP 2016	Hazards	No of People Affected	Loss potential	Relocation Potential	Retrofit Potential
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Town of Onley

Town-Owned Facilities								
Old Town Office/Police Department	-	X	X	Flooding Stormwater Wind Fire	516	Major Disruption	Yes	Yes
Only Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department	-	X	X	Stormwater Flooding Wind	516+	Major Disruption	No	Yes
Other Facilities								
Post Office	-	-	X	Flooding Stormwater Wind Fire	516+	Inconvenience	Yes	Yes
Riverside Hospital (just outside of Town limits)	-	-	X	Flooding Stormwater Wind Fire	10,000+	Devastating	No	Yes
Gas Stations	-	-	X	Flooding Stormwater Wind Fire	516+	Major Disruption	No	Yes

FINDINGS

1. The hazards expected to have the greatest impact on the Town are stormwater flooding and high wind events, which have been experienced throughout the Town's history. Other hazards of local significance include groundwater contamination, ice storms, drought, and mosquito-borne disease.

2. Much of the residential areas have older construction and mature trees around homes and churches. During a wind event, branches and trees may come down causing secondary damages and power outages.

3. The combination of poorly drained soils and inadequate drainage has resulted in some stormwater flooding problems for residents and businesses. The Town is interested in mitigating these problems through drainage assessments, design, and construction projects.