

CHAPTER 19: TOWN OF PAINTER

TOWN PROFILE

The coming of the New York, Pennsylvania, and Norfolk Railroad in the 1880s initiated a geographical population shift from the coasts to the center of the Eastern Shore. This created several new towns, including the Town of Painter, which lies at the exact center between the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and the Maryland state line. Painter, previously called “Mappsburg”, was incorporated by the Circuit Court of Accomack County in 1950 and has a total area of 400 acres. The main highway for the Eastern Shore, Route 13, intersects almost directly in the center of the Town (*Town of Painter Comprehensive Plan, 2002*).

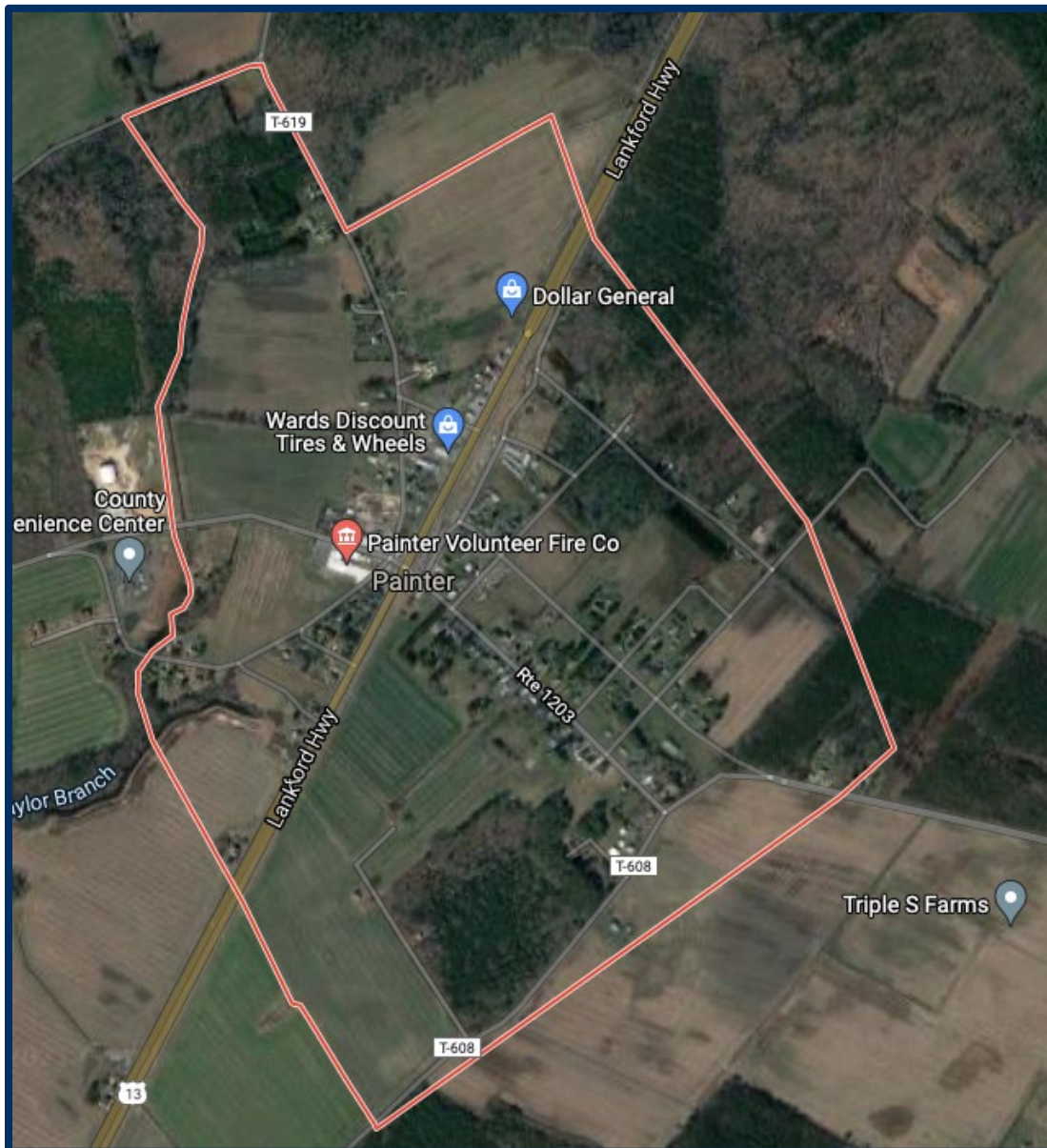


Figure 1: Painter Context and Google Map

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 relate 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.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the American Community Survey five-year estimates, the Town of Painter had a population of 245 in 2019. The median age is only 32.5, indicating a younger population; however, Town officials believe that age should be higher (Personal communications, Mayor Connie Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021). A younger population is generally good in regards to a hazard, unless there is a high population of young children; however, only 6.5% of the population in Painter is under the age of five. According to the ACS, the majority of the population is between the ages of 5-17 and 25-44 years.

The language residents speak is important to consider in the event of a hazard in regards to residents having the ability to access important safety information in a language they can understand. In the Town of Painter, 17% of residents speak a language other than English, that language being primarily Spanish. It is important for the Town to consider this when planning for hazards and to provide emergency information in both languages.

Table 1: Painter Demographic Information

	2020	2014*	2010**
Population	272	308	229***
Median Age	32.5*	35.8	39.7
Disability	25*	12	NA
Income			
Median Household Income	\$40,833*	\$51,667	\$39,063
Poverty Level	33.9%*	24.7%	NA
Language			
Only English	83.0%*	86.3%	79.2%
Other	17.0%*	13.7%	20.8%
Spanish	16.6%*	12.6%	20.8%
Indo-Euro	0.4%*	1.1%	0.0%
Asian	0.0%*	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.0%*	0.0%	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census 2020, *ACS, 2014-2019, **ACS, 2010, ***U.S. Census, 2010

WORKFORCE

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

According to Table 2, the majority of the work force in Painter is employed in the Educational and Health Care Services industry, which has been on an upward trend since 2010. Previously, a large percentage of the Town also worked in the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Food industry, but according to ACS 2019 estimates, that percentage has decreased significantly. Town officials believe the number of residents employed in the Retail industry should be higher and the Education and Health Care Services industry is likely lower (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021). The total civilian employed

population has decreased since 2010 as well, which is likely due to a high number of residents retiring (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021). The next two highest industries that employ residents of Painter are Construction and “Other”.

Table 2: Painter Local Workforce Industry

Civilian Employed Population						
Industry	2019		2014		2010*	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing/hunting, or mining	2	1.7%	6	3.8%	10	7.4%
Construction	12	10.6%	5	3.2%	4	2.9%
Manufacturing	9	8.0%	13	8.3%	2	1.5%
Wholesale trade	4	3.5%	23	14.7%	5	3.7%
Retail trade	7	6.2%	13	8.3%	29	21.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1	0.9%	15	9.6%	12	8.8%
Information	2	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rentals	6	5.3%	8	5.1%	12	8.8%
Professional, scientific, waste management	6	5.3%	2	1.3%	2	1.5%
Educational and health care services	37	32.7%	28	17.9%	15	11.0%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, food	8	7.1%	27	17.3%	25	18.4%
Public Admin	6	5.3%	12	7.7%	11	8.1%
Other	13	11.5%	4	2.6%	9	6.6%
TOTAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION	113	-	156	-	136	-

Source: ACS, 2014-2019, *ACS, 2010

BUSINESSES

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

The Town of Painter is primarily residential. Nearly all businesses in the Town are located just off Route 13. Some of these businesses include a gas station, Dollar General, a discount tire shop, United States Post Office, a food truck, farmers market, seafood stand, an HVAC shop, a nail salon, day care, and an antique shop (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021). The majority of businesses in Painter are in the Retail Trade industry.

Table 3: Painter Business Establishment Types

	Total Establishments
Industry Code Description	2021
Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	2
Construction	1
Manufacturing	0
Wholesale Trade	0
Retail Trade	14
Transportation and Warehousing	0
Information	0
Finance and Leisure	0
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1
Administrative and Support and Waste Management Remediation Services	0
Health Care and Social Assistance	1
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0
Accommodation and Food Services	1
Other Services (Except Public Admin)	1
Total, All Establishments	21

Source: Personal Communications, Mayor Connie Campbell and Town Clerk Kerri Atkinson, May 26, 2021

BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE

§201.6(d)(3) 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.

According to the American Community Survey five-year estimates, Painter's total housing units dropped from 141 in 2014 to 107 in 2019; however, the 2019 number is estimated to be too low and is likely closer to 2014 and 2010 figures shown in Table 4 (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021). Town officials also noted that the number of vacant housing units is likely closer to 15, with many dilapidated and in need of demolition. Although the Town currently does not have any demolition plans, they are interested in seeking funding opportunities to do so.

Another trend to note in Table 4 is the drastic decrease (over 50%) of owner-occupied housing units since 2010. This number is likely too low, whereas the number of renter-occupied units is too high (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021).

Table 4: Painter Housing

	2019	2014	2010*
Total Housing Units	107	141	142
Occupied	86	110	133
Vacant	21	31	9
Owner-Occupied	42	76	92
Renter-Occupied	44	34	41
Median Housing Value	\$107,800	NA	NA

Source: ACS, 2014-2019, *ACS, 2010

TRANSPORTATION

U.S. Route 13 is Painter's most visible transportation feature, bisecting the town with 18,000 vehicles per day. The four-lane principal arterial is part of the national defense Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET), a national system of highways necessary to support U.S. military operations, part of the National Highway System, and the Eastern Shore's only hurricane evacuation route.

The Town of Painter sits directly on Route 13. Just off the highway on both sides are the main residential areas, with the main commercial area being located on Route 13. The rest of the Town is made up of agricultural and wooded areas. Mappsburg Road in Painter connects the Town directly to the main highway, across the highway, and, in the other direction, to the Town of Quinby.

The measure of vehicles available to households is one indicator of a household's ability to evacuate when necessary. According to the 2019 five-year estimates by the American Community Survey, there are five occupied housing units without a vehicle in the Town of Painter; however, these residents have family and friends that would assist in the event of an evacuation (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021). Star Transit and Shore Ride are also available to transport residents up and down the Eastern Shore. Star Transit will operate during incoming hazardous events to help assist those without a vehicle and citizens with functional access needs evacuate; however, operations will cease once the hazard reaches a certain level.

Table 5: Painter Vehicles Available per Household

Vehicles Available	2019
None	5
One	21
Two	37
Three or more	23

Source: ACS, 2014-2019

COMMERCIAL AREAS

The commercial district in Painter is located along Route 13 and Railroad Avenue. Areas off the main highway in Town are primarily residential with agricultural and wooded areas throughout. The commercial district contains several retail shops, a gas station, Dollar General, food trucks and produce stands, as well as a few other businesses. There are two other businesses that are now closed, one of which was previously a bank and has recently been sold. Town officials are not aware of business plans for the former bank (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021).

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities are facilities required to support the services and functions provided by the Town government or in coordination with other public and private entities. These facilities enhance the overall quality of life for the Town and its citizens. It's important to note what facilities are available in case of a hazard, and it's important to make an inventory of facilities that could be affected by a hazard. Community facilities in Painter include the Town Hall and the Fire Department, which are housed in the same building.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police protection is provided by the Accomack County Sheriff's Department and Virginia State Police. The Painter Volunteer Fire Company provides the Town with fire protection and EMS services. The Fire Company is an all-volunteer department with 24 volunteer firefighters and 5 non-firefighting volunteers. The Company utilizes 2 pump trucks, 1 tanker, 1 brush truck, and a rescue vehicle with the ability to go through high water and snow. There are 2-3 paid EMS staff provided by the Accomack County Department of Public Safety and two ambulances that run out of Painter and are owned by the Wachapreague Volunteer Fire Company (Personal communications, Chief of Painter Volunteer Fire Company, May 26, 2021). Accomack County and surrounding towns also respond to calls when needed.



Figure 2: Painter Town Hall and Fire Department. Photo by Ashley Mills

WATER SUPPLY & SEWAGE DISPOSAL

All residential treatment of wastewater is done through on-site septic systems. The Town has no public water supply and residents and commercial users are solely reliant on private wells and septic systems for their water supply and wastewater disposal. Compared to other areas in the region, Town officials state that the soils in Painter are better for perking, although with heavy rains, septic issues may occur (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell, May 26, 2021).

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

The Town contracts with Davis Disposal for weekly residential trash collection, which is transported to a county transfer station. There is an Accomack County Convenience Center located just out of Town limits.

PARKS AND RECREATION

There are no parks within the Town of Painter; however, the Painter Garrison United Methodist Church has a playground and ball field available for residents (*Town of Painter Comprehensive Plan*, 2002).

DRAINAGE DITCHES

Maintenance of drainage ditches and storm drains in Town is the responsibility of VDOT and Accomack County. Stormwater drains are located along Main Street. Lack of maintenance previously resulted in flooding around this area; however, recent maintenance by VDOT has mitigated some of these flooding issues. Town officials stated that VDOT has been digging out ditches to improve drainage in areas just outside Town limits and expect they will be

digging within the Town soon (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021).

SCHOOLS

There are no schools within the Town of Painter. Keewee Cares is a private in-home daycare center located within Town limits (Personal communications, Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021).

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Town of Painter encompasses approximately 400 acres. Elevations in the Town range from a high of 37-feet and a low of 25-feet with overall slopes less than 1%, which may result in flooding due to poor drainage. Soils in Painter are either hydric or highly permeable and have a high potential for groundwater contamination. Presence of groundwater near the surface can cause septic system failure, which could result in groundwater contamination, putting the health of residents at risk (*Town of Painter Comprehensive Plan*, 2002).

LAND USE LAND COVER

The primary land uses in the Town are residential and agriculture, with commercial uses concentrated along the Route 13 corridor (*Town of Painter Comprehensive Plan*, 2002). Soil types in Painter are a major constraint to future development, as the Town has not experienced any new development in several years.

GROUND WATER

The Town of Painter is completely reliant on groundwater and faces a threat of contamination from several sources, including failed septic systems within the Town, leaks and spills of petroleum-based products from underground storage tanks, and major industrial facilities within the area.

HAZARD PREPAREDNESS & COMMUNITY CAPABILITIES

PREVIOUS HAZARD MITIGATION PLANS

§201.6(b)(3), §201.6(c)(3), §201.6(d)(3) Painter is participating in the hazard mitigation planning process for the first time. The Town's primary risk associated with hazards is stormwater flooding.

Table 6 : Town of Painter Hazard Mitigation Resources

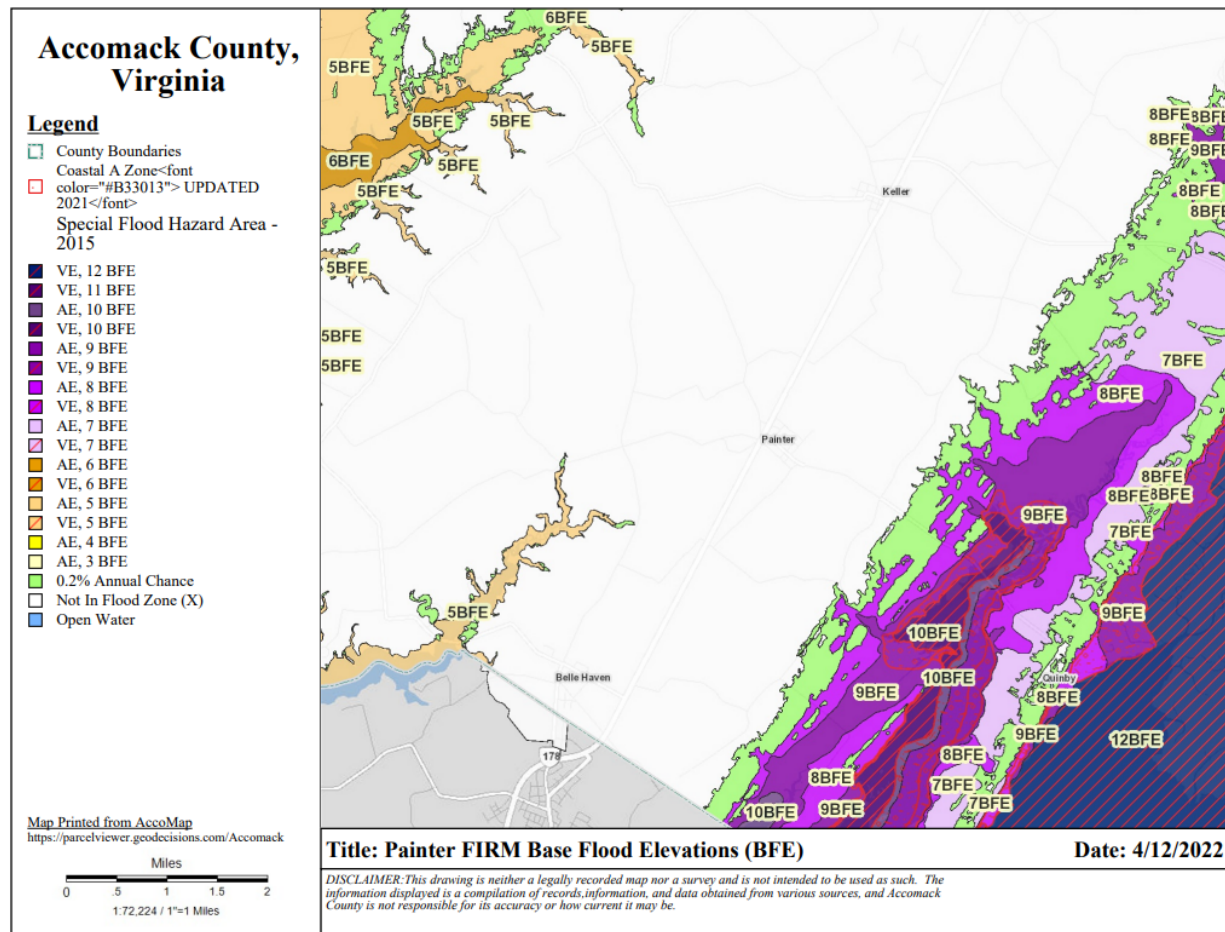
	Ordinances, Plans, & Publications															Resources, Committees			
Authority	Building Code	Chesapeake Bay Act	SWMP	Hazard Mitigation Plan	Comprehensive Plan	Zoning &/or Subdivision Ordinance	Storm Water Regulations	Transportation Infrastructure Inundation Vulnerability Report	All Hazards Preparedness Brochure	Emergency Operations Plans	Mutual Aid Agreements/Documents	Neighborhood Emergency Help Plan	Viginia Hurricane Evacuation Guide	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

[§201.6\(c\)\(2\)\(ii\)](#), [§201.6\(c\)\(3\)\(ii\)](#), [§201.6\(d\)\(3\)](#) The Town of Painter does not participate in the NFIP. There are no Special Flood Hazard Areas within the Town. More information on repetitive loss properties, NFIP policies and claims, and the CRS program can be found in Chapter 6: Coastal Flooding and Chapter 9: The Region.

Figure 3: Town of Painter FIRM Base Flood Elevation (BFE)



HMGP

The Town of Painter has not participated in the HMGP.

HAZARDS PROFILE

§201.6(c)(2)(i), §201.6(c)(2)(ii), §201.6(d)(3) Storm water flooding poses the greatest risk to the Town and has the most frequent impact.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND READINESS

The Town of Painter made few adjustments from normal operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Just one or two Town Council meetings needed to be canceled and were then held in the Painter Fire Department, which provides a larger space within the shared building. Attendees were able to abide by social distancing regulations and wore masks. Due to the Fire Department being a local polling place, the County provided Painter with plexiglass and other guidelines in order to allow voting. CARES Act funds and other federal funding were left with Accomack County by the Town (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell, May 26, 2021).

WIND

No parts of the Town lie in the wind-borne debris hazard area. This area is defined as the area extending one 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 around the homes. During a high wind event, falling branches or trees may damage some structures or power lines. All power and communication lines in Town are above ground and susceptible to wind damage.

COASTAL EROSION

No structures are at immediate risk to coastal erosion.

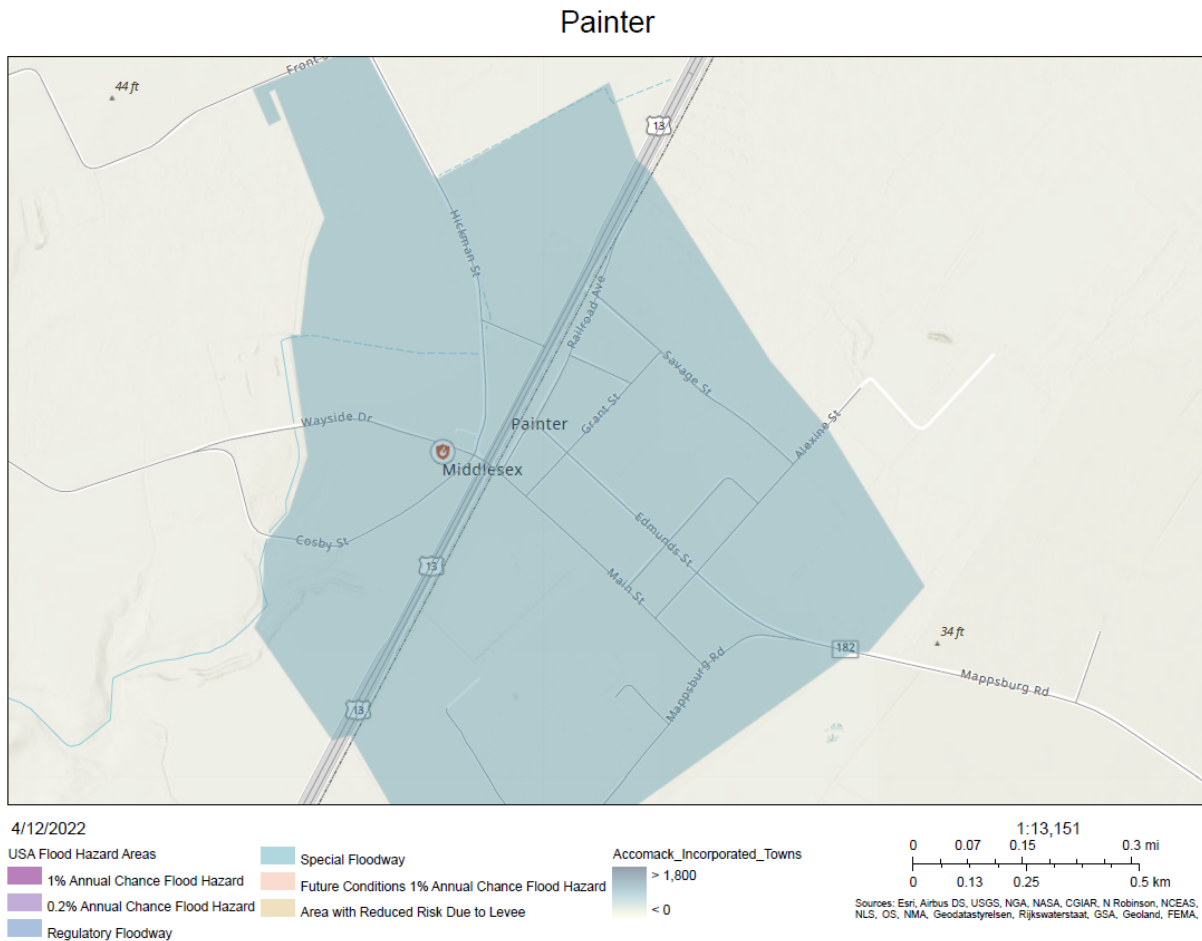
STORM WATER FLOODING

Storm water flooding has the greatest and most frequent impact on the Town. Due to the Town being relatively flat with slopes less than 1%, areas without adequate drainage and poorly drained soils are prone to storm water flooding (*Town of Painter Comprehensive Plan*, 2002). Drainage ditches in Town are maintained by VDOT and Accomack County. Recent and ongoing maintenance to drainage ditches has helped to mitigate some storm water flooding (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell, May 26, 2021).

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.

Figure 4: Town of Painter Flood Hazards to Infrastructure



HAZARDS OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

GROUND WATER CONTAMINATION

The Town faces a threat of ground water contamination from several sources including failed septic systems within the Town, leaks and spills of petroleum-based products from underground storage tanks, and above-ground fuel tanks. There are also major industrial facilities and agricultural lands within the area. In Painter, all residential treatment of wastewater and sewage is done through on-site septic systems. The majority of soils in the developed areas of Town are generally unsuitable for these conventional on-site septic systems due to the high permeability, wetness, and shallow depth to ground water (*Town of Painter Comprehensive Plan, 2002*).

ICE & SNOW STORMS

The Town has historically been impacted by ice and snow storms that have left residents stranded for extended periods of time. A large ice storm impacted the Town in the late 1990s. The storm downed tree limbs and power lines, forcing local businesses to close and residents to go without electricity for several days (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021).

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The U.S. Route 13 highway corridor runs through the Town, putting residents at greater risk from HAZMAT incidents resulting from traffic accidents involving tractor trailers carrying hazardous materials. The location of the gas station in Town also poses a threat, as Town officials note there have been several traffic accidents at the intersection and the vicinity of the gas station's location. There have been several occasions where tractor trailers have experienced leakage of hazardous materials, including chicken byproduct, and has required HAZMAT cleanup (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell and Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021).

TORNADOES

Tornadoes have not historically hit within Town limits, but they have occurred on the outskirts of Town and are a relevant concern. Although not officially documented as a tornado, it is believed a tornado ripped off the roof of the Fire Department in the 1980s (Personal communications, Mayor Campbell, May 26, 2021). Another tornadic event occurred just out of Town limits in the 1990s and caused severe damage to vehicles in the vicinity (Personal communications, Kerri Atkinson, Town Clerk, May 26, 2021).

CRITICAL FACILITIES

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

Table 7: Town of Painter Critical Facilities

Facility	Hazards	HMP 2006	HMP 2011	HMP 2016	HMP 2021	No of People Affected	Loss potential	Relocation Potential	Retrofit Potential
There are no Town-Owned Facilities in Painter									
Other Facilities									
Painter Fire and Rescue Department	Storm Water Flooding, Contamination, Wind	-	-	-	X	7,500+	Devastating	No	Yes
Town Hall	Storm Water Flooding, Contamination, Wind	-	-	-	X	245+	Major Disruption	No	Yes
U.S. Post Office	Storm Water Flooding, Contamination	-	-	-	X	245+	Major Disruption	No	Yes
Gas Station	HAZMAT Incidents, Storm Water Flooding, Wind	-	-	-	X	245+	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.
2. No part of the Town lies within any flood zone. The Town does not currently participate in the NFIP.
3. Secondary hazards facing the Town include groundwater contamination, HAZMAT incidents impacting water and air quality, ice and snow storms, and tornadoes.
4. The Town identified areas previously impacted by stormwater flooding and noted that maintenance to drainage ditches by VDOT has assisted in the mitigation of this issue. Regular maintenance and upkeep of drainage ditches is extremely important to reduce the risk of stormwater flooding in Town.
5. This is the Town's first time participating in the hazard mitigation planning process.