

Turning the Tide

Perryman's Path from Sacrifice Zone
to Sustainable Community for a
Healthier Chesapeake Bay



February 2024

Prepared by:

3P Protect Perryman Peninsula
Steering Committee





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The endeavor we embark upon seeks to right historical and systemic environmental injustices and to pave the way for a sustainable, equitable future. The passion and dedication of everyone involved affirm that we are not alone in this journey.

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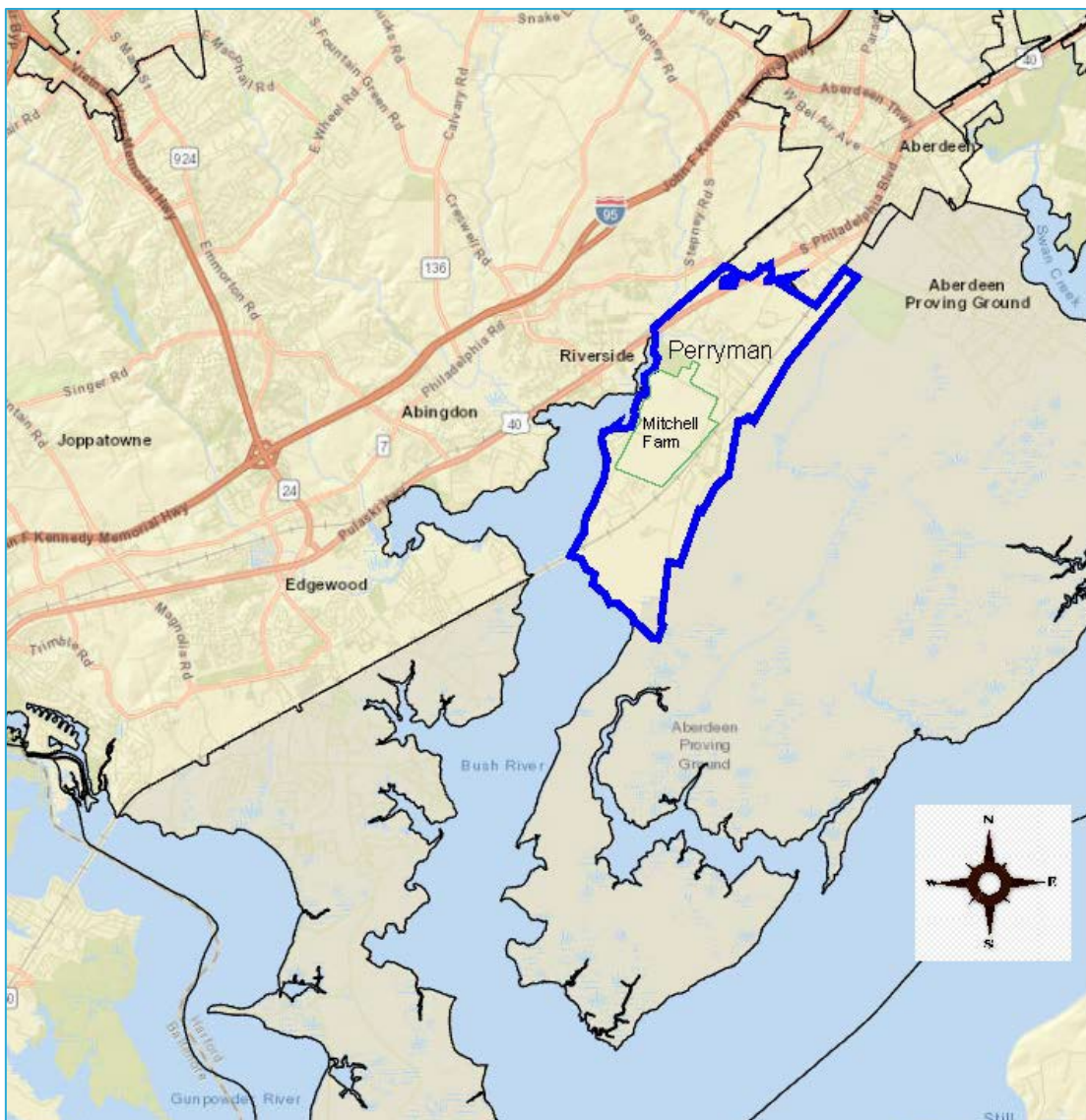
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mitchell Farm — More than just a piece of land, the Mitchell farm serves as a stark emblem of the deep-rooted systemic racism and environmental injustice that has perennially afflicted southern Harford County. The County's pattern is clear and concerning. Heavy pollution-bearing development is funneled into the County's southern regions where minority and economically disadvantaged communities reside. While, in contrast, the northern, affluent white population sees preservation of farmland and a lesser environmental burden. This glaringly uneven distribution is not a mere coincidence; it is a manifestation of systemic racial bias and economic disparity fueled by the disparate impact of decades of county zoning policy and decisions. Mitchell Farm's position on the Bush River, a lifeline to the Chesapeake Bay, amplifies our call to redefine land use policies, ensuring they stand against the dual shadows of industrial pollution and societal injustices. As shown in Figure 1, below is a map outlining the Perryman Census Designated Place (CDP). The Perryman peninsula is defined as Harford County lands within the boundaries of Bush River/Church Creek to the west, and US Route 40 to the north-west, US Route 7/Old Philadelphia Rd./MD Route 715 to the north and APG to the east.



Perryman is an unincorporated town located in eastern Harford County, Maryland wedged between the Bush River and Aberdeen Proving Ground.

FIGURE 1: Vicinity Map

Our proposal charts a transformative path for the fields, forests, and wetlands of Mitchell Farm, to a state park that embodies environmental responsibility and racial equity. While this transition aligns with the Governor's mission for the rejuvenation of Chesapeake Bay, our vision goes deeper. We are committed to rectifying long-standing housing inequalities, bolstering infrastructure that has historically been denied to marginalized communities, and carving out community spaces that resonate with the spirit of inclusivity.

Financial strategy is paramount. We have meticulously crafted a financial blueprint that binds together government agencies, private investors, and the community in a cohesive commitment. But the Mitchell Farm's property significance extends beyond local concerns. It stands as a symbol of Maryland's steadfast commitment to not only environmental care but also to dismantling the pillars of racial and economic inequity.

Your esteemed position as Attorney General is pivotal. History is replete with examples of how legal intervention has unseated giants like big tobacco, mitigated the opioid crisis, and clipped the wings of predatory lenders. Your office has the authority and the mandate to probe, challenge, and litigate, holding Harford County's policymakers accountable. Joining forces with state and federal allies in this legal endeavor can usher in transformative change. We fervently urge a halt on further industrial ventures until a comprehensive impact assessment is commissioned. This decisive action will ensure that Harford County's future trajectory is in alignment with sustainability, racial justice, and the holistic well-being of its residents and the greater Chesapeake region.

UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Imperative of Inclusion

Environmental justice is a pivotal concept that underpins this report, as well as Governor Moore's motto, 'No one left behind.' Simply put, environmental justice seeks to ensure that all communities—regardless of race, income, or social standing—have equal access to a clean, safe living environment. It aims to redress the disproportionate exposure to pollution, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to green spaces often experienced by underserved communities. Perryman stands as a glaring example of this oversight. While vast swaths of Maryland revel in natural beauty and resources, Perryman's residents grapple daily with pollution, the roar of tractor-trailers, and the absence of safe infrastructure, and improved park spaces. In essence, Perryman is being left behind even as this report is penned.

Perryman Peninsula: An Overview

Imagine a young boy, who lives in Perryman where sidewalks and crosswalks are absent, but tractor-trailer traffic has surged. With every breath from his asthma inhaler, he is reminded of the pressing environmental injustices that plague his community. Though the Bush River is tantalizingly close, he has never had the chance to fish, explore its banks, or feel its fresh breeze. He dreams of a nearby place to play that does not aggravate his asthma—a place where he can climb trees and connect with the world around him.



Image created by: Chat GPT /DALL•E

The lack of a local park is not just inconvenient; it is an affront to justice and equality. Parks serve as more than just open spaces; they function as natural classrooms for children. Unstructured play in a safe, natural environment provides irreplaceable lessons about ecology, biology, and conservation—lessons kids in Perryman and the surrounding area are currently denied. Mitchell Farm, then, is not just a proposed state park; it is a catalyst for transforming the lives of Perryman's youth and the community's future.

Perryman's Historical Landscape: Echoes of Racial Inequities

Perryman's rich African American heritage, stretching back centuries, paints a picture of resilience. But with time, while chains broke, invisible boundaries formed. The industrial developments disproportionately impacting predominantly African American neighborhoods are a testament to those lingering boundaries. As shown in Figure 2, the 1776 Spesutia lower hundred census highlights an almost balanced racial mix—790 people (55%) were white, and 650 (45%) were African American. Among the African American population, a mere four

individuals were listed as free. This racial balance, exceptional by any metric, persists to this day. In 2021 there were 50% white, 37% African American, 13% other (Hispanic/Asian/Mixed Race). Notably, the percentage of non-white in the Perryman Peninsula is twice that of Harford County overall. While freedom has been legally attained by all, the chains of environmental injustice continue to bind many, keeping them ensnared in a modern form of oppression.

Nestled at the confluence of the Bush River and the Chesapeake Bay, Perryman's landscape serves as a treasure trove of Maryland's history and natural beauty. Its story traces back to ancient Native American settlements, European exploration led by Captain John Smith in 1608, and a series of impactful wars. Yet, we cannot overlook Perryman's deeply rooted history in slavery, a history that continues to reverberate today.

James Phillips, one of the area's wealthiest men in 1689, possessed five unnamed enslaved individuals according to his probate inventory. His son, James John Phillips, inherited a tract of land documented in 1762. This land was tilled by indentured servants and tenant farmers but primarily by enslaved people. Aquila Nelson, a significant landowner, had eleven slaves by 1800, a number that increased to sixteen by 1810. Events took a turn in September 1814 when four enslaved men—Peter, George, Mark, and Primus—escaped Nelson's grasp to help the British. Their escape illuminates the deep desire for freedom, a struggle still palpable among today's African American residents in Perryman.

Today, the legacy of slavery manifests in systemic imbalances that disproportionately affect Perryman's African American community.

Areas close to predominantly African American neighborhoods bear the brunt of industrial encroachment and environmental degradation. Understanding this historical context is crucial for grasping the depth of social systemic and economic inequities that plague Perryman today.

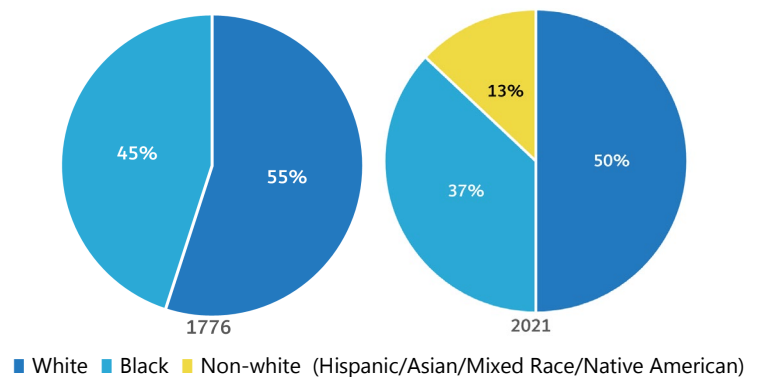


FIGURE 2: Percentage of Race in Perryman CDP

POVERTY ISLAND, home of freed slaves and their ancestors, was part of the APG land acquisition. Spesutie Island, a hunting playground for the wealthy, was spared from the exodus.

Link below to 3P Presentation on the history of Perryman Peninsula.

<https://protectperryman.com/history-of-perryman-peninsula/>

This 5.5 mi.² rural community of 2,800 residents with over 1,100 homes serves as a treasure trove of Maryland's history and natural beauty. Its story begins with ancient Native American settlements and later shifts to European exploration, notably guided by Captain John Smith in 1608. During both the American Revolution and the War of 1812, the peninsula remained a rural landscape, largely dominated by slave-occupied labor camps. Today's challenges, from the strain of industry to environmental degradation, are often shouldered most heavily by the descendants of these African American residents. The industrial zones, encroaching closer to predominantly African American neighborhoods, serve as stark reminders of systemic imbalances that persist.

The peninsula's natural advantages—proximity to vital waterways, fertile lands, an expanding U.S. railroad network, and local entrepreneurship—set the stage for the emerging canning industry in the late 1800s. When the U.S. government sought to bolster national defense during World War I, these qualities led to the establishment of the Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) in 1917 on over 70,000 acres. The Federal land acquisition process perpetuated economic inequities by providing unequal compensation for land taken based on race and occupation.

Industrial Development: Impervious Surface

Much debate occurred in the 1980s over the County's first comprehensive county re-zoning in 24 years. Then County Planner Robert Lynch noted there has been "excessive" industrial zoning in Perryman. Another goal of the planning department was to make the Bush River shoreline more accessible to the public. Included in this debate was Mitchell Property owner Wilber Pearce advocating for expanded tax credits for agricultural preservation over development. Simultaneously, county planners and council members recognized the inadequacy of the infrastructure for development. Negotiations with APG for an access road off Route 715 to isolate commercial traffic from residential failed to materialize. Public rezoning hearings in 1989 foresaw the potential for "catastrophic" outcomes from the rezoning of the Perryman peninsula. Starting in the 1990s, the Mitchell family sold their land east of the AMTRAK lines for development, shifting it from agricultural use to industrial zones featuring large distribution facilities. Political leaders and landowners originally insisted that such development would stay confined to the east side of the tracks. Since that time, a staggering 11 million square feet of mega freight distribution facilities have sprung up, as shown in Figure 3 below. Alongside them, almost an equal amount of road and parking facilities have been built, totaling around 20 million square feet of impervious surface.

At this juncture, it is important to clarify the term "impervious surface" and its implications. Simply put, impervious surfaces are materials like asphalt, rooftops, and concrete that water cannot penetrate. These surfaces channel stormwater into drains instead of allowing it to soak into the ground. This becomes problematic in Perryman, especially given the multiple layers of existing pollution and recharge of the public wellfields. The inability of these surfaces to absorb water can worsen flooding and accelerate the flow of pollutants into nearby waterways, escalating environmental issues.

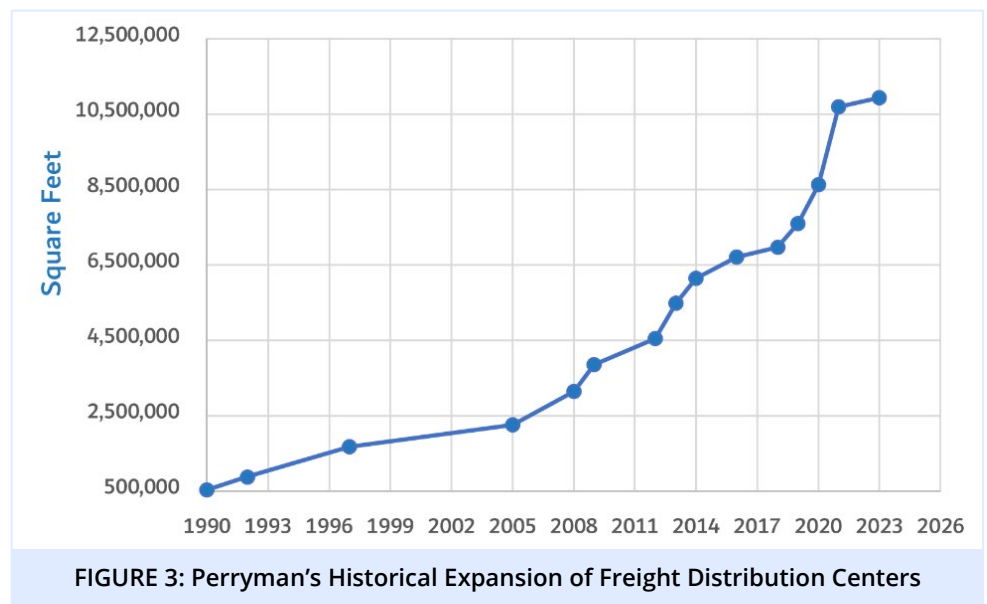
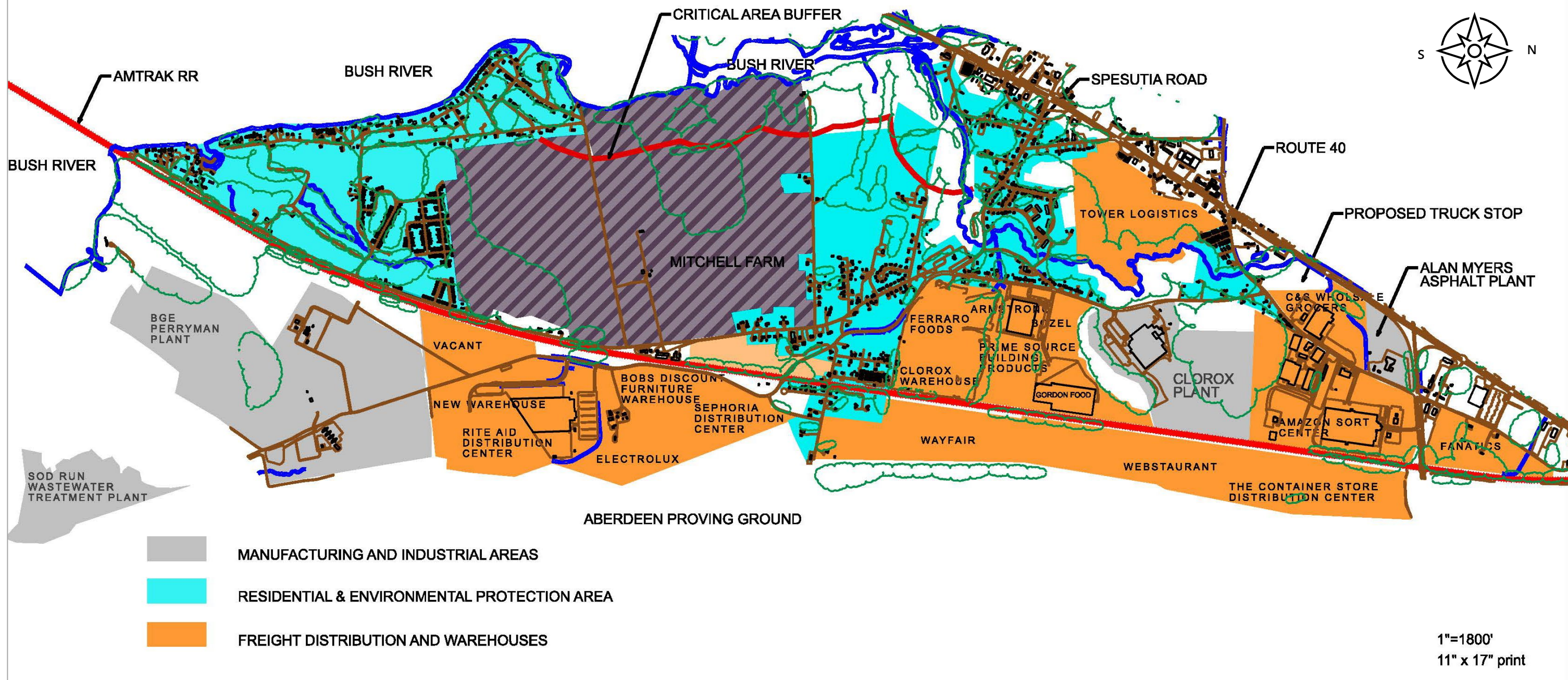


EXHIBIT 1: Schematic of Land Use



Despite this exponential growth in facilities and the impervious surfaces that accompany them, Perryman's infrastructure has remained nearly static. No additional access routes into the Perryman Peninsula have been built, leaving residents grappling with the compounded burdens of traffic, safety hazards, and pollution. As a result, the quality of life and property values in the community have taken a substantial hit.

Unfortunately, while the Mitchell Farm property on the west side of the tracks has continued to be farmed with no infrastructure and industrial preparations, the property was allowed to be rezoned to Light Industrial in 1998. The Mitchell family continues to this day to lease the cultivated productive farmland which is intertwined with the Perryman residential community.

Today, the Perryman Peninsula offers a tale of two communities, as shown in Exhibit 1. The western side bears the brunt of industrial development, while the eastern side nurtures a growing residential community rich in culture and diversity. The imbalances of this industrial expansion, often skewing toward areas with significant African American populations, highlight a disturbing pattern of environmental injustice. Despite this vibrancy, the area has been left behind by Harford County officials who prioritize industrial activities over public safety, water quality, and environmental sustainability. This focus on freight distribution centers as a path to economic prosperity overshadows the pressing needs and lived experiences of Perryman residents. The current Mitchell Farm property is approximately 711 acres. This is 20% of Perryman's 3,500 acres. Prior to industrial development that began in the 1960's, Perryman was 60% farmland, approximately 2,115 acres, predominately owned by the Mitchell family.

Data Mapping: Perryman CDP, Maryland

Perryman Census Designated Place (CDP) serves as a vital snapshot of Maryland's varied demographics and social challenges. As shown in Figure 4, the area is home to approximately 2,767 residents, and the racial breakdown is notably diverse: 50% are white, 37% are African American, 9% are Hispanic, and the remaining 4% includes Asian, Native American, and other ethnic groups [Cite: [U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates](#)].

The higher percentage of African Americans in Perryman when compared to many parts of Maryland underscores the community's rich African American heritage and the subsequent challenges they've faced.

Digging deeper, we find that the educational landscape shows glaring gaps. Only 228 or 8.2% of Perryman's population has a bachelor's degree or higher, a stark contrast to Maryland's 42.5%. This educational disparity, especially pronounced within the African American community, echoes the long-standing barriers faced by historically marginalized populations in Perryman. The disparity points to systemic barriers in educational access [[2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, S1501](#)].

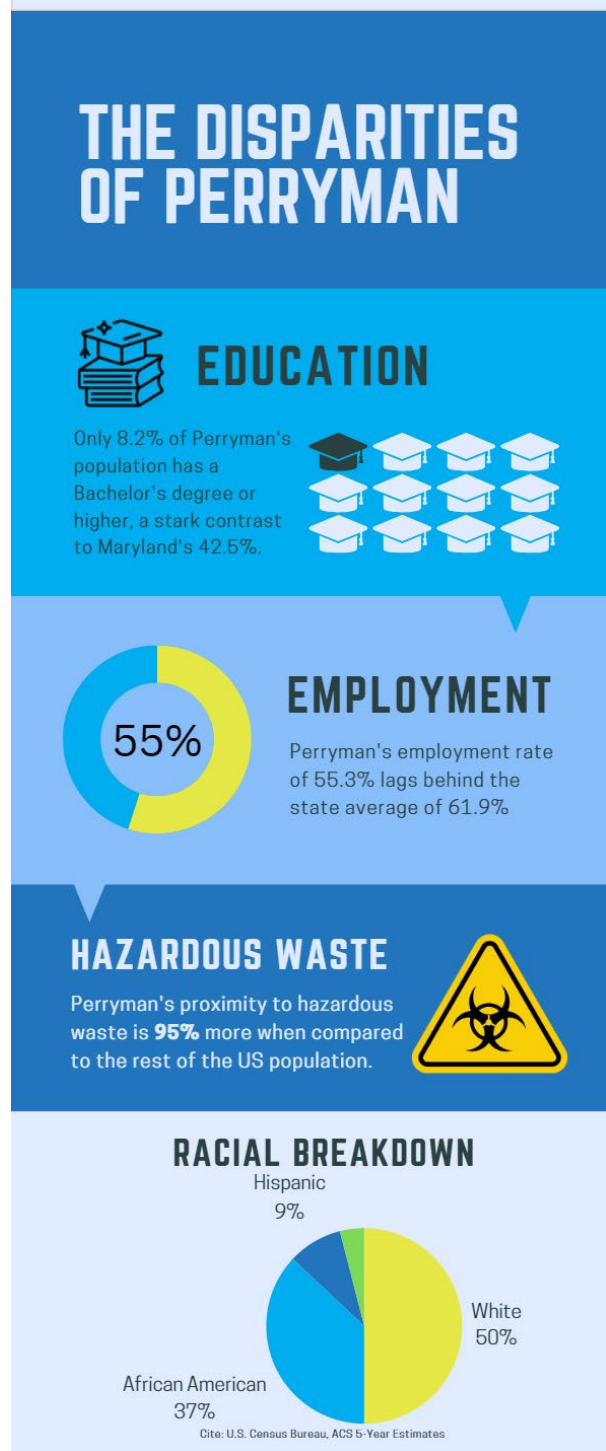
Employment data offer additional insights. Perryman's employment rate of 55.3% lags behind the state average of 61.9%. Historical factors and systemic racial biases might have played a role in these disparities. This lower rate might hint at fewer job opportunities or other factors affecting residents' quality of life [[2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP03](#)].

The housing scene is equally telling. A significant 35.2% of rented units go for less than \$500. While the low cost might seem like a benefit, it raises questions about the quality of available housing [Cite: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04]. Given the racial makeup of Perryman, these housing figures also hint at potential racial disparities in housing quality and affordability. The homeownership rate in Perryman is 58.9%, below Maryland's 67.8%, and housing values are modest, with 30.1% of homes valued under \$50,000 [[2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP04](#)].

In conclusion, Perryman CDP is a community in need of careful scrutiny. Its demographics are diverse, but disparities in education, employment, and housing suggest underlying systemic issues. These disparities disproportionately impact the African American community, painting a clear picture of the challenges they continue to face. While specific health data is not included in this report, all indicators suggest disparities in this area as well. This information is instrumental for an inquiry into Housing & Urban Development Department (HUD) and environmental justice discrimination. Investigative focus and targeted interventions are urgently needed to improve conditions and assure fairness for Perryman residents.

With this historical foundation laid, let us delve into one of the most pressing concerns facing Perryman today: its escalating water crisis. As we will see, the community's water struggles intertwine deeply with its past, its racial dynamics, and its fight for environmental justice.

FIGURE 4: Disparities of Perryman



EQUITY ON THE LINE

Perryman's Escalating Water Crisis

Safe Drinking Water: The Perryman Wellfield

Perryman is home to the “Perryman Wellfield,” also known as the “County Wellfield,” as shown in Figure 5. This wellfield taps into three separate aquifers that make up the Potomac Group. These aquifers lie beneath the Perryman Peninsula and serve both the County's Wellfield and private residential wells.

According to the Maryland Department of Environment's (MDE) 2000 report, this wellfield supplies water to 90,000 residents and 32,000 connections, making up about 30% of Harford County's drinking water.

Harford County's 2020 Water Quality Report states that the county draws nearly 2 billion gallons of groundwater annually from the Perryman Wellfield. Yet, this wellfield faces contamination from Trichloroethylene (TCE), Perfluoro-n-Octanoic Acid (PFOA), and Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS), all originating from Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG). These PFOS and PFOA chemicals are Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently regulated, setting maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) at zero. This is evidence of the County completely ignoring groundwater recharge violations.

Despite some wells having TCE treatment, no controls exist for PFAS or for potential contaminants migrating into private residential wells and the county wellfield. For many Perryman residents, especially those in historically marginalized communities, these groundwater sources are not just a utility; they are a lifeline. Contaminated waters and polluted air are not just environmental issues; they are manifestations of deep-rooted racial disparities. These hazards bear down heavily on Perryman's African American community, reflecting a broader narrative of environmental racism.

Groundwater Dependency: Perryman's Lifeline

While industrial businesses in Perryman benefit from piped water from the local municipal source, a substantial portion of the community paints a different picture. Numerous residential homes, smaller local businesses, and places of worship remain tethered to private wells for their water needs. This profound dependence underscores a deep-rooted connection between the residents and their local environment. Any disruption to these vital groundwater sources does not merely represent an ecological imbalance, it threatens the very core of daily life, health, and sustenance for many in Perryman. It is not just about environmental conservation; it is about safeguarding the community's fundamental rights and well-being.

Hydrogeology: Recharge and Risk

As shown in Figure 5, rainfall and surface waters play a crucial role in replenishing the Perryman Wellfield's aquifers. This natural process of recharging takes place over the Mitchell Farm property, an expanse of open land characterized by agricultural fields, lush woodlands, and vital wetlands.

The proposed industrial developments puts this delicate balance at risk. Plans show that more than 93 acres of this recharge area could be sealed off with impervious surfaces. This looming threat poses significant risks not only to the natural process of aquifer recharge, but also to the overall quality of our domestic water supply.

The situation is heightened by the fact that a reduction in the aquifer's recharge capacity would necessitate a greater reliance on alternative sources, notably lands within the Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG). Considering APG's troubling history of hazardous drinking water contaminants, such a shift could be catastrophic. Both private residential wells in Perryman and one of Harford County's primary public drinking water sources would face significant risks. This scenario, characterized by intentional disregard for implementing longstanding recommendations and the absence of updated studies, mirrors the devastating water crises as seen in places like Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and Flint, Michigan.

Forested Wetlands:

Nature's Invaluable Purifiers

Beyond the known water sources, Perryman holds another ecological treasure: its forested wetlands. These areas serve as nature's sophisticated filtration systems, regulating water flow, significantly reducing the risk of flooding, and the sequestering nutrients and carbon. But their role does not stop at water regulation. Forested wetlands are teeming with life, providing rich habitats for a diverse array of flora and fauna. Their dense trees and understory vegetation not only support wildlife but also act as sponges, absorbing and filtering pollutants that might otherwise directly contaminate our waterways and reduce commercial aquatic resources such as fish and crabs. The proposed industrial developments threaten to degrade these wetlands, diminishing their capacity to serve these essential roles. Protecting these wetlands is not merely an environmental imperative; it is a call to safeguard the health, safety, and ecological balance of the Perryman community.

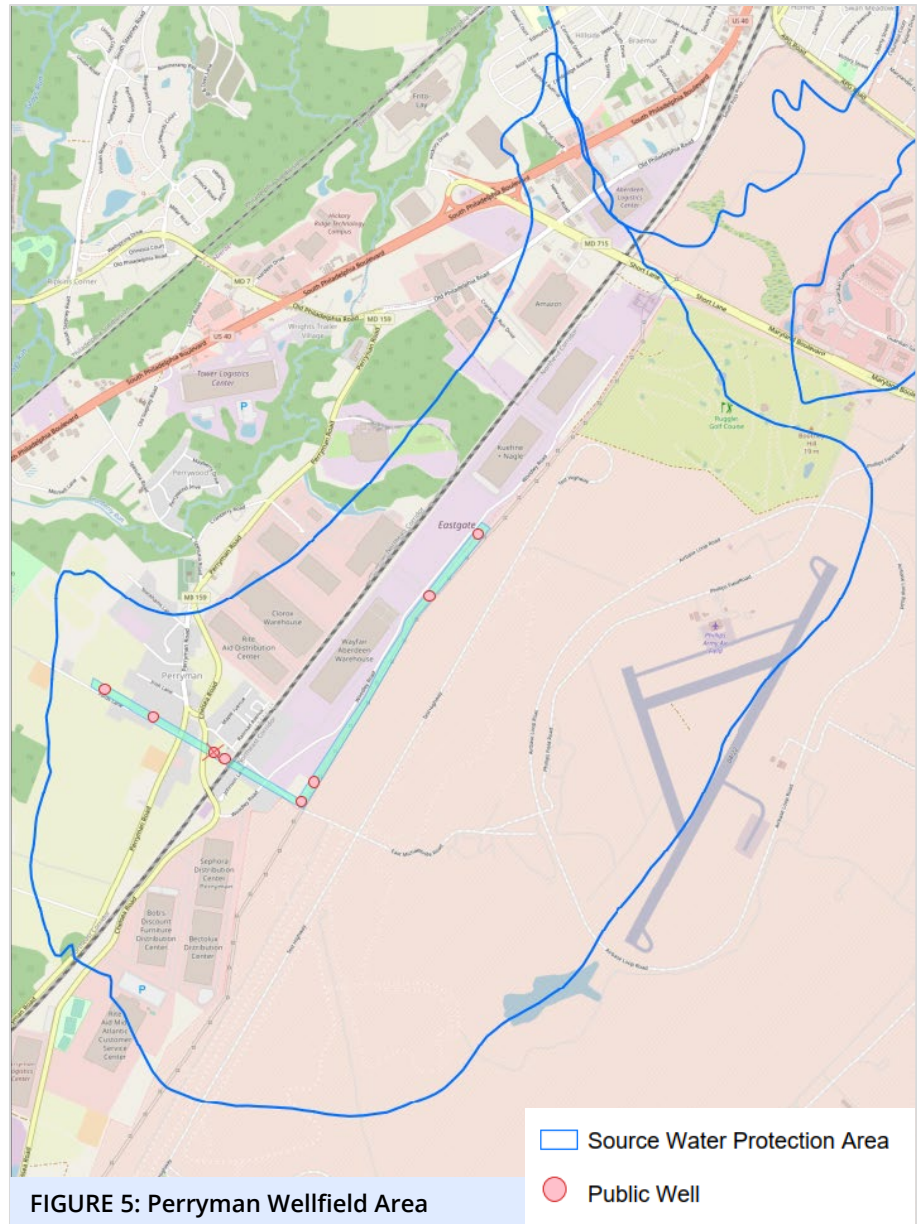


FIGURE 5: Perryman Wellfield Area

Stormwater and MS4 Violations: A Hidden Menace

The proposed development will add an enormous amount of impervious surface, generating millions of gallons of contaminated stormwater. In a single inch of rainfall, this development could produce around 4.7 million gallons of stormwater, laden with harmful substances like diesel fuel, oil, other automobile fluids, and heavy metals. This poses a direct threat to the Bush River and its sub-watersheds, including Cranberry Run and Church Creek.

A prime example of this concern is evident in the Gunpowder River, just south of the Bush, where once dense underwater grasses along its shore and near its mouth have seen a drastic decline. A significant loss in these grasses, vital for local aquatic habitats, has been attributed to unchecked development, muddy and nutrient rich runoff, which clouds the water and obstructs sunlight. This showcases the broader repercussions of unchecked industrial activity on Maryland's waterways. Integrating the lessons from the Gunpowder, it is clear that the projected impervious surfaces from the development can exacerbate this situation, further suppressing these grasses and indirectly harming aquatic life.

One of the critical aspects that often goes under the radar is the significance of municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) violations. MS4 permits are essential because they control stormwater pollution to improve water quality. Failure to comply can result in substantial fines and legal complaints. Harford County's MS4 permit mandates the prevention of pollutants in stormwater discharges. However, an EPA audit in 2009 found the county in violation of its MS4 permit, leading to a \$75,000 fine, later negotiated to \$27,000. Despite this, ongoing violations appear to continue. The community has provided video evidence and consistently reported issues to both MDE and Harford County without resolution.

In their 2021 Annual MS4 Report, Harford County claims that meeting the permit requirements exceeds their maximum extent practicable (MEP) standard. The evidence suggesting non-compliance makes the MS4 issue not just an environmental concern but also a legal and financial liability for the county.



LINK TO ARTICLE - [In August 2022, a plume of orange, silt-laden water covers much of Maryland's lower Gunpowder River. Aerial photos taken in summer 2023 showed similar plumes. Photo](#)



Sediment caused by the initial construction on Abington Woods that was halted by court order and the source of the muddy water pictured flowing out of Otter Point Creek into the Bush.

Bush River: A Pillar of Biodiversity and Recreation

The Bush River is more than just a waterway; it is the lifeblood of Perryman and a cornerstone of the region's ecological richness. This river, meandering gracefully through our community, supports a wealth of biodiversity, from its vibrant aquatic habitats teeming with fish and amphibians, like the spadefoot toad, to its shores that play host to an array of bird species, including bald eagles, ospreys and a variety of waterfowl and water birds. Beyond its ecological importance, the Bush River has historically been a hub for recreation – a place where families come to fish, kayak, boat, and bask in its serene beauty.

Yet, with urban runoff, industrial discharges, and the looming threat of expansive developments, the purity and vitality of the Bush River are under siege. The degradation of its waters does not just signify an ecological loss, but it also represents the dwindling of a cherished recreational spot and a vital cultural symbol for Perryman. As we move forward, safeguarding the Bush River becomes not just an environmental prerogative but also a commitment to preserving Perryman's heritage, biodiversity, and the cherished moments of leisure it offers to its residents.



Bald Eagle Hunting on Bush River



Sandhill Crane on the Mitchell Farm

Watershed: A Hotspot of Concerns

The proposed Mitchell Farm property development falls within the Bush River Watershed, an area already marked as impaired under Sections 305(b) and 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. The river is known for its Blue Crab, Yellow Perch, and Striped Bass fishery. When last studied in 2002, the primary contaminant here is Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), which are closely related to contaminated stormwater runoff. The large-scale developments, incentivized by tax breaks, have resulted in 290 acres of impervious surface, aggravating stormwater input into the Bush River Watershed.

Sacrifice Zones: Perryman's Disproportionate Burden

It is a stark reality Perryman grapples with - being designated a "sacrifice zone." This term implies areas where residents, often from historically marginalized communities, are left bearing the brunt of environmental and health risks. Industry burgeons, and with it, the looming threats intensify. Perryman stands at the crossroads, vulnerable to transforming into an area compromised for industrial gains and profit. As developments cast their shadow, the region's precious water sources, ecosystem, and the well-being of its residents' face jeopardy. Sadly, Perryman's sacrifices often go unnoticed and unaddressed, but their implications are profound and far-reaching.

Community Action and Recommendations

The community has not stood idle; multiple attempts to report ongoing stormwater issues have been made. Despite this, Harford County's "2021 Annual MS4 Report" argues that permit requirements exceed their capabilities, a dubious claim given the ongoing large-scale developments.

In the face of these accumulating risks, immediate actions like re-zoning the Mitchell Farm property back to Agricultural, installing monitoring wells, and updating the Perryman Wellfield Protection Plan must be taken. This is not just the voice of a few; it's the collective outcry of Perryman. From local families to places of worship, the community's unity in this cause stands testament to the urgency of the matter. It is time for a collective call to action.

This water crisis underscores the need for a halt on all development within Perryman Wellfield Recharge Areas until comprehensive assessments and protective measures are in place. The community reserves the right to file a third-party

legal complaint and is calling for an EPA audit of Harford County's MS4 Permit compliance status. The water issues in Perryman are not isolated; they are deeply entwined with ongoing environmental justice issues, much like the intertwined roots of a forest. This is not just about water; it is about the life, health, and future of Perryman and Harford County. Therefore, the time for collective, meaningful action is now.

These recommendations serve as a roadmap for immediate and sustained action. The future of our community depends on swift, decisive steps to protect our most vital resource: water. The water crisis underscores Perryman's broader challenges. Yet, water is but one facet of Perryman's multifaceted struggle for environmental justice, safety, and infrastructure adequacy. A broader perspective reveals the depth of these challenges. For Perryman's present and future, the time to act is now. Join us in this essential fight for our community's health, heritage, and environment.

Urgent Recommendations for Water Protection

Given the gravity of the water crisis in Perryman, the following recommendations are critical and immediate actions that must be taken. The aim is to safeguard both private and public water supplies, and to ensure the environmental integrity of our community.

LAND USE AND ZONING

- Re-zone the Mitchell Farm property back to Agricultural status. This should be paired with incentives for agricultural preservation, funding for conservation easements, or similar land-use strategies to protect the Perryman Wellfield and the Bush River.
- Wellfield Protection. Enforce the Harford County Perryman Wellfield Protection Zone (WPZ) rules rigorously for proposed subdivisions and parcels. Any part of the WPZ within a parcel should be subject to all WPZ restrictions.
- Conduct a thorough reassessment of the existing 50% impervious surface limitation, particularly in light of past instances where this regulation was not adhered to legally. This review should aim to ensure future compliance and address any shortcomings in the enforcement of this critical environmental protection measure.
- Expand the WPZ to include all areas contributing to the Perryman Wellfield.

COMPREHENSIVE REZONING

- Eliminate Enterprise Zone from all Perryman properties.
- Immediate update of the County's Master Plan, to include taking the following actions:
 - Designate the Bush River Watershed as a Priority Preservation Area and fund conservation easements.
 - Exclude the Bush River Watershed from the Development Envelope due to the rivers impaired status.
 - Restrict any up-zoning within the Bush River Watershed.
 - Implement the Green Infrastructure Corridors outlined in HarfordNEXT.
 - Follow and implement signature strategies found HarfordNEXT.
- Investigate apparent MS4 NPDES/TMDL non-compliance and freeze additional development pending review.
- While these reviews are occurring, place a 2 year moratorium on all industrial development in Perryman.

ESTABLISH WATER QUALITY STANDARDS IN LINE WITH EPA DRINKING WATER, STATE AND COUNTY STANDARDS

- Conduct routine compliance checks.
- Review and inspect all existing developments within the WPZ to ensure they meet all requirements or have the necessary variances.
- Investigate apparent MS4 NPDES/TMDL non-compliance immediately. Then, freeze all new development in the Bush River Watershed until a complete review occurs. Next, implement stringent development restrictions. Also, introduce annual stormwater fees for large generators of increased stormwater runoff. These steps aim to raise the necessary funds to bolster Harford County's MS4 Program. Ultimately, they'll help meet the water quality standards and restoration goals for the Bush River.

TEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT MORATORIUM

- Halt all development within the Perryman Wellfield Recharge Areas until water quality assessments are updated/established to reflect current conditions:
 - Update the "Source Water Assessment for The Perryman Well Field."
 - Update the Perryman Wellhead Protection Plan based on the new assessment.
 - Update the Bush River Watershed Management Plan and complete Small Watershed Assessment Plans for Cranberry Run, Deep Spring Branch, Church Creek, and all remaining small watersheds within the Bush River Watershed.

MITCHELL FARM PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

- Updated Environmental Surveys: Commission an impartial Wetlands Survey of the entire Mitchell Farm property by MDNR/USACE. This should identify all existing natural features like intermittent streams, wetlands, and hydric soil complexes.
- Environmental Protection: Ensure that all streams, delineated wetlands, and hydric soils on the Mitchell Farm property are protected with appropriate buffers. These areas must not be incorporated into stormwater management facilities.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

- Mandate the installation of monitoring wells near all stormwater management facilities, as previously recommended by the Harford County Health Department. Institute quarterly sampling and reporting requirements and make the data available to the public.
- Stormwater Management: Require Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans for each facility on the Mitchell Farm property, complete with inspection, monitoring, and reporting requirements.

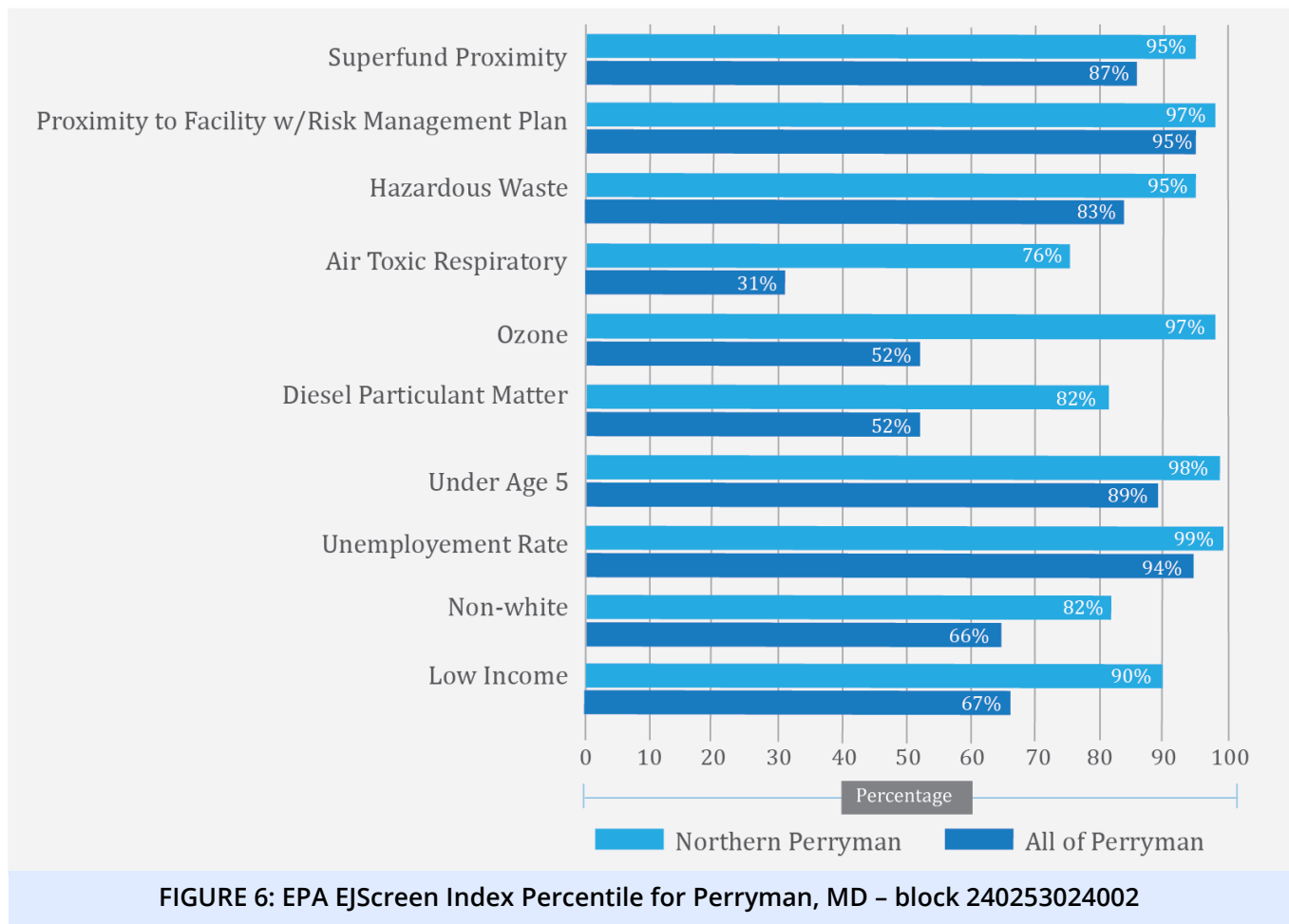
CONCERNS AND IMPLICATIONS

Environmental Justice Front and Center

The Perryman Peninsula grapples with an alarming set of environmental challenges. Analyze them through the lens of environmental justice, and the urgency escalates. Here we compare environmental and socioeconomic stressors in the most challenged area, the northern half of Perryman, to state and national averages, using data from the EPA's EJScreen tool.

EJScreen: Mapping the Reality

EJScreen serves as more than a database. It visualizes Perryman's challenges by merging environmental and demographic data. You can explore it here: [EJScreen](https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper), (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper>). As shown in Figure 6, the tool places Perryman above the 95th percentile nationwide for environmental concerns, including but not limited to: Hazardous Waste, Risk Management Plan facilities, and the proximity of Superfund sites. On the socioeconomic front, the area lands in the 94th percentile for unemployment, 89th for residents under age 5, and 90th for low income.



Environmental Burdens: The Weight of Disproportion

Perryman endures an outsized share of environmental burdens, driven by industrial and governmental policies. That's the reality right now, without even considering the potential of future developments, like the Mitchell Farm plan.

Perryman Demographics: Socioeconomic Struggles

Turning our attention to the socioeconomic challenges facing Perryman, we uncover further compelling evidence for the need for systemic change. A disquieting 44% of Perryman's residents fall under the demographic index for environmental justice concerns, eclipsing Maryland's 36%. The community grapples with an unemployment rate of 19%, despite the local freight terminals, a figure that sharply contrasts with Maryland's 6% and the national average. 50% of Perryman residents are non-white, and 38% of households are low-income—both figures signal a community overburdened and underserved, at high risk of environmental injustice. These troubling statistics do not just call for attention; they demand action. Additionally, Perryman is home to a large number of veterans, military families and support staff who face unique struggles. One transformative solution: the proposed Mitchell Farm State park, which can serve as an agent of socio-economic upliftment and climate equity, alleviating some of these systemic burdens.

Air Quality Equity: A Rising Concern

When discussing air quality, it is crucial to remember that the environmental challenges in Perryman resonate far beyond its borders. Given the area's significant diesel truck traffic, specialized local air quality monitoring becomes not just advisable, but essential. As shown in Figure 7, currently, Perryman's ozone level stands at a concerning 69.5 parts per billion (ppb), surpassing Maryland's average. It is a vital lesson in Environmental Science 101: everything is connected. Elevated ozone levels here will exacerbate the air quality issues across the county, the state, and even globally. This is not merely a localized concern; it's an urgent call to action that reverberates at multiple scales. Securing EPA grants is high on our agenda. We want Perryman equipped with localized ground air quality monitoring.

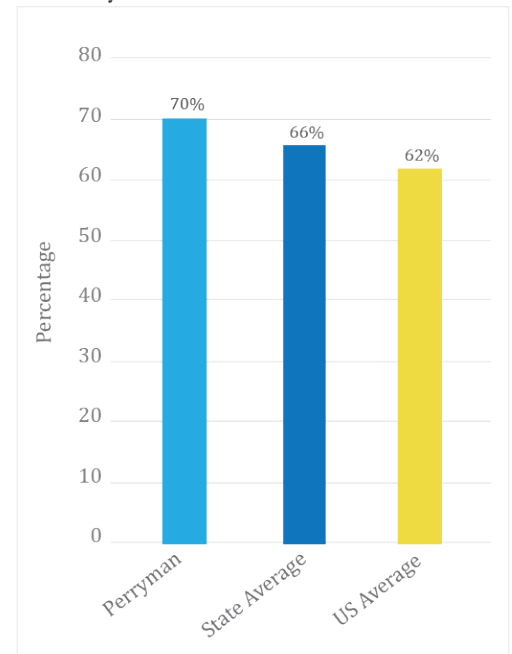


FIGURE 7: Ozone Parts Per Billion

HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT VIOLATIONS

A Systematic Disregard for Minority Communities

If you think environmental justice is the only issue, brace yourself. Harford County is also under scrutiny for HUD violations related to residential housing, adding another layer of complexity to our community's struggles. The violation probes bring to light concerns about affordable housing, racial disparities, and the overall quality of life in Perryman. The issues raised here amplify the urgency to rethink both residential and industrial development strategies, with a special emphasis on rectifying the racial imbalances that persist.

As shown in Figure 8, Perryman CDP presents a dynamic housing landscape echoing its deep-seated history. This area blends the allure of historic architecture with the modern comforts of today, all set against a backdrop of infrastructure as stressed as the community it supports. Regrettably, such disparities often disproportionately impact minority communities, further perpetuating cycles of poverty and injustice.

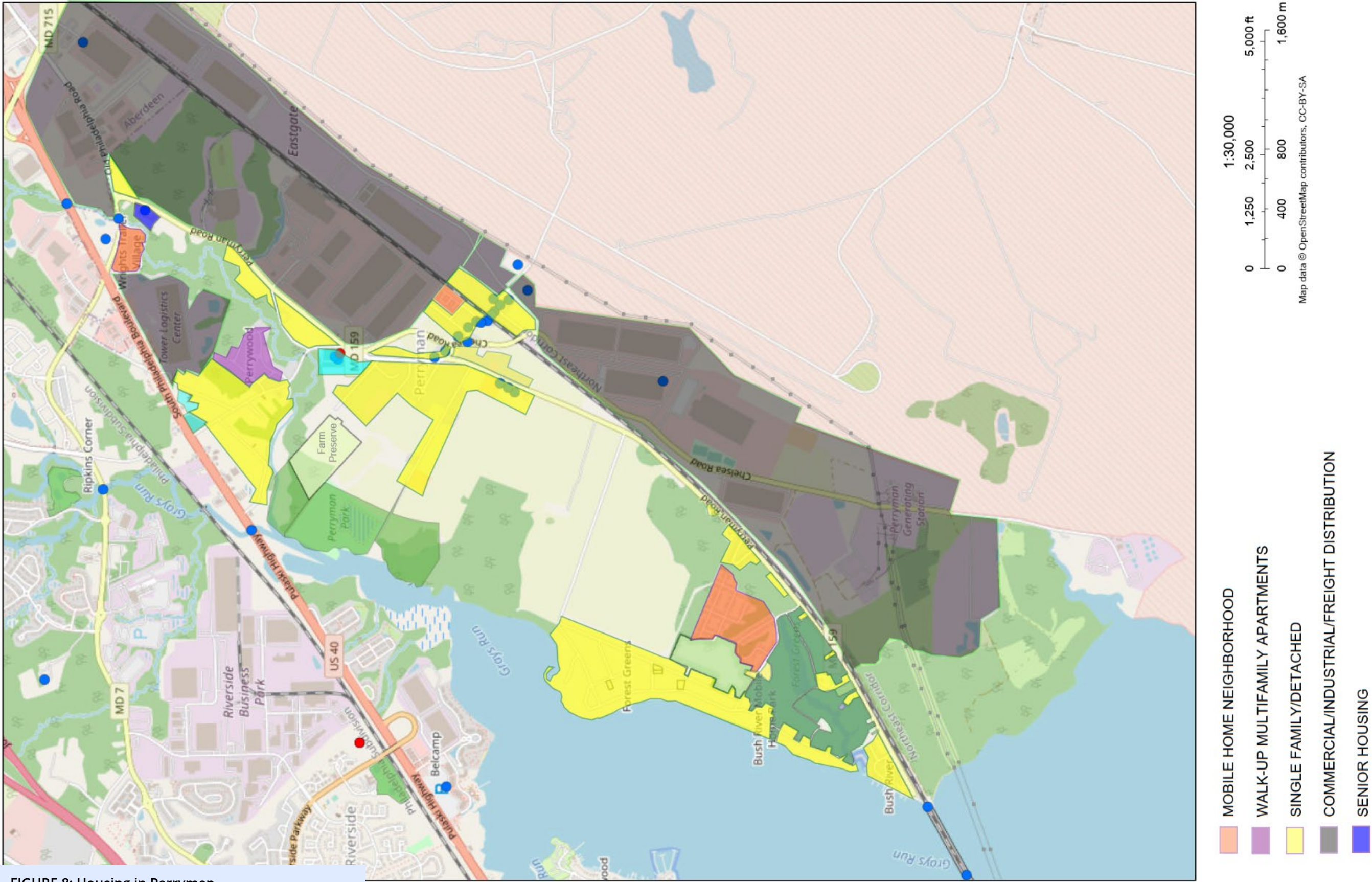


FIGURE 8: Housing in Perryman

Old to New: A History of Housing n Perryman

Homes in Perryman are as diverse as its population with values ranging from \$125,000 to a high of \$1,543,000, with a median price of \$433,500. Predominantly made up of conventional single-family homes built between the mid-1920s and 1990s with some custom builds, but most are builder-style homes with repeating floor plans. A handful of majestic Victorians from the 1800s still line Perryman Road on the outskirts of the Mitchell Farm property with their intricate designs bearing witness to a bygone era. These homes also serve as a reminder of a time when racial segregation was the law, and opportunities for non-white were systematically limited.

Older shore-style homes run along the shores of the Bush River in varying sizes and architecture, and on the southernmost point of the peninsula, modern waterfront properties ascend skywards, spanning three stories. These contemporary marvels come equipped with amenities such as elevators, affording residents breathtaking views of the adjacent waterways, emphasizing the region's embrace of progress.

Perryman Station: Senior Housing

Perryman Station consists of 60 units catering specifically to seniors aged 62 and older. Despite boasting various amenities, the glaring reality remains: Harford County's only tangible support is a bus sign across Perryman Road—a roadway now congested with diesel-spewing tractor trailers. This lack of infrastructure becomes even more concerning when acknowledging that many residents, whether at Perryman Station or Perrywood Gardens, lack personal vehicles. As shown in Exhibit 2, seniors, often dependent on walkers or canes, must negotiate this risky environment absent any sidewalks, crosswalks, or bus shelters. Their mobility aids serve as woefully inadequate shields against the gusts and fumes from passing commercial trucks.



EXHIBIT 2: Senior Citizen at “Bus Stop” with no sign, no bench, no shelter directly across from Perryman Station Senior Apartments

Mobile Homes: A Vulnerable Community

A sizable mobile home park, comprising 182 units, adds another layer to Perryman's housing narrative. These mobile homes, sandwiched between the lake preserve and Mitchell Farm property, present a unique quandary. While residents claim ownership over their abodes, the land underneath is leased, highlighting their collective community vulnerabilities in an ever-shifting landscape. A second mobile home park located off MD 159 near the US 40 intersection contains 50 housing units. A third mobile home park is nestled amongst modest single-family homes is located just east of the railroad tracks and less than 200' from a 573,735 square foot warehouse and just 300' from a new larger warehouse boasting a whopping 1.2 million square feet.

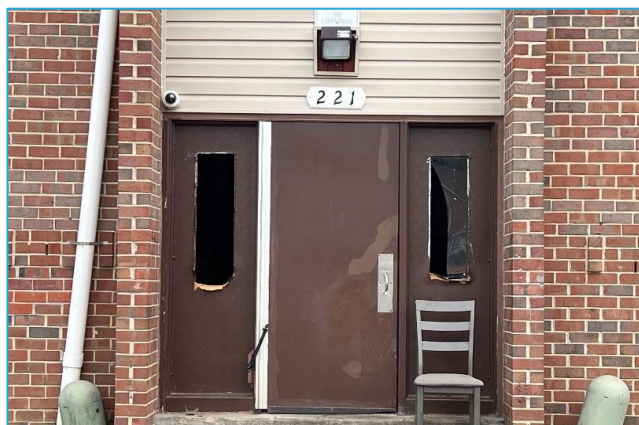
Perrywood Gardens: A Harford County Disgrace

Turn your attention to an alarming case that exposes systemic failures at multiple levels of government. Perrywood Garden Apartments, situated in a historically African American community in Perryman, initially served as a haven for its residents, many of whom can trace their lineage to enslaved individuals who once worked on Perryman lands. Today, however, the complex stands as a disturbing example of community housing mismanagement. This predicament highlights not only the local government's shortcomings but also the federal government's failure to hold landlords accountable for providing safe and healthy housing in exchange for subsidies. This neglect is further magnified when considering the racial demographics of the residents, raising questions about the role of racial bias in oversight and management.

This 184-unit, 14-building complex, serves as a sobering snapshot of Harford County's failing commitment to equitable housing. The degradation is obvious. As shown in Exhibit 3, broken doors and windows are common sights, some even serving as nesting grounds for wasps/hornets and a point of entry for rats, bats, and other pests. Fading signs and dead trees dangerously close to homes underscore the rot. What was once a lively recreation space—the basketball courts—now stands deteriorated, with frayed nets and a desolate atmosphere.

Piles of trash overflow from dumpsters, attracting pests that pose a health risk to the community. A pool, once a hub of joyful activity, stands permanently closed after various maintenance problems including leaks and contamination of nearby Cranberry Run with chlorine. The long-shuttered space is now a health and environmental hazard, documented by JoWanda Strickland-Lucas and Dr. Glenn Dudderar, community advocates deeply connected to Perryman.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Dr. Dudderar, during his time with the Bush River Community Council, unearthed a catalog of alarming violations. Among these were high levels of E. coli from sewage leaking in a ditch near a children's playground, corroded steel doors that invite vermin, and a mold problem verified through rapid growth in petri dishes. The flood-prone basements were another point of concern, pointing to shoddy plumbing practices. Even a local councilman did not mince words, branding the apartment managers as "crooks" for their continued neglect.



Broken Doors and Windows



Basketball Court in Disrepair



Swimming Pool Closed for Years

EXHIBIT 3: Illegal conditions at Perryman Gardens

Adding to these woes are fire safety hazards. A gaping hole between attic spaces poses a serious violation of fire codes. Dr. Dudderar aims to collaborate with community activist Jowanda Strickland to gain access for further assessments, given the gravity of these issues.

It is evident that Perrywood Garden Apartments is a focal point for broader issues in Perryman. The community faces not just environmental justice concerns but also alarming HUD violations. These violations put a spotlight on pressing issues such as housing safety, racial disparities, and the overall quality of life. If Harford County is under scrutiny for industrial developments, then its HUD-related residential housing issues only deepen the crisis.

This is not just about Perrywood Garden Apartments. It is about Perryman as well as southern Harford County. The story told here amplifies the urgency for immediate, comprehensive action to ensure that all residents can live in a safe and dignified environment.

Perryman Station Senior Apartments, two mobile home communities and Perrywood Gardens serve as critical housing options for community members, each attracting a distinct demographic.

Perryman's residential landscape offers a vivid tapestry, threaded with the highs and lows of community life. This patchwork ranges from aged Victorian houses to modern marvels, from struggling mobile homes to the dilapidated Perrywood Gardens. Amidst this variety, one commonality looms large: the land on which these homes sit. And it's not just about the soil; it's about the roads that connect these homes, the public transit—or lack thereof—that services them, and the utilities that power them. Again, underlying all these facets are the racial disparities that have historically influenced infrastructure and housing investments in the region.

As we shift our gaze from the home front to Perryman's veins and arteries—its infrastructure—the issue becomes clear. The system that should support this diverse housing portfolio is failing, just as it failed Perrywood Gardens. As shown in Exhibit 4, inadequate infrastructure exacerbates existing inequities and casts a long shadow over both housing values and quality of life. What follows is an exploration of these shortcomings and their ramifications. To grasp the full impact of these issues, we will explore them in detail, outlining strategies for sustainable change.

Because of systemic racially motivated policies, the home prices in the southern part of Harford County are much lower than those in the northern part of the county with I-95 being the dividing line. A new 3 bedroom/2.5 bath townhome north of Interstate 95 will cost buyers \$480,000 (2512 Chessie Way, Bel Air, MD) and a similar style townhome south of Interstate 95 will cost buyers about \$395,000 (4709 Thistle Hill Drive, Aberdeen, MD). This price gap in Perryman isn't merely a result of targeted industrial development. It's also a reflection of systemic issues, historical inequities, and environmental concerns that have impacted property values and the community's quality of life.



EXHIBIT 4: Lack of sidewalks between Perryman Garden Apartments and Perryman Grocery

CONDITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Perryman's housing paints a picture of historical elegance contrasted with modernity. However, a closer look at its infrastructure reveals challenges that the community grapples with daily, as shown in Exhibit 5. Many roads, originally conceived for a predominantly agricultural and recreational landscape, are now inadequate for today's demands. Perryman Road, also known as MD 159, stands testament to this. As a primary thoroughfare for tractor trailers heading to the industrial sector, its inconsistent roadway width over its 1.6-mile stretch, varying shoulder widths, and a patchwork of repairs indicate neglect. The road's issues do not end there. A lack of amenities such as sidewalks, adequate bus stops, and proper lighting, as shown in Exhibit 6, obstructs access to essential services. Inequities in access to essential services, juxtaposed with the rise of industries, mirror the systemic neglect that African American communities in Perryman have endured. This becomes especially problematic for residents who rely on public transportation or walking, hindering their access to the only grocery store in the vicinity. A history of imbalance persists in the form of limited accessibility and inadequate amenities for Perryman's African American residents. A traumatic example involved a father holding his 1-year-old son was struck while walking to the Refuge Temple church on Spesutia Road. Adding to the woes, the absence of alternative routes and recurring flooding emphasize the dire need for infrastructural enhancements.

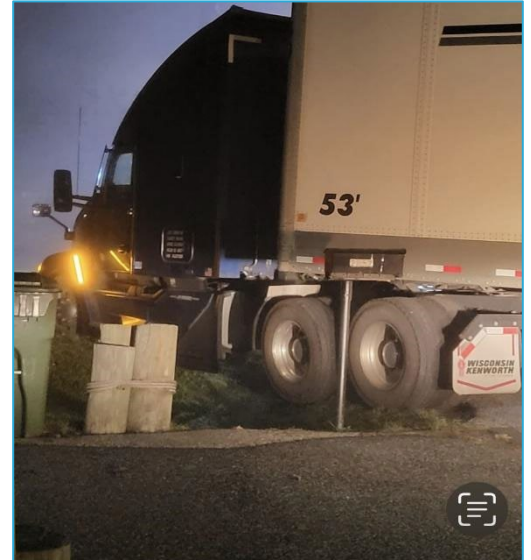


EXHIBIT 5: Truck restricting egress, blocking 14 homes for 4our hours



EXHIBIT 6: Pedestrian danger for family with young children walking on the road.

The evolution of Perryman over the past decade is noteworthy. Once predominantly residential and interspersed with verdant landscapes, it has seen an exponential rise in industrial developments. These industrial expansions have burgeoned without proportional enhancements in infrastructure or emergency services. This imbalance is evident in the glaring bottleneck that forms at the single entry and exit point, highlighting the community's vulnerabilities. The dearth of emergency services amidst increasing industrial activity raises serious concerns. These deficits in emergency services have a

pronounced effect on Perryman's African American community, reflecting a longer history of neglect and a lack of resources being allocated to address their needs. Delayed response times for medical emergencies and law enforcement interventions accentuate the mismatch between Perryman's residential nature and the increasing industrial encroachment.

The scenic vistas of Perryman now share their space with an ever-expanding industrial skyline. While these establishments might tout economic advantages, they invariably spotlight the discrepancies in infrastructure and the commitment to environmental stewardship. A majority of these industries center around logistics and manufacturing, which capitalize on Perryman's existing vulnerabilities. For many in the African American community, these developments serve as stark reminders of years of systemic inequities that prioritized industrial agendas over community well-being. Despite the noticeable strain on the road system due to this industrial surge, there has been no significant effort to upgrade the infrastructure. The community's concerns, although echoed by county officials, seem to be overshadowed by the continuous approvals for new industrial projects.

The challenges faced by Perryman's roads, the lifeblood of the community, emphasize the urgent call for holistic measures. Collaborative initiatives involving community leaders, environmentalists, and policymakers could pave the way for lasting solutions, ensuring a resilient infrastructure for the coming generations.

As the spotlight shifts from the state of infrastructure, it is pivotal to understand that these concerns are part of a larger narrative. The subsequent discussion delves into the industrial development that substantially affects both Perryman's environment and economy, reminding us that roads and waterways are conduits for more than just the daily commute.

Industrial Development in Perryman: Existing Challenges and Future Concerns

Perryman, while known for its rich history and unique landscapes, has recently witnessed a distinct shift in its development trajectory. The peninsular region, once predominantly agricultural, has become a focal point for industrial activity, dramatically altering its economic and environmental landscape.

Harford County's history showcases a troubling pattern of injecting environmental risks into Perryman. Take Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), for instance, a facility with a dark legacy of environmental pollution. Historically marginalized communities, such as those in Perryman, often bear the brunt of such environmental hazards, intensifying the racial disparity in public health and safety outcomes. From chemical warfare materials, including mustard gas, to heavy metals, APG has released a cocktail of dangerous substances into the environment. These contaminants pose risks not just to the environment but also to human health and local ecosystems.

PCB's Impair Bush River: MDE 2014 study found PCB's in thirty fish ranging from 54.22 to 658.95 ng/g far exceeding the impairment level of 39 ng/g.

The Military's Environmental Footprint: A Multiplied Threat

The military's use of hazardous waste, including solvents and pesticides, paints a bleak picture. This problem becomes even more alarming when we consider the presence of PFAS, often dubbed "forever chemicals," that have leached into both soil and water. Originating from known contamination sites within the Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), these persistent chemicals add another layer to an already complex issue.

Impervious surfaces, often resulting from new developments like the Mitchell Farm Project, amplify these risks. They facilitate the spread of hazardous waste, leading to an accumulating cycle of pollution that affects the Bush River and eventually has an effect on the Chesapeake Bay. This is not just a localized problem; it's a larger issue tied to the region's ecological balance. What happens here reverberates throughout the Bush River and, by extension, the entire Chesapeake Bay.

Understanding the full scope of APG's contamination helps us gauge the potential fallout from other projects. With threats multiplying in this way, close monitoring becomes a non-negotiable element for safeguarding human health and ecological welfare. Given the interconnected nature of these issues, piecemeal solutions simply won't suffice. We need a comprehensive strategy that addresses all facets of the problem, ensuring a safer and cleaner future for Perryman and its natural environment.

Tracing Industrial Evolution: Diesel Trucks and Heavy Industry

But the threats to Perryman do not end with the military presence. The community also hosts water treatment plants, heavy industry, and power facilities—all sanctioned by Harford County. It is critical to understand the significance of a wastewater treatment facility within this context. Wastewater treatment plants handle sewage and industrial waste, a process that often releases foul odors, airborne particles, and potentially harmful chemicals into the environment. This pattern, where toxic facilities are placed near marginalized communities, is unfortunately common, perpetuating racial disparities and making environmental justice a pressing concern. For communities like Perryman, having such a facility in close proximity means a greater likelihood of exposure to pollutants, affecting both health and quality of life.

The disproportionate exposure to unhealthy air caused by polluting diesel trucks is one of the clearest examples of environmental racism in Maryland.

Moreover, the placement of these facilities raises major environmental justice concerns. Often, waste treatment plants and similar infrastructure are located near marginalized communities, who then bear the brunt of the negative impacts. While officials might argue these facilities are necessary for the wider community, the localized burdens they impose disproportionately fall on Perryman's residents. This adds another layer of injustice, especially when considering the community's existing struggles with industrial pollution and reduced property values. These county approvals, then, are not merely administrative green lights; they are symptoms of a larger disregard for the long-term environmental and social well-being of Perryman. In light of these challenges, it's time for a fundamental shift in focus, prioritizing investment in this overburdened and underserved Perryman community.

The scenario becomes even more concerning when you consider Harford County's dual-track approach. While injecting environmental risks through industrial development, the county is also greenlighting multiple residential housing projects in the same area. It is as if officials are juggling dynamite sticks and torches in the same hand.

This reckless co-development of industrial and residential zones not only strains the already inadequate infrastructure but also disproportionately exposes historically underserved demographics to elevated health risks. It is a losing game, one that seems calculated to fail. Local families, often belonging to marginalized communities who have less political leverage, find themselves unwittingly entrapped in a perilous landscape. They face a double-edged sword: industrial pollution on one side and crumbling infrastructure on the other.

By allowing these two conflicting types of development to occur in proximity, Harford County sets a dangerous precedent. The repercussions are felt most acutely by communities of color, who are disproportionately affected by the environmental and health risks posed by such developments. They challenge the norms of public safety, environmental justice, and community well-being, creating a high-risk environment where residents are left to bear the brunt of these irresponsible choices.

Proposed Developments: Mitchell Farm Freight Distribution Project – The High Stakes of Industrial Expansion

The Mitchell Farm project spans 711 acres and is set to include five freight distribution buildings, collectively covering 5.2 million square feet. Roads and parking spaces contribute an additional 5 million square feet. The development will accommodate 1,414 tractor-trailers and 2,542 cars in parking facilities, alongside a 2,000 square-foot retail space. The proposed building height is 65 feet. This expansion poses implications for Perryman, with anticipated increases in traffic, environmental hazards, pollution, and demands on local resources.

5 MILLION SF



In comparison, the square feet of the proposed project would equal
4 M&T Bank Stadiums

Perryman's Fight: A Timeline



"Perryman has been fighting zoning and environmental injustice since the 1960's, when I was just a little girl."

~Jo Wanda Strickland-Lucas

2021 3rd Quarter Community Mobilization Kick's Off

In October 2021, an alert citizen uncovered a discreet Aegis notice about the warehouse development plans. Swiftly, the Perryman community rallied around a common cause: **"NO MORE WAREHOUSES - NO MORE TRUCKS."** From this unity, the 3P Coalition emerged.

The location of these warehouses and the potential truck traffic in a historically marginalized community like Perryman raises serious environmental justice concerns. Industrial development, paired with limited infrastructure, places a heavy burden on these communities, deepening the racial divide in terms of health and quality of life.



2022 1st Quarter Escalating the Battle

Early in 2022, Harford County Council President Vincenti and Councilman Beulah, who represented Perryman at the time, led a community meeting that failed to sway the developer. At a January Development Advisory Committee meeting, 89 questions from the Coalition fell on deaf ears.

3P retains Evans & Associates to help navigate the politics on the ground.

Given the historical pattern where vulnerable communities, often consisting of non-white residents, are disproportionately impacted by development decisions, this resistance was a significant stand against further perpetuating racial disparities.

2022 2nd Quarter New Strategies and Legal Moves

After County Executive Glassman vetoed the Council's Warehouse Moratorium, the 3P Coalition initiated legal proceedings, engaging the services of Baldwin Seraina, Attorneys at Law, to contest the compatibility of the project with Harford County's Code.



2022 4th Quarter Election Cycle: A Turning Tide

Electing officials ready to scrutinize the Mitchell project's potential negative impacts is a step toward addressing the racial disparities ingrained in past decisions, and ensuring a more equitable future for Perryman.

The Coalition's perseverance bore fruit during the 2022 elections.

- Electing Bob Cassilly as Harford County Executive
- Jacob Bennett replacing Mr. Beulah as Council representative
- Shepherding in other officials ready to scrutinize the Mitchell project's potential negative impacts.

2022 3rd Quarter Evolving Concerns

On September 27, 2022, Chesapeake Real Estate Group (CREG) altered the plans. The building usage changed from “warehouse” to “high cube fulfillment center, non-sort,” and the maximum building height leapt from 40 to 65 feet.



2023 1st Quarter Legal Challenges and a Temporary Pause

Chesapeake Real Estate Group (CREG) sued Harford County early in 2023. They aimed to force the courts to fast-track the project's approvals. However, the lawsuit's discovery phase has been halted during the moratorium period.

2023 1st Quarter A Second Moratorium and its Extension

Under the leadership of newly-elected County Executive Bob Cassilly, a second Warehouse Moratorium was put into place early in 2023. Originally set for a limited duration, the moratorium was extended in June and is now expired.

Current Status Update

- Forest Stand Delineation approved on May 11, 2022
- Preliminary & Site Plans cleared in October 2022
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Area and State Highway Administration reviews still pending

The Unyielding Community Watch

Despite multiple approvals, two key reviews remain unresolved. The community's vigilance endures.

The Perryman Community
Has Declared
Enough Is Enough!
“NO MORE
WAREHOUSES —
NO MORE TRUCKS”



Traffic Study Rejection

Traffic congestion and the resulting pollution often have disproportionate impacts on marginalized communities, intensifying health disparities. This victory marked an important moment in the fight for environmental justice and the larger battle against systemic racial inequities.

In November 2022, the State Highway Administration failed to approve the Traffic Impact Study.

Planning & Zoning Long Range's review is still pending.

STRATEGIC VISION FOR PERRYMAN'S FUTURE

The Coalition's blueprint for Perryman's future is twofold. While legal actions remain a tool in our toolkit, our vision expands beyond the courtroom. We are eyeing the acquisition of the land for a state park. Both paths converge on a singular mission: the enduring safeguarding of Perryman's environment and its rich community fabric.

The Perryman Dichotomy: Navigating the Divide Industrial Expansion vs Community Integrity

Perryman, within Harford County, stands divided. Railroad tracks bisect it into two realms. One has already surrendered to industrial demands, often sidelining the environmental and health concerns of its inhabitants. Now, the larger, residential half of Perryman is under immediate threat, risking the entire community's vitality. Considering Perryman's modest 5.5 square-mile footprint, the expansion of industry into its residential heart could render the whole area unsuitable and devalued for homes. Historically marginalized communities, already bearing the brunt of environmental hazards, find themselves further displaced by such developments, amplifying racial and socio-economic disparities.

Additional 5,200,000 Square Feet of Industrial Development - A 50% Increase to Perryman's Burden.

Our United Front: Uniting for Sustainable Progress – Perryman's Collaborative Journey

The balance between progress and preservation is not just desired—it's essential. Together, we must champion a future where economic growth coexists with environmental justice and community well-being. Given Perryman's diverse demographic makeup, it is essential that growth does not come at the expense of its marginalized communities. Ensuring this balance is not just about environmental conservation; it is a firm stand against racial and socio-economic injustice.

From Industrial Challenges to Green Horizons: Envisioning a Greener Future – Perryman's Path to Ecological Revival

We have explored the intricate dance between industrial expansion and the unique ecological and social needs of Perryman, and by extension, Harford County. Now, let us shift our gaze to a hopeful horizon—envisioning Mitchell Farm property as a state park. This green haven represents a beacon of hope, bridging the divide between industrial pressures and environmental promise. As we transition from challenges to potential solutions, Mitchell Farm property stands out, embodying the balance we fervently seek between growth and green preservation. Furthermore, considering the racial disparities evident in Perryman's history, a green space like Mitchell Farm property offers a chance for rectification. It's a space where all community members, irrespective of race or background, can find solace, recreation, and connection.

Introduction: Unlocking Harford County's Hidden Treasures with Mitchell Farm

Harford County boasts a stunning 45-mile coastline along the Chesapeake Bay and meanders through iconic rivers like the Bush, Gunpowder, and Susquehanna. Yet, one significant omission casts a shadow: the Aberdeen/Perryman area lacks substantial public access to these natural wonders. Mitchell Farm property emerges as an actionable solution, aiming to offer the community not just green space but also crucial access to waterways. The lack of significant green space in Perryman, a region home to many marginalized communities, is a glaring testament to the racial disparities ingrained in past land-use decisions.

The Limitations of Existing Parks

Despite its untapped potential, community green space in Aberdeen/Perryman is lacking. Existing parks are disconnected, often missing basics like clean water and public restrooms. For example, Perryman Park is a mere half-mile loop, around dredge spoils collected from repeated county efforts to clear runoff debris from the Bush River. Another nearby area close to the Rite Aid terminal remains closed since the COVID pandemic. This lack of facilities hampers social gathering, fishing, kayaking, and our connection to nature. Moreover, the absence of substantial green space disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, deepening racial and socio-economic disparities in access to recreational areas.

Forest Greens Lake Preserve: A Modest Refuge with Big Impact

Rewind to 30 years ago, and you find the Harford Land Trust partnering with the Forest Greens-Perryman Community Association (FGPCA) in the 'Save the Lake Project'. <https://www.harfordlandtrust.org/preserved-land/forest-greens/>

This initiative conserved about 125 acres of woodland and a 30-acre spring-fed lake, illustrating the power of communal conservation. Bolstered by sustained collaboration among residents, environmental advocates, and county offices, this area has since expanded by an additional 32 acres. It is crucial to highlight the glaring disparity in parkland distribution across Harford County. While areas up north boast an extensive ratio of parks to land mass, southern regions like Perryman lag way behind.

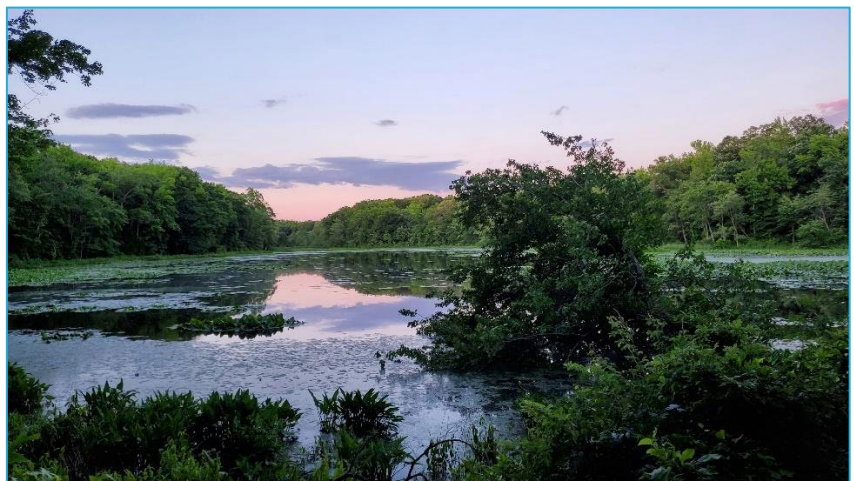


EXHIBIT 7: Mitchell Farm drains to the Forest Greens Lake Preserve

As shown Exhibit 7, Forest Greens Lake Preserve currently stands as a modest yet essential refuge amidst the environmental and health challenges faced by Perryman's overburdened and underserved communities. The preserve lacks amenities—you will not find gathering places, bathrooms, benches, or water fountains here. To kayak, you must hoist your boat over a guardrail on a shoulderless, narrow road. Yet this simple green space provides something invaluable: relief from industrial pollution and a sanctuary for solitary engagement with nature. It is more than a park; it is a lifeline, underscoring what we can achieve when we prioritize both conservation and community.

More Than Just Land: Righting Wrongs Through Mitchell Farm Property

Mitchell Farm property is not just about adding another park to Harford County's roster; it's about addressing long-standing racial and socio-economic disparities. We are talking about a region bereft of safe, accessible green spaces—a basic amenity that should be a right, not a luxury. It offers a chance for restitution and acknowledgment of the historical inequities faced by Perryman's marginalized communities. Mitchell Farm property presents a rare chance to offer not just open fields and scenic waterways but also social justice, especially for Perryman's overburdened and underserved communities.

A Tale of Two Counties: The Gap in Access to Natural Resources

While Harford County boasts a picturesque coastline and rich ecological assets, it paints a contrasting picture when compared to what Baltimore County offers. Perryman's lack of significant parkland is emphatically neglectful. Mitchell Farm property aims to bridge this disparity. It is more than a green space; it's a corrective measure, an act of restitution to the communities left behind. The lack of substantial green space in Perryman points to the racial and socio-economic disparities that persist in access to natural resources. By creating a state park in this region, we can take a significant step toward correcting these historic injustices.

Environmental Education and Community Gathering

Investing in a Cost-Effective Path to Social Equity and Resilience

The environmental value of Mitchell Farm property extends beyond conservation. It is a platform for environmental education, empowering local communities with the knowledge and skills to protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. When people connect with nature, they become its defenders. The Mitchell Farm's property potential as an eco-educational hub can help create a generation of environmental stewards, achieving Governor Moore's motto of "No One Left Behind." Facing down HUD violations is not just about addressing the symptoms of a broken system. It is about reinventing that system from the ground up. Environmental education and public access to green spaces are not mere perks. They are essential social infrastructure offering immediate and long-term returns on investment. By focusing on communities that have historically been marginalized, we can promote social equity and break the cycle of racial and socio-economic disparities in environmental education.

Consider the kids. Environmental education does not just enrich their learning path; it shapes them into critical thinkers and responsible citizens. A body of research supports this: children engaged in environmental stewardship excel in school and demonstrate higher civic engagement. They mature into adults who are deeply invested in their communities, wielding tools to tackle social challenges ranging from crime to public health.

When it comes to fiscal sense, the numbers do not lie. A RAND Corporation study shows that every dollar spent on early childhood environmental programs results in an \$8.60 societal return. That is not a cost; it's a smart investment for creating safer, smarter communities, brimming with educational and job opportunities.

Moreover, these programs deliver outsized benefits to children from low-income families—kids often relegated to neighborhoods devoid of green spaces and educational chances. In essence, we level the playing field, chipping away at systemic inequalities that perpetuate cycles of poverty.

So, what is the link to HUD violations? It provides a proactive approach. As we address current issues, folding environmental education into our community development strategy becomes not just beneficial but imperative. Such an initiative equips future generations with the acumen and compassion to thwart recurring violations, all while offering taxpayers long-term savings. In sum, it is time to pivot. Time to invest in initiatives that pay off in human dignity, social justice, and sound fiscal management. When a society comprehends its environment, it respects it. And a respectful society is, without a doubt, a more just society.

Community Gathering and Social Equity: More Than Just a Recreational Space

Community gathering spaces do more than provide a respite from the bustle of city life; they play a key role in building social equity and enhancing mental well-being. Neighborhoods abundant in parks and green spaces have lower instances of social isolation, as highlighted by studies from the University of Chicago (Lee & Kim, 2016; Wood et al., 2016). Research from the University of Pennsylvania further corroborates this, showing that more public spaces can lead to higher levels of trust and social cohesion among residents (Putnam, 2000; Sampson et al., 1997). A large, connected park

in Perryman would directly address the racial and socio-economic disparities that exist in access to public spaces, providing a much-needed resource for a historically underserved community.

But let us delve into the equity angle. The communities most starved for these public spaces are often those that are economically disadvantaged. The Brookings Institution pinpoints the inequity, observing that these communities disproportionately suffer from a lack of access to parks and green spaces (Byrne et al., 2006). Therefore, the state park we propose is not an amenity; it's a tool for social empowerment.

In summary, the state park we are proposing goes beyond mere recreation or environmental stewardship. It is a multi-dimensional solution that addresses various community needs, including strengthening community bonds, advancing social equity, and improving mental health.



Image created by: Chat GPT /DALL•E

Public Health Benefits: Green Spaces as Health Spaces

When we discuss social justice, we often omit a vital component: public health. Mitchell Farm property is not just a patch of earth waiting for conversion into a park; it serves as a lifeline for community health. Strong research shows that access to green spaces correlates with reductions in obesity, heart disease, and mental health issues ("Green Spaces and Mortality," The Lancet Planetary Health, 2020).

For example, the American Heart Association reports that communities with substantial green spaces experience up to a 25% decrease in heart-related incidents (American Heart Association, "Green Spaces and Heart Health," 2019). Moreover, studies have shown that spending time in natural settings can lower cortisol levels, a stress hormone, by an average of 10% ("Stress Recovery During Exposure to Natural and Urban Environments," Journal of Environmental Psychology, 1991).

The mental health advantages of such spaces cannot be overstated. Studies from the University of Exeter show that time spent in nature can effectively reduce stress and elevate mood (Ulrich et al., 1991). Adding to this, the National Recreation and Park Association asserts that people across all age groups benefit from spending time in parks (National Recreation and Park Association, 2017).

In addition to their physical health benefits, green spaces are also important for social and community well-being. They can provide a place for people to gather and socialize, and they can also help to reduce crime rates (Kuo and Sullivan, "Urban Nature and Urban Stress: The Effects of Amount of Green Space on Crime," Landscape and Urban Planning, 2001). Moreover, green spaces can help to improve air quality and reduce noise pollution (Nowak et al., "Air Pollution Removal by Urban Trees and Shrubs in the United States," Environmental Pollution, 2013).

For Perryman, a community starved of quality public spaces, Mitchell Farm property could be nothing short of transformative. By integrating elements like fitness trails, meditation gardens, and community fitness zones, as shown in Exhibit 8, we aim to turn Mitchell Farm property into a health and wellness anchor. This is not mere conjecture; it's an investment in well-being for a community too frequently overlooked. Given the racial disparities in access to healthcare and public health resources, a state park in this region would have a significantly positive impact on marginalized communities, offering them a resource that promotes physical and mental well-being.

Focusing On the Overburdened and Underserved: Environmental Justice Concerns

It's critical to remember that Perryman's historically marginalized communities are most vulnerable to environmental hazards. The people and communities in Perryman that remain neglected, and underserved should be at the forefront of our plans for Mitchell Farm property. It is not just about offering another venue for hiking and fishing; it's about providing a safe space where everyone has the right to explore the outdoors. Mitchell Farm property could serve as a sanctuary, a refuge from the industrial burdens that weigh heavily on Perryman's residents.

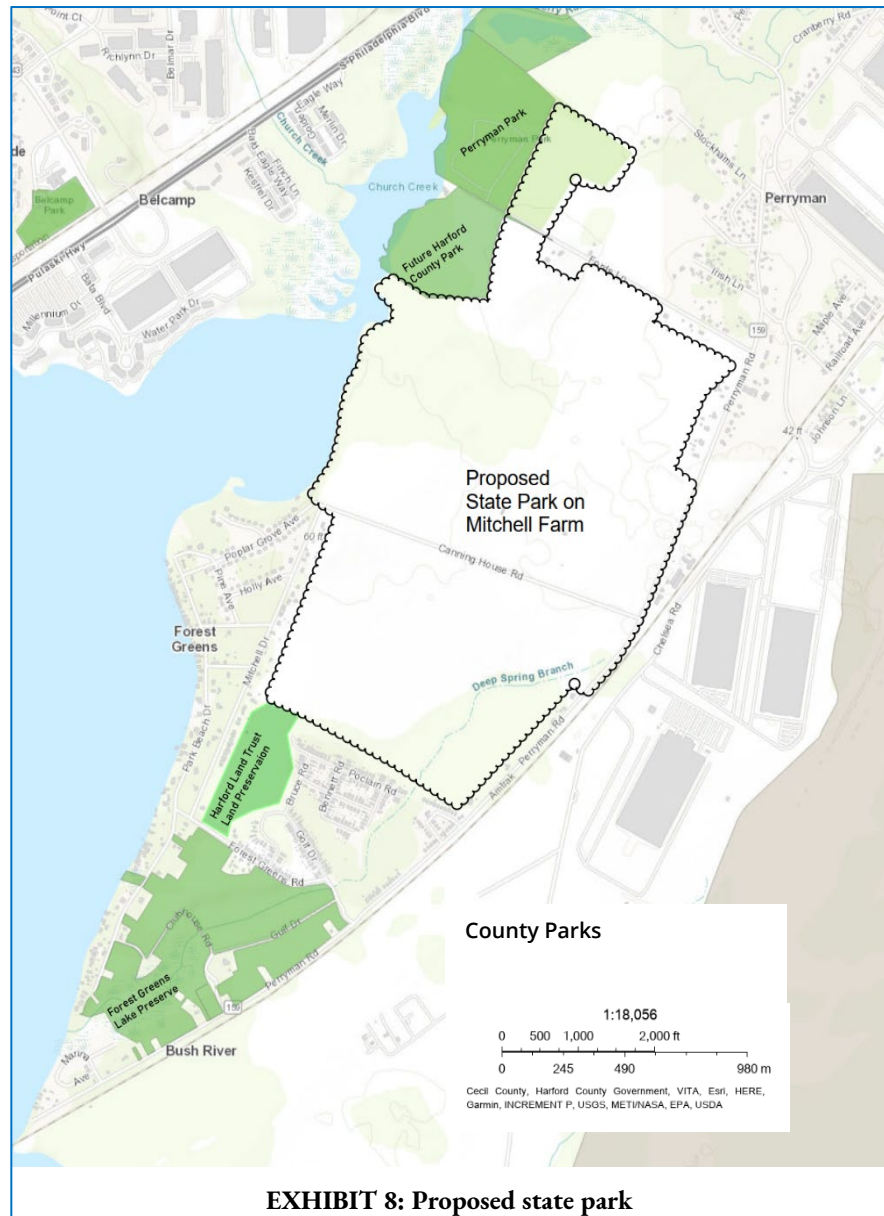
Economic Viability: A Balanced Equation Between Finances and Social Justice

The Mitchell Farm's property potential as a state park is undeniable, not just from an environmental or social perspective, but also in economic terms. Consider this: every dollar funneled into public parks yields about \$2.50 in local expenditure.

By this metric, the Mitchell Farm initiative, with its \$50 million investment, stands to inject approximately \$125 million into local coffers. But it does not end there. Property values tend to rise in areas adjacent to well-maintained parks, and job opportunities multiply.

Conversely, the jobs offered by freight distribution centers and warehouses tend to be temporary positions many of which are not held by Harford County residents. Clearly, from a financial standpoint, the Mitchell Farm property transformation appears promising.

Yet, it is vital not to lose sight of the larger picture. Perryman's history is marred with racial disparities, and these inequities give the Mitchell Farm property proposition an added weight. The park's potential to usher in economic opportunities is not just about numbers. It is an avenue to elevate marginalized communities, offering them job prospects and enhancing property worth in an area that has been traditionally overlooked.



Strategic Blueprint: Setting the Stage for Mitchell Farm

While the aspirations for Mitchell Farm property are high, the journey is not devoid of challenges. The most glaring one is the \$50 million required to bring this vision to life. But every cloud has a silver lining. We have already amassed commitments amounting to \$20 million, thanks to the generous contributions from both the State and Harford County. This leaves us with a \$30 million deficit, and this is precisely where our meticulously crafted Strategic Blueprint steps by outlining the roadmap to bridge this gap.

Zoning Evolution: Reinventing the Wheel, Wisely

Our organization, 3P, is not just sitting on the sidelines. We are actively collaborating with Harford County officials to revamp the zoning code. Our goal is simple: make industrial projects less appealing by reducing their profits. We aim to restore Mitchell property Farm to its original agricultural zoning, creating a seamless blend between tax codes and land use. In other words, we are getting the zoning back in tune with the land's true character.

Financial Engineering: Turning the Tables on Industrial Benefits

The current model heavily tilts in favor of industrial behemoths, often sidelining community health and well-being. We advocate for a paradigm shift: out with enterprise zones that cater solely to industrial magnates, and in with industrial impact fees. Such fees, dedicated specifically to community betterment, would ensure that each new industrial project contributes equitably to infrastructure and green spaces. Karen Holt, Harford County's economic development chief, highlighted that the county boasts 28.4 million square feet of existing industrial space. However, it's important to note that there's a 6.5% vacancy rate. This situation was recently compounded when GXO Logistics vacated a major Perryman warehouse in late September, leaving the facility unused. [Baltimore Business Journal 09/29/2023]

Resource Stewardship: Securing Our Investments

We have teamed up with the Community Foundation of Harford County. They are the custodians of our park acquisition fund, 4P Perryman Peninsula Preservation fund, holding the purse strings tight until we hit our financial goals. It is a partnership rooted in common sense and fiduciary responsibility.

Seed Funding: Planting the Future Now

We are also laying the groundwork for the park's sustainable future. We have launched a new non-profit, 4P Perryman Peninsula Preservation Project, Inc., with a mission to win grants. These funds will finance everything from water quality studies and air monitoring to community outreach on cultural and historical significance. We are even setting aside money to kickstart an ecological center, building the park from the ground up.

Local Stakeholders

The Perryman Peninsula mobilized when plans for a 5.2 million square foot industrial complex on Mitchell Farm property emerged. This revelation united 2,800 residents from 17 unique neighborhoods, including Wrights Mobile Home Village, Perryman Station, North Perryman Road, Cranberry Road, Spesutia Road, Perrywood Gardens, Meadowcrest, Village of Perryman, Michalesville, Bush Manor, Pintail Point, Forest Greens, and Gablers Shore. These neighborhoods represent a cross-section of communities, many of which have historically grappled with racial and socio-economic challenges. Together, they formed the united grassroots force known as the 3P Protect Perryman Peninsula coalition.

Diverse ecological organizations fortify our cause. Save Abingdon Woods, Maryland Climate Action, Gunpowder Riverkeeper, Susquehannock Wildlife Society, Otter Point Creek Alliance, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and others provide invaluable expertise, from environmental activism to policy advocacy. Their work often champions community rights and highlights the imperative of addressing racial disparities. The Harford Land Trust, with its history of local conservation and preservation, serves as a beacon for our endeavors in Perryman.

Many local businesses back our initiative, underscoring that community health and economic growth are not mutually exclusive. Their support advocates for inclusive growth, where all communities, irrespective of racial or socio-economic backgrounds, stand to benefit. With such a diverse array of supporters, we are not only forging ahead but also envisioning a future where justice, equity, and inclusivity take center stage.

The spiritual foundation of our movement is deeply rooted. As shown in Exhibit 9, Refuge Temple Ministries, which operates in a former colored school — a poignant reminder of past racial segregation — has been particularly supportive, providing a space for prayer and planning sessions. Other faith organizations, such as Cranberry United Methodist, Mt. Calvary Free Will Baptist Church, and the historically significant Saint George Episcopal Church (Maryland's oldest Episcopal church since 1671), underline the critical importance of acknowledging and rectifying past inequities.



**EXHIBIT 9: Refuge Temple Ministries:
Built as Perryman Colored School in 1925**

Nurturing An Emerging Force: The Birth of the Environmental Justice Coalition

Building the Environmental Justice Coalition stands as our latest venture, with a clear focus on intertwining environmental stewardship with social justice. Even though the coalition is in its formative phase, its trajectory has been ambitious and purposeful. We have embarked on awareness campaigns tailored specifically to highlight environmental justice issues. These issues have a history of disproportionately impacting Perryman's overburdened communities, many of which are made up of racial and ethnic minorities who have historically faced environmental neglect.

Our recruitment strategy champions inclusivity. By collaborating with local schools, faith-based organizations, and neighborhood councils, we are inviting participants who bring a multitude of experiences and viewpoints. This is not a mere gesture towards diversity. It is foundational in formulating strategies that resonate deeply with the varied fabric of Perryman's communities. In particular, we are striving to ensure that those historically sidelined in environmental discussions—primarily communities of color—now have a robust voice in shaping their own destinies.

By molding this coalition, we are signaling more than just a refreshed phase in our journey. It embodies the transformative might of community engagement. This is not a passive discussion about policies. It is an active investment in the people, enabling residents of Perryman to metamorphose into powerful catalysts for change, especially in challenging long-standing racial disparities.

CONCLUSION

Mitchell Farm property stands as more than just land primed for transformation. It symbolizes a collective call to action, addressing urgent challenges deeply rooted in Perryman and echoing across Maryland. Clear signals of environmental injustice manifest with alarming pollution disproportionately affecting historically disadvantaged communities. The compounding threats of pervasive soil and water contamination, the infrastructural crises, and HUD violations further mar our landscape. The ramifications of unchecked industrial development, especially when juxtaposed against racial disparities, are too pressing to disregard.

In recasting Mitchell Farm property as a state park, we champion a multifaceted objective. Foremost, it directly counters the environmental justice concerns plaguing our community. By implementing robust pollution mitigation and eco-restorative initiatives, we can substantially uplift residents who have borne the brunt of environmental perils for too long. Simultaneously, this transition paves the way for rejuvenated housing, small businesses, and infrastructure endeavors, thus redressing socio-economic inequalities exacerbated by rampant industrial sprawl.

Mr. Attorney General, your esteemed office holds the key to realizing this transformative vision. By lending your unwavering support, you empower our movement with moral, legal, and tactical vigor. This mission transcends Mitchell Farm property. It is about crafting a potent narrative, a testament to how judicious policy can seamlessly intersect with community upliftment, environmental conservation, and the relentless pursuit of justice.

Your role mirrors the seminal legal endeavors of the past, tackling monumental challenges like the opioid epidemic, big tobacco's stranglehold, and the menace of predatory lending. Your formidable power to scrutinize and prosecute offers a beacon of hope, pressing Harford County officials into accountable governance in harmony with state and federal allies.

Environmental justice in Perryman is not just a dilemma—it is a crisis echoing the pivotal moments that Attorneys General have valiantly navigated throughout history. These pivotal junctures redefine policy, sway public sentiment, and most vitally, safeguard lives. We passionately entreat the Attorney General's office to embrace this turning point, championing a future defined by judicious action and unwavering commitment. We envision a future where no residents, particularly the diverse and often marginalized communities of Perryman, are victimized by systemic racism and environmental injustice.

We eagerly await a collaborative endeavor with your office that is resolutely geared to translate this comprehensive vision into tangible action.



Mitchell Farm Property (2023)

“Environmental justice demands that residents have the opportunity for healthy living, freedom from the toxic effects of industry, and the enjoyment of open spaces. Yet, in Perryman, we’re seeking a stark deviation from those principles”

~Glenn Dudderar, PhD

APPENDIX – Environmental Justice Charts

Image 3a EJ Index - Hazardous Waste Proximity

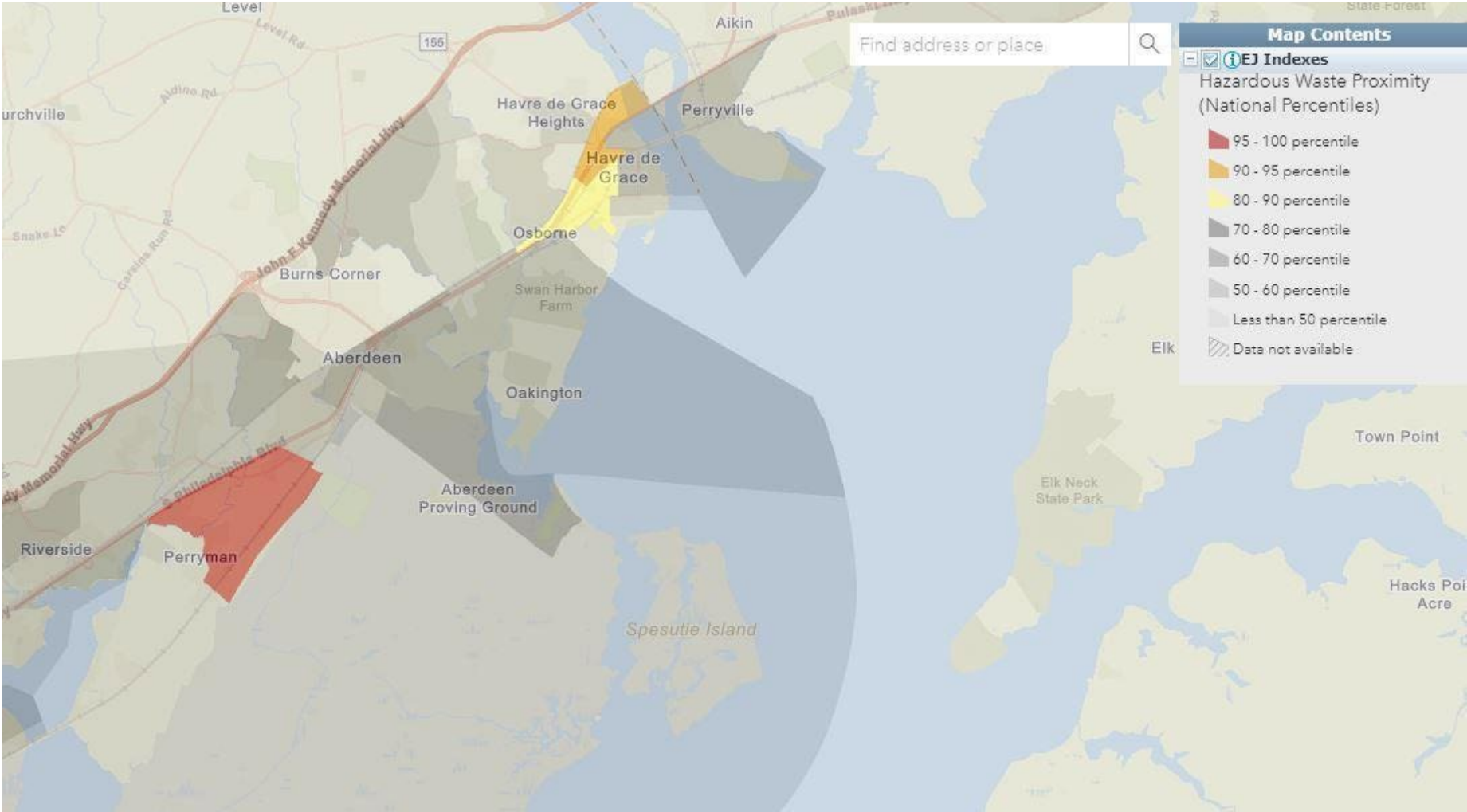


Image 3b EJ Index - Ozone

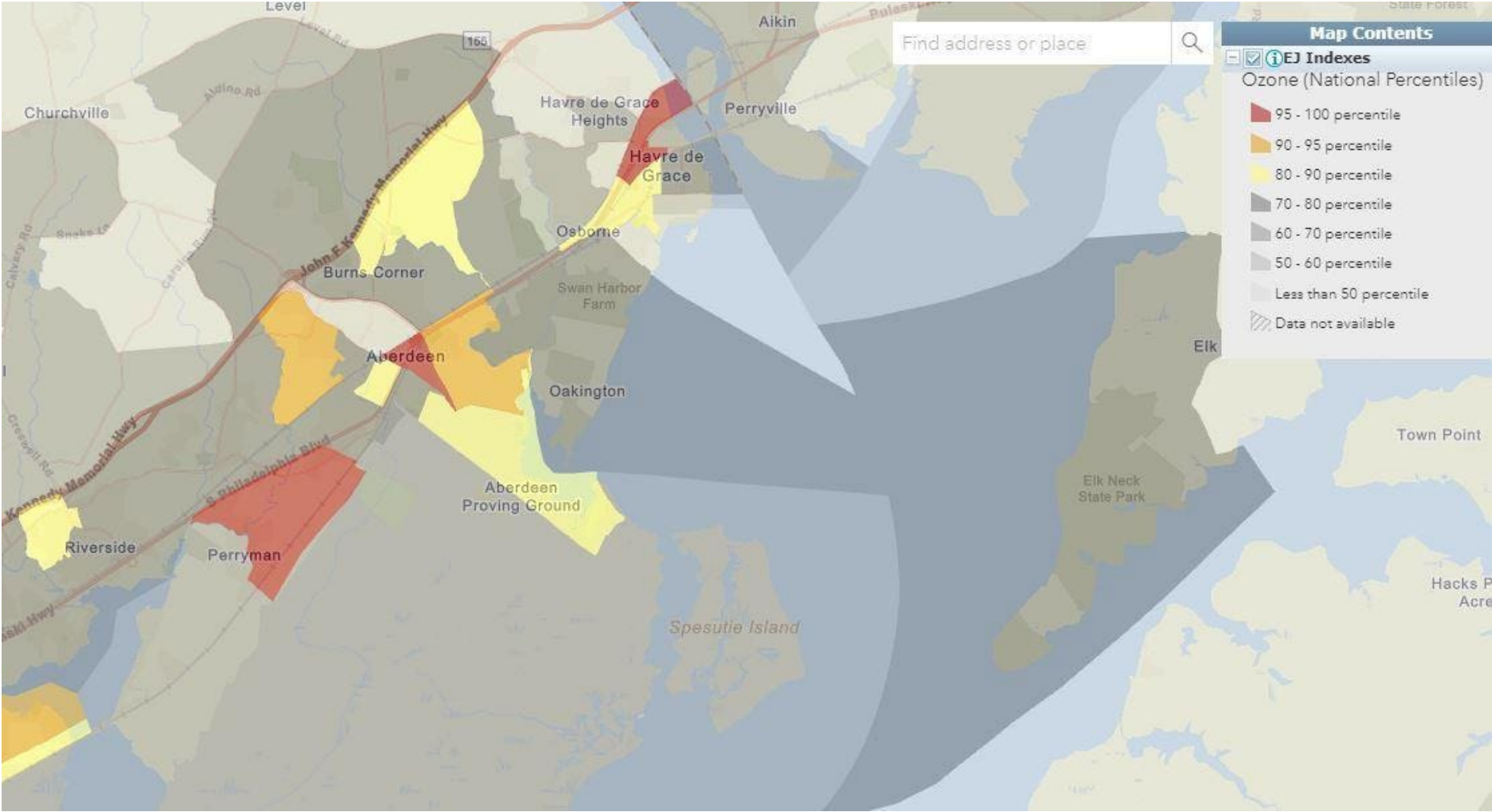


Image 3c EJ Index - Risk Management Plan (RMP) Facility Proximity

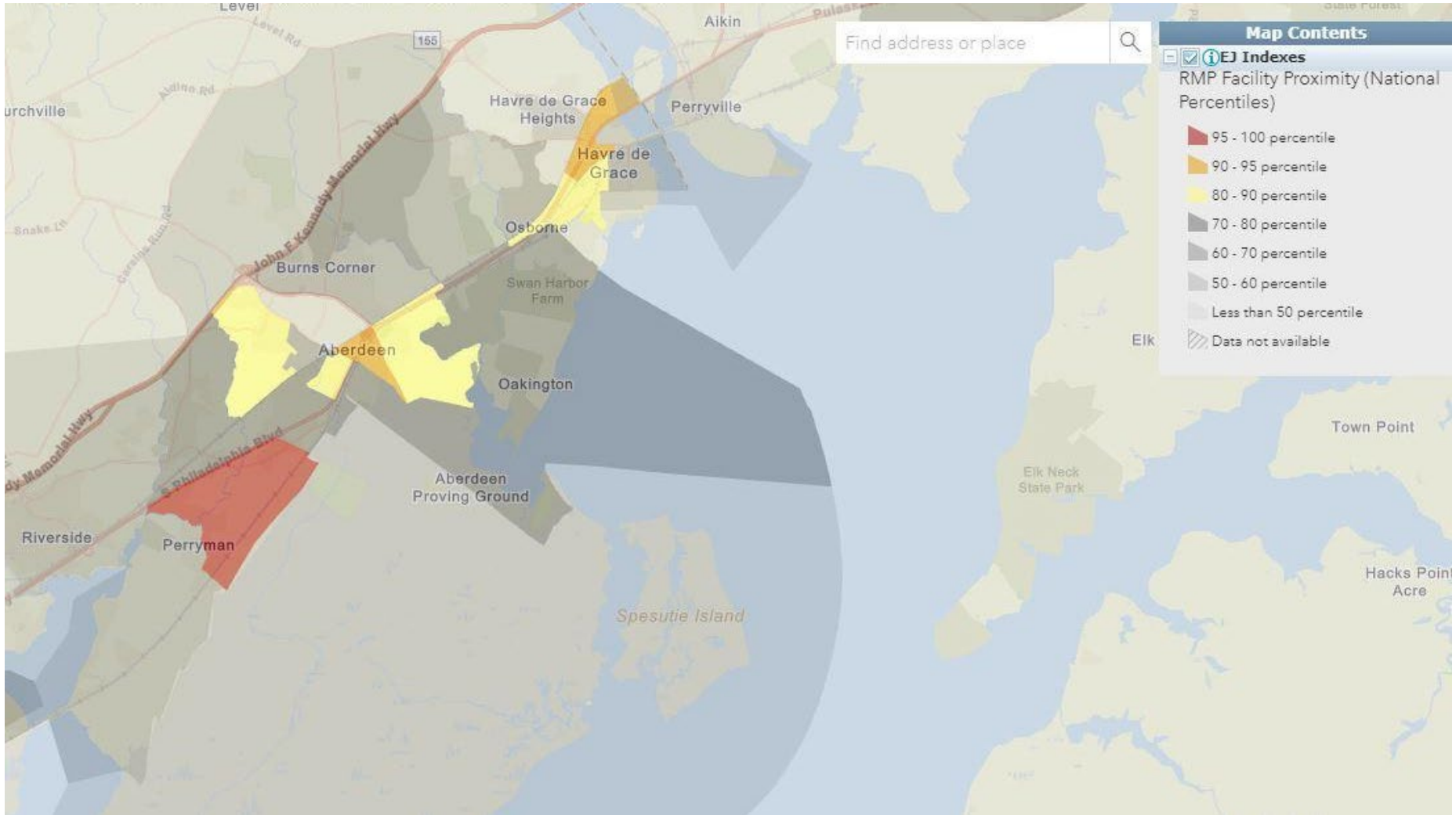


Image 3d EJ Index - Superfund Proximity

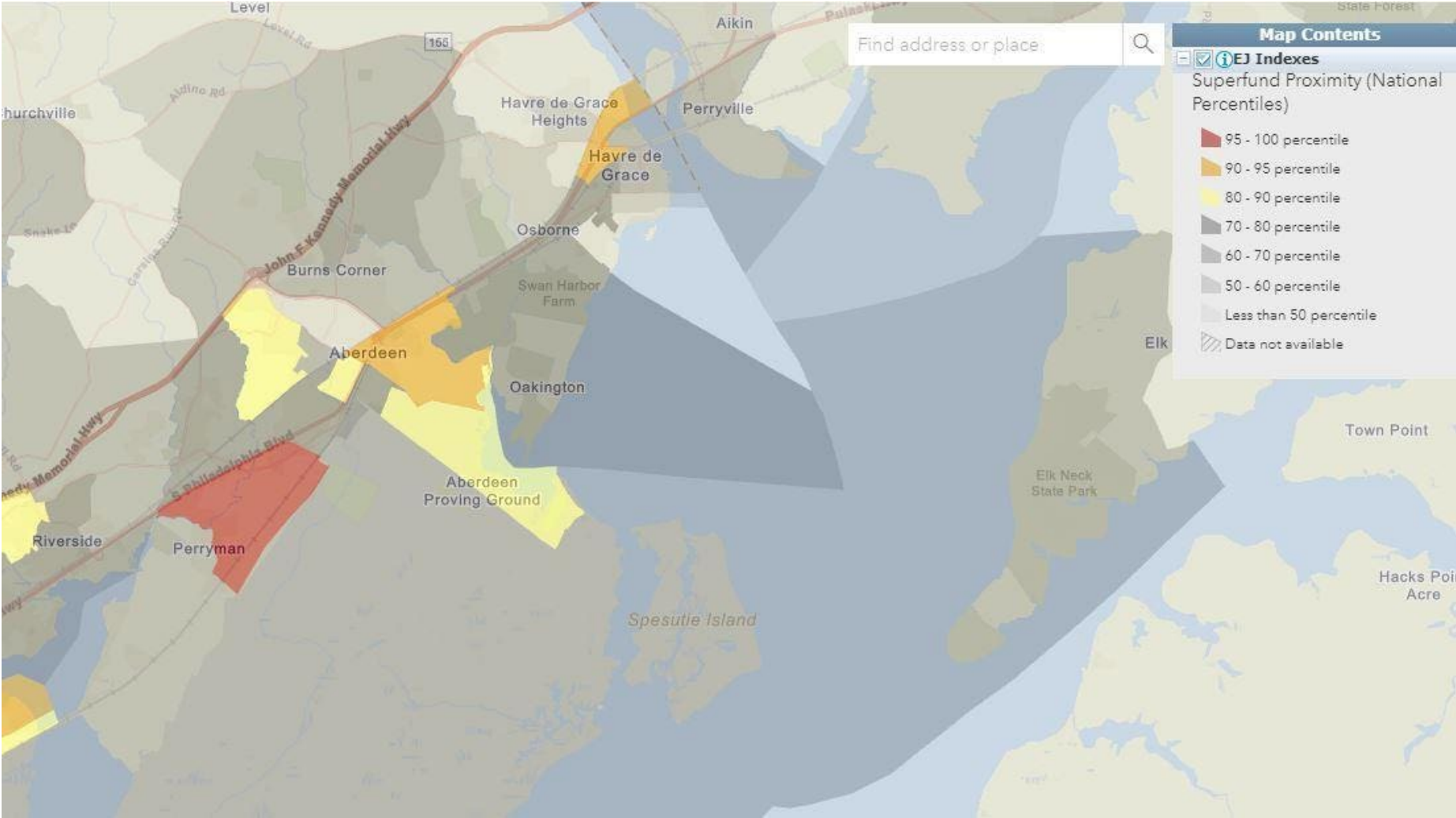


Image 3e Socioeconomic Indicators - Low Income

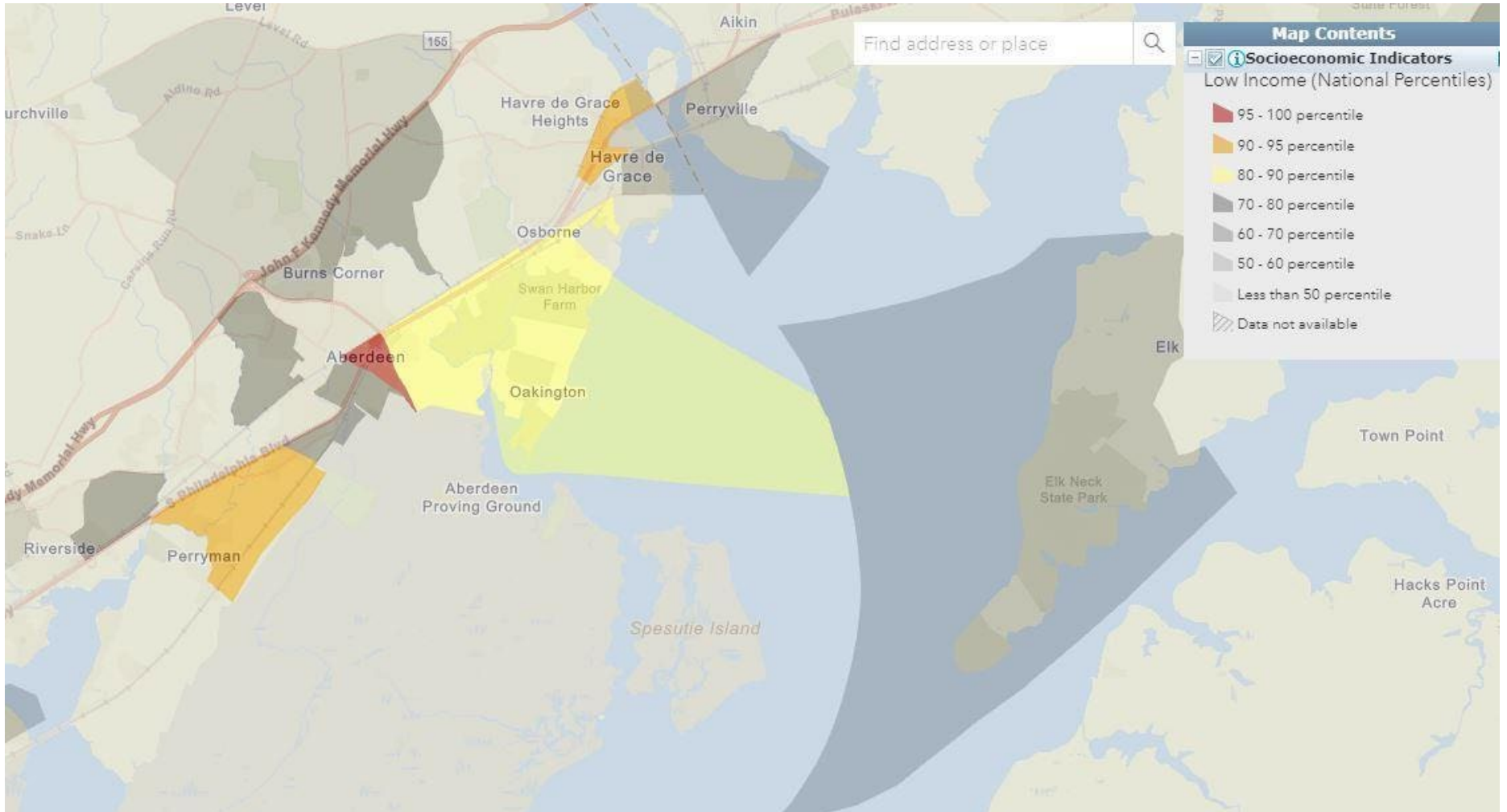


Image 3f Socioeconomic Indicators – Unemployment

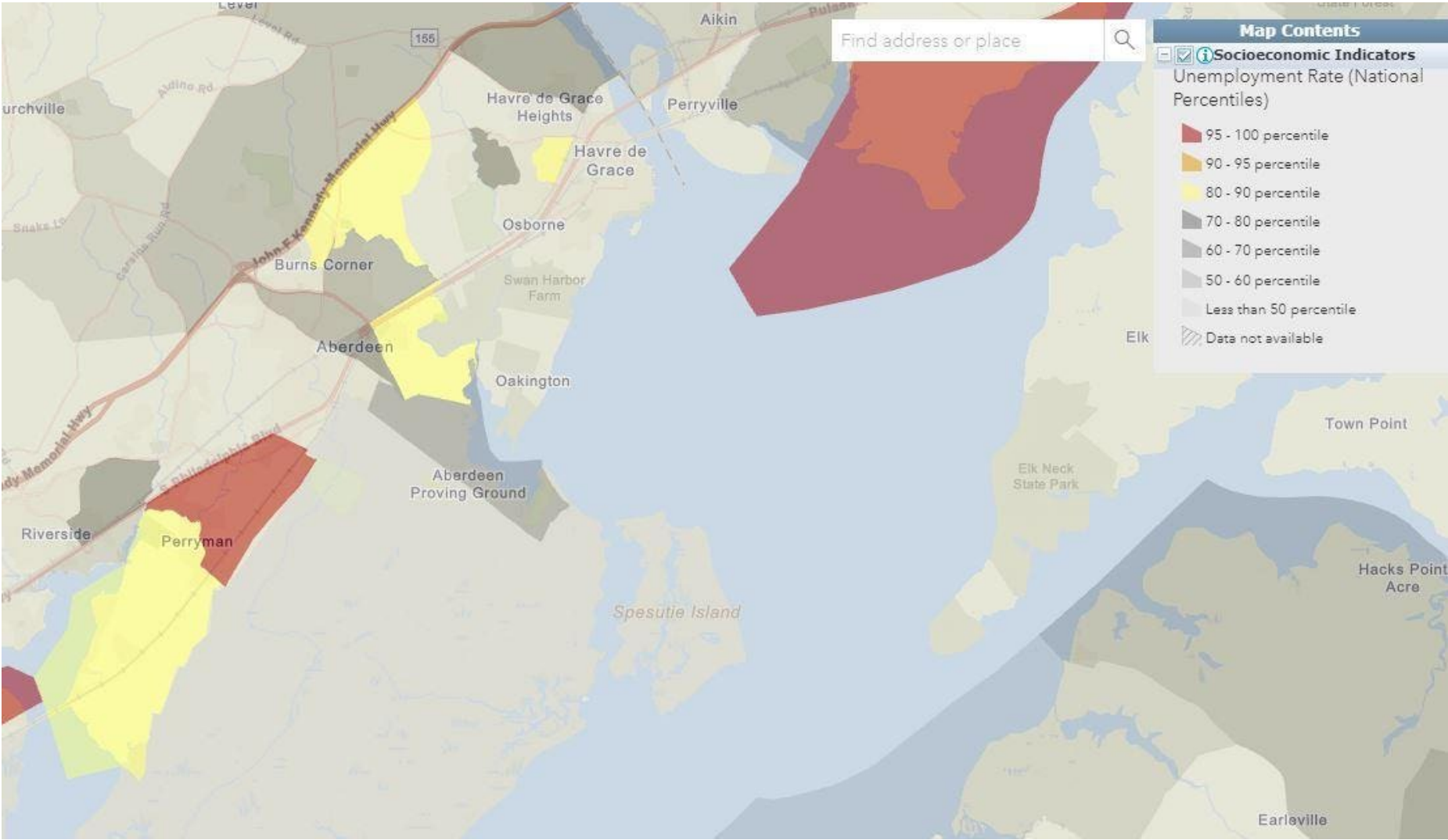


Image 3g Socioeconomic Indicators - Under age 5

