

01 Introduction



This Plan builds on 50 years of planning history of the County dating to the County’s first land use plan, which was adopted in January 1959. Frederick County has experienced numerous changes and transitions during the past 50 years that have taken the County from its predominantly rural, small town, agricultural roots to a suburbanizing bedroom community, to a maturing county with an established employment base and a prominent community in the City of Frederick. Throughout these transitions Frederick County has remained rooted in its rural and agricultural heritage that continue to support its rural communities, its small but growing towns, and a very dynamic historic downtown in the City of Frederick.

Looking ahead 50 years, Frederick County faces the challenge of maintaining its rural and agricultural heritage and its sense of community while balancing its growing role as an employment center. As a maturing suburban/urban community the County will have opportunities to accommodate and focus growth in a manner that maintains our rural areas and strengthens our communities.

	Amendment Status
Goals, Policies, Action Items	04/08/2010
Maps and Graphics	04/08/2010
Background Information	04/08/2010

MANY PLACES...

As the name of this Plan implies, Frederick County is composed of many distinct places ranging from small, rural communities such as Creagerstown, Burkittsville, and Ijamsville, to municipalities such as Middletown, Emmitsburg, and Brunswick, to the City of Frederick. These and other communities in the County have roots dating to the initial settlement of the County in the mid 1700’s to early 1800’s and continue to serve as viable and growing communities. More recently the County has experienced development of more urban communities such as Urbana, Linganore, and Ballenger Creek that will create the next generation of places that define the County.

ONE COMMUNITY

The focus of this Plan is how we are able to maintain the distinct places of the County in the context of the continuing transitions and challenges that the County is facing. The diversity of the County’s communities comprising 12 municipalities also presents a challenge in developing a consensus on how the County will maintain these distinct places as part of a growing community.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

- Provide a framework for maintaining the County's places with a distinct and common sense of community.
- Maintain the general premise of the Community Concept from the County's 1972 Comprehensive Plan with revisions to better address current conditions and issues.
- Work toward a consensus between the County and the municipalities that recognizes the distinct policies and circumstances of the municipalities within a context of a common direction for the County.
- Address the recent State mandates from HB 1141 including the Water Resources Element, Priority Preservation Plan, and the Workforce Housing Element.
- Incorporate the new State Planning Visions as result of the Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009 adopted by the State of Maryland.
- Establish a new planning process that will allow this Plan to be dynamic and better maintain consistency with municipal plans and State mandates.

STATE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Maryland has a very long history of state level planning dating back to the 1920's with the establishment of a State Planning Commission and the adoption of Article 66B, which provides local governments that implement planning and zoning with guiding legislation. Since the 1990's the State has taken a proactive role in implementing smart growth principles on a statewide level and mandating the inclusion of new comprehensive plan elements.

Within each chapter there is a section titled State Planning Mandates and Vision that will document the State Visions addressed by that chapter and the comprehensive plan elements mandates.

PLANNING ACT OF 1992

The Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act, or Planning Act, amended Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, to encourage economic growth, limit development sprawl, and protect the State's natural resources and environment. The Planning Act also established a requirement that local governments review and if necessary update their plans on a six-year cycle. The Planning Act and a subsequent amendment in 2000 required local governments to incorporate and implement Eight Visions through the Comprehensive Plan.

THE SMART AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH ACT OF 2009

This package of amendments to Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, was geared toward protecting Maryland's environment and natural resources and to promote sustainable growth in Maryland. In addition, the new Planning Visions law modernizes the State's eight existing planning visions with 12 new visions that reflect more accurately Maryland's ongoing aspiration to develop and implement sound growth and development policy.

State Visions

- **QUALITY OF LIFE AND SUSTAINABILITY:** A high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment;
- **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals;
- **GROWTH AREAS:** Growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers;
- **COMMUNITY DESIGN:** Compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources;
- **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner;
- **TRANSPORTATION:** A well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods and services within and between population and business centers;
- **HOUSING:** A range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes;
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Economic development and natural resource-based business that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State's natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged;
- **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources;
- **RESOURCE CONSERVATION:** Waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved;
- **STEWARDSHIP:** Government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection; and
- **IMPLEMENTATION:** Strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, State, and Interstate levels to achieve these visions.

1997 PRIORITY FUNDING AREAS ACT

The Maryland General Assembly passed the Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth initiatives in 1997. This legislation enhances the Planning Act passed in 1992 that established the seven visions to guide growth and development throughout the State. The Smart Growth initiatives go much further by establishing a variety of State programs and fiscal tools in an effort to protect sensitive areas, plan for better growth, and direct resources. The State's Smart Growth toolbox includes a wide range of policies and programs that address land preservation, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, transportation, environmental protection, historic preservation and other initiatives. Some of the more significant initiatives affecting Frederick County are described below.

Priority Funding Areas

Priority Funding Areas (PFA) define geographical areas within each county where the State wants to target its programmatic efforts and infrastructure funding to support economic development and new growth. Existing or new developments located outside of a State certified PFA would not be eligible to receive state funding for infrastructure improvements such as roads, water, or sewer. Generally the PFA criteria require a property to be within a designated growth area, have appropriate zoning, and be classified in a 10-year water/sewer service area.

Rural Legacy Program

This program provides funding to identify and protect the State's most valuable farmland and natural resource areas. The funding is used to either purchase development easements on property through a voluntary application process from the property owner or for fee-simple of land by the State. The funding can only be used in State designated Rural Legacy Areas.

2006 STATE PLANNING INITIATIVES

The 2006 Maryland Legislative session produced several planning related requirements that will affect the way Maryland's counties and municipalities exercise planning and zoning authority. The specific legislation came out of House Bill 1141 and House Bill 2 described below.

Water Resources Plan Element (WRE)

Addresses the relationship between water and wastewater capacities with planned growth. The three components of the WRE include: drinking water supply; wastewater treatment and disposal; and non-point source and storm water management.

Municipal Growth Element

Required of municipalities to identify areas for future growth consistent with a long-range vision. This element also requires coordination with the County and recommends the use of joint planning agreements between the municipality and the County.

Priority Preservation Element

This element came out of HB 2 and is required for counties with certified agricultural land preservation programs. Priority Preservation Areas may designate several connected or

unconnected parcels of land with the goal of creating larger contiguous blocks of parcels in agricultural preservation.

Work Force Housing Element

House Bill 1160 established a Work Force Housing Grant Program, which can be used by local jurisdictions that have a Work Force Housing element in its comprehensive plan. This element would assess workforce housing needs and goals to address the needs.

PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

The task to update the County's 1998 Countywide Comprehensive Plan was born from the Growth Management Initiatives announced by the Board of County Commissioners in January 2008. These initiatives included a review of the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, a countywide comprehensive zoning update, and the comprehensive plan update. The County's Division of Planning has been given the responsibility for conducting the update of the comprehensive plan and the comprehensive zoning update, which is a component of the Plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

- Open Houses – A series of four public open houses were held in May 2008 at locations throughout the County. These open houses provided an opportunity for the public to get introduced to the Plan update process and to view the trends and issues data and background maps.
- Survey – An online survey was open for a 60-day period from mid May to mid June. The survey had a total of 37 questions and generated 1,171 responses. A Community Survey Results report, documenting the results was issued in June 2008.
- Agency and Community Group Meetings – The Planning Division staff held facilitated meetings with 14 Boards and Commissions that are under the County government's jurisdiction and 10 community organizations. Staff presented a series of questions to solicit feedback on what makes Frederick County special, what are the issues and challenges facing Frederick, and what opportunities or solutions are available. These comments are documented in the Community Issues Report issued in June 2008.
- Frederick County Planning Commission (FCPC) Public Workshops and Hearings – Beginning in March 2008 the FCPC held 32 public workshops as well as a public hearing in July 2009 for the preparation of their Recommended Plan, released in August 2009.
- Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) Public Workshops and Hearings – Beginning in August of 2009, the BOCC held 13 public workshops in preparation of the BOCC Draft Plan, released in December 2009. Another series of open houses were held in early January 2010 followed by a joint public hearing with the County Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners on January 19 and 21, 2010. The Board held an additional 7 work sessions in February and March in addition to joint meetings with those municipalities upon request. In total approximately 100 public meetings were held over a 2-year period in preparation of this plan.