



## Acknowledgments

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with the assistance of the Maryland Department of Planning

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Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor  
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## Submission

This Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Chestertown Mayor and Council on: \_\_\_\_\_ following a duly advertised public hearing held on: \_\_\_\_\_ in accordance with the provisions of the Town Code.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Margo G. Bailey, Mayor

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**Table Of Contents**

Submission ..... 3

Preface ..... 7

Executive Summary ..... 9

Action Plan Priority List ..... 17

Introduction ..... 19

Statement of Goals ..... 21

Land Use Element ..... 29

    Part A. Land Use Maps and Studies ..... 31

    Part B. Community Character and Design ..... 67

Transportation Element ..... 81

Public Facilities Element ..... 91

Sensitive Areas Element ..... 99

Mineral Resources Element ..... 113

Historic Resources Element ..... 117

Appendices

    A. Population and Trends ..... 121

    B. Land Use Data ..... 125

    C. Previous Studies ..... 139

    D. “Cottage Housing” Examples ..... 147

    E. Street Design Standards ..... 151

    F. Excerpt from the State Development Capacity Task Force ..... 159

    G. Chesapeake Bay Critical Area ..... 161



## PREFACE

This Comprehensive Plan is the result of several years of intense work on the part of Chestertown's Planning Commission. It articulates – for Chestertown's citizens, for residents of Kent and Queen Anne's counties and for developers who would participate in growth of the Town – the Planning Commission's vision for the future.

Our vision, first of all, seeks to maintain balance in Chestertown's economic, aesthetic, cultural and historic elements.

This vision is built on commitment to growth at a pace that preserves the Town's special quality of life, preserves its diversity of neighborhoods, citizenry and architecture, and preserves open space and the environment, as well as the Town's historic character. This vision includes a commitment to improving areas of the Town that have been overlooked or ignored in the past, to providing affordable housing and ongoing opportunities for economic development. This vision includes a determination to improve the Town's transportation infrastructure and to maintain high-quality public facilities.

Finally, our vision includes a firm commitment to protecting Chestertown from the fate that has befallen some other locales on the Eastern Shore – development of vast tracts of uncontrolled, unattractive generic housing that virtually obliterate a small town's character and surrounding open space. Chestertown's Planning Commission is determined that that will not happen here.

Special thanks for this Comprehensive Plan should go to the Planning Commission members, all of whom are volunteers. They include Commission Chair Marsha Fritz; Commission member and former chair Kenneth Noble; members James Gatto, Kirk Williamson, James W. White IV, Marie Bass and Gilbert Watson, and former commission member Suzanne Hayman.

Special thanks should also go to Town Manager William S. Ingersoll and State Planner Markus Gradecak, both of whom worked long and hard alongside the Planning Commission. Similar thanks to Mayor Margo Bailey and the Town Council and staff for their support.

And finally, thanks to Trena Eales, who combined the Plan's text and graphics for publication.



## Executive Summary

This Comprehensive Plan has six major sections: Land Use, Transportation, Public Facilities, Sensitive Areas, Historic Resources and Mineral Resources. There is also an Executive Summary and an Action Plan Priority List.

### Land Use

Land Use is the foundation of the Plan. It is through the Land Use Plan that the town intends to establish the pattern, type and pace of growth, meaning Chestertown will grow slowly and carefully over the next 10 years, with a strong emphasis on infill residential construction and a very deliberate policy on annexation when appropriate. The Town is also committed to preserving its agricultural and open-space boundaries. Similarly, it is committed to preserving its historic character, maintaining its diversity of neighborhoods and setting high design standards.

The Town's Land Use policies apply not only within the Town's boundaries but outward into Kent and Queen Anne's counties in the Town's Planning Area as well. There are five areas of focus:

- South and West – The land within this part of the Planning Area that is now farmland is intended to remain farmland. There is acreage near the Kent County Detention Center that is suitable for high density residential housing. In this area, as well as others, the Town looks to the County to discourage low-density, large-lot residential development.
- North – This comprises roughly 950 acres between MD 514 and MD 297. The Town desires this area to remain stable, with little or no growth, except perhaps expansion of Crestview, if it is annexed.
- North and East (north of MD 291) – These are areas where the Town wants to see a new limited access “parkway” bypass that would connect Hopewell Corner with the area around MD 213/MD 544 in Queen Anne's county. There are approximately 275 acres north of MD 291 where a mix of industrial and office use could become an “employment center.” North of this land, there are several hundred acres of farmland that will eventually be annexed and developed with a mixture of residential uses. Roughly 50 acres south of MD 213 around Hopewell Corner is proposed for mixed use. Additionally, about 14 acres between the Washington Square Shopping Center and the Whitsitt Center would be appropriate for commercial and residential infill development.
- South and East (south of MD 291) – The Town sees a need to slightly increase the amount of commercial land behind existing businesses lining the south side of MD 291 so such businesses have room to grow. Lands along and near the Chester River should be left natural. Some land may be suitable for low-density residential development, but only if first annexed.
- Queen Anne's County areas – This area encompasses Kingstown and a portion of Chester Harbor. It also constitutes one of the Town's “gateways” and must be carefully nurtured. The Town does not want to see additional commercial sprawl along MD 213 between Kingstown and Schrader/Union Church Road.

Within the Town's boundary there are six areas of focus where specific needs, changes and improvements are identified. These areas are not intended to be all inclusive, nor are they the only ones that need to be intensively studied or improved. Their order of discussion is also not intended to signify that one holds more

importance than another. It should be noted that the areas, though defined by maps, overlap. The goal was to be specific but not limit discussion or improvements in other areas of the Town.

- Scott's Point/Stepney – This will be developed to extend the character of the town's street grid, with high quality pedestrian environments, small parks and green spaces and a mix of residential and commercial development. This area would include a pedestrian trail linking Wilmer Park and Radcliffe Creek and the beginning of a rails-to-trails system behind and parallel to Cannon Street.
- Northeast Edge of Town – This area provides opportunity for medium-density residential units that meet the needs of smaller households. It is also the site of a park already acquired by the Town but not yet developed.
- Commercial Area North of MD 291 – This is the Town's primary commercial revitalization area. It includes two shopping centers in need of redesign and a large area of open space adjoining LaMotte Chemical. The land adjacent to LaMotte is currently owned by Kent County, which intends to develop part of it and retain another part in open space.
- High Street Extended Area – This will remain mixed residential/commercial, but will receive special design focus consistent with the area's importance as one of the Town's gateways. Redesign may incorporate a boulevard type modification of the street, possible roundabout at Radcliffe Mill and a pedestrian link to a stream valley park and the rails-to-trails system.
- Government Center/Washington Ave. Corridor – This will see commercial revitalization of the shopping center that currently encompasses Dollar General, Women In Need, Ellen's Restaurant, C-town Barbers and the Laudromat. Expansion of the Fire House and Government Center, streetscape improvements along Philosopher's Terrace and similar improvements along Washington Avenue from Washington College to MD 291 are also planned.
- Route 20 Gateway – This area provides for expansion of existing commercial and residential uses, with an emphasis on affordability. The intersection of Flatland Road and MD 20 will be developed as a gateway, and any development around historic Lauretum will be consistent with that structure's character. Flatland Road will require redevelopment as an urban street.

Chestertown's insistence on maintaining its small-town, rural identity is an issue of community character. To preserve its community character, the Town will insist on high quality in future development, across the board. That will involve a number of design principles, including:

- Mixed Uses Are Desirable – The Town wants to maintain a reasonable mix of residential and commercial uses within and near neighborhoods. It does not want to repeat errors of past decades, in which housing was located far from places to shop and work.
- Natural Features Should Determine Design – This means all development should be environmentally sensitive and that the natural character of land to be developed should be maintained. Environmentally sensitive development means creating pedestrian-friendly streets, so that people can walk to work or shop.
- Automobiles Should Not Determine Design – The Town does not want garages to be the most prominent feature of houses, nor does it want streets that are too wide and huge parking lots that are

seas of asphalt. These are mistakes of the past not to be repeated.

- **Ample Open Space Must Be Provided** – This means that every developer must provide significant, usable open space as integral parts of projects and neighborhoods – not afterthoughts. This also means the Town will work to improve existing open space to create green corridors of connected open space.
- **Substantial Landscaping Should Be Incorporated In Design** – This will include a number of approaches, including requiring developers to leave as much existing forest as possible, requiring large, healthy nursery stock, native species, irrigation systems and replacement and maintenance bonds. It will mean treating signage and lighting as landscaping elements and requiring maintenance agreements for care of common areas.
- **Architecture Should Reflect Chestertown's Traditional Development** – Very simply, new development in the Town should look to the Town's historic core for examples of what to emulate, e.g. scale, size, materials, form and quality. The Town will insist on high quality architectural diversity (not copies of "historic" styles) and will not allow itself to be surrounded by generic residential and commercial development.

Community character is also shaped by existing neighborhoods. Following are four neighborhoods and visions for their future.

**Upper Washington Avenue** – This is roughly the area from Washington College to Morgnec Road and at present it is a hodge-podge of poor landscaping, poor signage and lighting and a streetscape that is confusing and unattractive. The Town's plan is to improve this area through renovation, rehabilitation, reuse and infill. The plan will mean extending the character of the older central portions of Town to this area, creating a streetscape that is pedestrian-friendly with wide, shaded sidewalks, benches and pedestrian scale lighting. There will be on-street parking, parking lanes ending in landscaped islands and mid-block crosswalks. On-site parking will be broken into clusters separated by groups of shade trees and shrubs. Buildings will be located in conformance to a "build to" line to help further create the streetscape common to downtown. Signs will be small.

**Cannon Street** – Cannon Street is of varied character, with qualities unique to every block from the waterfront to Lynchburg Street. The 100 block features restored historic single-family residences, with a few sites still remaining to be developed. The 200 block is a mixture of commercial parking lots, small businesses and medium-density residential, with much open space. Future development here should be of a scale and type that fits with the character of adjoining and nearby streets. This suggests a mixture of residential and downtown commercial. The 300 block is a mixture of renovation, new construction, relocated buildings and some buildings that could benefit from renovation. Goals for this block include expanding mixed-use revitalization, improving the block to stimulate private investment and providing pedestrian access through the block to potential green space beyond. New roads to connect to Cannon Street should extend the existing downtown grid. New buildings in this block may well hew to "build to" rather than a setback line. In the 400 block, much opportunity exists for revitalization. On the south side, what is now open space has the potential for relatively dense modestly sized residential buildings. Cottage development would be appropriate. Radcliffe Drive should be realigned through to Cannon Street. A pocket park could be developed here, allowing pedestrian access to the rails-to-trails project nearby. The 500 and 600 blocks of Cannon are all residential and in the midst of rapid renovation.

**High Street Extended** – This is the portion of High Street from about College Avenue to Flatland Road, and

now includes a mix of small homes and businesses that marked the old residential limits of town, as well as the Chestertown Cemetery, taverns, service stations and car washes. Setbacks vary widely and sidewalks are uninviting. The Town Planning Commission is committed to redeveloping this area as one of the Town's important gateways, perhaps by narrowing the street, adding shade trees and lighted pedestrian walks. The Town also hopes to add a landscaped roundabout at the High Street/Bypass intersection and create pedestrian linkages to a landing or park at Radcliffe Creek.

Kent Plaza to Washington Square – These are the two shopping centers on MD 213. Both are strip malls set in traditional “seas of asphalt.” Each should be redeveloped with extensively redesigned, landscaped parking areas. The area across MD 213 from Kent Plaza, now owned by the County, is an important parcel, partly to be developed commercially, partly to remain in green space. The area behind the two shopping centers on Scheeler Road and Haacke Drive should be developed both commercially and residentially.

## Transportation

The Plan's overall transportation goal is to provide a safe, efficient, convenient and attractive transportation system. It will achieve that goal with sharp focus on the relationship between transportation and land use.

Chestertown's No. 1 transportation priority is construction of a new Chester River bridge crossing in conjunction with a new limited-access parkway combining a linear park with a landscaped bike path, from the intersection of MD 213 and 297 in Kent County to the intersection of MD 213 and 544 in Queen Anne's. Such a project would facilitate vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the Town, improve driver and pedestrian safety and help preserve the Town's Historic District from destructive traffic impact. Washington Avenue traffic is now approaching gridlock and will only grow worse as the Town and surrounding counties grow. The new bridge crossing should accommodate pedestrians and bikers as well as automobiles.

Closely related to the Bridge-Bypass priority is construction of a parkway type road beside the hike-biker trail from Stepney Station to Dixon Valve. Such a road, like the Bridge-Bypass, would greatly alleviate traffic congestion on Washington Avenue, High Street and Cannon Street. It would also reinforce commercial revitalization along MD 213.

There are five principal gateways into Chestertown and all are priorities for redevelopment and improved design. But it is the gateway at the intersection of MD 20 and MD 291 that is among the Town's very top transportation priorities. Traffic at that intersection, just as on MD 213 (Washington Avenue), is approaching gridlock, and it will worsen significantly with development at Coventry Farms and elsewhere.

The Town supports increased transportation by bicycle as a quality of life issue, and encourages the strategic placement of bike racks. Development of the proposed rails-to-trails project, the Radcliffe Creek water trail and a Parkway Bypass trail would also support increased bike use and pedestrian traffic.

There is little public bus service in Town, but the Town would like such service to increase. The Town supports the continued operation of USTAR, and the Town endorses the Rock Hall Trolley as an aid to tourism.

Public parking in Town is addressed by on-street spaces that are either meter-controlled or free. The Town encourages business in the downtown core by keeping parking costs low. The Town has created restricted parking in several residential neighborhoods and may create more restricted parking in the future. The Town discourages large-scale parking lots and, as noted earlier, would like to see the lots at Kent Plaza and

Washington Square redesigned. In the future, a structured parking lot whose use would be shared by Washington College and Chester River Hospital Center may be necessary. Where streetscape improvements are planned, on-street parking clusters should be separated at intervals with landscaping islands that contain shade trees and ornamental plantings. There should be landscaped bumpouts and crosswalks to increase pedestrian safety.

The Town has street design guidelines that are intended to more closely integrate streets, street details and land uses. The Town wants "livable" streets where new roads are proposed and wants to upgrade roads that are not pedestrian-friendly or have problems regarding access, signage and visual attractiveness.

The Town supports Transportation Demand Management (TDM), which includes strategies to reduce single-occupant vehicle use and spread peak volumes into lower-demand hours. Specific strategies include satellite parking, ride-sharing, walking-bicycling facilities and flextime work schedules.

It must be stated that TDM does not supercede the need for the Parkway Bypass and new bridge, or the need for a new roadway from Stepney Station to Dixon Valve. One other suggestion in line with TDM:

- Protect the existing State right-of-way along MD 213 in Queen Anne's county for expansion of that road.

Finally, the Town is strongly opposed to possible construction of a new Chesapeake Bay bridge linking Kent County and the Western Shore. The traffic impact on the County and Town would be disastrous.

### **Public Facilities**

The Plan's public facilities goal is to propose the most appropriate and desirable patterns for the location, character and extent of public and semipublic buildings, land and facilities on a schedule that extends as far into the future as possible. The Town should develop an ongoing program to insure a progressive, forward-looking approach to providing high quality public services and facilities. The Planning Commission should establish benchmarks for specific public facilities and require as part of the development approval process an evaluation of impact of proposed developments on public facilities.

### **Water and Sewerage Systems**

The Town's water and sewerage system currently serve about 5,000 people. The Town should develop a plan for accommodating future development while maintaining the highest quality water and sewerage service. With diminishing federal and state funding for these services, the Town should develop a capital fund paid for in part by fees on development to build and maintain these systems. This fund should be created by hookup fees for new service, and those fees must be high enough to cover the cost per unit at the central treatment facility. The fund should not be used for operating costs.

### **Recreation**

The Town's parks include Wilmer Park, Fountain Park, Court Street Park, the recently acquired MD 291 Park and several school playgrounds owned by the county. There are plans for Wilmer Park, including an entertainment stage and a dinghy dock for visiting boaters. The Town plans to convert the old rail line at MD 289 across from Wilmer Park, link it to the park and then develop it as a hiker-biker trail. Similarly, there are plans to create a canoe trail on Radcliffe Creek and stream valley parks at the head of Radcliffe Creek and off Philosopher's Terrace. The Town needs to develop a recreation plan that reflects the needs and character of

its citizens, including older citizens. It should aggressively pursue development of recreational facilities using resources available through grants, taxes and fees. It should require major new residential/commercial developments to set aside specific lands for passive and active recreational use. If this proves difficult or impossible to achieve, developers should be assessed a fee with proceeds going to the general capital fund for recreational purposes.

### **Public Safety**

Chestertown's police force is headquartered in a small historic building on Cross Street. The building is too small and inappropriately located to serve the entire community. A study should be completed within the next 18 months to examine whether the facility meets statewide standards, and examine the possibility of a new, larger headquarters located elsewhere.

### **County Educational Facilities**

Within the Town, Kent County owns and maintains Garnett Elementary School, the Chestertown Middle School and the old Chestertown High School, now occupied by the Board of Education. Both schools appear to have room to handle future enrollment projections, but Garnett may require major renovations in the future. The Town should work with the Board of Education to better use playgrounds, to improve landscaping of board properties and to improve links with the community. In addition the Town needs to be aware of the impact of growth on school facilities, including staffing.

Regarding all County structures within the Town, the Town should work with Kent County to make sure County buildings support the historic character of the community and its quality of life.

### **Public Landing**

Kent County owns and maintains a public landing at the foot of High Street which provides access to the Chester River and offers benches for passive enjoyment. This landing is critical to the Town's presence on the river and needs to be maintained at the highest standards. The landing is a favorite of tourists and should become part of a continuous promenade.

### **State and Federal Buildings**

The town should work closely with the state and federal governments to maintain appropriate design and landscaping standards at government-owned buildings, and, when needed, determine the location of new buildings.

### **Private Facilities**

The following private institutions are critical to the character and well-being of the Town:

Chester River Hospital Center – It is large and growing larger, placing it in some conflict with nearby neighborhoods. A solution, beneficial for all, needs to be found.

Washington College – It too is large and growing larger, leading to friction with neighbors. Here too a solution, beneficial for all, needs to be found.

Chester River Yacht and Country Club – In addition to providing social and recreational opportunities, the

club occupies more than 60 acres of open space, which must be preserved.

Chestertown Volunteer Fire Department - The department believes it must grow and some way to accommodate that growth must be found, preferably in its present location.

### **Public Facilities Action Plan**

The Town should demand public-facilities impact studies as part of the development approval process. The town should continue to require annexation as a condition for extension of public water and sewer service, and establish hookup fees commensurate with actual cost. The Town should require preservation/creation of open space as parkland as part of the development approval process.

### **Sensitive Areas**

The need to protect environmentally sensitive areas is based on the fact that these resources are vital to the well-being of the community.

State law requires that this Plan address protection in four sensitive areas: the 100-year floodplain, streams and buffers, habitats of threatened or endangered species and steep slopes. This part of the Plan also addresses nontidal wetlands, agricultural easements and forest conservation. It concludes with a section on Additional Action Plans.

The Town's goal to protect the 100-year floodplain is to halt any future development there and to encourage Town acquisition of properties in the plain so that they can be returned to an undeveloped state.

Regarding streams and buffers, the Town's goal is to preserve and enhance these by identifying and mapping all streams and by establishing a minimum 100-foot buffer from each bank and by improving stormwater management in developed/developing areas. The Town will prohibit new development within stream buffers and will prohibit disturbance of natural vegetation within buffers.

At present there are no known habitats of threatened or endangered species within the Town. Should such habitat be discovered in the future, strategies will be prepared accordingly.

As for steep slopes, most of Chestertown is relatively flat. However, localized steep slopes that do exist are protected by the goals for stream buffers. The Town's goal is to direct development away from steep slopes and the Town will demand topographic review on all subdivision and site plans. It will prohibit development on slopes greater than 25 percent, and on slopes greater than 15 percent if highly erodible soils are present, unless it can be demonstrated that the stability of such slopes would be improved and adverse environmental impacts mitigated.

Regarding nontidal wetlands, it is the Town's intent to protect such wetlands by establishing a 50-foot "nondisturbance" buffer around such areas. Identification of wetlands and buffers will be part of the development review process.

Agricultural easements are an important tool for protecting environmental quality and the character and quality of life in Chestertown. The open agricultural character of land adjoining the Town defines the location and appearance of the Town within the County, and the Town will coordinate closely with County and State officials on these areas.

Chestertown's Forest Conservation program conforms to guidelines issued by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Any project "disturbance" (including subdivision) that affects more than 40,000 square feet necessitates compliance with the requirements of the Forest Conservation Ordinance (which restricts tree removal and specifies replacement practices at a two to one ratio).

The Town also intends the following Additional Action Plans, to be completed in five years:

- It will foster conservation corridor mapping to identify areas that should be preserved as open space, parkland or for transportation.
- It will target resources toward protection of Radcliffe Creek, which has significant environmental, recreational and tourism value.
- It will develop a Greenbelt within the Planning Area and around the Town to protect the Town's sense of place and its existing character.
- It will create landscape design standards for all development and redevelopment, strongly encouraging the environmental holistic approach known as "Bayscaping."

### **Mineral Resources**

The one important mineral resource currently known to exist within Chestertown or its Planning Area are the clay deposits at the Chestertown Brick and Tile Company off MD 291. While none of that clay is now used by the company, it will be the policy of the Town to protect the commercial operations of that business and to allow for extraction of commercial clay for production of bricks if the property is annexed in the future.

Should other commercially viable mineral resources be discovered within the Town or the Planning Area, those resources will be protected by the Town or the County to permit extraction. Specific reclamation of the land afterward and reuse strategies will be developed on a case by case basis.

### **Historic Resources**

Chestertown was established as the county seat of Kent County in 1706, and the need to protect and conserve the Town's historic resources is a fundamental, underlying concept to managing current and future growth of the Town.

In 1964 Chestertown became one of the first towns in Maryland to adopt a historic preservation ordinance. That ordinance defined the Historic District, required review and approval of exterior changes to any building in the district and established a seven-member Historic District Commission. That Commission has published a manual of design guidelines applicable within the Historic District, and those guidelines are available at Town Hall.

This Plan recognizes the importance of the Historic District and of the HDC and its mission.

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. The list includes districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture. It is the Town's intent to expand the boundary of the Chestertown Historic District to coincide with the boundary of the larger National Register District in the Town.

## Action Plan Priority List

All of these items can be found elsewhere in this Comprehensive Plan, but the Chestertown Planning Commission believes it is important to make a clear, concise statement about priorities. This list is by no means inclusive.

### New Initiatives – Highest Priority

- Construct a new Chester River Bridge crossing in conjunction with a new limited-access parkway with a landscaped bike path, from the intersection of MD 213 and MD 297 in Kent County to the intersection of MD 213 and MD 544 in Queen Anne's.
- Construct a new parkway-type road beside the hiker-biker trail from Stepney Station to Dixon Valve, following the old railroad right of way.
- Establish benchmarks for specific public facilities and require as part of the development approval process an evaluation of impact on public facilities. Develop a capital fund paid for by fees on development (such as hookup fees) to create the highest quality sewerage and water systems.
- Require major new residential/commercial developments to set aside specific lands for passive and active recreational use.
- Create architectural design standards built around the scale, size, material, form and quality of the Town's historic core, standards that will block any possibility the Town will end up surrounded by generic tract subdivisions. Those standards will embrace the concepts that mixed uses are desirable, natural features of the land should determine design and automobiles should not determine design.
- Create landscape design standards – including standards for lighting and signage — for all development and redevelopment, strongly encouraging the environmental holistic approach known as “Bayscaping.”

### New Initiatives – High Priority

- Foster conservation corridor mapping to identify areas that should be preserved as open space, target resources toward protection of Radcliffe Creek, develop a Greenbelt within the Planning Area to protect the Town's sense of place and character.
- Focus sharply on the Town's five “gateways” to redevelop and improve design, with the first priority the gateway at the intersection of MD 291, MD 20 and High Street extended.
- Expand the boundary of the Chestertown Historic District to coincide with the boundary of the larger National Register District.

**Ongoing Initiatives**

- Find solutions to growth needs of two of the Town's largest institutions – Washington College and Chester River Hospital Center.
- Continue to require annexation as a condition for extension of public sewer and water.
- Continue to enforce sensitive areas oversight in the 100-year floodplain, streams and buffers, special habitats, steep slopes, nontidal wetlands and forested land.
- Continue slow, careful growth over the next 10 years, with a strong emphasis on infill housing and annexation, while preserving agricultural and open-space boundaries and preserving the Town's historic character, diversity of neighborhoods and high design standards.

## Introduction

Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland is the Zoning and Planning enabling legislation from which Chestertown derives its authority to regulate land use. Section 3.05 states that:

*“It shall be the function and duty of the Planning Commission to make and approve a plan which shall be recommended to the local legislative body for adoption and which shall serve as a guide to public and private actions and decisions to insure the development of public and private property in appropriate relationships and which shall include any areas outside of its boundaries which, in the Commission’s judgment, bear relation to the planning responsibilities of the Commission. The elements of the Plan may be exercised in words, graphics, or other appropriate form. They shall be interrelated and each element shall describe how it relates to each of the other elements and the statement of objectives, principles, policies and standards.”*

Article 66B also states that the Plan shall contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- A statement of goals and objectives, principles, policies and standards;
- A land use plan element;
- A transportation plan element;
- A community facilities plan element;
- A mineral resources plan element, if current geological information is available;
- An element which shall contain the planning commission’s recommendations for land development regulations to implement the Plan; and
- Other elements, such as community renewal, housing, conservation, natural resources, at the discretion of the commission.

The Comprehensive Plan for Chestertown is made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing the coordinated and harmonious development of the Town, and promoting health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare. This Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the Chestertown Planning and Zoning Commission. Their deliberations and review played a central role in the formation of the Plan.

### Maryland’s Priority Funding Areas

“Priority Funding Areas” (PFA) legislation was developed as part of Maryland’s Smart Growth Program, which limits most State infrastructure funding and economic development, housing and other program monies to Smart Growth Areas, which local governments designate for growth. Municipal boundaries, as existing on January 1, 1997, were pre-designated as PFAs. Lands annexed after that date may be eligible for certification as new PFAs if they meet the criteria established in the Act. Accordingly, Chestertown is a Priority Funding Area and a logical location for additional growth and development consistent with the goals, objectives and principles contained in this Comprehensive Plan.

The Priority Funding Areas legislation builds on the foundation created by Visions adopted as State policy in the 1992 Growth Act. The “Smart Growth” Areas Act of 1997, Chapter 759 of the Laws of Maryland of 1997, requires the State to target funding for “growth-related” projects to PFAs beginning October 1, 1998.

The Smart Growth Act establishes a policy for the use of State funds that supports communities and influences the location of development. State funding for projects in Maryland municipalities, other existing communities, industrial areas and planned growth areas designated by counties will receive priority funding over other projects. Priority Funding Areas are locations where the State and local governments want to target their efforts to encourage and support economic development and new growth.

In 2003, the State initiated a Priority Places strategy that further clarified and refined the State’s targeted efforts at promoting infill development and redevelopment of underutilized sites. Chestertown continues to benefit from the State’s desire to assist local jurisdictions achieve high quality development while helping to ensure adequate public facilities.