

CHAPTER 1: PLAN PURPOSE, BACKGROUND, AND PROCESS

Purpose of the Plan

1. The Centreville Community Plan establishes goals, objectives, and recommendations for the long-term growth management of the incorporated Town of Centreville and nearby unincorporated areas of Queen Anne's County. It is the purpose of this Plan to chart a responsible and beneficial course for the future of the Centreville area.
2. The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), made up of the Planning Commission and interested citizens, was appointed to assist with the preparation of this Plan and has adopted the following mission statement for their efforts.

To develop a detailed, community-based plan and separate implementation ordinances aimed at managing anticipated growth in the Centreville area so as to preserve its existing character and stability and enhance local economic health through

- a. preserving and enhancing an optimum quality of life and health for all citizens of Centreville and surroundings;
 - b. encouraging appropriate types of responsible development at rates of growth compatible with the Town's infrastructure and fiscal resources;
 - c. ensuring the appropriate quantity, quality, and location of development to desirable densities and scales;
 - d. establishing a balance of fundamental community needs, economic development, employment opportunities, historic heritage, and resource conservation;
 - e. integrating the ethic and strategies of the Corsica River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) as defined in the September 2004 Final Report; and
 - f. supporting the programs of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area.
3. Within corporate limits, this Plan will serve as the Town's official comprehensive plan thereby addressing all of the State's requirements for such plans as described in Article 66B of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*. This Plan, adopted by the Joint Resolution of the Town Council of Centreville

and the County Commissioners of Queen Anne's County found in Appendix A, will update and replace the 1998 Centreville Community Plan.

4. Centreville and its unincorporated surroundings are designated as a Growth Sub-Area by the adopted 2002 Queen Anne's County Comprehensive Plan. The Centreville Community Plan conforms to the County's Comprehensive Plan as it relates to Growth Sub-Areas and was incorporated as an amendment to the County's 2002 Comprehensive Plan.
5. Preparation of this Community Plan has involved cooperation between the Town and County governments. This cooperation is needed because each jurisdiction, under State law, exercises independent planning and zoning authority. The Maryland Department of Planning encourages inter-jurisdictional coordination between towns and counties in order to promote State objectives for concentrated growth in existing communities. These objectives were confirmed and strengthened by the 1997 passage of Smart Growth legislation, the Priority Funding Areas law, and the recently adopted Priority Places initiative to assist communities and developers in achieving the State's Smart Growth principles.
6. The Town Council and County Commissioners developed and signed a Joint Town/County Planning Agreement in January 1995. The agreement outlined Town and County responsibilities for a coordinated planning effort. The agreement also stipulated that the Plan should be "community-based": meaning that residents, property owners and other stakeholders within the planning area will be intensively involved in preparation and adoption of the Plan. Both Town and County officials recognize the benefit of working together to plan for the managed and orderly growth of the Centreville area. The Town gains by having some say and control in the development of lands adjacent to its borders. Through annexation, the Town can capture additional tax revenues and development fees for needed improvements and maintenance that will benefit both existing and new residents. The County gains by having Centreville become a partner in the overall County-wide growth management program.
7. The Centreville Community Plan is jointly recommended by the Town and County Planning Commissions to their respective governing body and is jointly adopted by the Town Council and County Commissioners. The Plan contains recommendations for changes to existing Town and County policies and regulations, including, but not limited to, zoning/subdivision ordinances, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area programs and ordinances, sewer and water plans, and capital improvements programs. By adoption of this Plan, neither the Town nor County is relinquishing any of its current independent zoning or budgetary authority.

8. This Plan is the basis for the subsequent development of land use laws, ordinances, and regulations. The Plan's recommendations, policies, goals, objectives, principles, and standards are to be carried out through land use laws. The Plan's geographic description and delineation of recommendations and policies are to be relied on in deciding piecemeal zoning changes, special exceptions, and floating zones. The Plan's recommendations and policies are to serve as the basis for functional plans, amendments to these plans, and capital funding decisions. The Plan is flexible and should be revised as situations warrant and community objectives change over time. It is mandated by the State that this Plan be reviewed and updated as necessary every six years.

Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992 and Amended in 2000

1. The Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992, and amended in 2000, mandates that all local governments adopt plans and implementation strategies that achieve eight general "Visions."

These eight Visions are as follows:

- a. Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
 - b. Sensitive areas are protected;
 - c. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;
 - d. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
 - e. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced;
 - f. To assure the achievement of a. through e. above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;
 - g. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned where growth is to occur; and
 - h. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.
2. The eight Visions of the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992, and amended in 2000, are hereby incorporated as goals of the Centreville Community Plan.

3. In short, the Act requires local governments to reduce sprawl development, concentrate growth in and around existing developed areas, promote economic development, and protect sensitive natural resources. The Act also requires that all state and local government investments in infrastructure (roads, sewer, water, schools, etc.) are consistent with adopted local growth management plans. The Planning Act further requires that Centreville prepare a Sensitive Areas Element for the Community Plan and an amended Implementation Element to encourage regulatory streamlining, flexibility, and innovation.

"Smart Growth" and Neighborhood Conservation

The following description of Maryland's *Smart Growth* initiatives is taken from an informational brochure published by the Maryland Office of Planning.

1. In its 1997 session, the Maryland General Assembly strengthened Maryland's response to the continuing and damaging effects of suburban sprawl by enacting *Neighborhood Conservation Smart Growth (Smart Growth)* initiatives. This legislative package marshals the State's financial resources to support growth in Maryland's communities and to limit development in agricultural and other resource areas.
2. The *Smart Growth* initiatives enhance the Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992 (Growth Act). This 1992 legislation provided Maryland its first major statewide growth management legislation, establishing the direction the State must travel to ameliorate sprawl and lessen its negative impacts.
3. The Growth Act creates a policy framework - the eight Visions - to guide the actions of disparate government agencies, private developers, and local officials whose decisions shape Maryland's future landscape. Now, *Smart Growth* gives the State programmatic and fiscal tools to assist local governments meeting sound growth policies and implementing the Visions.
4. Maryland's population will continue to grow. We must assure that while Maryland grows, our society, environment and fiscal stability are protected and enhanced. The State will encourage economic growth to guarantee that this growth makes a positive contribution to Maryland's economy and quality of life.
5. *Smart Growth* should be a fine balance between preservation of landscapes, open spaces, and unique character and economic growth. Private land use decisions are influenced by a network of county and municipal plans and related zoning and subdivision ordinances, and by expenditures for infrastructure by the State and local governments.

6. The centerpiece of this new legislative package is the "Smart Growth Areas" legislation. The law limits most State infrastructure funding and economic development, housing and other program monies to those places local governments determine for growth - the "Priority Funding Areas". This provides the better of two worlds. It lends fiscal support to the local jurisdictions' choices for development areas meeting State criteria and to already developed areas. However, it also assures that the State will not fund infrastructure in rural areas where development is undesirable.
7. The State's *Priority Places* initiative builds upon Priority Funding Areas law which directs state funding for growth-related needs to specific areas. The goal of *Priority Places* is to focus state resources and activities on particular places and projects within designated *Priority Funding Areas*. The initiative recognizes and supports projects and planning proposals that have the greatest potential to spark broad-based development trends and land-use patterns that are good for the economy, quality of life and the environment. State agencies will work together to positively impact the cost, timing and design of development.
8. The other bills in the 1997 legislative package also support locally-identified development areas. They facilitate the re-use of brownfields and provide tax credits to businesses creating jobs in a *Priority Funding Area*. A new *Live Near Your Work* pilot program supports this effort by providing cash contributions to workers buying homes in certain older neighborhoods. All of these measures will encourage economic development and help stabilize older developed areas.
9. To spur more preservation of undeveloped land, the new *Rural Legacy Program* provides financial resources for the protection of farm and forest lands and the conservation of these essential rural resources from development.
10. The *Neighborhood Conservation* and *Smart Growth* initiatives lend fiscal and program support to the concentration of population in growth areas and the protection of rural lands from development. They are the logical progression to the Growth Act.

Town Planning History

1. The Town's first Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance were adopted in 1966 with subsequent amendments in 1974 and 1981. The Town's latest Plan was adopted in 1988 and amended in 1992 and 1998. The Town adopted a local Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program in 1988 as required by State law. The Town Zoning Ordinance underwent a comprehensive update in 1991

and Chesapeake Bay Critical Area regulations were included. Town planning to date in Centreville has focused almost exclusively on areas within the Town proper. Between the adoption of the Town's 1998 Plan and the adoption of this 2009 Plan, only two annexations occurred.

2. Since 1998, the Town has adopted several revisions to the Town Zoning Ordinance implementing recommendations from the 1998 Plan regarding design standards in the Central Business District (CBD), landscape requirements for parking areas, allowance for off-street parking for redevelopment in the Central Business District, accessory apartments in existing detached single-family residences, and increased design standards in the Planned Business Park District.
3. Regarding new development since 1998, the Town has annexed the North Brook development, which consists of 430 single-family detached dwellings, as well as Symphony Village, which is an age-restricted community consisting of 390 single-family detached dwellings and a clubhouse. In addition, since 1998 the Town has seen substantial new development and redevelopment within the corporate limits as they existed in 1998, including two new shopping centers, the Centreville Business Park, and the Pennsylvania Avenue redevelopment area.

2002 Comprehensive Plan for Queen Anne's County

1. Queen Anne's County was the first local jurisdiction in Maryland to update its comprehensive plan and development ordinances to be consistent with the *Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992*. The County's plan identified six +Growth Sub-Areas+ where development should be encouraged to concentrate so as to discourage continued patterns of environmentally insensitive and fiscally irresponsible sprawl development throughout rural areas.
2. The designated %Growth Sub-Areas+ are: Stevensville, Chester, Kent Narrows, Grasonville, Queenstown, and Centreville (see Figure 1, Queen Anne's County Growth Sub-Areas). Each of these developed areas or towns is an existing population center with infrastructure already in place. Each of these communities has been previously identified in earlier County comprehensive plans (1964, 1987, and 1993) as areas where future development and growth should be directed.
3. The County's 2002 Comprehensive Plan acknowledged that previous planning efforts to manage growth and direct it towards specified growth centers have not been entirely successful despite the adoption of disincentives to develop in rural areas. In 1987, 80 percent of the County was %downzoned+ from approximately one house per every one or two acres to

one house per every eight acres with requirements that development be clustered and 85 percent of any tract reserved as permanent open space. In 1989 the County's Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Ordinance effectively downzoned most undeveloped waterfront areas to one house per every twenty acres.

4. Comprehensive downzonings, as cited above, have greatly contributed to a reduction in the overall long-term development prospects for Queen Anne's County, but they have not been entirely successful in discouraging development in rural areas and directing it to designated growth areas. The County's residential real estate market still shows a strong preference for rural and waterfront housing. Many developers have commented that it is still easier and more profitable to subdivide and develop farmland on private septic systems and wells rather than develop in towns or areas with existing sewer and water service. The previously enacted rural development disincentives must be supplemented by proper growth area development incentives if the County is ever to influence market preferences so that people will want to live in towns like Centreville.
5. In a continuous effort to stem further sprawl development and provide appropriate incentives to encourage growth to locate in and around the existing villages and towns, detailed growth management plans for designated growth areas were prepared and adopted per the County's Comprehensive Plan recommendations. These plans are intended to specifically focus on issues related to land use, development, environmental protection, community facilities and infrastructure, and community design. The challenge is to plan for quality, livable communities that will be attractive to existing and future residents and businesses.

2004 Corsica River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS)

1. The *Corsica River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy* (WRAS) was completed in 2004 and bears a direct link to the Centreville Community Plan. The WRAS was sponsored by the Town of Centreville and supported by diverse and active stakeholder interests. It sets forth a blueprint for the sustainable environmental health of the Corsica River. The WRAS is based upon a comprehensive and scientific assessment of the Corsica River Watershed. The Corsica has been designated as impaired under Maryland's *Clean Water Action Plan* since 1999 and given the highest priority for restoration. The WRAS science draws upon the historic data contributing to that designation, while updating and expanding that knowledge with a host of new data which describe and document water quality, shoreline characteristics, development and farming impact, and a variety of impairments. These data show that considerable restoration is sorely needed. Moreover, they point to where, what, and how much.

2. The Town of Centreville lies at the heart of the Corsica River Watershed and forms the confluence of the three major nontidal sub-watersheds. Although the Town is the sole point source contributor of nutrients to the Corsica River during winter periods of frozen ground, the loading has been dramatically reduced due to the completion of a more efficient sewage treatment plant. During most months of the year, effluent from the plant is conveyed to a spray irrigation site east of Town. The Town and its surroundings, as one of the State's Smart Growth Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) now known as Priority Places, is the primary area for future growth in the watershed. The Town is the Seat of Government for Queen Anne's County. The Town has the most to gain from proactive environmental stewardship and the most to lose by not pursuing the highest standards of environmental excellence.
3. The Corsica River WRAS is truly unique in that it is the only WRAS sponsored by an incorporated municipality. The Town of Centreville has identified the health of the Corsica River as a key component to its heritage and its future. The Town believes that by taking a leadership role in the watershed restoration effort, precedent will be made for other towns across the state to seize control of their environmental future and facilitate coordination between economic development and growth. It is the Town of Centreville's goal to ensure that no growth occur at the further expense of the environmental health of the Corsica River.
4. This Community Plan has taken into consideration the recommendations made by the WRAS and embodies the ethic and strategies of that study as appropriate in the individual chapters of this Plan.

Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area

The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area encompasses heritage sites and places in Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties and was certified as a Maryland Certified Heritage Area by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority on April 20, 2005. The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan recognizes the Town of Centreville's unique heritage and sets forth programs and strategies that offer the Town opportunities for (1) coordinated and enhanced tourism and economic development activities, (2) recording and telling the history of the Town, and (3) the enhancement of cultural, historic, natural, and recreational resources of importance to the Town. Consequently, the Centreville Town Council voted in 2005 to incorporate the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan, by reference, in the Town of Centreville's Community Plan. This 2009 Plan specifically continues that policy. A copy of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan is on file in the Town office and is available on the Heritage Area's web site at www.storiesofthechesapeake.org.

The Current Planning Process

1. Efforts to update the Centreville Community Plan to be in compliance with the update requirement of Article 66B of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* and to meet the increasing growth pressure on the Town began in 2005 with the appointment of a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC, which included the entire Town Planning Commission and several at-large residents from both the County and the Town, was charged with guiding the planning process and drafting a Community Plan for consideration by the Town and the County. To initiate the planning process, the CAC conducted a Community Workshop on February 15, 2006. The purpose of the workshop was to inform the public of the onset of the planning process and to solicit comments from attendees on various aspects of the plan. Participants were encouraged by facilitators to share their thoughts in three broad categories: commercial land use, residential land use, and redevelopment areas. Comments from the participants have been summarized in Appendix B. The CAC carefully considered all of the comments and have incorporated many of them into the appropriate sections of this Community Plan.
2. Over the next year the CAC met monthly to consider various chapters of the Plan as prepared by the Town's planning consultant. Generally, the CAC would receive chapters in advance of a meeting and guide the consultant to make appropriate revisions. The revised chapter would be reviewed and accepted by consensus prior to moving on to subsequent chapters of the Community Plan. It should be noted that at each CAC meeting appropriate time was set aside for public comment. In addition, at the request of the CAC, the CAC meeting held on July 5, 2006, was attended by representatives of the State Highway Administration to discuss the status of various State Highway projects and studies which are critical to the transportation element of the Plan.
3. The CAC met on March 21, 2007, to review a completed working draft. A number of revisions were discussed and those which had the widespread support of the CAC were incorporated into a final CAC Draft. The CAC agreed to forward this final CAC Draft Plan to the Town and County Planning Commissions for joint review and consideration.
4. The Town and County Planning Commissions held a joint workshop on April 23, 2007, to review and discuss the CAC Draft Plan. Based on the feedback from this workshop, proposed changes were discussed by the Town and County Planning Commissions at their subsequent meetings. The County Planning Commission approved changes to be included in the Review Draft Plan on May 10, 2007. The Town Planning Commission followed with its approval on May 16, 2007. County staff initiated the 60-day

public review period by forwarding the Review Draft Plan to adjoining jurisdictions and appropriate State agencies. Copies of this draft were available at the Queen Anne's County Free Library and Town and County offices, and it was published electronically on the Town and County web sites.

5. Written comments were received from various State agencies and from the general public during the required 60-day review period. On September 26, 2007, the Town and County Planning Commissions held a joint public hearing to receive additional comment. Both Planning Commissions agreed by consensus to keep the public record open for an additional 14 days until October 10, 2007.
6. Each Planning Commission held a work session to consider all comments received during the public comment period, including comments from State agencies and adjoining jurisdictions. Every comment was reviewed individually and, by consensus, appropriate direction was provided to staff and the planning consultant to suggest revisions to the Review Draft Plan. The Town Planning Commission work session was held on November 7, 2007, and the County Planning Commission on November 8, 2007.
7. On December 12, 2007, the Town and County Planning Commissions held a joint meeting to consider the suggested revisions to the Review Draft Plan based on direction provided by the two Planning Commissions. Upon reaching consensus on each of the suggested revisions, the Planning Commissions approved a Joint Resolution recommending adoption by the Town Council and County Commissioners of the Planning Commission Draft Community Plan dated December 12, 2007.
8. On December 18, 2008, the Centreville Town Council and the County Commissioners of Queen Anne's County held a joint public hearing to consider adoption of the Centreville Community Plan.
9. After receiving feedback from the Town Council and County Commissioners in December, 2008, each Planning Commission reconsidered the Plan. Upon reaching consensus on suggested revisions, the Planning Commissions approved a Joint Resolution recommending adoption by the Town Council and County Commissioners of the Planning Commissions Recommended Centreville Community Plan. The Joint Resolution can be found in Appendix C.
10. The Centreville Town Council and the County Commissioners of Queen Anne's County subsequently adopted the Centreville Community Plan by a Joint Resolution found in Appendix A.