

Appendix B

Initial Community Workshop

Prior to beginning the process of updating the Community Plan, on February 15, 2006 a public workshop was advertised and held for the general public to describe the purpose of updating the Centreville Community Plan and to solicit comments from the attendees about the various aspects of the plan. The format for the workshops was three stations held on one evening, focusing on Commercial Land Use, Residential Land Use and Redevelopment Areas, with participants rotating between the three workshops. Each workshop was moderated by a planner either representing the URS Corporation or the Queen Anne's County Planning and Zoning Department. Comments received at these three workshops have been summarized and included in this Appendix. Many of the recommendations and suggestions received have been incorporated into the Community Plan and are expressed in its various chapters. The following are the summaries prepared for the three workshops:

Station 1: Commercial Land Use

General Consensus of Participants

- There was general consensus and agreement with the current goals stated in the current Plan. Discussion often led to initiatives to implement the current goals.
- Design guidelines should be implemented and used with a site plan review process to ensure all new development and redevelopment is 1) compatible in design with the historic and architectural character of Town, 2) is at a neighborhood scale, and 3) is pedestrian friendly.
- Developer incentives should be implemented to achieve rehabilitation of historic and characteristic structures, and further enhance desired features.
- Sufficient, convenient and aesthetically designed parking is critical to the existence of many small businesses and the vitality of the CBD.

Central Business District (CBD)

Land Use

- The CBD's current land use functions should be maintained and any new development in this area should be compatible in design with the predominant historic and architectural character of the area.

- The CBD currently retains many wrong type businesses that may discourage a pedestrian friendly CBD and economic viability. Examples include a gas station, a tile store, among others. Such commercial uses may be more appropriate in the Town Commercial area along Major Routes outside the CBD.
- Efforts should be made to retain and attract neighborhood scale retail that contributes to the economic and cultural vitality of the Town. (i.e. specialty retail stores, restaurants, small-scale inns, and arts and entertainment). Strategies should be in place and implemented that support this goal.
- Low intensity retail uses are most appropriate surrounding the CBD.
- The Circuit Courthouse has a significant economic impact to the Town, and is vital to many small retail and service oriented business within the CBD. Efforts should be made to meet the Courthouse space and capacity needs.
- The CBD currently does not attract tourism because there is not a specialty theme. (i.e. Antique Row).

Mixed Use

- Development of residential apartments on upper floors should be encouraged to foster more twenty-four hour use. The developments should balance small scale retail, office and residential space, and should ensure that the uses are mutually supportive of each other and the CBD. Provisions should be in place that address privacy, noise, parking, loading areas, access, connectivity and landscaping. Transition zoning designations that address density, design and use types may assist to alleviate conflicts between uses.
- The area structures between Fayette St. and Water St. on Commerce St. provide good examples of mixed use and conversion of historic/characteristic structures.
- Mixed use developments need to be master planned to ensure compatibility and good design that includes adequate parking, connections, lighting, etc.

Historical and Architectural Character

- Continued preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures should be encouraged. A Historic Preservation District could be designated with Design Standards and Site Plan Review process.
- A mechanism should be in place that encourages rehabilitating older buildings. Further, vacant and underused buildings discourage homeowners and businesses from investing or re-investing in the area. Utilize

Rehabilitation codes and create incentives that make rehabilitation projects more cost effective and permitting friendly.

Review Standards

- Architectural Design Standards should be used that mandate and encourage all development to be designed and constructed in compatibility with the historic and architectural character of the CBD. Standards should include a broad list that balances developer needs and market demands with the desired characteristics of the Town. Design standards should include elements such as: facades, building materials, site design, building design, architectural features, parking, landscaping, lighting, buffers, among others. These standards should be used as the basis for establishing a more cohesive design review process.
- A more cohesive and thorough Site Plan Review process that utilizes the Planning Commission from application to permitting is necessary. Participants stated that the review and advisory authority of the Planning Commission needs more influence. A comprehensive review procedure will ensure compatibility of design of new structures with adjacent structures, neighborhood and community character. Review of Standards should balance discretionary authority with fixed standards. It was stated that discretionary board approvals risk being subjective and arbitrary, while fixed specific standards risk being too restrictive which will discourage development. Site Plan requirements/components are necessary for adequate review, such as building elevations.
- A streamlined plan review and permit approval track could be used to create incentives that encourage desired design standards and architectural features.
- See Easton, Maryland as model for Historic District and Design Guidelines. See Berlin, Maryland as a model for Design Standards and Facades.

Streetscape Improvements & Site Design

- Participants would like to see more investment in streetscape improvements, urban landscaping, sidewalks, public parking, and façade renovations. The State's Neighborhood Conservation Program may assist with such improvements. Flexibility, priority and funding for projects that have a substantial positive impact in the CBD should be provided.
- Connectivity to pedestrian networks, parking areas, residential developments and planned business parks, etc. should be encouraged. It is important that design standards and review take pedestrian connections into account within the project, and between the project and surrounding uses.

- The CBD currently does not attract Tourism because there is no connectivity between historical, cultural and other amenity resources. Convenient and secure pedestrian links between the Town's commercial, office, cultural and government center to other historical and cultural resources, such as the Providence Farm, the Wharf area, should be encouraged.
- Traffic calming methods, pedestrian-friendly streets and adequate parking need to be provided that will alleviate visitors' concerns and deterrents of visiting the Town. Also, streetscapes improvements and amenities are necessary, including adequate sidewalks, pedestrian connections, crosswalks, and attractive light post, among others.

Parking

- Lack of parking is discouraging visitors and potential customers from coming to the CBD, which is hindering the strength of CBD businesses. Sufficient and convenient parking is critical to the existence of many small businesses and the vitality of the CBD.
- It was the feeling of participants that parking in the CBD during normal business hours is consumed by visitors to government agencies, creating a parking shortage for visitors that would patronize town businesses. It was recommended that a study be done to have the agencies conduct accounting of their impact on town parking and develop alternatives to free up visitor parking.
- Parking, private and public, on and off-street, that addresses the needs of residents, merchants, employees and visitors should be encouraged.
- Many participants agreed with the goals stated in the current Plan:
 - Public parking should be incorporated into new development and redevelopment areas, and should be attractively landscaped and designed to accommodate the needs of new development and the existing CBD.
 - Centralized parking facilities should be provided and serve as an important linkage between the old and new CBD areas.
 - On-street parking opportunities within the CBD should be maintained for shopping and tourism convenience.

Expansion of the CBD

- Additional expansion of the CBD may not be appropriate at this planning phase as the foremost goal should focus on the existing CBD. It is not certain if the current economic demand and commercial market will support the

expansion of the CBD. There was also concern that the expansion may dilute and draw necessary services and desired small-scale commercial uses away from the CBD.

- However, expansion eastward to Banjo Lane as stated in the current Community Plan is appropriate. It was also stated the CBD should expand northward to Johnstown Lane. The design of expansion areas should be compatible in character to the existing CBD.

Town Commercial

Many participants agreed with the goals stated in the current Plan:

- All development in Town Commercial areas should be designed to present attractive gateways into the older, historic town center.
- These areas should be the focus of coordinated public and private improvements to enhance the streetscape with facade renovations, landscaping additions, street trees and sidewalk improvements which link them to the primary commercial center of the Town, the CBD. The State's Neighborhood Conservation Program may assist with such improvements. Design standards and site plan review process should ensure these improvements are in place.
- These commercial areas should not be expanded beyond their current designated zoning limits in order to prevent additional commercial strip development on the edges of Town and encroachment into adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Planned Business Parks

Many participants agreed with the goals stated in the current Plan:

- Should be, master planned to ensure compatibility and good design that includes adequate parking, connections, lighting, landscaping and buffer zones. Design standards and a site plan review process should ensure desired provisions are in place.
- The parks should be designed to accommodate mixed commercial and light industrial uses and have flexibility to accommodate varied size uses.
- These areas are needed to accommodate future economic development and an expanding employment base which will benefit the Town and the central/northern part of Queen Anne's County. Larger commercial and employment uses with intensive on-site parking requirements and the need for public utilities should be directed to these planned-business parks.

- Retail uses in the Planned Business Parks is not appropriate because it discourages growth in the CBD.

Other Comments

- The Town should adopt a Economic Development and Revitalization Plan and also implement strategies that support the Plan.
- Some aging buildings in Town may be violating Fire and Safety Codes.
- Growth allocation is currently an obstacle for developers who strive to provide affordable housing. The costs are passed down to the homebuyer.
- Foster civic beauty.

Station 2: Residential Land Use

Affordable Housing

- It was discussed and understood that higher density in the form of multi-family housing (apartments, Condos and Townhouses) is necessary to get more affordable housing.
- It is difficult but important to find a balance between keeping the cost down and providing architectural treatments and on site amenities / improvements.
- Areas specifically discussed to locate affordable housing included sites behind the old Acme building near downtown and behind the existing development on the south side of Little Kidwell.
- Affordable housing should have easy access to walk to commercial areas for services and employment and schools.
- Additional affordable rental units in town are needed.
- Consider restricting the size and setbacks for homes to keep them affordable. The market homes tend to be very large.

Environmental Protection

- Protecting the environment is important when development happens. Respect the existing conditions of a site by protecting existing streams and drainage ways as well as existing woodland areas.

- Protect shore buffers along the waterfront. Consider buffers greater than 100 feet.
- Promote placing shore buffers and environmental features in community open space and not on fee simple lots.
- Allow for passive recreation and enjoyment of sensitive areas consistent with the stream park concept in the existing plan.
- Encourage greenbelts and/or wooded buffer areas.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) Districts

- Provide specific design standards for new developments. The standards should be based on the existing character of the older portions of Centreville.
- Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Design in new developments. Set standards to move away from things such as wide roads, cul-de-sacs, wide lots, and garages on the front of all homes.
- Opportunities for commercial uses in PUDs should be carefully considered or not permitted. New developments near existing commercial areas may not have the need for a commercial component.

Mixed Use

- Encourage apartments on 2nd and 3rd floors in the downtown commercial areas.
- Provide opportunities for expanded home occupations that could support small lower intensity commercial uses and a residence in an existing home near existing commercial areas. Examples would be a small office or small retail areas for crafts and antiques.

Road Systems

- When new development occurs provide alternative routes to get around town and to avoid downtown during busy times.
- Keep the connector road in the plan that runs from Taylor Mill Road to North Brook and work on implementation and construction of the road.

Planning Commission Authority and enforcement

- Allow the Planning Commission more discretion in approving PUDs.

- Consider providing the Planning Commission additional approving authority on elevations and architecture during the review process or to receive building permits.

Station 3: Redevelopment Areas

General Consensus of participants

1. The existing Redevelopment areas are appropriate as designated.
2. Design guidelines and standards should be established for the Central Business District and all Redevelopment Areas.
3. Incentives should be offered in Redevelopment Areas such as façade improvement grants and priority EDU allocation.

Redevelopment Area 1 and 2

Description: *The vacant/undeveloped properties around and including the former Agway site on Banjo Lane present an excellent opportunity for new commercial development/redevelopment that can be linked directly to the CBD via Water Street. The former rail station and lumberyard site on Pennsylvania Avenue also presents commercial development/redevelopment opportunities that are within easy walking distance of the CBD via Railroad Avenue.*

Goal: To continue the current redevelopment in this area by encouraging mixed use commercial and residential development.

Participant Recommendations:

- Municipal parking lot development on lands of Maryland Rail Authority along Pennsylvania Ave is critical to additional redevelopment of area. Lack of parking will be limiting factor for redevelopment should the municipal lot not come to fruition.
- Residential uses above commercial have been beneficial by creating 24 hr presence, and are helping to elevate a serious rental housing shortage in Centreville and Queen Anne's County. The Town should continue to encourage residential units on upper floors.
- The architectural style of new buildings on Pennsylvania Ave. should be continued and encouraged by establishing design standards that would set minimum design standards for new development in redevelopment areas and the Central Business District.

- The City should also move forward with establishing municipal meeting facility on railroad site.

Redevelopment Area 3

Description: *The commercial sites on the east side of Rt. 213 are designated as Redevelopment Area 3. New commercial uses are currently proposed for one of the larger properties in this area.*

Participant Recommendations:

- This area should serve as gateway to the Centreville town center and should be welcoming and aesthetically designed. Re-use or restoration of old mill buildings should be attempted or made a condition for development.
- The Town should consider relocation of police facility closer to the public works area on west side of Rt 213 and examine the possibility of new municipal building in this area.
- Banjo Lane should be extended north of Turpins Lane to intersect with Rt. Commerce St.

Redevelopment Area 4

Description: *The Town Commercial area on the south side of Town is located in a strip along the western Side of Rt. 213 and in a small pocket on the eastern side just north of the Mill Stream. Redevelopment Area 4 is adjacent to this commercial area on both sides of Rt. 213 directly adjacent to the Mill Stream. This redevelopment area contains two older structures that may have possibilities for rehabilitation and adaptive commercial reuse.*

Participant Recommendations:

- It was discussed that there may be a redevelopment proposal for this site being reviewed by the Town. This is thought to be an important gateway to the town center area. Any development of the site should be appropriate in relationship to the scale and architecture of Centreville.
- The streamside location of this redevelopment area could be an attractive location for mixed commercial and residential uses. Any development of the site should incorporate the extension of the Mill Stream Greenway.

Redevelopment Area 5

Description: *Redevelopment Area 5 at the Centreville Wharf provides a unique opportunity for the Town, in conjunction with the County and private interests, to create a small-scale, mixed use waterfront development that could include an improved public landing, marina facility, passive waterfront park area, a small outdoor amphitheater/bandstand for public festivals and events and a small restaurant and tourist/boat supply store.*

This type of environmentally sensitive redevelopment would allow Centreville to capitalize on its currently underutilized waterfront/wharf area and greatly expand tourism opportunities that could be linked to, and directly benefit, the CBD.

Participant Recommendations:

- Participants believed that transient boating facilities are needed to promote tourism and economic development. It was suggested a mix of tourist oriented commercial (restaurant . shops) and recreational uses should take place on the Town owned parcel(s) near the wharf area. One suggestion was for a canoe and kayak launching area to be constructed at the foot of Corsica St.
- Road improvements on Chesterfield Ave. should be completed that would include sidewalks, a bike path, and appropriate signage directing pedestrians, cyclists and motorist to central business district.

Redevelopment Area 6

Description: *Redevelopment Area 6 is located between Commerce and Liberty Streets on the south end of Town, contains a number of deteriorating and/or abandoned residential structures on small, irregular lots. Many of the lots also contain steep slopes. The lot configurations and topography preclude redevelopment as traditional town-scale, single-family lots and homes. (Note: At the time of adoption of this Community Plan, Redevelopment Area 6 has been completed with new townhouses and semi-detached houses. The designation of Redevelopment Area 6 has been reassigned to the residential area south of Little Kidwell Lane in this Plan.)*

Participant Recommendations:

- Participants were in agreement that the redevelopment that has taken place in this area is appropriate.

New Redevelopment Areas

Participant Recommendations:

- It was suggested that a new redevelopment area be established in the residential area south of Little Kidwell Ave, west of Redevelopment Area 4, south to Mill Stream and east to the lands designated as Town Public/Semi-Public Institutional in Fig. 11 Town Development Concept of the current Community Plan.
- It was recommended that infill lots should be developed with single family residential homes and that larger undeveloped parcels closer to the creek could be appropriate for planned unit development (PUD) with a mix of residential types.
- The area directly north of the CBD between the lands owned by the Board of Education and Banjo Lane was recommended as a new redevelopment area. It was suggested that this area be redeveloped in a mixed use scenario similar to Redevelopment Area 2 with commercial uses on lower levels and residential use on upper floors. It was stressed that design standard and guidelines should be established.
- Parking in this area was another concern. It was suggested that the City require federal, state, and county agencies conduct a proper accounting of their required parking and investigate the possibility of developing a parking facility on lands of the Board of Education for their needs. It was the feeling of participants that parking in the town center area during normal business hours is consumed by visitors to these agencies, creating a parking shortage. By freeing up existing parking more visitors would patronize town businesses.

General Town wide issues of concern:

- The Town should update and establish a more stringent town maintenance code, and ensure proper enforcement. Participants voiced concern that the current code is not always enforced.
- There is a need in Town for recreational facilities (Indoor and Outdoor) for Children and Teens. Redevelopment areas could be an appropriate location for development of such facilities.
- Town should re-evaluate the height limit in the central business district to allow slightly taller structures.

- The greenway network should be expanded throughout town and provide connections to new developments on the perimeter of Town.
- A long term capital improvement plan to provide which would facilitate the coordination of replacement of water and sewer lines, and the repaving and replacing of sidewalks is important. It is difficult to improve the attractiveness of Town due to the piecemeal approach of making infrastructure repairs.
- There is a need for additional recycling drop off locations in Centreville.