

OVERVIEW

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan (Plan) is the official policy document for the County. The Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Commission and County Departments use the Plan as a guide when evaluating proposed projects or changes to the Zoning Ordinance. The State uses the Plan to determine whether or not to provide state funding for a local project (e.g. Rural Legacy, Community Legacy, public infrastructure, Community Development Projects, etc.). Bond rating agencies look at the Plan to see if the County is using resources wisely and in a coordinated fashion. Prospective business owners use the Plan to help them make investment decisions. Residents use the Plan to evaluate how well County government is responding to the goals and objectives written in the Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Goal

The goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and/or improve the overall quality of life for all citizens of Calvert County by:

- a. promoting sustainable development,
- b. encouraging a stable and enduring economic base,
- c. providing for safety, health, and education, and
- d. preserving the natural, cultural, and historic assets of Calvert County.

The goal is expressed in a series of 10 visions. Each vision is followed by one or several benchmarks. The visions and benchmarks are listed below.

Goal Implementation

1. Use the Comprehensive Plan as the County's primary guiding policy document.
2. Implement the Plan using the following procedures:
 - a. Department Heads: Prepare annual reports to the Board of County Commissioners on progress implementing assigned action items.
 - b. Planning Commission: Determine whether ordinances or special plans need to be proposed or revised.
 - c. Board of County Commissioners:
 - Appoint committees to investigate and report

on specific aspects of the Plan as needed.

- Maintain a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan which reflects the actions called for in this Plan. Place high priority on providing needed infrastructure in the Town Centers, as called for in the Town Center master plans, and identify funding sources to help implement the CIP.
 - Require additional research as needed.
 - Make copies of all reports and actions available to the public.
- d. Citizens: Remain informed and active participants.

Project Funding

The County's Capital Improvement Program budget reflects the goals established in the Comprehensive Plan and the subordinate plans adopted by the County Commissioners. The CIP schedules projects over a six-year span, based on severity of need, public safety, Commissioners' priorities, and the availability of funding. This plan is updated annually to more accurately reflect current needs and trends. Only those projects planned for implementation in the upcoming fiscal year are actually approved for funding. Each project is tied to a specific reference in the Comprehensive Plan.

Visions

The Comprehensive Plan goal is expressed in the following visions. Each vision is followed by one or several benchmarks. The benchmarks provide a means of monitoring progress and thereby ensure that the visions become reality.

Our landscape is dominated by forests and fields.

- At least 40,000 acres of farm and forestland are preserved.

Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work and shop.

- 35% of all new households are located in Town Centers or immediately around Town Centers.
- One ECTC office park is established in each election district by 2008.

Our wetlands, streams, and forests support thriving plant and animal communities. Our seafood industry is improving.

- There is a 40% reduction in nutrients entering the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River.
- 90% of existing forest is retained.

Our highways are safe with only moderate congestion and public transit is readily available. Walking and bicycling are practical alternatives.

- A level of service "D" is attained on MD 2/4 and on Town Center roads.
- A level of service "C" is maintained on County roads and outside Town Centers.

We waste less, consume fewer natural resources, and properly dispose of waste.

- At least 20% of household and commercial waste is recycled.
- At least 22% of commuters use transit or carpool to work.
- The annual increase in average household energy use is under 3 percent.

Our communities are safe. We care for the well-being of each other.

- County crime incidence is below 4,500 per 100,000 (compare with state average of 5,800)

Our children are well prepared for the future. We are healthy in body, mind, and spirit.

- The County provides 30 acres of public access open space per 1,000 residents.
- Increase the graduation rate of Grade 12 from the 2003 rate of 87.76 percent.
- Decrease the drop out rate for Grades 9-12 from the 2003 rate of 2.71 percent.
- Increase the percentage of the population age 25 years and over who are a high school graduate (includes equivalency) or higher (86.9 percent, 2000 Census)

We are stewards of our cultural heritage.

- All students are exposed to a County heritage curriculum.
- A database of County heritage resources is developed and published.

We are building a strong local economy based on renewable resources, high technology, retirement, recreation, and tourism.

- The commercial real property tax base is expanded from \$459 million in 2002 to \$598 million by 2007.
- In-County jobs are increased by 2,700 from 2002 to 2007 (15,607 to 18,307 in-county jobs).
- The number of visitors is increased from 471,321 in 2002 to 573,000 in 2007.

Our government is efficient, open, and responsive to citizen needs and concerns.

- The ratio of debt service to total revenues is not to exceed 9.5%.