

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a center of government, education and maritime activity the City of Annapolis has remained unique, vibrant, and attractive over its long history. Annapolis is Maryland's State Capital, home to the U.S. Naval Academy, and is one of the most historically significant small cities in the country. When people think of Annapolis they may envision the Maryland State House, the Naval Academy, or the City Dock, but these landmarks are just a few of the many places that make Annapolis unique. The city also includes distinctive neighborhoods, active business corridors, and a diverse population of residents.

The *2009 Comprehensive Plan* has been developed to chart the City's direction for the next ten years, respond to relevant State law, and replace the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. The Plan is organized around three main ideas that define the approach to planning for the City's next decade. The three ideas are:

- ▶ Preserve and Enhance Community Character
- ▶ Maintain a Vibrant Economy
- ▶ Promote a 'Green' Annapolis

The *2009 Comprehensive Plan* presents policy recommendations, principles, and objectives in seven topical chapters. In addition to the policy recommendations, the Plan identifies major projects and geographic areas or topics warranting more study. The seven topical chapters are:

- Chapter 3 - Land Use & Economic Development
- Chapter 4 - Transportation
- Chapter 5 - Municipal Growth & Community Facilities
- Chapter 6 - Parks
- Chapter 7 - Environment
- Chapter 8 - Housing
- Chapter 9 - Water Resources

Demographic data is presented in Chapter 2. Implementation is discussed in Chapter 10



Land Use & Economic Development

One guiding principle of this Plan is that a City's economic vitality does not depend on the outward expansion of its borders. Growth will be directed primarily to four Opportunity Areas that lie almost entirely within the current city boundary. The Plan identifies three Community Character Types to describe the desired character of future development in the Opportunity Areas. Each of these types distinguish themselves from traditional zoning and land use categories by focusing as much on the character and the design of buildings as on their uses. These character types are identified as "Urban Commercial Character", "Urban Center Character" and "Urban Center Low Character".

Another principle of this Plan is that infill development should occur in a way that is consistent with existing community character. New development should be designed to fit into the existing community and help to serve the needs of its residents.

The eleven policy recommendations for this chapter are:

1. Growth will be directed primarily to four Opportunity Areas: West Annapolis; south of Bay Ridge Road near Hillsmere; along Forest Drive near its intersection with Spa Road; and Outer West Street.
2. Infill development, redevelopment, and expansion outside of the four defined Opportunity Areas should be consistent with the character of the surrounding community.
3. Land areas devoted to light industrial and flex space will remain productive and sound for the operation of business.
4. Support the expansion of professional office space such that office employment and the services provided by office-based businesses are readily accessible to all residents.
5. Protect and promote the neighborhood commercial retail centers in the city.
6. Enhance the public realm of City Dock and its environs.
7. Acknowledging the importance of the Maritime industry to Annapolis' character, identity, and economy, strive to ensure the Maritime industry's sustained health and viability.
8. Continue to maintain stringent historic preservation requirements in the downtown area and protect and conserve neighborhoods utilizing the neighborhood conservation zoning designation.
9. Annapolis' rich cultural history and wealth of current historic and cultural offerings will be protected and enhanced.
10. Evaluate risks from sea level rise in decisions involving land use along the waterfront.
11. Through land use planning and economic development activities work to ensure the maintenance of the City's AA+ bond rating or better.

Transportation

A principle of transportation in this plan is the acknowledgement that transportation is critical in the achievement of community goals. This means creating a transportation system that is safe, accessible, integrated and effective. The opportunity areas identified in the Land Use & Economic Development Chapter play an important role in achieving these objectives.

A focus on improving and expanding alternatives to automobile travel is also an important aspect of this Plan. The Plan recognizes that transportation alternatives serve multiple purposes, including reducing traffic and contributing to the move toward a “Green” Annapolis by reducing auto emissions. A number of policies in this Chapter are directed toward improving the bicycle network throughout the City, expanding the pedestrian and bicycle network, and improving the performance and reliability of the City’s public transportation system. The implementation of these policies should become a part of the City’s growth and development process.

Another important aspect of the transportation chapter is the pursuit of creating an effective regional transit system to serve the needs of commuters, residents and employees. The Plan recognizes that coordinating with the County and State will be critical in achieving this objective. The development of a regional multi-modal transportation hub will help achieve a successful and effective multi-modal network. These objectives are important to the success of the City and region in the coming years.

The ten policy recommendations in this chapter are:

1. The Opportunity Areas recommended in the Land Use Chapter will each contribute system-wide transit demand such that this demand (i.e. transit ridership) can be leveraged to efficiently operate and expand the entire transit system.
2. Public transit vehicles, which carry far more passengers per gallon of fuel and per unit of street infrastructure than individual automobiles, will be given priority on all major streets and highways serving Annapolis.
3. Pursue the creation of a regional transit system serving the needs of Annapolis commuters, residents, and visitors.
4. Specific and targeted improvements to the local street system should be made with priority to those that improve cross-town circulation, route continuity for public transit, and intersection capacities.
5. In light of the continuing growth of congestion in the Forest Drive corridor, preserve and enhance the array of solutions currently at the City’s disposal.
6. Street improvements should be made to support the implementation of the Opportunity Areas.
7. Parking throughout the City will be priced and the supply managed to reduce demand for automobile travel during peak congestion periods and to help fund transit, biking, walking, and ferry service.

8. The City will invest in system-wide improvement to convert main streets and avenues into “complete streets” – that is, streets which serve the full needs of the community.
9. Conventional methods for evaluating a development project’s traffic impacts will be replaced with a more coherent and balanced urban planning-based evaluation of accessibility and mobility.
10. The City will focus on travel demand management as a tool for improving circulation, accessibility, and mobility through Annapolis.

Municipal Growth & Community Facilities

The Plan calls for modest expansion of city limits. In two locations it rationalizes the shared city-county boundary and promotes unified redevelopment projects on properties which lie on or adjacent to the city-county line. The majority of growth is planned to occur in the designated Opportunity Areas. The plan projects the overall population to grow from 35,840 in 2000 to 42,600 in 2030. This equates to a growth rate of half of a percent (0.5%) per year. The Plan allows for the annexation of two areas - land bordering Route 2 & Route 50 in the northwestern corner of the city, and land bordering Bay Ridge Road along the southern boundary of the city. The City will continue to respond to individuals seeking to annex their property into the city, even if that property is located outside the two areas identified above. The City will seek coordination with Anne Arundel County as it considers all future annexation and development on annexed parcels.

Parks

The Parks Chapter focuses largely on enhancing existing parks and facilities. It also points to the need for completing connections between pedestrian and bicycle pathways. The completion of the Pip Moyer Recreation Center and improving the city’s trail system are two objectives toward the achievement of these goals.

The three policy recommendations in this chapter are:

1. Enhance existing parks and facilities with the objective of supporting structured and informal recreation, protecting the natural environment, and encouraging human health and fitness.
2. Complete the network of pedestrian and bicycle pathways.
3. Expansion of the parks system should be undertaken selectively and strategically, with the objective of taking advantage of rare opportunities, providing parks and recreation services to underserved areas, allowing public access to the waterfront, and furthering environmental goals.

Environment

Recommendations made in the Environment Chapter include protecting the Chesapeake Bay, shrinking the City’s “carbon footprint” and protecting environmentally sensitive areas within the City. The Chapter recognizes the City’s environmental achievements, and recommends that these efforts be continued. The Chapter also recognizes the need for citizen education and involvement in helping to protect the environment.

The five policy recommendations in this chapter are:

4. Reduce the polluting effects of stormwater runoff into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
5. Protect and restore environmentally sensitive areas and other natural resources within the city.
6. Shrink the City’s Carbon Footprint and become a community of Green buildings to combat climate change.
7. Improve community environmental stewardship and education.
8. Minimize noise and light pollution.

Housing

The Housing Chapter focuses on the need for more affordable housing in the city. It recognizes the fact that home values rose rapidly over the past decade while wages did not keep pace. It recommends City support for efforts to provide housing that is affordable to workforce and middle income households.

The Chapter also focuses on the City’s public housing communities. These efforts should include rebuilding and rehabilitating public housing complexes with a mix of ownership and rental units. It also recommends working with the Housing Authority (HACA) to evaluate income diversity within these communities and reserving ten percent of re-constructed units for mixed income residents.

The three policy recommendations in this chapter are:

1. Support development of housing affordable to workforce or middle income households.
2. Reinvent public housing.
3. Support housing programs that assist low and moderate-income households with homeownership and housing rehabilitation.

Water Resources

The Water Resources Chapter recognizes the need for the City to protect and conserve the existing water supply and distribution systems. It shows that the growth forecast in this plan can be supported by the water and sewer systems. It also recommends the City enhance the wastewater collection and treatment systems, and that the City maintain its water resource management areas. Policy recommendations for achieving these goals include reducing the overall water usage of the community as well as continuing to limit recreational uses in the Waterworks Park.