

Comprehensive Plan

1978

Adopted 4/74; Amended 3/77; Reprinted 8/78 & Amended 12/78

Goals, Objectives and Policies

INTRODUCTION

The preparation of the amended comprehensive Land Use Plan for St. Mary's County has involved a wide range of activities including inputs from all levels within the county. The process began in April 1975, and the plan has evolved to this point as a result of a continuing dialogue among the county government, the public, related State, local and Federal agencies, and the general public. It is important to emphasize that the preparation of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan is a process of evolution. It begins at a level of factual data existing conditions both physical and social and evolves through a series of stages into what is called a comprehensive Land use Plan. Because the process itself is as important as the so-called final product, the description of that process occupies an unusually large segment of this comprehensive Land Use Plan. Understanding the reasons for this approach is an important prerequisite for understanding the plan itself, and these reasons are apparent from the fundamental **goal** of preparing this comprehensive Land Use Plan. This plan was built around the need to supply the county with a flexible set of **goals**, standards, and development criteria to control, direct, and guide future growth. The central **goal** of the plan is to establish a program and strategy to guide the future development of St. Mary's county, maintaining and improving the quality of the natural environment while accommodating the projected level of growth in a well-ordered physical environment. One of the most important characteristics of the county is the quality of life, both existing and potential, and the way to improve and ensure that quality of life is to improve the natural, physical, and social environments. All these elements are interrelated, and they are all compatible. This plan has been directed at helping to maximize the potential for high quality natural and physical environment as one important step in helping to reinforce a high quality of life in the County.

Goals & Objectives

In developing this process, several stages are presented:

1. The first stage is the building of a sector concept for the county. Building on the facts describing the existing land use and the demographic and economic characteristics, an attempt has been made to identify a system of service areas throughout the County. This service center system is designed to facilitate the distribution of future land use and community service requirements based on existing land use patterns, potential for economic development, and projected population. This first stage is also directed at providing a definable set of districts

with distinct environmental and land use characteristics that will eventually serve as the basis for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

2. The second stage involves the selection of a viable growth strategy for the County. This stage involves an analysis of several alternatives based on economic development patterns both existing and projected. The conclusions reached in this analysis serve as major **policy** decisions for the remaining stages in the building of the land use plan.
3. Stage three is the preparation of an urban oriented economic growth model which is used to evaluate the current potential for future economic growth. The primary **objective** of this model is to prepare a usable tool for identifying those areas of the County which will experience the pressures for growth so that appropriate strategies for guiding that growth can be prepared.
4. Stage four involves the projection of future growth, based on the conclusions reached in the analysis of previous stages. The **objective** of this stage is to develop a flexible process of projecting growth that can accommodate unforeseen variations. A population level is identified as the framework for long-range planning, and a staging process is estimated for reaching that population level.
5. Stage five identifies a system of activity centers in the County. Two levels of centers-major centers and community service centers are identified, and a picture is prepared of how the projected growth should be distributed. The overriding **objective** is to establish a system so that projected growth can be distributed to achieve maximum efficiency in the provision of public and private facilities and services.
6. Stage six recognizes the **goal** of enhancing the natural environment and ensuring that the issues relating to natural resources are woven into the fabric of the Comprehensive Plan. The natural environment is the most important characteristic of St. Mary's County, and this plan is directed at preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the land. Various issues relating to environmental quality are discussed and relevant actions are proposed.
7. Stage seven presents the land use plan and develops a strategy for its implementation. Evolving from the previous stages, this stage is based on three basic **objectives**:
 - a. To protect the quality of the waterfront area and to achieve and maintain a high level of natural excellence while assuring that all compatible development is of a similarly high quality.
 - b. To concentrate growth in designated areas in order to provide a framework for efficient provision of public services.
 - c. To control and limit growth in less densely populated areas which do not allow efficient provision of elements of the infrastructure and redirect those growth pressures into those areas programmed for concentrated growth. This allows for and encourages the preservation of agricultural, forest and related activities.

Goals and Policies

Summary List of Additional Generalized **Goals** and **Objectives**

1. To establish a program and strategy for controlled growth in St. Mary's County, maintaining and improving the quality of the natural environment while accommodating a reasonable level of urban-oriented economic growth.
2. To identify an appropriate rate of growth for the County that is realistic both from past trends and from the County's ability to provide appropriate public services.
3. To develop an economic model for assisting in the identification of areas subject to pressures for development and growth.
4. To protect and enhance the County's environmental qualities through the preparation of a land use plan recognizing nature as a primary component of physical and social design.
5. To provide a planning framework which maximizes potential for stimulating the County's economic base for utilizing and expanding the labor force, for reducing reliance on a single major employer, the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland.
6. To recognize and protect areas of significant natural beauty and resources, to maintain and improve the quality of the County's waterways.
7. To adequately protect the County's ground-water resources and potential for creation of surface water resources.
8. To provide a framework within the County for an ordered hierarchy of settlements with appropriate services and employment potential.
9. To provide a physical land use configuration designed to minimize trip generation while maximizing the use of available and projected transportation facilities and by so doing decrease the potential for highway related air pollution.
10. To initiate measures and **policies** aimed at preventing further decline of the agriculture and seafood industries.
11. To provide and develop facilities to support the Naval Air Test Center and to pass such ordinances and resolutions as necessary to ensure the continued operational capabilities and growth of NATC and its outlying facilities.

Major questions involving the **policy** determination of the comprehensive planning process are concentrated in the following sections:

1. Stage 2: discusses the alternative growth strategies available to the County and selects an alternative as the framework of the land use plan.
2. Stage 5: distributes the projected population based on **policy** determinations relating to design and economic efficiency.
3. Stage 6: discusses **policy** determinations relating to the identified environmental issues.

4. Stage 7: presents a strategy for implementation based on the **policies** established for future growth.

Income Analysis

Data has been gathered to analyze the income characteristics of the identified basic sectors of the County and is shown in Table 14. Agricultural income per employee increased considerably even though employment decreased. This would generally indicate that productivity per employee increased. However, the percentage of the total earnings generated by the agricultural sector declined while government and private sector earnings increased, indicating a decline in the relative contribution to the total earnings of the County by the agricultural sector. The most striking characteristic of the income data is the fact that earnings from the government sector presently account for over 70% of the total income generated in the County and has increased slightly between 1959 and 1969. This situation, coupled with the fact that over 60% of the total employment in the government sector is associated with the Patuxent Naval Air Test Center, demonstrates just how dependent the County's economy is on the continued viability of this facility. This reliance must be reflected in the Lexington Park Area Master Plan as well as that of the County as a whole. One of the primary **goals** of the County Government is to provide and develop facilities to support the Naval Air Test Center and to pass such ordinances and resolutions as necessary to ensure the continued operational capabilities and growth of the Naval Air Test Center and its outlying facilities.

One of the first steps toward this **goal** was Resolution No. 74-43 titled "Aircraft Impact Districts" of 13 November 1974. This resolution contains specific guidelines for land use in air Installation Compatible Use Zones. (See Part II, The 7th Stage)

The **objective** of this comprehensive plan for St. Mary's County is to propose a "process" as well as a "result." No comprehensive plan can provide definitive answers on how an entire county will or should look in the future. The most important and essential service a plan can provide is really how to identify issues and, once identified, how to incorporate these issues into **policies** for land use and development.

Too often it is expected that a picture of proposed land use is the "ultimate" pattern of growth to be achieved. It is more important, however, to identify the issues being faced in the County and to develop a strategy for dealing with those issues. This plan identifies as the major issue facing the County the need for dealing with the forces of preservation and development in a compatible manner such that the result in physical and social environment is enhanced. It is toward this end that a planning strategy has been prepared. The strategy is as important as the picture which will be presented as a result of applying the strategy. Therefore, what this plan is primarily designed to do is build with the County and for the County a tool which can be used to control the pace and direction of growth and development, for if the pace as well as the direction of growth can be controlled then the County and its people are in the enviable position of really helping to define the future.

Each of these alternative concepts must be examined carefully to develop a realistic **policy** to serve as the basis for the land use plan.

The No Growth Alternative

The concept of "no growth" has come into the forefront of discussion particularly in the Washington Metropolitan area and other metropolitan areas throughout the country. The impetus for a no growth **policy** has been the fact that the pace of development in the metropolitan areas has far outpaced the public sector's ability to provide adequate sewer, water, education, and other infrastructure facilities. Counties have been unable to plan for and control the unexpected increases in residential development; and, in general, residential development per se has not been able to financially support the service facilities required. The lag effect, rather than improving over time, has actually worsened to the point of making moratoriums against development necessary.

St. Mary's County is now at the stage where a determination of **policies** concerning growth or no growth are absolutely essential, and it is also necessary to define exactly what is meant by "no growth." Considering the fact that the average natural growth rate in the country is approximately two percent, some growth in population levels is required to accommodate the offspring of present residents, if this is desired. A compound two percent growth rate would imply that the population of the County would double in 35 years. The average yearly growth rate of the County from 1960-1970 was almost 2.0%, but that of the Tri-County Region was almost 3.0%. Increasing the net growth rate to 2.8% would imply a doubling of the population in 25 years. In general, it appears that the average yearly population growth rate for the County is increasing.

To accommodate any increase in population, regardless of the staging, would require an expansion of the County's economic base. As indicated by the economic analysis, the economy is becoming more dominated by the government sector with a decreasing agricultural base, and the primary government employer is the Patuxent Naval Air Test Center which for the foreseeable future will not be subject to major expansion. A "no growth" **policy** would generally limit the potential for expanding the resident labor force. Since the agricultural employment sector is decreasing, and since the government sector is generally increasing only slightly, with the major employment opportunity stabilized, expansion of the internal economy is going to be necessary just to absorb the slack.

The other basic sector of the economy is the construction industry, which is predominantly residentially oriented. As pointed out previously, growth in terms of residential use only does not lead to fiscal balance -- it generally does not financially support the provision of required services. Expanding residential development without expanding other employment opportunities would lead to a situation of increasing reliance on employment opportunities outside of the County, particularly in the Washington Metropolitan Area, St Mary's County would become more oriented to a commuting environment. Because of the economic picture, adopting a "no growth" **policy** would therefore lead to an eventual reliance of the County on outside employment opportunities. From a fiscal viewpoint, this situation is not desirable.

Concentrated Development in Existing and Proposed Activity Centers

The concentration of future growth and development in designated centers is a land use **policy** which can accommodate any proposed growth according to a well-established rate. The process is designed to incorporate a system of inter- dependent activity centers with concentrations of both population and services. Although the growth center is most often applied on the regional scale in the identification and designation of a hierarchy of urban centers, it can also be applied on a sub-regional scale since it is still possible to determine a system of interdependent centers or "poles" of activity. The physical space characteristics on the County scale parallel those associated with the larger scale regional setting.

Concentrated Development in Existing and Proposed Activity Centers

There are other arguments for following a growth center concept. In addition to minimizing the cost of attracting new economic activities by the concentration of desired inputs, a growth center approach can divert activity from competing areas while protecting existing agricultural land uses as well. By concentrating the economic inputs in terms of location and labor force potential, new activities can be encouraged to locate in areas planned for such activities, improving the efficiency and therefore the effectiveness of the planning process. This, too, is a desirable **goal** of the comprehensive plan.

The Fifth Stage Designation of Activity Centers

The Major Centers

Lexington Park

Lexington Park is the major employment and population center of the County and the most important activity center in the entire Tri-County Region. The 1970 population of the area was 9,136; and the 1970 population of the eighth election district in which Lexington Park is located, was 19,837 or 41.9% of the total county population. Employment and income figures also indicate the concentration of resources in the Lexington Park area. Of the approximately 15,000-member labor force in the County, approximately 8,000 are employed at NATC which is approximately 53% of the total employed in the County. In addition, approximately 67% of the total earnings of the County are generated by the Government sector with over 70% of employment in the Government sector located at NATC. Reliance on one employment center must be altered if continued growth is to be assured.

Several factors relating to the Lexington Park area can contribute to the diversification and intensification of economic activity in that area. The new Patuxent River Crossing, now under construction, is a major capital investment in the area that offers potential for new commercial and economic activities as a result of improved and expanded access to the Region as well as to the Baltimore Metropolitan area. Once the crossing is completed, connecting Calvert County to St. Mary's County, Lexington Park will be situated at the crossing of two major transportation corridors-the Route 5/235 corridor to the Washington area and the Route 2/4 corridor to Baltimore.

Planning for development in the Lexington Park area must take this fact into account and capitalize on the opportunities presented.

Opportunities for creating a superior living environment in Lexington Park hinge on two major factors that can and must be accommodated by future growth. The continued operations of the PNATC are essential to the continued economic viability of the County, and this fact reinforces the need for planning compatible land uses within the designated noise impact zones of the airport. Continued concentrations of residential land use within the noise impact zones will seriously inhibit the quality of the living environment as well as threaten the future operations of the airport. As a result, it is essential to shift the major concentrations of population away from the designated noise zones, offering incentives for new development in unaffected areas. The rationale for this policy of future growth in Lexington Park is discussed in considerable detail in the special section of this Comprehensive County Plan devoted to the Master Plan for Lexington Park. It is important, however, to present the general framework for development of the Lexington Park area and the general potential for growth in this area since Lexington Park is the major urban center of the County and will continue to be the major center. It is important, therefore, to recognize the potential for inhibiting elements and plan accordingly to assure a high quality physical as well as economic development.

The second important element offering potential for the creation of a superior residential community in Lexington Park is the new state park presently being acquired for future development.

This state park, which eventually will include 2,480 acres plus 300 acres of County Park, must be integrated into the living fabric of the community. Access from all parts of the community, as well as the County, must be accentuated to assure adequate open space and recreation opportunities within easy reach of all residents.

The existence of Lexington Park as the largest existing center in the County reflects the fact that the major portion of the County's investment is here. Expanding and solidifying this position in the County is essential. Indeed, under present circumstances the County cannot afford to accommodate growth in scattered areas - the process should be developed to concentrate growth for more efficient provision of public services. Effort must be directed toward the creation of a viable urban center in the County as the basis for long-term growth. Achievement of this **goal** will go a long way toward preservation of the important land and ecological qualities of the County while beginning a process of concentrated growth that will allow the provision of services and activities not otherwise available to a more dispersed population. That the basis for such concentration already exists in and around Lexington Park is apparent both from the economic as well as the facility analysis presented to this point. It is the major **goal** of this land use plan, therefore, to concentrate the great portion of future growth in the Lexington Park area, encompassing a population reaching 40,000 over the next thirty years, with the eighth election district reaching a total population of approximately 43,000. Extraordinary efforts will have to be exerted by the County to accomplish this end, and the success of these efforts must be re-evaluated continuously to keep pace with the process of development in and around the County.

The potential for future development - physical, social and economic - in Lexington Park is therefore a function of several important elements. The strong economic opportunities related to the PNATC and potential for local commercial operations, the opportunities presented by the new Patuxent River Crossing, and the potential for a high-quality living environment based on superior open space recreation potential all contribute to the conclusion that Lexington Park can, and should, continue to develop as the major urban center of the County. These potential forms the basis for the Master Plan for the Lexington Park Area that is prepared as a special section of this Comprehensive Plan.

St. Mary's City

As is evident from the March 1970 plan for St. Mary's City prepared by Robert L. Plavnick, A.I.P.; St. Mary's City: A Plan for the Preservation and Development of Maryland's First Capital, any plan for development of the area will require a very strong design statement concerning the plan and its relationship to the surrounding environment. The physical beauty of the area coupled with the historic importance must become the controlling design **policy**. There is no reason why this concept cannot be compatible with creation of an important education and visitor center for the region; and the first step, as presented in the St. Mary's City Plan, is the determination and delineation of the historic district for preservation and reconstruction of the archaeological sites. The provision of appropriate tourist facilities must be guided by strong design criteria to preserve and enhance the importance of the area. Very strict control must be exerted over design quality to ensure a high level of implementation of a well-delineated and strong comprehensive plan for St. Mary's City. The current preservation plan should serve as the base for a more extensive process. Estimates have been prepared by Hammer, Siler, George Associates showing that 250,000 visitors a year could be expected to come to St. Mary's City if a minimum development program were undertaken for the historical area.

The Community Service Centers

Center Projected Population (2003)

1. Hollywood area	5,000
2. Ridge area	4,000
3. Valley Lee area	4,000
4. Chaptico area	4,000
5. Clements area	4,000
6. Area of Avenue	4,000
7. Mechanicsville area	<u>4,000</u>
Total	29,000

Adding to this the population projections for the major centers yields a total of 92,000 or almost 80% of the entire population of the County. The remaining 23,000 or approximately 20% of the population must be distributed in terms of existing subdivisions and in terms of assumptions about future locations of the dispersed element of the population.

Several major assumptions and **policy** decisions are being made in the designation of these village centers and in the distribution of the remaining 23,000 people projected for the year 2003. The best way to describe these questions in relation to the existing election districts and their present population, since data is available only for these geographic areas. Specifically, three of the affected election districts areas. Specifically, three of the affected election districts five, six and seven, show major changes from existing patterns of growth. In election districts five and six, considerable pressures must be exerted to control and limit future residential growth to an overall rate of approximately one percent. Under present conditions the major growth experienced in these areas contributes markedly to the residential sprawl pattern that will eventually choke off the efficient operation of the Route 235 corridor if allowed to continue, as well as exhaust the County's fiscal capacity. Recognition of the importance of this corridor to the growth and totality of the County has led to the formation of the growth center at Lexington Park, aimed at concentrating future growth in an efficient land use and economic pattern. This concentrated approach must be reinforced to assure its realization. Continued sprawl development along the major transportation corridor would be contrary to this **goal**. Besides spreading the development pressures beyond the proposed center, continued sprawl in the Hollywood area would serve to restrict the free flow of traffic and goods from the entrance to the County to the major employment and economic Center at Lexington Park. Decreasing the efficiency of this arterial flow would slow down the rate of growth of Lexington Park. For these reasons, the proposal is to limit growth in the sixth election district to approximately 0.8% through the next thirty years so that the present population of approximately 6,100 would grow to about 7,500 by the year 2003. In election district five, because of the undesirable potential for a commuter population, the proposal is to limit growth to a rate only slightly greater than 1.0% (accommodating existing commitments) through the next thirty years so that the present population of approximately 4,100 would grow to 6,000 by the year 2003. This restricted growth potential for the Hollywood and Mechanicsville areas is a major change from existing patterns, but it is essential to the viability of the growth center proposed for Lexington Park and to the continued efficiency of the Route 235 highway artery.

Table 32A St. Mary's County Population Projections

Estimates for the pacing by which these levels are reached are based on policy decisions described previously on the rate at which certain areas should develop as well as on projections based on existing experience. Information developed from the economic model for projections of potential areas for economic growth has been used to identify where control **policies** would have to be exerted and where incentives would have to be applied to help guide the population growth into an efficient land use system. The staging of population growth is an essential element in the preparation of the capital improvements program and vice versa. The staging of the provision of the public infrastructure is a strong control that can be exerted to control the rate of growth into a manageable pattern. Projected population staging by election district is shown in Table 33, and population growth from 1970 - 2003 is shown in Figure 23.

Commercial Land Use

The potential for new industrial development is limited. The strongest private industrial sector

is the construction industry, reflecting the increasing pressures for new residential development. The manufacturing sector is minimal, employing approximately 5% of the employed labor force with over 35% of the manufacturing sector employed in lumber products and transportation equipment. No prediction can be made for a major change in the existing employment pattern since there is no basis on which to make any such prediction. However, policies can be developed which are designed to maximize the potential for new industry to locate in St. Mary's County, and such policies must be developed to help diversify what is in fact becoming a stagnant economy.

Development Pressures on the Waterfront

Industrial

Water has always attracted industry, providing it with a ready garbage disposal system. Areas of tidal action are particularly alluring because of the cleansings of the affected basins. The existence of several potential natural deep-water harbors, the national "energy crisis", and some current shore-line uses have created real and imagined pressures for potential industrial uses, including a petroleum refinery, petrochemical industries, and other heavy industrial commerce. Such industry types conjure images of foul smells, stagnant polluted waters, and major noise impacts on neighboring areas. Fear of such proposals for County shoreline uses, as based on past experiences, is well-founded. No one wants to live beside an obnoxious commercial or industrial use.

On the other hand, from our past experience we have been conditioned to enjoy and benefit from the products of these same industries. Whether we enjoy the admission, industry is the source of jobs, and, therefore, indirectly the source of our food and houses plus the many products that make today's life more pleasant. In that sense, industry is both our enemy and friend. To maximize potential benefits - both economically and personally - and to minimize negative environmental effects from any future industrial locations the following steps are proposed for the determination of future industrial operations:

2. Adopt a site selection law such as the State of Maine which allows an Environmental Improvement Commission to deny an industrial location proposal based on potential environmental dangers. Such an evaluation capacity necessitates a well-documented and **objective** environmental study along with reasonable and specific criteria by which to judge any proposal.

Residential

The County's shoreline is speckled with small and large housing developments and expansion pressures are continuously increasing. The result has been haphazard placement of housing with no provision for public services including schools, fire stations, sewer and water, and roads. The major portion of the County soils is not suitable for septic tanks and leach fields, and severe water quality problems exist in many of these unwisely developed areas. In general, the population requires an adequate supply of housing, and one cannot argue that a waterfront location would not be a most desirable one. However, if existing methods of development are not altered, shore access will eventually be limited to those few holding riparian rights while overall water quality will be degraded for all. To solve existing water quality problems, overcrowded schools and to retain public access to appropriate beach areas, the County should assume the following **policies**:

1. Base the approval of residential building permits on the availability of public sewerage and water, adequate schools, and appropriate road construction and maintenance programs.
2. Combine the process of granting building permits with the overall land use plan and the capital improvements program designed to concentrate housing developments as described in the growth center concept while maintaining other areas for essential agriculture and recreational needs. This process would facilitate the provision of adequate sewage treatment facilities, helping to alleviate water pollution problems.
3. Improve subdivision standards and create models for water-front developments.

Development Pressures on Prime Agricultural Land

To retain and preserve agricultural and forest resources, the County has several alternatives:

3. Property tax policies should reflect the actual use not the potential use of the land. Too many farmers in other areas have been taxed out of their farms and lifestyles by taxes based on urban economic concerns rather than rural, agricultural needs.

Wetlands

Wetlands, tidal marshes, or estuaries are names used interchangeably to denote one of the most vital and dynamic units of nature. Wetlands are of integral importance to man, fish, bird, and mammal. These marshy, boggy areas are the spawning and nursery grounds for a large percentage of sea life, nesting and feeding places for a variety of birdlife, and an indispensable part of the food chain where organic matter and nutrients are converted into future food sources of plants and animals. Wetlands also help control flooding by acting like a sponge for unseasonably high waters, moderate local climatic conditions and, fortunately for today's populations, have helped filter out man-made pollutants. Aesthetic values are also part of the wetlands' contributions to man's well-being.

In 1970, the Maryland General Assembly passed a wetlands law which was the beginning of long overdue protection for these vital areas. Although the legislation applies only to salt water wetlands and does not prohibit construction in these areas, it is more protection than provided in most other states. The regulations require the Department of Natural Resources to designate public or state wetlands ("all land under the navigable waters of the State below the mean high tide which is affected by the regular rise and fall of the tide") and private wetlands ("all lands not considered 'State wetlands' bordering on or lying beneath tidal waters which are subject to regular or periodic tidal action and which support aquatic growth"). The major thrust of the legislation is requirement of a permit from the Department of Natural Resources before filling or dredging a channel larger than 60 feet in length, 20 feet wide or 3 feet deep at mean low water on private wetlands. The Western Shore of Maryland has lost about 3,000 acres or 6% of its wetland areas since 1942. The major tidal wetland losses have resulted from housing development while agricultural drainage has been the major cause of inland wetland losses. The increasing shore development pressures are thus placing wetlands in economic competition with other demands for coastal uses. Wetlands

are so vital to our life cycle that rampant destruction of St. Mary's County's wetlands cannot be permitted. In addition to the small protection provided by the State Wetlands Legislation, the County can institute other actions and **policies**:

1. Residential developments should be grouped inland and at a protective distance from the tidal wetlands. This **policy** is reflected in the growth center concept under which the land use plan has been developed.
2. Boat marinas should be constructed in harbors rather than individual boat docks strung through wetland areas.
3. Wastes should be recycled or disposed of in existing County sanitary landfill areas.
4. Agricultural drainage should be controlled as suggested in the previous sections.
5. Industrial locations should be away from wetland areas in properly prepared sites as proposed in preceding pages.
6. Particularly vital or ecologically fragile wetlands should be included in open space system wildland areas or other designations for permanent preservation.

Objective

<u>PROPOSED PRESERVATION AREAS</u>	<u>Approximate Area (acres)</u>
St. Mary's River	275
Chaptico Run	475
Cherryfield Point	186
Medley Creek	115
Newtown Neck	725
Cornfield Point Geologic Section	106
Point Look-in	53
Bay Forest Drive	124
Drayden Geologic Section	53

These areas provide a framework for preservation of ecologically important and significant features of the region. Designation of these areas was based on the importance of the various biological, geographical, archeological, paleontological characteristics and was predicated on the **objective** of preservation and protection of important plant and animal species. Conservation of these areas would be a major contribution to improving environmental quality and maintaining ecological balance, and as such these areas are designated for observation on the land use plan.

General Goals for the Waterfront Protection Zone

1. To allow the development of low density residential, selected commercial and industrial expansion and agricultural activities in a manner that is not detrimental to the natural environment.
2. To maintain and improve the water quality of the rivers, streams and bays so that shell fishing, fishing and water-oriented economic activities will not be curtailed.
3. To preserve the vegetation, natural features and stream courses adjacent to the waterfront areas.
4. To prevent significant problems of erosion, sedimentation and drainage.

5. To protect public and private investments from flood and flood damage.
6. To assure appropriate land use design in harmony with the environmental and natural features of the area.
7. To protect and maintain prime agricultural areas.
8. To allow development in areas that are suitable for development by virtue of their natural features and so preserve areas through private action that are naturally unsuitable for development.

Development Policies

Any development proposed for the Waterfront Protection Zone shall be subject to the following development **policies**. Appropriate review mechanisms and implementation procedures shall be developed in the zoning ordinance and other ordinances of the County to implement these development policies.

Policies for Stream Valleys and Drainage Courses

Definition: Stream valleys consist of the watercourse and flood plain which serve as the natural reservoir and channel for water runoff from the land and the side slopes of the flood plain running with the stream from its origin to point of confluence with a larger body of water.

1. Development shall not take place within stream valleys and drainage courses.
2. Floodplain maps and delineation of stream valleys should be undertaken in the Waterfront Protection Zone and utilized as a guide in the review of development proposals.
3. Vegetation should be maintained on the slopes of stream valleys to prevent erosion and sedimentation.
4. All structures should be setback at least fifty (50) feet from the edge of the stream or tributary.

Policies for Shoreline Waters

Definition: These are waters which have the capability of supporting shellfish harvesting, clams and oyster beds.

1. No dredging should be performed in these waters except for approved maintenance dredging on exiting public navigation channels.
2. Stringent water run-off controls should be imposed on development adjacent to these waters and all developers of land contiguous to these waters should attempt to contain on site, all wastes generated by development (including agriculture) in order to prevent degradation of water quality.
3. Oysters and clam beds, marine grass beds which serve as important habitats for marine organisms and spawning should not be modified.

Policies for Flood Zone

Definition: The flood zone consists of lands between the shoreline and the 100-year flood line. It is the area subject to flooding by storm driven tides on a statistical probability-of once every 100 years.

1. Any development in the flood zone which would unnecessarily jeopardize public health, safety or welfare should be pre-vented. Examples include sewage treatment plants, industrial holding ponds or other potential polluting facilities.
2. All residential construction in a flood zone should have ground floor elevations above the level subject to flooding by the statistical 100-year flood.
3. All high intensity development in the flood zone should be serviced by central sewer systems.

Policies for the Wetlands

Definition: Wetlands consist of those land areas which are covered with water for periods sufficient to support aquatic or semi-aquatic vegetation.

1. Wetlands shall be given the highest level of protection to minimize the alteration of their natural features and purposes.
2. No construction shall be permitted within wetlands excepting for the purposes of providing public access within carefully restricted area for nature study or other passive recreational uses.
3. No platting shall be permitted within wetlands excepting for the purposes of providing public access within carefully restricted areas for nature study or other passive recreational uses.
4. Continuous effort shall be exerted on other public agencies to assure that they administer adequately their regulatory powers on the use of the wetlands.

Policies for Flood Plains

Definition: Flood plains are lands lying along drainage courses that are subject to flooding on a regular basis. These areas usually contain mixed alluvial soils, poorly drained soil and natural vegetation that is adapted to fluctuating levels.

1. Development in flood plains should be prevented.
2. Natural vegetation in flood plains should be preserved to the maximum degree possible to prevent erosion, retard run-off and prevent sedimentation.
3. Any structures erected in the flood plain should be designed for free flow of water.
4. There should be no open storage of fertilizers, chemicals, or other polluting materials in flood plains.
5. All activities in the flood plain should consider their potential detrimental effects on water quality and downstream resources.

Policies for the Areas of Steep Slopes

Definition: Areas of steep slopes consist of those areas where the prevailing slopes are in excess of 15% (1 ½ feet vertical rise to 10 feet horizontal distance) and slope stability is questionable.

1. Areas of steep slopes shall be given the highest level of protection to minimize the alteration of their natural features and purposes.

2. No construction shall be permitted within the areas of steep slopes except as permitted under special permit procedures and meeting strict engineering standards for construction and erosion control and certified for safety by a certified civil engineer.
3. No stripping of vegetation, excavation, filling, grading, or terracing shall be permitted within areas of steep slopes, excepting as such activities are undertaken for the sole purpose of stabilizing slopes which have been rendered unstable, or as permitted in number 2.
4. Modification of the natural drainage pattern within areas of steep slopes shall be carefully controlled as to minimize problems of erosion and sedimentation.
5. A program shall be undertaken for stabilizing slopes which have been rendered unstable.

Policies for the Plateau Area

Definition: The plateau area consists of the relatively flat uplands which extend from the upper limits of the steep slopes around the Waterfront Protection Area.

1. Undeveloped areas of the plateau shall be devoted pre- dominantly to residential uses.
2. Innovative forms of residential development, such as cluster development, shall be encouraged in order to protect environmentally sensitive areas for public and private open space and to achieve appropriate design.
3. Development shall be undertaken in such a way as to minimize the threat to the stability of the steep slope area and designed to be in harmony with the scenic features of the waterfront area.
4. Stripping of vegetation, grading, and filling shall be carefully controlled so that these activities are kept within desirable limits.
5. Tree planting and revegetation shall be encouraged in conjunction with development so as to prevent erosion and sedimentation, maintain slope stability, and enhance the wooded quality of the waterfront area.
6. The natural drainage pattern shall be preserved where feasible, and where the pattern must be modified it shall be modified in such a way as to minimize adverse effects.
7. No storm water shall be allowed to flow into the steep slope area except at controlled discharge points.
8. No new development which discharges sewage effluent shall be permitted unless it is served by public sewers.

Policies for Shoreline Modification

Definition: Shoreline modification is any development activity which changes the natural features, appearance or contours of the shoreline.

1. Any dredging and filling which is necessary to the public interest should be in accord with an overall plan and environmental impact statement approved by Federal, State and County agencies. All other dredging and filling should be prohibited.
2. Any port or pier facilities should be designed in a fashion that requires minimum maintenance and water scouring action should be utilized if possible, to prevent formation of salt traps which require continuous maintenance dredging.
3. All port facilities should have modern and approved oil spill equipment and the capability to employ these on short notice.

4. Commercial shoreline activities should be restricted to those activities that require a waterfront location. Non-water dependent commercial activities should be located inland.
5. Parking facilities for commercial water dependent activities should be designed to prevent concentrated run-off from paved areas from entering adjacent water bodies. Storm sewers, ditches or other drainage systems should not empty directly into open waters. Holding basins should be created to allow settling of suspended matter and gradual release into open water.

Policies for Marina Location and Design

Definition: Marinas are facilities which provide boat launching and storage, boating supplies and services for small pleasure craft.

1. Marinas should be located in areas where maximum physical advantages exist and where least dredging and maintenance will be required.
2. Marina construction should avoid destruction of marsh areas, shellfish beds, and submerged grasses where possible.
3. Turning basins and navigation channels should be designed to prevent long term degradation of water quality. Dead-end of deep channels without adequate flushing should be avoided.
4. Marinas should be equipped with sewage collection systems for servicing of pleasure craft.

Policies for Bulkheads

Definition: Bulkheads are retaining structures utilized to stabilize a shoreline or make it more accessible.

1. Bulkheads should be constructed at an established bulkhead line or landward of the mean high-water mark.
2. Bulkhead construction should avoid sharp angle turns that may collect trash or cause flushing problems.

Policies for Dredging and Filling

Definition: Alteration of the natural shoreline by addition of fill and removal of material to raise adjacent land to usable elevations.

1. Wherever possible, dredging or filling should be pre-vented.
2. Residential developments that are feasible only through dredging or filling should be prevented.
3. Dredging for navigational access should be carefully planned to prevent unnecessary channels.
4. Turbidity control mechanisms should be used for water quality in adjacent areas.

Waterfront Protection District

The purpose of the Waterfront Protection District is to ensure compatibility of any proposed development with the overriding **objective** of environmental protection along the shoreline of St. Mary's County. This district includes designation of areas for conservation and preservation because of their natural value and because of limited or non-existent development potential. The primary **objective** is to effectively balance development opportunities with the environment and to prevent the use of unsuitable locations for development.

The special areas of environmental concern are as follows:

1. Wetlands and marshes
2. Special wildlife habitats

3. Streams, stream courses, and flood plains
4. Erosion and sedimentation
5. Water quality and the protection of shellfish
6. Effluent
7. Protection of slopes and wooded areas
8. Vegetation
9. Dredging
10. Flood protection
11. Shoreline modification

General **goals** for the Waterfront Protection District are as follows:

1. To allow the development of low density residential, selected commercial and industrial expansion and agricultural activities in a manner that is compatible with and enhances the natural environment.
2. To maintain and improve the water quality of the rivers, streams, and bays so that shell fishing, fishing and water- oriented economic activities will not be curtailed.
3. To preserve the vegetation, natural features and stream courses adjacent to the waterfront areas.
4. To prevent significant problems of erosion, sedimentation and drainage.
5. To protect public and private investments from flood and flood damage.
6. To assure appropriate land use design in harmony with the environmental and natural features of the area.
7. To protect and maintain prime and/or productive agricultural areas.
8. To allow development in areas that are suitable for development by virtue of their natural features and so preserve areas through private action that are naturally unsuitable for development.

AIRCRAFT IMPACT DISTRICTS

In the consideration of future proposed land uses in areas affected by aircraft installations, the **policy** of the County Commissioners and the Planning Commission shall be as follows:

- (1) Except in those areas for which zoning districts have otherwise been previously established those areas designated as CNR-ZONE 2 and Considerable Accident Potential shall be limited to the following uses:
 - (a) Industrial
 - (b) Commercial
 - (c) Residential (No greater than one dwelling unit per acre)
 - (d) Open Space and Recreational Uses (other than Spectator Sports)

The aforesaid **policy** as to land use shall in no way affect existing zoning districts or the rights and duties of the owners thereof, their successors and assigns.

(2) There shall be a Buffer Zone which shall extend 1,000 feet beyond and around the designated CNR-ZONE 2 which may permit, Agricultural, Industrial, Commercial, and/or Residential at a gross density not to exceed two (2) dwelling units per acre. Within the Buffer, the Planning Commission shall encourage lower densities adjacent to the CNR-ZONE 2 line and higher densities near the outer perimeter of the Buffer Zone. The aforesaid Buffer Zone **policy** shall in no way affect existing zoning districts or the rights and duties of the owners thereof, their successors and assigns.

Land Use Policies

Rural service Centers are defined as those areas in the County located at strategic intersections that contain at least three (3) commercial establishments and are historically and economically significant to the rural population of the county. Some of these areas are Chaptico, Helen, Morganza, Loveville, clements, Colton, Avenue, California, Compton, Callaway, Piney Point, Tall Timbers, Park Hall, Great Mills, Budd's Creek, Oakville, Golden Beach, Abell, Dameron, and St. Inigoes.

Rural Service Centers provide for the integration of limited commercial activity with rural residential and agricultural development.

Community Facilities

Introduction

This section discusses existing, programmed and planned facilities St. Mary's County. Community facilities and services include schools, parks and open space, fire and police protection, health and welfare facilities and services., and libraries. They are generally provided and/or maintained by a public agency, although private companies, institutions, and service organizations also contribute in limited instances. Each facility represents varying public investments in land, structures and operating costs. Certain activities including primarily the parks system are land oriented, while others such as police and fire protection are mainly service functions with only limited land holdings. The pattern of activity locations and service areas in St. Mary's – ranging from specific people-oriented community facilities such as the local library to the diffuse and impersonal network of public utility systems – varies considerably. It is desirable that given this multiplicity of institutional forms, activity locations, and service areas, programs should be coordinated whenever and wherever appropriate, to benefit local residents and user groups.

The role of community facilities as significant determinants on both the location and density of future growth should be recognized. It is very desirable that the governing body of St. Mary's County together with its ancillary departments and agencies administer a program of improvements and additions to community facilities which reflects and supports local planning **objectives** for future development of the county as a whole.

PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Generation of Park Need

Further development of the full range of park, open space and recreational facilities that now occur in St. Mary's County is only partially a county function and is only partially related to the exact needs of the growing Resident population. The relationship of projected residential growth to planned park need falls into three major groupings, as follows:

1. Minimum relationship

This includes conservation and preservation of environmentally valuable sites, e.g., shoreline, wetlands, flood plains, and wildlife habitats. Most of these features have been identified and documented in recent state, county, and private studies. Unique historical locations and structure, e.g. St. Mary's City have the same fundamental status. Although population growth in the County will intensify pressures to adversely modify these areas, there is no dependent relationship between the amount of population growth and an exact acreage that should be conserved or preserved. The desired **objectives** of conservation and preservation should be encouraged through a variety of ongoing public and private; techniques including state and county regulation of development, securing public access, and land acquisition programs by groups such as the Nature Conservancy.

Health

A. Operational and Fiscal Structure

A comprehensive program of health services is a necessary part of any system of community facilities designed to serve a given population. Health-oriented facilities are provided to St. Mary's County by a variety of public, semi-public and private agencies, and groups. Each facility represents a particular organizational response to a unique health or social need. The public role is both to contribute substantially to this overall effort and to monitor the total range of facilities and services. The basic **objectives** of a public health department are normally to maintain standards, to identify existing deficiencies, articulate future needs, and achieve administrative and organizational efficiencies. The St. Mary's County Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is typical in this respect. Organizationally, it is divided into six divisions – Public Health Nursing, Environmental Health, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Mental Health and Fiscal Administration and is administered under the County Health officer, appointed jointly by the Maryland State Board of Health and the County Board of Health. The latter is a three-member committee established and appointed by the County Commissioners. In addition to the qualified personnel who staff the various public health facilities, there is a broad range of private practicing physicians and dentists, voluntary health agencies, other official and non-official groups, and civic groups supporting Health Department programs. Each of these non-public groups contribute independently to meeting the overall **objective** of providing a full range of health and ancillary social facilities.

The public health program in St. Mary's County is funded by a combination of state (two-thirds) and

county (one- third) funds. Additional grants for certain activities are obtained from State sources on a matching 3 to 1 state to county basis. The approved County budget for 1973-74 included a gross sum of \$701,269 from county funds and \$405,760 from federal and matching state funds. A further \$89,000 was approved from county funds for mosquito control, ambulance quads and supplementary salaries for certain hospital and nursing home personnel .

WATER AND SEWER CONSIDERATIONS

B. Fiscal Structures

The entire service system is intended to be self-financing with the necessary revenues being provided mainly from basic developer charges, front foot benefit charges, connection fees, service charges and other sources. This approach is comparable to the financing of water supply in the County. Although it ensures that public expenditures for sewerage service to serve the County are minimal, it carries the risk that development will be permitted irrespective of basic public **policies** on growth in order for the County to recoup its own expenditures.

Scope and Purposes

As stated in Article 43 of the Maryland State Code, "The **objectives** of the County Plan are to guide the development of the water supply and sewerage systems to be consistent with County comprehensive planning, and to be used as a tool in implementation of the County development **policy** so that an ample supply of water may be collected, treated, and delivered to points of use, and so that wastewater may be collected and delivered to points best suited for waste treatment and disposed of or reused so as to minimize adverse effects or legitimate water uses in a most effective manner.

Current Planning

St. Mary's County does not at this time have an approved comprehensive plan for solid waste disposal which meets Maryland State standards. The approved plan is prepared in accordance with Section 387, Article 43 of the Maryland Health Laws.

Present plans to expand and improve service include the following:

- Closure of the Valley Lee Dump in 1973 and Ridge Dump in 1974, consistent with State law.
- Provision of substitute service either: (1) by provision of open containers at a few designated transfer stations, with truck collection and transfer to the landfill site; or (2) by locating "green" boxes throughout the county at points more than five miles from a landfill site, each box serving the needs of 15-20 persons, and transferable to a landfill site.
- A comprehensive proposed plan of action for meeting present problems, future solid waste

requirements, and stated **objectives**. It stresses the importance of viewing solid wastes "as a public utility which requires planning and management in the same manner as water and sewerage systems." The elements of the proposed plan presented by the County's solid waste consultant include:

- Establishing managerial responsibilities for solid waste management.
- Developing an improved format for disposal and collection, including the closures and substitute service noted above.