

I. OVERVIEW

This Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a guide for the physical development of the City. It was prepared with the intent of educating the public about planning decisions, and serves as a document to assist the Mayor and City Council as they consider important funding and budgetary priorities. In addition, the Plan serves as recognition of the City's support of Maryland's *Smart Growth Initiative* as a cornerstone of intelligent planning and local land use policy.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to encourage development of a safe, healthy, and distinctive living environment—one that serves the existing community, entices visitors, and stimulates economic development. Also crucial is the desire to retain the "small town" aspects of Havre de Grace, which so many people cite as being very important. Downtown preservation and enhancement remains as a primary planning objective, however, the entire community must be considered in respect to planning and development decisions and programs. Residential neighborhoods and industrial areas must be approached with the same care and thought when policies are planned and implemented.

The City of Havre de Grace, with the guidance of the Havre de Grace Planning Commission, engaged in a review of its 1996 Comprehensive Plan beginning in 2000. The Planning Commission and staff from the Department of Economic Development and Planning revalidated the Visions and Goals established in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan and began a review of the entire twelve-chapter document. This resultant document recognizes the accomplishments that have been made during the past seven years and builds on the foundation of the earlier plan. In addition, some new planning concepts have been developed during this review and incorporated in this planning document. The findings and recommendations included in this document serve as the basis for developing subdivision and zoning regulations and, ultimately, a capital improvements program which guides expenditures for necessary public improvements. This Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a reference for community leaders and citizens who are striving to make Havre de Grace a better place in which to live, work, and enjoy an excellent quality of life.

II. USE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to give direction to both public and private decision-makers so that the most beneficial arrangement of land uses can be accomplished as well as the provision of public services for present and future residents. A comprehensive plan provides a basis for intelligent discussions by the public and its elected representatives on the future development of their community. It also coordinates decision-making within and between public and private activity in the endeavor to achieve a healthy and balanced environment. To be effective, the plan must be accepted, understood, and supported by the elected officials who are charged with the responsibility of decision making and by citizens who recognize the benefits

that can result from good planning. It must also be tailored toward the social, economic, and environmental conditions that prevail today while at the same time promote a balance between environmental and historical protection and the provision of adequate services and facilities required by the populace in the future.

The following statements address more specifically the various uses of the comprehensive plan:

- *An economically healthy balance of land uses is represented in the comprehensive plan which provides a framework for consideration of annexation and rezoning applications.*
- *Use permits, subdivision plats, site plans, and general development proposals can be reviewed within a more comprehensive frame of reference and not approached on a piecemeal basis.*
- *Improvements to the City's transportation network can be coordinated to provide a more integrated and serviceable system.*
- *Programs for the improvement and/or expansion of public utility systems can be undertaken in a more judicious manner.*
- *Public services and facilities can be provided in a more economical and efficient manner.*
- *The comprehensive plan will promote an awareness of social values which should result in a wide variety of housing types, densities, and price ranges.*
- *Once officially recognized, natural resources, scenic vistas, features of historical and architectural significance, and areas of natural beauty can be more effectively preserved, protected, and integrated into an orderly pattern of development.*

III. STUDY AREA

The Havre de Grace planning area consists of three segments: (a) the older portions of the City located to the east of US 40, which are identified as revitalization areas, (b) newer neighborhoods and developing areas which are within corporate limits, and (c) areas outside of corporate limits which are recognized as logical planning areas by the Planning Commission. The area reviewed is generally bounded by Interstate 95 to the north; Earlton and Robinhood Roads to the west; the Oakington Peninsula to the south; and the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay to the east. The incorporated areas of Havre de Grace reflect the City boundaries as they were on 1 July 2003.

Within each of the three comprehensive planning areas are sub-areas that represent a section of the City or a common characteristic for planning analysis. For instance within the *Revitalization Areas*, there are sub-areas for the City's Waterfront, Downtown Business

District, and Old Town, among others. *Newer Neighborhoods and Developing Areas* address existing neighborhoods, like the Meadowvale community, Grace Harbour, Bayview Estates, and tracts of land yet to be developed within the City limits. *Growth Areas*, on the other hand, are those areas outside of the City that must be reviewed in terms of future annexation and desired land uses.

IV. LOCATION

Havre de Grace is located in northeast Maryland at the mouth of the Susquehanna River on the Chesapeake Bay. The City is centrally located between Wilmington, Delaware, which is forty miles to the northeast, and Baltimore, Maryland, which is thirty-five miles to the southwest. These cities are connected by US 40, which extends through the City, and the John F. Kennedy Memorial Highway (Interstate 95), located just northwest of the City.

Havre de Grace is in the eastern corner of Harford County and constitutes one of the three municipalities in the County. Other municipalities include the City of Aberdeen, located three miles to the southwest, and Bel Air, the County seat, which is located thirteen miles west of the City. Northeast of Havre de Grace, across the Susquehanna River, is Perryville, which is a small community located in Cecil County. Havre de Grace is connected to Perryville and Cecil County by the Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge and the Millard E. Tydings Memorial Bridge.

The Pennsylvania border is twenty miles north of Havre de Grace, and the City is within an hour's drive of Lancaster, Chester, and York, the nearest major cities in Pennsylvania. Havre de Grace is forty minutes from Baltimore and Wilmington, seventy-five minutes from Philadelphia and ninety minutes from Washington D.C. Within a three hour radius of Havre de Grace are the great metropolitan areas of the Northeast Atlantic seaboard, including New York, which constitutes the largest regional concentration of people, urbanization, and economic activity in the United States.

V. CITY HISTORY

In the interest of establishing the background for this study, it is of value to understand the historical beginnings of the City. The first recorded history of Havre de Grace can be traced back to the mid-1500s when various explorers traveled into the Chesapeake Bay area. A map of the Bay was produced in 1585 by an Englishman named Wyth, but it was not until John Smith's exploration of the Upper Bay and Susquehanna River area in 1608 that a detailed description of the area was recorded. In 1658, the land on which Havre de Grace is now located was granted to Godfrey Harmer, and he called the site Harmer's Town. During the following year, Harmer transferred his land to Thomas Stockett, and the site became known as Stockett's Plantation.

Many of the determining factors surrounding the growth of the City are closely linked to its location at the mouth of the Susquehanna River. In 1695, the General Assembly granted permission to establish a ferry with inns on either side of the river. A toll ferry, put into operation in the same year, became the first legally established crossing of the Susquehanna as well as an important crossing on the lower Susquehanna. After the establishment of Bell's Ferry at Lapidum in 1727, Bell's was referred to as "Upper Ferry", and the settlement on the site of

present day Havre de Grace became known as Susquehanna Lower Ferry. During colonial times, Havre de Grace, known as the Susquehanna Lower Ferry, had become an important link in the great coach road between Philadelphia and the South. The Lower Susquehanna River Crossing was used more frequently than other river crossings since it was located on the most direct route between Baltimore and Philadelphia. Washington, Jefferson, Richard Henry Lee, Madison, Monroe, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and other colonial leaders used the Lower Susquehanna River Crossing during their travels.

The City became known as Havre de Grace in about 1782. According to legend, Lafayette referred to the City as Havre de Grace in a letter to George Washington. It is said that the site reminded him of the French seaport, Le Havre. Havre de Grace was incorporated as a Town in 1785 and in 1799 developed its first City Plan. Many of the streets that were laid out on this early plan still exist today, with Congress and Union Avenues as principal streets.

While the City had not been directly involved in the Revolutionary War, much of it was destroyed during the War of 1812, the second war with the British. In 1813, a group of local militia from Havre de Grace fired upon a party of British naval vessels, leading to the subsequent burning and ransacking of the Town by the British. Consequently, few eighteenth century structures remain in Havre de Grace, and the City has subsequently rebuilt itself.

In the nineteenth century, many of the major historical events in Havre de Grace were related to commerce and transportation. The Concord Point Lighthouse was built in 1827 to aid in navigation. In 1836, the Baltimore, Wilmington, and Philadelphia Railroad laid tracks from Baltimore to Philadelphia via Havre de Grace. The Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal from Havre de Grace to Wrightsville, Pennsylvania opened in 1840. A passenger steamboat service from Havre de Grace to Baltimore was also initiated in that year. During the Civil War, many new business efforts began and prospered in Havre de Grace, including sand export, fishing, ice harvesting, canning, and milling operations. The first bridge across the mouth of the Susquehanna was constructed by the Baltimore, Wilmington, and Philadelphia Railroad in 1866. The Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal ceased operation in 1900.

The first half of the twentieth century saw numerous important local events including the opening of the Bayou Hotel in 1921, the completion of the Conowingo Dam in 1928, and the construction of the US 40 Bridge in 1939. The double-decked bridge, which remained open until the completion of the US 40 bridge, was dismantled and sold for scrap iron during World War II. The Graw, a Havre de Grace racetrack built in 1912, provided a popular form of entertainment for residents and visiting race enthusiasts until it ceased operation in 1950. Harford Memorial Hospital, during the same period of time, became the primary County hospital and remains a vital medical service provider today. Duck hunting, or gunning, on the Susquehanna Flats was at its peak. Being a neighbor to the Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) and the former Bainbridge Naval Training Center, Havre de Grace provided entertainment and off-base housing to military troops stationed at these facilities.

Recent events of significance in Havre de Grace include the arrival some major industries centered along MD 7/Old Post Road and Chesapeake Industrial Park. Expansion of marinas, cultural museums, public waterfront areas, and downtown commercial revitalization are transforming the older portions of the City. In addition, significant residential developments, which include the newer communities such as Bayview Estates, Grace Harbour, Bayland

Condominiums, and numerous waterfront condominiums as well as future Bulle Rock communities, are changing the landscape of the City. On-going public improvements and increased private investment are working to advance the City into a vibrant waterfront community.

VI. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

The main areas covered in this socio-economic profile for the City include population trends, age distribution, race distribution, median household and per capita income, poverty status, and labor force characteristics. The information contained in this chapter is based upon U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 data and past census data reflected in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan. The data provided is in a consolidated form identified by the geographic areas of the City of Havre de Grace and Harford County, Maryland. Data for Harford County is included to give an insight into how Havre de Grace compares with the expanded population of Harford County as a whole. Statistical profiles of general demographic information and selected social, economic, and housing characteristics were utilized.

A. Population

The City's population increased marginally (2.2%) from 8,763 in 1980 to 8,952 in 1990. However, the City experienced a significant population increase of 26.6% from 1990-2000. The overall increase is primarily attributed to in-migration and an increase in housing stock due to the new residential development west of US 40. It is fully expected that population growth will continue at an even greater pace over the next ten years because of new residential growth of the proposed Bulle Rock communities, proposed annexations, and in-fill residential development in the older communities. Information on the estimated number housing units is available in Chapter 11, Housing and will provide an indication of anticipated population growth.

**TABLE 1.1
TOTAL POPULATION
UPDATED FROM CENSUS 2000, PROFILE OF GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Population	1980	1990	1980-1990 % change	2000	1990-2000 % change
Havre de Grace	8,763	8,952	2.2	11,331	26.6
Harford County	145,930	182,132	24.8	218,590	20.0
% of Total Population	6.0%	4.9%		5.2%	

There are striking differences in the population by age trends between 1990-2000 as compared to 1980-1990 with regard to the 0-20 year and the 21-64 age cohorts for the City of Havre de Grace as shown in the following table. This reflects the new residential growth west of US 40 and the influx of new families with school age children.

**TABLE 1.2
POPULATION BY AGE - CITY OF HAVRE DE GRACE**

UPDATED FROM CENSUS 2000, PROFILE OF GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Age Group	1980	1990	1980-1990 % change	2000	1990-2000 % change
0-20 years	2,897	2,564	-11.5	3,231	26.0
21-64 years	4,640	5,024	8.3	6,622	31.8
65+ years	1,226	1,364	11.3	1,478	8.4
Total	8,763	8,952	2.2	11,331	26.6

B. RACE

The following table shows the Census 2000 statistics on racial composition of Havre de Grace and Harford County based on the *Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000, RACE* for those respective geographic areas. In addition to what is shown on Table 1.3, statistics on Hispanic or Latino populations are provided by Census 2000 data separately (as provided by *Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000, HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE*). Census data of the Hispanic or Latino population for Havre de Grace is 241, or 2.1%; Harford County’s Hispanic or Latino population is 4,169, or 1.9% of the County’s total population.

**TABLE 1.3
HAVRE DE GRACE - PROPORTION BY RACE
FROM CENSUS 2000, PROFILE OF GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Race	Havre de Grace 2000	% of Population	Harford County 2000	% of Population
One Race				
White	8,979	79.2	189,678	86.8
Black or African American	1,830	16.2	20,260	9.3
American Indian and Alaska Native	25	0.2	498	0.2
Asian	146	1.3	3,313	1.5
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	13	0.1	129	0.1
Some Other Race	91	0.8	1,500	0.7
Two of More Races	247	2.2	3,212	1.4
Total Population	11,331		218,590	

C. Income

The median household income for a community provides important information regarding the spending power and lifestyle of that community, as well as overall wealth. Median household income for residents in Havre de Grace has been and continues to be considerably lower than that of Harford County as a whole. However, one positive trend that is evidenced from the 2000 census is that the percent of change for Havre de Grace between 1990 and 2000 is growing at a slightly higher rate than Harford County.

Though not statistically significant, it may reflect a slow progression of the City’s population in shortening the gap for median income between Havre de Grace and the general Harford County population.

**TABLE 1.4
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
UPDATED FROM CENSUS 2000, PROFILE OF SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Income	1980	1990	% change	2000	% change
Havre de Grace	\$14,441	\$26,678	84.7	\$ 41,218	54.5
Harford County	\$20,875	\$41,680	99.7	\$ 63,868	53.2

To be expected based on median income, Havre de Grace per capita income is also lower than that of Harford County. However in a positive trend, percent of change between 1990 and 2000 is increasing at a substantial rate of 62.0%, also indicating a measure that the gap is diminishing between Havre de Grace population and the County as a whole in terms of income.

**TABLE 1.5
PER CAPITA INCOME
UPDATED FROM CENSUS 2000, PROFILE OF SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Income	1980	1990	% change	2000	% change
Havre de Grace	\$6,342	\$13,112	106.7	\$21,176	61.5
Harford County	\$7,626	\$16,612	117.8	\$24,232	45.9

D. Poverty Status

Most recent information of poverty status is from 1999 Poverty Status from the U.S. Census Bureau *Profile for Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000* for the geographic area of Havre de Grace. The income threshold for poverty status for a family of four at the time of this survey (1999) was \$17,029. For a single individual, the income threshold for poverty status was \$8,501. Poverty status is determined for all persons except institutionalized persons, persons in military group quarters and college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under fifteen years old.

Though it is decreasing, Havre de Grace has a disproportionately high rate of poverty as compared to Harford County. Due to the 12.9% poverty rate, the need for services for low-income populations is also high. Necessary services include free and reduced cost meals, intervention programs, and instructional assistance for school children through Title 1 funding (Federal and State) in Harford County Public Schools, increased transit, social service, and housing support.

**TABLE 1.6
POVERTY STATUS
UPDATED FROM CENSUS 2000, PROFILE OF SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS
POVERTY STATUS IN 1999**

	Residents below poverty (1980)	% of Total	Residents below poverty (1990)	% of Total	Residents below poverty (1999)	% of Total

Havre de Grace	1,482	16.9	1,304	14.6	1,461	12.9
Harford County	10,638	7.3	9,122	5.0	10,695	4.9

E. Labor Force

Unemployment is an important indicator of the socio-economic conditions present in a community. Within the City of Havre de Grace, the labor force increased while the number of unemployed remained steady during the past ten years. Overall, there was a slight decrease in the unemployment rate for the City to 5.1%. In comparison, the unemployment rate for Harford County for 2000 is extremely low at 3.1 %, while the labor force has increased significantly.

**TABLE 1.7
EMPLOYMENT STATUS
UPDATED FROM CENSUS 2000, PROFILE OF SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

	Total Civilian Labor Force	Number Unemployed	% Unemployed
Havre de Grace			
1980	3,741	256	6.8
1990	4,456	296	6.6
2000	5,757	296	5.1
Harford County			
1980	66,613	3,884	5.8
1990	96,765	3,265	3.4
2000	115,314	3,522	3.1

As shown in Table 1.8, the leading occupation for the civilian employed population in Havre de Grace is management, professional, and related occupations at 33.6%, with sales and office occupations as second highest (26.3%). Though not shown in the table, the total population 16 years or older is 8,716, with 5,792 in the labor force and 2,924 persons (or 33.5%) not in the labor force. Those not in the labor force may be retired individuals or are female individuals that do not identify themselves as part of the labor force at the time of data collection for Census 2000. In addition to the civilian work force identified in the table below, thirty-five (35) persons are employed in the Armed Forces.

**TABLE 1.8
HAVRE DE GRACE – OCCUPATION STATUS, 2000
FROM CENSUS 2000, PROFILE OF SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Occupation	No. of Persons	% of Total
Management, professional, and related occupations	1,834	33.6
Service occupations	752	13.8
Sales and office occupations	1,434	26.3
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	3	0.1
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	592	10.8
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	846	15.5
Total Employed Civilian Population 16 years and over	5,461	

F. Summary of Socio-Economic Profile

During the past ten years, the City of Havre de Grace has experienced a substantial increase in population. Due to known and anticipated future residential development, the City’s population growth will continue. In addition to population, income levels are continuing to rise at a steady rate. Population diversity in terms of racial composition continues to be excellent, reflecting a healthy and vital community. As evidenced by census data, these are positive trends that reflect the City’s changes since the 1996 Comprehensive Plan. However, the City of Havre de Grace also has a substantial population of low-income and poverty level status. These populations need the continuing publicly funded support services that are required by individuals and families in need.