

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter re-establishes the City's broad visions and goals stated in the 1996 Havre de Grace Comprehensive Plan. The visions and goals established in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan were a product of substantial community effort and are recognized as valid today. In addition, this chapter also includes the State of Maryland's eight visions as provided by the *Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth Initiative*. This State initiative guides local planning policy by establishing eight visions to be included at the local planning level. The chapter also describes the community process used for the development of this Comprehensive Plan.

II. PLAN PREPARATION

The approach used in the preparation of this Plan placed great importance upon gathering input from the many stakeholders in the community who will be affected by the Plan's recommendations. Elected and appointed officials, residents, and business owners were invited to participate in the Plan's development. Initially, members of the Planning Commission recognized the value of the 1996 Havre de Grace Comprehensive Plan and determined that it would serve as the foundation for the development of this subsequent plan in terms of format and content. They began an in-depth review and revision in 2000, noting accomplishments and formulating changes and recommendations for all twelve chapters of the document. In October 2001, the Planning Commission held a public weekend workshop with the Mayor, City Council, and City staff members to identify broad concepts to be incorporated in the planning document.

In December 2001, the Planning Commission held two evening public open houses to gather community perspective on the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Both open houses included an informational presentation at the beginning of the session and an atmosphere of informal discussion around stations relating to chapter topics. Participants could ask questions or provide opinion on items of their interest, and a facilitator at each station documented all information. Over one hundred people participated in these two open houses. In addition, the City newsletter provided an email contact for additional community comment for the period that the Plan was developed.

During 2002 and 2003, staff of the Department of Economic Development and Planning substantially revised the twelve chapter document under the advisement of the Planning Commission. Chapters of the document were provided to various City Commissions, such as the Economic Development and Historic Preservation Commissions, for their review and content opinion as well. Public hearings by both the Planning Commission and City

Council prior to the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan provided final public comment for its formal legislative establishment. In addition and as required, the Maryland Department of Planning and Harford County Government also were provided the opportunity to comment on this Plan.

Modified only slightly from 1996, the following visions will continue to serve as the guiding principles for the City's land use for future development. In very broad terms, they are the essence of what the City is striving to be. It is essential that the Mayor and City Council reference the Plan and these guidelines during their deliberations at the budget, project, and program levels.

III. VISIONS AND GOALS

The visions established by the City have been grouped into five general categories:

- (1) *Community Services and Development*
- (2) *Urban Design and Development*
- (3) *Environment and Open Space*
- (4) *Historic and Cultural Resources*
- (5) *Economic Development*

Additionally, the State mandates that the Planning Commission implement the following visions through the Comprehensive Plan (Codified at § 3.06(b), Article 66B, Annotated Code of Maryland). These eight visions are a comprehensive set of guiding principles established by the State of Maryland, which describe how and where growth and development should occur. They also call for land and water stewardship to guide land use policy, individual efforts, and group actions. Due to the dense nature of historical development patterns of Havre de Grace, its relationship to major transportation networks, and availability of public utilities, the City's planning efforts directly support the State of Maryland's *Smart Growth* Initiative.

- (1) *Development is concentrated in suitable areas;*
- (2) *Sensitive areas are protected;*
- (3) *In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers, and resource areas are protected;*
- (4) *Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;*
- (5) *Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced;*
- (6) *Economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;*
- (7) *Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur; and*
- (8) *Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.*

The following visions and goals have been developed for the purpose of coordinating the quality, scale, location, and timing of future development within the City of Havre de Grace. Developed through the community's numerous stakeholders, these adopted visions and goals set the physical, social, economic, and cultural framework around which the Havre de Grace Comprehensive Plan is designed. The following definitions of the word *vision* and the word *goal* describe the relationship of visions to goals for the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan.

Definitions

VISION: *A statement of a desired future condition.*

GOAL: *A specific step or action necessary or desirable to make a vision reality.*

Each of the aforementioned five general categories contains a vision statement along with a set of goals to be achieved.

1. Community Development

VISION: **A Good Family Life**

Goal A: Preserve and improve the stability, physical structure, and property values of existing neighborhoods.

Goal B: Provide adequate public services and facilities to existing and future residents of the City.

Goal C: Promote and encourage a City-wide sense of community among the residents, in both old and new neighborhoods.

Goal D: Promote volunteerism and philanthropy within the community.

Goal E: Improve the quality, availability, diversity, and affordability of housing throughout the City.

2. Urban Design

VISION: **A Small Town Ambiance**

Goal A: Preserve the small town image, amenities, and appearance of the City.

Goal B: Plan, design, and develop land uses which complement the downtown, the waterfront, and historic areas.

Goal C: Protect waterfront vistas along the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay and maintain public access to these features.

3. Environment and Open Space

VISION: An Environmentally Sensitive Community

Goal A: Protect and maintain the environmental resources in Havre de Grace.

Goal B: Minimize the adverse effects of development on environmental resources.

Goal C: Participate with Harford County and other governmental agencies (Maryland Department of the Environment, Department of Natural Resources, and the Corps of Engineers) in efforts to protect environmental resources.

Goal D: Conserve and protect the City's sensitive areas and natural ecology and encourage development in a manner which minimizes impacts on these areas.

Goal E: Create opportunities for City recreation, parks, open space, and urban street landscaping.

Goal F: Conserve significant green space and open land.

Goal G: Take advantage of opportunities to enhance or retain scenic views and byways.

4. Historic and Cultural Resources

VISION: A Historic And Cultural Center

Goal A: Protect and enhance the historical elements and building architecture which contribute to the distinctive image of the City.

Goal B: Protect and enhance the visual and historic character of the various periods and styles of Havre de Grace's evolution.

Goal C: Protect and preserve the historically significant manor houses in the Havre de Grace planning area.

Goal D: Support the City's numerous museums in their efforts to interpret the important cultural history of the region.

5. Economic Development

VISION: A Good Place To Do Business.

Goal A: Support the retention of existing businesses while exploring opportunities for new business development.

Goal B: Expand and enhance conveniently accessible and attractive commercial and industrial development.

Goal C: Strengthen and expand the existing tourism industry in the City.

Goal D: Encourage retail and service development in the Downtown Business District.

Goal E: Utilize policies, financial incentives, and business skill enhancement opportunities to strengthen and stimulate private development.

Goal F: Coordinate the efforts of economic development, local business, and tourism organizations to assure a unified and strong approach to improving the economic base.

Goal G: Explore opportunities available to the City to receive and leverage economic development funds.

These visions and goals, supported by the Mayor and City Council, will continue to be used as a basis in the preparation of land use recommendations, development strategies, plans, and programs.