

November 9, 2011

## **Friends of Harford Comments to County Executive Craig on the Final Draft Harford County Master Plan**

Friends of Harford commends the county for many good points within the draft master plan. We agree with you in many ways, so thank you for:

1. Eliminating the rural residential infill areas. These were not sustainable in light of public services needed in support, loss of agricultural land, and potential pollution of rivers and streams. The next step would be to eliminate any new rural residential zoning.
2. Recognizing the need to revise the TDR program to redirect development into the development envelope instead of onto farmland.
3. Recognizing that land use has a major impact on efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay and including plan elements that will minimize development in areas not served by public sewer. Working to minimize septic systems and reduce impervious surfaces associated with development are forward-looking commitments by the County to restore our state's most treasured and productive estuary.
4. Largely maintaining the development envelope north of I-95.
5. Supporting the agricultural community (55% of the County's land) in many good words throughout the plan. Thank you for continuing land preservation of 500 acres per year in the Priority Preservation Area and proposing to identify further areas for such designation.
6. Putting emphasis on redevelopment.
7. Recognizing the quality of life issues more critically within the development envelope. The County must take an active role in fostering development that makes community and not just money, and we urge you to include issues such as lighting and noise so that these may be addressed subsequently in the zoning code.
8. Acknowledging the need for parks and recreation facilities with walking and bicycle access to the communities they serve.
9. Pointing out the significance of greenhouse gases. The Carbon Neutral Corridor Pilot Study is only a beginning. This must also be addressed in our intra-county transportation plans.

Our "thank you" is sincere, but we believe the following concerns must also be addressed:

1. As we discussed in our earlier meeting with you, we believe the Land Use Map must be detailed and large enough to show property lines as was the multi-page map made available for the comprehensive rezoning issues. A small map does little to clarify just where the lines fall. That is critically important to everyone involved. In a similar vein, detailed maps for each Community Area are also needed. The location of all boundaries must be unequivocal.
2. On page 16 it says “since 1990, an average of 82% of the new residential development has occurred within the Development Envelope.” This is both true and possibly commendable, but it does not tell the whole story. If the comparison were made on the basis of land used in each case, it would look quite different. Even though 82% of development occurred inside the Development Envelope, we believe that significantly more actual land was consumed by the 18% of new residences built outside the Development Envelope. One household uses between two and ten acres in the agriculture area; one household within the Development Envelope is apt to use much less than one acre. In the last 20 years we have lost a significant portion of farmland. Figure 21 on page 37 more accurately tells the story of the abusive use of family conveyances and bad law. We ask that you include data on the amount of land developed for residential use both inside the development envelope and outside it.
3. The expansion of the Development Envelope between Havre de Grace and Aberdeen is identical to that proposed for the last Master Plan – and eliminated by the Council. Since more residential upzoning is not needed for at least 28 years, it is premature to reclassify this area at the present time. Doing so now is harmful to redevelopment and revitalization, values which are discussed elsewhere in this Plan.
4. We ask for more definitive support for open space or other shared community amenities in new developments as well as in areas already developed. We strongly encourage efforts to protect natural resources, Natural Resource Districts, and the ecological health of land and water.
5. The Master Plan is not the place to garner specific financing for individual parcels, so references to specific funding mechanisms such as TIFs, STDs and so on must be removed.
6. The use of the term “Designated Growth Areas” should not include individually zoned parcels outside the PFA areas as it is counter to the Smart Growth policies.