



Friends of Harford

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Friends of Harford's Guiding Principles for Master Plan development

Friends of Harford believes that the Master Plan and its subordinate plans represent the blueprint for the future of our county. It must be forward leaning, but honor our rural heritage. We need to plan both as a county and as an integral part of the Baltimore region.

Our goals for Harford:

- Protect farmland and agriculture by not expanding the development envelope and by directing future growth into the envelope.
- Provide livable, sustainable communities with a high quality of life while enhancing existing communities.
- Protect the environment and natural resources.

Policies:

Friends of Harford supports maximum practical implementation of Maryland's Smart, Green and Growing policies. We also support the following specific policies for Harford:

- Protect farmland and support farming as a major industry, as a quality of life issue, and as a continual food supply within Harford's borders.
- Development that impacts agricultural viability is to be prohibited. In order to maintain critical AG viability mass, the number of rural AG *acres lost* must be considered, not just the ratio of dwellings built inside vs. outside the envelope.
- Revision of the TDR program is essential to direct residential development into the development envelope instead of onto rural farmland.
- Development should be encouraged and supported inside the Development Envelope. Give this area priority for all public facilities such as schools, roads, parks, fire stations, libraries, community centers, etc to provide a high quality of life.
- Integrate land use and transportation. The Master Plan should require the creation of walkable and compact communities with quality community design and mixed land uses. It should call for investment in transit and alternative transportation to provide residents the option of walking, bicycling, and/or taking transit for at least some of their daily activities. Transit oriented development should be encouraged.

- Usable open space or other shared community amenities should be required in all new subdivisions and retrofitted to older developments.
- Protect property from harm by others, whether the property is private, public or a natural resource. Actions on one's property which will harm other properties or our shared environment should not be allowed.
- Keep pollution on one's own property; this applies to light, noise, stormwater, sediment, dust/fumes. Halt adverse impacts to NRDs.
- Natural resources and the environment are to be strongly protected.
- Allowing increased density next to fragile land is injurious to the ecological health of the land and waters of the County and Bay and should be restricted.

Master Plan Process and Procedures:

- Require transparency of process and support citizen participation in government land use actions and decisions. The Administration and Department of Planning & Zoning need to show all changes made to the current Master Plan (including the Land Use Element Plan and Community Area Plans), regardless of whether they choose to work with the current versions or rewrite current Plans.
- Community Area Plans and their maps are crucial and must be done in detail. Consensus of the people within the area affected should be paramount.
- All maps mentioned in the Master Plan are, by definition, integral and important items within the Master Plan legislation itself. The Master Plan with its online, zoomable maps needs to be provided for public comment prior to the introduction of legislation to the County Council.
- The Council needs to be more open as to their amendments to the Plans so citizens may make comments and these comments can be seriously considered well before the Council votes.
- The precise location of all boundaries must be unmistakably clear in both map and descriptive language. All maps must be detailed enough to clearly delineate the borders they are defining down to or below the parcel level. (e.g., A Rural Village, RR Infill, or Development Envelope boundary may include only a portion of certain properties due to split zoning, so maps must be detailed enough to show exactly where the split occurs.)