

Envision Havre de Grace!



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

For the City of
Havre de Grace, Maryland

2024



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Warren Hartenstine

Harry Miller

Ed Garono

Farhat Shah

Charles Place

Janice Chan

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DOCUMENT

Timothy Bourcier

Maury Thackston, *GIS Mapping*

Dianne Clair

Eric Lawrence

Joe Kochenderfer, *Editing*

GRAPHIC CONSULTANT

Anne Fullem Design

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

Timothy Bourcier, *Director*

Dianne Clair

Marisa Willis

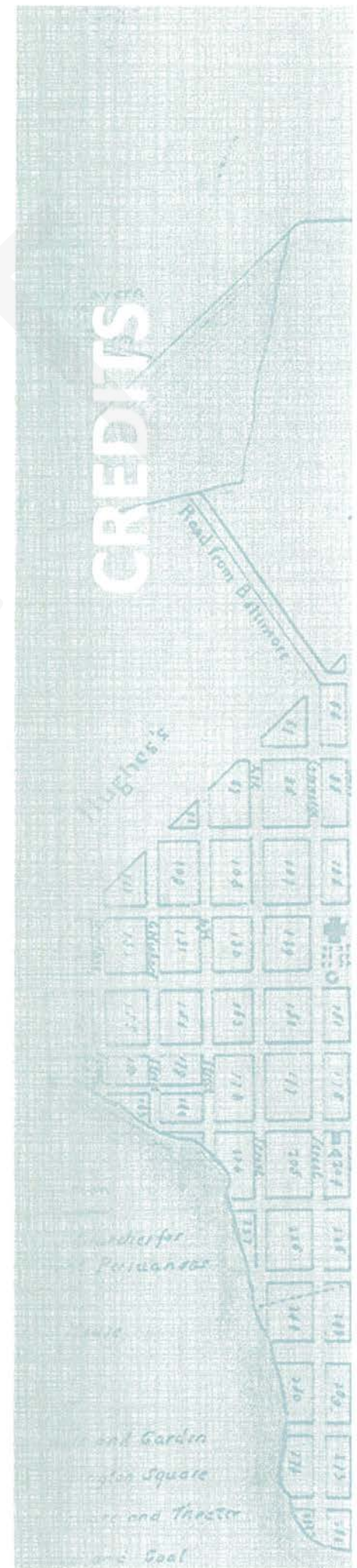
Maury Thackston

Eric Lawrence

Colleen Critzer

Earl Sweigart

CREDITS





A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Thank you for taking the time to check out our Comprehensive Plan, *Envision Havre de Grace*. It is a document that reflects our collective vision and aspirations for the future of our great City and for our unique place within Harford County. Our waterfront, our historic founding along America's colonial highway, and our citizens and businesses through the ages have made Havre de Grace and its built environment the best place to be a part of, whether you live here, work here, are visiting or are just passing through.



You will see that we have grown considerably in the last 25 years, almost doubling in geographic area and growing in population by 65% since 1990. We are part of Harford County's Development Envelope where public infrastructure – such as water and sewer and major road networks – combine to advance growth in a common-sense way. We have grown quickly during that time and we have some catching up to do to stay in front of that growth. Our biggest challenge over the next 10 years is outfitting our water distribution system to meet the demands of growth in addition to serving our sister city, Aberdeen, our borders now touching. With the Susquehanna River as our source, it is our desire to expand our water supply and be capable of greater distribution within our region where urban growth is smart growth.

As a community, we are blessed with a great deal of creative energy in its citizens and stakeholders and we wish to continue to expand our arts and entertainment reach. Many individuals have made significant investments of time, talent, and financial resources over the span of decades in the arts here in Havre de Grace, to include the Arts Collective, the Arts Commission, and Harmer's Town Art Center project just to name a few. We would like to continue to focus our attention in supporting these efforts to make Havre de Grace the premier arts destination in the northern Chesapeake Bay region.

Finally, we have high aspirations for greatly expanded multimodal transportation that takes advantage of our location on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. With the future replacement of the century-old Amtrak Bridge that bisects our historic town, we are at the edge of an unfathomable federal construction project that will take 10 years to complete. We would like to create true multimodal access within the region between the transit-oriented communities of Aberdeen and Perryville for pedestrian and bike access that allows people choice in transportation outside of automobiles. This vision is ambitious and will take decades to see it completed, but you have to have a vision to be able to get started.

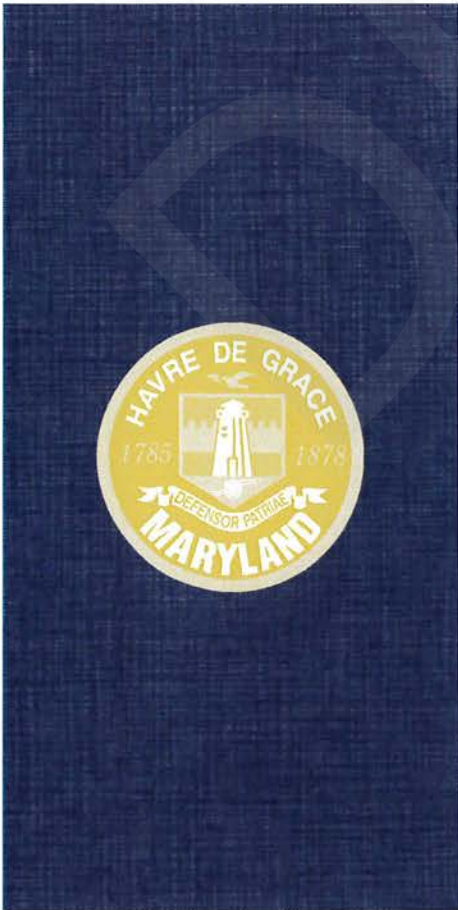
Thank you for joining us in our vision.

DESIGN OF THE CITY SEAL



The Havre de Grace City seal was designed by Mildred Gore Stansbury with Bel Air artist George Van Bibber. As the first Black City Council Member, Mrs. Stansbury was the first African American voted into political office in Harford County in 1964. She and her husband, Russell Stansbury, were educators in the Harford County Public School system, both beginning their careers at the Havre de Grace Colored School, now a museum and cultural center located at 555 Alliance Street.

The Concord Point Light, cannon, and fortification symbols were later translated into the City's flag design in 1998 by Havre de Grace artist Cindy Height.



DRAFT

Placeholder Page for
Resolutions

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- A Guide for Smart Growth
- Relationship to State Planning Visions
- City's Relationship to the Region
- How to Use This Plan

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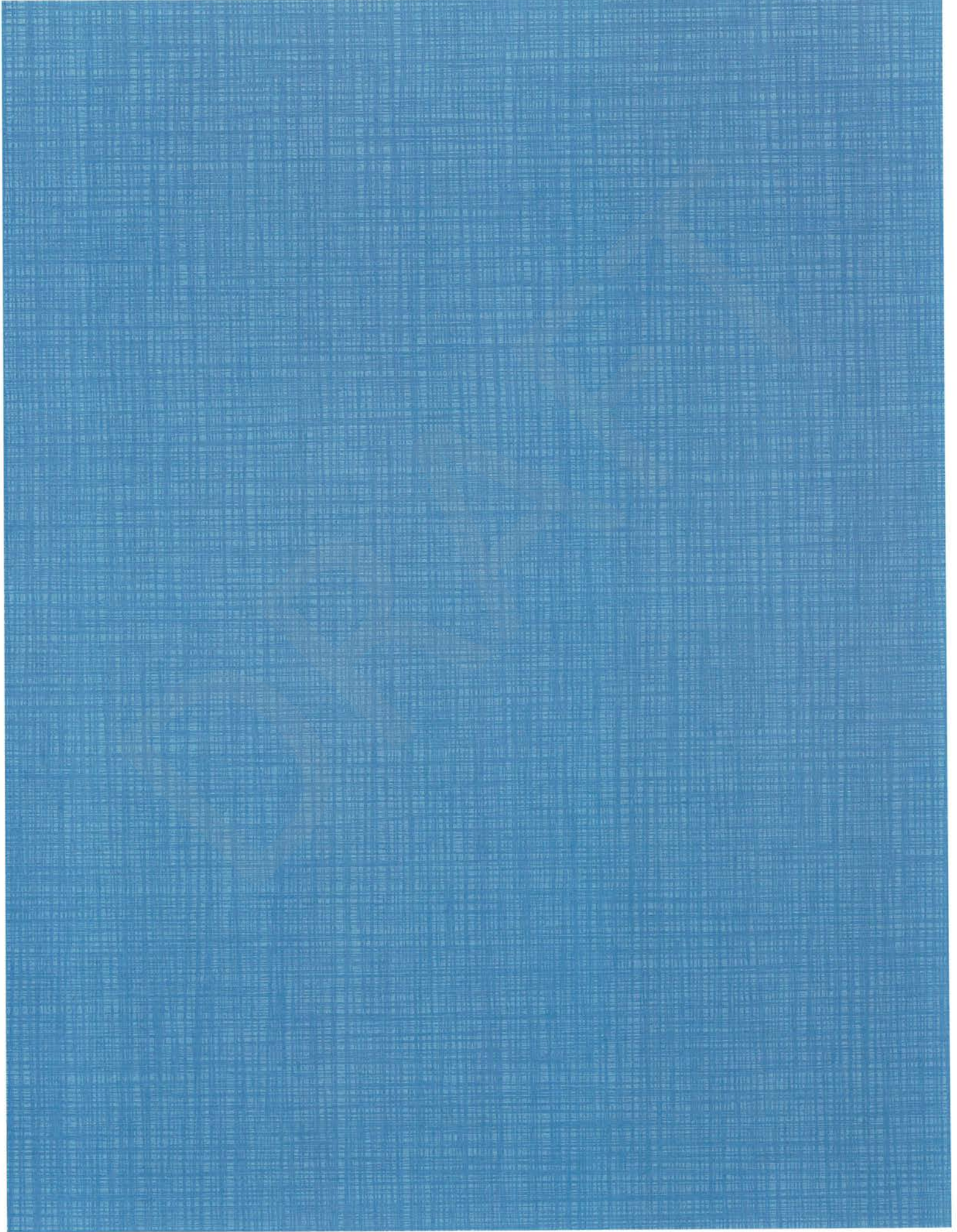
- Visions and Goals
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- Sustainable Community: A Strategy for Revitalization
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*The mission of Havre de Grace
is to maintain and improve the quality of life, services, and
infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner and to provide
a friendly, safe, economically vibrant, waterfront community
while preserving its distinct historic character for residents
and visitors."*

☞ Havre de Grace Strategic Plan, 2008

I: Purpose of This Plan: A Preamble

- A Guide for Smart Growth
- Relationship to State Planning Visions
- City's Relationship to the Region
- How to Use This Plan

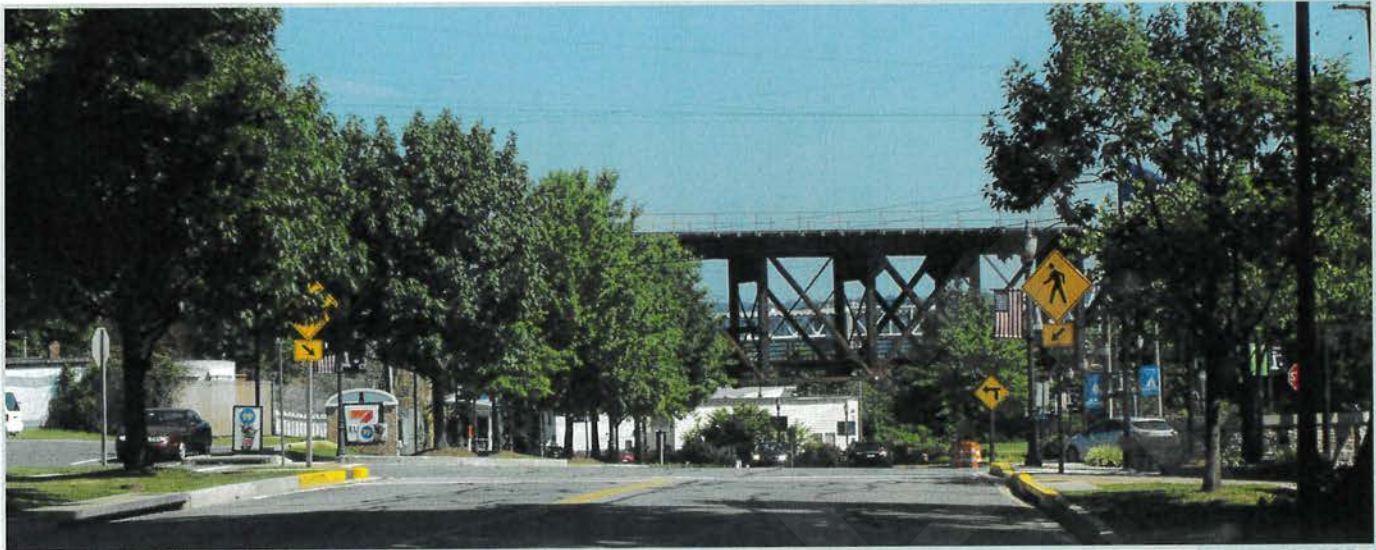


PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN: A PREAMBLE

Welcome

to Envision HdG, the City of Havre de Grace's Comprehensive Plan! Havre de Grace is a vibrant waterfront community with a substantial National Register Historic District, beautiful new communities, connections to State and regional parks, and an excellent business base. This Comprehensive Plan is a document that intends to define a vision for the City's growth and reinvestment over the next ten years. The vision needs to be broad-reaching but achievable, setting the stage for policy decisions and law which governs the way the City will look in the future for years to come. It also needs to be founded in fiscal responsibility, working for the benefit of current and future citizens and business stakeholders. Thank you for taking your time to understand our plan for the City of Havre de Grace. It is our sincere hope that you will share in our vision.

Welcome to Envision Havre de Grace! ■



A GUIDE FOR SMART GROWTH

Havre de Grace is an excellent example of smart growth. Initiatives at the State level, the City's proximity to major employers and transportation networks, its waterfront and small-town charm, and fascinating diversity of businesses and citizens all converge to make Havre de Grace interesting and unique within the region. This Comprehensive Plan is developed with these characteristics in mind. Though the plan is a policy guide for land use decisions, it embraces the physical attributes of the City and keeps the human relationship to the built environment at the heart of its purpose.

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, City Council, and staff members as they consider important funding and budgetary priorities. In addition, the Plan serves as recognition of the City's alignment with Maryland's long-standing and admired smart growth initiatives 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 critically important. Historic areas preservation and enhancement remain as a primary planning objective, however, the entire community must be considered in respect to planning and development decisions and programs. Residential neighborhoods, commercial revitalization, and industrial areas must be approached with the same care and thought when policies are planned and implemented.

The City of Havre de Grace Department of Planning, with the guidance of the Havre de Grace Planning Commission, engaged in a review of its 2004 Comprehensive Plan immediately following its adoption of significant amendments in 2010. Those amendments – the Municipal Growth Element and Water Resources chapter – were required by State legislative action in 2006 and provided an increased level of technical analysis for guiding planning decisions. The findings and recommendations included in this planning 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.



RELATIONSHIP TO STATE PLANNING VISIONS

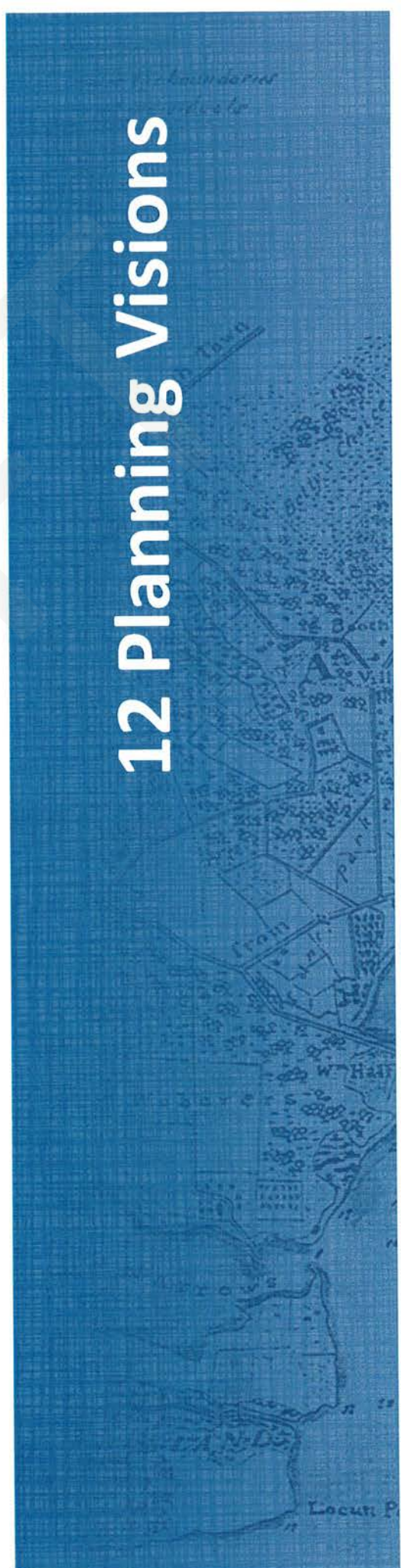
The State of Maryland has been at the national forefront with progressive statewide land use policy based on both regulation and incentives. Often termed under a general heading of smart growth, Maryland began focusing its policy for heightened land use control over the past twenty years, first with the passage of The Economic Growth, Resources Protection, and Planning Act in 1992 and then The Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act in 1997. Both of these legislative actions established visions and incentives for steering state-level policy affecting local land use by promoting neighborhood conservation and resource protection while at the same time encouraging economic growth and appropriate development patterns.

Building on these prior initiatives, the State of Maryland's Smart, Green, & Growing legislation in 2009 established the following twelve visions, which provide the basis for planning within the City of Havre de Grace as well as statewide planning efforts.

These twelve visions are continuous threads within this document, sometimes as stand-alone chapters such as with economic development or environmental protection. They underwrite the effort in the State of Maryland to revitalize older communities, to grow responsibly, to protect resources, and to maximize public expenditures. These themes are supported throughout this document to ensure that the City's planning efforts are aligned with the State's and that these universal visions are achieved.

- 1 **Quality of life and sustainability:** a high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment;
- 2 **Public participation:** citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals;
- 3 **Growth areas:** growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth area adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers;
- 4 **Community design:** compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources;
- 5 **Infrastructure:** growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner;
- 6 **Transportation:** a well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population centers;
- 7 **Housing:** a range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes;
- 8 **Economic development:** economic development and natural resource-based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State's natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged;
- 9 **Environmental protection:** land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources;
- 10 **Resource conservation:** waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved;
- 11 **Stewardship:** government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection; and
- 12 **Implementation:** strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, State, and interstate levels to achieve these visions.

12 Planning Visions





City's Relationship to the Region

Havre de Grace is located in northeast Maryland at the mouth of the Susquehanna River on the northernmost reaches of 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 (I-95), located just north and west of the City. Major rail lines traverse the immediate area, to include passenger service (Amtrak and MARC) and CSX freight.

Havre de Grace is located 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. Havre de Grace is forty minutes from Baltimore and Wilmington, seventy-five minutes from Philadelphia and ninety minutes from Washington D.C, making it very central to major international airports. 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.



How to Use This Plan

The purpose of this 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 informed 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.

Development proposals, site plans, and subdivision plats 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, multi-modal system.

Programs for the improvement and/or extension of public water and sewer systems can be undertaken in a more judicious manner.

Public services and facilities can be provided in a more economical and efficient manner.

Ideally, the comprehensive plan will promote an awareness of social values which result in a wide variety of housing types, densities, and price ranges.

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.