

1. VISIONS and GOALS

Havre de Grace inhabits a setting that is enviable in its small-town charm and its outdoor connections to a vast waterfront like nowhere else in the region. The City is situated at the very top of the Chesapeake where the Susquehanna River broadens to become the Bay, with parks and protected lands along both ends of our waterfront boundaries. This makes for a unique location based in its historic water access – when waterways were highways – and as a significant point of overland road and rail transportation that developed along the eastern seaboard. Despite all this, it has stayed at a scale that is very human and personal.

In addition and like many places, Havre de Grace at its heart is a community of citizens who care for each other. The spirit of volunteerism runs strong and we keep developing creative outlets to satisfy this natural instinct, whether it be through the community Thanksgiving dinner established over thirty years ago or the annual Candlelight Tour having passed its fiftieth year or the CAT (Citizens Against Trash) Club weekly cleanups. People reaching, helping – it's in our nature.

It is these two things – its people and time-honored places – that make Havre de Grace unique and provide the foundation that will have the City reach its greatest potential for those involved, whether it is as a place you call home, where you choose to locate your business, or as a desired destination based on its intrinsic appeal. These are aspects of Havre de Grace that we wish to grow. With this in mind, the following visions are outlined to guide the continuing revitalization and development of the City of Havre de Grace.

VISIONS FOR THE CITY OF HAVRE DE GRACE:

✓ [A Healthy Community](#)

What to build on to achieve the vision of a healthy community:

Trails, parks, and a beautiful waterfront that contribute to a year-round outdoor focus, allowing for preventative health and excellent quality of life

Safe community with engaging police officers, mutual aid and support

Locations for physical and mental health and wellness nearby

A community of neighborhoods, where neighbors look out for each other

Community amenities, such as the Havre de Grace Activity Center which has combined senior center supported through the Office on Aging, recreational facilities, and physical activity for kids and people of all ages

Walkable schools, especially the centrally-located new Havre de Grace Middle/High School complex and Havre de Grace Elementary School

Waterfront connections from the Susquehanna to the Bay with access to the open sky, natural world, and trails -- a gateway to the Bay with water sports and leisure, whether it be fishing, wading, hiking, biking or strolling

✓ [An Inclusive Community](#)

What to build on to achieve the vision of an inclusive community:

A diverse community, racially, economically, and culturally

Recognition of its historic racial diversity, place of work, industry, and hard-fought educational facilities (now the Havre de Grace Colored School Museum and Cultural Center, Inc.) – first high school for African-American in Harford County, graduating its first class in 1932.

Many housing options, support, and choice, with a need to focus on building missing-middle and affordable housing to recognize all community needs

Support for diverse businesses, minority-owned business (Minority Business Enterprise, MBE) – ethnic minority, gender, and/or military veteran classifications

✓ [A Vibrant, Connected Community](#)

What to build on to achieve the vision of a vibrant, connected community:

Goal of a Reimagined Route 40 as a redesigned regional connecting corridor

Recognition of the accessibility created by Northeast Corridor (NEC) Amtrak and MARC rail access as well as bus transit service through MTA and HarfordLINK

East Coast Greenway, September 11th National Memorial Trail, Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway trail connections, and MDOT Bike Spine Network

Innovation, at-home businesses, incubators, small-scale manufacturing that does not need to be housed in industrial complexes, largely as a result of post-COVID evolution of business and remote work

ThinkBig coming to Havre de Grace (being installed now!) to ensure that communications bandwidth and infrastructure is in place for at-home innovation

A cool, quaint downtown, commercial center of activity – support for local business

Economic energy within the region – largest Great Wolf Lodge within a 5 mile drive and focus on the beauty and potential of the Lower Susquehanna/Upper Bay region

Creative energy of its residents and business owners

✓ [An Essential Cultural and Historic Hub](#)

What to build on to achieve the vision of an essential cultural and historic hub:

Arts-focused which rounds out the human experience of creative discovery, with art spaces, outdoor public art, theatres

Three National Historic Trails, a place of national history due to its location where the convergence of the Chesapeake Bay with road, rail, and canal systems joined within northern tidewater Maryland

Local museums and historic interpretation – thematic, connected

Important regional history and how it contributes to understanding heritage

Historic fabric of the City's expansive historic district --- interesting structures, street context intact from its creation in 1782

✓ [A Cohesive, People-Centered Built Environment](#)

What to build on to achieve the vision of a cohesive, people-centered built environment:

Build on the historic fabric of the old town waterfront and its unique context

New neighborhoods supporting density, quality and character -- Smart Growth

Focus on walkable connections throughout the whole City, especially in new, emerging neighborhoods as they are designed and constructed

Recycle historic neighborhoods and homes – restore them to make them useful, engaging

Support with property maintenance – health, safety welfare of all citizens

✓ [A Green, More Sustainable Community](#)

What to build on to achieve the vision of a green, more sustainable community:

Create a bike and pedestrian focused community to reduce car dependency – perfect location for alternative transportation

Support Green Team creative initiatives to think differently on how to live – local, sustainable food production, conservation, native habitats

Green infrastructure – specifically as related to water quality through projects that improve runoff from the land and living shorelines

Innovative development practices for new, emerging communities

Plant trees everywhere – urban canopy

Sustainable City initiatives – extension of solar array contract, electric vehicle fleet, green building practices, reuse and rehabilitate

✓ [A Fiscally-Sound Government](#)

What to build on to achieve the vision of a fiscally-sound government:

Responsible, sound financial practices

Aggressively pursuing grant funding for utilities and green infrastructure

Wise spending, conservative approach to benefit the community

Maintenance as priority – maintain what is here, incremental growth, natural progression/extension of public utilities

Soundness of public infrastructure, build from within

Capital Improvements Program planning that projects 5 to 10 years for planned growth and large infrastructure, restoration projects

Growth of industry and business ecosystem

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