

6. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan is only one element of a continuous growth management process for the City of Havre de Grace. The Plan itself serves as a guiding document, or a framework, around which relevant future land use decisions are based. In order for the goals, objectives and action items in this document to bear fruit, those items must be implemented. The word *implementation* is an action word, and implementing the Comprehensive Plan is a continuing, active process. It is accomplished through various growth management tools – such as zoning, subdivision, and site plan ordinances – that govern public and private actions at the individually owned property (or site planning) stage and may include incentives as well as regulations. It is further regulated through the local legislative process, which includes interaction between the public, the Planning Commission, the Board of Appeals, and the Mayor and City Council.

The regulatory framework is not only the local-level mechanisms that the City utilizes to implement the Comprehensive Plan, but also the State of Maryland requirements for what needs to be addressed in a Comprehensive Plan. Moreover, the Comprehensive Plan has legal significance, in that the State requires, “zoning, provision of water and sewer, and other local actions must be consistent with its recommendations”. The subject matter of those recommendations and the guiding visions for the document are all prescribed by State laws.

In addition to regulations, there are also incentive policies that influence land use decisions, both public and private. These may include Enterprise or Empowerment Zones for renewed commercial reinvestment, Historic Tax credits for reuse of existing structures, or other incentives that ultimately affect land use. Great strides have been made at the state-level under the nationally recognized Smart Growth initiative to encourage growth to occur in appropriate areas. These State initiatives affect land use policies at the local level. This includes the establishment of Priority Funding Areas and the development of incentives for cleanup of old industrial areas, or Brownfields. These incentives serve to encourage beneficial land uses, whether it is community revitalization, historic preservation, or other desired outcomes.

This chapter lays out existing implementation measures that affect land use in a very broad, generalized way. Further investigation is necessary for more specific information relating to policies, regulations, or available incentives. The following recommendations are considered to be the most important actions that should be pursued within 3 years of adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Supporting sections within this chapter consist of the following: (1) implementation authority and process of local government to oversee policy, regulation, and enforcement regarding land use control, (2) current zoning designations and development approval process, (3) the capital improvements program, (4) annexation, and (5) other

MARYLAND PLANNING VISION #12: IMPLEMENTATION

The last but not the least important State Planning Vision is #12: *Implementation*.

As the Comprehensive Plan is mostly considered a guiding document with some legal authority, creating policies that conform to the Comprehensive Plan is of the utmost importance.

Specifically, in order to bring the other 11 visions into fruition, Havre de Grace must adopt “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.”

implementation tools. This chapter strives to clarify the relationship of the Comprehensive Plan as a policy document to the real process of implementation that occurs at the individual property level.

Implementation is necessary and allows Havre de Grace to be an autonomous entity. The City is able to sustain financial solvency, grow in a controlled and responsible manner, and enforce regulations at all levels of government. Taking ideas and turning them into policies allows Havre de Grace to be in control of its own destiny.

Planning Authority and Process

The Local Government Article and Land Use Article of the [Annotated Code of Maryland](#) give 3 land use controls to local governments: 1) authority to adopt a comprehensive plan; 2) power to enact a zoning ordinance; and, 3) develop subdivision regulations. Local governments do not have to take advantage of any of these enumerated powers but, if they choose to do so, it must be done according to State law. Below is a discussion of the City’s current land use controls and potential ways to make an even stronger and more efficient system of regulation.

Prior to public hearings for development review and formal action by the Planning Commission, City staff members review a project internally to ensure that it conforms to State and local laws and that the project can be served by public utilities and services. As part of the staff review, a Joint Development and Review Committee (JDRC) should be created to address issues related to development projects as part of a new pre-development meeting process. This committee should include staff from the Department of Planning, the Department of Economic Development, the Department of Public Works, local emergency response and other technical staff as required to properly assist in the development of the project. Property owners and/or project developers will need to participate to answer questions relating to their respective project. The Zoning Code states when pre-development meetings should take place. The uses and sizes of development projects requiring pre-development meetings should be more specifically outlined in the City Code.

Consideration for the following items is paramount during these discussions and throughout all development review by City personnel and the Commission to assure the best possible project:

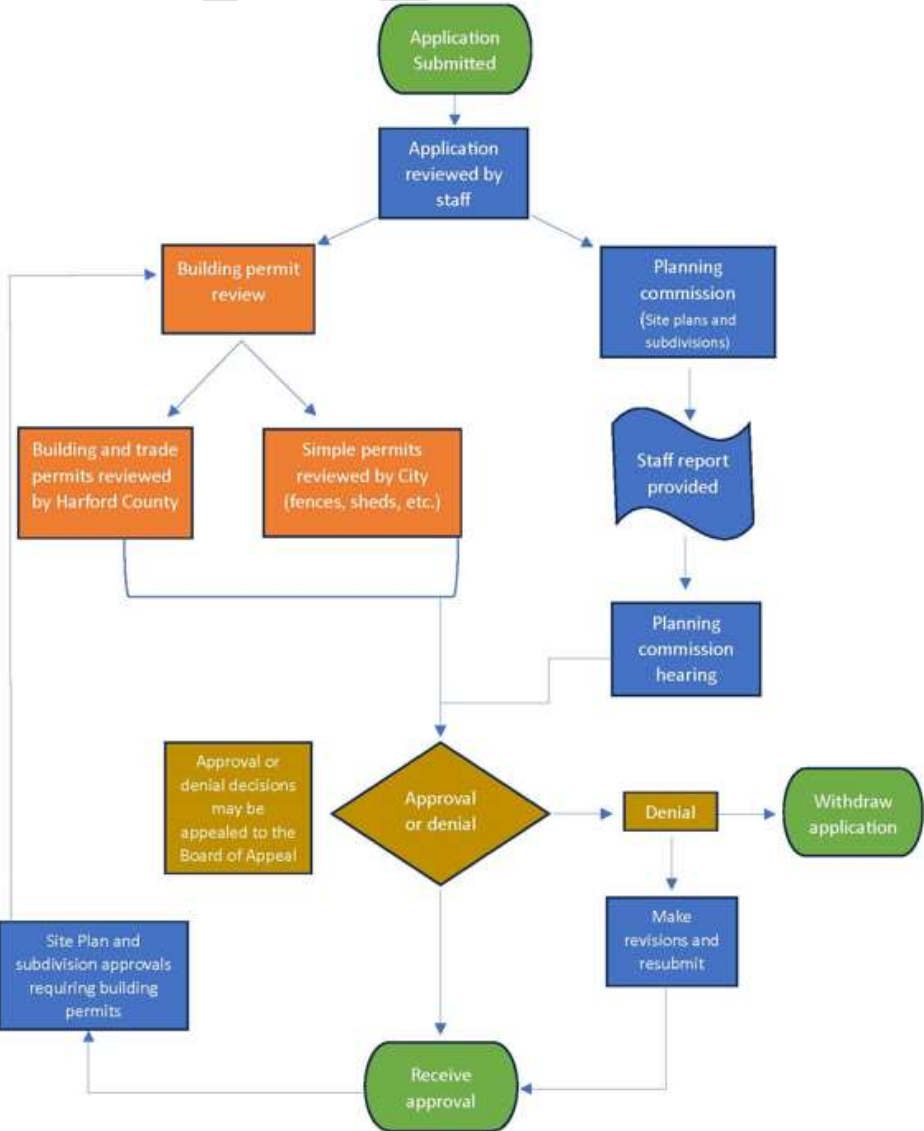
<p style="text-align: center;">Project Land Use and Density</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Functional organization of site ▪ Land use relationships ▪ Developable area ▪ Compatibility with Comprehensive Plan 	<p style="text-align: center;">Transportation and Circulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify transportation hierarchies ▪ Vehicular access and circulation ▪ Pedestrian access and circulation ▪ Traffic impact analysis
<p style="text-align: center;">Design Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compatibility of scale ▪ Compatibility of design ▪ Architectural style ▪ Landscaping 	<p style="text-align: center;">Site and Off-Site Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Size and shape of site ▪ Topography ▪ Soil and sub-soil conditions ▪ Drainage and storm water ▪ Public utilities and infrastructure ▪ Existing improvements

Historical and Architectural Considerations	Environmental Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significance ▪ Location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inventory of assets ▪ Quality of ecological setting ▪ Preservation of natural systems ▪ Quality of environmental design ▪ Open space and conservation

Land Use Controls

Havre de Grace utilizes all of its state-provided land use controls. Since 2018, the City has updated its regulations to improve the functions of the Planning Commission and Board of Appeals. The development review process has also improved. In the sections below, this document identifies ways the City can continue to improve on these foundations.

The flowchart illustrates the development review process for the City, albeit oversimplified. Projects of varying sizes must go all through a permit process for staff review, whether it is for a major subdivision or the size of a small shed. All projects must be reviewed with many regulations as a backdrop, so it is not always as straightforward as it seems. For instance, Havre de Grace has the benefit, but also added complication, of an extensive waterfront which adds floodplain and Chesapeake Bay Critical Area requirements in some land areas. Also, the scale of the project may trigger additional regulatory review such as stormwater management requirements for projects over 5,000 square feet or forest conservation for projects over 40,000 square feet. The regulations must all be taken into account in the review process.



Zoning Code

Chapter 205 of the City's Code is the chapter on zoning. The Zoning Code was officially adopted in 1982 and molded to fit the existing fabric of the City. In March 2000, the City added the Mixed-Office Employment district in an attempt to guide development for a large parcel at the I-95/MD 155 interchange. To date, that parcel has not been developed. In 2023, the City added an I-Industrial zoning category for areas that had been zoned C-Commercial to differentiate the uses. All zoning categories are reflected in the Zoning Map within this chapter.

The Zoning Code has been modified over time in a piecemeal approach with the goal of improving the development review process and recognize new uses coming to the area that were not addressed (e.g. "pain management clinics"). However, the Zoning Code is outdated. A comprehensive rezoning is likely needed to modernize the Zoning Code, as well as to bring it into conformance with this adopted Comprehensive Plan. Specific provisions that need to be updated will be discussed in further sections of this plan as they relate to that section.

Modifications to the Zoning Code are initially reviewed by the Planning Commission upon receiving "an application for amendments" per Section 25-25(A) of the Zoning Code. The Planning Commission is then required to send their findings and recommendations to Mayor and Council. However, the method for staff-driven changes to the Zoning Code is unclear in the current text. Article V of Chapter 25, which discusses the Planning Commission's powers have not been updated since 2003. This should be a priority for the City as recent updates to prior sections of the City Code have led to discrepancies in the zoning change process.

Site Plan Approval

The City updated the language of Chapter 155 – Site Plan Approval in December 2020. The Code provides guidance and transparency to developers, staff, and members of the Planning Commission. For developers, the chapter outlines the development review process, site design and architectural requirements, the need for adequate public facilities, and environmental concerns. For staff, Chapter 155 is a guide for the requirements that need to be met and for the various departments and agencies that also need to review site plan applications.

For projects that require site plan review, the Department of Planning should spearhead the creation of a Joint Development Review Committee. It is in the best interest of the City to have all departments and agencies that are reviewing site plans meet together to discuss a project. The current process is disjointed and would benefit from an overhaul on how to make better informed decisions as a group.

Subdivision Regulations

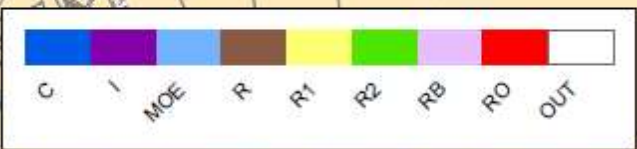
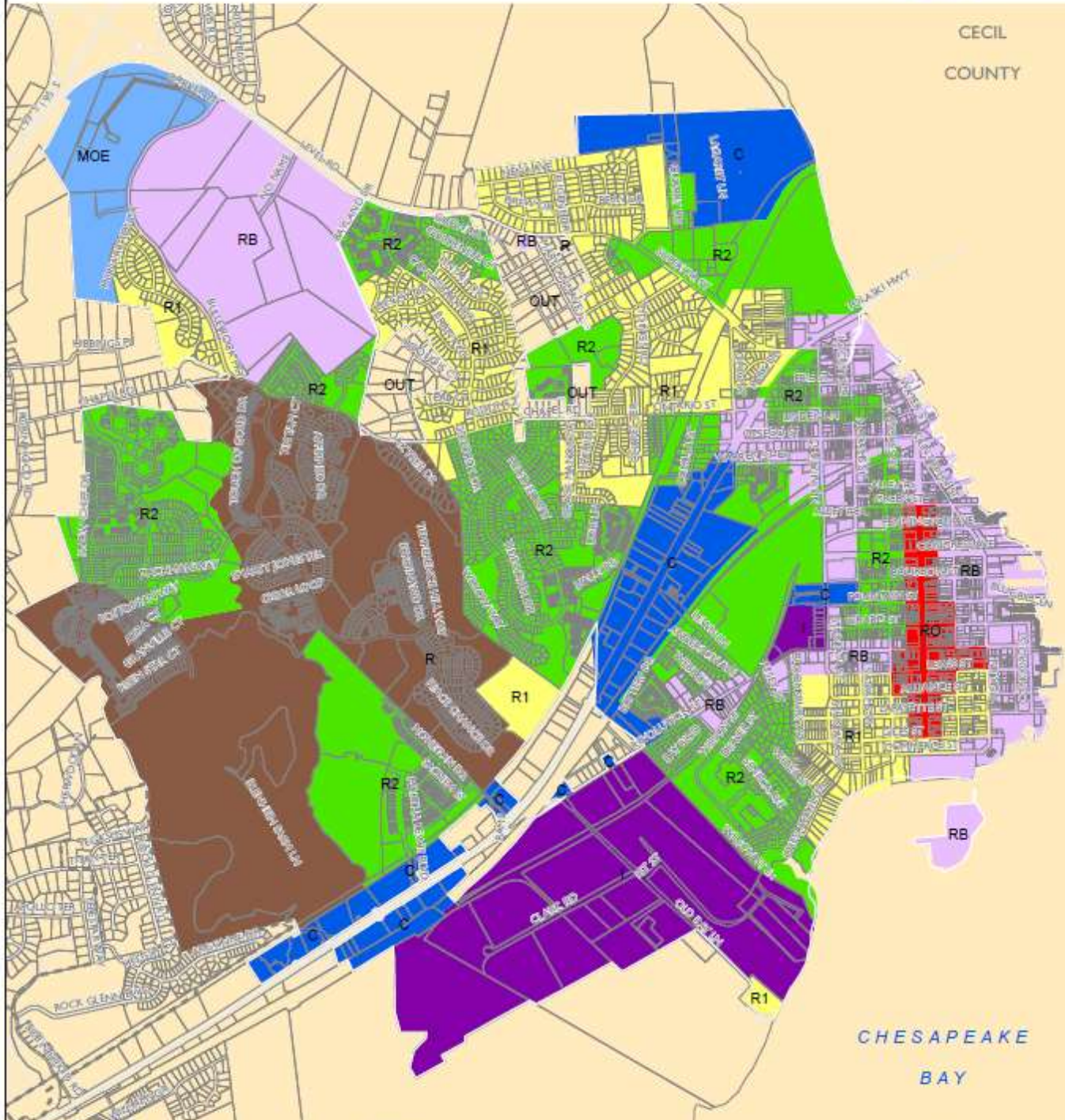
Chapter 173 – Subdivision Regulations is also an updated edition of the City Code, being ratified in March 2020. Similar to the Site Plan Approval chapter, the new subdivision regulations provide a road map for subdivision approval with clarity on the requirements. Currently, the subdivision requirements do not have a minor or major subdivision classification – staff can only approve of subdivisions of two lots. All other subdivision applications must be heard by the Planning Commission. It may be in the best interest of the Planning Commission to make a minor and major distinction in order to allow staff review of smaller subdivisions in order to make the development process more efficient.

ZONING MAP

City of Havre de Grace



CECIL
COUNTY



This is a representation of the Havre de Grace City Code-205 as amended.

OCTOBER 2023

Capital Improvement Program

The scheduling of public physical improvements, such as streets, sewers, public buildings, and park improvements for a community, is the essential task of capital improvements programming. The scheduling is based on a series of priorities according to need, desire, or importance, and to the community's ability to pay. Capital improvement programming provides the vital link between the Comprehensive Plan and the actual construction of public improvements. Whereas the plan may state what and where improvements should be built, the capital improvement program states when they will be built, how they will be paid for, and what they will cost. Because the provision, nature, and location of public facilities greatly influence the patterns of urban growth, programming is one of the most important implementation tools at the City's disposal.

Many important advantages and benefits are to be gained from the programming of capital improvements. A Capital Improvements Program, or CIP:

- Ensures that the public facilities and traffic circulation portions of the comprehensive plan will be carried out;
- Calls attention to deficiencies in the community and promotes action to correct them;
- Produces cooperation and coordination between various municipal departments as well as different governmental units;
- Ensures that projects are not built before they are needed or so late that costs become prohibitive;
- Ensures that funds can be provided in a logical manner;
- Guarantees review of new facilities to determine whether policy decisions were properly made on how the new project should be financed; and
- Protects the community from pressure groups demanding "pet" projects.

The term "capital improvements" refers to new or expanded physical facilities for the community that are of large size and relatively permanent, such as streets, playgrounds, harbor facilities, police stations, schools, libraries, water distribution, and sewer systems. Large-scale replacement and rehabilitation of existing facilities also fall within this category. To derive the maximum benefits from public funds, it is vitally important that municipal improvements be scheduled and coordinated so they are constructed in the proper sequence to meet growth demands. Once programmed, it is critical that the funding be earmarked and the planning, design, engineering and construction schedule is adhered to. This will give the capital improvements program validity.

Public improvement programs generally cover the scheduling of capital expenditures under a priority system for a revolving 5-year period. It is essential that these programs be coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan for consistency. An enhanced dialogue between the Departments of Public Works, Finance, and Planning would facilitate this coordination. The Joint Development Review Committee is a logical forum for accomplishing this. Projects scheduled for early execution are detailed so that proper

budgeting and financing can be arranged. The program is reviewed annually and at the same time projected ahead another year. In this way, there is a continuing program five years in advance. This assures that public projects will be completed where and when needed, and within the budget of the community.

Annexation

Evaluating Annexation Requests

Annexation is the process of expanding the corporate boundaries of the City. A basic requirement is that land to be annexed must be adjoining existing City boundaries. Annexation is desirable when expansion is consistent with plans for the orderly growth and development.

The Havre de Grace Annexation policy is expressed in Chapter 20 of the City Code, which states in part:

1. The City Council may consider and act upon a petition for the annexation of land contiguous and adjacent to the corporate limits of the City in order to promote the health, safety, welfare, and economic development of the City.
2. The annexation may be appropriate when it promotes coordinated planning for the area surrounding the land proposed for annexation, where it is consistent with the plans for the present and future development of the City, and where it will not result in isolated development inconsistent with surrounding land uses.
3. The annexation must contribute to the realization and/or furtherance of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and any other corridor or small area plan.
4. The location relative to existing public facilities and a review of the City's ability to provide public facilities to serve the annexation area.
5. The development of relevant conditions for the protection and benefit of the residents of the City.
6. The annexation will not result in an adverse fiscal impact upon the City.
7. Upon approval of an annexation petition by the City Council, the petitioner shall not be permitted to amend or to otherwise change the terms of the annexation petition

Annexation of land should result in increasing the City tax base and expanding employment opportunities. Analysis of the costs and benefits of annexing certain land should be considered as well as any special conditions that should be met by the applicant petitioning for annexation. Annexation of land into the corporate boundaries should be of benefit to the City when all things are considered. To assist the City in making this determination, the applicant must develop and provide an *Annexation Justification Statement*. This statement should briefly address the following elements:

- The rationale for the annexation from the applicant's perspective.
- A description of the proposed land use.

- A comparison of the proposed land use to the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.
- A description of the expected economic, environmental, and social impacts, both positive and negative.
- A description of services required as a result of the annexation, including water and sewer, fire and police protection, schools, libraries, and recreation.
- A statement of required services which will be provided by the applicant, the method of financing those services, and the schedule for completion.
- The reasons why the City should support the annexation proposal.
- A description of the process used and results of community notification and input regarding the proposed annexation.

Annexation may be initiated by a property owner (or owners) by filing a request, or petition, for annexation. The petition must be signed by not less than 25% of the persons residing on the property to be annexed and who are registered as voters in Harford County elections in the precinct(s) in which the land to be annexed is located; and by the owners of not less than 25% of the assessed valuation of the real property in the area to be annexed. In cases where an annexed area is not served by public water and sewer, temporary tax abatement may be provided. If the proposed zoning of the land to be annexed differs from that of the Harford County Master Plan/Land Use Element Plan, then the County Council must waive its control or the zoning must remain as designated by the County for a period of 5 years.

The legislative action required for annexation is the enactment of an *Annexation Resolution*. The annexation process is as follows:

- City Administration prepares an Annexation Plan according to State law. The Mayor and Council review the plan and approve it by Charter Resolution;
- The Department of Planning provides the Maryland Department of Planning and Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning with updates on the annexation process and public notices as required by law;
- Annexation is acted upon by the Mayor and City Council, consistent with the approved Annexation Plan, and after a public notification and hearing process has been completed;
- The Department of Planning requests Priority Funding Area status for properties that are currently served by water and sewer or are located within the 10-year service area per the biannual Harford County Water and Sewer Master Plan.

Other Implementation Tools

Code Enforcement and the Property Maintenance Code

The City of Havre de Grace utilizes its Code Enforcement program to enforce the upkeep of the City. Although there is presently only one Code Enforcement officer, the City's philosophy of canvassing

neighborhoods daily and discussion issues with residents has been successful. The Department of Planning also fields complaints from residents and looks into them regularly. The complaint system is behind the times and would also improve by allowing code enforcement notification to be made using an online application. This is part of the e-permitting software the City is looking to incorporate in the near future.

Outside of the provision in the Zoning Chapter of the City Code, Article I of Chapter 31 includes the adoption of the 2018 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC), which is updated from time to time. The IPMC has more stringent requirements for the upkeep of property, which helps keep Havre de Grace beautiful. The IPMC requires houses to not have chipping paint, crumbling roofs, and other problems that require maintenance. While the City tries to work with residents when possible, the IPMC also provides options for fining residents when they are consistently out of compliance. The City is looking to determine when fines should be required and how to more consistently apply the IPMC.

Historic Preservation District

Under Section 97-4 of the City Code, the [Historic Preservation Commission](#) (HPC) was formed with the powers and duties listed under Section 97-5. The HPC does not have any enforcement powers, but plays an important role in supporting the vision of elected officials for the City's National Register Historic District (NRHD). The City does not have existing preservation guidelines or design standards, and the HPC also does not regularly review development plans in the City, but only requests for demolition.

Despite the HPC's lack of enforcement power, the group has been instrumental in urging use of historic design elements, including passage of an ordinance requiring houses along Union and Congress Avenues to align their front setback with their neighbors. With better guidelines and opportunities to review additional development in the City, the HPC could provide even better recommendations to staff and the Mayor and City Council to help in preserving the history of Havre de Grace.

Adequate Public Facilities

[Chapter 2](#) of the City Code requires that all new development ensures there are adequate public facilities prior to development, specifically for schools, roads, and water and sewer. For small subdivisions, the Director of Public Works can waive some requirements. However, larger development must provide letters from the Director of Public Works and Harford County Board of Education as well as traffic impact analysis to ensure public facilities are not degraded upon completion of development. City staff from both the Departments of Planning and of Public Works should work with the Harford County Board of Education and other stakeholders in reviewing the existing ordinance from time to time to be sure it meets the current needs of the City.

Incentives

Beyond regulations and requirements, Havre de Grace has the opportunity to incentivize residents and businesses to develop in a certain manner. For instance, the City has provided tax breaks in the RO/Residential Office zoning district to encourage residential reuse of former office space. The State also offers a variety of programs and incentive opportunities. The following is a list of recent programs Havre de Grace should consider utilizing to assist in its effort to bring the visions of this plan into fruition:

- In 2006, [Maryland House Bill 1160](#) established a Workforce Housing Grant Program within the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). To participate,

jurisdictions must adopt a Workforce Housing Element containing an assessment of needs, goals, objectives, and policies that preserve or develop workforce housing.

- [The Sustainable Communities Act of 2010](#) strengthens reinvestment and revitalization in Maryland's older communities by renewing an existing rehabilitation tax credit; creating Sustainable Communities to simplify the framework for designated target areas in the Community Legacy (CL) and Neighborhood Business Works (NBW) programs; establishing a new transportation focus in older communities; and enhancing the role of the Smart Growth Subcabinet (SGSC) in community revitalization.
- [The 2013 Sustainable Communities Tax Increment Financing \(TIF\) Designation & Financing Law](#)
The TIF Law authorizes local governments to designate places as a Sustainable Community. In turn, the local government may finance the costs of infrastructure improvements in these areas in a manner similar to Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) designated Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) methods. These approaches include issuance of bonds, creation of special taxing districts, and tax increment financing. This allows local governments to make important infrastructure and asset investments in their Sustainable Community areas to spur economic development and ensure quality of life and livable communities.

The TIF Law provides for new funding uses that include historic preservation, environmental remediation, demolition, site preparation, parking lots, facilities, highways, or transit assets that support Sustainable Community residents, schools, and affordable or mixed-use housing. It gives Sustainable Communities the opportunity to utilize Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) bonding authority, which can finance, acquire, develop, own, and/or operate projects for economic development purposes.

- The Maryland Historical Trust provides grants for [capital projects](#) and they administer the [African-American Cultural Heritage Action Fund](#) – a program to assist in funding ongoing preservation activities for historic places.

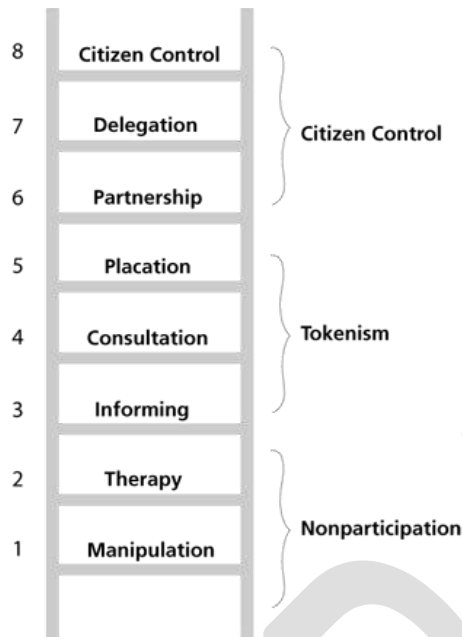
State Laws Requiring Local Implementation

In addition, other laws mandated by the State of Maryland are incorporated into local regulations which also apply to individual properties during the development process. The administration of those ordinances are accomplished by staff within the Department of Planning and/or the Department of Public Works during the development review process. The following is a list of regulations that govern actions during the site and subdivision review stages of the development process. Links are included to their location within the City Code:

- [Adequate Public Facilities](#)
- [Chesapeake Bay Critical Area](#)
- [Floodplain Management](#)
- [Forest Conservation](#)
- [Stormwater Management Ordinance](#)
- [Grading and Filling](#) as related to Sediment and Erosion Control

Community Participation

In her journal article, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation”, Sherry Arnstein discusses her now-famous idea of citizens’ participation in public policy. The ladder shows the different levels, ranging from low to high, concerning citizen participation in planning processes.



Arnstein's Ladder (1969)
Degrees of Citizen Participation

While creating this Comprehensive Plan, City staff put in their best effort to create opportunities for citizen control of the project. However, during the regulatory process, most of the effort consists of public hearings, either at the Planning Commission or the City Council level. There should be a greater effort to reach out to stakeholders and residents during all parts of the regulatory process to achieve more than tokenism levels of participation.

All activity of the Planning Commission is open to the public with opportunities for public comment. This includes review of site plans, subdivisions, and final plats as well as work sessions on all comprehensive planning or ordinance initiatives. All Board of Appeals hearings are also public, with public notification required. In addition, Mayor and City Council hearings on all matters – including land use issues relating to annexation, ordinance legislation, or the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan – are public and televised with opportunities for public comment. In this way, City Government is a very open process with numerous avenues for public comment.

Agendas for Planning Commission hearings and Board of Appeals cases are posted at the entrance of City Hall as well as on the City’s website prior to meetings. However, individuals interested in further information regarding development projects or the planning initiatives must actively seek the information themselves through City staff members. The City is moving to install an e-permitting and public notification system to better inform residents and make information easily available to everyone. It is a priority for the Department of Planning to seek funding for software and program implementation services in the near term.

MARYLAND PLANNING VISION #2: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In developing its Planning Visions, the State of Maryland recognized the importance of public participation. Planning Visions #2 does more than require public participation. The vision specifically states, “citizens are active partners”. Havre de Grace is sensitive to citizens’ responsibilities in achieving community goals.

While the City is always striving to be consistent with the Planning Visions, it is important to constantly review public participation efforts. A system must be created and consistently refined to ensure an environment conducive for active involvement in the planning and regulatory processes.

Coordination with Harford County Government

For annexations and development near municipal borders, coordination must occur with the State, Harford County and adjacent municipalities. Additionally, all jurisdictions coordinate on the biannual Harford County Water and Sewer Master Plan for the extension of infrastructure in a coordinated way. This is driven by Harford County land use policies which establishes a Development Envelope for urban growth. Finally, all jurisdictions coordinate on large-scale transportation priorities through the State's yearly Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP) through coordinated annual priority letters.

Havre de Grace also benefits from a great relationship with Harford County for construction plan review and building inspections. This was required during the upsurge in new housing construction during the mid-2000's after major annexations resulted in greatly increased new home sales after subdivision. In addition, Harford County is a tremendous resource for Geographic Information System (GIS) support, supplying all jurisdictions with data that they could not afford on their own. Havre de Grace is fortunate to be the recipient of shared GIS data layers, whether it be through the County's webapp or through the gift of created data and downloaded information to be used for planning purposes.

Increased coordination between Havre de Grace and Harford County Government on land use issues is important. Planning initiatives between jurisdictions are not independent in their effects on each other, and it is key to recognize the close relationship between Harford County and all municipalities within the County. Changes in land use through annexation, large development projects, the transportation network, schools system needs, and the interrelated public utilities are just some of the major items that demand coordination. It is of utmost importance that all jurisdictions continue to coordinate for shared information and mutual cooperation for the benefit of citizens and stakeholders in Harford County.

Coordination with State Government

Havre de Grace along with all other Maryland municipalities are required to coordinate with State agencies through various programs. These programs include but are not limited to Priority Funding Area designation, Tier-system septic bill, water and sewer service designations, Enterprise Zone incentives, and other revitalization incentives to create the opportunity for reinvestment in older communities such as Havre de Grace.

Coordination with State government agencies is also key for the City of Havre de Grace. Major highway projects, park enhancements, and public facility improvements are provided through the State of Maryland's numerous capital funding agencies. In addition, technical support is also readily available. All projects located along a roadway under State jurisdiction are sent for review to the State Highway Administration (SHA). SHA provides permits for work in the right-of-way, approval of access permits and traffic studies to determine the impact of development.

The City works closely with Maryland Department of Planning for annexation and various planning initiatives as well as utilizes their technical and training support. The Department of Natural Resources provides technical assistance, environmental review (Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission, Forestry, etc.), and grant funding, such as that provided through Program Open Space. The Department of Commerce provides jurisdictions with support for business activity, facility improvements, and tax incentives (such as the Enterprise zone). Community revitalization and housing initiatives are provided through the Department of Housing and Community Development. Historic preservation is supported by Maryland Historical Trust. Finally, Maryland Department of the Environment provides funding for water and sewer facilities, technical assistance, and enforcement action. Havre de Grace will continue to work closely with State agencies and foster relationships as they are necessary to promote healthy growth.

Relationship to Other Plans

Harford County Water and Sewer Master Plan is the guiding plan for all of Harford County with regard to the extension of water and sewer facilities. This plan is updated every 6 months, in the fall and spring. Construction permits through the Maryland Department of the Environment require consistency and coordination between the various jurisdictions through this legislatively adopted document.

Harford County Department of Community Services Consolidated Plan is a 5-year plan that is required through the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. This plan describes how Harford County utilizes Federal, State, and local funds to address housing and community development needs of low to moderate income individuals and families in all of Harford County including municipalities. Annual action plans address the yearly progress of the Consolidated Plan.

Harford County Emergency Operations Plan is the plan for Harford County for large-scale emergencies. This plan determines the best escape routes and modes of transportation in the event of severe flooding, bombing, or chemical discharge from Aberdeen Proving Ground. Sections of this plan address the following: Reception and Mass Care; Police, Fire Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services; Public Works; Health, Medical, and Mortuary; Emergency Resources; and the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program.

Implementation Goals

The following are goals of any proposed future changes to the regulatory goals for the City:

- Monitor new State laws and adapt regulations as necessary to meet new requirements or to take advantage of new opportunities.
- Utilize the City's CIP program, grant programs, and other incentives to assist in implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Work closely with Harford County, State agencies, and adjacent municipalities concerning annexations and future development.
- Review existing ordinances and provide updates as needed to meet the needs of the City.
- Continue to improve on the public information and dissemination process.

Actions

Short-Term

- Upon completion of the Comprehensive Plan, look into hiring a consultant to perform a comprehensive review of the Zoning Code and make changes to modernize the ordinance.
- Develop a pre-development protocol, including the development of a Joint Development Review Committee.
- Purchase and implement an e-permitting system:
 - ✓ To assist in permitting code enforcement and other implementation efforts;
 - ✓ Provide the public with additional means of receiving information and providing feedback on development issues.

- Develop a code enforcement protocol for enforcing the Property Maintenance Code and Zoning Code, including when to seek fines;
 - ✓ Develop an abatement program to assist in repairing properties, rather than demolish them, when possible;
 - ✓ Look at ways to prevent repeat code offenders, including working closely with residents on issues that may be causing them to violate the code.
- Modify ordinances:
 - ✓ Modify the Planning Commission ordinance to be consistent with other recent changes to the Board of Appeals duties, site plan ordinance, and subdivision ordinance;
 - ✓ Define minor and major subdivisions and allow staff review of minor subdivision for increased efficiency in the development process.
- Increase public participation in planning processes through increased online notifications and advertised public forums. Active engagement by the public is desired.

Mid-Term

- Develop historic preservation guidelines and provide more duties to the Historic Preservation Commission in order to provide improved recommendations to the Mayor and Council on issues affecting the historic district.
- Explore the opportunity to implement elements of Smart Cities initiative at a scale appropriate to Havre de Grace, where technology is utilized for infrastructure planning and use of space, resources, and energy for higher efficiency and resource planning.