

# **COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ELEMENT**

### **Introduction**

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to capture a broad community vision of the future development of Mardela Springs. Written statements that describe future expectations are necessary to describe that vision. These statements should be easily understood and generally accepted by the residents and business interests in the Town.

Goals and objectives are found in this chapter and in the subsequent chapters for each element of the Plan. The goals and objectives formulated by the Town have been incorporated as a basis for the goals and objective statements in this Plan.

Goals are long-range, generalized statements that represent the ultimate desires of the Town. Objectives are a proposed series of broad policies that are more immediate and specific in nature. Objectives are intended to be intermediate steps that are taken toward achieving the goals. In subsequent sections, objectives for each element will be discussed.

In 1992, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act; commonly known as the 1992 Planning Act. This legislation required that every comprehensive plan include the seven Visions (amended to eight Visions in 2000 and to twelve Visions in 2009). The twelve Visions, as amended, are the guiding principles for the development of the goals and objectives of the Mardela Springs Comprehensive Plan.

In 2006, a new law (House Bill 1141) was enacted to require that municipal comprehensive plans include "water resource" and "municipal growth" elements. These new elements were developed to provide added support for achieving the twelve visions.

The following basic components for achieving the goals of the Planning Act have been adopted: 1) An overall community vision for the future, and 2) An articulation of the twelve growth management visions. The Mardela Springs Comprehensive Plan takes these visions as a starting

point from which more detailed Plan objectives, policies, and recommendations are developed.

## **Mardela Springs Vision / Goals for the Future**

The overall mission of the Mardela Springs Comprehensive Plan is to set forth a guide for the long term development of the Town to help ensure a community that will continue to foster a comfortable living environment for its residents by providing an opportunity for the pursuit of social, recreational, and civic activities, along with other desirable amenities that make an attractive residential community. Within this context, the Plan will recognize the need for increased employment opportunities within or near Mardela Springs, where such development will not impair or make secondary the primary goal of making Mardela Springs an attractive residential community.

The Mardela Springs Comprehensive Plan is structured so as to achieve the following overall Vision:

**To promote and maintain Mardela Springs as an attractive, rural, family-oriented residential community with a rich historical heritage that provides a cherished quality of life for all residents.**

This Vision will be achieved by providing, protecting, and promoting:

- The historical heritage that uniquely defines the community;
- The small town village character and pedestrian scale of the neighborhoods;
- Livable neighborhoods and affordable housing opportunities;
- A safe, close knit community; and,
- The development and redevelopment of any vacant in-town areas with a look to some limited peripheral growth.

## **The Twelve Visions / Goals for Mardela Springs**

The following twelve Vision statements are based on the 1992 Planning Act, and subsequent amendments thereto, and are incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan as fundamental goals which will be achieved

through a variety of objectives, policies, principles, recommendations, and implementation techniques.

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 areas 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 and business 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 Bay and Coastal Bays, are carefully managed 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 environmental 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.

## **House Bill 1141**

Municipal / County coordination with respect to growth and development issues was a much debated topic in the 2006 Session of the Maryland General Assembly. As a result of this debate, House Bill 1141 was passed and this new legislation sets forth additional procedures and requirements for municipalities preparing comprehensive plans. These new requirements include:

- The inclusion of a Municipal Growth Element in the Plan which identifies where Mardela Springs anticipates growing outside of its existing corporate limits and discusses how the Town will address public service, infrastructure, and environmental issues for areas within the identified growth boundary. Prior to the Town's adoption of the Municipal Growth Element, the Town must furnish a copy of the element to the County and then meet to discuss any comments, concerns, and/ or suggestions. If necessary, either party can request to engage in mediation to facilitate agreement should a conflict arise regarding the content of the Municipal Growth Element.
- The inclusion of a Water Resources Element in the Plan that identifies drinking water and other water resources necessary to meet current and future demand; and to identify suitable water and land areas to receive stormwater and wastewater derived from development.

- In order for land annexed after September 30, 2006, to qualify for State assistance as a Priority Funding Area, the Town must complete an analysis of land capacity available for development, including infill and redevelopment, and do an analysis of the land area needed to satisfy demand for development at densities consistent with the Plan.
- The Town must develop an annexation plan that is consistent with the Municipal Growth Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- House Bill 1141 gives local jurisdictions until October 1, 2009, to update their Comprehensive Plans to include these additional elements with the possibility of one to two six-month extensions for good cause. Local jurisdictions that have not updated their plans by the stated deadline may not change the zoning classification of property until their updates are complete.
- House Bill 1141 also changes the criteria for how the County applies the five-year rule for annexation requests. Previously, the County compared the permitted uses for the proposed municipal zoning with the designated land use in the County Plan in order to determine if they were substantially different. That standard has been revised to reflect whether a substantial difference exists between the land uses and permitted densities of the proposed Town zoning versus the land uses and permitted densities of the current County zoning.

The Mardela Springs Plan addresses all of the requirements of House Bill 1141 and attempts to do so in a manner that incorporates the Town's vision with the overall vision for Wicomico County.

Although Mardela Springs will only be able to accommodate limited growth and change, this growth will be accomplished in a sustainable manner. Wicomico County and Mardela Springs will be an increasingly united community that solves problems through full communication and community decision-making. The County and the Town will work closely with each other in implementing solutions to common problems. Each will attempt to understand the larger picture and help determine the best interests of the whole.

Our vision is an ambitious one, but working together, with effort and dedication, we can achieve it.

## **Overall Development Concept Principles**

The following broad principles complement the overall goals for the Town and further illustrate the growth management and development concept the Town is pursuing:

- **Maintain a low growth rate in order to develop in a timely, orderly fashion and to maintain the small town atmosphere of Mardela Springs.**

This principle recognizes that managed growth is more economically and socially beneficial to the Town than haphazard, unplanned development.

- **Facilitate the efficient delivery of public and private services.**

This principle recognizes that the cost effective delivery of public and private services requires that the users of these services be concentrated in areas where they may be most readily served.

- **Integrate land use and transportation.**

This principle considers the relationship of future development to the various modes of transportation in the Town in order to maintain and promote their most effective use and to strengthen the Town's role as a village center.

- **Respect the significant natural environment of the Mardela Springs area.**

This principle recognizes that the health, safety, and general welfare of County and Town residents depends upon the proper functioning of natural systems, and that the quality of life to which we are accustomed relies, in large measure, on the prudent use and protection of our natural systems.

- **Promote the development of the existing community and preserve the rural heritage.**

This principle recognizes qualities, such as civic pride and cultural heritage that cannot be measured in statistical terms. The growth and protection of the existing rural village lifestyle of Mardela Springs is important to promote.

- **Preserve significant historic areas and structures.**

This principle recognizes that there are significant historic areas, features, and structures in the County and in Mardela Springs that form an integral part of its overall attractiveness. As future development activities intensify, it is important for the image of the Town to protect and retain these features. New development should not destroy the historic attributes, which are visual remnants of the Town's past.

## **Land Use Goals**

- Preserve the low density, rural image and lifestyle of Mardela Springs.
- Maintain and create desirable residential (home) environments for all residents of Mardela Springs.
- Encourage development of new, well-designed and properly located commercial facilities and maintenance and revitalization of existing commercial uses.
- Utilize the unique location advantage of the Town on U. S. Route 50 for development that will increase employment opportunities for Town residents and improve the assessable base of the Town.

## **Municipal Growth Goals**

- Guide the timing, location, and general land uses for infill development and annexed properties as depicted on the Proposed Land Use Plan Map and the Town Growth Area Map.
- Maintain the character, visual cohesiveness, and bounded edges of the Town's historic core. New edge development is permitted, but should reflect traditional Town character in terms of scale, land use, and design.

## **Sensitive Areas Goals**

- Preserve the natural resources and features of Mardela Springs and the surrounding environs to insure a balance between

development and the need to protect natural resources or features.

- Minimize adverse impacts on water quality (including ground water) that result from high nutrient loadings or pollutants in runoff from surrounding lands or from pollutants that are discharged from structures and to conserve fish, wildlife, and plant habitats in the town.

### **Transportation Goals**

- Ensure the safe and efficient movement of goods and people.
- Reduce dependence on auto use, especially drive-alone vehicle use during the morning and evening commute hours.
- Achieve efficient use of energy in transportation.
- Coordinate transportation decisions regionally and locally.

### **Community Facilities Goal**

- Provide an appropriate array of community facilities and services required to maintain the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Mardela Springs.

### **Water Resources Goal**

- Evaluate water sources and water and sewer capacity for the desired growth of the Town of Mardela Springs. This includes ensuring that development occurs at a pace that the water resources can sustain, while reducing the potential for non-point source pollution in local waterways.

### **Community Character Goal**

- Establish guiding principles to promote, protect, and enhance the historic and cultural resources that uniquely define the community.



## **Implementation Goal**

- Establish an effective set of regulatory and program activities that will ensure achievement of the goals, objectives and policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

## **Legal Basis for Comprehensive Planning**

Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland is the planning and zoning enabling legislation from which the Town of Mardela Springs derives its powers to regulate land use. Section 3.05, and as amended by House Bill 1141, sets forth the minimum requirements for a comprehensive plan, which shall include, among other things:

- A statement of goals and objectives, principles, policies, and standards;
- A land use plan element;
- A transportation plan element;
- A community facilities plan element;
- A mineral resources plan element, if current geological information is available;
- A water resources plan element;
- A municipal growth element;
- An element which makes recommendations for the determination, identification, and designation of areas that are of critical State concern, if applicable;
- A sensitive areas element;
- An element which shall contain the planning commission's recommendations for land development regulations to implement the plan; and
- Other elements, such as a community renewal, housing, conservation, natural resources, at the discretion of the Planning Commission.

## **Components of a Growth Management Program**

This Comprehensive Plan provides the basic framework and direction for all components of what may be considered the Town's overall Comprehensive Planning Program. It is not a stand-alone document but is supported and, in turn, supports related Planning Program documents such as the ones listed below:

- Zoning Ordinance;
- Subdivision Ordinance;
- Capital Improvements Budget;
- The Mardela Springs Critical Area Program and implementing ordinance.

These documents and others, when used concurrently, are the basis for directing and managing growth in Mardela Springs.