

# **INTER-JURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION AND STREAMLINING ELEMENT**

## **Inter-jurisdictional Coordination**

Inter-jurisdictional coordination is an important issue for Mardela Springs. It is a valuable tool to help identify potential conflicts and attempt to address them as an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan. The Town's growth and development depends on coordination and cooperation among various federal, State, and county agencies, as well as officials from neighboring municipalities.

Inter-jurisdictional coordination is defined as the act of establishing periodic means of communication with officials of other political jurisdictions for the purpose of addressing and resolving issues of mutual interest related to the operations, and future physical, economic, and social development of the area. The Comprehensive Plan should be the cornerstone of all coordination and cooperation efforts and should set the tone and reflect the jurisdiction's attitude toward such cooperation.

## **Inter-jurisdictional Coordination Goal**

To ensure that the federal, State, County, and adjoining municipal governments are aware and supportive of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, particularly with regard to County and State land use plans, capital projects, funds, permits, and technical assistance.

## **Inter-jurisdictional Coordination Objectives**

- (1) Provide government services efficiently and at the minimum cost possible.
- (2) Continue to coordinate water and sewer planning with Wicomico County and the Maryland Department of the Environment.
- (3) Take advantage of federal, State, and County grant and low-interest loan programs in order to achieve the goals of this Plan.

## **Inter-jurisdictional Coordination Policies**

- (1) Whenever the Town Comprehensive Plan is revised, the process should include meetings with relevant Wicomico County and State officials.
- (2) The Town should continue to work with the County to maintain the growth boundary and to accomplish strategic planning with regard to annexation potential.
- (3) The Town should provide notices to the County of proposed actions within the Town and growth boundary that may be of interest to the County. Likewise, the Town will work with the County to arrange reciprocal notification of nearby proposals that may be of interest to the Town.
- (4) The Town should create a Planning Commission to review and comment on proposed land use activities.
- (5) The Town should arrange periodic meetings with County, State, and other municipal officials on matters needing special attention, such as schools, transportation, and water and sewer.

## **Inter-jurisdictional Coordination Recommendations**

- (1) The Town should coordinate with Wicomico County and nearby municipalities to have quarterly or semi-annual meetings to discuss growth and development issues, and other relevant issues of mutual concern.
- (2) The Town should work with the State and County to explore the feasibility of a public water and sewerage system for the Town and to identify funding sources to create such infrastructure.
- (3) The Mardela Springs Planning Commission, once appointed, should work with the County to establish a review process for proposed land activities located within the Town growth boundary that have a potential affect on the Town.

- (4) The Town should publicize a regular meeting schedule for its committees, commissions, and elected officials in order to provide improved communications.
- (5) The Town should continue to coordinate regularly with County offices on their plans and programs, especially with regard to pertinent developments and subdivisions.
- (6) The Town should contact County and State agencies early in the process for annexations.
- (7) The Town should continue to communicate with federal and State agencies to improve chances of bringing communitybased programs to the Town when appropriate.
- (8) The Town should continue its current cooperative arrangement with Wicomico County for the County to issue building permits upon the Town's approval and for the County to perform the Town's building inspections.
- (9) The Town should continue its current cooperative arrangement with the Wicomico County Health Department involving health department inspections for private well and septic system requests.

## **Streamlining**

The 1992 Planning Act calls for streamlining of regulatory mechanisms to achieve the State's Visions. While there is always citizen concern over the amount of government regulation, Mardela Springs' residents recognize the necessity of regulations in order to protect residents' health, safety, and welfare; and to protect the aesthetic quality of the Town.

The level of development activity in Mardela Springs to date has been relatively low, and therefore, the Town's project reviews have occurred in a timely manner. Larger, more complex projects could experience greater delays, especially if they involve reviews by outside agencies of the County, State, or federal government.

The Town should create a streamlined review of applications for development; especially permit review and subdivision review within the Town's growth boundary. The Town should also explore the

development of flexible regulations to promote re-development, economic growth, and innovative and cost-saving project design.

### **Recommended Streamlining Strategies**

- (1) The Town should produce a guide to land development and permitting utilizing layperson terminology. The guide could address the permits or approvals needed for typical activities, including brief descriptions of the applicable regulatory programs, and direct individuals to the appropriate agencies. It could also include contact names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses.
- (2) The Town should work with the County on a streamlined building permit review process since the County issues building permits on behalf of the Town, upon approval by the Mardela Springs' Town Commissioners.
- (3) The Town should work with the County and the State to support efforts to standardize the administration and enforcement procedures associated with the Forest Conservation Act and the Critical Area Act.
- (4) The Town should revise its zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to provide additional opportunities for streamlined approval processes, where feasible.
- (5) The Town should include time limitations in its zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations for plat and plan reviews, plat recordation, and construction completion.

## **IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT**

### **Introduction**

The success of any planning program lies in its implementation. Once adopted, the Mardela Springs Comprehensive Plan becomes the official growth policy statement and long-range development philosophy of the community. However, adoption of the Plan does not guarantee its implementation. In order for the Plan to be an effective instrument of Town government, it must be an integral part of the day-to-day administrative and political process. The Mardela Springs Plan cannot be implemented unless a deliberate and coordinated effort is made by the Planning Commission and the President and Town Commissioners to insure that all future development proposals are carefully evaluated for consistency with the goals, objectives, and policies set forth in the Plan.

Many of the recommendations contained in this Plan are best implemented through land development regulations. The Town of Mardela Springs does not currently have a full complement of development regulations, other than those administered through agreement with the County, such as the building code, subdivision regulations, and the Forest Conservation Program. Due to a lack of fiscal resources available to hire full or part-time professional staff, it is recommended that the Town continue to permit the County to administer its land development regulations.

### **Implementation Goal**

To facilitate and encourage implementation of the Plan, each element of the Plan contains objectives and policy statements suggesting various implementation approaches; thus providing clear guidance to those responsible for implementation as to how to proceed. The Plan also provides enough flexibility for changing conditions in the community.

### **Implementation Objective**

To prepare and apply regulations, incentive programs, and coordination mechanisms that will bring the visions, goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Plan to fruition.

## **Implementation Recommendations / Strategies**

- (1) Develop and adopt a zoning map and zoning regulations in accordance with the policies and recommendations of the Plan. The Town of Mardela Springs should adopt a simple zoning ordinance that reflects the types of land uses and community character the Town wants to achieve.
- (2) Consider requesting technical assistance from the County in the administration of the zoning ordinance, and, as such, the Town's zoning ordinance should be consistent with the County zoning ordinance to the extent possible.
- (3) Develop and adopt subdivision regulations as a means of implementing the Plan.
- (4) Consider requesting the County provide technical assistance in the administration of the subdivision regulations, and, as such, the Town's subdivision regulations should be consistent with the County's subdivision regulations to the extent possible.
- (5) Adopt a health and safety housing code for all housing units.
- (6) Assure that all regulations, programs, and projects are consistent with the spirit and intent of the Comprehensive Plan.
- (7) Review and, if necessary, revise the Town's fee schedule to include all types of permits and to help offset costs for project reviews.
- (8) Amend regulations to require development projects to provide adequate landscaping and recreational and open space areas.
- (9) Regulatory flexibility will be accomplished, in part, by revising prescriptive zoning and other regulations to be more descriptive of desired outcomes.
- (10) Permit streamlining will be accomplished by working with County and State agencies to "certify" consistency of Town projects as part of any formal application process; and by working with the County to standardize the administration and enforcement procedures of The Forest Conservation Act.

- (11) Coordinate with the Critical Area Commission to determine the most effective means to implement the Town's Critical Area Program.
- (12) The Town should adopt "benchmarks" related to its' physical, economic, social, and environmental condition, as well as annual "goal measures" for each benchmark. This will permit the Plan to be effectively evaluated over time to determine whether it is being successfully implemented.
- (13) The Planning Commission shall prepare an "Annual Report" which summarizes planning, zoning, subdivision, site plan, project review, and Board of Appeals activities; assesses progress in meeting the missions of the Plan; assesses Town benchmarks; summarizes County and State actions affecting the Town; and makes recommendations to the Town Commissioners for strengthening growth management and resource protection in the Town. This "Annual Report" shall be sent to the Town Commissioners and to the Maryland Department of Planning.