

2017 Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 3

Update dates and references in the Foreword

FOREWORD

Comprehensive Planning in Easton has a long history, dating back at least to 1950 when Elements of the first Plan were adopted by the Planning Commission. Citizen involvement in Comprehensive Planning underwent a sea change in the mid 1990's with the development of the 1997 Comprehensive Plan. That Plan was developed with what was then an unprecedented level of community involvement throughout a two and one-half year process, the cornerstone of which was two meetings designed to solicit citizen input through a variety of interesting and clever techniques. Thematic stations were set up and techniques ranging from surveys to interviews to quasi-gaming exercises collected responses from hundreds of attendees. In large part because of this community involvement, the 1997 Plan remains relevant today to the extent that much of what it says still pervades throughout this latest Plan.

This Plan, as well as the one adopted in 2004, are generally refinements of the themes first discussed and described in the 1997 Plan. The 2004 Plan added elements of Growth Management to the primary premise of the 1997 Plan, which was that the quality and appearance of all types of development in Easton needed to be improved. The Growth Management Strategy that was added in 2004 established a Growth Boundary beyond which the Town should not grow. Furthermore, within this ultimate boundary the area between the current Town boundary and the growth boundary was divided into three priority areas for future growth. This has had a profound effect on Annexation policy since 2004 as the only Annexation requests approved were those that were classified as Priority One Growth Areas.

This 2010 Plan refines these Growth Management Strategies further, is somewhat more technical in nature, and reflects changes mandated by the Maryland Legislature in the form of HB 1141. It was rewarding to see that much of what was required in these new Elements, particularly the Municipal Growth Element, are things that we in Easton already do and/or reflect existing policies of Easton and Talbot County.

Comprehensive Planning is of paramount importance today. 1.1 million new residents are expected to move to Maryland by 2030 and an ever increasing number of them are choosing the Eastern Shore as their home. Maintaining the character, the very essence of this place that makes it so unique and special, will be an enormous challenge. This Plan lays the groundwork for insuring that happens here in Easton. If we find we have missed the mark, we will revise the course along the way and we will once again take a Comprehensive look in 2023. Our hope is that we will still be close enough to the right path that that Plan will represent one more refinement and not a whole new change of direction.