
CHAPTER NINE: IMPLEMENTATION

The 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan serves many purposes. It is an analysis of the current state of the Town and a "vision" of where the Town desires to be in the future. The plan is an internal policy document guiding local decision-making effort. A strategy is identified and discussed to identify means of achieving the goals. The Plan serves as a statement of intent for neighboring governments, developers, and similarly interested parties so that they may be aware of the Town of Mount Airy's concerns. It will also help to coordinate the Town's plan with the comprehensive plans of surrounding jurisdictions.

One of the fundamental challenges of the Plan is the constant reminder that all issues are interrelated. Land-use planning, environmental stewardship, infrastructure provisions, and adequate public facilities provisions are all affected by each other. When making decisions on any one issue, the indirect impact on other concerns must be weighed.

Many of the Plan recommendations will impact new development. This does not necessarily mean more regulation, but intends to better regulate by ensuring that the Code and Ordinances achieve their intent, that different criteria do not conflict with each other. It should be a goal to streamline the regulations so they address only what is necessary to achieve the desired result.

Each chapter of the Plan has specific policy recommendations that can be undertaken to achieve the stated goal. The following text outlines an order for implementation of the primary policies and actions.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS

The first priority after the Comprehensive Plan is to revise and amend the Town of Mount Airy Zoning Map to reflect the zoning classification revisions for parcels of land as recommended by the Plan and approved by the Town Council. A new comprehensive map must also be updated to reflect any zoning changes that are made during the Comprehensive Plan process.

Ideally, the Comprehensive Plan Map should match the existing or updated zoning map, which then should accurately reflect existing land use. The Comprehensive Map is a guideline for future development and should be adhered to as closely as possible.

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIC WORK PLAN

The Town of Mount Airy will begin developing a Strategic Work Plan shortly after adoption of the plan. The work plan will outline how the goals and vision of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan will be implemented over the next 8-10 years, and will include the execution of a Community Needs Assessment for the 2023 Comprehensive Master Plan Update.

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

Zoning ordinances implement the principles of the Comprehensive Master Plan and should be updated on occasion to continue to reflect the policies advocated by the Comprehensive Master Plan. Regular evaluations of the Town Zoning Codes are necessary to ensure the Comprehensive Master Plan is being followed. A comprehensive evaluation of the Town Zoning Ordinance is scheduled to take place after the Comprehensive Master Plan for the Town is completed.

MIXED USE ZONING AND OFFICE PARK EMPLOYMENT ZONING

The Town of Mount Airy Planning Commission will initiate amendments to the zoning regulations to establish at least two new zoning classifications known as “Mixed Use Zoning” and “Office Park Employment Campus Zoning” in accordance with the adopted Master Plan. Development of both zoning classifications will be a priority focus upon adoption of this plan. In order to ensure the establishment of zoning classifications that address both the needs and concerns of the citizens, the community will be engaged early in the planning process.

ROUTE 27 CORRIDOR COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN ELEMENT

The Town of Mount Airy will begin developing a Route 27 Corridor element in the summer of 2015. Planning Administration will hold a series of meetings with the Planning Commission, Town Staff, State and County agencies, land owners, and community organizations to develop a strategic plan to consider the orderly development for the future of the Route 27 corridor. The large majority of vacant land lies on the east side of Route 27 and warrants a comprehensive analysis to balance goals to promote economic growth and preserve the qualities of the small town that are widely desired by the citizens of the Town.

NATURAL RESOURCE POLICIES

Once the revised Zoning Ordinances and Map are adopted, attention should be focused on review of natural resource protection policies. Some of the primary continuing concerns are water resource issues including well exploration, protection, and stormwater management practices. Conflicting policies with regard to well exploration and development within the Town Code should be revised. The protection and preservation of natural resources will be a priority when considering new development and proposed land development polices and zoning ordinances, including the proposed Mixed Use Zoning and the Office Park Employment Campus Zone.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Many of the regulations within the Subdivision Ordinance should be reviewed for compatibility with land-use and zoning goals and natural resource policies. In addition, the chapter on Community Design Guidelines recommends that a more detailed review be given to site plan analysis. This attention should also emphasize the character and aesthetics of new development as well as infrastructure provisions.

PUBLIC FACILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

Town policies that affect the provision of infrastructure and facilities required by development should be evaluated. It is vital that new development does not decrease the level of services for the existing community, or create a demand the Town is unable to meet. "Sustainable development", a phrase often used to describe global environmental responsibility, is also appropriately applied to the responsibility that should be borne by development. Infrastructure or facilities including water, sewer, trash, recycling, street, parks maintenance, and similar services are managed by the Town. The Town should cooperate with county or state efforts to maintain levels of service for schools, county and state roads, libraries and other facilities in part or wholly provided by the county or state. The Town can improve its management of services and facilities by better tracking techniques. "Master Plans" for the water and sewer systems, road maintenance and construction, parks and recreation improvements and stormwater management can be drawn to anticipate development at the applicable zoning category and density. Impact fees or dedications that are applicable can also be anticipated; helping to evaluate whether required exactions would meet the intended goals for the Town. System wide regular evaluations of the public facilities will also assist in avoiding any serious "shortfall" situations that may place the Town residents in jeopardy.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND RECYCLING CONSIDERATIONS

A goal for Mount Airy is to ensure it manages the energy resources and solid waste recovery available to the town in the most cost efficient ways possible. A primary responsibility for the town is the operation and maintenance of water and waste systems for the Town of Mount Airy. Electrical energy is another of the costs in the town budget and continuing efforts will be necessary to identify cost effective methods for stabilizing and reducing electricity cost for the town. Additionally, looking at energy efficient renewable energy sources will help contribute to the defined State of Maryland goal of reducing impacts on the environment and potentially producing jobs for Mount Airy residents. The Town of Mount Airy has been handling several forms of solid waste and recycling for the town residents for several years. Enacted State Legislation requires mandatory recycling and the town through a Commission responsible for determining the appropriate means for trash removal collection along with the monitoring and oversight of a town-wide recycling program. A fully integrated energy master plan can help with the integration of energy and sustainability of projects and assets. Integration of energy and services allows the Town to recognize opportunities for conservation, sustainable design, and renewable energy. The Town will determine its own unique path towards sustainability with the implementation of the guiding principles encouraged in this plan.

INTER-JURISDICTIONAL COOPERATION

The second chapter of the Master Plan outlines some of the complex issues the Town must address given its location at the corner of four counties and pursue discussion of how each county's planning policies affect the Town and the Mt. Airy region. Of particular importance are Frederick and Carroll Counties support in building a better Mount Airy. This has been achieved and continues to be achieved by permitting the Town to control development within its limits, limit development outside the Town and by locating services where they properly belong within the established community boundaries. It will take several years to address most of the issues raised in this Plan. The next plan effort, which is required within 10 years after the adoption of this plan, should review the success or problems encountered in adherence to the policies presented herein. Inevitably, some recommendations will have been successful and others may have been too difficult to implement. The underlying concern of all recommendations is the betterment of the community for all residents, present and future. Following the overall "vision" of what the Town wants to be in the future is essential. Adherence to this conviction, through the implementation of this plan and subsequent revisions, will lead the Town toward a better future.