

Comprehensive Plan Open Houses This Week!

This is your chance to find out what the draft Comprehensive Plan says about...

Traffic congestion? How does the plan propose reducing existing traffic congestion and prevent it from getting worse?

Strip commercial development? Why does the Plan say it's bad while recommending more of it in Prince Frederick, Huntingtown, Lusby, Solomons, Owings and possibly other areas?

Expansion of Prince Frederick? Why should Prince Frederick be so much bigger and how will it be better?

Mapped Residential areas adjacent to Town Centers? What densities will be allowed? What about water & sewer?

Population growth? How much more is planned and why? What will impacts be?

Development Outside Growth Areas? What kinds and where?

Dates and Locations

Monday, Nov. 13	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Calvert Marine Museum, 14200 Solomons Island Road South, Solomons
Tuesday, Nov. 14	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Department, 3170 West Ward Road, Dunkirk
Thursday, Nov. 16	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Calvert High School, 520 Fox Run Blvd., Prince Frederick

This is your county and your future – Be involved and informed

Traffic Congestion

As currently drafted, the new Comprehensive Plan could create the worst traffic backups this county has ever seen. The worst traffic congestion will begin in Prince Frederick.

Previous Plans have called for controlled growth along with completion of the “loop road” around Prince Frederick.

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan noted that *“The (road) projects in Prince Frederick will improve conditions for the future, provided that County growth does not significantly exceed 37,000 dwelling units.”*

The western side of the loop road (Prince Frederick Boulevard) is almost completed and the State Highway Administration (SHA) has been widening Route 4 to six lanes. However, there are no current plans to complete the eastern side of the loop road, known as Chesapeake Boulevard, and no overpasses are planned by SHA in Prince Frederick. The underpass was originally in the SHA plans but was removed. Without the completion of all planned road improvements, traffic is backing up two miles during most work-days on south-bound Maryland 4.



Traffic Congestion

Meanwhile, the Commissioners have already increased residential zoning density in Prince Frederick (along with reducing setbacks from the roads and increasing heights to 6 stories). In addition, the new Comprehensive Plan calls for dramatically expanding the Prince Frederick town center, and other town centers, and has deleted the “buildout” provisions that would have kept the number of dwelling units to no more than 37,000 (total for the County). However, the County has not conducted new traffic studies to assess the impact of that new development.

In a letter to SHA in February 2017 regarding Route 2/4, the Commissioners noted that *“It is imperative that its function be improved as this route is the only north/south arterial highway in Calvert County and serves more than 50,000 vehicles per day, projected to increase to 83,500 by 2030.”* Mere road widening through Prince Frederick, which is currently under design, will not fix the problem. In fact, a 2013 SHA traffic study predicted that all major intersections through Prince Frederick would fail, even with the planned widening of Route 4 and completion of Chesapeake Blvd.

Increasing residential growth capacity without properly addressing road capacity is irresponsible and the Planning Commission should address this problem before approving the Plan. Otherwise, we all will see our quality of life suffer.

***What improvements to our roads are proposed to accommodate the new growth called for in the new Plan?
How will these improvements be paid for? Will road improvements be made prior to the new development?***

Building similar in size & setback to new regs allowed at Armory Square.



Strip Commercial Development – Here's just 1 example of what's proposed:



Have you noticed how Calvert County has very few of these strip commercial centers outside the Town Centers?

That's because, beginning in 1983 when Town Centers were adopted, this type of development was prohibited. (Note: This property was zoned commercial and retained its zoning after 1983).

Also since that time, Comprehensive Plans have prohibited expansion of minor Town Centers (Owings, Huntingtown and St. Leonard) from expanding across Route 4 for the express purpose of avoiding additional Strip Commercial Development.

Strip Commercial Development

The new Plan contains the following: *“Objective 3: Avoid the potential for strip commercial development along highways. Do not permit additional commercial and retail development along highways outside Town Centers. Do not allow commercial and retail uses to have direct access onto MD 2/4 in Huntingtown, St. Leonard, or Lusby.”*

(Pg. 4-24,25)

Read the next few slides and ask whether the expansion of the Huntingtown Village across Route 2/4 will meet these objectives.



Huntingtown Nursery Property – 5.63 acres

Now picture this property, the location of the vacant nursery, which is proposed to be added to the Huntingtown Village. It's over twice the size of the Huntingtown North shopping center property. This property can continue to operate as a nursery even if not included in the Village, or can be converted to a higher-intensity commercial use (with direct access to Route 2/4) if it is included.

Will it look like part of the Village? Or another Strip Commercial Development?

Will it make the Huntingtown Village “walkable”? What impact will it have on traffic?

Strip Commercial Development



This residential property is also being added to the Huntingtown Village because it's located between Huntingtown High and Cox Road. It can remain residential if not included in the Village, or can be converted to commercial if it is included.

Will it look like part of the Village? Or another Strip Commercial Development?

Will it make the Huntingtown Village "walkable"? What impact will it have on traffic?

Strip Commercial Development



Proposed Church Property – 7.24 acres

A church is proposed on this vacant property. It is also being added to the Huntingtown Village. Churches can be constructed just about anywhere in the County without having to be in a Town center or Village, but there would be nothing stopping this property from being converted to commercial if it is included in the Huntingtown Village.

Will it look like part of the Village? Or another Strip Commercial Development?

Will it make the Huntingtown Village “walkable”? What impact will it have on traffic?

Expansion of Prince Frederick Town Center

A huge expansion is proposed for Prince Frederick. The Plan claims it will make Prince Frederick more “vibrant” and attractive to millennials and senior citizens. We need to know how that can be accomplished – particularly given recent steps to weaken architectural standards and sign design standards and the fact that the Plan includes no statements about requiring attractive development. **Who will want to live there?**

Many citizens participated in a 3-day Charrette in 2013. It was to be the first step in updating the Prince Frederick Master Plan, but the process came to a halt shortly afterward.

The next slides compare what was recommended as a result of the Charrette and what is proposed in the new Plan, which purports to be the same. You be the judge.



New Comp Plan excerpt: “Prince Frederick could support the highest-level intensity of development for a Town Center. At a charrette for Prince Frederick, citizens and county staff worked together to develop future growth scenarios that proposed expanded boundaries, improvements to the transportation network, and options for future land use. This effort should be completed and a new Master Plan for Prince Frederick should be adopted.” (Pg. 4-18)

Expansion of Prince Frederick Town Center

Here is an excerpt from “Prince Frederick Charrette Key Policy Recommendations” presented to the Commissioners by the Consultants on September 17, 2013

<http://www.co.cal.md.us/documentcenter/view/4306>

“Town Center boundaries — The Lawrence Group (TLG) recommendation — Expand the Town Center boundary by adding land to the northeast and west and subtracting land from the southwest.”

Town Center Boundaries

- TLG Recommendation: Expand the Town Center
 - Add land to the northeast and west
 - Subtract land from the southwest
- Net gain 529 acres, ~ 30% increase

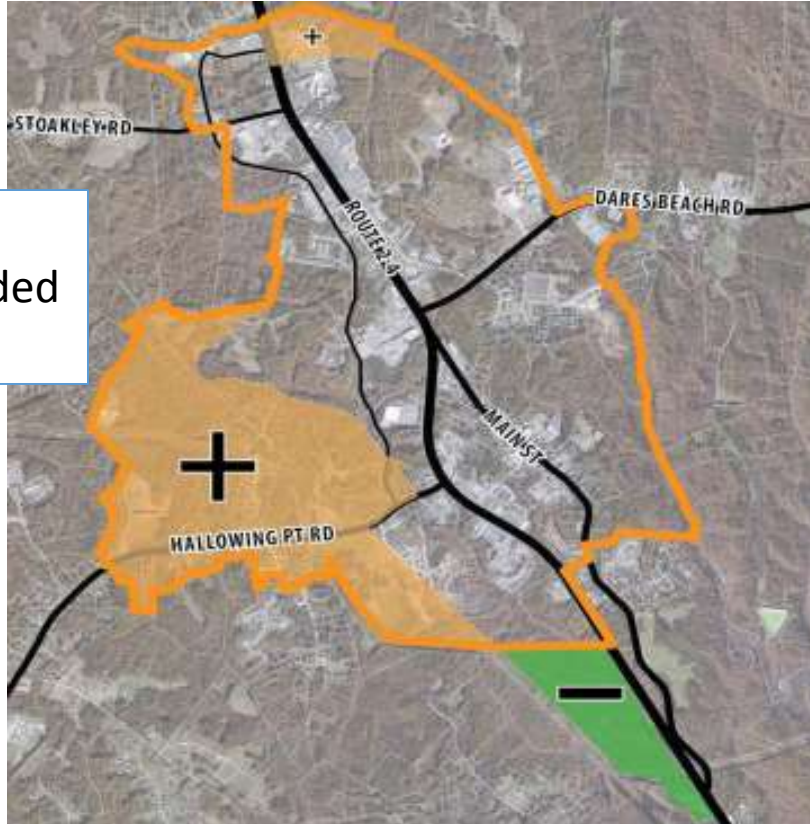


Town Center Boundaries

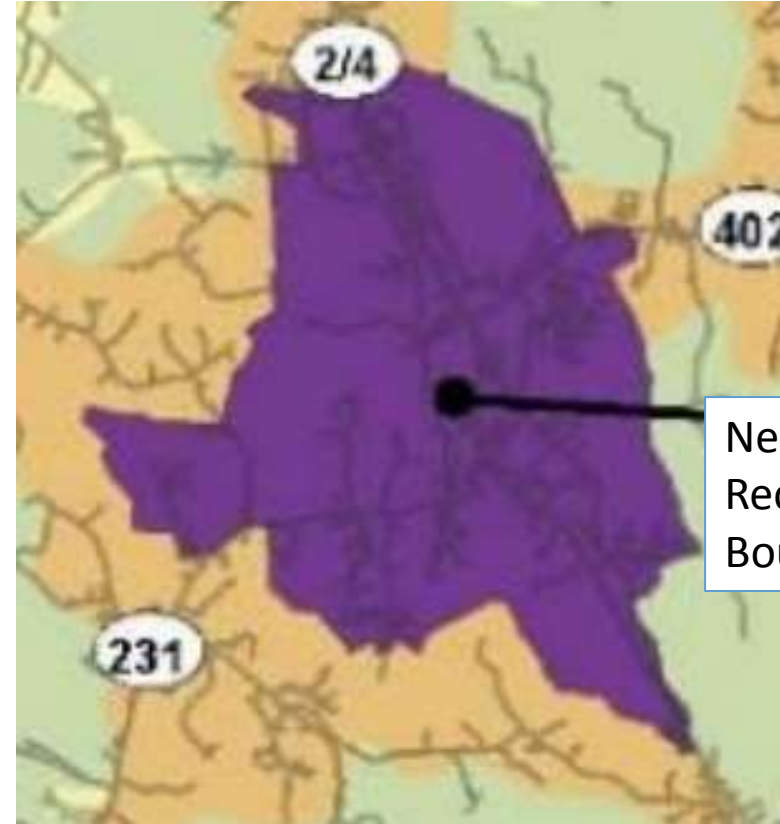
- West area – would add College of Southern Maryland and Barstow Elementary – activity centers
- Northeast – would add Calvert Memorial Hospital-owned property
- Southwest – would remove land with environmental constraints

Expansion of Prince Frederick Town Center

Charrette
Recommended
Boundaries



New Comp Plan
Recommended
Boundaries



It's very easy to see that the boundaries proposed by the new Comp Plan (on right) extend much more on the west side of Route 2/4 than what was proposed by the Charrette. In addition, the area on the southwest side of the TC is not proposed for elimination, as proposed by the Charrette (it actually appears wider than recommended).

Questions: Why the discrepancies? How many more acres (in addition to the 529 acres recommended by the Charrette) are proposed to be included? What will this area be used for? If residential, what will the density be?

Population Growth – Why more, how much more and where?

The current Comprehensive Plan contains a section that dictates the “buildout” of Calvert County:

“Soon after the adoption of the 1997 Plan, the Planning Commission conducted a thorough analysis of the costs and benefits of reducing buildout. More than 20 different buildout reduction options were developed for public review and comment and a program to reduce buildout to 37,000 households was adopted in March 1999.” (Pg. 3)

The new Comprehensive Plan has deleted all references to maintaining the adopted buildout provisions and only includes a “Current Capacity Analysis” based on current zoning regulations (pages 4-11 and 4-12).

The new Plan contains “mixed messages” about how much more density/population is proposed. Throughout the new Plan, it says growth should be directed toward the “Growth Areas” defined as the Town Centers, Villages, and the new Residential areas adjacent to the TCs, but nowhere does it say **how much growth**.

In addition to not knowing how much land has been added to the Town Centers, so many questions remain unanswered about proposed population growth.

How will it impact our schools? How will our roads be able to handle increased population when they are already failing? What about sewer capacity? How much will the County need to spend of our tax dollars to pay for this infrastructure?



Growth Areas proposed – too many unknowns

Town Centers Proposed Residential Density				Mapped Residential Areas Adjacent to Town Centers Proposed Residential Density			
	Base density*	Max. density with TDRs	Water and sewer		Base density*	Max. density with TDRs	Developer funded water and sewer permitted?
Dunkirk	3 units/acre	?	Not addressed		1 unit/acre	4 units/acre	yes
Prince Frederick	3 units/acre	?	Existing		1 unit/acre	4 units/acre	yes
Lusby	3 units/acre	?	Existing		1 unit/acre	4 units/acre	yes
Solomons	3 units/acre	?	Existing		1 unit/acre	4 units/acre	yes

*Base density is the number of dwelling units permitted without purchase of Transferable Development Rights

Growth Areas proposed - too many unknowns

Villages Proposed Residential Density			
	Base density*	Max. density with TDRs	Public Water and sewer
Owings (expanded boundary)	1 unit/acre	?	Allowed solely to address public health issues in older communities.
Huntingtown (expanded boundary)	1 unit/acre	?	Allowed solely to address public health issues in older communities.
St. Leonard	1 unit/acre	?	Allowed solely to address public health issues in older communities.
<p>*Base density is the number of dwelling units permitted without purchase of TDRs.</p> <p>** Draft plan isn't clear. Is a Residential District proposed around Villages?</p>			

Rural Areas

Rural Residential	
Base Density	Use of TDRS
?	?

Mapped Residential Areas

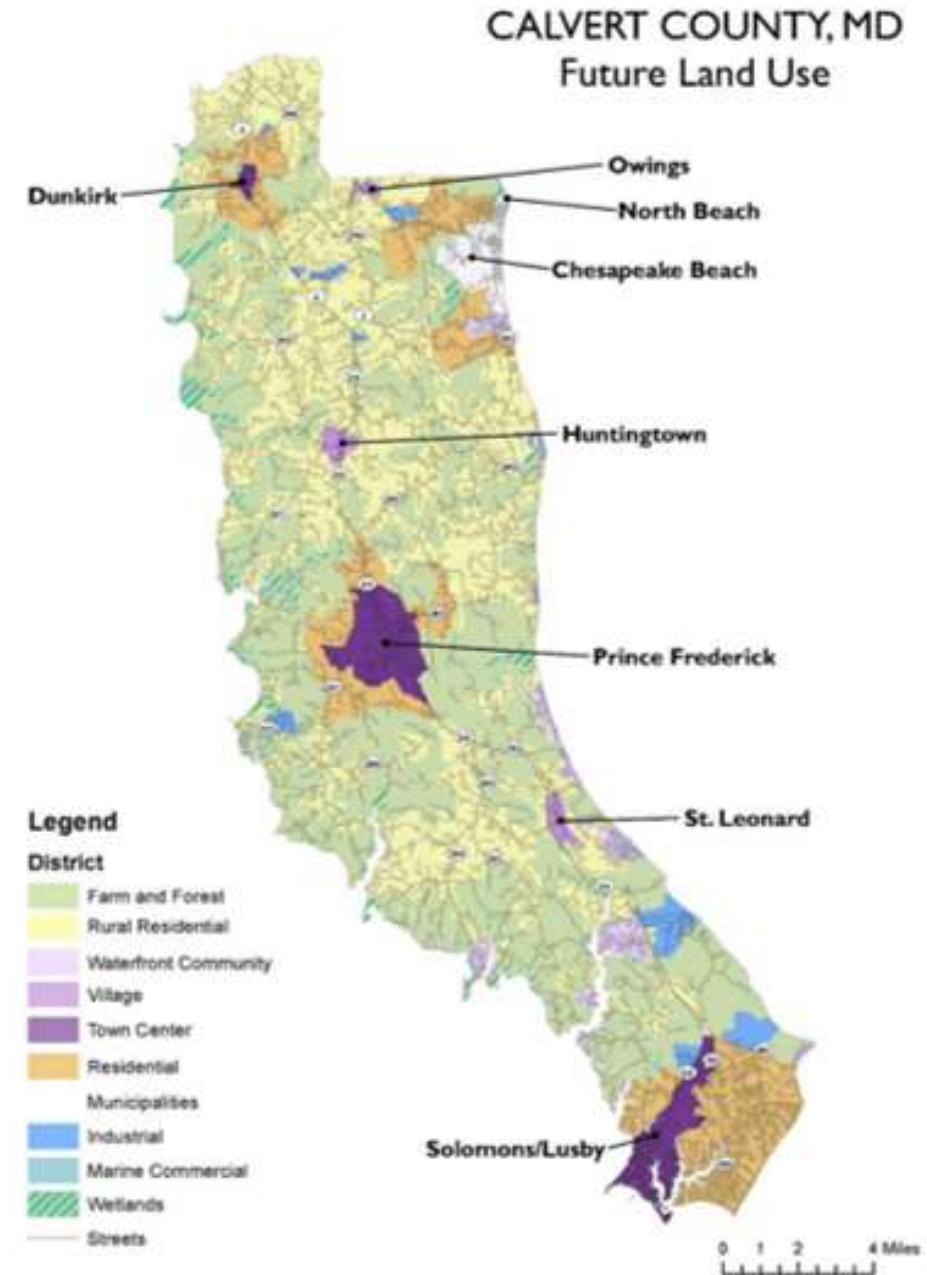
Every Town Center is surrounded by mapped Residential Areas (in orange), where increased density is proposed (in addition to within the TCs and Villages). Here are a few statements from the new Plan regarding these areas along with unanswered questions:

“The base permitted density in these areas is one dwelling unit per acre with densities permitted to increase to four dwelling units per acre using TDRs and the provision of developer-funded public water and sewer.” (Pg. 1-4) **Does this mean the densities can not increase without water and sewer?**

“Allow developer-funded extension of public water and sewer systems into the Residential Areas around Prince Frederick. Lusby and Solomons.” (Pg. 4-3) **Does “developer funded” mean the developer will pay for water and sewer and then the County will take over maintenance of it?**

“Sewerage Systems for Residential Areas around Town Centers: Developer-funded extensions of public sewer systems are permitted in the designated Residential areas surrounding Town Centers, as identified on the Future Land Use Plan Map.” (Pg. 9-15)

What types of housing units will be permitted in these areas?



Development Outside Growth Areas

What does this sentence mean? “Allow privately-funded community sewage treatment facilities to serve commercial, industrial and employment uses located outside Town Centers and Residential areas, consistent with economic development goals”. (Pg. 4-23)

Yet on Pg. 9-19, we have this contradictory statement: “Objective 1: Minimize new sewerage service areas outside of Town Centers. Continue the policy of restricting new sewerage service areas for multiple users to Priority Funding Areas (primarily TCs), except for connection to septic failure areas. In those cases, only connect to existing developed lots.”

Industrial – “These are manufacturing and employment centers that may include some larger-scale institutional and services uses.” (Pg. 1-4) ***What type of development is this foreseeing?***

Another confusing & disturbing statement about development outside the Town Centers: “While there is considerable support for directing growth into the Town Centers, there remains much concern that not all developed places in the county are or should be the same. There is a general sense that a single category of “Town Center” may not be sufficient to address the various intensities and types development at key locations in the county.” ***A “general sense” by whom? Developers? Do average citizens want more growth areas in addition to Town Centers, Villages, the new Residential areas, and Industrial? Could this be a reference to the “Hamlet” areas proposed early on but rejected by the citizens?***



Town Center & Village Appearance

Although the Vision that *"Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient places to live work & shop"* is still in the new Plan, all references to the appearance of our Town Centers have been removed.

The sign regulations (currently pending) remove all appearance code requirements from all Town Center Master Plans, replacing it with a "generic" watered-down set of appearance "guidelines". In addition, new regulations are being prepared to strip the Architectural Review Committees from most of their ability to dictate the appearance of developments.

On top of all of that, "chains" will be exempt from Architectural Review and can apply for an administrative variance (no public hearing required) to increase the height of their signs by up to 30%.

How will the above-referenced Vision be achieved without specific goals and objectives in the new Plan dictating what actions should be taken to achieve the Vision?



Conclusion

As demonstrated in this presentation, the 1st draft of the new Comprehensive Plan raises more questions than it answers. This draft is also incomplete because it does not include:

- The Implementation Chapter which is key in learning how goals and objectives will be achieved, by whom, and at what cost to tax payers.
- A “sustainability” element, which will explain how the County will continue to sustain its high quality of life, balanced budget, healthy environment, etc.
- Comments from agencies who will be responsible for the implementation of the Plan.

Yet despite these deficiencies, the public is being asked to review the Plan and submit comments by December 8th, with no opportunity to review and comment on subsequent drafts until the Public Hearing sometime this spring. And as many citizens have learned, questions are no longer permitted at Public Hearings.

In the meantime, the Commissioners continue to change the zoning regulations concerning signs, appearance in the Town Centers and, most recently, elimination of the provisions of the Adequate Public Facilities regulations which control how crowded our schools are.

This presentation was created by Keep Calvert Country. If you have questions after reading this and fail to get your answers at the upcoming open houses, please feel free to email us at keepcalvertcountry@gmail.com.

Finally, the Dept. of Planning & Zoning has agreed to meet with citizens on **Thursday, November 30th from 6-8 p.m.** in the Courthouse Square hearing room (205 Main Street, Prince Frederick). The primary topic will be the new Comprehensive Plan, and all are welcome to attend.