

CHAPTER 10: IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

Plan implementation is a critical component in comprehensive planning and the one most often overlooked. It is the opportunity to set an action agenda for accomplishing the goals and policy recommendations established in the plan. It is also an opportunity to prioritize items that must and can be accomplished immediately, compared with longer range items that require additional time, expense or effort. Prior chapters focus upon recommending policies needed to guide the community along the path considered most desirable. The Implementation element provides the tools needed to get there.



Inner West Street

Article 66B, Land Use, Section 3.05 (vii) requires that a comprehensive plan “shall contain the planning commission’s recommendation for land development regulations to implement the plan and which encourages the following:

1. Streamlined review of applications for development, including permit review and subdivision plat review within the areas designated for growth in the plan;
2. The use of flexible development regulations to promote innovative and cost-saving site design and protect the environment; and
3. Economic development in areas designated for growth in the plan through the use of innovative techniques.”



Methods and Responsibility for Implementation

The Annapolis Comprehensive Plan is a City policy document. The primary means of implementation include:

- ▶ **Incorporation of policy recommendations into daily decisions** guiding development, redevelopment, preservation, infrastructure, transportation, economic development, growth and a myriad of other issues. Many of the policies cited in the Comprehensive Plan are designed to assist in site design as well as approval of plats and permits. Consideration should be given to incorporating policies into checklists or other review materials to ensure that they are utilized when and where appropriate.
- ▶ **Amendment of current land development regulations** to ensure a quality character of development that reflects the community's vision. The current zoning ordinance has the tools in place to address a number of the policies recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. Changes to Zoning Code language and maps may be indicated to facilitate the land use and character changes envisioned for the four opportunity areas identified in Ch. 3 – *Land Use & Economic Development*. Changes to existing zoning controls in the opportunity areas will be undertaken as part of the more detailed area planning that will be done for each opportunity area. Alternative development regulation techniques (described below) may also be explored to better accommodate recommendations about community character and environmental sustainability, as well as the flexibility cited in Article 66B, Land Use.
- ▶ **Changes to legislation and state actions.** Various recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan are best met through legislative action. For example, transportation recommendations addressing rail links to Baltimore and Washington D.C. could be emboldened by changes in transportation funding.
- ▶ **The Capital Improvement Program (CIP)** is the financially constrained document used to implement recommendations from this and other adopted plans. Coordination with the CIP will allow for construction of improvements in an order that will accommodate the most pressing needs of the Comprehensive Plan. The multi-year plan identifying capital projects for street infrastructure; water, wastewater, and drainage improvements; park, trail and recreation facility provisions; and other public buildings and municipal services is not only a critical link to the timing and funding of projects, it is also a recognition of the need for expanded intergovernmental coordination. Capital improvements must be coordinated with the objectives of this plan if the community is to meet its planning goals and serve as a catalyst in obtaining the desired future community character. Therefore this Plan recommends a policy-based capital improvements program. In executing its statutory duty to review the City's CIP and to determine its compatibility with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission would benefit from clearer guidance. Capital improvements therefore should be drawn from this Comprehensive Plan and be specifically related to the policies set forth herein.
- ▶ **Identification and implementation of special projects, programs, and initiatives** will support organizational, programmatic, and/or developmental objectives. These may include further studies, detailed area plans (individual neighborhoods or special districts), or initiating or expanding upon key City programs.

Techniques for Addressing Development Regulations

Annapolis' development regulations follow the traditional Euclidean system of zoning that emphasizes the appropriateness and compatibility of land uses. In certain areas, Annapolis has successfully implemented overlay districts that address character and provide incentives for enhanced design features.

Alternative development regulation techniques that the City could consider to implement the Land Use recommendations in this plan include:

- ▶ Continue to rely on hybrid techniques such as overlay districts and incentives within the context of the existing code. City staff has become increasingly adept at using these techniques to better address character, as seen in the Eastport Gateway Conservation Overlay District. Consideration will be given to creating overlay districts that address the opportunity areas noted in Chapter 3 - *Land Use & Economic Development*. A serious examination of maximum densities should occur that will allow for improved success with incentives and additional incentives should be added to address highly desirable outcomes such as increased green space and pervious surface.

- ▶ The City could create special districts in strategic locations and, within those special districts, it could utilize a set of standards that follow one of the three character based codes – Composite Zoning, Performance Zoning and Form Based Codes (described in Appendix D). In this manner, the community can experiment with the concept of a character based system before making a communitywide adjustment. Other



Maryland Avenue Fall Festival

communities, for example, have adopted a Form Based Code in areas of anticipated new growth or redevelopment while maintaining the Euclidean ordinance for the remainder to the community. As in the previous recommendation, the opportunity areas established in Chapter 3 offer the most select locations for use of special districts.

- ▶ The City will continue to assure adequate public facilities via its Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

Implementation Strategies



Boats at City Dock

Figure 10.1 lists key strategies for implementation, as derived from the content and policy recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan. These strategies highlight the steps to be taken by the City, often in coordination with other jurisdictions, organizations, or agencies. This table is intended as a quick reference tool. It is designed to be kept up-to-date and used on an annual basis as part of the regular review process as well as an assessment of progress toward achieving

the goals of the plan. In this way, this table may be used on an ongoing basis and provided to the City Council to keep them apprised of the progress of implementation.

Plan Administration

The City will maintain a commitment to the ongoing, successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The City's management and staff, together with its boards and commissions have essential roles in implementing the plan and, thus, ensuring its success.

Role Definition

The Mayor and City Council will assume the lead role in implementing this plan. Their chief responsibility is to decide and establish the priorities and timeframes by which each action will be initiated and completed. They must manage the coordination among the various groups responsible for carrying out the plan's recommendations. Lastly, they are also responsible for the funding commitments required, whether it involves capital outlay, budget for expanded services, additional staffing, further studies, or programmatic or procedural changes.

The hierarchy and roles of implementation are as follows:

City Council

- ▶ Establishes overall action priorities and timeframes by which each action of the plan will be initiated and completed.
- ▶ Considers and sets the requisite funding commitments.
- ▶ Offers final approval of projects/activities and associated costs during the budget process.
- ▶ Provides direction to the Planning Commission and City staff.

Planning Commission

- ▶ Recommends to City Council an annual program of actions to be implemented, including guidance as to the timeframes and priorities.
- ▶ Prepares an Annual Progress Report for submittal and presentation to the Mayor and City Council.
- ▶ Ensures decisions and recommendations presented to the City Council are consistent with the plan's policies, objectives, and recommendations. This relates particularly to decisions for subdivision approval, site plan review, zone change requests, ordinance amendments, and growth.
- ▶ Review and add conditions to city funded projects for compliance with the requirements of the comprehensive plan.

City Departments

- ▶ City departments are responsible for administering this plan as it relates to their function within the organization. Many departments were involved in the plan development process and are, therefore, familiar with its content and outcomes.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Community leaders acknowledge that many issues related to character, environment and impacts of growth are regional, rather than local, in nature. Watersheds and other ecosystems, economic conditions, community character, transportation patterns, housing, and the effects of growth and change are issues that cross the boundaries of the community. They impact not only Annapolis, but adjacent areas of the Annapolis Neck Peninsula, Anne Arundel County, and the larger region. As a result, the economic, cultural and physical health of Annapolis is partly reliant upon the County, meaning that the success of one is largely dependent on and, thus, responsible for the success of the other. In addition, cooperation is now more important than ever due to increasing service demands and limited resources. Coordinating among entities allows for more efficient service provision.



Plan Amendment

In accordance with Article 66B, Land Use, Section 3.05(b)(2), the Comprehensive Plan will be examined at least once every six years to ensure that it remains relevant. Shifts in political, economic, physical, and social conditions, and other unforeseen circumstances will influence the priorities of the community. As Annapolis continues to mature and evolve new issues will emerge while others may no longer be relevant. Some action statements may become less practical while other plausible solutions will arise.

Annual Progress Report

A progress report should be prepared annually by the Planning Commission, with the assistance of the Planning & Zoning Department, and presented to the Mayor and City Council. This ensures that the plan is regularly reviewed and modifications are identified. Ongoing monitoring of plan consistency with the City's ordinances must be part of this effort.

To inform the Annual Progress Report, data to illuminate the following Plan topics will be assembled and tracked annually:

- Population growth and dynamics of that growth
- Residential and commercial building trends
- Economic indicators
- Indicators of progress toward transportation goals, environmental goals, and housing goals
- Expansion of municipal boundaries and areas served by City sewer and/or water infrastructure

The Annual Progress Report should include:

- ▶ Significant actions and accomplishments during the past year including the status of implementation for each programmed task.
- ▶ Implementation constraints including those encountered in administering the plan and its policies.
- ▶ Proposed amendments that have come forward during the course of the year, which may include revisions to plan maps, or other recommendations, policies, or text changes.
- ▶ Recommendations for needed actions, programs, and procedures to be developed and implemented in the forthcoming year, including a recommendation of projects to be included in the CIP, programs and initiatives to be funded, and priority coordination needs with public and private implementation partners.
- ▶ Guiding questions to help evaluate annual progress should refer back to the three main ideas that shaped the development of the Plan.

Have actions and accomplishments furthered the goals of preserving and enhancing community character?

Are local business districts thriving and have City actions supported the maintenance of a vibrant economy?

What progress has been made towards promoting a "Green" Annapolis?

Six-Year Update/Evaluation and Appraisal Report

An evaluation and appraisal report will be prepared every six years. This report should be prepared by the Planning & Zoning Department, with input from various City departments, Planning Commission, and other boards and committees. The report involves evaluating the existing plan and assessing how successful it has been in implementing the vision and goals. The purpose is to identify the successes and shortcomings of the plan, look at what has changed, and make recommendations on how the plan should be modified in accordance with state requirements. The report should review baseline conditions and assumptions about trends and growth indicators, and it should evaluate implementation potential and/or obstacles related to any unmet goals and policy recommendations. The result of the evaluation report will be a revised comprehensive plan.

More specifically, the report should identify and evaluate the following:

1. Summary of plan amendments and major actions undertaken over the last six years.
2. Major issues in the community and how these issues have changed over time, particularly in regards to changes in items required by Article 66B, Land Use.
3. Changes in legislation that may impact the composition or content of the plan.
4. Changes in the assumptions, trends, and base studies including the following:
 - The rate at which redevelopment (or new development) is occurring relative to the projections put forward in the plan;
 - Shifts in demographics and other trends;
 - City-wide attitudes and whether changes necessitate amendments to the vision and goals; and,
 - Other changes in the political, social, economic, or environmental conditions that dictate a need for plan amendment.
5. Ability to continue to successfully implement the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
 - Individual statements or sections of the plan must be reviewed and rewritten to ensure that the plan provides sufficient information and direction to achieve the intended outcome.
 - Conflicts between goals and policies that have been discovered in the implementation and administration of the plan must be resolved.
 - The action agenda should be reviewed and major actions accomplished should be highlighted. Those not accomplished should be re-evaluated to ensure their relevancy and/or to revise them appropriately.
 - The timeframes for implementing the individual actions should be re-evaluated. Some actions may emerge as a higher priority given new or changed circumstances while others may become less important.

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- Based upon organizational, programmatic, and procedural factors, as well as the status of previously assigned tasks, the implementation task assignments must be reviewed and altered to ensure timely accomplishment.
- Changes in laws, procedures, and missions may impact the ability to achieve the goals. The plan review must assess these changes and their impacts on the success of implementation, leading to any suggested revisions in strategies or priorities.

The Action Agenda in Figure 10-1 lists the recommendations considered a priority within the first 3 years after Plan adoption. They are subject to budget, staffing, and other City management prerogatives and will be reviewed annually as part of the Annual Progress Report. Many of these must be implemented in concert with government or private sector partners.

Figure 10-1 Action Agenda 2009-2012

Action Item	Policy/Chapter Reference
Plans & Studies	
1 Outer West Street Sector Study	Chapter 3, Policy 1
2 West Annapolis Sector Study	Chapter 3, Policy 1
3 Bay Ridge Sector Study	Chapter 3, Policy 1
4 Forest Drive Sector Study	Chapter 3, Policy 1
5 City Dock Public Realm	Chapter 3, Policy 6
6 Regional Transit Initiatives	Chapter 4, Policy 3
7 Pedestrian Master Plan	Chapter 4, Policy 8
8 Climate Action Plan	Chapter 7, Policy 3
9 Sea Level Rise Strategy	Chapter 7, Policy 3
Programs	
10 Capital City Cultural Arts District	Chapter 3, Policy 9
11 Historic District Survey	Chapter 3, Policy 9
12 Transportation Demand Management Program	Chapter 4, Policy 1
13 "Complete Streets" and Local Street System Improvements	Chapter 4 Policy 6
14 Traffic Impact Study Regulations	Chapter 4, Policy 9
15 Bicycle Transportation and Trail Network Improvements	Chapter 6, Policy 2
16 Pollutant Loading Reduction	Chapter 7, Policy 1
17 Urban Tree Canopy Program	Chapter 7, Policy 1
18 Moderately Priced Dwelling Units Program: Density Bonuses	Chapter 8, Policy 1