

8. AREAS OF CRITICAL STATE CONCERN

8.1 Introduction

Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 3.05(a)(1)(vii) enables recommendations for the determination, identification, and designation of Areas of Critical State Concern. The Legislature also empowers the Maryland Office of Planning to promulgate guidelines for use by local governments in making critical area recommendations. Guidelines were published in the Maryland Register on January 7, 1976, preceding a time of extensive effort between the Maryland Office of Planning, other State agencies, local governments, and interest groups.

After an evaluation of the program in the late 1970's, the Maryland Office of Planning established the following definition of an Area of Critical State Concern:

"An Area of Critical State Concern is a specific geographic area of the State which, based on studies of physical, social, economic, and governmental conditions and trends, is demonstrated to be so unusual or significant to the State that the Secretary designates it for special management attention to assure the preservation, conservation, or utilization of its special values."

These designated areas are within four classes: 1) tidal wetlands, 2) non-tidal wetlands, 3) protection and enhancement of rail service, and 4) special areas.

8.2 Planning Considerations

To date, the State has not designated any land in the Manchester planning area as an Area of Critical State Concern. However, the County did make a recommendation to the State in the late 1970's to designate the corridor for relocated Maryland Route 30, the future Bypass.

This was promoted as a State concern because: 1) funds had not been allocated for the engineering and construction of the Bypass, 2) development along the corridor could preempt the facility and place increased demands on fiscal resources of the State, and 3) the State-maintained primary highway was being used for increasing intercounty and interstate travel.

Two decades later, these same concerns remain and are being addressed in part by the County's Bypass Protection Program and on-going studies of the Maryland State Highway Administration for the Manchester Bypass.