

CHAPTER 4

Plan Vision, Goals, and Format

Chapter 4 of this plan establishes the foundation upon which the functional elements of the plan are based. This chapter summarizes the citizen input process used to obtain opinions and direction from local residents. It also highlights the vision, goals, and scope of the plan while explaining the format for the remaining chapters.

A. Citizens' Vision for the Future of the Community

Summary of Visioning Session Results

On June 3, 5, and 10 of 1996, three visioning meetings were held in the Freedom area. A total of 180 citizens spent 22 to 3 hours in 13 work groups creating a vision statement for their community. The citizens worked through a series of exercises designed to help identify the Freedom area's assets and constraints. Participating citizens explained their wishes and wants for the community in the future, and a vision statement was developed based on their collective desires. The facilitators for each group recorded all of the comments and opinions of the citizen participants. The citizens used this exercise as a brainstorming session to formulate the vision statement. A more detailed list of ideas resulting from this exercise can be found at Appendix C.

The most common themes that surfaced during the visioning exercises dealt with a wide variety of issues. Many of those participating wanted future growth to be architecturally and aesthetically pleasing along with an overall planned and coordinated look free from overcrowding. Some called for a financially and fiscally responsible rate of growth, while others wanted no growth at all. Additional concerns pertained to issues such as providing a safe and protected community for all ages, maintaining and enhancing the area's natural beauty, and fostering cohesiveness and cooperation between the local government and the community.

In another exercise, participants identified assets and constraints of the Freedom area. They were prioritized as follows:

Assets:

Rural atmosphere and open space, farmland
Quality of schools and teachers is excellent
Low density development/single-family homes
Close to Baltimore/Washington and easy access to work destinations
The citizens in the area are caring and supportive of each other
Many civic organizations
Low crime rate - area is safe

Constraints:

Traffic congestion
Too much development and growth happening too fast
Schools not adequate for growth
Billboards and signs - too many and do not enhance area
Lack of tax base/economic development
Need more fire and police support
Zoning regulations



Citizens' Survey Results

As part of this update process, in May of 1996, the Planning Department mailed approximately 8,350 newsletters and surveys to property owners in the extended study area. This area was slightly larger than the area covered by the plan and was bordered by the Liberty Reservoir and Baltimore County on the east, Howard County and Patapsco River to the south, Woodbine Road to the west, and Morgan Run and Liberty Reservoir to the north. A total of 1,790 responses to the survey were received, which represents a 22 percent response rate. The survey was designed to explore the following issues:

- what people like and dislike about the Freedom area;
- people's vision for the future of their community;
- what facilities will enhance the community and help achieve the vision;
- what jobs and business opportunities should be created;
- means to further preserve and protect the natural environment; and
- how growth should be planned and accommodated.

The following information is a summary of some of the most significant results of the survey questions, which can be found at Appendix D. The results represent the percentage of people who responded to the survey.

Most respondents moved to or stayed in the Freedom area because of the surrounding open space (24%) and the affordability of homes (23%).

Participants were asked to indicate a preference for additional recreational facilities. Of those who answered, there seemed to be a slight favoring for an equestrian facility, golf course, and campgrounds.

58 percent strongly agreed that agriculture is still a viable business in this area and should be encouraged.

55 percent of respondents either strongly or mildly agreed that the area's schools were under-funded.

60 percent of respondents strongly agreed that the preservation of Freedom's physical environment is more important than economic and industrial development.

53 percent recorded a strong disagreement regarding the need for a greater variety of retail stores in the area.

54 percent either strongly or mildly agreed that the Freedom area needs to create a community core.

Mild or strong support for sidewalks and pedestrian corridors was reflected by 65 percent of respondents.

The three major community services respondents felt were in the **most** need for improvement or an increase were police, road maintenance, and library services, respectively.

Respondents felt that the additional services which needed to be improved were, in priority order, activities and facilities for children/teens; additional police/fire protection; adult education and senior center facilities; and recreational facilities.





60 percent of respondents indicated that they were **not** aware that Freedom was planned as a major growth area.

The average length of time that respondents have lived in the area was 17 years.

A total of 36 percent of residents worked in Baltimore and 44 percent in other locations such as Columbia and Rockville.

Most people commuted to work for 16 to 45 minutes.

73 percent of respondents had a total household income, before taxes, of more than \$50,000 per year.

A total of 53 percent of those responding to the survey completed college.

Most respondents (35%) fit into the professional category when describing their usual occupation.

The information gathered and analyzed from this survey was important in determining types of facilities desired by the residents in the community and the needs of the population. Further analysis of the changing conditions in the area regarding land use, population trends, and transportation facilities formed an integral part of the Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan.

B. Sacred Places Workshop

The Sacred Places concept was first introduced by Mr. Randy Hester 15 years ago, with the first workshop held in Manteo, North Carolina. The Sacred Places concept centers on the benefits of sustainable community development. It stresses the importance of citizens and planners working together to inventory quality of place items and to use the resulting inventory as a guide for future development.

A Sacred Places workshop was held for the Freedom area on October 17 and 18, 1997, at the Springfield Hospital employees' cafeteria. An average of 40 people attended the workshop on each of the two days. A bus tour was held on October 17 to give the participants an overall look at the Freedom area. Mr. Neal Payton, an architect from the firm of CHK Architects in Silver Spring, made a presentation that allowed the citizens to accomplish the following goals:

1. Enable citizens to understand the relationship between the physical form of neighborhoods and the sense of "place" that they experience.
2. Enable citizens to understand the differences between contemporary zoning and traffic engineering practice with previous traditions that allowed for the development of towns like Westminster, Sykesville, or Mount Airy.
3. Encourage a broader discussion on neighborhood design from one that focuses on density and land use alone to one focused on envisioning the kind of community or neighborhood sought by citizens and creating the zoning that allows the county to get there.
4. Encourage the adaptation of the concept of "living streets" and "livable communities" into the discussion of growth and the comprehensive plan.



His presentation for the Freedom area focused on a community center and having a definite boundary for the planning area to which the citizens can relate. In all, he encouraged citizens to understand the relationship between the physical form of neighborhoods, the concept of “livable streets” and “livable communities”, and the town center concept.

At the break out session on the October 17, the participants came up with plans for the Freedom area, including a town center and the naming and preservation of numerous “Sacred Places”. Although everyone present was not of the same opinion, the majority seemed to agree on the need for a town center. Suggestions for locating the Freedom area “town center” ranged from the Springfield Hospital, the library, the existing mall and adjacent vacant parcels, and the land at the intersection of MD 32 and MD 26.

On October 18, the citizens from Union County, Pennsylvania, explained the Sacred Places Workshop that was held in their community. The presentation included a handout with information on cost of community services for six towns in Union County. The afternoon was devoted to the actual Sacred Places identification, wherein participants broke out into different groups to brainstorm and identify Sacred Places within the Freedom CPA. After this, 2 to 3 people went out in the field to take pictures while the remaining members incorporated the identified “Sacred Places” onto maps with colored dots and markers.

The following is a partial list of Sacred Places in the Freedom area that were identified by the participants:

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| Wesley Freedom Methodist Church | Piney Run Park | Sykesville Fire Department |
| sections of Mineral Hill Road - scenic vistas | Eldersburg Library | trees along Liberty Road |
| Liberty Reservoir (Watershed Area) | Copper Mine | Sykesville Train Station |
| Main Street in Sykesville | Patapsco Park | Carrolltowne Mall |
| natural spring located off of Arrington Road | Harvest Inn | vistas along Arrington Road |
| 100-year old holly tree in Sykesville | Henryton Hospital | Lyons Café |
| boat dock off of Liberty Reservoir | Millard Cooper Park | Patapsco Park - green buffer |
| St. Paul's United Methodist Church | Patapsco River Tunnel | Springfield Hospital Center |
| scenic sections off of Liberty Road | Warfield Complex | |

C. Eight Visions of the 1992 Planning Act

The Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 requires all jurisdictions within the state that exercise planning and zoning power to adopt and implement eight visions contained in the Act and codified at ' 3.06(b), Article 66B, Annotated Code of Maryland. The eight visions are a set of guiding principles which describe priorities for growth and resource conservation. The visions which follow, as stated in the Act, are hereby incorporated into the plan:

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive areas are protected;



3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
5. Conservation resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced;
6. To ensure the achievement of 1 through 5 above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;
7. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur; and
8. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions

Carroll County accommodates its growth and protects its agriculture zone by directing its most intensive development into nine community planning areas, one of which is the Freedom area. This concentration of growth addresses visions one and three. Visions two, four, and five are addressed in Chapter 8 of this document under the environmental resources chapter. The environmental element identifies which local resources are protected and how. One of the goals of the county as established in this plan is to encourage responsible economic development opportunities by directing commercial and industrial growth into appropriate areas, as required in vision six. A “fast-track” review process is in place, as well as other streamlined review procedures, to facilitate a reasonable regulatory process. The county also adopted a “Concurrency Management Ordinance” that ensures that development can move forward only when the public facilities are in place or are imminent. This innovative approach to the use of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), in addition to the continued requirement that costs associated with development be borne by the developer, addresses visions seven and eight.

D. Carroll County’s Vision and Goals

Through the process of developing a countywide master plan, the work teams, representing each municipality and many other diverse interests, supported the following vision statement for the county.

Carroll County offers a safe environment in which all its citizens may reside, work, shop, learn, and play. The rural character of our county is preserved through measures that protect our natural and cultural resources, minimize residential sprawl, and save farmland. Carroll County is enriched by sustainable agriculture and agribusiness as well as retention and recruitment of responsible, productive business and industry that offer family-wage jobs and employ the existing skilled workforce in the county. Adequate public facilities will be provided as Capital Improvement Program funding is available and concurrent with timed and phased development demand.



FREEDOM COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:
A COMMUNITY OF NEIGHBORHOODS



The goals developed to help achieve the county vision address multiple aspects of the countywide community. They are broad enough to be applicable countywide. All of the functional and small area (detailed) plans developed within the county strive to achieve and to be consistent with these overall goals.

Goal 1 Pursue policies and capital improvement expenditures that facilitate growth in designated growth areas, thereby protecting and conserving agricultural and environmental resource areas, preserving open space, and providing public facilities and services efficiently and cost effectively.

Goal 2 Preserve 100,000 acres of tillable agricultural land for the production of agricultural products and promotion of related agribusiness.

Goal 3 Protect, maintain, and restore, where practical, the environmental resources and natural ecosystems in the county by promoting land use practices that are in balance with, and minimize the effects on, the natural environment.

Goal 4 Promote a healthy economy and additional employment opportunities by: supporting the retention and expansion of existing businesses including agribusiness through sensible land use policies; providing land appropriately located and zoned for a variety of types and intensities of new economic development activities; and maintaining a balance between economic development and population growth through diversified industrial expansion that offers job opportunities and steady employment for skilled workers.

Goal 5 Phase and time development at a rate consistent with the county's ability to fund and expand community services and facilities through public and private resources.

Goal 6 Ensure adequate and appropriate Capital Improvement Program and operating budgets to implement the Master Plan and provide public facilities and services.

Goal 7 Provide a safe and functional transportation system which implements the land use plan while promoting access and network of roads, rail, transit, and non-motorized opportunities.

Goal 8 Promote development design that is in harmony with the surrounding built and natural environments, encourages community interaction, and in rural areas, preserves the county's rural character.

Goal 9 Preserve the county's historic, cultural, scenic, and architectural heritage.

Goal 10 Provide for a wide range of housing types, density, and affordability that is well maintained and will meet the needs of the entire community.





Goal 11 Provide a coordinated and comprehensive system of public and private parks, recreational facilities and programs, and open space that will meet the active and passive recreational needs of all citizens of the county and enhance community design, identity, and vitality.

Goal 12 Provide community educational opportunities, facilities, and resources, particularly libraries and schools, to meet the needs of a diverse population.

Goal 13 Ensure communication and coordination between the county and the municipalities on projects and issues of mutual concern and promote interjurisdictional cooperation in planning and land use decisions.

Goal 14 Involve the community in implementing the Master Plan.

E. Freedom Community's Vision and Goals

While the community comprehensive plans within Carroll County support and implement the County Master Plan, it is also recognized that each individual community holds different values and cherishes characteristics unique to that community. Each community has its own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. While these characteristics may also be found in other Carroll communities, each area may choose to address these issues in its own way and within its own set of priorities. Therefore, each community also develops its own vision statement.

The following vision statement represents what the participants in the various forms of community involvement (for this community plan update) felt to be the future that they preferred for their community. Future decisions and activities of the community should be consistent with this vision. Members of the community should strive to bring about the changes that will make this vision attainable.

To create a community that is functional and aesthetically pleasing, modern and sensitive to the environment, welcoming people of all ages and income levels as well as businesses and industries that want to locate in our community of neighborhoods.

In addition to developing a unique vision statement within the community, a set of goals was also developed that are distinct to the needs of the community and that are more specific than the countywide goals. The participants in this planning process identified the following priorities for the Freedom community.



Goal 1 To provide a plan that promotes growth management and community development

Goal 2 To provide a safe and functional transportation system

Goal 3 To provide adequate public facilities and services

Goal 4 To protect and enhance the environment

Goal 5 To enhance the character and uniqueness of the Freedom community

Goal 6 To encourage community involvement in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the Freedom community plan

Goal 7 To promote economic development

In order to accomplish these goals, the community should be aware of what they are, especially those people in decision-making positions. Decisions and policies should reflect the desire to accomplish these goals. Activities should not be pursued that contradict the goals. A community comprehensive plan does not merely involve elected and appointed officials. All community leaders and residents need to be committed to accomplishing the goals for the plan to be successful.

F. Plan Format

The Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan is essentially made up of two major parts. Chapters 1 through 4 provide an introduction to the Freedom community as well as form the foundation of the plan and establish its legal basis. These chapters also discuss the plan process, visions for the community as hoped for by its citizens and as expected by the state, and extensive demographic information.

The second of the two major parts of the plan consists of chapters that address the goals and recommendations for achieving the vision. Chapters 5 through 9 discuss each goal for the Freedom community separately and in detail, describing current conditions and recommendations for improvement for planning, preservation, and development issues in Freedom.

The plan contained herein also reviews and projects the estimated fiscal impacts of the recommendations throughout Chapters 5 through 9. Although the estimates are only projected costs, the fiscal impact discussion of financial support needed from the community to ensure that the implementation of the plan recommendations are realized is a vital component of the plan format.