

Introduction



1 • Introduction and Plan Principles

The Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham plan area includes three suburban communities located just east of the Capital Beltway and north of US 50. The development history of this area follows a typical suburban pattern: early settlements along rail and streetcar lines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with rapid residential and commercial growth following World War II and the construction of major highways, including the Capital Beltway in the early 1960s. The area’s proximity to Washington, D.C., and Baltimore made it an attractive location for commuters, both by car and rail. The land use patterns that resulted from rapid growth have brought a standard suburban form and character to the area, defined primarily by extensive neighborhoods of single-family homes and linear commercial development along major highway corridors.

In the late twentieth century, the long-term impacts of suburban development began to be felt in communities throughout America: extreme auto-dependence; traffic-choked arterial and collector streets; neighborhoods without safe and comfortable connections to commercial and employment areas; and formerly viable commercial and office centers abandoned in favor of newer developments on open land, eroding the local retail base. The Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham area has suffered many of these standard impacts, highlighting the need for a comprehensive planning effort that will address the effects of twentieth-century suburbanization and create a rich network of interconnected neighborhoods, open spaces, commercial and employment centers, and transportation options that will improve upon the existing physical fabric and make the plan area an even more pleasant and desirable community in the Washington, D.C., metro area.

Purpose of the Plan

Authorized by the Prince George’s County Council, a sector plan provides a comprehensive framework for decision-making in a plan area. The sector planning process involves a variety of stakeholders, including residents, property owners, and business owners, and allows them to articulate their values and aspirations for their community through extensive public discussion. The lengthy planning process gives community members and professional staff the opportunity to identify issues and highlight areas in which the Prince George’s County Planning Department and associated government agencies should coordinate efforts to preserve community character or work to shape needed change.

The framework established by a sector plan includes strategies and an implementation plan that will serve as a guidance document for local and state decision-makers. Plan strategies include short- and long-term recommendations that represent the desires of community stakeholders and the professional judgment of planning department staff. Implementation tools include a sectional map amendment (SMA), which is a rezoning of some area properties in order to implement the recommendations of a sector plan.

In May 2008 in Council Resolution CR 53-2008, the Prince George's County Council directed the Prince George's County Planning Department, a division of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), to prepare a sector plan and concurrent Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) for the Glenn Dale-Seabrook-Lanham area. The 2009 sector plan update is the fourth comprehensive plan for the area, following the 1964, 1977, and 1993 master plans. This plan updates the 1993 *Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Glenn Dale-Seabrook-Lanham and Vicinity* and also serves as a vehicle by which to implement the recommendations of the 2002 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan*.

Structure of the Plan

The 2009 sector plan update, while embracing many of the individual goals and objectives of the 1993 master plan, identifies and emphasizes the interrelationship between plan elements. Recommendations for one plan element may overlap with and complement those of another plan element. Also, recommendations within each plan element generally are prioritized so as to help decision-makers focus efforts on resolving the most important issues within the plan area.

Most plan element chapters open with sections that briefly identify key findings and challenges for each plan element, allowing the reader to quickly become oriented to the plan chapter. Chapters then begin with a discussion of existing conditions and conclude with a recommendations section that contains goals, policies, and strategies for each plan element. The 2009 sector plan update also includes a detailed implementation matrix that delineates the anticipated timeframe and responsible parties for each strategy.

The plan element chapters and implementation action plan are followed by the SMA, which contains text and graphics discussing zoning changes needed to implement plan recommendations. With plan approval, each zoning change contained within the SMA will constitute a legal amendment to the official Prince George's County Zoning Map.

Plan appendices contain more detailed information about existing conditions data and recommendations presented in many of the plan elements, along with specific information about the plan approval process.

Plan Area

The Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham area covers approximately 10.9 square miles of Planning Area 70 and includes portions of three councilmanic districts (see Maps 1 and 2). Located six miles northeast of the District of Columbia, the sector plan area lies in the central portion of Prince George’s County and is bordered by two major regional highways: the Capital Beltway to the west and US 50 (John Hanson Highway) to the south.

The plan area for the 2009 sector plan update differs from the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham plan area addressed in the 1993 master plan. The earlier plan included a 2.3-square-mile area east of Greenbelt Road (MD 193) that has since become East Glenn Dale, a separate sector plan area. A sector plan was prepared for East Glenn Dale in 2006. All recommendations made in this 2009 sector plan update pertain only to the area within the new planning boundaries for Glenn Dale, Seabrook, and Lanham. However, this sector planning effort has considered the 2006 *Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for East Glenn Dale Area* recommendations for portions of Planning Area 70.

Additional information about the sector plan area can be found in the Population, Housing, and Land Use Trends chapter (Chapter 3).

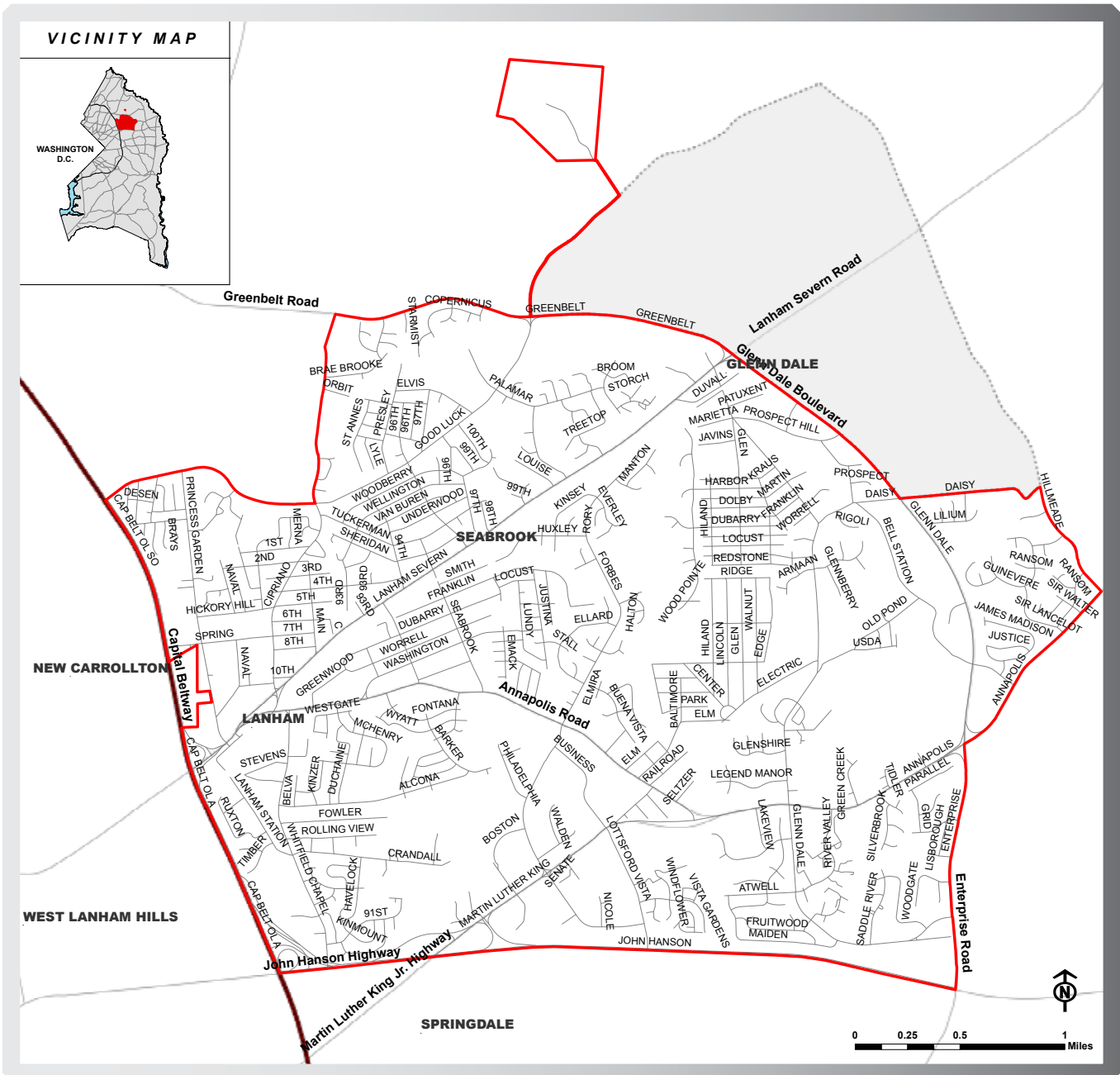
Relationship to Other Planning Studies and Legislation

1993 Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham and Vicinity

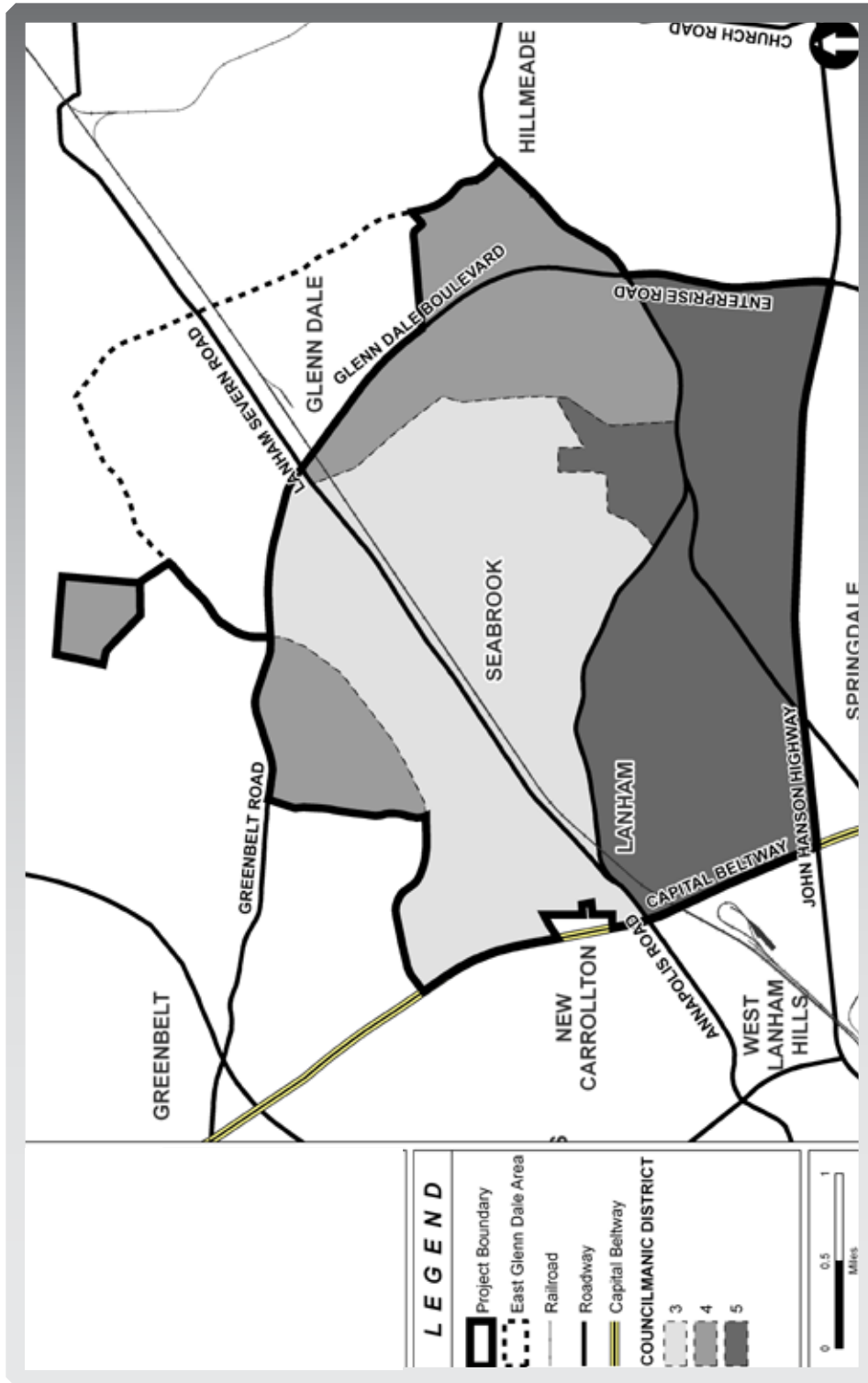
The 1993 *Approved Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham and Vicinity* acknowledged the plan area’s basic suburban character and focused on shaping future development to create community centers and interconnect land uses. Highlights of the 1993 plan are summarized in Table 1.

Many of the 1993 master plan elements contain a number of highly-specific recommendations and guidelines for properties, roads, and facilities. During the 16 intervening years, a number of notable recommendations have been implemented, including:

- The creation of the Folly Branch Stream Valley Park and trail
- The development of the Annapolis Road (MD 450) sidepath to Seabrook Road



Map 1: Sector Plan Area Boundary



Map 2: Boundaries of Councilmanic Districts

Table 1.
1993 Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham and Vicinity Master Plan
and SMA Key Recommendations

<i>Plan Element</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
Environmental Envelope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an open space network through park acquisition or dedication; subdivision control of floodplains, wetlands, and stream buffers; and tax credits for scenic easements • Improve stormwater management • Protect natural features through public/private partnerships, land banking, or purchase of development rights
Circulation and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadway improvements throughout the plan area • Improve bus service from employment areas to rail stations • Use shopping center parking lots for park-and-ride facilities • Improve pedestrian access to the MARC station
Living Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of densities and housing types • Ensure that infill development conforms to existing neighborhood character • Limit nonresidential expansion into neighborhoods and provide adequate buffering • Connect living areas to employment centers, public facilities, etc., through a trails network • Improve code enforcement
Commercial Areas and Activity Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrate commercial uses in activity centers that also include social/public activities and public spaces; reduce isolated commercial zoning • Create adequate buffers between commercial and adjacent residential areas
Employment Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain existing employment areas • Ensure accessibility by transit and encourage the use of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies
Public Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain all existing schools • Plan for future elementary schools at (1) southwest corner of Glenn Dale Boulevard (MD 193) and Annapolis Road (MD 450); (2) south side of Greenbelt Road west of Forbes Boulevard • Build a new library at Eastgate Shopping Center or adjacent to the proposed elementary school at Glenn Dale Boulevard (MD 193) and Annapolis Road (MD 450) • Build a new police station on MD 193 south of Daisy Lane

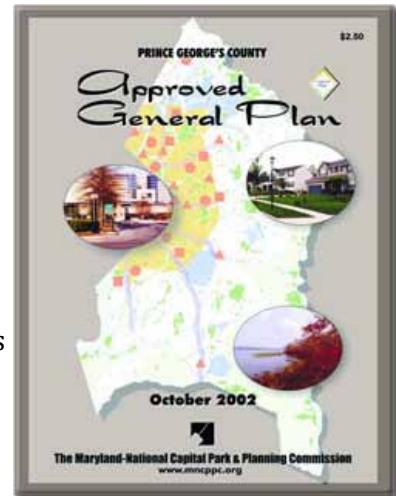
<i>Plan Element</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
Parks, Recreation, and Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a continuous system of trails for hiking, biking, and equestrian uses: use shared lanes with highways, stream valley parks, utility rights-of-way; and plan for trails in new residential, commercial, and employment development • Acquire land for new parks • Acquire land for recreational uses along three major streams: Folly Branch, Lottsford Branch, and Bald Hill Branch • Ensure provision of parkland in conjunction with new development
Historic Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue surveys of historic resources in plan area • Provide financial incentives (public and private sectors) to encourage preservation of historic resources • Create neighborhood preservation organizations
Urban Design	<p><i>Residential</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that infill development complements the existing neighborhood pattern • Maintain the residential character of buildings converted to nonresidential uses • Provide landscape buffering between residential areas and incompatible uses • Line arterials and collectors with street trees • Provide sidewalks, trails, and bus shelters <p><i>Commercial</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage shared driveways to reduce curb cuts • Promote architectural compatibility within activity centers through comprehensive development plans • Encourage the provision of public open spaces • Screen parking lots and provide buffers between commercial and residential areas • Provide sidewalks and crosswalks <p><i>Employment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop large parcels under an employment park concept • Encourage the provision of public open spaces • Ensure compatible infill development • Screen parking

- Surveys of historic resources in the plan area, including Marietta and the former Glenn Dale Hospital
- Roadway improvements along Greenbelt Road (MD 193) and Annapolis Road (MD 450)

The 2009 sector planning process recognized that many of the issues and recommendations identified in 1993 are still valid today. Moreover, not only must a community-based vision be defined, but a prioritized implementation strategy or action plan must be advanced and actively pursued.

2002 Prince George's County Approved General Plan

The 2002 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan* instituted a new way to conceptualize development in the county. The county's land area was divided into three "policy tiers"—the Developed Tier, the Developing Tier, and the Rural Tier—and a number of "centers" and "corridors" in which development should be concentrated to take advantage of public investments in transportation facilities. Allowable land uses and proposed densities vary according to policy tier.



The sector plan area falls within the Developing Tier, which is located outside the Capital Beltway and contains the area's most recent suburban development. The General Plan's vision for Developing Tier areas involves "a pattern of low- to moderate-density suburban residential communities, distinct commercial Centers, and employment areas that are increasingly transit serviceable."¹ Table 2 identifies goals for the Developing Tier.

The General Plan's new centers and corridors designations replaced the 1993 master plan's activity center categories. The General Plan offers the following definitions:

- **Center:** *Areas which are appropriate for concentrations of medium to high intensity, mixed-use, and pedestrian-oriented development. The majority of the Centers have rail transit facilities . . . as the key feature.*²

1 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan* (2002), p. 36.

2 *Ibid*, p. 47.

Table 2.
2002 General Plan Developing Tier Goals

Maintain low- to moderate-density land uses (except in centers and corridors)
Develop compact, higher-intensity mixed uses in centers and corridors
Reinforce existing suburban residential neighborhoods
Reinforce planned commercial centers as community focal points
Develop compact, planned employment areas
Preserve and enhance environmentally sensitive areas
Increase utilization of transit
Balance the pace of development with the ability of the private sector to provide adequate transportation and public facilities
Encourage contiguous expansion of development where public facilities and services can be more efficiently provided

- **Corridor:** *The land within one-quarter mile of both sides of designated high-volume transportation facilities, such as arterial roads.³ . . . Development should occur at designated Corridor nodes and be planned as transit-oriented development.⁴*

In the General Plan, the Seabrook MARC station area is a future community center, which is the lowest-density type of center. Portions of Annapolis Road (MD 450) and Greenbelt Road (MD 193) are designated corridors.

The 2009 sector plan update reinforces the 2002 General Plan recommendations and explores the appropriate intensity and mix of uses for the Seabrook MARC station area and the portions of Annapolis and Greenbelt Roads designated as corridors. The sector plan update attempts to address the question of where future development is appropriate and what form it should take, along with considerations of needed infrastructure, including roadways, transit, trails, recreational amenities, and public facilities.

³ *Ibid*, p. 104.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 50.

1992 Maryland Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act

This legislation was enacted to encourage economic growth, limit sprawl development, and protect the state’s natural resources. It establishes consistent general land use policies to be locally implemented throughout Maryland. These policies are stated in the form of eight visions:

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 of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced.
6. To assure achievement of items one through five 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.
8. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

The eight visions are a set of guiding principles that describe how and where growth and development should occur. The act acknowledges that the comprehensive plans prepared by counties and municipalities are the best mechanism to establish priorities for growth and resource conservation. Once priorities are established, it is the state’s responsibility to support them.

1997 Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act

This act builds on the foundation of the eight visions adopted in the 1992 act, as amended. The act is nationally recognized as an effective means of evaluating and implementing statewide programs to guide growth and development.

The loss of open space, decline and abandonment of older communities, the cost of supporting an increasingly dispersed population, and the deteriorating health of the Chesapeake Bay led the Maryland General Assembly to enact the 1997 Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act. Smart Growth aims to limit sprawl and to give people the opportunity to live in a variety of healthy, safe communities to fit diverse, healthy lifestyle choices.

The legislative package collectively referred to as the Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth Initiative comprises five major components:

- Priority Funding Areas
- Rural legacy
- Live near your work
- Brownfields
- Job creation tax credits

A significant aspect of the initiative is the Smart Growth Area legislation requiring that state funding for projects in Maryland municipalities and other existing communities and industrial and planned growth areas designated by counties will receive priority funding over other projects. The cornerstone of Smart Growth, the establishment of priority funding areas, ensures that existing communities continue to provide a high quality of life for their residents.

An employer-assisted housing program, Live Near Your Work, uses state, local, and private resources to help people purchase homes near their place of employment. Live Near Your Work helps increase the rate of homeownership, introduces a mix of incomes into communities, and encourages people to use alternative modes of transportation for their daily commutes.

In an effort to encourage the clean-up and redevelopment of abandoned or underutilized properties with contamination or the perception of contamination, the Brownfields Voluntary Cleanup and Revitalization Program streamlines the clean-up process, offers developers and lenders certain limitations on liability, and provides economic incentives for redevelopment.

Originally passed in 1996, the Jobs Creation Tax Credit Act encourages mid-sized and small businesses to invest in priority funding areas by providing tax credits to targeted growth sector businesses.

Finally, the Rural Legacy program protects rural greenbelts and regions rich in natural and cultural resources from sprawl through the purchase of easements and development rights. Rural Legacy encourages jurisdictions and land trusts to develop land preservation plans and to work across jurisdictional boundaries.

In 2000, Maryland passed Smart Codes legislation that makes it easier to rehabilitate buildings, revitalize existing communities, and create new communities that emulate the characteristics of our most vibrant communities, providing guidelines for infill development and “smart neighborhoods.”

2009 Smart, Green, and Growing Legislation

This bill, which goes into effect on October 1, 2009, replaces the state's eight existing planning visions set forth in the 1992 and 1997 acts with 12 new visions in order to guide growth and development in Maryland. Local jurisdictions are required to include these visions in their comprehensive plan and implement them through the adoption of applicable zoning and subdivision ordinances and regulations. The Maryland growth, resource protection, and planning policy is the following:

1. **Quality of Life and Sustainability:** A high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment.
2. **Public Participation:** Citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals.
3. **Growth Areas:** Growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new center.
4. **Community Design:** Compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources.
5. **Infrastructure:** Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner.
6. **Transportation:** A well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers.
7. **Housing:** A range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes.
8. **Economic Development:** Economic development and natural resource-based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged.

- 9. **Environmental Protection:** Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources.
- 10. **Resource Conservation:** Waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved.
- 11. **Stewardship:** Government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection.
- 12. **Implementation:** Strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, state, and interstate levels to achieve these visions.

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) is required to prepare and publish a report on the statewide impacts of Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFO) on or before January 1st every two years; in order for the state to accomplish this, the bill requires local jurisdictions to submit a report to MDP every two years if an APFO results in a restriction in a priority funding area (PFA).

The bill authorizes local jurisdictions to establish transfer of development rights (TDR) programs within PFAs and to assist a local jurisdiction in the purchase of land for public facilities in PFAs. Proceeds from the sale of these development rights must be used for land acquisition and public facility construction in the PFA. A public facility includes recreational facilities, transportation facilities, transit-oriented development, and schools and educational facilities.

Plan Principles

The 2009 sector plan update emerged from an 11-month-long public participation process that included five community-wide meetings, nine community advisory group meetings, and meetings with various neighborhood associations (see Chapter 2). The issues, challenges, and opportunities identified in these meetings provide a foundation for the principles and policies that drive the 2009 sector plan update. Each major principle relates to a specific theme that arose in the public process, and its associated policies provide broad guidance for county decision-makers. Specific goals and recommendations can be found in the plan element chapters that follow.

As in other areas of Prince George's County, local decision-makers must balance the interests of the county as a whole, council districts, neighborhoods, and business and property owners. Planning for the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham area requires careful weighing of these competing interests, especially when addressing issues such as infrastructure improvements, transportation improvements, and provision of public facilities. Through implementation of the sector plan local decision-makers can ensure that the successful realization of particular goals does not impair the implementation of other goal strategies. Ideally, sector plan strategies will allow decision-makers to address many plan area issues simultaneously.

SECTOR PLAN PRINCIPLES

ESTABLISH A UNIQUE SENSE OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY.

- *Enhance commercial and employment areas through landscaping, streetscape elements, sidewalks, and pedestrian connections to nearby neighborhoods.*
- *Improve the appearance of arterial roads through shade tree plantings and green medians.*
- *Develop walkable, mixed-use centers at the Seabrook MARC station and Vista Gardens vicinity.*



CREATE ATTRACTIVE AND VITAL COMMERCIAL CENTERS THAT SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.



- *Promote convenience retail, restaurant, and service uses.*
- *Encourage improved landscaping, façade design, pedestrian connections, and outdoor dining opportunities as existing shopping centers refresh their properties.*
- *Limit future growth of auto-oriented commercial uses and strip retail.*
- *Seek opportunities to create new community gathering spaces for outdoor activities.*
- *Partner with local business associations for marketing campaigns and physical improvements.*

STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT NEIGHBORHOODS.

- *Create safe, comfortable, and attractive neighborhood streets through the use of green streetscape elements and continuous sidewalks.*
- *Discourage “cut-through” traffic in neighborhoods and reduce vehicle speed through traffic-calming devices.*
- *Ensure adequate buffering and screening between neighborhoods and incompatible uses.*



DEVELOP INTERCONNECTED TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR BETTER ACCESS, MOBILITY, AND HEALTH.

- *Continue to develop a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails that connect destinations within the plan area.*
- *Work with state and county agencies to improve bus service and MARC ridership in the plan area.*
- *Follow “complete streets” principles, which include consideration of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in all roadway construction and retrofitting projects.*



DEVELOP A NETWORK OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE THAT PROVIDES ENVIRONMENTAL AND RECREATIONAL BENEFITS.



- *Increase the percentage of urban tree canopy coverage.*
- *Expand the interconnected park system through new land acquisitions.*
- *Complete trail connections between local and regional open spaces and between open spaces, neighborhoods, and community destinations.*
- *Require stormwater filtration areas on public and private properties.*

PROTECT HISTORIC RESOURCES TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND COMMUNICATE THE AREA'S HERITAGE.

- *Recognize historic properties through regulatory and nonregulatory methods.*
- *Continue to survey and document the area's historic resources.*
- *Ensure that new development respects historic character.*
- *Promote public awareness of the cultural and economic benefits of local historic resources.*



ENSURE THE PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC FACILITIES TO SERVE EXISTING AND NEW DEVELOPMENT.



- *Revise public safety district service boundaries to improve response times.*
- *Construct new, state-of-the-art facilities for public safety operations and a branch library.*
- *Build new schools within and outside the plan area to reduce existing overcrowding and alleviate future growth pressures.*
- *Renovate or replace aging facilities.*
- *Seek efficiencies through colocation of public facilities.*

SUPPORT LAND USE POLICIES THAT PROMOTE A SUSTAINABLE, WALKABLE COMMUNITY.

- *Implement land use policies that support walkable centers of neighborhood-serving retail, services, and employment.*
- *Promote land use policies that increase residential densities at strategic locations to support public transportation.*
- *Encourage mixed-use, transit-oriented development at the Seabrook MARC station in the long term.*



Plan Approval

The Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham and vicinity sector plan and sectional map amendment received permission to print from the Planning Board on July 23, 2009. After this date, copies of the draft plan were printed and distributed to the public. The draft plan was also posted on the plan web page for further public review.

A joint public hearing is scheduled with the Planning Board and the District Council on October 6, 2009, to receive public comment on the preliminary plan. Adoption by the Planning Board and approval by the County Council is anticipated in spring 2010.

