



Worcester County Comprehensive Plan Update

COMMISSIONERS MEETING
OCTOBER 7, 2025

AGENDA

- Overview of the Comprehensive Plan
- Draft Community Facilities Element
- Draft Economic Development and Tourism Element
- Draft Transportation Element
- Questions
- Review Schedule

Overview of the Comprehensive Plan

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

- Establishes a Vision for the Future
- Includes goals, objectives and action items aligned with the Vision
- Guides decisions on land use, transportation, housing, economic development, environmental resources, historic preservation and other issues
- Fulfills State of Maryland requirements
- Developed for the Planning Commission through close coordination with Staff
- Recommended by the Planning Commission to the County Commissioners
- Adopted by the County Commissioners



Optimize productivity of **working landscapes**, including **farms** and **forests** and **fisheries**, and prioritize **development within population centers** that are in proximity to existing infrastructure and facilities.



Prioritize transportation networks that create **energy efficient, affordable** and **reliable access** to jobs, housing and services.



Enable a mix of **quality housing types** and **affordability** options to accommodate all who want to live in the state.



Allow for **adaptive reuse, mixed-use** and **context appropriate** new development that responds to changing markets and innovations.



Engage **all sectors of the community** in plan development to ensure **diverse voices** are heard and the needs of **underserved populations** are prioritized.



Integrate resiliency measures that will **minimize** the **impacts** of rapid and unexpected **natural- and human-caused threats** on communities.



Provide for **public spaces** that encourage **social interaction** and value **cultural, historical** and **natural resources**.



Protect and restore **sensitive ecological systems** and conserve **natural resources**, including forests, agricultural areas, and waterways.

Maryland's Planning Principles

In 2025, the Planning Principles Act ([SB 266](#)) replaced the 12 Planning Visions with the 8 Sustainable Growth Planning Principles. Effective October 1, 2025, [Land Use Article Section 1-201](#) requires a planning commission to implement the Principles through the comprehensive plan.

Draft Community Facilities Element

Community Facilities Goals and Objectives

The following goals have been identified for maintaining, improving, and providing additional community resources in Worcester County. These goals align with the new Sustainable Growth Planning Principles.

- Work with the State of Maryland to plan for future needs as the County grows, including emergency services, schools, and community facilities.
- Partner with Worcester County Public Schools for essential services and schools with sufficient services demanded by the County's communities.
- Look at opportunities to preserve and enhance the small-town character of the County through an increase in community and cultural activities.
- Provide adequate public services, including health, safety, social, recreational, and waste disposal services to facilitate the County's desired amount and pattern of growth.

Community Facilities Components



Government



Public Safety



Parks and Recreation



Educational Facilities



Library Facilities



Health Services

Draft Economic Development and Tourism Element

Economic Development and Tourism Goals and Objectives

A primary goal of economic development is to foster a resilient and inclusive economy by driving sustainable growth in tourism, small business, technology, agriculture, and light industry. In Worcester County, this includes preserving and celebrating the County's rural and coastal heritage while creating opportunities for year-round employment, innovation, and community well-being.

The following objectives have been identified as critical to the ongoing success of Worcester County and its residents. These are grouped into categories as they apply to the County's picture goals:

- Support Business Retention and Expansion (BRE)
- Foster Economic Growth and Employment Opportunities
- Encourage Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Drive Sustainable Growth in Tourism and Hospitality
- Create Opportunities for Engagement and Collaborative Development
- Invest in Community and Sustainability

Economic Development and Tourism Components

Economic Markets

Construction and Real Estate

Tourism and Hospitality

Industrial

Health Care

Agriculture

Commercial Services

Employment

Income and Poverty

Incentive Zones

Opportunity Zones

Enterprise Zones

Business and Industrial Property

Arts and Entertainment (A&E) District

Financial Resources and Incentives

Draft Transportation Element

Transportation Goals and Objectives

Worcester County, in cooperation with local, state, and federal entities, will provide for safe and efficient movement of people and goods by the various transportation modes with an acceptable level of congestion. The following goals will support the County in their pursuit of the most effective transportation planning possible.

- Support transportation infrastructure and future transportation needs.
- Improve safety, mobility, accessibility, and resiliency in the transportation network.

Transportation Components

Policies and Guidelines

Functional Classification

Maintenance

Traffic Volumes

Scenic Byway

Transit

Pedestrian Facilities

Water Transport

Railroads

Airports

County Priorities

Highway Needs Inventory

Transportation Studies and Projects

Transportation and Land Use

Questions

Review Schedule

