

**Open Work Session
Comprehensive Plan (Chapters 8 through 14)
August 2, 2016**

Mr. Jack Lenox, Director of Planning, Zoning and Community Development, and Mr. Keith Hall, Transportation and Long Range Planner, came before Council. Mr. Hall gave a quick overview of the information contained in Chapters 1 through 5 of the draft Comprehensive Plan that was previously discussed with Council. He then began his discussion on Chapters 8 through 14.

Chapter 8- Transportation

Mr. Hall said Chapter 8 covers the various modes of transportation in Wicomico County, including information on the highway network; recommendations on road improvements; near, mid and long-term improvements to support future growth and development. He said Council will find information related to the railroad system, air transportation, waterborne freight, transit system, bicycle and pedestrian safety, water trails, and scenic byways. Mr. Hall said when Council looks at the proposed roads that are being recommended, the new roads, are going to be necessary to support the projected future growth and development within Wicomico County, not only future but areas that are existing that are continuing to grow over the next 15 to 25 years. Mr. Hall explained that the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan are unfunded and are simply recommendations. As an example, he said in looking at the airport, one of the things that jumps to mind that he has heard over the years, is to realign Hobbs Road so there is direct access from the airport to US Route 50. He said, again, this is a recommendation that is unfunded that requires a study. However, if the County is going to go after a grant or any federal or state funding to offset the costs of the study, it is good to have it in an adopted plan. Mr. Hall continued, saying the County has to ensure that there are future areas, land use wise for the expansion of industrial growth to not only have a regional airport, a Norfolk Southern Rail line, but also the port of Salisbury. The bicycle and pedestrian amenities section is trying to create a regional network. They do not want bike paths that go nowhere or sidewalks stopping and then people just walking out into the roadway. Mr. Hall said when you look around the city, towns and county, you see these gaps and it is important the County makes an effort to try to correct the situation. When looking at waterborne freight and the port of Salisbury, the County needs to make sure that it has adequate locations for dredge material sites adding that dredging is performed by the Army Corps. of Engineers, but providing dredge spoil disposal sites is the host county's responsibility. Mr. Hall said the Comprehensive Plan does not indicate where they should go, but it is saying that is a priority. Mr. Cannon said, on page 8-2, it talks about encouraging the participation and cooperation of all interested and affected parties, but he did not see any mention of Tri-County Council, which he thinks should be included. Mr. Cannon said it also talks about exploring the possibility of the development of multimodal transportation and distribution complex, which would provide efficient transportation services to the entire region. He then said he thought the County already had that with Shore Transit. Mr. Hall said it is not only for Shore Transit, it is also for a distribution center, like what is down in Somerset County. Given that the County has a rail line, two US freeways, and waterborne access, if it could find a commodity that would work in this region that could come in by one mode of transportation, subsequently get offloaded, and then

use another mode of transportation to get to its final destination, that would be advantageous for the County competing economically. Mr. Hall said one example is Cato Oil. You have petroleum that is being barged in, which is waterborne freight that is being offloaded and then carried to its final destination via tractor trailer. Mr. Matt Holloway said for the waterborne freight, on page 8-17, the figure is from 2013, which is 939 short tons. He said he thinks the Army Core of Engineers requires 1,000 short tons in order for dredging to continue on the Wicomico River. Mr. Matt Holloway then asked if there are any updated figures that show the County has gone up to the 1,000 short tons. Mr. Hall said as of April this was the most up to date figure released by the Army Corps. of Engineers. He said he has heard that dredging operations could be jeopardized if we fall under a million short tons of commodities moving up and down the Wicomico River. The County has a lot stone aggregate coming up as well as grain. Mr. Hall said they are seeing a resurgence in the need for grain as Council has witnessed in the discussions regarding poultry houses. He does not anticipate this downward to continue and he has not heard anything from the Delmarva Water Transport Committee indicating that the County's funding is in jeopardy. The County is trying to keep at a million short tons. Mr. Cannon said table 8-5, on page 8-11, lists state transportation improvements through 2030. He wonders whether or not the list incorporates the topics that Mr. Young is presenting to the state with what the County is requiring. Mr. Hall asked Mr. Cannon if he is talking about the priority letter, to which Mr. Cannon responded, yes. Mr. Hall explained that the priority letter contains the County's individual needs that it is looking at for the next six-year programming period for the state. This is a state generated list, but that does not mean the County could not incorporate any of the road projects showing in table 8-5. However, the funding consideration would be very low by the Maryland Department of Transportation at this time. Mr. Cannon said he thought if these were priorities that the County is trying to address with the State of Maryland then possibly it is something that should be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Cannon said these are not short-term goals, these are long-term solutions. He said he is not talking about extending a left turn lane by 100 yards, these are larger situations such as the egress from Route 50 trying to get on the Bypass and trying to get off the Bypass onto Snow Hill Road were we feel they really short sheeted Wicomico County in just getting it up as quickly as they could. Mr. Cannon said he felt as a whole there is a huge need on the part of the state to rethink how they may be able to address those concerns. Mr. Hall said those projects as well as the access on and off to Route 50 as well as Route 13 coming off the Bypass is included in the draft priority letter. Mr. Hall said he and Mr. Young are trying to get scheduled for a work session at the next upcoming Council meeting to go over the projects at which time if there are any projects that Council would like to add even though they are long range considerations they can be discussed. It is a template driven letter. Mr. Hall continued, saying House Bill 1013 was passed by the General Assembly this last session. When you are looking at capacity expansion projects or what they consider major projects over \$5 million dollars, there is a litany of different research and data studies that are now required to justify the request for MDOT's consideration. It is not something MDOT was in support of, however, the bill passed through the General Assembly. Mr. Cannon said in regards to the immediate priorities 1 to 5 years, he is not sure if all the projects listed are immediate priorities, but he does not know what method was used to put the projects in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Hall said he thinks that is at the discretion of the Council as to whether or not some projects should

come off the list or whether or not some projects should have their time frame changed. Mr. Hall said he just looked at the list again today and he thinks there are a couple that could be moved from immediate priority, to off the list or to another time frame. He said keep in mind there is no commitment. Just because they are in the adopted Comprehensive Plan as an immediate priority does not mean they are going to get funded as some of them are carry over projects from the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Matt Holloway asked if that helps with funding. Do some agencies say the project was not on your immediate priority list in your Comprehensive Plan, therefore, it will not get funded? Mr. Hall said as planners they can justify that since it is within the context of the Comprehensive Plan that will take precedence over prioritization because as we all know there might be a project that comes up that has an implication on one of the recommendations and either advances the project or it might deter it from coming to fruition in a certain time frame. Mr. Cannon said perhaps there should be a work session with Mr. Hall and Mr. Weston Young. Mr. Hall said he thinks Council should look at this list collectively with the priority letter keeping in mind that the priority letter is for improvements along state owned or maintained roadways. When you look at the priorities within the Comprehensive Plan outside of table 8-5, you are looking at County projects, but we can do that with table 8-5. Mr. Cannon said he would like for Mr. Hall to help differentiate between the two.

Chapter 9- Community Facilities

Mr. Hall said this is a vision document or policy document that is looking at future growth and development. In order to have that future growth and development, you need to support it with adequate community facilities to maintain or to increase your current level of service. He said when you are looking at Chapter 9, you are not just going to find information that is inclusive to the unincorporated portion of Wicomico County, it does talk about wastewater treatment and sewer systems. While the County does not have its own wastewater treatment system in the unincorporated portions of Wicomico County, it does not mean that will not be a future consideration some day. Mr. Hall continued; he said Council will find background about the state mandated stormwater management program that Wicomico County administers. There is information about Solid Waste and the recycling program. There is information on educational facilities, both public and private, as well as college and other higher level academic institutions. There is background information on libraries, the Civic Center, Tourism, law enforcement, Sheriff's Office, the police departments in Salisbury, Fruitland, and Delmar. There is background information about the detention center, as well as fire rescue/EMS and health services. The overarching theme, when you look at the implementation strategies, is to continue the coordination that the County is already doing. One of things he would like to highlight is the expansion of Urban Service Districts. He said this chapter is where you will find that information as an implementation strategy. It is not meant to provide a road map on how to do it as that will be discussions that will take place between the County and incorporated jurisdictions with their own water and sewer authority. He said, however, it is important to reference the expansion of Urban Service Districts in the Comprehensive Plan for future discussion and dialogue or continuation through further studies. Mr. Cannon asked if there should be a note that says the County as a whole should be looking at some type of wastewater treatment authority itself. Mr. Hall said there is a recommendation to create water and sewer authority as well as the use of packaged treatment plants and where they should or

should not occur. Mr. Cannon said it mentions that annexations are the preferred method for a local jurisdiction to provide public services to new areas. He said he does not know if that is always the preferred method. Mr. Hall said he thinks that is up for discussion. They can always change the wording around a little bit and make sure there are not any implied meanings that create unintended consequences. Mr. Hall said it is important from a policy standpoint that there is something like that in the Comprehensive Plan, so as Council starts looking at other companion plans, such as the water and sewer plan, which is the real regulatory tool as to what gets served and how it gets served, Council can go back and show that connection in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Creamer asked Mr. Hall if the County Council has already amended the Water and Sewer Plan to provide for packaged treatment facilities in rural areas, to which Mr. Hall responded, yes. Mr. Cannon asked if COMAR still requires a 50% reduction in impervious surface area. He said he knows that was a big thing four years ago. Mr. Hall said that it is still part of the stormwater management that is being administered through the County. Mr. Cannon said he was not sure if it had been relaxed any, to which Mr. Hall responded, not at this time. Mr. Cannon said, on page 9-5, there is a reference to a new school as it says the next major project is the construction of a new Bennett Middle School. Mr. Cannon said that construction has already been done, so that page needs to be updated. Mr. Hall said the version he is looking at indicates, "The next major construction project was the new Bennett Middle School, which was opened for the 2015 school year." Mr. Cannon said he is looking at a pdf, which is probably outdated. Mr. Hall said the most recent draft of the Comprehensive Plan was done approximately in April 2016. Mr. Hall explained that the tabular information is always going to be changing, but they try to get the most current snapshot.

Chapter 10- Historic and Cultural Preservation

Mr. Hall said this in an inventory chapter. There are two historic districts, one in Quantico and one in Whitehaven. This chapter also talks about the Pemberton Historical Park and it mentions the City's historic districts. One of the things they heard out on the streets with the extensive public outreach with this document was that it needs to be a coordinated effort between the County and the municipal jurisdictions. This chapter discusses the National Register of Historic Places; how many, where they are located, what is the history behind them. Then you start getting into preservation programs as well as incentives that are offered at the county, state or federal level. When you look at implementation strategies, there is no regulatory component as these are just considerations. The most important thing is making sure the County preserves the historical culture amenities that define who we are as a County. He said going back to future growth and development, making sure they are compatible especially as infill occurs that these historic districts are historic areas. Mr. Cannon said he did not see the Chipman Center listed. Mr. Hall said the National Register of Historic Places is the highest standard with regards to historic preservation and there are regulations on what you can and cannot do on the structure. If you are part of the Maryland Inventory of Historic Places, that means there is some historical culture relevance, however, there are not any regulatory tools. You may not see the Chipman Center listed because it is not on the national registry, which is what is outlined, all 21 of them. Mr. Cannon said he just wanted to make sure that it was not an oversight. Mr. Hall said he thinks it is part of the Maryland Inventory of Historical Places, which there are 675 of them in the County.

He said this chapter is preservation based, program based, there are no regulatory functions or requests being asked from this chapter.

Chapter 11- Housing and Community Development

Mr. Hall said there is a lot of overlap in this chapter with Chapter 3 with the community profile. You are going to find information about housing characteristics and a little bit about affordable/workforce housing. Mr. Hall said another thing the County is preparing for is aging in place and the discussion and the importance of being able to provide amenities that as a person continues to age there is no need to transition out of their home to an assisted living facility; you make accommodations within the house they are living in. Mr. Hall continued, he said this chapter mentions student housing, housing conditions, as well as local housing assistance providers and programs, whether it is trying to increase first time homeownership in the County or whether it is financial difficulty, such as paying utility bills.

Chapter 12-Economic Development and Financial Sustainability

This chapter talks about how the County is going to preserve the quality of our community. It is a lot about looking at the tax revenue versus looking at the tax effort. In this chapter you will find information about the Sage Report, the 2012 Financial Sustainability Report. There is information about economic profile characteristics, employment figures, labor force, as well as the importance of the commercial and industrial sector, agriculture sector, and manufacturing sector. It also covers both state and county programs. Tourism is mentioned because the County has an abundance of natural resources, open space and beautiful features. The County will hopefully see expansion in agri-tourism as well as heritage tourism. Mr. Hall said the implementation strategies in this chapter do not have a regulatory component. Council will notice that there is a lot of continued support, especially for the ag sector, something that Council is discussing as far as policy is trying to make sure it does not create an incompatibility of uses. Mr. Matt Holloway said the list of major employers still shows Labinal Salisbury Inc. and Perdue Agribusiness Inc., which he does not think has relocated yet, but they are getting ready to relocate to Delaware. Mr. Hall said he recommends that right before the Comprehensive Plan goes to public hearing that they take a look at all the data again, so some figures may change and some organizations may come off. This chapter also shows an overall snapshot of the building permits issued.

Chapter 13- Mineral Resources

Mr. Hall said this chapter is required by state law. It talks about the County's operations, regulations, zoning considerations, special exception process, and the need to continue to inventory abandoned sand and gravel sites because those are the resources that we are extracting in this region. This chapter also talks about reducing impacts to the County infrastructure. When you have mining operations, it is typically heavier loads and larger vehicles transporting them, and they can comprise the integrity of county roads. Mr. Hall said just like in the discussion on access to poultry houses, Council should continue to discuss with Mr. Young to see if there is any type of evaluation the County should be looking at as to where these future sites will be located and whether or not they will have any potential impact. Mr. Matt Holloway asked, in regards to the sand and gravel operations, if what is showing is the total acres that are being mined currently, to which Mr. Hall said that is total acres of the site as a

whole. Mr. Matt Holloway said Chaney Enterprises owns some in the Hebron area, but he is not sure if they are currently mining, but they have the license on the land. Mr. Hall said this list reflects who has the license, however, they will sweep the document one last time.

Chapter 14 – Plan Implementation

Mr. Hall said this is a cut and paste from all the chapters put into one section for the ease of the reader. As planners when they look at the Comprehensive Plan, they will cut to the chase and go right to the implementation chapter because the implementation chapter is taking information from each chapter and compiling it in one place. The chapter is easy to read and gives an overall idea where we are heading in support of future growth and development, as well as protecting the natural environment features and making sure our community facilities are on pace to meet future demand. Mr. Joe Holloway said under agriculture it says explore and encourage the use of Best Management Practice to improve techniques in farming for more efficient methods. He said he knows that people have said the County is violating the Comprehensive Plan by approving the poultry houses, but this is contradictory to what they are saying. The County looks at the Best Management Practices that the companies use, and they are trying to be more efficient. Mr. Hall said when you have a document of this magnitude it is easy to start mixing sentences together to either support or not support an opinion or position. They are making sure the County will have a document that is adopted and that is consistent with state regulations and guidelines. It meets the 12 visions of the state as far as what a Comprehensive Plan is. In addition, they are trying to reduce any incompatibility as a function of land use. Mr. Hall said we are an ag county with an ag economy, and we have to ensure the continuation of operations. The more residential uses that go into agriculture areas, the harder it is for those areas to be used as farms.

Mr. Hall said there are maps and appendixes in the back of the Comprehensive Plan. He recommends at the next work session to start discussing either the agriculture chapter or the land use chapter. He said these are two chapters that need to be reviewed exhaustively and the reason he says that is because when you look at the agriculture chapter what is going to be put in front of Council is the decision on does the County proceed with what is known as the priority preservation element; do we want a state certified ag program. If the County wants a state certified Ag Program, there are certain components in the plan that meet those expectations. Mr. Hall said as far as land use, the County is in very good shape. There is a plan that has been adopted since 1998, a zoning code amendment and a comprehensive rezoning since 2004. Land use is predicated on that. All the local jurisdictions for future growth areas are consistent with the County's zoning. There has been one zoning change since 2004. The County has more than a great foundation. Mr. Hall said some adjustments need to be made here and there to really just eliminate any nonconforming uses or areas where there has been a change in the use. Mr. Cannon asked Mr. Hall what chapter he would like to discuss at the meeting, to which Mr. Hall said he would like to start with the agriculture chapter, which is Chapter 6. He would like to review Chapter 6 and the priority letter as the priority letter is a function of timing and the state is getting heavy into their budget process. There is also the Maryland Association of Counties meeting

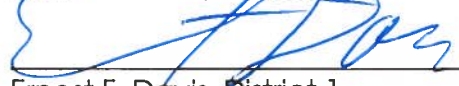
at which time they would like to have the priority letter available even if it is in draft form to discuss with certain state representatives.

**Open Work Session
Comprehensive Plan (Chapters 8 through 14)
August 2, 2016**



John T. Cannon, President

Matt Holloway, Vice President



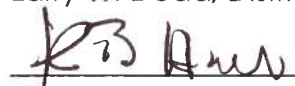
Ernest F. Davis, District 1



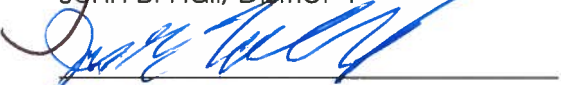
Marc Kilmer, District 2



Larry W. Dodd, District 3



John B. Hall, District 4



Joe Holloway, District 5



Matthew E. Creamer, Council Administrator