

**Charles County 2012 Comprehensive Plan
Preliminary Scenarios
Port Tobacco River Conservancy (PTRC) Comments
August 2011**

PTRC's Scenario Preference and Summary Comments

PTRC prefers Scenario 1. However, we recommend that some of the Shared Elements be dropped, and some elements in Scenario 2 and 3 that we consider essential to move the County forward in 2012 and future years, be reconfigured in Scenario 1.

“For and Against” Comments on the shared elements and in Scenario 2 and Scenario 3

Shared Elements:

- Agree with most of the 1 through 23 listed elements. These elements will be specifically added to our list of Scenario 1 elements.
- Don't agree with “waterfront development designated areas” except to pursue opportunities for passive public access. The map in Fig. 2 shows waterfront development covering all of the shore line of the Port Tobacco River including a “Port Tobacco historic waterfront village”. We would like an explanation of what this is. We hope it does not refer to the current Village of Port Tobacco, which is historic, and to the historic homes on the hill side overlooking the PT River or the land on the waterfront, west side of Chapel Point Rd. These land areas should be preserved.
- Newburg/Aqualand/Morgantown areas should be added to Scenario 1 as mixed use villages and waterfront development.
- Strongly agree with elements 9 and 10. Water quality goals are one important basis for the MD TMDL and WIP that will require restoration/repair of current pollution sources. PTRC has identified many of the sources through our water quality monitoring and scientific studies.
- Also strongly agree with element 18 which follows the MD priority of removing septic systems by connecting to existing or new public sewer systems (WWTPs), where practical, because of their superior performance in reducing nutrients, bacteria and other pollutants that will continue to degrade the waterways. Shared septic systems should be considered only where WWTPs are not available or practical.

Scenario 2:

- Note that the proposed ERRA referred to in Scenario 2, element 10, is planned to be located beyond the area shown on Fig 2. map and is several thousand feet to the east of the waterfront. PTRC does not support this zoning amendment unless and until assessments produced and validated by government and private (foundations) experts demonstrate that there will be a 50% improvement to the environment and that the ERRA

will not adversely impact transportation and public facilities. Unless the County leadership provides the resources and the political will to implement these new decision making processes, the proposed initiative should be abandoned.

- Don't support the Cross County Connector since the data and studies indicate that it would be harmful to the Mattawoman Creek. Support improvements in the north-south corridors if they do not degrade the environment and do not promote uncontrolled development

Scenario 3

- Don't like the idea of concentrating development along the entire length of Rt. 301, with the exception of the current focal points. There are residential and rural areas that should be preserved for the Quality of Life of current residents and visitors who pass thru our County. Development should be based on merit and need.
- Agree with upgrading Rt. 301 at least through La Plata and eventually extending to a new Harry Nice Bridge. This will provide a permanent improvement for Charles and other Counties commuters and visitors passing through using Rt. 301.

Preferred Scenario, Comments and Suggested Elements from Other Scenarios

Scenario 1:

- Support most of the elements in principle including preserving as much rural forested land as possible.
- Downzone Rural Conservation to 1/20 and Rural Residential (RR) to 1/10. Improve the TDR program (consider Calvert County's program) and the incentives to buy TDRs. Also consider down zoning St. Charles and commercial areas, for instance, then letting them buy TDRs to get the density they want. Downzone the 20% of developable land in the PPA to 1/20 from the current planned 1/3 (which encourages sprawl, is expensive for the County and contradicts the theory behind the PPA). Density in all downzoned areas could be higher with properly planned clustered development with the purchase of TDRs.
- This scenario, as currently written, does not mention restoration of environmental problems. The continued existence of these problems will not improve the environment. Preservation alone will not allow the County to meet the EPA and MD TMDL/WIP goals.
- Even 1/20 development (using septic systems) in stream valleys should be discouraged since nitrogen pollution travels quickly to the stream without degradation.
- Do provide limited exceptions for developments outside the development district that:
 - Provide for significant improvements to the environment, not degradation
 - Attract a work force or retired people who would not move to Charles County to live in the development district
 - Would increase the tax base of the County and Towns to finance restoration of existing infrastructure, like WWTPs, storm water management, and enhanced public services. Only a very few residential developments such as a clustered

senior community bring in more tax revenue than they cost the county and therefore only such developments should be considered. The Planning Commission, with technical support from the County Planning staff and/or outside experts should be required to use existing State and Federal measurement tools to validate the net environmental and financial benefits.

- Recommend that the shared elements not specifically disagreed with in the above Shared Elements Comments and the following shared elements be included Scenario 1:
 - Element 1. Ecotourism and environmental offsets
 - Element 2. Transportation a. b. c.
 - Element 6. Historic roads
 - Element 11. Economic Development and Green Technology
 - Element 17. Public Facilities
 - Element 18. Public water and sewage with the exception of shared septic systems that should be considered only as the last resort
 - Elements 20 - 22. Affordable Housing
 - Element 23. Energy conservation and efficiency.