



Maryland Department of Planning

Martin O'Malley
Governor
Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Richard Eberhart Hall
Secretary
Matthew J. Power
Deputy Secretary

Honorable Robert E. Bruchey II
Mayor of Hagerstown
City Hall
1 East Franklin Street
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740-4817

May 6, 2010

Mayor Bruchey:

The Maryland Department of Planning has completed the coordinated review of the draft City of Hagerstown 2010 Small Areas Plan. Thank you for your participation in the plan review process. The State of Maryland is committed to fighting the high financial, social, and environmental costs of sprawl development through effective Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation strategies.

The City has done a commendable job creating a Plan that understands and accommodates for the unique nature of the City of Hagerstown. After review of the draft amendments it appears that there has been a concerted effort placed on addressing the recommendations created in the Growth Management and Land Use chapter of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. The Department generally agrees with the zoning changes made to reflect Hagerstown's future land use plans.

The following pages contain comments and recommendations from the Maryland Department of Planning. The Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development found the Small Areas Plan to be consistent with the Department's plans, programs, and objectives.

The Maryland Department of Planning would like to remain involved and updated as the Special Planning Areas are implemented. Thank you again for the opportunity to review the draft City of Hagerstown 2010 Small Areas Plan. If you have any questions and/or require assistance, please contact the review coordinator David V. Cotton at 301-777-2161.

Sincerely,

Peter G. Conrad, AICP
Director of Local Government Assistance

cc: Kathleen A. Maher, Planning Director
David V. Cotton, MDP Regional Planner



Review Comments from the Maryland Department of Planning
City of Hagerstown
Draft 2010 Small Areas Plan
May 6, 2010

East End/Hospital Special Planning Area

The Department understands that this planning area will become a major focus of the City's redevelopment plans in the very near future. The Washington County Hospital and the Municipal Stadium are two prominent features in this planning area.

Hagerstown East End Redevelopment Plan

This section mentions the Hagerstown East End Redevelopment Plan, prepared in May of 2005. The Small Areas Plan states that much of the redevelopment plan is beyond the scope of the Small Areas Plan. It is also stated that the Planning Department does support the Site Analysis section of the redevelopment plan and its conclusions. The site analysis section of the redevelopment plan and the associated conclusions should be explained and included in this section of the Small Areas Plan.

Future Land Use Plan

Overall the City has done a good job recognizing the consistency of existing land uses with their current zoning classifications in the Hager Street, South Cleveland Avenue, Radcliffe Avenue and the south side of Dual Highway.

The Hospital, First Urban Fiber Plant and Municipal Electric Light Plant sites are excluded from the future land use plan. All three sites currently have zoning classifications that are inconsistent with the existing character of their neighborhoods. These areas encompass a very large portion of the special planning area. It is imperative that the City continue with future studies to identify plans for the re-occupation or redevelopment of these sites.

Jonathan Street Special Planning Area

Once the commercial center of Hagerstown's African American community, the special planning area has been adversely impacted by the remaining industrial and rail related uses. The City should be commended on recommending the changes shown on the future land use plan map. Those recommendations were based on sound planning practices and once adopted, any existing inconsistencies would be resolved through the rezoning process.

Locust/Mulberry Street Special Planning Area

The area is primarily residential. Most dwelling units are single family, two family or duplex. This area represents the urban core of the City that was developed during the late 1800's through the early 1900's. This plan recommended no major modifications to the residentially zoned areas and no changes to the non-residentially zoning areas.

The Department agrees with the changes to the Land Use Plan section of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan that corrects a mistake made in this planning area.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan also recommended that the Planning Department explore zoning options for lot sizes, setbacks, building heights, and other characteristics that are representative of the City's older residential neighborhoods. We are encouraged to see that city staff has taken this recommendation and proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance that will reflect the City's urban core. Smaller lot sizes, shorter lot widths, and shallower setbacks will be proposed in all residential zoning districts in the City in the near future.