



*Maryland Department of Planning*

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Deputy Secretary

July 22, 2010

Honorable Daniel A. Murphy  
Mayor of Hancock  
126 West High Street  
Hancock, Maryland 21750

Mayor Murphy:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) has completed our review of the Town of Hancock's 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update. 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.

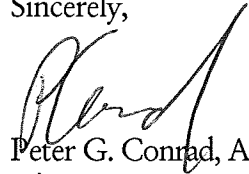
The draft plan is a good faith effort to address many of the required elements of HB 1141, however, we recommend that you consider our comments and further refine the components outlined in the legislation. The attachment includes comments and recommendations from the MDP. Comments that appear in bold sentence or paragraph form require additional attention in order to strengthen the Plan. Please review our comments to ensure the Plans compliance with HB1141. Additional comments that may be forthcoming from other State agencies will be forwarded as we receive them.

The MDP would like to commend the Town for creating a Plan that understands and accommodates for the unique nature of the Town of Hancock. Comprehensive Plans are strengthened when the local implementing tools reflect the visions and strategies of the plan. We recommend that within six months after adoption of the comprehensive plan amendments, the Town review it's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances for consistency with the plan. MDP would like to remain involved and updated on that process as it moves forward.

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Thank you again for the opportunity to review the Town of Hancock's 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update. 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  
Local Government Assistance

Enclosure: MDP Review Comments

cc: David V. Cotton, MDP Regional Planner  
Jason Dubow, Planner, WRE Coordinator  
Rich Josephson, Director, Planning Services  
Rita Elliott, MDP Clearinghouse



**Review Comments from the Maryland Department of Planning  
Town of Hancock  
2010 Comprehensive Plan Update  
July 22, 2010**

During the 2006 legislative session House Bill 1141 was passed requiring Counties and Municipalities address several new elements within their Comprehensive plans. Guidance documents for the Municipal Growth Element and the Water Resources Element are available at the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) website [www.mdp.state.md.us](http://www.mdp.state.md.us). MDP has reviewed Hancock's Comprehensive Plan and offers the following comments.

**MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT**

Overall the Town has done a good job incorporating a Municipal Growth Element into the draft comprehensive plan. The Town has included a build out analysis (infill potential) in the plan and has linked this analysis to population projections and future growth management strategies.

*Development Capacity Analysis & Population Projections:*

Maryland Department of Planning appreciates the inclusion of population projections and a development capacity analysis. However, the plan did not include a development capacity analysis for the Town's Growth Areas as identified on pages 2-6 and 2-7. A development capacity analysis for annexation areas is a requirement of HB1141's Municipal Growth Element (MGE). The plan must also include information on how Growth Areas will impact public services and infrastructure.

According to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the Town's current (2010) population is 1,734 and is expected to grow by 72 persons to 1,806 by 2030. MDP projects Hancock's 2010 population at 1,998 persons and their 2030 population at 2,529 persons, or an increase of 531 persons over the 20-year time period. Apparently, due to the loss of employment and multiple geographic constraints (i.e.-steep slopes), Hancock will experience less growth than MDP figures indicate.

It is not clear why the plan would recommend adding 4 Growth Areas to a Town only expecting to grow by just over 70 people over 20 years. If employment and tourism-related industries are desired, it may be best to rethink the size and location of Hancock's desired Growth Areas. If possible, it is recommended that residential development be targeted for infill development within the Town limits.

Please keep in mind that it is important to determine if there is a proper balance between land supply and demand. If you provide too little land for development (be it on greenfields, redevelopment or infill) and the land cost will become too high or development may spill over to adjacent jurisdictions. If you provide too much land for development it will tend to be used inefficiently. In addition, plans and growth controls will be marginalized because there are an abundance of locational options for each new development.

It was not clear whether the MGE establishes a person per housing unit figure for existing *and* future population growth. MDP recommends the plan establish an existing (baseline) and future (build out) person per housing unit figure to ensure accurate population projections.

*Community Facilities:*

HB 1141 requires the Municipal Growth Element examine the relationship between infrastructure supply and future demand for potential annexation areas. Additionally, any foreseeable impacts to these facilities from growth and how the Town intends to finance improvements to these facilities is required.

*Priority Funding Areas:*

The Town has expressed several areas for annexation (186 acres in the East End Annexation area, 429 acres in the Northern Annexation area, 31 acres in the Alexander Property, and an unspecified amount of land in the area south of Sensel and west of Pennsylvania Avenue). The town should provide an estimate the additional Water and Sewer capacity needed to serve these areas.

Please note that HB1141 changed the requirements for designating PFAs. Annexations after October 1, 2006, must be submitted to the MDP for PFA certifications. Properties annexed into the Town do not retain County PFA status and do not automatically become PFAs.

*General Comments:*

It may help to provide a topographic map overlaid with zoning, locations of growth areas and acreages and sensitive area information to provide a clearer picture of Hancock's land supply and demand.

The plan is well organized and easy to read. The goals of the plan are introduced early and help provide direction for the document.

According to the Future Land Use Map 3-2 on page 3-7, much of the land contained within the Future Municipal Limits, especially to the north of Interstate 70, is classified as rural development, allowing a maximum density of 1 developable unit per acre. Please keep in mind that in order to maintain a designated Priority Funding Area (PFA), the States PFA law requires an average development of 3.5 developable units per acre.

## **WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT**

The WRE is incomplete. The WRE would meet the requirements of HB1141 with recommended amendments. The most important amendments to include are in **bold**. The WRE does not yet effectively address the following purposes of the law and/or State guidance, as follows, and discussed in more detail below:

- The WRE should include nonpoint source loading analyses that provide a preliminary assessment of potential changes in nonpoint source loads due to land use planning decisions and make general findings for alternative land use options (MDP M&G 26, p. 39).

- Does the WRE describe the alternative future development options for which nonpoint source and point source loading estimates were performed (MDP M&G 26, p. 40)?
- Does the WRE estimate the approximate number or range of additional households and associated commercial and industrial wastewater demand that could potentially be supported in the planning area (MDP M&G 26, p. 23)?

*Demand Analysis Comments:*

The WRE states that the permitted withdrawal for the Hancock water system is 300,000 GPD (top of p. 4-3) and then states that the permit limit is 350,000 GPD (bottom of p. 4-3). Please resolve this discrepancy.

The WRE does not state whether there are any private wells in the Town. Please add this information. If wells exist, please note whether there are plans to connect any failing wells to the public water system and the capacity needed to serve them. The plan could then discuss whether they are susceptible to pollution and whether these might be included in future source water protection plans.

*Sewer Demand Analysis Comments:*

The WRE should describe the actions planned for implementation to ensure that wastewater capacity is adequate and pollutant loadings are safe to meet future needs. If necessary, the WRE should identify lead agencies, estimate budget needs, and establish a project timeline (MDP M&G, p. 33)

- The WRE assumes that the WWTP will be upgraded to implement Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) technology by 2030 but states that funding the upgrade represents a “substantial challenge for the Town” (p. 4-7). Please provide a discussion addressing options for funding this upgrade.

The plan states that the Town has made great strides to correct the issue of inflow and infiltration (I&I). The attempts made and the volume of decrease should be included in the WRE analysis. The Plan should project further efforts to eliminate this problem. It is suggested that the Town make a goal of reducing all I&I to 10% of total flow.

The sewer service map should show the area where existing septic systems are proposed for connection to the Town’s sewer service.

*Suitable Receiving Waters Comments:*

**The WRE should assess the combined point and non-point source pollution impact of more than one possible land use plan scenario, including the proposed land use plan. For example, different land use options or residential densities could be assessed within the current growth areas, or different growth areas could be assessed. The Town’s land use plan should be the least impactful with regard to impervious surface and pollution impacts.**

To add clarification to tables 4-4 and 4-5 on p. 4-11 future impacts should be labeled with a year instead of just “Future”. For example: “Future (2030)”.

*General WRE Comments:*

The WRE states, “the Future Land Use Plan described in Chapter 3 is the only future scenario evaluated in this Element” (p. 4-1). The WRE should assess more than one land use planning scenario, including the proposed land use plan.

**The WRE should include maps that show proposed water and sewer service areas and a discussion of when and what amount of service will be provided in future annexed territories. Areas not planned for service should be noted. If service is not planned what facilities will be allowed?**

**The Town should provide an estimate of the future water and sewer demand (both residential and non-residential) from the proposed growth areas at build-out. If non-residential demand is not expected, the WRE should state this.**

- The Town is proposing some significant growth areas (186 acres in the East End Annexation area, 429 acres in the Northern Annexation area, 31 acres in the Alexander Property, and an unspecified amount of land in the area south of Sensel and west of Pennsylvania Avenue). The WRE should estimate the additional water and sewer capacity needed, if any, to serve these growth areas.