

May 28, 2025

Leland Bonneville, Chairman
City of Fruitland Planning Commission
401 East Main Street
P.O. Drawer F
Fruitland, MD 21826-0120

Dear Mr. Bonneville,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft City of Fruitland 2025 Comprehensive Plan Amendment (Draft Plan). The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) believes good planning is important for efficient and responsible development that addresses resource protection, adequate public facilities, housing, community character, and economic development. MDP's attached review comments reflect the agency's thoughts on ways to strengthen the Draft Plan, as well as satisfy the requirements of Maryland's Land Use Article.

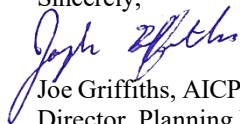
MDP forwarded a copy of the Draft Plan to several state agencies for review, including: the Maryland Historical Trust and the Departments of Transportation, Environment, Natural Resources, Commerce, Disabilities, and Housing and Community Development. To date, we have received comments from the Maryland Historical Trust, Departments of Housing and Community Development, Transportation, Environment, Natural Resources, and Critical Area Commission. These comments are included with this letter. Any plan review comments received after the date of this letter will be forwarded upon receipt.

The department hopes that Fruitland considers the comments included in this review as a reflection of our desire to support Fruitland in its comprehensive planning efforts and notes that our suggestions are intended to help further the implementation of state, county, and the city's own visions. MDP staff are available and eager to assist Fruitland in any Draft Plan updates, including meeting the housing element requirements of HB1045 and HB90. Please let the department know if the city would like to meet with us to discuss our comments.

MDP respectfully requests that this letter and accompanying review comments be made part of the city's public hearing record. When the Draft Plan is adopted, please send Keith Lackie a PDF copy of the final document.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these comments, please email MDP's Lower Eastern Shore Regional Planner, Keith Lackie at keith.lackie@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Joe Griffiths, AICP
Director, Planning Best Practices

Enclosures: Review Comments City of Fruitland Draft Plan Amendment

cc: Marc Henderson, City Manager
Tracey Taylor, Director, Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning and Community Development
Keith Lackie, Regional Planner for MDP, Lower Eastern Shore Region



**Maryland Department of
Planning
Review Comments
City of Fruitland Draft 2025 Draft Plan Amendment**

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) received the Draft 2025 Fruitland Comprehensive Plan Amendment (Draft Plan) from the City of Fruitland on March 31, 2025. These comments are offered as suggestions to improve the Draft Plan and better address the statutory requirements of the Land Use Article. Other state agencies, as noted below, have contributed comments and others may submit comments separately. If comments are subsequently received by MDP, the department will forward them to the city.

Maryland Planning Principles

The Land Use Article [Section 1-201](#) requires Maryland jurisdictions with planning & zoning authority to implement the state's 12 Planning Visions (Visions) through the comprehensive plan. During the 2025 session, the Maryland General Assembly adopted [SB 266](#), which replaces the Visions with the 8 Sustainable Growth Planning Principles (Principles) but maintains the requirement for the Principles to be implemented in comprehensive plans. This change is effective October 1, 2025. In partnership with other state agencies and local governments, MDP is developing guidance to help jurisdictions craft and implement comprehensive plans adopted after October 1 that address the new Principles. During the spring and summer of 2025, MDP is conducting a series of regional roundtables to solicit local recommendations and requests related to Principles implementation. MDP will use roundtable insight to inform guidance development.

MDP acknowledges that City of Fruitland planned for and completed the Draft 2025 Fruitland Comprehensive Plan Amendment under the direction of current Maryland planning law, focused on implementing the Visions. The applicability of SB 266 to draft comprehensive plans involves legal issues for which you may wish to seek the advice of counsel. MDP, however, does not believe that comprehensive plans drafted under pre-October 1, 2025, legal requirements need to be amended now, prior to adoption, to comply with the Principles. Rather, the department suggests the following approaches to incorporating the new Principles, depending on final plan adoption date.

- If the Draft 2025 Fruitland Comprehensive Plan Amendment is adopted **before October 1, 2025**, MDP recommends that jurisdictions address the Visions in the adopted plan as they would have if the General Assembly had not adopted SB 266. Jurisdictions should consider, however, acknowledging the adoption of SB 266 and including a statement that the jurisdiction will work with MDP to implement the Principles as part of plan implementation.
- If the Draft 2025 Fruitland Comprehensive Plan Amendment is adopted **after October 1, 2025**, MDP recommends that jurisdictions acknowledge and describe the Principles in the adopted plan and indicate that the jurisdiction will work with MDP to implement the Principles as part of plan implementation. Attached to this review is a model one-page Principles comprehensive plan insert that jurisdictions may use for the purpose of this acknowledgement.

If Fruitland elects to implement the Principles in the adopted version of Draft 2025 Fruitland Comprehensive Plan Amendment, below are some examples of comprehensive plans that integrate the Visions, which can be used as possible approaches to integrating the Principles into your own comprehensive plan:

[Livable Frederick Master Plan](#) (2019): Tags plan themes with the Visions
[Middlecity Comprehensive Plan](#) (2023): Links plan goals with specific Visions

[Millington Comprehensive Plan](#) (2023): Describes how Visions are informed by state law and includes Visions implementation as an integral part of the city’s growth strategy
[Annapolis Ahead](#) (2024): Describes how Visions contribute to the foundation of the city’s plan

2025 Legislation Impacting Local Planning

MDP identified the following bills, adopted by the General Assembly during the 2025 session, that impact local planning, implementation, and reporting. MDP cannot determine at this time how they may impact Fruitland, but the department wants to make the city aware of them. In partnership with other state agencies, MDP is analyzing the bills and will be developing guidance.

Local Land Use Reporting

- [HB 698](#) - Development Impact Fees, Surcharges, and Excise Taxes Reporting
- [HB 1193](#) - Maryland Housing Data Transparency Act

Energy

- [SB 931/HB 1036](#) - Renewable Energy Certainty Act

Natural Resources and Comp Plans

- [HB 731](#) - Wildlife - Protections and Highway Crossings

Housing

- [HB 1466/SB 891](#) Accessory Dwelling Units - Requirements and Prohibitions

Municipality Minimum Planning Requirements

Land Use Article (LUA) Section 3-102 describes the required and optional elements for non-charter county and municipal comprehensive plans but does not mandate how they are to be addressed. The following checklist identifies the required plan elements and how the Draft Plan addresses them.

Checklist of Maryland Code (Land Use Article) Element Requirements for Non-Charter Counties and Municipalities			
Comprehensive Plan Requirements	MD Code Reference	Additional MD Code Reference	Reference
(1) A comprehensive plan for a non-charter county or municipality must include:	L.U. § 3-102(a)		
(a) a community facilities element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(1)(i)	L.U. § 3-108 -- Community facilities element.	Chapter 2: pages 6 - 10
(b) an area of critical state concern element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(1)(ii)	L.U. § 3-109 -- Areas of critical State concern element	Not specifically provided – incorporated within Draft Plan Chapters 5, 8, 9, and 10
(c) a goals and objectives element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(1)(iii)	L.U. § 3-110 -- Goals and objectives element	Not specifically provided – Incorporated as “objectives and implementation strategies” throughout Draft Plan Chapters
(d) a housing element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(1)(iv)	L.U. § 3-114 -- Housing element SB-687(2021)	Chapter 7: pages 38 - 43

(d) a land use element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(1)(v)	L.U. § 3-111 -- Land use element	Chapter 3: pages 11 - 13
(e) a development regulations element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(1)(vi)	L.U. § 3-103 -- Development regulations element	Chapter 1: pages 5, Chapter 10: page 56 - 57 And policies/recommendations/implementation strategies throughout the Draft Plan
(f) a sensitive areas element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(1)(vii)	L.U. § 3-104 -- Sensitive areas element	Chapter 8: pages 45 - 51
(g) a transportation element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(1)(viii)	L.U. § 3-105 -- Transportation element	Chapter 6: pages 31 - 37
(h) a water resources element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(1)(ix)	L.U. § 3-106 -- Water resources element	Chapter 5: pages 25 - 30
(i) a mineral resources element, IF current geological information is available	L.U. § 3-102(a)(2)	L.U. § 3-107 -- Mineral resources element	Chapter 9: pages 52 - 55
(j) for municipalities only, a municipal growth element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(3)	L.U. § 3-112 -- Municipal growth element	Chapter 4: pages 15 - 24
(k) for counties only if located on tidal waters, a fisheries element	L.U. § 3-102(a)(4)	L.U. § 3-113 -- Fisheries element	Not applicable
Optional: (2) A comprehensive plan for a non- charter county or municipality MAY include: (a) a community renewal element; (b) a conservation element; (c) a flood control element; (d) a natural resources element; (e) a pollution control element; (f) information concerning the general location and extent of public utilities; and (f) a priority preservation area (PPA) element	L.U. § 3-102(b)	L.U. § 3-102(b)(2)(i)	Not provided

(3) Visions -- A local jurisdiction SHALL through the comprehensive plan implement the 12 planning visions established in L.U. § 1-201	L.U. § 3-201(c)	L.U. § 1-201 -- The 12 Planning Visions	Chapter 1: Page 2, affirms 12 state visions as fundamental goals of the Draft Plan.
Optional: (4) Growth Tiers -- If the local jurisdiction has adopted growth tiers in accordance with L.U. § 1-502, the growth tiers must be incorporated into the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan	L.U. § 1-509		Appendix C

MDP General Comments

MDP notes there are several discrepancies throughout the Draft Plan with respect to organization and structure. For example, the Introduction section has “Goals and Objectives”, yet the Community Facilities Chapter does not contain “Goals and Objectives” or “Policies and Recommendations”, instead this chapter seems to represent a basic inventory of the city’s community facilities. With respect to the remaining Draft Plan Elements there are no “Goals and Objectives”, however there are (seemingly) inconsistent titles for apparent similar purposes (e.g. “Policies and Recommendations”, vs. “Policies and Implementation” vs. “Visions”).

Conformance with Section 3-102 of the Land Use Article

The following analyzes the Draft Plan as it relates to the requirements of the municipal comprehensive plan elements, in accordance with the Land Use Article (LUA). These comments specifically address those Draft Plan chapters that MDP has determined warrant additional information to demonstrate conformance to the LUA, and/or provide suggestions that may strengthen the Draft Plan.

1. Introduction Chapter– Analysis

MDP acknowledges the Draft Plan’s “preamble” refers to the Local Government Article and recommends adding a reference to the Land Use Article. Within the “what is a comprehensive plan?” section, MDP notes that the Land Use Article requires the local government “to review, and if necessary update” the jurisdictions comprehensive plan every 10-years” [emphasis added to show omission of the Land Use Article text].

2. Community Facilities Chapter – Analysis

MDP recommends that the “Inventory of Existing Community Facilities” sub-sections on “potable water supply” and “sewer system” (pages 6 and 7) be relocated to and incorporated within the Draft Plan’s Water Resources Element (Chapter 5).

3. Land Use Chapter – Analysis

MDP notes that the Draft Plan’s narrative of [13] “Land Use Definitions” (Draft Plan, pages 12-13) are not consistent with the [11] “existing land uses” identified on “Map 2: Existing Land Uses”, therefore the department suggests that these inconsistencies be rectified.

4. Municipal Growth Element (MGE) Chapter – Analysis

MDP notes that the Draft Plan MGE includes an analysis on the land within the current municipal boundary and the “acreage demand for future residential development”, and a description of six (6) “Growth Areas”. However, with respect to the six (6) growth areas, MDP finds the Draft Plan MGE falls short of the LUA’s requirements under [MD Land Use Code Annotated \[Subsection 3-112 MGE \(a\).\(7\).\(8\).\(9\)\]](#) :

(7) public services and infrastructure needed to accommodate growth within the proposed municipal growth areas (emphasis added) including those necessary for:

- (i) libraries;
 - (ii) recreation;
 - (iii) water and sewerage facilities;
 - (iv) public safety, including emergency medical response;
 - (v) stormwater management systems sufficient to ensure water quality both inside and outside the proposed municipal growth area; and
 - (vi) public schools sufficient to accommodate student population consistent with State rated capacity standards established by the Interagency Commission on School Construction;
- (8) any burden on services and infrastructure for which the municipal corporation would be responsible for development in areas near to and outside of the proposed municipal growth area; and
- (9) anticipated financing mechanisms to support necessary public services and infrastructure.

The MGE analysis required by the LUA is intended to provide a substantive analysis (as opposed to a brief narrative) of the anticipated public infrastructure to accommodate the potential buildout of each “Future Growth Area”, as shown in “Table 6-3 - Growth Area Summary” (Draft Plan, page 21). MDP acknowledges the Draft Plan “Growth Area Summary” narrative text indicates the estimate for “Single-Family” and “Mixed-Residential” is “based on MDP’s development capacity model” (Draft Plan, page 21), given that the model only considers residential development.

MDP notes that the LUA also requires an analysis of non-residential uses for estimated impacts of “Commercial/Institutional”, “Light Industrial”, and Commercial/Light Industrial” uses identified in Table 6-3, as projected by the acreage of each of the aforementioned specific “Future Growth Areas”. While there are various ways to provide the ‘estimate of public services and infrastructure needed to accommodate growth within the proposed municipal growth areas’, MDP suggest the Draft Plan utilize Fruitland’s zoning ordinance provisions of height/area/bulk, for each of the non-residential uses, perhaps ‘discounted’ by a certain percentage due to potential environmental constraints.

5. Water Resources Element (WRE) Chapter – Analysis

The WRE (pages 25 to 30) indicates that the city’s water supply comes from 5 wells and has a 500,000 gallons per day (gpd) appropriation permit but then mentions a 5th well with a 385,000 gpd allowance (page 25). This language is confusing as to whether the city has 5 or 6 wells and whether the city is allowed 500,000 gpd or 885,000 gpd (although later, the text states that the city’s Water Appropriation and Use Permit is for 500,000 gpd). The Draft Plan also states that based on a “346 residential unit increase and the set aside of 350 equivalent dwelling units (EDUs) for future commercial and light industrial development,” resulting water usage would be a total of approximately 579,000 gpd, which seems to exceed the city’s current capacity; but then later states “[b]ased on the numbers provided above, the City has the capabilities and permits to withdraw [sic] the necessary amount of water to serve the City trough [sic] 2040” (page 25). In addition, the 346 residential unit increase described in the WRE does not align with the 741 residential units in the 6 growth areas; it’s unclear whether the “set aside of 350 EDUs for future commercial and light industrial development” described on page 25 aligns with the 830 acres of commercial/light industrial in the growth areas.

The WRE describes the city’s wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) capacity and Wicomico River discharge permitted allowance, but it does not compare the WWTP system capacity under any future growth scenario. The WRE states that close to 300 parcels currently on septic may be connected to the city’s WWTP but does not discuss how those connections will affect system capacity.

The nutrient loading section describes the city’s current discharge permit allowances for TN and TP but does not state what the current actual discharge is for TN and does not compare discharge allowances to any future growth scenario.

MDP suggests the city consider analyzing (and displaying the analysis tabularly in the WRE) both water and wastewater supply and the difference between the current system capacities and the future growth scenarios described in the MGE (as well as the properties currently on septic that are planned to be connected).

Since the MGE indicates potential increases in use intensity and development/redevelopment density, the city should conduct an analysis of the impact of the increased intensity/density (including non-residential growth) to future demand and capacity for water and sewer resources. The city should also consider how the increase in intensity/density will impact storm water, nutrient loading, and climate change considerations? MDP's [WRE Guidance Update](#) can be used to guide the city regarding best practices for water resources planning.

6. Transportation – Analysis

There are several transportation policies or recommendations discussed on the Draft Plan's pages 34 to 37 under various subject titles which are not included in "Policies and Recommendations" on the Draft Plan's page 37. MDP recommends the city reassess and includes those potential policies or recommendations on page 37, which can consist of the following:

- The Brown Street Corridor Study Recommendations
- The level of service standards,
- "Complete streets" design and the grid system extension
- Studying additional bicycle paths and sidewalks
- Promoting public transit
- Including city's transportation needs in the county's annual transportation priority letter to MDOT
- Working with the state regarding state route improvement needs

If the city plans to adopt the level of service (LOS) standards, MDP staff suggests considering a much less stringent roadway adequacy LOS standard for mixed-use and Main Street areas to discourage high-speed vehicle travel and foster pedestrian and bicycle friendly environments.

MDP staff suggests including a recommendation on improving pedestrian and bicycle connections to schools, parks and recreational areas, public facilities, etc. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) provides various funding and technical support programs to support local efforts to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Here is the link to the website that features MDOT's active transportation programs: [MDOT's active transportation programs](#)

Other transportation element suggestions and resources include:

- MDOT's new [Maryland State Transportation Trails Strategic Plan](#), which is designed to improve and expand trail connectivity in Maryland, may be helpful.
- MDOT also implements Complete Streets statewide for state highways and has created guidance through its [Complete Streets Initiative](#).
- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)'s report on "[Small City and Rural Multimodal Networks](#)," which provides best practice examples to enhance pedestrian and bicycle networks in rural communities and small cities.
- If the current S-WMPO's long-range transportation plan and transportation improvement program (TIP) include transportation projects for the city, these projects should be included in the comprehensive plan.
- [The 2020 Fruitland Sustainable Communities Action Plan](#) includes transportation strategies and recommendations, which should be included in the comprehensive plan.

- If the city wishes to build or expand its electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, technical and financial assistance programs are available. For more information on EV charging resources, please refer to the Maryland EV website at [Maryland EV](#).
- Beginning October 1, 2023, a county or municipality may require that the new construction of homes with a garage, carport, or driveway include a Level-2 EV charger or electric pre-wiring to support a Level 2 EV charger. (Reference: [Maryland Statutes, Public Safety Code 12-205](#))
- U.S. Route 13 inside Fruitland should be referred to as U.S. 13 Business. Please see [this link](#) for more information. MDP staff suggests changing U.S. Route 13 to U.S. 13 Business to avoid confusion. Please check and correct the functional classification information on Map 6 and on pages 32 and 33 to ensure consistency.
- Please change the reference of “Commerce” (Draft Plan, page 32) to reflect the “MDP State Data Center” provided summary demographic data for the City of Fruitland (emphasis added).

7. Housing Chapter - Analysis

The links to MDP’s Housing Element Models & Guidelines are broken throughout the Housing Chapter, likely the result of MDP modifying its website. The city should use the [current link](#). The Placing Jobs Models & Guidelines link on page 42 is also incorrect. This is the [current link](#).

HB 1045 and Housing Affordability

The Housing Chapter correctly identifies the affordability ranges for workforce homeownership (60 – 120% of Area Median Income (AMI)) and workforce rental (50% - 100% AMI) households, as outlined in [Land Use Article \(LUA\) Section 3-114](#). However, LUA Section 3-114 also requires Housing Elements to “address the need for affordable housing” for low-income households, defined as those “with an aggregate income that is below 60%” of the AMI. While the visions and policies described in the Housing Chapter may address the need for affordable low-income (below 60% AMI) housing, MDP recommends that the city include a definition of “low-income” in the Introduction on page 38. The city should also consider clarifying why Exhibit 2 (page 39) includes two affordable monthly payments for low-income households and the word “rental” in parentheses in the bottom row, as neither are described in the text. MDP recommends that the city review The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development’s [Maryland Housing Needs Assessment & 10-Year Strategic Plan](#) for an analysis and recommended strategies to support affordable housing for low income-households in the Eastern Maryland Region (Needs Assessment, pages 49 – 55).

The “Homeownership Affordability” section of the Housing Chapter (pages 40 – 41) also includes rental affordability data and analysis. MDP recommends that the city either rename this section to include rental affordability or split the rental analysis into its own section. MDP notes that this section analyzes housing burden, monthly owner costs, and gross rent data for Wicomico County. The Housing Dashboard includes the same data for Fruitland. To access it, the city can select “Places” from the drop-down menu at the top of the dashboard and then click within the Fruitland municipal boundaries on the map. Using this process, the charts displayed, as well as the exportable reports, will display Fruitland housing data for valuable information that could be included in the Draft Plan. Exhibits 4 and 6 highlight that renter households in Wicomico are significantly more cost burdened than homeowners. The city should consider highlighting those policies and implementation measures on page 44, which will be designed to reduce the burden for renters.

MDP commends the city’s inclusion of the “Consistency With Other Plans” section, as addressing Maryland’s housing shortage and affordability needs demands the application of resources and planning that extend beyond a Housing Element, including those for neighborhood revitalization, homelessness services, and Wicomico County housing services. Many of the state agency links in this section are broken. A corrected list is below.

[2020 – 2024 Consolidated Plan](#). Please note the consolidated plan is for 2020 – 2024 rather than 2025.
[2024 Annual Action Plan](#)

City of Fruitland Sustainable Communities Plan

MDP recommends that the city consider reviewing the alignment between the Housing Visions (page 38), the Housing Policies and Implementation (page 44), and Map 4: Future Land Use. For example, the visions indicate the desire to encourage mixed-use, affordable housing near Route 13, yet this is not included in the policies on page 44, and Map 4 does not appear to recommend significant multifamily residential nor mixed-use along the Route 13 corridor. MDP does note, however, that page 11 of the Land Use Chapter includes an objective to “[p]romote more intense residential development along with business and job opportunities on the U.S. Route 13 corridor”. MDP also supports the implementation recommendation to create an ordinance to permit Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by-right, which the ADU Policy Task Force recommended as a best practice in its [2024 report](#).

HB 90 and Fair Housing

MDP recognizes and agrees with the Housing Chapter’s assertion that fair housing must be addressed regionally (page 44) and that it may be difficult for small jurisdictions to affirmatively further fair housing independently. LUA 3-114 requires jurisdictions to “include an assessment of fair housing to ensure that the local jurisdiction is affirmatively furthering fair housing”. The city should consider including insight gathered as part of the DHCD survey, mentioned on page 43, to help address this requirement, as the Housing Chapter does not currently contain a fair housing assessment.

LUA 3-114 does not define what an assessment of fair housing entails, but MDP developed [this webpage](#), which describes available fair housing resources and best practices and how jurisdictions might consider using them in their housing elements. It includes a section on data and mapping resources which may help the city with a quantitative assessment. It also includes self-assessment and community engagement questions which the city might use (or expand upon) to conduct a qualitative assessment of fair housing. These resources, among others, can aid the implementation strategy on page 44 to “[w]ork regionally to affirmatively further fair housing”. MDP recommends that the city includes more detail in the Housing Chapter about how it will complete a community or regional assessment of fair housing within the Draft Plan’s planning horizon.

MDP’s research into affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH) has shown that a traditional US HUD assessment of fair housing includes an analysis of the following four housing issues in a community.

1. **Patterns of segregation/integration:** Areas within the jurisdiction that are residentially segregated by protected class
2. **Racially or Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty (R/ECAPS):** US HUD defines R/ECAPS in metropolitan areas as census tracts with a non-white population of 50 percent or more and a poverty rate of 40 percent or more (or a poverty rate that is three or more times the average tract poverty rate for the metropolitan area, whichever threshold is lower). For rural areas, HUD lowers the non-white percentage threshold to 20 percent.
3. **Disparities in access to opportunity:** Areas within the community/jurisdiction that provide access to opportunity, such as good schools, medical facilities, employment centers, positive public health outcomes, and low crime rates. A fair housing assessment would consider if protected classes have less access to such areas.
4. **Disproportionate housing needs:** An analysis considering whether certain areas or populations within a community, particularly protected classes, have disproportionate housing needs than other areas or populations.

The LUA 3-114 does not state that these four issues must be included in an assessment of fair housing in a housing element, nor is MDP setting any standards for what must be included. MDP encourages the city to discuss the legal requirements of the assessment with its attorney. MDP staff are also available to meet with the city and discuss fair housing needs and objectives in more detail.

8. Sensitive Areas Chapter (no comments)

9. Mineral Resources Chapter (no comments)

10. Plan Implementation – Analysis

MDP suggests that there are several opportunities to provide specific “policies, recommendations, and or implementation strategies” that are currently embedded in the narrative portion of the Draft Plan, but which, however, are not reflected within the respective chapters’ policies, recommendation, and/or implementation sections. While not an exhaustive list of embedded text (that reflect “policies, recommendations, and/or implementation strategies” found within the Draft Plan’s narrative text within several chapters), MDP has specifically identified these types of omissions within MDP’s Housing and Transportation Chapters Analysis, found above.

MDP notes that the Draft Plan’s “Chapter 10 – Plan Implementation” indicates that the development of an Implementation Plan (post-Comprehensive Plan adoption) by the Planning Commission and Elected Officials “should look at the policies in each of the chapters” (emphasis added) - (page 56), which MDP suggests would be limited to the relatively few identified “policies” found within the Draft Plan. Given the limited number of formal “policies” within each chapter, MDP suggests the city work with the Planning Commission and Elected Officials to also consider the many “implementation strategies” and “recommendations” found in the Draft Plan, to better inform and develop the Implementation Plan.

11. MDP Comments on Specific Maps and Appendix B

Growth Tiers Map: The City of Fruitland Growth Tiers Map for SB 236 was incorporated in the city's 2015 Comprehensive Plan and was therefore considered adopted as of 2015. The addition of what appears to be one parcel to Tier 1 is reflected in the Draft Plan Growth Tier Map (in the central southwestern portion of the city). This parcel has been annexed since the previous growth tier map. All other Tiers appear to be consistent with the 2012/2015 map. However, the city should ensure that any changes from the adopted 2015 Comprehensive Plan Growth Tiers Map 5: “Growth and Planning Areas Map” to the six (6) Draft Plan growth areas (Map 5: Growth Areas) are properly reflected in the (soon to be adopted) 2025 Comprehensive Plan Growth Tiers Map. Specifically, MDP suggests the “Tier 2: Planned for Sewer, Municipal or Growth Areas” will need to be revised based upon the 2025 Draft Plan revised municipal growth areas).

Map 1: Community Facilities: MDP suggests the city consider the map symbols (within the map itself) be revised to be more legible than the Draft Plan map.

Map 6: Transportation: MDP suggests revising the title of this map to “Map 6 – Transportation Functional Classifications”

Map 10: Watershed: MDP questions the efficacy of this map and recommends a change to the scale to legibly reflect the city’s location within the “Lower Wicomico River” and “Wicomico Creek” watersheds.

Appendix B (Census and American Community Survey Data): MDP notes that several graphs and tables within the appendix are difficult to read (e.g., within the “Income: Area Median Household Income” section, the second graph “Annual Income” is not legible).

**Maryland Department of Planning
Review Comments Draft Plan**

STATE AGENCY COMMENTS

The following are state agency comments in support of MDP's review of the Draft Plan. Comments not included here may be submitted under separate cover, or via the State Clearinghouse. If comments from other agencies are received by MDP, the department will forward them to the City of Fruitland as soon as possible.

Attachments

Page 12: Maryland Historical Trust

Page 15: Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

Page 18: Maryland Department of Transportation

Page 26: Maryland Department of Environment

Page 30: Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Page 32: Maryland Critical Area Commission



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

April 23, 2025

Mr. Keith Lackie
Lower Eastern Shore Regional Planner
Maryland Department of Planning
201 Baptist Street
Salisbury, MD 21801

Dear Mr. Lackie:

Thank you for the opportunity to review Fruitland's draft comprehensive plan and submit comments on behalf of the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). Overall, we support the plan's inclusion of historic and cultural properties and the goals laid out for their identification and protection (p. 45 and p. 51, as well as the "Historic Features" section beginning p. 48). Specific comments follow below.

In the "Historic Features" section, we encourage mention of the [Fruitland Survey District \(WI-534\)](#) in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties; this documentation could serve as the basis for a potential historic district nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, which would align with the plan's recommendations to identify significant cultural properties. We also recommend pursuing National Register designation as a first step in the "Policies and Recommendations" section, while moving toward the local landmarking and designation items listed (p. 51 "Develop an inventory of structures within the City that are 50 years old or older;/Regulate development and redevelopment on historically/archeologically significant properties"). The infrastructure required for local designation and regulation includes creating and implementing a local historic preservation ordinance and establishing a local historic preservation commission, pursuant to Title 8 of the Land Use Article, which can take time to achieve. A National Register listing – if completed – would assist in these efforts. We encourage Fruitland to specify the need for a local zoning ordinance and commission in the narrative and/or alongside the recommendation items related to local regulation on p. 51.

The "Historic Features" section includes a helpful outline of most of the major preservation programs in Maryland. We did, however, note some inaccuracies, which are listed below.

- p. 48 "According to the Maryland Historical Trust, there are currently three properties within the City that are of historic, cultural, or architectural significance." In reviewing our files, I did not see any properties that have been evaluated as culturally or historically significant in Fruitland, although quite a number have been surveyed.
- p. 49 The "Protection and Preservation Programs" section would be a good place to outline what the comprehensive plan envisions to advance local regulation for historic

preservation (for example, enacting a local preservation ordinance and establishing a commission), per comments above.

- p. 49 We recommend retitling the section “National Register of Historic Places” to something like “Historic Property Documentation” or similar, given that the section includes different levels of documentation and evaluation. Within a “National Register” subsection, we recommend noting that there are currently no National Register listings in Fruitland, and we encourage you to provide a list of properties and the district included in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties within that subsection.
- p. 49 Please change “In 1966, the Historic Preservation Act established...” to “In 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act established....” Please also note that the National Register is a program of the U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and is administered at the state level by MHT.
- p. 49 Please eliminate the following sentences: “The MHT surveys historic buildings, structures and archaeological sites to determine eligibility of being listed on the State register. As with being on the National Register of Historic Places, listing does not limit or regulate the property owner on what can or cannot be done with the property. In order to be considered for listing on the National Register or having an easement on the property to be accepted by the MHT, the site usually must first be listed on the Maryland Historical Trust Register.”

There is no “State register” or “Maryland Historical Trust Register.” The subsection on the “Maryland Register of Historic Places” is accurate, and you are welcome to retain it, but MHT typically refrains from referencing the Maryland Register, as it merely consists of properties listed in the National Register plus properties determined eligible for the National Register by the MHT director. It is not a separately maintained list, and the name often causes confusion with the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties. The Maryland Inventory is – as you note – the catalog maintained by MHT of documented and potentially historic properties that have not been evaluated for historic significance.

- p. 50 Per the comment for p. 48, we have no record that the properties you list as “registered with the Maryland Historical Trust” (Blades-Moore House, Mt. Calvary Methodist Church, and Tony Tank Manor) have been evaluated for historic significance. They have all been individually documented for the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, but this is simply informational, and there are other properties within Fruitland that have been similarly documented. We recommend deleting this sentence.

It may be helpful to include a map of properties documented for the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, which may be accessed through [Medusa](#), the state’s cultural resource information system, as well as some photographs. As a small final comment, please note that “the Maryland Historical Trust” should be abbreviated as “MHT” throughout the plan, not “the MHT” or “the Trust.”

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the plan. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like more information about our programs. I can be reached at nell.ziehl@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Nell Ziehl". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Nell Ziehl
Chief, Office of Planning, Education and Outreach

Cc Rita Pritchett, MDP

April 15, 2025

Mr. Keith Lackie, Regional Planner
Maryland Department of Planning
Lower Eastern Shore Regional Office
Salisbury Multi-Service Center
201 Baptist Street, Suite 24
Salisbury, MD 21801-4974

Dear Mr. Lackie:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Town of Fruitland draft 2025 Comprehensive plan (the "Plan"). When reviewing plans, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development ("DHCD") comments on items for which political subdivisions can strategically leverage DHCD's resources to accomplish their housing and community development goals. DHCD also reviews comprehensive plans for consistency with relevant statute and, if appropriate, Sustainable Communities Action Plans.

Overall, DHCD staff were impressed with the quality of the Plan. Staff in the DHCD Division of Neighborhood Revitalization reviewed the plan and provided the following comments, which are meant to help realize the Plan's goals. We present the following in no particular order:

1. The Plan identifies a need to address dilapidated structures, including historic structures in need of repair for which the DHCD's Community Legacy Program grants could assist. Information regarding Community Legacy is available online at <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Communities/Pages/programs/CL.aspx> or contact Garland Thomas, Garland A. Thomas, Assistant Director - Statewide Team, Division of Neighborhood Revitalization, 410-209-5810, or email, garland.thomast@maryland.gov.
2. DHCD can further assist with home repairs that improve comfort, livability, and accessibility for homeowners through its Special Loan Programs. Planning staff and residents can learn more about these programs at <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Residents/Pages/SpecialLoans.aspx> or contact the program directly at 301-429-7409 or DHCD.SpecialLoans@maryland.gov.
3. The Plan identifies a need to address dilapidated housing for which DHCD's Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF) grants could assist. Planning staff can learn more about SDF online at <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Communities/Pages/programs/SDF.aspx>. Garland Thomas can provide more information.
4. The Plan does not show that Town of Fruitland has conducted a point-in-time count to identify the total number of people experiencing homelessness in Town of Fruitland, and the Plan does not identify goals or actions regarding services for people experiencing homelessness. For information on DHCD's programs addressing homelessness, please see more online at <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Residents/Pages/HomelessServices/Pages/GrantFunding.aspx> or contact the

5. Homelessness Solutions Program Manager, Suzanne Korff, at 410-209-5850 or Suzanne.Korff@maryland.gov.
6. The Plan identifies the community's needs with respect to income and poverty. Town of Fruitland or non-profits active in the Town of Fruitland may be eligible to apply for discretionary Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds administered by DHCD in order to provide services for low-income individuals and families at or below 125% of poverty. Planning staff can learn more about CSBG programs online at <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Communities/Pages/programs/CSBG.aspx> or contact the Poverty Solutions Team at 301-429-7525 or csbg.dhcd@maryland.gov.
7. The Plan identifies a need for affordable housing, including workforce and low-income housing and notes that many families in the Town of Fruitland are cost burdened with respect to housing. A portion of Town of Fruitland is within a HUD Qualified Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Census Tract. There are currently has a number of LIHTC properties and units in and near Fruitland. If the Town wants to support further LIHTC development, they may find more information online at <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/HousingDevelopment/Pages/lihtc/default.aspx> or contact Edward Barnett, Director of Rental Lending, at 301-429-7740 or edward.barnett@maryland.gov.
8. The Plan identifies a need to promote businesses development in the town's core. Info on DHCD's support for businesses can be found online at <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Business/Pages/SmallBusinesses.aspx> or by contacting Mike Haloskey, Director of Business Lending Programs, at 301-429-7523 or Michael.Haloskey@maryland.gov.

It is our understanding that the Town of Fruitland has elected not to renew its Sustainable Community designation, which will expire in May 2025. It should be noted that some of the programs referenced above, such as the Community Legacy Program and the Strategic Demolition Fund are restricted to designated Sustainable Communities. Depending on local priorities, the Town may want to renew its designation as this would make the Town eligible for State of Maryland programs and incentives that could support the Plan's implementation.

Staff in DHCD's Division of Neighborhood Revitalization are available to provide technical assistance with preparation of an updated Sustainable Community Plan and application for designation. For more information, contact Tynan Stevenson, tynan.stevenson@maryland.gov, or call 410-209-5811.



We in the Division of Neighborhood Revitalization look forward to continuing our productive partnership with the Town of Fruitland in its future initiatives. Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Plan. If you have any questions regarding the comments above, please contact me at john.papagni@maryland.gov or (301) 429-7670.

Sincerely,



John Papagni
Program Officer
Division of Neighborhood Revitalization

Cc: Joseph Griffiths, Maryland Department of Planning
Rita Pritchett, Maryland Department of Planning
Olivia Ceccarelli, Division of Neighborhood Revitalization
Tynan Stevenson, DHCD Division of Neighborhood Revitalization
Garland Thomas, DHCD Division of Neighborhood Revitalization



April 22, 2025

Mr. David Dahlstrom
c/o Rita Pritchett
Maryland Department of Planning
301 West Preston Street, Suite 1101
Baltimore MD 21201

Dear Mr. Dahlstrom:

Thank you for coordinating the State of Maryland's comments on The City of Fruitland Comprehensive Plan – Draft 2025 Comprehensive Plan (the Plan). The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following comments on the Plan for consistency with the State of Maryland and MDOT's goals and objectives:

General Comments

- In general, the Plan is consistent with MDOT plans and programs. The MDOT supports the goals of the Plan, which includes updating the zoning code to reflect modern and flexible code drafting practices, and protection of natural resources.
- The MDOT supports the City of Fruitland's emphasis on public transportation including expanded public transportation access on the Lower Eastern Shore with Shore Transit and the Salisbury-Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (S-WMPO).
- Commuter Choice Maryland is MDOT's Travel Demand Management (TDM) program, and it could be incorporated into the Plan as a strategy to support the Plan. The program offers an extensive menu of commuter transportation services, such as ridesharing. Please visit www.CommuterChoiceMaryland.com for more information.
- The MDOT supports shifting transportation mode choice towards transit and active transportation (bicycle and pedestrian etc.), shortening automobile trips, and increasing car and van pooling commuter efforts. These are all critical components to building efficient, equitable, and sustainable places. For more information on MDOT planning and programming efforts, please contact the Office of Active Transportation and Micromobility and see our Maryland's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans and Programs web page <https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=24>.
- Please continue to coordinate with the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) for the ongoing expansion of regional transit and the coordination of MDOT supported locally operated transit services (LOTS). The MTA also supports park and ride (with the State Highway Administration (SHA)), demand response services, paratransit, medical services, and senior-center transportation options. For local transit service planning, please contact Mr. Jason Kepple, MTA Regional Planner at 410-767-7330, or via email at JKepple@mdot.maryland.gov.

Maryland State Highway Administration Comments

- If you have any questions or need additional information about the following comments, please contact Mr. Ben Allen, SHA Regional Planner, at 410-545-5649 or email at ballen3@mdot.maryland.gov; or email Mr. Joseph Lombardo, SHA Assistant Regional Planner, at jlombardo.consultant@mdot.maryland.gov.

Chapter 6 Transportation Element

- P. 31, Introduction: Please ensure that the Transportation Element Checklist is properly linked.
- P. 32, Functional Classification and Roadways: SHA is currently updating its urban boundary locations and associated functional classification data. Please reach out to Mr. Darren Bean, SHA Regional Planner, for additional information at 410-545-0071 or dbean@mdot.maryland.gov.
- P. 34, Alternative Transportation: Consider adopting the MDOT Complete Streets Initiative. The Complete Streets initiative identifies a range of options for multimodal transportation, which includes active transportation (i.e., human-powered mobility such as biking or walking) during roadway improvement delivery. To review other resources and access this information, please visit:
<https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=207>;
- P. 35, Sidewalks and Pedestrian Paths: Consider including various available grant opportunities including:
 - Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program: a reimbursable, federally funded program for local sponsors to complete community projects designed to strengthen the intermodal transportation system. The program provides funding for projects that enhance the cultural, aesthetic, historic, and intermodal transportation system. The program can assist with projects that create bicycle and pedestrian facilities, restore historic transportation buildings, convert abandoned railway corridors to pedestrian trails, mitigate highway runoff, and other transportation-related enhancements. Project sponsors are required to provide a minimum 20% of the total project as a match.
 - Recreational Trails Program: a federally funded program that SHA administers on a reimbursement basis. Like the TA Program, the Recreational Trails Program may reimburse a local project sponsor up to 80% of the project's total eligible costs to develop community-based, motorized, and non-motorized recreational trail projects.
 - MDOT's Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program: a program that allocates State transportation funds administered by the MDOT Secretary's Office to promote biking as an alternative transportation mode. For further information on these resources please visit:
<https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=24>.

- P. 35, Sidewalks and Pedestrian Paths: Consider mentioning that Fruitland is included in a Suburban Activity Center/Traditional Town Context Zone. It is recommended that any roadway improvements include appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodation. For all roadway and sidewalk improvements to SHA roadway facilities, please provide for and maintain bicycle facilities as well as full ADA-compliant pedestrian facilities. To determine an appropriate bicycle accommodation, please reference the 2050 Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan by visiting <https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=24>.
- P. 35, Sidewalks and Pedestrian Paths: US 13 BU from MD 513 to College Avenue is included as a pedestrian safety action plan (PSAP) corridor. The SHA's District 1 office has not yet pursued a study to determine what improvements are warranted. For additional information on possible improvements and schedule, please contact Mr. Dan Wilson, SHA District 1 Assistant District Engineer, Traffic, at 410-677-4000 or dwilson12@mdot.maryland.gov.
- P. 36, Transportation Improvements: Please add the details of the adjacent Highway Needs Inventory (HNI) project, which includes a Divided Highway Reconstruction project on US 13 from the Somerset County line to the start of US 13 Business.
- P. 36 – Transportation Improvements: Please refer to the latest 2024 or 2025 Wicomico County Priority Letter by visiting <https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=82>.
- P. 36, Improvements Plan, Intermediate Range: SHA is pursuing a Bridge Replacement project on US 13 BU over Tonytank Pond, which is anticipated to be completed by 2031. For additional information, please contact Mr. Jordan Tacchetti of SHA Office of Structures at 410-545-8378 or jtacchetti@mdot.maryland.gov.

Mr. David Dahlstrom
Page Four

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the Plan. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Dan Janousek, Regional Planner, MDOT Office of Planning, Programming, and Project Delivery (OPPPD) at 410-865-1098, toll free at 888-713-1414, or via email at djanousek@mdot.maryland.gov. Mr. Janousek will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoff Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Geoff Anderson
Chief, OPPPD, MDOT

cc: Mr. Ben Allen, Regional Planner, SHA
Mr. Darren Bean, Assistant Regional Planner, SHA
Mr. Jason Kepple Taylor, Regional Planner, MTA
Mr. Joseph Lombardo, Transportation Planner, SHA
Mr. Jordan Tacchetti, Team Leader, Project Management, SHA
Mr. Dan Wilson, Assistant District Engineer, Traffic, SHA

TSO Office of Active Transportation and Micromobility
City of Fruitland 2025 Comprehensive Plan **Comments**

Subject: City of Fruitland 2025 Comprehensive Plan

Originating Agency/Office: City of Fruitland

☒ Yes ☐ No

Does this work include active transportation and/or micromobility components?

The Plan describes alternative transportation network within the City. The transportation improvements plan considers short, intermediate and long-range improvements, including expansion of the sidewalk network.

OATM Review Comment Summary

The comprehensive plan identifies the existing alternative transport network within the City, and notes that the 2050 BPMP identifies this area as a priority area from the bicycle infrastructure gap analysis. Data utilized in the 2050 BPMP indicates that Fruitland has areas that are considered medium through very high short trip opportunity areas and a generally low bicycle level of traffic stress network. Fruitland is considered a suburban activity center/suburban context zone under SHA's Context Driven framework. The Context Driven Toolkit offers context-specific countermeasures for consideration.

OATM recommends that any improvements to the transportation network utilize a complete streets approach to planning and design for the goals outline in the Transportation Improvements Plan. Resources to support Complete Streets including state-maintained data, tools, and best practices can be found at <https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/completestreets>. Capital improvements within MDOT right of way in Fruitland will meet the requirements set forth by the MDOT Complete Streets Policy and Implementation Plan.

OATM recommends the City consider utilizing state and federal funding sources outlined on the MDOT discretionary grant page to support transportation goals.

2050 State Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP)

Does this work meet some or all the following BPMP goals?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Leverage active transportation investments for building sustainable, equitable and resilient communities.

☐ Yes ☒ No

Improve the safety of active transportation travel through infrastructure and resource development.

☒ Yes ☐ No

Better integrate active transportation and micromobility considerations in project and program procedures.

☒ Yes ☐ No

Encourage short- and long-distance active transportation trips through better connected networks.

OATM Priorities

Complete Streets

☐ Yes ☒ No **Does this work or plan take place within MDOT right of way?**

If Yes, include contact for CS Mode Champion to contact regarding compliance with complete streets policy. If No, encourage jurisdiction to utilize practices from MDOT's Complete Street Policy including consideration of CS early in planning process.

☐ Yes ☒ No **Does this work or plan prioritize [Context Driven](#) framework?**

Fruitland is considered a Suburban/Suburban Activity Center context zone. The context driven toolkit offers recommended countermeasures for this land use type.

Multimodal Access

☐ Yes ☒ No **Does this work or plan include or propose the collection of counts for vulnerable roadway users (VRU)?**

Please consider submitting data to OATM should any proposed work require VRU data collection.

☒ Yes ☐ No **Does this work or plan include data that could be contributed to the [Maryland Sidewalk Data Collaboration](#) effort?**

OATM encourages coordination with the local jurisdiction to contribute data to the Maryland Sidewalk Data Collaboration.

☒ Yes ☐ No **Is the work or plan in an area with high equity need-low bicycle accessibility based on the [Bicycle Infrastructure Gap Analysis](#)?**

OATM encourages use of resources including the Bicycle Accessibility analysis, Context Driven toolkit and Complete Streets to prioritize and identify the best facility improvements to increase bicycle accessibility.

☐ Yes ☒ No **Does this work or plan increase [access to transit](#)?**

Shore Transit provides public transportation services within the Tri-County region, with three routes that run through the City. There is no indication of the expansion of Shore Transit service. S-WMPO's long range transportation plan Connect 2050, identifies a need for expanded public transit access in this region.

☒ Yes ☐ No **Is this work or plan within a [short trip opportunity area](#) (STOA)?**

STOAs have a greater potential for active transportation trips. OATM encourages use of the Context Driven guidance and to seek opportunities to increase access for both active transportation and micromobility within the area.

Transportation Trails

☐ Yes ☒ No **Does this work or plan create a new connection or enhance an existing connection to the statewide trail network?**

Fruitland identifies opportunities for expansion of the bicycle path and sidewalk/pedestrian path network, including an expansion of the bicycle path on US 13 but does not include them in the improvements plan.

Micromobility

☐ Yes ☒ No

Does this work or plan take place in a jurisdiction with an existing or proposed micromobility permit/operator?

Resources regarding micromobility can be found at:

<https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=219>

Maintenance

☒ Yes ☐ No

Does this plan or proposal include mention of ongoing maintenance and operations?

The plan recommends that the City determines repair needs and forecasts the budget such to make repairs when they are needed.

Historical Crash Data:

For historical crash data, OATM encourages jurisdictions to visit the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) [Crash Data Dashboard](#).

Resiliency

OATM recommends this project consider climate resiliency including identifying risks, incorporating best practices in design and the utilization of new and emerging technologies in construction. Additional information, including a summary of PROTECT funding opportunities, can be found in the [2024 MDOT Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan](#).

Grant Applicability

Elements of the transportation goals may be eligible to compete for funding through the below grant programs:

☒ [Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program](#): MDOT-administered state funding for a wide range of bicycle network development activities.

☒ [Transportation Alternatives Program \(TA\)](#): MDOT-administered Federal funding for projects that enhance mobility and accessibility, execute safe route to school projects (SRTS), as well as the cultural, aesthetic, historic, and environmental aspects of Maryland's transportation network.

☐ [Recreational Trails Grant Program \(RTP\)](#): MDOT-administered Federal funding for projects that develop and maintain land and water-based recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Funding is a set-aside of TA funds.

☒ [MHSO Safety Grant](#): MDOT-administered state and Federal funding for outreach initiatives that focus on Maryland's highway safety priorities including the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

☐ [Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation \(PROTECT\) Discretionary Grant Program](#) is a Federal grant to plan for and strengthen surface transportation to be more resilient to natural hazards, including climate change, sea level rise, flooding, extreme weather events, and other natural disasters.

☒ [Carbon Reduction Program \(CRP\)](#) is a Federal grant which provides funds for projects designed to reduce transportation emissions, defined as carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from on-road highway sources, including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

☒ [Safe Streets and Roads for All \(SS4A\)](#) is a Federal grant to improve roadway safety by significantly reducing and eventually eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries, including bicycle, pedestrian and micromobility projects.

☐ [Community Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment \(EVSE\) Program](#) is a state grant to increase access to affordable and reliable electric vehicle (EV) charging networks, including those used for e-bikes and micromobility, and reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions in low and moderate income, overburdened, and underserved communities in Maryland.

Reviewer: Marissa Brown

Date: 4/10/2025



Draft City of Fruitland 2025 Comprehensive Plan

Maryland Department of the Environment – WSA/WPRPP

REVIEW FINDING: R1 Consistent with Qualifying Comments
(MD20250331-0256)

Water & Sewer:

Potable Water Supply

Pg 6 – The 2025 Draft Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) Well information appears have issues regarding the units. Several of the wells have units of “minute.p.m.”.

Pg 6 – The Comp Plan indicates Fruitland has 5 wells with additional wells proposed. The Town should work with the County to amend the 2010 County Water and Sewerage Plan (W&S Plan) to include these proposed new wells, and any other infrastructure needed for growth.

Sewer System

Pg 7 - The Comp Plan indicates a need for increased capacity of the WWTP, but does not provide a proposed flow. The W&S Plan indicates a re-rating to 1 million gallons per day (MGD). If the Town proposes a higher capacity than 1 MGD then the Town should work with the County to amend the 2010 County Water and Sewerage Plan.

Flooding:

Please be advised, the property or properties in MD20250331-0256 is/are in close proximity to Flood Zone AE (100-year Floodplain) and X (500-year Floodplain). The project coordinator(s) should follow local floodplain ordinances and Federal Emergency Management Agency's guidelines and standards.

It is advised that the coordinator(s) consider climate resiliency, which could include but not limited to the following steps (<https://toolkit.climate.gov/>):

- Explore Hazards: Identify climate and non-climate stressors, threats, and hazards and how they could affect assets (people and infrastructure).
- Assess vulnerability and risks: Evaluate assets vulnerability and estimate the risk to each asset.
- Investigate options: Consider possible solutions for your highest risks, check how others have responded to similar issues, and reduce your list to feasible actions.
- Prioritize and plan: Evaluate costs, benefits, and capacity to accomplish each action integrating the highest value actions into a stepwise plan.
- Take action: Move forward with your plan and check to see if your actions are increasing your resilience with monitoring.

The coordinator(s) is advised to contact Dave Guignet, State National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator, of MDE's Stormwater, Dam Safety, and Flood Management Program, at (410) 537-3775 for additional information regarding the regulatory requirements for Floodplains and Storm Surges.

The coordinator(s) is advised to contact Matthew C. Rowe, CC-P, Deputy Director of MDE's Water and Science Administration, at (410) 537-3578 for additional information regarding Climate Change and Resiliency.



MDE Comments for Environmental Clearinghouse Project Local Plan Review: Draft City of Fruitland 2025 Comprehensive Plan

Response Code: R-1

1. Any above ground or underground petroleum storage tanks, which may be utilized, must be installed and maintained in accordance with applicable State and federal laws and regulations. Underground storage tanks must be registered and the installation must be conducted and performed by a contractor certified to install underground storage tanks by the Land and Materials Administration in accordance with COMAR 26.10. Contact the Oil Control Program at (410) 537-3442 for additional information.
2. If the proposed project involves demolition – Any above ground or underground petroleum storage tanks that may be on site must have contents and tanks along with any contamination removed. Please contact the Oil Control Program at (410) 537-3442 for additional information.
3. Any solid waste including construction, demolition and land clearing debris, generated from the subject project, must be properly disposed of at a permitted solid waste acceptance facility, or recycled if possible. Contact the Solid Waste Program at (410) 537-3315 for additional information regarding solid waste activities and contact the Resource Management Program at (410) 537-3314 for additional information regarding recycling activities.
4. The Solid Waste Program should be contacted directly at (410) 537-3315 by those facilities which generate or propose to generate or handle hazardous wastes to ensure these activities are being conducted in compliance with applicable State and federal laws and regulations. The Program should also be contacted prior to construction activities to ensure that the treatment, storage or disposal of hazardous wastes and low-level radioactive wastes at the facility will be conducted in compliance with applicable State and federal laws and regulations.
5. Any contract specifying “lead paint abatement” must comply with Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 26.16.01 - Accreditation and Training for Lead Paint Abatement Services. If a property was built before 1978 and will be used as rental housing, then compliance with COMAR 26.16.02 - Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing; and Environment Article Title 6, Subtitle 8, is required. Additional guidance regarding projects where lead paint may be encountered can be obtained by contacting the Environmental Lead Division at (410) 537-3825.
6. The proposed project may involve rehabilitation, redevelopment, revitalization, or property acquisition of commercial, industrial property. Accordingly, MDE's Brownfields Site Assessment and Voluntary Cleanup Programs (VCP) may provide valuable assistance to you in this project. These programs involve environmental site assessment in accordance with accepted industry and financial institution standards for property transfer. For specific information about these programs and eligibility, please Land Restoration Program at (410) 537-3437.
7. The project may cause contaminated runoff from an animal feeding operation (AFO). Please contact the AFO Division at (410) 537-4423 to determine if this AFO will require registration under the General Discharge Permit for Animal Feeding Operations.
8. The project will result in increased numbers of confined animals at this animal feeding operation (AFO) and therefore necessitate registration under the General Discharge Permit for Animal Feeding Operations. Please contact the AFO Division at (410) 537-4423 to determine if this AFO will require registration under this permit.
9. Borrow areas used to provide clean earth back fill material may require a surface mine permit. Disposal of excess cut material at a surface mine may requires site approval. Contact the Mining Program at (410) 537-3557 for further details.



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

Maryland Department of Planning
301 West Preston Street
Suite 1101
Baltimore, MD 21201

Memo: MD DNR comments on Fruitland Comprehensive Plan

To: Keith Lackie
cc: Rita Pritchett

On behalf of the Department of Natural Resources, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City of Fruitland Comprehensive Plan. The draft document was distributed to appropriate contacts at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and reviewed. DNR offers the following comments:

Fisheries Ecosystem Assessment Division Fruitland Comments

- Additional development in the Wicomico drainage is a concern. The watershed is currently at 8.8% impervious surface (IS) and 0.28 structures per acre (C/ac). The target development for a watershed is 5% IS and 0.13 C/ac. Once development reaches a threshold of 10% IS and 0.34 C/ac, there are increasingly intractable aquatic habitat issues. The goal would be to conserve as much land as possible to stay under the threshold of development.
- FEAD staff sampled the Wicomico River most recently in 2018. Striped Bass eggs, Yellow Perch larvae, White Perch larvae, and Herring larvae were all detected at the site adjacent to Fruitland.
 - Analysis of Yellow Perch larvae between the Wicomico River and Choptank River (rural control) indicated that primary productivity may be lower in the Wicomico River and depicting an impact from development.
 - Runoff from town drains into the nearby spawning and nursery areas, so stormwater runoff is a concern. Strong stormwater management should be implemented.
 - Allowing mining in the critical area should be reconsidered. In the critical area, this would be very near the anadromous fish spawning and larval fish nursery. Water quality concerns could impact the productivity of these areas.
 - Additional considerations of other mining activities should be given to protect and maintain important fish habitat in the Wicomico River.
 - Additional protection of greater than a 25ft buffer along non-tidal streams should be given to protect fish habitat.
- Annexing areas with failing septic systems is a good idea. This will help protect fish habitat from high nutrient runoff.
- Infilling areas with development already present is a good idea. It will reduce the impact of increasing impervious surface in less developed areas.

Land Acquisition and Planning comments:

Page 7 notes that areas of Fruitland Recreational Park are privately operated under lease from the City. Most, if not all of this park was funded by Project Open Space Local, and generally leases are not permitted. DNR's POS group will need to review these lease(s) for POS Local compliance. You can reach out to Michael.Mcquarrie@maryland.gov to discuss.

Maryland Forest Service comments:

The Maryland Forest Service recommends implementing a Forestry Program, which would promote the State Forest Action Plan and the community could benefit from the addition of a city Forestry Conservation Ordinance and a Tree Care Ordinance.

- [USFS Wildland urban interface \(UWI\)](#) is an important concept to consider. Forestry conducted a review for Fruitland based on this map. At this time UWI is not significant, however with changing climate Forestry recommends further review and development of an urban wildland prevention plan. Please reach out to MD Forestry Fire Staff for more information.
- Additionally, programs like Tree City USA and Maryland PLANT Award could be a great way for the city to receive recognition for their tree planting and care efforts. Forestry recommends investigating these avenues. Maryland PLANT Award has similar criteria to Tree City USA and reading through this plan, we have concluded Fruitland would be a good candidate for that as well.

When planning urban plantings, thought should be given to climate change and what species would thrive in an altered climate. We encourage the execution of the recommendations from the [USDA Northern Forests Climate Hub](#), specifically the Forest Conservation and Urban Forests sections, primarily working with the Department of Natural Resources to update Fruitland's Forest Conservation law to meet regulations, inventory and monitoring of wetlands, and prioritizing forest hubs and corridors to mitigate habitat fragmentation. Maryland Forest Service agrees with the city's recognition that natural buffers improve water quality and recommend planting of unbuffered areas take priority followed by planting to augment existing forest areas. Maryland Forest Service can help identify sites and programs that can assist towards this goal. Finally, the Maryland Forest Service Supports the implementation of a forestry program to promote forest health. Maryland Forest Service and Maryland Department of Agriculture staff can assist the city in identifying prevalent forest health needs such as emerald ash borer (EAB), invasive and noxious plants, and encouraging the city's use of native plant species in landscaping projects. We also encourage staff awareness and training of invasive plant species identification and removal options.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions about these comments or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 443-534-4151 or christine.burns1@maryland.gov.

Best,
Christine Burns

Wes Moore
Governor
Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor



Erik Fisher
Chair
Nick Kelly
Acting Executive Director

**STATE OF MARYLAND
CRITICAL AREA COMMISSION
CHESAPEAKE AND ATLANTIC COASTAL BAYS**

Mr. Keith Lackie

Re: Fruitland Comprehensive Plan

Dear Mr. Lackie,

The Critical Area Commission staff have reviewed the Comprehensive Plan for Fruitland, MD. The commission has the following comment:

1. Fruitland anticipates annexing land north of the city that lies along the Wicomico River to provide public sewer services (Growth area 1). Growth Area 1 is in the critical area and would include waterfront properties and Buffer habitat. Currently, the Fruitland Critical Area code does not include provisions for establishing and maintaining Buffers. Following annexation, the Critical Area ordinance will need to be amended to include shoreline and Buffer provisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this plan. If you have any questions about these comments, please feel free to contact me at 410-260-3467 or michael.macon2@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Macon".

Michael Macon
Natural Resource Planner

CC: Joseph Griffiths (MDP)
Rita Pritchett (MDP)