

Executive Summary

This Bryans Road-Indian Head Sub-Area Plan (the Plan) has been developed to guide future land use and development in the Bryans Road-Indian Head Sub-Area (the Sub-Area) of Charles County, Maryland. The Plan addresses land use and development, transportation, environment, open space, and public facilities such as water and sewer, parks, and schools. The Plan also establishes a “vision” for the area; an overall image of what the Bryans Road-Indian Head communities want to be and how they should look in the future. The planning horizon for the Plan is 20 years, but the vision elements address a 20 to 50 year horizon.

The Sub-Area covers approximately 17.5 square miles, a little under four percent of Charles County’s land area. As of 2000, the Sub-Area was home to approximately 10,800 people, nearly nine percent of the County’s population. Important economic assets in the Sub-Area include the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian Head Division, one of the largest employers in the County, the County’s only airport, and the Bryans Road and Indian Head business areas. The Sub-Area contains valuable environmental assets including portions of the Mattawoman Creek Natural Environment Area, and a 2,175-acre, mostly forested tract purchased by the State in 1998.

The Sub-Area is part of Charles County’s “Development District” which has been designated as the County’s principal center of population, services, and employment. The incorporated Town of Indian Head borders the Sub-Area. The Town participated in the development of the Plan, but is responsible for planning within its boundaries.

Charles County’s 1997 Comprehensive Plan designated approximately 2,000 acres centered on the MD 210/MD 227 as the Bryans Road “Town Center” where higher density residential development and associated commercial and services uses would be encouraged. The Bryans Road Town Center today is home to approximately 5,400 people, half the Sub-Area’s population. The Sub-Area’s population is projected to increase by around 1,300 people, or 13 percent, by 2020. Jobs are projected to increase from 2,800 today to 3,100 by 2020. After accounting for approximately 220,000 to 350,000 square feet of existing commercial and business space, the sales potential of Bryans Road’s market area translates into demand for about 70,000 to 90,000 square feet of additional retail space by 2020.

Overall, existing traffic volumes in the Sub-Area are light to moderate and the existing road network handles existing traffic adequately. The heaviest volumes are on MD 210 east of Bryans Road. The Cross County Connector is a planned four-lane county road that, when complete, will connect Bryans Road with Waldorf.

Since the Sub-Area is located within the Development District, it is ultimately intended to be fully served by public water and sewer. Currently, however, service is limited to portions of the Bryans Road Town Center and the Town of Indian Head.

The Plan divides the Sub-Area into eight land use categories. With some minor adjustments, the Bryans Road Town Center Boundary as shown in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan is retained. Within this boundary, higher-density residential development is encouraged, and this area would become a focus for locating public uses and for investing in public amenities. Within the Town Center Boundary, around the MD 210/MD 227 intersection, is a 175-acre Town Center Core Mixed Use Area, which is to have a mixed retail/residential emphasis north of MD 210 and an employment/residential emphasis south of MD 210. Low to Medium Density Residential Areas comprise approximately 30 percent of the Sub-Area. Employment Areas comprise an approximately 950 acre area including and surrounding Maryland Airport. Commercial Areas recognize existing retail, office, entertainment, and service-type commercial uses in scattered locations outside the

Bryans Road Town Center. Open Space Areas are extensive including Chapman's Landing, Mattawoman Natural Environment Area, and county parkland.

The Plan includes a detailed vision plan for the Bryans Road Town Center Core Mixed Use Area. Actual development will very likely differ from that portrayed in the Plan, but this does not matter, provided the development that does occur is consistent with the Plan's key elements and design principles. Through public/private partnerships, land use regulations, and the site design, development and architectural review process, the County can guide proposals for development to ensure that they follow these elements and principles.

The Town Center Core features a community open space (town common), enclosed with existing and new development. The common would be situated at the intersection of MD 227 and Matthews Road. Development would front onto it providing a comfortable environment for citizens to shop, eat and meet one another. The common would create a new traffic pattern in the center of Bryans Road. This pattern could function in a similar fashion to a traffic circle, or roundabout. The common would slow traffic on Route 227 to a comfortable, safe speed within this two-block section of Town Center Core. New development would line the streets, such as Matthews Road, that lead to the common. The Cross County Connector, currently planned to terminate at MD 210, would be extended north across MD 210 to connect to Matthews Road.

The area around the Cross County Connector is recommended for a concentration of office and other employment uses, taking advantage of the excellent location at the intersection with MD 210. Retail sales, personal services, and general merchandise sales would be permitted only as a supporting component for employment uses. The Town Center Mixed Use Core boundary extends only a few hundred feet east of the Cross County Connector, so as to focus the Town Center Core area west of the Cross County Connector. To improve traffic flow and the image and appearance of Bryans Road from MD 210, the Plan includes an access management plan and recommends streetscape enhancements along MD 210 in the Town Center Core.

The Sub-Area is still coming to terms with the impact of the State's 1998 purchase of Chapman's Landing on future economic development. The Plan's economic development strategy is to protect existing assets especially the Naval Surface Warfare Center; support the Town of Indian Head's strategic plans; take advantage of ecotourism, recreational and heritage tourism opportunities; and create the conditions for future office and employment development by creating an attractive town center in Bryans Road, and setting aside abundant land for employment development.

Proposed new roads in the Plan are: a potential road between the Pomonkey employment area and the Cross County Connector; extension of Camp Hedges Place to Marshall Hall Road allowing Marshall Hall Road traffic to bypass the Town Center Core; and several new roads in the Town Center Core designed to create small development blocks and a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment. The Plan also includes a conceptual hiker-biker trail system and recommends sidewalks and bicycle facilities throughout the Town Center.

The Plan notes the need for stormwater management retrofits in the Town Center Core area, and recommends that an ongoing Mattawoman Watershed Study make management recommendations for the large Pomonkey employment area.

The Sub-Area Plan is not expected to have a significant impact on public facilities including water, sewer, schools, public safety, fire and emergency services, or library. The County has identified the need for a regional park in the area. The Plan recommends it be located either in Indian Head or the Bryans Road Town Center. The Plan makes recommendations for future uses at Chapman's Landing, to be forwarded to a committee that has been established to study the issue.

Plan implementation will require collaboration among a broad range of parties. Key next steps include zoning, subdivision, and site development regulations to implement key recommendations.