

INTRODUCTION

North Beach, located in Calvert County (the smallest county in Maryland) is part of the Washington Metro area, and is located only 34 miles south-east of Washington, D.C.; 28 miles south of Annapolis; and, 18 miles away from the Prince George's county seat. The Town was originally known and was platted and developed by the Chesapeake Beach Land and Improvement Company of Calvert County. The land was platted in 1900 in the land records by surveyor Chas P. Calvert. The streets were laid out in a grid pattern following the shore of the Chesapeake Bay. Street names replicate the names of cities across the country. Lots were typically 50 feet by 150 feet with a building restriction line of 20 feet from the street; however, many of the lots were later subdivided creating a 25 foot lot width.

Construction of buildings, most of which were summer cottages, began in the early 1900's. By the 1920's there was a thriving small summer community with homes, churches, and shops. A commercial area grew around the trolley system where Chesapeake Avenue is today. In 1910, North Beach had grown and prospered sufficiently to be granted a corporate charter by the State to be a self-governing municipality.

Between 1930 and 1975, several major hurricanes and fires caused extensive damage to the pier and commercial district. After World War II, legalized gambling brought a resurgence of economic vitality to Southern Maryland and the beaches. The opening of the Bay Bridge and the repeal of legalized gambling in 1968 caused a reversal in the economy of North Beach and Southern Maryland. Despite the past economic fluctuations and weather-related events, North Beach has continued to grow at a slow and steady pace.

Fishing and demand for water related activities have continued to maintain a traditional importance due to North Beach's location on the Chesapeake Bay. The Bay has provided a quaint and beautiful setting that draws residents to its shores. Cottages, built for summer homes, have been converted to year round residences while commuters and retirees have settled as permanent residents. Although there are still many summer visitors, many must seek overnight housing in nearby communities since there are not overnight visitor accommodations in Town.

During the 1990's, new construction of homes, from single family to high density dwelling units flourished and the population base of permanent residents increased. People from surrounding communities, as well as residents, re-discovered the town's greatest asset: the Chesapeake Bay which provides a high quality seashore environment for all to share.

The Town of North Beach shares a rich resource with Calvert County and the State of Maryland due to its location on the Chesapeake Bay. A reflection of the Bay is ever-present in the town's citizens and landscape. It is a resource well worth protecting and an environment that adds to the quality of life for the town's people. It is a backdrop to a Waterfront mixed use district that can serve as a vibrant recreational, shopping, and tourist attraction now and into the future. North Beach is a place that can provide an attractive, convenient community with amenities and an overall quality of life that will make the Town one of the most-desirable, family friendly places to visit, shop, and to settle down in Southern Maryland.

PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

In July 2008, the Town of North Beach started working diligently to draft a revision to their 1998 Comprehensive Plan and to provide two new sections that were mandated by the State: the Municipal Growth Element and the Water Resources Element. The Planning Commission undertook the important task of defining the characteristics of the town and to set a positive course for North Beach over the next twenty years. The Planning Commission provided data to help update the Plan at several work sessions in the later half of 2008 and 2009. As a result, the Plan articulates a community vision and direction and will present goals, objectives, and implementation strategies that can help the town achieve the future they desire.

The 2009 North Beach Comprehensive Plan has been prepared with revisions and additions to the adopted 1998 Plan. It complies with key pieces of legislation of the State and takes into account major changes that have been made by the Town since 1998. It is based on Planning Commission and Mayor and Council work sessions; numerous interviews with elected officials, community service providers, County and Town employees; individual and joint public hearings with the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council, citizen interviews, and the opportunity for citizens to participate in public hearings. The Plan has been prepared in conjunction with review of all appropriate Town documents and with Calvert County's Comprehensive Plan, Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan, and other documents as referenced in Appendix A.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

On the onset of the Comprehensive Plan Process, an advertised public hearing was held by the Mayor and Council and Planning Commission to receive citizen's comments. Since it was not well attended, a survey was circulated to the community to assess issues that were most important to the citizens and how they would like to see their town develop over the next twenty years. The entire survey is located in Appendix B with results, however; some of the most repetitive and significant comments are listed below.

Citizen Interview and Survey Comments

- Do not over develop the Town; and, preserve the character and charm of our family friendly small town.
- Manage and direct growth to maximize revenues.
- Expand revenue opportunities for the Town.
- Expand and market the commercial zone, particularly the Waterfront mixed use district to attract businesses for residents and tourists.
- Encourage retail services that will add viability to our downtown area.
- Strengthen the architectural guidelines and include them in more areas of Town.
- Preserve our historic heritage.
- Do not destroy the view shed of the Chesapeake Bay, but instead, accentuate it as our most attractive asset for all to enjoy.
- Expand bicycle and pedestrian paths within the Town and connect them to the boardwalk so the services will be safely available within walking and biking distance.
- Expand public parking in the downtown to support tourism and aid in revitalization.
- Enhance streetscape improvements to redevelop the downtown area.

- Protect the Bay and its marshes and add recreational opportunities that are water related.

PURPOSE

This Comprehensive Plan for North Beach is the official policy document that provides for private and public decisions to be made concerning development and future growth during the planning period. It focuses on the town's physical development; addresses public policy for government spending and provision of public services; and serves as a guide to be used when evaluating proposed projects and drafting and implementing land use regulations and ordinances. It will assist the Town in managing growth in the built environment while preserving the natural environment.

The Plan is a resource for the County and the State when reviewing infrastructure plans; to determine funding of local projects to award grants; and to approve State permits. Therefore, several sections will include statistics from the State and County, as well as, other municipalities in which the town shares infrastructure and facilities under inter-jurisdictional agreements.

The town may use this document for guidance when trying to achieve concurrence between growth and infrastructure; to balance growth between commercial and various types of residential development; and to protect natural resources and sensitive areas.

It will help businesses' make decisions on where they can locate within the town, and provide residents with information to plan where they want to live or how their community is affected by development. Most importantly, the Plan is aimed at preserving the town's distinct character and improving the quality of life for their residents while ensuring economically viability.

The Plan is not a document to be shelved; it is one that should be used during amendment of the Zoning, Subdivision, and Adequate Facilities Ordinances, the Water and Sewer Plan, and other pertinent land use documents. It should be consulted when making development decisions that may involve future rezoning of properties, reviewing annexation petitions, or during development review.

Box IN-1

The Plan is divided into nine elements and two appendices. Most elements contain strategies to provide guidance to implement goals, polices, and strategies.

LEGAL BASIS

Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland provides the legal framework and content for comprehensive planning. The Planning Commission has the responsibility to draft a Comprehensive Plan and then recommend its adoption to the Mayor and Town Council. After formulation of a Plan, the legislation requires all jurisdictions to review and update the Plan at intervals of no more than six years.

The "Seven Visions" identified in the Maryland Economic Growth, Resources Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 must, also, be incorporated into the Plan. However, as a result of year 2000 amendments there are eight visions to be incorporated.

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas,
2. Sensitive areas are protected,

3. In rural area, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected,
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic,
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced,
6. To assure the achievement of items (1) through (5) of this section, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined,
7. Adequate public facilities and infrastructures under the control of the County or municipal corporations are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur, and
8. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

This Comprehensive Plan update addresses all of the above so that this plan can guide the town of North Beach through their project planning period of 2030. Several of their efforts that meet these visions are exemplified below. Others will follow in the remainder of this Comprehensive Plan.

Since the 1998 Comprehensive Plan was approved, the Town has continued to concentrate development in suitable areas. North Beach is a town containing 2.8 square miles with a small portion of land area in Chesapeake Bay marsh land. It contains approximately 33 blocks in the older part of town; however, in 1996 property located at the western end of Second Street was annexed from Calvert County. The annexed area is now the location of an approved townhouse community with 115 newly constructed townhouses: some of which are garage townhouses. At this time this community is not totally built out.

Another area of Town near Frederick Street and Eighth Avenue contains a fairly dense area of town homes and apartments. Some of these are Senior Citizen apartments. There have been a number of improvements to the town since the 1998 Comprehensive Plan adoption. A new Community Center opened at Dayton and Fourth Avenue. Calvert County Senior Center has been constructed on Chesapeake Avenue; the Girls and Boys Club opened their facility at Fourth Street; and a three story, 16 unit residential condominiums for Senior Citizens has been built between Chesapeake and Bay Avenues at Third Avenue. The Boardwalk and Pier that has long been a feature in North Beach's history have been rebuilt and a bicycle path has been added along Bay Avenue.

The Town has few lots that are vacant; however, there is a large property between Third and Fifth Avenues that fronts on Bay Avenue that is undeveloped and prime for development. Future housing growth potential will occur on a few infill lots, redevelopment of existing lots; and any annexable land that is feasible within adjacent Counties. Additional information relative to future housing will be found in the Municipal Growth Element. The Town has been successful in funding several of their public improvement projects and updating their development ordinances by applying and receiving grants.

While all of this development has been occurring, care has been given to protecting sensitive areas and in making North Beach a sustainable community where the built environment does not conflict with its natural environment. The Town is bordered on its east side by the waters of the Chesapeake Bay, and on the northwest by a large tidal wetland ecosystem. In the past this tidal wetland ecosystem has been considered to be part of the location of a Nature and History Center project which has not been built to date. The public works yard, on Eleventh Avenue, had been considered as the location for a building for this project. The public works yard is located adjacent to the tidal wetlands on its south side. The tidal wetlands would serve the purpose of being preserved

for field trips with a boardwalk being constructed to view wild life and educate visitors about the importance of stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and its wetlands and estuaries.

The boardwalk and revetment project was completed by the Town to help protect the community from storm water from the Chesapeake Bay and provides recreational enjoyment for residents.

The Town realizes the importance of economic growth and will continue to streamline its development regulations to aid developers in expeditiously proceeding through the development process. However, the public officials realize that the developers should be willing to provide quality development that will attract businesses in the downtown area, especially in the Waterfront mixed use district. During the adoption of their current Zoning Ordinance, the Mayor and Council approved design guidelines for this district that will help to ensure a vibrant, economically viable, and sustainable downtown.

Today the two towns are referred to as the "Twin Beaches area" and the residents of the towns of North Beach and Chesapeake Beach frequent each other's restaurants, business services, and participant in some of the same community activities. The County Library Branch in Chesapeake Beach serves both communities and the summer trolley provides service to tourists and residents traveling between the two towns. The Town has entered into a four party agreement with the Town of Chesapeake Beach, Calvert County, and Anne Arundel County for treatment of their sewerage. The sharing and coordinating of services and facilities is promoted in the Municipal Growth Element's mandate.

House Bill 1141 requires municipalities to include two new elements in their Comprehensive Plan: the Municipal Growth Element and the Water Resources Element which are incorporated in this Plan.

The Municipal Growth Element requires a far more detailed and quantitative analysis of the municipality's anticipated growth than has been required in past Comprehensive Plans. It requires coordination between municipal and county representatives before the Comprehensive Plan can be accepted by the State. Ordinances and materials from Calvert County and North Beach have been used as background information and are listed in Appendix A for reference. Town, County, and State staff has been consulted during the preparation of this document; and the County and State will be sent a copy of the document for review and comment before it is approved.

DEMOGRAPHICS

North Beach is a diverse community that consists of year-round residents, seasonal property owners, seasonal day visitors, and a growing number of senior citizens. Although the availability of data is limited, this section will include all four groups of population, mentioned above, to provide a basis for understanding and meeting present and future planning needs when forecasting in the Municipal Growth Element chapter. It will look at census data for population size and characteristics; whereas

Box IN-2

Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland: the Planning and Zoning Enabling Act is the State's preeminent planning law. It provides for jurisdictional power for local land use and growth management decisions.

House Bill 1141: requires a Municipal Growth Element in all municipal comprehensive plans and a Water Resources Element in all local government comprehensive plans.

future population growth projections and development proposals will be viewed in the Municipal Growth Element. Other demographics pertinent to housing and economic development may be found in the Economic and Housing Elements of the Plan.

Historic Population Characteristics

North Beach has experienced steady growth over the years, with some fluctuations due to economic and weather related events. The number of both year-round residents and seasonal day visitors has increased moderately over recent years. Many of the summer homes in earlier years have been converted to permanent residents and homes damaged by weather related events have been redeveloped into larger and more stable structures.

It should be noted that the population and household counts of the 1990 census was disputed by Town officials. The official 1990 North Beach population as determined by the U.S. Census was considered substantially lower than the number of actual permanent residents. Other studies that have been completed for the Town after year 2000 agree that the number of residents in the 2000 census figure was underestimated.

The Plan has relied on available State and County data in conjunction with census data to project population for future years in the Municipal Growth and Water Resources Elements.

Projection data was verified with more recent studies that have been prepared. It should be noted that the census data is nine years old and will be updated in the 2010 census. At such time that the Planning Commission drafts the next Comprehensive Plan update, numbers can be verified and projection can become more accurate.

This chapter will provide general demographic information; however, more specific demographics relative to a particular element are found in the Economic and Housing Elements, the Municipal Growth Element, and the Water Resources Element.

Table IN-1 shows the historic population from 1930 to 2000 with the percent of change for each decade and annual change per year. In part, fluctuations in percentage of population may be attributed to a change of seasonal property owners to permanent residents of the Town, as summer cottages were converted over time.

BOX-3

The Town has refuted the 2000 census population data based on other studies and information. The 2000 census population of 1,880 is a decrease from the 1990 census of 2,179. The Town officials believe the population was slightly higher than the 1990 population. Although 2000 census data has been shown, projections in the Plan have been compared to rates of growth and percentages with County growth, as well as, historical growth in North Beach.

Population: 1930-2000 and Percent of Change
Table IN-1

Year	Population	Percent of Change by Decade	Percent of Change by Year
1930	107	-	-
1940	246	1.30	.13
1950	314	.28	.03
1960	606	.93	.09
1970	761	.26	.03
1980	1504	.98	.10
1990	2179 ¹	.45	.05
2000	1880 ²	-.14	-.01

¹ Census number refuted by the Town due to malfunction in collection methods.

² Population reflects revision by US Census. Census data for years 1930 through 2,000: US Census Bureau.

Table IN-2 compares the historical growth of North Beach to Calvert County and the State to better understand permanent population growth as compared to the seasonal population conversion to permanent population growth that occurred in North Beach.

Historical Population and Average Growth Rate per Decade
North Beach, Calvert County, and Maryland
1970-2000
Table IN – 2

<i>Year</i>	<i>North Beach</i>	<i>% of Growth</i>	<i>Calvert County</i>	<i>% of Growth</i>	<i>Maryland</i>	<i>% Of Growth</i>
1970	761	-	20,682	-	3,923,897	-
1980	1504	.98	34,638	.67	4,216,933	.07
1990	2179 ¹	.45	51,372	.48	4,780,753	.13
2000	1880 ²	-.14	74,563	.45	5,296,486	.11

Reference: US Census Data; preparation by ARRO.

Resident Population Characteristics

It is common for a comprehensive plan to analyze the various characteristics of a community's population, such as age, sex and education. While such information can serve to inform many actions related to future planning of services, the size and characteristics of the community's visitor population is also of importance for planning purposes due to the potential impact tourists can have on parking, public facilities and services, as well as, economic growth in the Town. Tourist data will be provided in the Economic analysis since they add revenue to the Town's budget.

2000 Population Characteristics: Age, Sex, Median Age, and
Household Size in North Beach & Calvert County
Table IN-3

Population	North Beach	Percent	Calvert County	Percent
2000	1,880	-	74,563	-
Population by Sex				
Male	886	47.1 %	36,767	49.3 %
Female	994	52.9 %	37,796	50.7 %
Population by Age				
Under 5	154	8.0 %	5,077	7 %
5-19	390	21.0 %	18,723	25 %
20-64	1200	64.0 %	44,136	59%
65+	136	7.0%	6,627	9 %
North Beach Total	1880	100 %	-	100 %
Median Age	-	33.0	35.9	-
Average Household Size	2.34	-	2.91	-
Source: 2000 U.S. Census; Calvert County Comprehensive Plan 2004; Summary by ARRO : n/a: data unavailable				

As shown in Table IN-3, the population is fairly evenly divided between males and females. The population of school age children: generally ages 5-19, is 21 percent of the population in North Beach and 25 percent in Calvert County. The median age of the Town's population is 33 years of age compared to 35.9 years of age in Calvert County. This table does not have a break down in older population other than 65 years plus; however, with many people retiring earlier than 65, it is likely that there is a higher percentage than 7 percent living in North Beach. Table IN-4 provides a more detailed picture of older population by age.

North Beach
Age of Householder
Occupied Housing Units
Table IN-4

Age	Number	Percent
15-24 years	29	3.6
25-34 years	208	25.9
35-44 years	190	23.7
45-54 years	176	21.9
55-64 years	95	11.8
65-74 years	62	7.7
75-84 years	28	3.5
85 year and older	14	1.7
Occupied Housing Units	802	100.0

Reference: 2000 US Census Bureau

Table IN-4 shows the distribution by Age of Householder by Occupied Housing units from the 2000 census. Of interest is that 12.9 percent of the householders are 65 years or older. An additional 11.8 percent of North Beach's householders are between the ages of 55-64 some of which are close to or who may be already retired. Henceforth, approximately 25 percent of householders are either retired or retirement is occurring soon. This becomes a significant statistic when housing, business and professional offices, and retail services located in town are addressed in the Plan.

Housing Characteristics

North Beach
Housing Characteristics 2000
Table IN-5

Occupied Housing Units	% ¹	Total Housing Units	Owner-Occupied Housing	Percent Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied Housing	Percent Renter Occupied	Vacant Housing	PERCENT VACANT
802	89.6	895	502	62.6	300	37.4	93	10.4

US Census: 2000

Table IN-5 summarizes the number and percentage of owner and renter occupied housing in North Beach. It can be seen that over a third of the housing stock in North Beach is renter occupied indicating a significant seasonal or transient population.

Educational levels in North Beach are fairly comparable to Calvert County as shown by percentage on Table IN-6. Among North Beach's population, 53 percent have participated in a college experience as compared to 52.5 percent of County residents.

Educational Attainment
Table IN-6

Educational Attainment (highest level)	North Beach	North Beach Percent	Calvert County	Calvert County Percent
Population 25 years and over	1,198	-	47,768	-
Less than high school graduate	211	17.6	6241	13.1
High School Graduate (or equivalency)	351	29.3	16,433	34.4
Some College	358	29.9	11,603	24.3
Associate Degree	61	5.1	2,751	5.8
Bachelor Degree	138	11.5	6,772	14.2
Graduate or Professional Degree	79	6.5	3,968	8.2

Source: U.S. Census

Table IN-6 provides a general breakdown of levels of educational attainment which will be used in the Community Services Element. The important point that should be noted here is that the Town is well educated. Education for some citizens is a life long process which makes it important to have appropriate institutions to disseminate information. Library resources, provision of child and adult dance, music, or art, cultural, crafts or other educational opportunities that are available locally can create a better community and add to the business services that are located in North Beach.