

PAST AND PRESENT TRENDS

The Town is an incorporated municipality located on the northeastern corner of Calvert County and is situated to the south of Anne Arundel County; its southern boundary is the adjacent Town of Chesapeake Beach. A truly unique and special quality of North Beach is its location that fronts on the beautiful Chesapeake Bay. There is approximately one-half mile of shoreline that enables the Town to front on the beach and have a tremendous view of the Bay.

The 1998 Comprehensive Plan depicts the existing land use in North Beach as predominantly single family residential. It states that almost three-quarters of the developed land within the Town boundaries consist of residential uses. The Plan describes the existing land uses as having a small percentage of commercial uses located along Bay Avenue between Third and Seventh Streets with a mix of commercial and institutional uses located along Chesapeake Avenue between First and Fifth Streets. It pointed out that some of the commercial buildings had been vacated and demolished which was detrimental to the community. Another issue that the 1998 Comprehensive Plan noted was that a low scale waterfront profile would assist in preserving the historic flavor of an earlier era, and permit water views for the upper portions of structures along Chesapeake Avenue. This is still a concern of some of the town residents who are concerned that the view of the Bay will be blocked if there are multi story buildings along Bay Avenue.

There have been a number of changes to the town in recent years. A new Community Center opened on Dayton Avenue; the Boardwalk and Fishing Pier have been rebuilt which provided fishing, crabbing, swimming, and other passive recreation to citizens and tourists and a bicycle path has been added along Bay Avenue that connects to the boardwalk. A new building houses the Boys and Girls Club; a Senior Center were constructed and occupied on Chesapeake Avenue; a three story apartment for seniors has been built between Chesapeake and Bay Avenues; and a large tract of land was annexed into town that provided 135 three story town houses with some garages. In addition, several multi-family buildings have been constructed in the downtown area. Several senior and market rate apartments have been added to the housing market mix.

More recently, other proposals are being considered or have had plans approved: a new town hall planned to be located on Chesapeake Avenue; a large mixed-use building that would be constructed on Bay Avenue at Fifth Street; and improvements for a mixed-use project proposed on land at the northwest corner of Seventh Street and Bay Avenue.

A trend in residential housing that has been continuing for many years and is expected to continue is the conversion of small one story beach houses into larger multiple story single family homes many of which can be seen along Atlantic Avenue. Homes are being acquired as retirement or second homes throughout the community. Rehabilitation and redevelopment of some of the older summer homes have indicated that the demand for this town is increasing and property values have increased until the mortgage crisis of 2008 which has slowed most projects from coming to fruition.

In 2004, the Mayor and Council approved a change to the Town Zoning Ordinance to create the Waterfront Renaissance District. This is the only mixed use district in the Town and permits residential with varying densities, professional and general offices, and retail uses. There is flexibility in the regulations of this district because the Zoning text provides for the granting of

modifications for a number of site plans requirements. The Planning Commission has design standards in place to have excellence in architectural design that is compatible with the historic architecture of the Town while providing for safety, convenience, economic vitality, and beauty for the Town's residents and tourists. With approval of this Comprehensive Plan, that action will be reinforced. The Zoning Ordinance should be updated to provide for policies and strategies referenced within the Comprehensive Plan.

The 2004 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan shows North Beach as a Town Center District. The Town Center designation's objective is to have the Town developed as an attractive, pleasant, and convenient place to live, work, and shop. In their 2004 Comprehensive Plan, the County states that rather than functioning as a bedroom community, the County should adopt policies that will promote the County as a desirable location for such uses as: vacation destinations, resource protection areas, and retirement communities, among other uses that are appropriate for the County. The Town of North Beach is now achieving those distinctions and will continue to do so in the coming years. There are several senior residential facilities and a senior's center in Town; a variety of recreational opportunities for day tourists, and resource protection are a key goal to protect their sensitive areas.

The Town is in the process of improving parts of town that have suffered from economic decline and severe storms that have hit the area. There are several development proposals that have been delayed due to the economic crisis of years 2008 and 2009 that were proposed on land that lies vacant or is under utilized. It is prudent for the Town to encourage infill development that can improve the quality of this older community. Infill development is in keeping with Smart Growth and is urged by the State as an efficient method of development because the infrastructure is already present at the sites. However, it is important when reviewing projects that infill development should be designed to be attractive and compatible with the existing development in Town. In addition, some vacant lots may need to be consolidated due to their small size. Amended zoning text to provide regulations to accomplish development of infill lots should be considered for small infill lots during a rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance.

BOX: LU-1

The Critical Area legislation was passed in 1984. The Critical Area is defined as a strip of land along the tidal shoreline extending 1,000 feet landward from the water's edge, or from the landward boundary of any adjacent wetland. While the Critical Area Act aims to protect resources within the Critical Area, the law does not prohibit development within the designated area. Instead, the law regulates and restricts land development. The existing North Beach Zoning Ordinance contains the regulations for such development.

Incentives may be necessary for infill lot development due to the fact that construction is generally more expensive since it is more difficult to realize economies of scale for one building rather than several in an area. Infill development can be beneficial, especially since the Town does not have a lot of annexable area around it. In addition, this type of development is efficient for emergency and public safety because it makes turn-around times faster; and, it adds to the goal of being a walk-able and bike-able community.

North Beach has portions of the 100-year flood plain, a Critical Area boundary that includes a large part of town, and tidal wetlands in and surrounding the community. These physical features add to the challenge of new or re-development projects; however, there are sites that still can be developed.

These same water features add to the ambience and recreational possibilities that can be offered in the community; and, it nick-names the Town as "the Jewel of the Chesapeake Bay".

Table LU-1 shows the 1998 Land Use Designations, the corresponding Zoning districts that are currently in the adopted Zoning Ordinance, and the percent of various land uses. The Residential, Commercial, and Mixed use zoning designations are compatible and may still be used with the Proposed Land Use Map.

Table LU-1
North Beach Existing Zoning and Land Uses

Land Use Type	Acreage	Share of Town Percent	Corresponding Zoning District
Residential: R-1, R-2, R-3	159.47	71.59	R-1, R-2, R-3
Commercial: Neighborhood and General	19.44	8.73	C-1, C-2
Mixed Use	7.05	3.17	Waterfront District
Recreation Marsh and Parkland	36.79	16.52	PR
Totals	222.75	100	-

Prepared from the Town Boundary map and Zoning Ordinance by ARRO.

Table LU-2 contains the current zoning in Town and a brief definition of each zoning district. As shown, there is currently 71 percent of land in one of three residential zoning classifications: R-1: Residential- Single Family; R-2: Multi-Family and Mixed Use; and R-3: Single Family and Mixed Use. A common theme in the definitions of these three districts is that uses should be compatible with residential living and a residential district. It is necessary to have clearly defined screening requirements and buffer yards in areas where mixed use is already established and new or re-development will occur in the future in order to maintain neighborhood compatibility in a Town that has neighbors and businesses in close proximity.

Landscaping requirements should be defined with specifications of landscaped materials and with alternatives for the Waterfront Renaissance district that may provide public art or community public improvements. Compatibility issues, also, can be addressed with Noise Ordinances, design guidelines, trash enclosures and inside storage of trash for commercial development; and signage regulations that are not intrusive to a residential neighborhood. The Waterfront Renaissance District comprises a little over 3 percent of the Town's acreage and is made up of mixed uses like residential, office, and retail. The district would, also, permit uses that are permitted in the underlying district(s) in addition to those approved by the Planning Commission as part of the review process.

Recreational, Marsh, and Parkland are combined into a Park and Recreational District (PR); however, this is proposed to be changed on the Future Land Use Map where land-use classifications and ultimately zoning districts will be expanded.

Table LU-2 provides the adopted zoning classifications that are somewhat related to the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. Part of the update of this Comprehensive Plan is to establish preferred land uses and provide zoning district boundaries that reflect those land use classifications.

Table¹ LU- 2
Existing Zoning for Residential, Commercial,
Mixed Use and Recreation Uses

Zoning Classification	Definition	Uses	Density
R-1, Single Family Residential	Intended to preserve and protect the primarily single-family detached residential character of the district and to keep these areas free from the land uses that are incompatible with and/or might adversely affect these single-family neighborhoods.	Single Family Detached Home Day Care Government Building	3.5-8 dwellings/acre
R-2, Multi-Family Residential and Mixed Use	Intended to promote the development of a pleasant living environment with multiple housing types and other low impact land uses which complement residential and institutional character and are compatible with residential use.	Single Family Townhouses Duplex Home Day Care Nursing Home Commercial Apartments	13-50 dwellings/acre
R-3, Single Family Residential and Mixed Use	Intended to promote the development of a pleasant living environment with single family housing types and low impact land uses which complement residential and institutional character and are compatible with residential use.	Single Family Detached Home Day Care Accessory Building	9-12 dwellings/acre
C-1, Neighborhood Commercial	Intended to provide locations for small-scale and low-impact commercial and non-residential uses while protecting residential character within and adjacent to the district.	Single Family Townhouse Small Retail	Minimum Lot Size – 2,500 SF
C-2, Town Center Commercial	Intended to promote the intense development of land for commercial uses that are compatible in scale and impact with nearby residential	Restaurants Single Family Multi-Family Schools Government Buildings	Minimum Lot Size – 2,500 SF

	neighborhoods, and to protect and provide a safe and attractive environment for shopping, entertainment, and community gathering.	Retail Services Professional Offices	
W, Waterfront Renaissance District	Intended to promote the development of a mix of uses that are respectful of and complement a waterfront location and contribute to recreational and tourism activities for residents and visitors.	Restaurants Office Retail Multi-Family	Minimum Lot Size – 2,500 SF
PR, Park and Recreational District	Established to provide and protect locations for parkland and recreational activities and needs.	Recreation Water Department Amusement Boat Sales	Minimum Lot Size – 5,000 SF

¹Table has been prepared using the 1998 North Beach Comprehensive Plan.

After analysis of the existing zoning classifications, it was determined that the nomenclature and characteristics of the current zoning districts needed to be revamped to define density, intensity, and types of uses. Table LU-1 does not include other designations on the 1998 Land Use Plan: Open Space/ Park (OS); Parking Lot(P); Church(CH); Town Hall (TH); Community Center(CC); and Town Garage(TG). Additionally, Special Use areas: like Scenic Gateway; Environmental Education; Marsh Walk; Paths and Greenways will not be on the Proposed Land Use Map; however, are planned to appear on the Community Services Map or the Environmental, Sensitive, and Critical Areas Map which is more appropriate.

Other overlays that are referenced in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan and need to be addressed are the Floodplain Overlay, the Critical Area Overlay, Growth Allocation District, Historic Overlay District and Institutional Zoning. The Floodplain and Critical Area overlays are really regulatory delineations and are shown on the Environmental, Sensitive, and Critical Areas map in the Environment Element. Regulations for both the Floodplain and Critical Areas are referenced in the Zoning Ordinance and are referenced in Appendix A as resources.

In the event that these regulations are updated by the State or the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Town would be required to adopt the latest version of the specific regulation. Institutional zoning is proposed to be replaced with a Government Land Use classification that indicates properties that are occupied by a governmental land use regardless of who owns the property. If the government land use ceases to exist, the property would revert back to the original land use classification.

The Growth Allocation Overlay's regulations are provided in the 2005 Zoning Ordinance; however, an overlay has not been placed on the Town's Zoning Map to date. Finally, a Historic Overlay is referenced in the Zoning Ordinance and should be retained. The overlay districts that are planned to remain in this Comprehensive Plan are the Historic Overlay and Growth Allocation Overlay. The American Planning Association defines an overlay district as: "A special district or zone which

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addresses special land use circumstances or environmental safeguards and is superimposed over the underlying zoning districts. Permitted uses in the underlying zoning district shall continue subject to compliance with the regulations of the overlay or district."

The Waterfront Renaissance district is the most recent zoning district that is intended to provide a mixed-use district in downtown. Uses expected in this district will be office, residential, and retail and service commercial. During this revision to the Comprehensive Plan, the Waterfront Renaissance district is expanded to include more mixed-use in the areas between Bay and Chesapeake Avenues and Sixth and First Streets. Additional services that citizens need on a daily basis and the many tourists that visit the area should be able to support more business establishments provided that the proper market studies are done to indicate the strongest commercial and office needs of the Town.

The Housing Element contains information relative to the historic structures that exist in Town and documentation that was done to preserve the history of some of these structures in case of destruction or redevelopment. There are several houses that are maintaining their historic character that are occupied. Although a Historic District appears to be unlikely at this time, a Historic Overlay could be placed on a property in town at the request of the owner. Hopefully, this would give that property some standing relative to compatible development around it. Ideally, the Overlay should have language in the Zoning Ordinance that would dictate what regulations are in place to protect the character of the historic structure that is in the overlay.

The adopted Zoning Ordinance contains text for the Growth Allocation (GA) Overlay District; however, no property has been mapped with this classification. The purpose of the GA district is to designate areas of the Critical Area Overlay District where the Mayor and Council have approved change in the current land use designation on specific sites and for specific development projects so that they may be developed to the extent permitted by this ordinance. If a land owner requests the overlay to be placed on the property and the application is in compliance with the adopted text, the designation is available to be put in place.

PROPOSED LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

The following Comprehensive Plan land use classifications shown on Table LU-3 should be utilized to formulate the next revision of the Zoning Ordinance. If these land use classifications were adopted, some text and district nomenclature would, also, need to be amended in the Zoning Ordinance to be in compliance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Future Land Use Classifications
Table LU-3

Land Use	Recommended Density	Recommended Uses
General Commercial	Variable	Retail services that serve the community and may serve other areas adjacent to the Town or tourists.
Neighborhood Commercial	Variable	Retail and office uses within or in close proximity to residential areas that provide residents pedestrian access to essential and convenience services.

Government	Variable	Publicly owned areas of the town where the public is invited to congregate or areas that are used for private public service.
Waterfront, Renaissance	Variable	A combination of uses including residential and non-residential. Uses may include offices, retail, institutional uses, and small passive recreation areas. The purpose of this district is to enhance and redevelop the downtown area along and adjacent to the Bay. This district requires compliance with the Waterfront Renaissance design guidelines.
Residential, Low Density	3.5 to 8 DU/AC	Single-family, detached, attached, and multi-family, and residential accessory uses. Neighborhood retail and services provided that land uses are compatible with and do not adversely affect residential neighborhoods.
Residential, Medium Density	9 to 12 DU/AC	Single-family, detached, attached, and multi-family, and residential accessory uses. Neighborhood retail and services provided that land uses are compatible with and do not adversely affect residential neighborhoods.
Residential, High Density	13 to 50 DU/AC	Single-family, detached, attached, and multi-family, and residential accessory uses. Neighborhood retail and services provided that land uses are compatible with and do not adversely affect residential neighborhoods.
Recreation	Variable	Lands and facilities generally owned and operated by the Town or other level of government for the purpose of recreation or public open space.
Conservation	Variable	Publicly or Privately owned environmentally sensitive areas.

Prepared by ARRO Consulting, Inc.

The Proposed Land Use Map shows North Beach as it is today with the following differences: the Waterfront **Mixed Use** district is proposed to increase by approximately 4.9 percent in size which will provide more housing, retail, service, and office uses that will be subject to design standard regulations during final site plan approval before development or redevelopment will be approved by the Planning Commission. This will provide more of a downtown area along the Bay and will connect the Waterfront **Mixed Use** district with the General Commercial land on Chesapeake Avenue between First and Third Streets and a Neighborhood Commercial zoning district between Fifth and Seventh Streets along Chesapeake Avenue. Any existing uses that are within this expanded area will be able to remain under the grandfathering provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and the property value should increase due to the fact that the Waterfront Renaissance district will have a number of amenities that are not required by the Euclidean zoning districts in Town. Conversely, the General Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, and total Residential districts in town will decrease by 2.7 and 4.5 percent, respectively. This does not mean that there will be less commercial and residential acreage in Town; it means that some of the Euclidean zoned property will transfer to the Waterfront Renaissance if the Mayor and Council approves of the change in the Comprehensive Plan. A Government designation will show where all governmental units are located within the Town. There have been some additional zones of Neighborhood Commercial located on Fifth Street between Erie and Dayton Avenues. One major goal of the Comprehensive Plan, that is worth noting, is that although the Town is built with small lots that are close together parcels that are zoned residential should be adequately screened from any new and redevelopment or rehabilitation of properties that are nonresidential. **Table LU-4 quantifies the amount of land proposed for future land use designations.**

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Proposed Land Use Classifications
Table LU-4

Land Use	Acreage	Percent
1. General Commercial	7.22	3.0 %
2. Neighborhood Commercial	6.41	3.0%
3. Government	10.50	5.0 %
4. Waterfront mixed use	18.00	8.0 %
5. Residential Low Density	106.05	47 %
6. Residential Medium Density	35.82	16%
7. Residential High Density	8.25	4 %
8. Recreation	9.00	5 %
9. Conservation	21.56	9 %
Totals	222.75	100 %

Prepared by ARRO Consulting, Inc. from Proposed Land Use Map.

FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Approximately 106 acres of Residential Low Density are shown located throughout the Town except for most of the eastern boundary that is made up of the Waterfront Renaissance district, the Chesapeake Bay and its marshland. There are a few blocks of Residential Low Density (3.5-8 du ac) with uses that are primarily residential along Atlantic, Annapolis, and Bay Avenues.

Consideration for placement of General Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial land acreage was based on expanding the actual land use occupied by commercial areas existing today with some expansion to accommodate future growth in retail and business services needed by the Town.

Commercial land use, comprised of three acres, is shown from First Street to Fifth Street on the west side of Chesapeake Avenue. There are a few government businesses on that link of Chesapeake Avenue as well. There is land designated Waterfront Renaissance on the east side of Chesapeake Avenue in that same area. Three acres of Neighborhood Commercial district is proposed on both sides of Fifth Street between Erie and Dayton Avenues and in the block between Maryland Route 261 and Seventh and **Eighth** Streets. Approximately, 36 acres of Residential Medium Density land use (9-12 du/ac) is shown on the San Francisco development and between Greenwood Avenue and Frederick Avenue and **Eighth** and Eleventh Streets. Eight acres of Residential High Density land use (13-50 du/ac) is shown between Greenwood and Frederick Avenues between Eleventh Avenue to the Calvert County line and Marsh/Wetland land use areas.

There is approximately 10.5 acres or five percent of land within the Town that is designated Government which originally was classified as Institutional. Fourteen percent of the Town is in Recreational, Conservation, and Marsh.

In their efforts to plan land uses within their town, the Planning Commission and elected officials have realized that it is important to enhance the town by continuing to provide recreational opportunities to the citizens and tourists, ensure that there is a mix of residential housing types for their citizens of all ages, and provide the necessary commercial services that will increase employment opportunities within the town and accommodate the growing population.

The land designated Waterfront Renaissance provides areas for office, commercial, high and medium density residential, and recreational opportunities in close proximity to the bay front. It is important that any development in this district is done with compromise between the developer and the community since it is the focal point of the Town. View sheds should be preserved and pocket park areas should be reserved for public use rather than used only by residents of a particular development. Streetscape improvements should be included with development plans that would provide trees and landscaping that will compliment the area. Bicycle racks and pedestrian safe walkways to garages or surface parking lots should be made available.

Since there is a growing population of senior citizens and retirees in North Beach any new, redevelopment, or revitalization projects should include consideration for those physically challenged who live and visit North Beach by providing handicapped accessible facilities and being sure that landowners repair sidewalks in front of their property that are not in good shape and would impede a wheelchair. Portable signs and other materials that businesses put out on the sidewalk should be placed so that there is a four foot clear area for physically challenged individuals to maneuver and pass unobstructed.

LAND USES ADJACENT TO NORTH BEACH

On the west and northwest boundary of Town, lies Calvert County land designated as Rural Community/Residential. To the north lies Anne Arundel County land that is designated as Rural and to the south is the community of Chesapeake Beach land designated as Residential, Resource Conservation, and Mixed Use-Low Intensity. To the east of town, lies the Chesapeake Bay that adds to the character and the charm of this unique place. Many of the land use decisions in North Beach, relative to the proposed types of commercial and office development needed in North Beach, are made in consideration of the land uses already existing in Chesapeake Beach. It is obvious that the population needed to support some types of commercial services is dependent on the people of both communities in the Twin Beaches' area.

During preparation of this Comprehensive Plan, the possibility of annexation of adjacent land areas was analyzed and it appears that there is no land outside of the Town to annex due to the fact that the only section of Calvert County that fronts Greenwood Avenue would be unlikely to request annexation since it is already built up and served by public sewer. It is possible **however**, that failure of private wells could require a need for public water in the future; **providing an** incentive for the County residents to annex into North Beach.

The proposed Land Use Map does not delineate vacant property in the Town; however a physical survey of the Town and analysis of the Air Photographs have located 7.27 acres of parcels that are vacant and **suitable for development**. Some of these areas have had proposed development plans discussed with Town officials; however, none have been approved. It is estimated that the number of

vacant lots and the increased density will accommodate future population and new housing required for that population. In addition, the proposed density that has been established with adoption of this Comprehensive Plan will provide additional housing units. This evaluation is placed in the Municipal Growth Element.

Approximately 106 acres are shown as Residential Low Density, which is located throughout the Town except for most of the eastern boundary, which is made up of the Waterfront Renaissance district, the Chesapeake Bay and its marshland. There are a few blocks of Residential Low Density (3.5-8 du ac) with uses that are primarily residential along Atlantic, Annapolis, and Bay Avenues.

Future Land Use and Densities with Corresponding Zoning
Table LU-5

Land Use Categories	Density	Typical Uses	Existing Zoning Designations	Proposed Zoning
Low Density Residential	3.5-8	Single Family; Duplex	R-1	R-1
Medium Density Residential	9-12	Townhouses	R-3	R-2
High Density Residential	13-50	Apartments	R-2	R-3
Waterfront Mixed Use	Variable	Variable	W	W

With adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the densities **as shown in table LU-5** would be adopted and the Zoning Ordinance would need to be amended to reflect the changes. The Planning Commission does not appear to desire to change the heights of buildings mandated by the Zoning Ordinance due to the importance of preserving the view shed of the Chesapeake Bay.

It is in the Waterfront Renaissance area that the Town has concentrated efforts to provide for high-end private and public improvements to accommodate compatible residential, office, and commercial development that will be guided by design guidelines to maintain the charm and historic attributes of the Town.

Although there is the potential for tourist related employment, at the present time there is few employment opportunities within the Town provided by commercial or service establishments.

It is the Town's objective to improve this area to provide for shopping and service-related opportunities on the ground floors of proposed development with residential and/or office on the upper floors. Areas designated as General Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial along Chesapeake Avenue and along Route 261 near Seventh Street will also provide for opportunities for commercial, entertainment, and service establishments.

LAND USE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Land use development regulations are generally thought to secure public safety, promote health and welfare of citizens, provide for adequate light and air and conservation of natural resources, facilitate adequate provisions of transportation, water, sewerage, recreation, landscaping, parks, and conservation of natural resources. With adoption of a Comprehensive Plan, review of Land

Development Ordinances should take place to insure that regulations are compatible with the goals and polices of the Comprehensive Plan. This Plan has a list of all polices in the Implementation chapter that will help guide the staff, public officials, and appropriate agencies and give direction as to the proper authority that is responsible for the completion of each task that is needed to carry out the Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation may be achieved by amending the following Land Use Regulations and Ordinances: the Zoning, Subdivision, Adequate Facilities, Water and Sewer, Solid Waste Management, Critical Areas, Forest Conservation, Floodplain Management, Stormwater Management, and Sediment Control Ordinances. Some of these ordinances would be amended independently by the Town with review and approval by the Planning Commission or the Mayor and Council. Others would be required to be amended by the County or State whereupon the Town would provide data for the ordinances, and then adopt the County or State Ordinance by Resolution.

Implementation may take the form of the Mayor and Council updating the Municipal Codes, passing resolutions, requiring procedures for accepting annexation petitions, or development applications, or applying for grants for infrastructure improvements. The Town's Capital Improvements Program may help to fund some projects recommended by the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, funding may be available from other sources, especially in the case of cooperative efforts by adjacent jurisdictions, County, or State who may cooperatively undertake building an infrastructure improvement with several entities.

The Development review applications that are submitted to the Town staff, Planning Commission, and Board of Appeals may be affected by the goals, policies, and implementation strategies in the Plan. Most provisions in all of these applications will be affected by the general goals, policies, and strategies. The importance of the Comprehensive Plan is that it guides the development process in a community and its approval represents the vision and direction that the Town wants to travel in the next twenty years.

The efficiency of having a direction and goal helps to streamline the development process since it helps people and the development community to understand what the Town would like to accomplish. If the Plan is followed and its goals are represented in the development ordinances and the Town Municipal code, the direction will continue to build upon itself and create a sustainable, logical, and desirable community.

LAND USE ISSUES FROM THE CITIZEN SURVEY

A summary of land use issues that were indicated in the citizen survey, and preceded drafting of this Plan, is found in bolded text below with policy suggestions that could be implemented with adoption of this Plan.

- ❖ **Enhance streetscape improvements, redevelop downtown areas, and expand the Waterfront Renaissance district to attract businesses and services for residents and tourists. Avoid Environmental clutter with signage.**

Several types of land use regulations can affect streetscape and redevelopment in the downtown area which would make it more attractive. It is important that as the Town grows that it continues its efforts

to be aesthetically pleasing and vibrant; that it provides economic benefits such as drawing tourists to the area; that it attracts businesses to the community to help provide necessary services; and that retail establishments needed by the residents of the Town are located downtown. A more attractive environment downtown and redevelopment of its vacant lots would accomplish some of Town's goals. Although there is some concern that street trees and landscaping obstructs some of the view of the Bay, street trees and landscaping can provide shade to cool the environment and reduce air conditioning costs in the summer and provide uptake of storm water, as well as, providing an attractive streetscape. A Street Tree list identifies the requirements to determine the best way to maintain a tree-lined street without the potential conflict of underground utilities or root invasion of sidewalks. Species could be selected that would provide less of a barrier to the view shed of the Bay. Such a list could be added to the Zoning Ordinance and could also be used in planting of public areas in Town. North Beach should consider planting in gateway areas at Chesapeake Avenue and First Street and Fifth Street and **Greenwood Avenue**.

Other benefits from trees and landscaping are the uptake of surface runoff that is not captured by conventional storm water management. Under natural and undeveloped conditions, surface runoff can range from 10 to 30 percent; however, a developed site can increase that percentage to 50 percent or more which may result in ponding of water, onsite flooding, erosion, and degradation of water quality entering the Bay. Low Impact Development (LID) techniques can reduce such effects and can be a requirement of the Zoning Ordinance and final site plan approval.

❖ **Strengthen and update the architectural guidelines and include them in more areas of the Town.**

The Waterfront Renaissance District is a zoning district where the Planning Commission may waive certain standards for the purpose of gaining excellence of design when reviewed by the Planning Commission during preliminary and final site plan approval. Design standards for this district are important since the district allows high density residential and nonresidential uses which may be quite compatible, if design standards are appropriate. Since various neighborhoods and zoning districts each have unique characteristics, before architectural guidelines or standards are expanded into additional zoning districts the Planning Commission should study the issue. More details would need to be added to the Zoning Ordinance design guidelines and standards if they would be applicable to Euclidean zoning districts. An option that might be considered would be adding a provision to the existing Zoning Ordinance that would allow for area plans or establishing planning sectors to be developed in particular areas of Town that are not overlay districts. Once the needs and the issues of the neighborhoods were developed, then flexible design standards could be put into place to address those needs.

❖ **Encourage retail services that will add viability to our downtown area. Do not over develop the Town; preserve the character and charm of our family friendly small town.**

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use map shows an expansion of the Waterfront Renaissance District that will provide additional opportunities for retail, office, and residential use. This, in conjunction with strong design standards that are clearly defined and articulated in the Zoning Ordinance, would not degrade the character and charm of the Town, but would instead reinforce the character. The Comprehensive Plan needs to demonstrate through its goals, policies, and strategies, the importance of a balance between the provision of services for the citizens of the town and the importance of retaining the charm which are goals that are not contrary to each other. Mixed use can be

very compatible if the correct regulations are in Land Development Ordinances and there is routine enforcement of the Town's development regulations.

❖ **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.**

There is a major parking problem in some areas of the Town that has been studied by parking consultants hired by the Mayor and Council. However, even if parking spaces are increased in the community, there is never enough parking to be able to accommodate all uses all of the time. Therefore, it would be prudent for the Town to promote less reliance on the automobile for resident circulation within the town. Adding additional walking paths, bicycle routes, and encouraging more public transportation to pass through the community would be beneficial. Requiring bike racks at all parking areas and garages during final site plan approval for new or redevelopment or placing them in secure public areas would encourage more rider-ship. Studies should be done to see if bicycle paths could use some of the paper street or paper alley rights of ways to expand more of the town bike paths. Use of the paper alley right of ways has been referenced in the Desman study to provide for additional parking, as well. Since traffic in alleys move more slowly than the street, a joint use may be feasible. Bicycle paths may be able to be placed in the street rights of way that do not have sidewalks on both sides of the street on the non-sidewalk side. Land use regulations could be revised to require fewer modifications for those who cannot provide parking spaces to those who would have to arrange shared parking for land uses that operate at different times. These arrangements must be secured by legally recordable agreements to be effective and long lasting. If conditions of shared parking are violated, the Town would need to revoke the zoning certification and the parties would have to renegotiate other parking arrangements.

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

Make sure that future projects in the built environment are compatible with the natural environment and that development preserves and enhances the community character. Development of recreational outdoor activities and provision of infrastructure for them for tourists and residents to use may be necessary. Development of the Bayside History and Nature Center may prove to be a viable and appropriate project during this twenty-year planning period. Rentals of canoes, small fishing boats, and dredging the boat docks for slightly larger boats may contribute to recreational inventory of the Town.

One benefit that North Beach has for streamlining development review is that its infrastructure is already in the ground, which limits review time for development plans. The recently created Waterfront Renaissance district does give the Planning Commission authority to modify requirements that may need to be adjusted to construct in a built environment. Overall, the regulations that are in place provide the Commission with the tools that they need to review a project fairly quickly. There is a good list of what types of information that the Planning Commission requires for review and the purpose of the district and what the Town is trying to accomplish in the district. However, it appears when reading the requirements of the design standards for this district, the text is vague enough that a preparer of a final site plan, who is not familiar with developing in the Town, would not know how to prepare a plan without trial and error. This can delay the process for a significant amount of time. The design standards are not detailed enough to let a preparer know exactly what they need to do before submitting a final site plan. For instance, a development plan needs to propose elevations of buildings by type prepared by a registered architect; but there are no standards related to ensure that the design

will "cultivate a clear and consistent image for new development within the Waterfront Renaissance District and help ensure compatibility between new development and neighboring properties". If everyone is submitting from the development plan list of Section 4 of the adopted Zoning Ordinance, and there are no specifications in standards to follow, then you could get a variety of plans that are not what the Town hopes to accomplish. This greatly increases the time of the development review process and it increases the chance of missing an important component of the Planning Commission or the staff's review because there is no standardization of the plans that are submitted. If the Town wants to have a certain building design, there should be standards to address building design: for example, how the buildings should be oriented to protect the view shed; what types of park or open space amenities should be included in the plan; if landscaping can be used or public art in its place; what requirements will the applicant be asking to modify, etc. Each developer will have the tendency to submit vary different applications if you only have a list saying that something has to be demonstrated rather than guidelines to describe what you would like to see.

The Town's land use ordinances have many progressive ideas in them; the reference above would improve the process and help to expedite it.

LAND USE GOALS

1. Continue to maintain and improve the quality of life for all residents of North Beach and insure that future growth reflects the goals, policies, and desires of its citizens.
2. Make adequate provisions for appropriate distribution of residential, commercial, and recreational land uses with a focus on preserving the Town's small town character, while maintaining and enhancing the quality of the existing residential neighborhoods.
3. Manage growth so that it keeps pace with public infrastructure and provide the necessary infrastructure for medium to high density residential, commercial, and office uses in suitable areas.
4. Strive for a **pedestrian friendly** and sustainable community by encouraging redevelopment downtown, resource recovery, energy efficiency, and conservation of resources.
5. Provide cultural, historical, recreational and environmental opportunities in Town by encouraging historic preservation, linking recreational and educational activities along the waterfront and marshlands, and supporting the museum and other cultural events.
6. Review and adopt design standards for new development, infill on vacant lots, and adaptive reuse projects that will complement and enhance North Beach's community and cultural heritage.
7. Provide for efficient use of land, ensure safeguards for environmentally sensitive areas, and promote high quality development and rehabilitation through the use of flexible and innovative development controls, and streamlined site plan review.
8. Encourage citizen participation in the land use planning decisions.
9. Encourage and incorporate Green building (LEED) and Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in future development decisions and promote enhancing streetscapes whenever possible.
10. Support a variety of housing types with commercial and civic uses in a compact, walk able, and bike able community setting.
11. Protect the historic structures in the Town.
12. Encourage the use of area plans to develop several small projects into one development project.
13. Encourage developers to provide adequate off street parking without the need for parking waivers or fee in lieu of not providing parking.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Policy LU.1: Develop a recreation and park plan for the Town to include gateway areas, public parks, and outdoor water related facilities.

Policy LU.2: Enhance design guidelines to provide for safe pedestrian walkways, a signage program; and bicycle racks in parking areas or facilities.

Policy LU.3: Promote new or redevelopment that incorporates environmental resources as site amenities. This can be incorporated in the Zoning Ordinance as a low percentage of SWM and be increased if it proves beneficial to the Town.

Policy LU.4: Require new or redevelopment projects to provide handicap accessible access on pedestrian walkways and public sidewalks.

Policy LU.5: A Town Tree list should be prepared and adopted so that the appropriate species of Street Trees and landscaping for public and private projects would be used which may provide a cost savings to the Town. Appropriate street trees and landscaping should be added to the Town's gateways.

Policy LU.6: Provide incentives for adaptive reuse of historic structures and incentives to preserve or document historic structures.

Policy LU.7: Review and amend the development regulations to expand and further define screening and buffer yard requirements when incompatible uses are adjacent to each other; and, to accommodate future increased density.

Policy LU.8: Continue to require Best Management Practices and low-impact development (LID) in site design techniques to minimize the impact of infrastructure on adjacent environmentally sensitive areas.

Policy LU.9: Avoid potential negative impacts on the built environment through site design with emphasis on facility access, building heights, scale, massing, and setbacks.

Policy LU.10: Promote high quality mixed use in the Waterfront Renaissance district with a higher residential density while still maintaining view sheds of the Chesapeake Bay.

Policy LU.11: Require developers to partner with the Town to fund infrastructure improvements associated with their development and develop and approve developer agreements for all proffers made during the review and approval of their final site plan.

Policy LU.12: Reduce sign pollution by amending land use regulations to promote the use of monumental signs and avoid pole and temporary signs. Encourage business to clear sidewalks of obstacles that impede handicap accessibility.

Policy LU.13: Encourage new development and redevelopment to be compatible with the character of existing or already approved planned development in the neighborhood

Policy LU.14: Maintain and enhance the quality of existing residential neighborhoods.

Policy LU.15: Continue to streamline regulatory mechanisms to encourage economic growth.

Policy LU.16: Review the Zoning Ordinance for standards for compatibility of historic structures in the neighborhoods. Draft requirements to provide standards for a Historic Overlay District.

Policy LU.17: All public buildings **should be LEED certified. **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design incorporates “green” building techniques with the goal of reducing the destruction of natural areas, reducing air and water pollution, reducing the depletion of finite resources and creating a healthier and safer indoor and outdoor environment.****