

# TOWN OF POOLESVILLE



## COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

December 5, 2011

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# INTRODUCTION

A primary responsibility and formal role of the Poolesville Planning Commission is to review and update the Town of Poolesville's Master Plan (Plan) for consideration and adoption by the Town Commissioners. The State of Maryland requires such action at least every six years to reflect any social, economic and physical changes in a community's circumstances and goals over time. All Comprehensive Plan Elements required by Montgomery County and the State of Maryland are included in the Plan, as appropriate.

The Plan is a reflection of the Town's efforts to help the community achieve its full potential, as outlined by the overall vision of the Plan, and is the instrument that enables residents, businesses, and property owners to develop and implement a vision for how the community is to look and function in the future. The Plan includes some of the important implementation tools necessary for its proper execution.

Important features of the 2011 Plan, based on various sources, are to ensure that the characteristics that make Poolesville unique are preserved and strengthened in future years, and that efforts to encourage and sustain economic growth within the Town are greatly expanded. Such efforts must complement Poolesville's unique placement in and adjacent to the County's Agricultural Reserve.

## **VISION STATEMENT - A statement of Goals, Objectives, Principles, Policies & Standards**

The Vision Statement is a collaborative effort of the Poolesville Commissioners; Planning Commission; Parks, Recreation, and Streets Board; Community and Economic Development Committee; local Chamber of Commerce; and community input through a focus group, electronic survey of local residents, and public hearings. The previous Master Plan, dated February 22, 2005, served as the foundation for this plan. The Vision Statement is the cornerstone of the Master Plan and contains a summary of the goals of the Poolesville community and specific objectives to support those goals.

The Town of Poolesville prides itself on being a caring community with small town values and character that endeavors to ensure that present and future residents are able to enjoy this lifestyle. Residents have stated that Poolesville is a wonderful place to live and raise a family and have expressed a strong desire that Poolesville's small-town character be protected and enhanced.

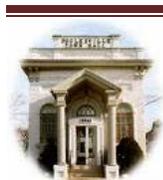
The goal of this Master Plan is to establish a guide to ensure that the characteristics that make Poolesville unique are preserved and strengthened in future years.

A number of objectives are key to realizing this vision:

(1) ***Small Town Character*** - Citizen input attests to their strong desire to maintain the small town or village characteristics that are the essence of Poolesville. A small town or village can be described as a clustered community with homes in close proximity to a town center with commercial businesses, public facilities, and pedestrian traffic. In concert with the objectives of ensuring some growth and protecting Poolesville's small town image, this Master Plan outlines steps toward incremental and limited growth and a town population of approximately 6,500 in the foreseeable future (see the Municipal Growth Element Section).

(2) ***Town Center*** - Much of what gives Poolesville its small town character is the Town's Old Town Center and associated historic structures. To enhance and maintain the Town, a Streetscape Concept Plan has been developed, approved, and begun (see Appendix D). When completed, this plan will strengthen and improve the appearance and safety of Poolesville's core downtown and business district and may encourage renovation. The aim of any future development in the Commercial District should be to enhance these desirable features and incorporate them into the design of new construction in an aesthetically consistent manner. Additionally, the restoration of old structures is encouraged (See Appendix C) and guidelines are included in this plan to promote construction and upgrades of buildings in the Central Business and Commercial Districts that are in harmony with existing older architecture.

(3) ***Schools*** - Maintaining schools in Poolesville and ensuring these schools have opportunities and resources at least equal to other schools in the County is a high priority for Town residents. The Town of Poolesville needs to continue to inform the Board of Education and local legislators of Poolesville's unique location within the Agricultural Reserve and the impact of our unique



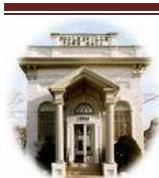
location on school population. Given the stabilization of the Poolesville High School enrollment through the creation of the Poolesville High School magnet curriculum programs, consideration should be given to creating magnet programs at John Poole Middle School if student enrollment declines.

(4) ***Business Community/Economic Development*** - The linchpin to a Town's identity and existence is a strong and vibrant business community. Local businesses contribute to the economic and social fabric of the community by providing basic goods and services, local job opportunities and non-profit organization support. In order to maintain Poolesville's small town character, it is imperative to encourage, sustain and promote the economic viability of Poolesville's businesses. The Town's Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC) needs to continue and expand its efforts to encourage support of existing businesses and seek creative efforts to encourage viable businesses to locate in Poolesville.

(5) ***Streetscape/Parks & Recreation*** - The Town of Poolesville should continue to be improved consistent with the current *Plan for Park and Recreation Facilities* and current Streetscape Plan. Under these plans, the continued implementation of the Park and Recreation Plan will create a more pedestrian friendly community by connecting neighborhoods to community recreational facilities and the Town Central Business District. The continued implementation of the Streetscape Plan along Fisher Avenue will enhance the appearance and appeal of the downtown area while contributing to the integration of the business, residential, park, and recreation resources in Town. In addition to providing facilities for active recreation, it is also important to preserve green space within the Town by encouraging land uses and densities compatible with the adjacent agricultural preserve and by conserving sensitive natural resource areas.

(6) ***Water/Sewer Quality*** - Ensuring safe, adequate water and wastewater capacity is essential for the health and safety of Town residents and the preservation of Poolesville as a desirable place to live. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is responsible for monitoring and managing the State's aquifers. MDE and the Town work together to ensure that the aquifer continues to be a source of high quality water and that groundwater withdrawal rates are less than recharge. This partnership has been successful and Poolesville is fortunate to have an adequate supply of high quality water that requires very little treatment. Poolesville is taking pro-active measures to reduce naturally occurring radon and alpha emitters in the groundwater to an extent that surpasses State and Federal guidelines and standards.

This Plan is designed to ensure that development within and adjacent to the Town's boundaries is compatible with its rural setting in an agricultural preserve and that the resources, health and safety of the Town are not adversely impacted. Consistent with this goal, the Town has enacted stringent requirements for petroleum products storage and a Wellhead Protection Ordinance that recognizes areas of influence external to the Town's limits. Protection of the wellhead area to minimize the risk of ground water contamination is a continuing concern to the Town and State. The Town must remain vigilant to ensure that existing Town Codes and Regulations limiting potentially detrimental activity in the wellhead areas are enforced. Continued monitoring of the wellhead protection area within the Town and in adjacent areas is of critical concern.



The Town and State are also concerned with wastewater discharge. During the past six years, the Town has made major improvements to its wastewater treatment plant and reduced the level of contaminants entering Dry Seneca Creek; however, efforts need to continue to reduce the amount of inflow and infiltration (I&I) of groundwater into the wastewater system. The reduction of I&I increases treatment efficiency and reduces the cost of processing input that is not wastewater.

(7) ***Historical Heritage/Tourism*** - Poolesville has a long history and roots that run deep, including local families whose ancestors lived in and settled the Town and its surrounding areas. The Town was a key crossroads during the Civil War and large encampments of soldiers bivouacked in and around Poolesville. While Poolesville can never become a major Civil War destination like Gettysburg, its location in beautiful rural surroundings, its location on the way to other nearby points of interest such as Sugarloaf and White's Ferry and its historical legacy does offer an opportunity for visitors. This Plan provides support for initiatives to promote Poolesville as a place to visit or live.

In support of these efforts to build on the Town's historic assets, Poolesville has adopted and should maintain designation as a heritage area, making it eligible for State assistance and support. Volunteer groups in Poolesville have developed initiatives to help support the Town's heritage area status and there should be plenty of assistance in the form of time and energy from Town volunteers to take advantage of available grants and programs.

