

Town of La Plata Comprehensive Plan July 2009



Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan

Laws, History, Plans & Process

- Maryland Annotated Code – Article 66B
- History of municipal Comprehensive Planning in La Plata
 - Adopted Plans in 1974, 1987, 1996, and 2002
- Additional planning documents and events:
 - La Plata Vision Plan – 2000
 - Plan for Downtown La Plata – 2001
 - 2002 tornado and re-construction
 - Community Design Guidelines (Central Business-2003, Commercial Highway-2004)
- Annexations Since 2002 – 161.5 Acres have been added to the Town's land area

Recent Changes to Maryland Planning Laws

- House Bill 1141 (2006) – requires two new Comprehensive Plan Elements:
 - Municipal Growth (Element 8)
 - Water Resources (Element 9)
- Senate Bill 273 (May 2009) – revises 1992 Planning Act, by updating the 8 Planning Visions adopted in 1992. 12 new and revisited Planning Visions were created and are to be reflected in all new Comprehensive Plans

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(from the Comprehensive Plan)

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Comprehensive Plan Update Process

- Six members of the Planning Commission started monthly work sessions in February 2008
- One Plan Element was discussed each month and a “mission statement” was created for each.
- Work Session Procedure:
 - Review 2002 Plan, verify and discuss changes
 - Review Goals, Objectives and Recommendations – in keeping with our other planning documents
 - Reach consensus on new goals and standards for implementation for each Element before moving on to the next.

2.1 Sensitive Areas



(Above: Redwood Lake in Clarks Run)

- **Mission Statement:**

- Promote sustainable community practices that protect the quality and availability of future sources of potable water
- Conserve, reclaim and reuse water resources
- Direct new development to areas where impact to the natural environment is minimized.

- **Policies:**

- Ensure the type and intensity of development is appropriate to the natural capabilities of the land to be developed.
- Educate residents about water quality and impacts of individual actions on watersheds

2.2 Community & Economic Development



(The historic Carrico building occupied by a mix of apartments and businesses)

- **Mission Statement:**
 - **Maintain a diversified economy, increase community and economic development opportunities through revitalization and reinvestment, while preserving the unique character and structures of La Plata**

- **Policies:**
 - Enhance La Plata's downtown business district and implement designs which improve pedestrian access and safety, as well as calm vehicular traffic through Town.
 - Use the planning strategies and techniques in the Community Design Guidelines to enhance the aesthetic quality of commercial buildings and sites.



(113 Howard St. site of SAIC's new training center)

2.3 Land Use

- **Purpose-** to provide a means to achieve balanced integration of growth and development into an existing community.
- **Mission Statement:**
 - Provide for the most efficient use of land that preserves its best natural features
 - Ensure that an appropriate/compatible mix of uses occurs where best situated to be served by existing or planned Town infrastructure

By category, the Town has developed as –

- 32% Residential Districts (1% in Planned Unit Development)
- 11% Commercial Districts (0.50% Industrial)
- 37% Mixed Use Districts
- 13% Public Land Districts – schools and other institutional uses
- 17% Flood Plain



(305 Centennial St. - a Mixed Use building including Candy Clark Boutique and Apartment homes)

2.3 Land Use continued

- **Policies:**

- Encourage implementation of Smart Growth development strategies
- Adopt Planned Redevelopment & Infill District (PRID) and Planned Business Park & Enterprise District Ordinances
- Adopt a new Stormwater Management Ordinance reflecting the State Stormwater Management Act of 2007
- Implement Smart Growth Minimum Density of 3.5 Units per acre for residential development in keeping with the Town's classification as a Priority Funding Area (PFA)



(6 St. Mary's Ave. – The Green Turtle Restaurant and mixed retail businesses)

2.3 Land Use Continued

- **Policies Continued...**

- Adopt Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance to allow for a secondary dwelling on lots of 5,000 sq. ft. or more developed as single family detached homes.
- Require traffic impact analysis with all major development proposals
- Utilize existing natural features and topography as buffers between disparate land uses; provide transitional land uses between major categories



(600 Charles St. - Mixed retail and office space)

Commercial/
Industrial
development



Mixed Use/High
density residential
development



Medium
Density
residential
development



Low Density
residential
development



2.4 Transportation

- **Mission Statement:**

- Pursue, promote, implement projects that improve traffic circulation, reduce traffic congestion, create opportunities for alternative transportation modes, increase safety/accessibility for motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians; and incorporate aesthetic appeal into the travel experience

- **Transportation projects completed since 2002 added:**

- Talbot St. has been completed between Washington Ave. and Route 301
- Rosewick Rd. has been extended to the east connecting to Route 301 and to the west, connecting to St. Charles Parkway
- MTA lot constructed on Washington Ave. to serve commuter car pools, van pools, and mass transit bus lines



*(Above: Park & Ride parking lot on Washington Ave.;
Left: One of three shelters at the MTA Parking lot)*

2.4 Transportation continued

● Policies:

- Require “complete streets” design for new and retro-fit construction, including devices to accommodate car, bike and pedestrian traffic
- Discourage dead end cul de sac designs between existing communities, remove bollards and other obstacles between existing communities to improve connectivity and ease congestion
- Establish a pedestrian/bicycle network of pathways and sidewalks
- Encourage provision of transit service to neighborhoods, parks, schools, retail centers (VanGo), encourage van/carpooling and commuter parking areas



(VanGo shelter in Rosewick Crossing)



(The bike path next Rosewick Rd.)

2.5 Open Space & Recreation

Mission Statement:

- Develop a high quality public parks and recreation system with adequate space and facilities that integrates an appropriate mix of recreation activities accessible to all Town residents



(Silver Linden Park located in Clarks Run)

Improvements to existing facilities and new facilities added since 2002

- Town developed a new playground in 2004 within the Phoenix Run community including grills, picnic tables and benches, as well as play equipment.
- Silver Linden Park has new play equipment, installed 2005
- A new picnic pavilion with tables and grills has been installed at Tilghman Lake and temporary bathrooms have been supplied



(Phoenix Run Park)

2.5 Open Space & Recreation Continued

- **Policies:**

- Pursue acquisition of land west side of US 301 for neighborhood park
- Add sidewalks and/or hiker/biker paths to existing streets where not in place
- Adopt/implement Parks Capital Expansion Plan
- Pursue some means supporting Town's park system
- Review/pursue improvements for usability of Tilghman Lake Park



(Above Left: Wills Park; Right: Garden behind the old firehouse building)

2.6 Housing

- **Mission Statement:**
 - **Promote/maintain the availability of a variety of housing choices to meets needs of present and future population that encourages socio-economic diversity while remaining compatible with the character of La Plata**
- Housing types in new residential communities added since 2002 are more varied than in the past when single family detached homes were the dominant form. New neighborhoods have included townhomes, duplexes and multi-family buildings.



(Carol's Place apartments and condominiums)



(Town home condominiums in Edelen Station)

2.6 Housing continued

- **Policies:**

- Promote development which combines variety of residential/commercial interests on the same site or in the same building. Support mixed use live/work buildings in the downtown neighborhood commercial centers.
- Support proposals and programs which serve the needs of senior and/or physically challenged segments of the population.
- Support community service non-profit organizations who address housing needs



(Heritage Place II)



(Steeplechase Town Houses)

2.6 Housing Continued

- **Policies Continued...**

- Adopt an ordinance to permit and regulate development of accessory dwelling units
- Develop methods for implementing new codes and standards in older existing communities
- Promote compact infill development within the Town, to eliminate “sprawl” growth outside planned growth areas



(Playground in Agricopia)



(Town homes in Agricopia)

2.7 Review and Regulation

- **Purpose:**

- To put in place and periodically renew regulations that govern land subdivision and set standards for site development

- **Policies:**

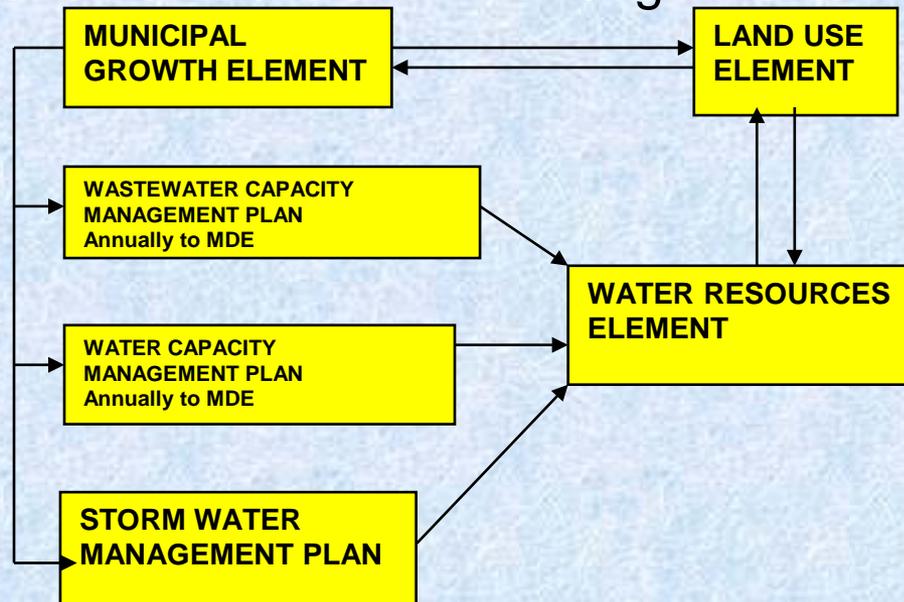
- Implement regulations that are aimed at enabling “Smart Growth” principles of site development and compact development patterns to conserve land and natural resources
 - Initiate streamlined review processes which are clear and concise with permit applications available online to the public



(The new La Plata Courthouse expansion)

2.8 WATER RESOURCES

- One of the new Comprehensive Plan elements required by House Bill 1141 (2006) as part of the new Comprehensive Plan adoption process
- Relationship to other Comprehensive Plan Elements and other State requirements are shown through the flow chart below:



2.8 Water Resources continued

- **Purpose:** To definitively answer the following questions –
 - Is there adequate water supply to meet current and future needs?
 - Is there adequate wastewater treatment to meet current and future needs?
 - What impact will meeting these needs have on water resources?

- **Highlights:**

- Anticipated growth not difficult to predict quantitatively, but is very difficult to predict with any accuracy **when** it will occur
- Recommendations for potential solutions and answers to the overarching issues above:
 - Make effort to limit amount of water consumption and sewage generation as part of development plans without reducing the overall density
 - Develop a plan for future growth that will not over load Town's water resources when annexations take place



2.9 Municipal Growth Element

- **The second new Element required under HB1141 (2006) to be part of adopted Comprehensive Plans as of October 1st, 2009**
- **Purpose of the Element:**
 - Examine past growth and trends
 - Project future population growth
 - Assess land needs based on capacity analysis of selected future growth areas
 - Determine the effects of growth on infrastructure and natural features



(The newly expanded Civista hospital site)

2.9 Municipal Growth Continued

- **Growth Map Objectives – How/why the projected growth areas have been delineated as they have:**
 - Replace failing septic system and wells with central water and sewer system
 - Maintain green space and maintain sense of community
 - Use natural features to fix growth boundaries
 - Provide a balance between residential, commercial and industrial growth
 - Encourage “Smart Growth” and limit sprawl development
 - Protect the environment and natural resources



(Port Tobacco Players Theater)

Map 1 Proposed Growth Areas

TOWN OF LA PLATA

Charles County, Maryland

"Official Zoning Map of La Plata, Maryland"
Ordinance 04-5; adopted 6-8-04
Effective Date June 24, 2004
Updated April 2007

ZONING

- R-21 Residential District
- R-10 Residential District
- R-8 Residential District
- R-5 Residential District
- R-3 Residential District
- MUD-1 Mixed Use District Residential
- MUD-2 Mixed Use District Residential/Commercial
- MUD-3 Mixed Use District Residential/Commercial/Industrial
- P-L Public Lands District
- F-P Flood Plain District
- C-B Central Business District
- CBT Central Business Transition District
- C-H Commercial Highway District
- I Industrial District
- IP Industrial Park District
- L-I Light Industrial District
- PUD Planned Unit Development

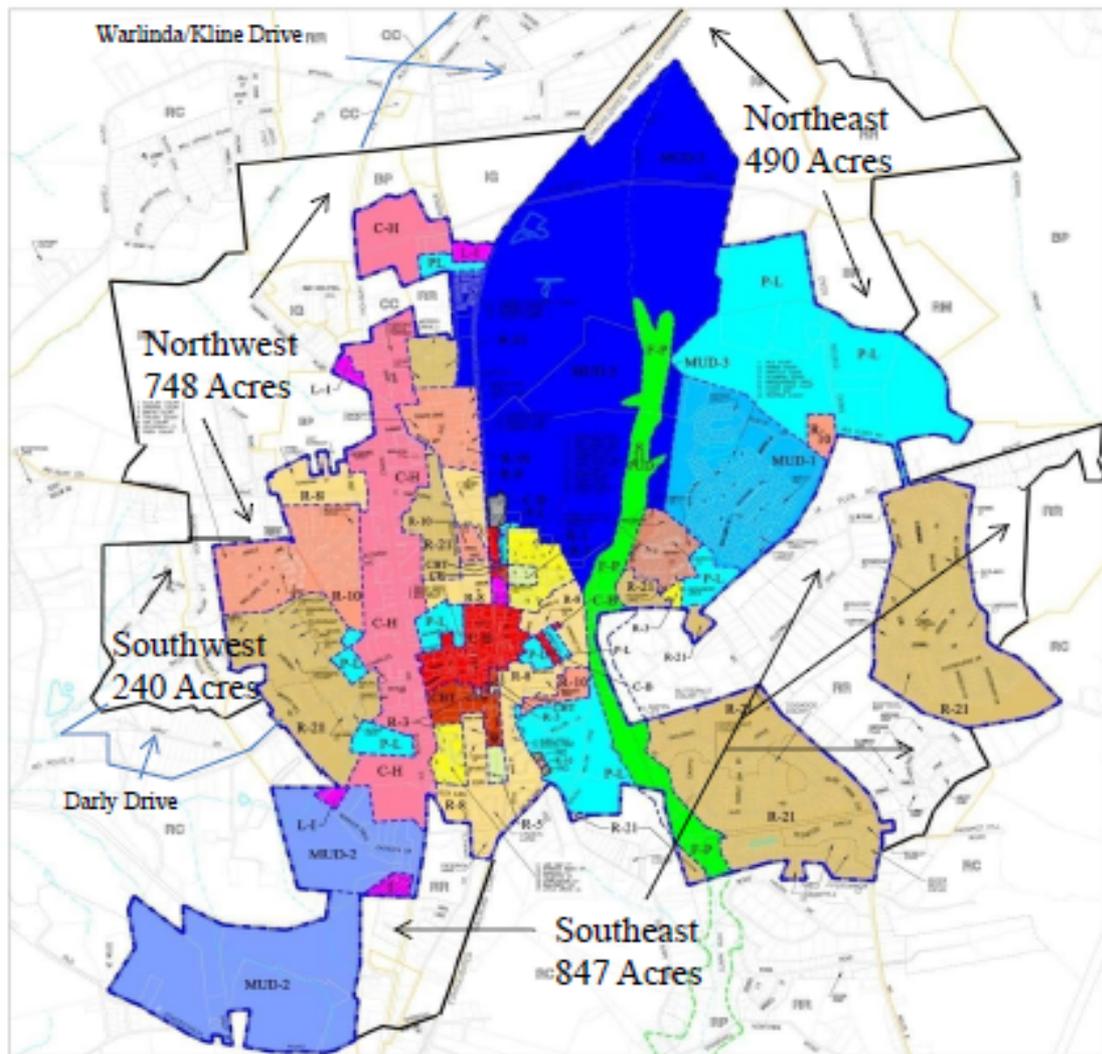
Excluded (Land surrounded by Town under Charles County jurisdiction)

CHARLES COUNTY ZONING

- RC Rural Conservation
- RR Rural Residential
- RL Low Density Residential
- RM Medium Density Residential
- CC Community Commercial
- BP Business Park
- IG General Industrial
- RP Resource Protection

Base Legend

- UNINCORPORATED LIMITS
- SUBDIVISION BOUNDARY
- PARCEL & LOT BOUNDARY
- TOWN ZONING DISTRICT
- COUNTY ZONING DISTRICT
- STREAM



2.9 Municipal Growth continued

- **Northwest:**

- 758 Acres which are mostly undeveloped, have potential to drain to State High Quality Waters in Jennie Run
- Mixed use development creates a better balance between jobs and residences



(Target store at La Plata Plaza)

- **Southwest:**

- 230 Acres primarily large lot residential
- 40 Acre undeveloped parcel that has potential for commercial or mixed use development



(Centennial St. Developments)

2.9 Municipal Growth continued

- **Northeast:**



(Lowe's store at Rosewick Crossing)

- 490 Acres of undeveloped land fronting on Rosewick Road that is currently zoned Industrial or Business Park
- Could be part of balanced land use plan for employment/enterprise zones

- **Southeast:**



("Paige's of Time" Early Learning Center)

- 847 Acres, primarily developed as single family residential subdivisions
- 67 Acre field currently used for agriculture on 301 could be commercial or green public space (parkland)

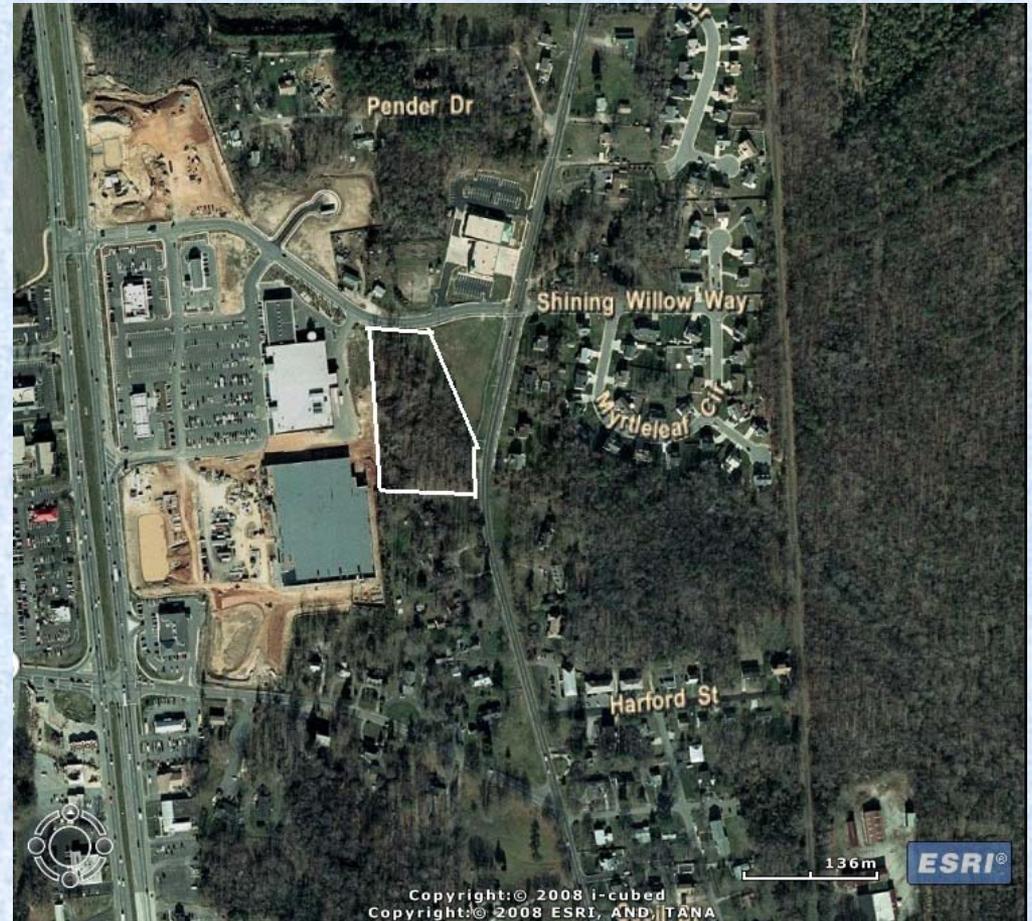
Comprehensive Rezoning July 2009



La Plata South LLC

R-21 to R3

- 3.01 Acres on south side of Shining Willow Way
- Recommended for rezoning by the Planning Commission
- Current zoning allows for SFD homes only, Max. density = 2 units per Acre
- Proposed zoning could allow a variety of housing types, Max. density = 14.5 units per Acre



Ekistics Construction, Inc.

R-21 to R-3

- 0.54 Acres on the north side of Route 6
- Recommended for rezoning by the Planning Commission
- Current zoning allows for SFD homes only, Max. density = 2 units per Acre
- Proposed zoning could allow a variety of housing types, Max. density = 14.5 units per Acre



Fallon Homes

R-10 to R-3

- 2.56 Acres on the north side of Shining Willow Way
- Recommended for rezoning by the Planning Commission
- Current zoning allows for SFD homes only, Max. Density = 4 units per Acre
- Proposed zoning could allow a variety of housing types, Max. density = 14.5 units per Acre



Christian Family Baptist Church

R-10 to R3

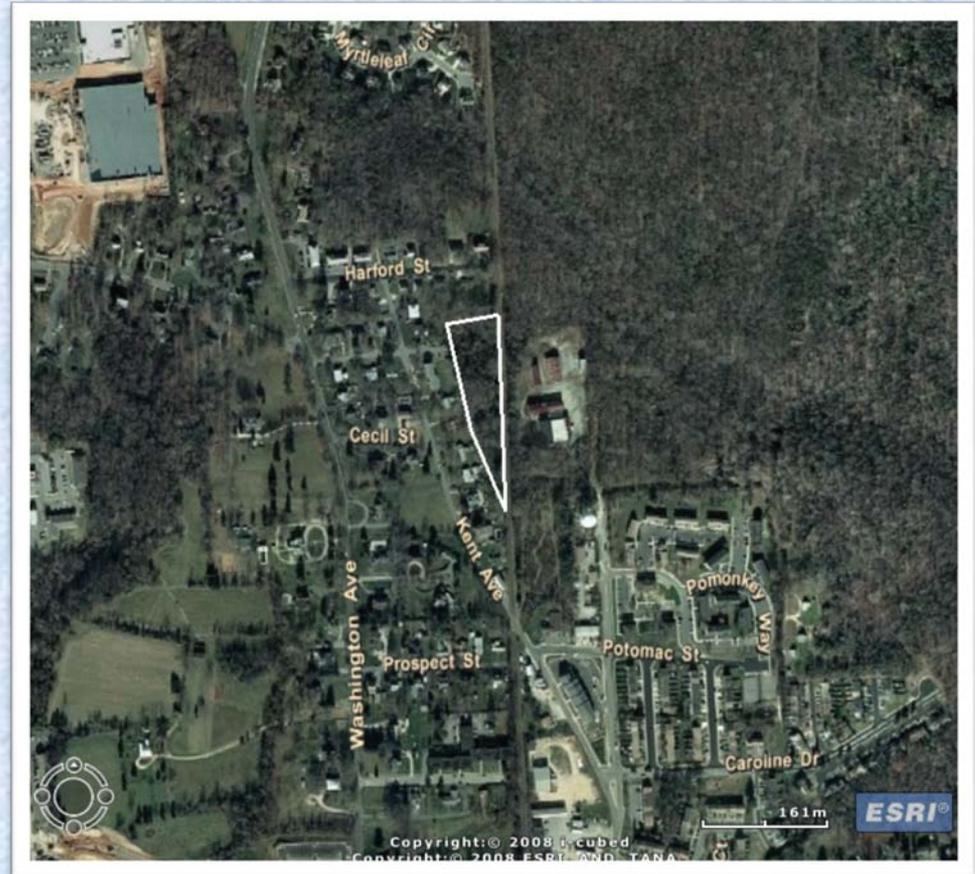
- 2.6 Acres on the west side of Washington Ave.
- Not Recommended for rezoning by the Planning Commission
- Current zoning allows for SFD homes only, Max. Density = 4 units per Acre
- Proposed zoning could allow a variety of housing types, Max. density = 14.5 units per Acre



Kent Knolls

R-8 to R-3

- 2.65 Acres at the end of East Hawthorne Dr.
- Recommended for rezoning by the Planning Commission
- Current zoning allows for SFD homes only, Max. Density = 5 units per Acre
- Proposed zoning could allow a variety of housing types, Max. density = 14.5 units per Acre



Buckeye Lane

LI to MUD 2

- 9.48 Acres at the end of Buckeye Lane
- Recommended for rezoning by the Planning Commission
- Purpose: to render zoning consistency over entire tract



Oriole Lane R-10 to CH

- 11.29 Acres on the west side of Route 301
- Not Recommended for rezoning by the Planning Commission
- Purpose: To render zoning consistency to Parcel 69 which is currently split zoned



Approval Process

- **July 7**-Planning Commission public hearings on (1) Comprehensive Plan and (2) Comprehensive Rezoning Map
- **July 15**-Planning Commission Special Meeting to make recommendations to the Council
- **July 21**-Presentation at Town Council work session, paper copy of recommended Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Rezoning Map given to Town Council
- **July 28**-Town Council public hearing(1) Comprehensive Plan and (2) Comprehensive Rezoning Map
- **August 28**-Town Council introduces Ordinance 09-# 2009 Comprehensive Plan, Ordinance 09-# 2009 Comprehensive Rezoning Map

Comments or Questions?

**For Those Who Have Signed the
Speaker's List.**

Thank You!