



VISIONS & DECISIONS

Volume 1 Issue 1 Summer 2008

The Washington County Planning Department's Quarterly E-Newsletter

URBAN GROWTH AREA REZONING PROGRESSING

The analysis portion of the Urban Growth Area Rezoning is starting to draw to a close. The appointed fourteen member Urban Growth Area Advisory Committee has been diligently working to conclude their months of research and analysis in the culmination of a report to the Board of County Commissioners. Over the last 12 months the Committee has been reviewing materials and formulating recommendations to various aspects of land use planning being reviewed for this zoning update including the analysis of a possible Transfer of Development Rights program, the availability and advancement of workforce and affordable housing, and evaluation of various ordinances to identify opportunities for streamlining regulations as an incentive for development in the growth area.

Using the Committee's report, comments received from public input meetings held last summer and recommendations enumerated in the 2002 County Comprehensive Plan as guidance, Staff will be compiling a draft of the Zoning Ordinance updates over the next several months. These updates will include changes in site design requirements, permitted and conditional uses in some zoning districts, the addition and/or deletion of some zoning districts, and updates to various definitions. Not all property owners in the designated Urban Growth Area will be affected by these changes but it is anticipated that a majority of parcels will be affected to some degree. Staff is eagerly anticipating having a draft of the proposed changes for public review by the end of the 2008 calendar year.

You can stay informed on the anticipated release date by going to our website at www.washco-md.net, subscribing to our new E-Newsletter, or watching the local newspaper. In addition, if you have any comments or questions regarding this issue, you can e-mail us at askplanning@washco-md.net.

NEW! PLANNING DEPARTMENT E-NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first issue of the Washington County Planning Department's E-Newsletter. Through this newsletter we hope to provide the community with updates on our latest projects, procedure changes, and initiatives that are taking place in our department on a quarterly basis. For more information or to be added to our email list, please contact Misty Wagner-Grillo @ 240-313-2447 or mgrillo@washco-md.net



PLANNING PROJECTS GO ONLINE THROUGH CITIZEN ACCESS

In 2006, the Washington County Permits and Inspections Department launched "Velocity Hall," which is an internet application now known as "Accela Citizen Access." Accela Citizen Access allows the public to view the progress of permits and to apply for some permits online, through the Washington County Government website.

On July 18, 2008 the Planning Department introduced the availability of Accela Citizen Access to citizens, consultants, and other interested parties to view the progress of our activities and projects. We will not offer the ability to apply for applications online, but the public can track the progress of our projects by viewing agency comments, approval information, and contact information.

For more information on how to access and use Accela Citizen Access to view Planning Department projects, please visit our website @ www.washco-md.net/planning/plan.shtm

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Website: www.washco-md.net/planning/plan.shtm

For Newsletter questions and comments or to be added to our email list please call 240-313-2447 or email mgrillo@washco-md.net



AGRICULTURE PROGRAM HAS BIG YEAR!

As we close out the fiscal year the actual easement settlements for the FY 2008 from all sources totaled \$9.265 million. Approximately \$1.5 million of this total will be paid over a 10 year period. In addition, easement donations or partial donations are estimated at nearly \$600,000. Sara Edelman is to be commended for stepping into the Agriculture Planner position in the middle of one of the busiest Agriculture Planning years and having to learn the many facets of the seven different Agriculture Preservation programs---all in the “heat of battle.”



Sara Edelman, formally an Associate Planner in our Subdivision & Site Plan Review Section, moved to our Agriculture Land Preservation Section as an Agriculture Planner in March of 2008.

If you would like to learn more about our Agriculture Preservation Program, please contact Eric Seifarth or Sara Edelman in the Planning Department.



FOREST CONSERVATION AMENDMENTS ADOPTED BY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Washington County Commissioners adopted amendments to the Washington County Forest Conservation Plan on June 10, 2008 and they became effective July 1, 2008. Many of the amendments were minor and do not affect the application of the Ordinance to development activities. However there are several changes that will affect development proposals.

- The definition of “Onsite” and “Offsite” is more precisely defined. “Offsite” excludes remaining lands.
- Intermediate Forest Stand Delineations are no longer recognized or accepted.
- All declarations of intent have been extended from 5 years to 10 years.
- Off site retention easements must be located on a single lot of record.
- Payment in Lieu of Planting has been added as the last item in list of preferred sequence of techniques for mitigation.
- The surety amount must include a 15% contingency.
- Payment in Lieu and non-compliance fees are now set by resolution and may be changed at a later time.
- Retention protection measures (signs and fencing) must be installed within 30 days of subdivision plat approval, and the department must be notified for inspection. Failure to do so will place an owner/developer in non-compliance with the FCO and subject to fees/fines.



It is important that property owners with Forest Conservation easements on their property understand all notes, protection requirements and construction sequences on the recorded Forest Conservation Plan for their property. It is the current property owners responsibility to follow these procedures. A copy of the amended Washington County Forest Conservation Ordinance and amended Declaration of Intent forms are available through our website. If there are questions about the amendments or regulations, please contact our Department.



REMINDERS

GIS & SPATIAL DATA REMINDER



Zoning Maps for Washington County are available!

Zoning Maps for each property Tax Map in Washington County are available as printed, hard-copy maps and as digital (.pdf) images on a CD. Costs for these products are:

Hard Copy	Per Map	8.5 x 11 sheet	\$2.15
		11 x 17 sheet	\$2.30
		24 x 36 sheet	\$10.00
	Per Set	8.5 x 11	\$30.00
		11 x 17	\$43.50
Digital Image CD (in PDF)	Per Set		\$21.50

Map Updates

The **Protected Lands Map** and the **Major Urban Developments Map** have been updated as of June 30, 2008. Copies of both of these frequently requested maps may be obtained from the Washington County Planning Departments website under the GIS & Spatial Data tab (http://www.washco-md.net/planning/gis_products.shtm).

UPCOMING MEETINGS

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING:
(7:00pm at the County Annex Building, located on 80 W Baltimore St.)

- SEPTEMBER 8, 2008
- OCTOBER 6, 2008

REZONING PUBLIC HEARING (7:00pm at the Washington Court House Court Rm #1, West Washington Street)

- SEPTEMBER 15, 2008

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
(7:00PM at the Washington County Annex Building located on 80 W Baltimore)

- SEPTEMBER 3, 2008
- OCTOBER 1, 2008

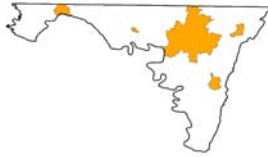
CONSULTANT OUTREACH MEETINGS

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the **October 17, 2008** consultant outreach meeting. Consultants attendance is crucial for the continuance of these meetings

EXCISE TAX FEES CHANGED

Effective July 1, 2008. **Residential:** New Construction \$3.00 per sq ft of habitable space (includes mobile homes and/or replacement homes). Addition: \$1.50 per sq ft of increased habitable space.

Commercial: Includes new Construction and/or additions. Retail: \$3.00 per sq ft of gross floor area. Non-Retail: \$1.00 per sq ft of gross floor space.



MEET OUR STAFF
SERIES 1 OF 3
THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING &
THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING
STAFF



MICHAEL C. THOMPSON, Director of Planning and Community Development, is a graduate of Eisenhower College and holds a B.A. Degree in Political Science. He obtained a Master Degree in Public Administration from the University of Georgia. His career spans over thirty years in the planning field in rapidly growing communities both in Wyoming and Maryland. This experience has included all aspects of planning from the review of subdivisions to the preparation of master plans. Mr. Thompson became Director in May 2004 after spending over eighteen years with Frederick County, Maryland having served as Zoning Administrator and Chief of Development Review. He has served on numerous state committees on various planning issues and on the Board of Directors of the Maryland Association of Zoning



Jill Baker is a Senior Planner within the Comprehensive Planning Section of the Department. She has a degree in Environmental Analysis and Planning from Frostburg State University. Jill is a life long resident of Washington County and has been with our Department for 8 years. She is currently working on Priority Preservation Areas, updating the Zoning Ordinance, and assisting the Hagerstown Eastern Panhandle MPO.



Chris Cochrane is an Associate Planner and the newest member of our Department staff, coming as a West Virginia University graduate to our department in 2007. Chris has a degree in Geography: Urban & Regional Planning, and resides in Hagerstown. He is currently assisting with the update of the Comprehensive Plan.

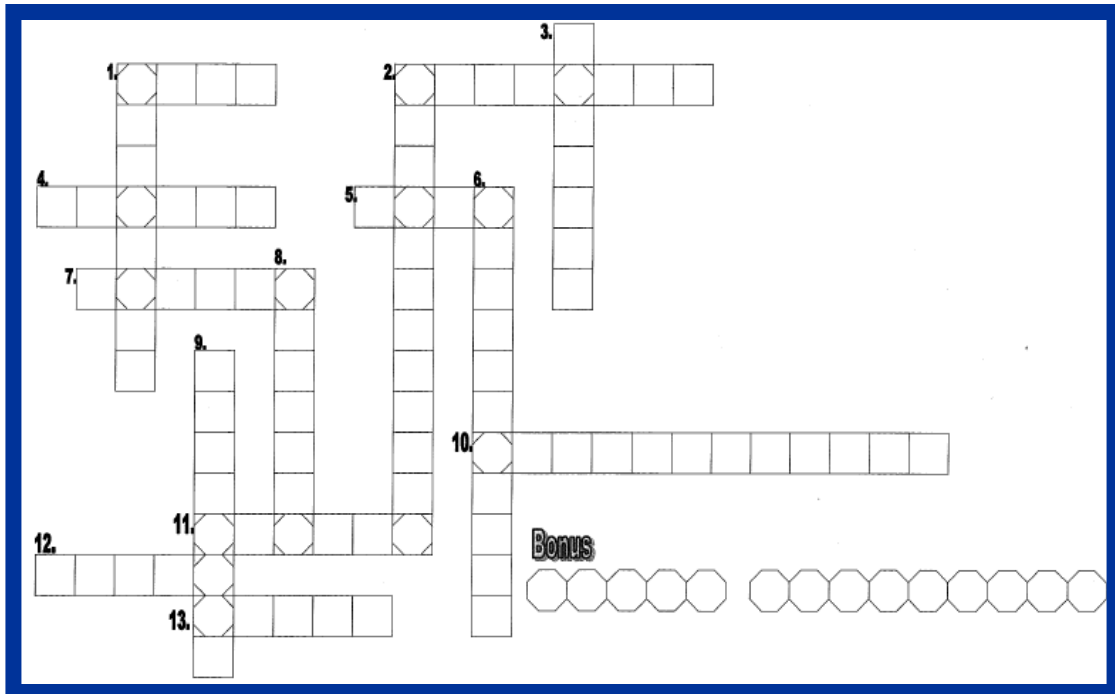


Bill Stachoviak is the Parks and Environmental Planner for the Department. Bill has a degree in Park Resource Planning & Management and is a Qualified Professional with the States Forest Conservation Program. He currently administers implementation of Forest Conservation Plans, and is updating the Land Preservation Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan and related sections of the Comprehensive Plan. Bill also works with the Recreation and Parks Board and Parks Department on parks projects throughout the County. He has been with our Department for 27 years.

Steve Goodrich, Chief Senior Planner of the Comprehensive Planning Section of the Department, is a graduate of Frostburg State University. He is responsible for the Urban Growth Area Zoning update, and assisting the Urban Growth Area Advisory Committee. He is also responsible for all aspects of the Historic District Commission, which includes managing consultant projects and completing additional historic site surveys. Steve is a liaison to the State of Maryland for the Forest Conservation Program, and he also sits on the Heart of the Civil War Advisory Board. He has been with our Department for 29 years.

PLANNING JUMBLE

PRINT THIS PAGE AND GIVE OUR JUMBLE A TRY
ANSWERS WILL BE IN THE FALL 2008 ISSUE.



How to play: Complete the puzzle by looking at the clues. When the puzzle is complete, unscramble the octagon letters to solve the bonus question. Answers in the Fall 2008 newsletter. Good luck and have fun!

Clues

Across:

1. What a developer pays
2. An exception
4. Public regulation of Land
5. Number of Units
7. Assessors Document
10. Added to vacant land
11. Property Identifier
12. Not urban
13. Land Area

Down:

1. Length of property along a road
2. Online research tool
3. Governs the way a property develops
6. Required for 5 across
8. A person who guides development
9. Detailed engineered drawing

Bonus Clue: Ultimate goal of developers