
CHAPTER 3: COMMUNITY PLANNING ISSUES

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This chapter discusses the major growth and development issues facing Grasonville.

ISSUES

The major growth and development issues facing Grasonville are:

How can existing residential neighborhoods be protected and enhanced?

How should Main Street develop in the future and what should be its future appearance and character?

How will the new Emergency Center affect Grasonville?

Should the Planning Area be expanded?

What should happen on large existing undeveloped or underdeveloped sites in Grasonville?

What transportation, recreation and other public improvements are needed to improve the quality of life in the community and ensure that Grasonville functions effectively as a growth area?

How will environmentally sensitive areas be protected?

How can "rural" areas outside the Grasonville growth area be protected so that they retain their existing character?

A. HOW MUCH AND WHAT TYPE OF GROWTH SHOULD THERE BE IN GRASONVILLE?

Grasonville is one of the County's designated growth areas. This designation is based on several factors: Grasonville is located along the heavily traveled US 50/301 corridor and is within commuting distance to the rapidly expanding Baltimore/Washington metropolitan area; the community has an existing concentration of development and has existing zoning designations which accommodate commercial and residential growth; and the community is served with public sewer and some public water, and numerous other community facilities and services.

However, Grasonville has significant environmental resources, particularly wetlands and forests, that are a significant constraint to major growth (See Figure 8). These environmental considerations, and the presence of conservation lands on the perimeter of the community dictate that Grasonville will have limited growth potential.

Despite the smaller size and more limited overall development potential of the Grasonville Planning Area, residential development interest has rapidly increased in recent years. The County has recently approved or is in the process of reviewing residential subdivision proposals for about 144 new lots within Grasonville. It is estimated that the maximum build-out potential of the few remaining undeveloped larger tracts zoned for residential use is about 500-600 additional lots. In addition, it can be expected that a modest amount of additional residential growth will occur as infill development of vacant lots in older existing subdivisions. Actual build-out of undeveloped lands zoned and approved for development will probably occur slowly over time, and it is unlikely that full build-out would occur within the twenty-year planning period. The changing dynamics of real estate market forces will ultimately determine the actual rate or timing of growth in Grasonville. With this Plan the County and the community have an opportunity to proactively plan for the best way to manage future growth in a beneficial way.

Under this Plan, different parts of Grasonville will ultimately have several distinct characteristics. Most of the Main Street area will retain a village character, with - mixed village-scale commercial and residential uses. The area along US 50/301 will primarily develop as a commercial corridor serving regional needs. The northern and southern parts of the community will be primarily residential. To prevent sprawl into the rural areas surrounding Grasonville, this Community Plan continues to limit growth to areas designated for development within the Planning Area. The boundaries of the growth area Planning Area are generally defined by Countryside zoning district boundaries and waterways. The new Emergency Center requires an expansion to the Planning Area, which is proposed in the County's 2010 Comprehensive Plan update, as well as in this 2010 Grasonville Community Plan update. (Figure 1).

The Grasonville Planning Area expansion, north of Route 18, will accommodate the new Emergency Center and supporting mixed-uses. The Planning Area expansion south of Route 18 and the new Emergency Center, by approximately 30 acres, to support the extension of public sewer to the Neighborhood Conservation (NC-20) zoned properties and to accommodate Grasonville Planned Residential Neighborhood (GPRN) land use and proposed zoning near the new Emergency Center. (Figure 11 and Figures 3-1 & 3-2.)

The KN/S/G sewage treatment plant capacity has been increased to support future development in the Planning Area. The State has mandated that all jurisdictions attempt to concentrate the majority of future development into existing communities in order to avoid the negative fiscal and environmental impacts of unchecked sprawl development.

Emergency Center Construction at Nesbit Road

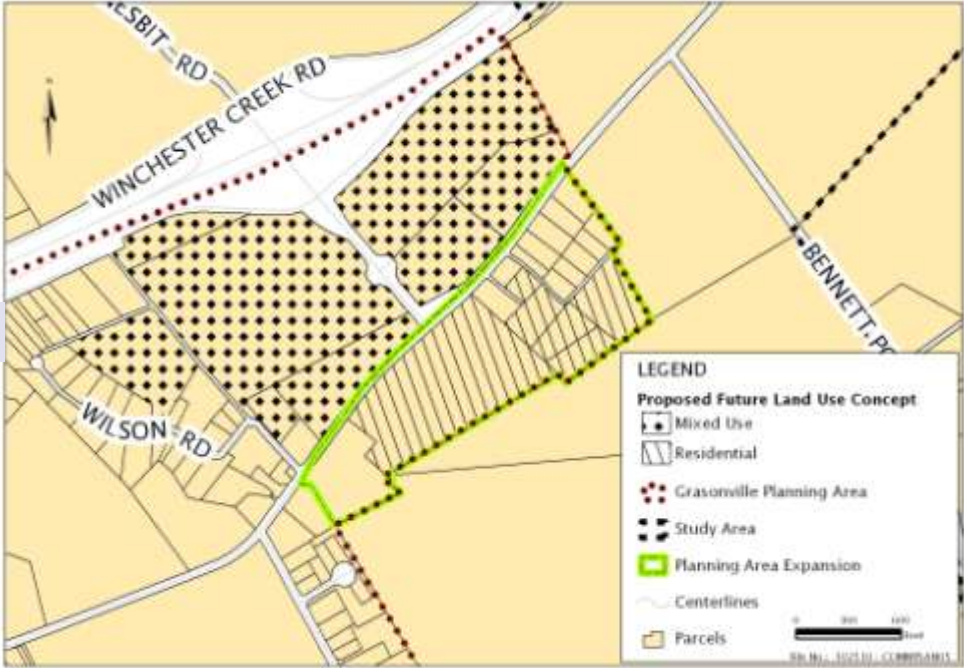


Figure 3-1

B. HOW CAN EXISTING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS BE PROTECTED AND ENHANCED?

Existing residential neighborhoods are primarily zoned Neighborhood Conservation (NC), Neighborhood Conservation with single-wide manufactured homes (NC-T), Grasonville Village Center (GVC), Grasonville Planned Residential Neighborhood (GPRN) or Suburban Residential (SR) (See Figures 6 and 7).

A key objective of this Community Plan is to manage future development in existing neighborhoods and in planned development areas so that existing neighborhoods are protected and enhanced.

Ways to do this are to:

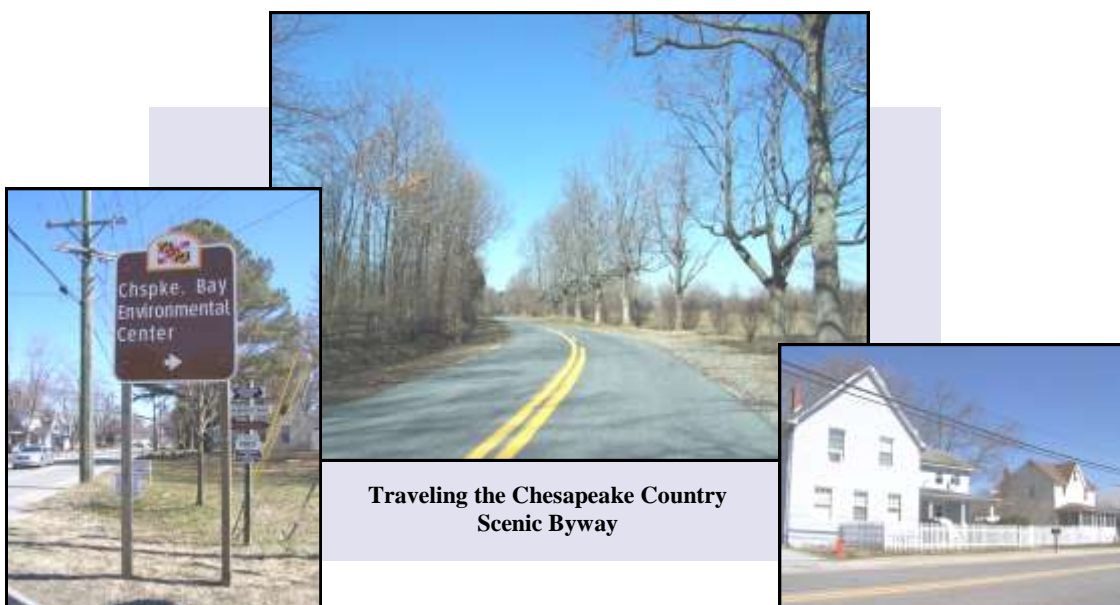
- Ensure that infill development of vacant lots in existing residential neighborhoods is compatible with the density, scale and character of the existing neighborhood.
- Ensure that new planned residential developments are integrated into the existing community fabric of buildings, roads, and open space.
- Limit conversions and redevelopment of existing single-family homes into absentee landlord rental apartments.
- Limit the ability of existing nonconforming commercial uses to expand.
- Protect existing neighborhoods from encroachment by incompatible commercial or home occupation uses.
- Create more cohesion between different parts of the community, by improving pedestrian-bicycle access from existing neighborhoods to other parts of Grasonville.
- Promote options for increased bicycle and pedestrian safety, such as, dedicated bike lanes, pedestrian crossings and additional sidewalks.
- Require appropriate buffering for existing neighborhoods from new adjoining commercial development. This will be particularly important for existing neighborhoods close to the US 50/301 corridor.
- Consider attracting a magnet school or middle school with co-located County park amenities.
- Create a vibrant Main Street with pedestrian-scale street lighting.
- Consider lower speed limits on Main Street.
- Reduce or eliminate the creation of flag lots.
- Establish minimum lot widths for NC-20 lot re-zonings.

C. HOW SHOULD MAIN STREET DEVELOP IN THE FUTURE AND WHAT SHOULD BE ITS FUTURE APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER?

Infill development is development on existing vacant or undeveloped land in partially developed areas.

Main Street is the traditional focus of Grasonville. It is Grasonville's major "public space" and thus is very important in helping define how residents and visitors perceive the community. How Main Street develops is key to Grasonville's future. This Community Plan offers a special opportunity to coordinate land use planning along Main Street with the actual appearance of the roadway because in 1997, as part of the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway Program, the State Highway Administration began designing the reconstruction of Main Street from Chester River Beach Road to Collier Road. However, further improvements to Main Street are needed, including the rehabilitation of the Post Office. New development and redevelopment should consider the use of rear alleyways to connect parking areas and provide for utility and service convenience. The new Emergency Center and potential development at the east end of Main Street, around Nesbit Road, will also affect Main Street.

The County should continue to work with the Scenic Byway Program, the new 1812 Byway program and the 1812 Star Spangled Banner Trail system in Queen Anne's County to create a master plan for the reconstruction of Main Street to support new development and redevelopment. The master plan should be incorporated into the US 50 Corridor Study to consider land use planning strategies, and architectural and design standards that complement and support the preservation of the area's heritage and character.



Existing Character

Overall, Main Street has a residential feel with mostly single-family houses on small to medium sized lots, typically between 1/4 to 1/2 acre (10,000 to 20,000 square feet). Non-residential uses are also important and help give some blocks more of a mixed-use feel comparable to a traditional "Main Street". Important community facilities located along Main Street include the elementary school, fire station, post office, senior center, community center and churches. Although major commercial activity in Grasonville is oriented to sites with easy access from US 50/301, Main Street retains some retail and employment activity, mostly clustered between Church Lane and around 400 feet east of Gravel Run Road. Most of this commercial activity is neighborhood-oriented (pizza parlor, beauty salon, garage, etc.).



Grasonville Main Street

Future development under current conditions

Future development along Main Street will be dictated in part by market forces, and in part by land use policy as set by this Community Plan and implemented through the county zoning and land development regulations.

Currently most of Main Street west from around Gravel Run Road is zoned Grasonville Village Center (GVC) (Figure 6). A mix of residential and non-residential uses is permitted in this zoning district. Most single-family residential uses are permitted by right (no special permits required). Planned multi-family residential uses are permitted by conditional use on lot sizes of two acres or larger. A wide range of non-residential uses are permissible, but also require conditional use approval from the County's Board of Appeals.

Vision for Main Street

The preferred development style can be characterized as high-quality residential, and neighborhood-scale retail development, typical of what might be found in older, small Eastern Shore towns.

The vision that would seem to make the most sense from a community planning perspective is as follows:

Grasonville Village Center

In the Grasonville Village Center (between Perry's Corner Road and around 400 feet east of Gravel Run Road) low- and medium-intensity commercial uses are encouraged, along with single-family and multi-family housing. The existing village scale is maintained and enhanced so that this area becomes Grasonville's "special place" or "village center":

- New buildings built close to the street and in scale with neighboring development.
- Small "village scale" commercial signage.
- Sidewalks along Main Street with connections to neighborhoods and community facilities.
- Street furniture: benches, bike racks, trash cans.
- A pocket park with a seating area, landscaping, and, perhaps, a tot-lot, that gives families a reason to come to the village center.
- Reduced visual impact from utility poles.
- Public parking on or close to the street or a public parking lot within convenient walking distance to the village center.
- Pedestrian-scale street lighting.
- Curb and Gutter with area-wide storm-water management.
- Creation of design standards similar to those established for the UC and TC districts.



Pedestrian-scale street light

The current front setback requirement of 35 feet, for the Grasonville Village Center (GVC) zone, may be far greater than the average existing front setbacks. The 35 foot setback standard may conflict with preserving the existing and preferred future character for the area. The Planning Commission should consider amending this front setback standard.

Outside the Grasonville Village Center

Outside the Grasonville Village Center, Main Street maintains a mostly single-family residential feel and scale. Low intensity non-residential uses and limited multi-family development (duplexes and accessory apartments on larger lots) are permitted, but with standards designed to ensure an overall single-family residential appearance. Owner occupation of housing is encouraged and multi-family rentals discouraged. The street section is enhanced with sidewalk, a grass or landscaped edge, and street trees. With homeowners' support, some streetscape consistency is achieved by coordinating fence type, trees, and other landscaping.

This vision is preferred over options which would leave the entire length of Main Street open to potential commercial and unlimited, multi-family development pending site-by-site decisions by the County Board of Appeals. Without some certainty provided through zoning, it seems inevitable that the stability of residential neighborhoods will suffer, thereby creating a disincentive for homeowners to invest in their properties as owner-occupied homes. It also seems inevitable that once several commercial developments are approved by the Board of Appeals, it will become increasingly difficult for the Board to justify denial of subsequent commercial applications. The net result would be a downward spiral of single-family residential property values and increased pressure/ incentive to convert remaining homes to apartments or commercial uses throughout the entire length of Main Street.

The approach advocated in this Plan is to maintain and encourage a strong mixed-use (residential and commercial) Grasonville Village Center in the central part of Main Street. The Neighborhood Conservation zoned area to the east would consist exclusively of single-family homes. The area west of the Grasonville Village Center would be characterized by: single-family homes, some with accessory apartments; limited small-scale commercial uses; and some attached duplexes on larger lots, all of which should be designed to have a single-family home appearance and blend into the existing neighborhood.

This approach will continue to provide a higher level of certainty to property owners along Main Street about what can and cannot happen on their property and on surrounding properties, and hopefully stimulate private investment in the community.

Roadway improvements

Main Street currently is an open section, two-lane road. As noted above, in 1997, the State Highway Administration began planning a reconstruction of Main Street from Chester River Beach Road to Collier Road. The extent of the improvements was

limited by funding, and the narrow, existing right-of-way. Drainage in this low lying area is also a major consideration. A preliminary design concept, first presented in 1997, was to reconstruct the street in closed section (curb and gutter), with two 14-foot wide lanes and sidewalk on one side of the street. Design work with additional opportunities for input from the community and the County should continue and promote options for increased bicycle and pedestrian safety, such as, dedicated bike lanes, pedestrian crossings and additional sidewalks.

The entire length of Main Street from the Queenstown Bank to Wilson Road should ultimately be rebuilt as a closed section street with sidewalk, landscaping, and provisions for drainage. Improvements at key intersections are needed to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow. Over time the currently planned improvements between Chester River Beach Road and Collier Road should be expanded to cover this entire area. A list of improvements recommended in this community plan for consideration in current and future planning for Main Street is included in Chapter 4.

D. WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN ON EXISTING LARGE UNDEVELOPED OR UNDER DEVELOPED SITES IN GRASONVILLE?

Around 30 percent of the land now zoned for development in Grasonville is currently vacant, undevelopable (wetlands), forested, or in agricultural use. Generally these are larger tracts of land that are zoned Suburban Residential (SR) or Grasonville Planned Residential Neighborhood (GPRN). Along the US 50/301 corridor are some additional areas that are zoned Urban Commercial (UC) or Suburban Estate (SE), (Figure 7).

Outside the US 50/301 corridor



Ewing Farm Parcel

Undeveloped tracts outside the US 50/301 with proposed subdivision plans include the 144 unit Walters Property along Perry’s Corner Road. The one remaining un-subdivided, large tract of Grasonville Planned Residential Neighborhood (GPRN) zoned land (Ewing Farm Parcel) is conveniently located across Main Street from the Grasonville Elementary School. It has an existing development potential, under current zoning, of about 315-380

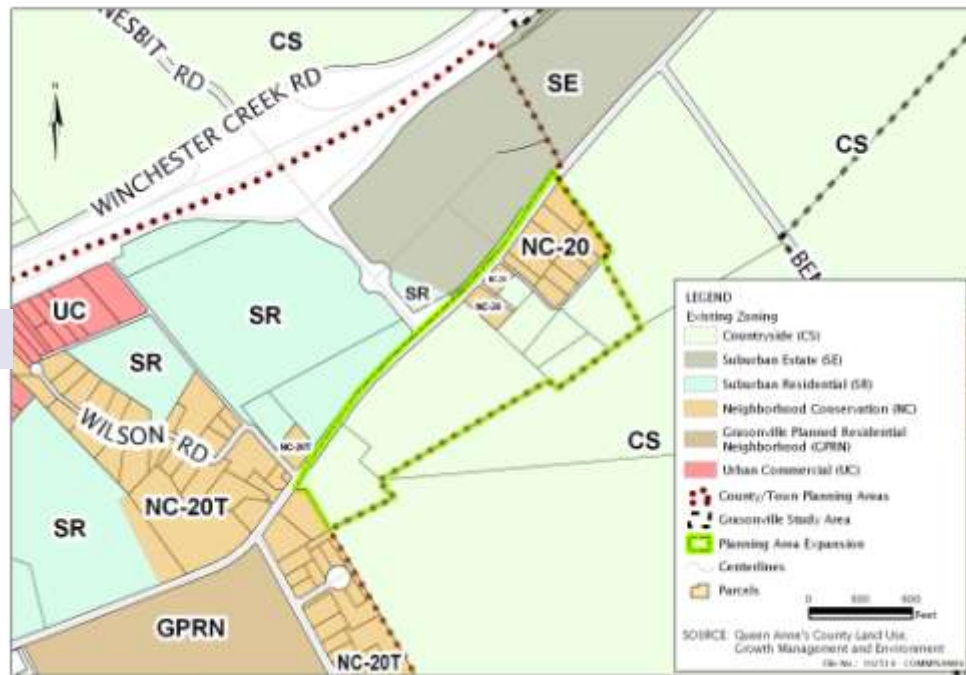
additional units if development capacity is maximized. This land would be the preferred location in the community if a needed magnet school or middle school is considered for the area. The site is large enough to accommodate a school and co-located County recreation fields.



Because these areas could significantly increase the number of existing homes in Grasonville, it is important that it be integrated into the existing community fabric to the extent possible. The Grasonville Planned Residential Neighborhood (GPRN) designation provides for environmentally-sensitive design, architectural integration to ensure a unified and coherent plan of development, and functional community open space and recreation areas. More detail regarding this proposed district is included in Chapter 4.

Some small to medium sized tracts around Grasonville's Planning Area boundary, around 154 acres in total, are presently zoned Estate (E) or Suburban Estate (SE). These zoning categories generally allow for moderate density single-family residential development which may be served with public sewer and water if the development is clustered. Large-lot development in these areas is also permitted but would not be suitable for public sewer and water service. These relatively few (E) and (SE) zoned areas are part of the Grasonville Planning Area and form a logical transitional zone between it and surrounding rural lands. The Grasonville Planning Area is expanded south of Route 18 and the new Emergency Center, by approximately 30 acres, to support the extension of public sewer to the Neighborhood Conservation (NC-20) zoned properties. Approximately 18 acres of Countryside (CS) zoned land, south of Route 18, will be designated for Grasonville Planned Residential Neighborhood (GPRN) to accommodate additional residential uses near the new Emergency Center. (Figure 11 and Figures 3-1 & 3-2).

Figure 3-2



Grasonville Neighborhood Character



Forest Road



Melvin Avenue



Main Street



Main Street



Narnia Drive



Timber Lane



Whitehouse Road



Wilson Road

Inside the US 50/301 corridor

Undeveloped land in the US 50/301 corridor is clustered mainly in two locations: north and south of the Chester River Beach Road overpass, and north and south of US 50/301 immediately west of Hess Road/Hissey Road. Undeveloped lands between Hissey Road and Nesbit Road are protected from future development by conservation easements.

Due to the proximity of US 50/301, a six lane divided highway with associated traffic, noise and glare impacts, it is not practical to plan for future residential development on the Suburban Residential (SR) zoned properties directly fronting the highway. Future residents would ultimately want/need sound barrier walls along the highway frontage in order to maintain any semblance of a peaceful residential neighborhood. Concrete noise barriers used on the Western Shore to limit noise impacts to residential neighborhoods adjacent to highways cost an average of \$550.00 per linear foot. Any residential development that might occur on these sites would most likely be higher density, rental units in multi-family structures, since it is doubtful that single-family detached housing would be marketable in these locations.

A preliminary noise study was conducted along the highway corridor as part of the 1998 Grasonville Community Plan. That Plan concluded that given average daily traffic on US 50/301, that future residential structures would need to be set back at least 800 feet from the center of the highway in order to reach acceptable noise levels for housing.

With high visibility from the highway, good access from service roads and overpass ramps, an existing partially developed commercial corridor, and high land values, it is unlikely that these Suburban Residential (SR) zoned properties will remain undeveloped for very long. Currently, the new Emergency Center is under construction and two additional office buildings proposed on the Emergency Center site. One Suburban Residential (SR) zoned parcel was recently cleared but no development has been proposed, although the County Commissioners have supported a Department of Housing and Community Development funding request for a project financing of 72-92 rental units on that site.

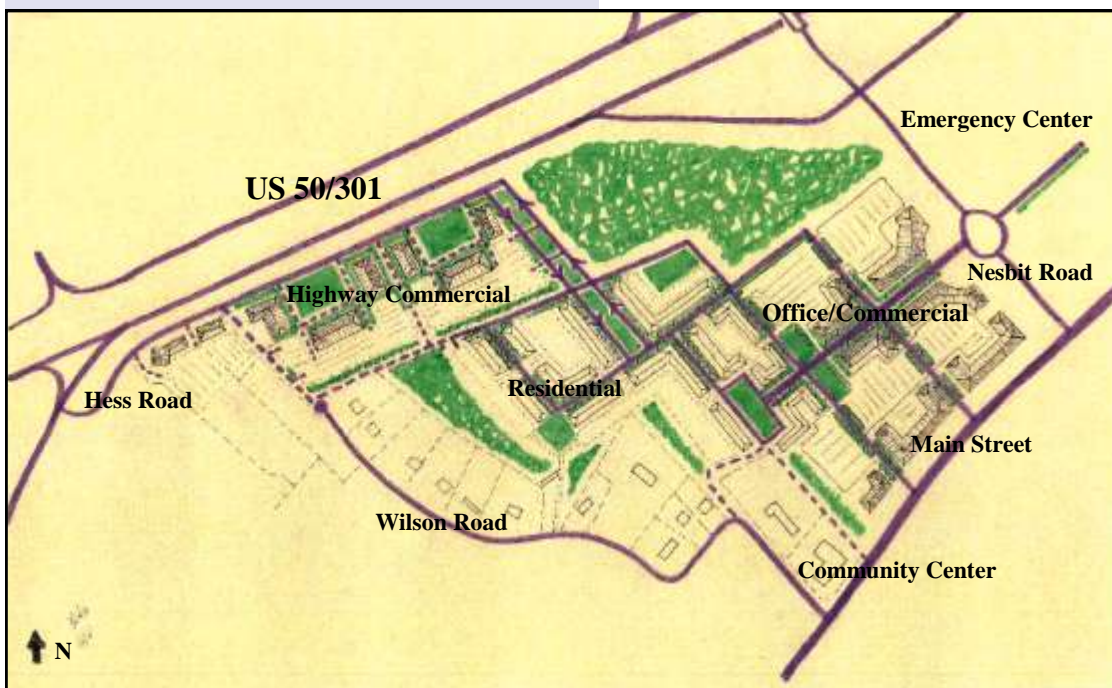


Recently cleared site on Nesbit Road

Given the options of higher density multi-family housing or additional commercial or institutional development, it appears that commercial/ institutional development, consistent with the Grasonville Village Center (GVC) zone, or even a new Medical Campus zoning classification would be the most reasonable scenario for these Suburban Residential (SR) zoned properties. Supportive uses would include, doctor's office, assisted living facility, drug store, convenience store, restaurant, and related workforce residential uses supportive of the community. See Illustration 3-1 for a concept plan for mixed-use development. In the vicinity of the Emergency Medical Campus along Route 18, open or civic spaces may be provided to accommodate a commemorative kiosk explaining the British actions in the Battle of Slippery Hill and the defense of the county undertaken by a small band of County patriots. This kiosk area would have enough room for ceremonies, school groups, etc. to view the layout of the battle actions at the kiosk. On-site or nearby parking should be available.

It should be noted that members of the Task Group who attended plan work sessions were deeply divided on the future land use and zoning of these highway frontage properties. The major concern is that commercial development of the sites located on the south side of the highway (US 50/301) will negatively impact residential property values along Main Street. Extensive landscape buffers and special design considerations should be required to separate these uses from adjacent residential neighborhoods, especially those along Main Street whose rear yards are immediately adjacent to the affected tracts.

Illustration 3-1 - Mixed-Use Concept Plan



E. HOW CAN THE APPEARANCE OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL AREAS BE IMPROVED?

Existing commercial areas fronting on US 50/301 are currently zoned Urban Commercial (UC) and are, for the most part, already developed with businesses. Much of the development predates the closing of direct access onto US 50/301 and is oriented directly towards the highway with little connection to the Grasonville community. Most of these existing developments were constructed prior to the County's adoption of significant landscaping and design standards.

The appearance of infill development and redevelopment of these properties should improve under the County's current landscaping, design and signage standards. Specifically such development should be:

- At an appropriate bulk and scale for Grasonville with limits on the maximum size of structures (no big-box retail or strip commercial centers, for example);
- Architecturally attractive;
- Integrated to the community fabric of buildings, roads, and open space where feasible and desirable;
- Designed and landscape buffered to minimize negative impacts on existing residential communities; and
- Have primary access and egress to service roads or roads which have direct connection with US 50/301. None of these commercial sites should have direct primary access to Rt. 18 Main Street.
- Chapter 4 contains a fuller description of how these guidelines are to be achieved.
- Apply design and sign standards to new commercial development.

F. WHAT TRANSPORTATION, RECREATION, AND OTHER PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT QUALITY OF LIFE IS ENHANCED AND GRASONVILLE FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY AS A GROWTH AREA?

To improve the quality of life for existing residents and to function effectively as a growth area, attracting an appropriate amount of growth and development and thereby preventing sprawl development in rural areas, Grasonville must be an attractive place to live, work, shop, and recreate. Public investments are needed to create an attractive community. This public investment will in turn attract higher quality residential and non-residential development, which will repay the public investment.

Schools

New residential development in Grasonville and the other County growth areas are severely limited by the availability of school capacity. New school capacity could be accommodated within the Planning Area on parcels designated as Grasonville Planned Residential Neighborhood (GPRN). The County is in dire need of Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU's). The County should consider exempting small MPDU projects, consisting of less than 10 units, in the Planning Area from the requirements of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

Roads

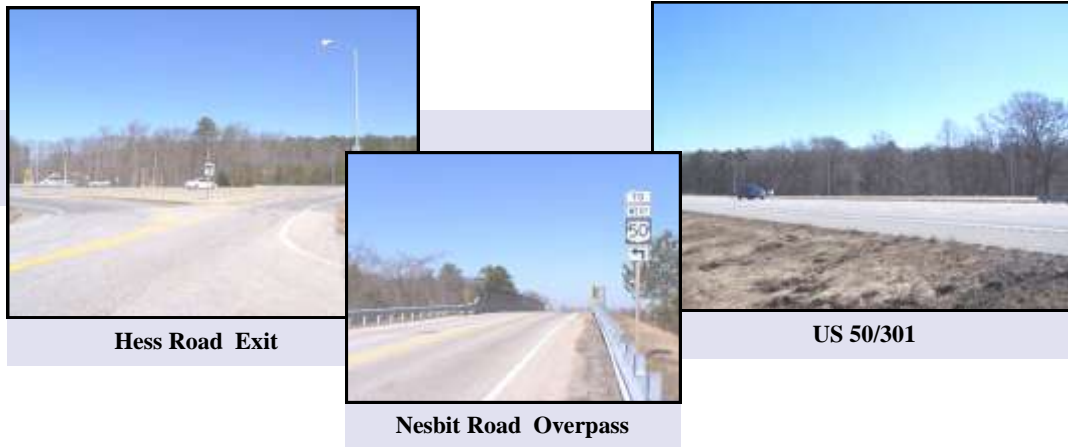
Overall, motor vehicle traffic moves well through Grasonville. The two full-directional interchanges with US 50/301 at Chester River Beach Road and at Nesbit Road serve the community adequately. The existing network of roads will be adequate to serve existing residents and the amount of growth that will occur, provided traffic from future development is directed towards roads with capacity, and provided minor improvements are made to specific intersections. No major road improvements or new collector roads will be needed in Grasonville, except for the reconstruction of Main Street, as discussed in detail above under Section C. The lack of pedestrian and bicycle amenities needs to be addressed.

The Department of Land Use, Growth Management and Environment has requested detailed information from the Maryland Department of Transportation regarding functional classification, average daily traffic counts and level of service for State routes in the Grasonville Planning area. Information provided by the State is very limited. Rt. 18 is classified as a "major collector", but current traffic counts are not available. US 50/301 is classified as a "principal arterial." Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts for US 50/301 through Grasonville is 66,360 AADT at Jackson Creek Road, 63,530 AADT at Evans Avenue, and 65,420 AADT at Nesbit Road. Count data is only available for Main Street, east of Bennett Point Road at Taylor Drive with 2,391 AADT.

Table 3-1

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)

	2006	2007	2008
Route 50/301			
Jackson Creek	69,380	68,691	66,360
Evans Avenue	65,820	65,161	63,530
Nesbit Road	67,730	67,051	65,420
Route 18/Main Street			
Taylor Drive	2,503	2,520	2,391



Circulation patterns south of Main Street

In planning for new development south of Main Street, an important consideration is the lack of direct north-south through routes between areas south of Main Street and US 50/301: northbound traffic on Sawmill Lane, Grasonville Cemetery Road, Gravel Run Road and Perry's Corner Road must travel east or west on Main Street to reach one of Grasonville's two full-directional interchanges with US 50/301. As overall traffic in the area increases, this will put more traffic onto Main Street, mixing local traffic with through traffic, and creating the potential for congestion and hazards. A new connecting road between Discovery Lane and Grasonville Cemetery Road may improve overall east-west mobility. There is the potential to consider a small roundabout at Grasonville Cemetery Road if a new connector road is considered. The intersections of Main Street with Perry's Corner Road, Gravel Run Road and

Grasonville Cemetery Road are particularly at risk because north and westbound traffic must make left turns onto Main Street.

To reduce unnecessary traffic on Main Street this Community Plan recommends that traffic generated by future development south of Main Street not have major access onto Main Street or streets such as Gravel Run Road and Grasonville Cemetery Road. Similarly, smaller residential streets such as Collier Road, Melvin Avenue, White House Road, and Church Lane should not be extended for access to future development. Instead, most traffic from future development should be directed to Perry's Corner Road and Sawmill Road, collector roads that provide more direct access to US 50/301.

Intersection improvements

The key intersections of Chester River Beach Road and Perry's Corner Road with Main Street should be evaluated to determine whether signalization, or turning lanes would improve traffic flow. Other intersections along Main Street such as at Station Lane, Gravel Run Road, Evans Avenue and Grasonville Cemetery Road will need to be evaluated and modified as necessary to handle additional traffic, and improve turning angles to accommodate safer turns.



Landscaping and guard rail on Main Street obstructs oncoming traffic from view and impedes safe pedestrian movement



Landscaping blocks speed limit sign at Evans Avenue

Recreation

Grasonville Park off Perry's Corner Road is currently Grasonville's only active park facility. Grasonville Elementary School provides some open space and a play area. Ewing Pond Park, adjacent to Grasonville Elementary School provides open space. A small County park facility (Long Point Park) is located on the north side of US 50/301 between Jackson Creek and Long Point Roads. There are two existing public boat landings, one at Jackson Creek in the northwest part of Grasonville, and one at Cabin Creek at the end of Cabin Creek Road. These are local facilities that should not be expanded for greater use by visitors from outside the community.

As a designated growth area Grasonville needs a more fully developed parks and open space system. Recreation needs are:

- Active recreation space centrally located, and accessible from existing neighborhoods along Main Street and from planned new neighborhoods to the south. This space could be co-located into a new school site.
- A small recreation/activity area in the Grasonville Village Center.
- Pedestrian-bicycle links to recreation facilities from Grasonville's existing and planned neighborhoods.

Pedestrian and bicycle amenities

Grasonville is fairly compact: from Perry's Corner Road to Grasonville Primary School, for example, is around one mile. Most destinations on Main Street (post office, stores, church, senior center) could be reached within a 15 to 20 minute walk or a short bicycle ride from most of Grasonville's neighborhoods south of US 50/301. However, lack of a complete sidewalk or bicycle routes are a disincentive to non-automotive circulation. Creating good pedestrian-bicycle connections in Grasonville would offer a safe, attractive alternative to driving, especially for young people, and help create a cohesive sense of place. A proposed pedestrian-bicycle network is set forth in Chapter 4 and depicted in Figure 10.

Drainage

Grasonville is low lying and subject to flooding from heavy rainfall and exceptionally high tides. The importance of protecting properties by maintaining drainage ditches was stressed by members of the Task Group. A County sponsored drainage program and a Public Drainage Board should be established to address storm-water management and drainage problems in the Grasonville Planning Area. The proposed reconstruction of Main Street as a closed section road and storm-water management

facilities for new developments offer additional opportunities to improve drainage throughout the community. Water quality improvements to area creeks, such as Jackson Creek, should be studied and implemented.

Sewer

The County Master Water and Sewer Plan establishes policy for access to public sewer service in rural areas outside of designated growth areas and/or sanitary districts. Current County policy is not to provide sewer service in areas designated as "Rural" in the Comprehensive Plan or the various adopted community plans unless there is a compelling environmental health risk which could be alleviated by public sewage disposal.

Transfer Station

The solid waste transfer station off Gravel Run Road is not an appropriate use for a residential growth area. It has negative impacts on nearby residential areas and streets and although it should either be relocated outside of the growth area or to a more suitable location with better transportation access, it may prove very difficult to site a new location elsewhere in the County. What may be more feasible is that existing transfer station sites will be consolidated in conjunction with implementation of a curbside collection program for the Kent Island/Grasonville area. A highly desirable reuse for this site would be for recreation and open space, particularly in view of its central location with respect to existing and planned residential neighborhoods.



Grasonville Solid Waste Transfer Station

G. HOW WILL ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS BE PROTECTED?

Environmental considerations are very significant in planning for growth in Grasonville. Over half of Grasonville is within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area (Figure 8). Wetland issues are very significant even outside the Critical Area since hydric soils are common throughout the area. A broad range of Federal, State and County laws and regulations help protect environmental resources in Grasonville. The County's Comprehensive Plan and its current zoning and Critical Area regulations meet all of Maryland's requirements for environmental protection and all new developments are evaluated on a site-by-site basis to ensure compliance with these regulations.

Environmental protection remains an extremely important County-wide objective, and sensitive environmental features, such as streams, wetlands and their buffers, floodplains, groundwater, habitats of threatened and endangered species, and agricultural and forested areas are plentiful in the Planning Area. Preservation and, where possible, enhancement of these areas is a key tenet of the Community Plan. Wherever possible, vegetated buffers should be forested, using native or locally compatible tree species. Existing forest stands should be preserved. Where such preservation cannot be achieved while still allowing development, afforestation (equal or larger in area than the acreage of trees removed) should occur within the Planning Area, as per provisions of the County's Forest Conservation regulations. Development in environmentally sensitive areas should use techniques to reduce impacts on water quality, wildlife habitats and shoreline. Agricultural and forested areas within the Study Area are included in the as part of the County's designated Priority Preservation Area.

The 2010 Water Resources Element (WRE) is a new element of the County's Comprehensive Plan and has considered the impacts of existing and proposed land uses on water resources. Impacts to our water resources can be minimized by concentrating and directing growth to Planning Areas, such as, Grasonville. Best Management Practices (BMP's), Tools, Techniques and Strategies, outlined in the WRE can be implemented to further reduce nutrients and sediments reaching our water resources. Grasonville is currently served by central water and wastewater facilities. Expansion and improvement to these systems will ensure that nutrient loads into area water resources are minimized and improved. Applying sustainable smart growth principles and best management practices will work to conserve resources, reduce resource consumption, and minimize impacts to sensitive resources.

Stormwater runoff can be a major source of impact to water resources. Application of the Environmental Site Design (ESD) or Low Impact Development (LID) concepts and design on development activities and use of the County's Stormwater Management standards will work to reduce impacts on the areas water resources.

The County should explore the need and potential for regional drainage systems and storm-water management in the Grasonville area in order to improve overall water quality. Current regulations require site-by-site solutions for drainage and storm-water management, and while new developments are actually creating an improvement in water quality, older developments without adequate storm-water management are still polluting local waters with unchecked runoff. A regional system for drainage and storm-water management would assist to ensure that all developed sites would be managing and improving drainage and the quality of runoff.

H. HOW CAN "RURAL" AREAS OUTSIDE THE GRASONVILLE PLANNING AREA BE PROTECTED SO THAT THEY RETAIN THEIR EXISTING CHARACTER?

A key objective of this Community Plan is the protection of existing "Rural" areas on the perimeter of Grasonville. Demarcating growth boundaries is consistent with Maryland's growth management policies under the 1992 Planning Act. These require, for example, that development be concentrated in suitable areas, and that resource lands be protected. "Rural" areas around Grasonville are primarily zoned Countryside (CS), and large tracts are already protected from development:

- Most of the designated "Rural" lands are classified as Resource Conservation Areas (RCA) within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area permitting only very low density development (one dwelling per 20 acres).
- Large areas are permanently protected. The peninsula between Marshy Creek and Cabin Creek, for example, is owned by the Wildfowl Trust of North America, and contains the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center. A large property west of Walsey Creek is protected by a voluntary conservation easement. The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy recently purchased a large tract of land along Bennett Point Road, just east of Grasonville.

Other areas outside the growth area boundary do retain a limited amount of low density residential development potential, and there are several existing residential subdivisions scattered around Grasonville, such as the Bennett Point Road communities and the Prospect Bay residential golf course community.

The Community Plan's land use objective for these areas is for them to retain their rural character, with no proposed upgrades in existing zoning or Chesapeake Bay Critical Area classification, except in the proposed Planning Area expansion areas.

These areas will be protected from development through:

- This Community Plan, which sets the policy framework for growth and development in the Grasonville area,
- The zoning ordinance and maps and Chesapeake Bay Critical Area ordinance and maps that specify the permitted type and intensity of development, and
- The Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Master Plan that specifies areas planned to receive public water or sewer service.



Grasonville Elementary School



Grasonville Cemetery Road



Hess Road



Grasonville Station

Grasonville Sidewalk Improvements



Grasonville Cemetery Road



Main Street



Schoolhouse Lane



Nesbit Road



Evans Avenue



Perry's Corner Road



Tall Pines Lane



Sawmill Lane



Main Street

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