

**NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING MEETING
North East Town Hall Meeting Room
106 South Main Street
North East, Maryland 21901
Thursday, November 7, 2024 / 4:00 PM-6:00 PM**

-CALL TO ORDER-

Mrs. Vennell opened the workshop at 4:10 pm.

Present for the meeting included, Commissioner Hilary Crothers-Moore, Planning Members Judy Duffy and Calvin Wilson and Steering Committee members Amy Yackanech, Town of North East Grant-writer, Stacey Dahlstrom, EPR-PC Consultant for the Comprehensive Plan, Reva Heinrich, EPR via Zoom, Alan Simpson, EPR, via Zoom, Melissa Cook-Mackenzie, Town Administrator Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning, and Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant. Absent from the meeting included Chairman Mark Dobbins, Neil DeMatt and Grant Handley, Assistant Town Administrator.

-APPROVAL OF MINIUTES-

September 26, 2024

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the September 26, 2024 minutes with a minor correction. Ms. Yackanech second the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-REPORTS-

None.

-NEW BUSINESS-

North East Comprehensive Plan:

Survey

Ms. Dahlstrom introduced Alan Simpson and reported that he and his team worked on compiling the survey information and incorporated it into summary. Ms. Cook-Mackenzie inquired if the raw data used for the survey summary was available for review if needed. Mr. Simpson replied yes Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie inquired how many people commented and left contact information on the surveys. Mr. Simpson replied that a total of 74 email addresses were given. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie suggested to keep a copy of the survey summary on hand as we continue to review the Comprehensive Plan elements. Ms. Dahlstrom added that the summary results will be helpful when developing goals.

The committee had no further comments on the survey results.

APPROVED
May 22, 2025

Chapter 3 Transportation Element

Page 3-1

Paragraph 3.

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie referred to the wording Two Tier priority for growth and development inquired if this wording should be explained in more detail. Ms. Dahlstrom stated that we can let her know what items need additional explanation and they can be flagged for updating.

Page 3-2

Bullet 1:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie referred to the wording: improve the safety and security of the Towns transportation and infrastructure. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that some of the items listed have been completed for the remainder of items the wording should be more specific, identifying the reason such as more lighting is needed or security cameras. Mrs. Vennell inquired if a grant was being applied for what wording would be most helpful. Mrs. Yackanech replied that leaving the wording more general and making specific goals will be most helpful when applying for grants and verify that the objectives still support the goals.

Ms. Dahlstrom stated that she typically lists a goal and then the objectives for the goal directly underneath. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie said she would prefer that as well. Ms. Dahlstrom replied that she will copy and paste the objectives under each goal and realign the Comprehensive Plan in this format.

Bullet 2:

No Changes.

Bullet 3:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie suggested using the wording: expand transportation options to include the scheduled passenger rail service, or something similar, and also inquired how far in the future is acceptable to plan for a project. Ms. Dahlstrom stated that a minimum of a 10 year plan is required however for something like transit services we could use at least the year 2040.

Bullet 4 through 6

No Changes.

Bullet 7:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported there is a typo: two “such as”, one needs removed. Also, Mrs. Vennell reported that the word “trails” shall be removed from permitted places bicycles may be used as it would be in conflict with the North East Preserve which does not permit bicycles on its trails.

APPROVED
May 22, 2025

Bullet 8:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that the first bullet and eighth could possibly be combined depending on the objectives.

Page 3-3

Bullet 1:

Commissioner Crothers-Moore inquired about the Rolling Mill Bridge being stricken through and Ms. Dahlstrom replied that it was being moved under objectives and placed on page 3-6 and page 3-13. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie added that the Rolling Mill Bridge is a county bridge thought that it should be noted that although it is a County bridge it is the Town's objective and goal to have the bridge replaced. Ms. Heinrich stated that it could be re-written as a goal. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie inquired if the Town were to petition the county would it be better to have the replacement of the bridge be listed as a goal or objective in our Comprehensive Plan. Mrs. Vennell suggested removing this item from objectives and reword to put it under goals and Commissioner Crothers-Moore concurred. Ms. Dahlstrom suggested the wording: "to provide and enhance the connection and re-connection via the replacement of the Rolling Mill Bridge for access for emergency services, vehicular and pedestrians, residents, communities connection to the down town."

Bullet 2:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie the word "conduct" should be removed.

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that she and Sandy Turner, Cecil County Tourism are working on new wayfinding signs throughout Town and to the park. Ms. Dahlstrom suggested rewording to: continue to enhance wayfinding signs.

Bullet 3:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that the Town had received a grant to replace the sidewalks, and that has been completed. Ms. Duffy reported there are sections of sidewalk along State Highway Roads that need repair, replaced and do not have the handicap ramps. Commissioner Crothers-Moore suggested that a bullet could be added about the sidewalks being a State Highway goal. Ms. Dahlstrom replied yes.

Ms. Duffy also mentioned the bus stop and sidewalk at the end of Jethro Street not being ADA compliant. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that we can add this item to our State Highway wish list and set up goals and objectives to support this.

Page 3-4

Bullet 1:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie suggested rewording: "the Town should continue to work with State Highway and the County to ensure the traffic carrying capacity of the three
North East Planning Commission Workshop

major routes serving the Town (US Route 40, MD Route 272, and MD Route 7) are protected in the event of future development.”

Bullet 2:

Ms. Dahlstrom suggested modifying the wording such as: Improve access to parking through wayfinding signs.

Bullets 3-6:

No Changes.

Bullet 7 & 8:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie and Ms. Dahlstrom concur that these two bullets could be combined.

Bullets 9-11.

No Changes.

Page 3-5

Bullet 1 through 3 and 6 through 10:

No changes.

Bullets 4 & 5

These bullets were moved under transit services.

Page 3-6

Bullet 1-3.

No Changes.

Bullet 4:

The group discussed when Cecil County subdivisions are being considered south of Town, be proactive regarding the review of the changes to the transportation patterns imposed by the subdivision and coordinate with applicable agencies. Commissioner Crothers-Moore suggested this could be an objective to support a goal.

Bullet 5:

Ms. Dahlstrom will reword this bullet regarding the area south of Town such as future communities served from route 272.

Bullet 6:

No Changes.

Page 3-7

Highways

Paragraph 1:

No Changes.

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Paragraph 2:

Trucking Routes

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie suggested adding a statement about the new Perryville exit ramp onto Belvedere Road which will lessen traffic exiting onto Route 272. Ms. Dahlstrom will add wording.

Rail Services

Ms. Dahlstrom will define Virginia Regional.

Ms. Yackanech suggested adding Havre de Grace and Aberdeen to the list of public bus transit stops.

Page 3-8

Paragraph 1:

Transit Services

Commissioner Crothers-Moore inquired about the train station and/or transit facility on page 3-8. Mrs. Vennell stated this project still needs to be verified with Cecil County. Mr. Wilson inquired about having more wayfinding signs placed for public transportation such as Greyhound Bus and other public transportation, when we get to that section. Mrs. Crothers-Moore suggested placing a link on Town website for public transportation information

Paragraph 2 and 3:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that this paragraph should be reworded as the county may change the name of the Cecil Transit bus, the bus should be referred to as the County Transit Bus or Cecil Transit Bus. Ms. Dahlstrom will reword these paragraphs.

Page 3-9

Existing Bus Stops in North East Area include

Mrs. Crothers-Moore stated that the word "Gateway" is missing a "Y" at the end of the word.

Bus Shelters

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie suggested adding addresses to the updated bus shelters and in some cases the businesses have changed where the bus shelters are located. Also, the Mauldin Avenue and Walnut Street bus shelter is actually in the cross over road between these two roads, therefore this will need to be clarified. Mrs. Vennell gave Ms. Heinrich the contact name for the information regarding the bus stops: Johnathan Cramer.

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that the name for Cecil College needs to be updated.

Page 3-10

No Changes.

Page 3-11

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie suggested rewording from North East Park and Ride to the commuter lot is located on the South side...

Last Paragraph

Mrs. Vennell suggest on the last sentence change from: is being contemplated to should be considered.

Pg 3-12

Ms. Duffy stated that a correction is needed on page 3-12. The wording currently states the sidewalk reconstruction needed is Jethro to the Amtrak bridge, the wording should state sidewalk reconstruction is needed from Jethro to the North East Creek Bridge on Mauldin Avenue.

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie commented when listing Rolling Mill Lane or Rolling Mill Road to make sure the correct one is being listed as one is located in the County and the other within the Town.

Page 3-13

First Chart

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie mentioned that it should be stated that the Rolling Mill bridge is a Cecil County bridge and that Rolling Mill Road and Mechanics Valley Road are Cecil County Roads were feasible.

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported:

1. There is an East Coast Greenway sign located at PNC bank.
2. The Bridge over Amtrak has been replaced.

Paragraph below first chart – Bicycle level of traffics stress

Ms. Dahlstrom will review the bicycle information to add any new relevant information.

Page 3-14

Mrs. Vennell reported that Mr. Handley commented that the Town is currently exploring options to expand commercial uses of the boat pier and would like to add some new wording. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie suggested adding language such as the town should pursue alternative options to expand commercial water oriented opportunities while maintaining public access.

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Page 7

Revisions for Chapter 3 Pages 3-1 to 3-14 will be an attachment to the November 7, 2024 minutes.

The next workshop shall be scheduled for December 19, 2024 to continue the review of Chapter 3, page 3-15 to the end of the chapter.

Ms. Duffy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Minutes prepared by Lisa Rhoades:

Lisa Rhoades
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Mark Dobbins
Chairman

APPROVED
May 22, 2025