

**NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING MEETING
North East Town Hall Meeting Room
106 South Main Street
North East, Maryland 21901
Thursday, December 19, 2024 / 4:00 PM-6:00 PM**

-CALL TO ORDER-

Mrs. Vennell opened the workshop at 4:06 pm.

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

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

November 7, 2024

The November 7, 2024 minutes were tabled until the next scheduled Planning Commission Workshop Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meeting, as the Chapter 3 revisions for pages 3-1 to 3-14 have not yet been completed by the consultant.

-REPORTS-

None.

-NEW BUSINESS-

North East Comprehensive Plan:

Chapter 3 Transportation Element

Page 3-15

Bottom of Page

Safety

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie inquired about the comment "Safety" at the bottom of the page. Ms. Heinrich explained this is an area of opportunity for the Town to add additional information about safety which would allow for an opportunity to improve resources. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie inquired if this was intended for Town owned streets only or Town, County and State roads as well. Ms. Heinrich stated that a couple of years of data for town owned streets could be useful for creating goals and objectives about

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safety. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that another safety objective should be corner visibility. Ms. Heinrich stated that their team will add the wording.

Level of Service (LOS)
(Pages 3-15 to 3-18)

- Planning Department Action Item: The Planning Office will request 2 years of statistics from the North East Police Department to put in the paragraph.

Page 3-16

Last Paragraph

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that since there is a current study underway regarding the Route 272 corridor that the study should be referenced here.

Page 3-17

Paragraph 2

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie suggested the following language:

1. The Town, County and State should also establish the same level of service for failure.
2. The State, County and Town should coordinate and enter into an MOU.
3. A written policy should be created regarding the Level of Service and what is acceptable.

Reason: Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie commented, if the Town were to have an "F" as LOS, realistically no more development should occur.

Ms. Heinrich stated she will look into how each jurisdiction differs and then come up with some Level of Service language.

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that the county has adopted a policy on their criteria for a traffic impact study in 2022 and the Planning Office would like to present this idea to the Planning Commission for their consideration at a future meeting.

Page 3-18 through Page 3-23
No changes.

Page 3-24

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that the Transportation Planning and Programming and the Annual Tour paragraphs contain the same information and should be consolidated. In addition, the information should be verified by the consultant that it is still up to date.

Paragraph 1
Annual Tour

Mr. Handley suggested rewording the sentence that states "It also affords an opportunity for local officials to directly comment on aspects of the proposed projects and also suggest projects and priorities that are of local concern." Rewording to: "It also affords an opportunity for local officials to use this meeting as an opportunity to advocate to the Secretary of Transportation, in person, about future projects and priorities as well as inquiry about other future or ongoing State Highway Administration projects."

Page 3-25

Paragraph 1

Remove the word "may" impact regional travel and replace with the word "would" impact regional travel.

Paragraph 2

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated this paragraph should be removed.

Paragraph 3

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated where Maryland Route 7 is referred to it should be clarified whether it is Maryland Route 7 East or West.

Paragraph 4

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie inquired if the HNI referenced, would be the 2050 Plan. Ms. Heinrich replied yes.

Paragraph 5 through 6

No changes.

Paragraph 7

Level of Service

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie would like the first sentence to be reworded to add SHA: "A Level of Service policy establishes a basis for evaluating proposed development plans and projects against the LOS that the SHA, Town and County seek to achieve or maintain as growth occurs."

Page 3-26

Paragraph 1

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated this paragraph needs to be reworded. The second sentence states "deficiencies below those standards on major roadways would

prohibit future development” There currently is a development in the planning stages. However, State Highway has not shut down this development.

Paragraph 2

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated we cannot prohibit development if it is outside the incorporated Town limits. This paragraph needs to state if the development were to impact Town roads and if the development cannot be mitigated, the development should be prohibited.

Paragraph 3 through 8
No changes.

Page 3-27

Paragraph 1
No changes.

Paragraph 2

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie commented the text needs to be updated. Ms. Hienrich stated she will verify if WILMAPCO has updated their section.

Mr. Handley commented that Charlestown recently did a traffic study which may be beneficial to the Town if it included Maryland Route 7 and Route 40 data.

- Planning Office Action Item: Mrs. Vennell stated that she would contact the Town of Charlestown about obtaining a copy of the traffic study.

Page 3-28
No changes.

Page 3-29

Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 2

Mr. Handley and Mrs. Vennell discussed that Transit Oriented Development (TOD) needs revised as the County has a new hub area. Mrs. Vennell added that the Towns goal is to bring projects to the next step and seek funding. Therefore the goal and objectives will need to be reviewed and revised.

Page 3-30

Paragraph 1 through 2

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie commented that a status update is needed from WILMAPCO and the text to be updated accordingly.

Page 3-31

Chesapeake Connector
Paragraph 1 through 4
No changes.

Paragraph 5
US Route 40 Corridor Intersection Improvements
Gateway

Mr. Handley explained that additional explanation is needed in this paragraph. If the reader was not familiar with the area, this paragraph may be confusing as it is currently written as there is a "Gateway Drive". Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie concurred and added that the paragraph is still relevant in relation to enhancing the appearance of the community and shopping centers. It is important to have the entrance to the Town beautified and as the approach to the Town changes and grows the entrance may need to be modified so that it is a continuous visually appealing entrance to the town.

Paragraph 6 through 7
No changes.

Page 3-32

Bullet 1
No changes.

Bullet 2 through Bullet 6
Rail and Transit

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie also mentioned that the Rail and Transit section on this page needs to be updated and the information for Rail and Transit consolidated into one location.

Ms. Heinrich stated that the Rail and Transit section had been moved per previous comments however, she does also see the opportunity for additional consolidation.

Bullets 7 through 10
No changes.

Page 3-33

Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 3
No changes.

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie gave the following comments regarding the newly numbered items on Pages 3-33 and 3-34:

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Paragraphs 4 through 9 (numbered bullets)

Number 2- No change.

Number 5 – repairs have been done regarding flooding therefore this can be removed.

Number 6- the project is done. Strike currently under way and contract info. The first part of the sentence stays in.

Page 3-34

Paragraphs 1 through 5 (numbered bullets)

Number 7- middle school is being relocated, therefore this statement needs to be rewritten.

Number 8- should be corrected to Bridge over North East Creek (not Amtrak).

Number 10- regarding the sidewalk, the Town along with County has requested a sidewalk along Route 7 from Ridgely Forest Drive to Mechanics Valley Road. This will need to be clarified under number 10.

Number 11- this item should be moved under rail. Mrs. Vennell will provide an updated SHA letter, from April 2024, to the consultants.

Paragraph 7 and Paragraph 8

Parking and Coordination

Mr. Handley stated that a feasibility study may not be warranted and the paragraph should state something to the effect of “the Town of North East is analyzing parking needs as development occurs.” Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie concurred and would like this paragraph removed. The Planning Commission agreed that parking needs are reviewed with each project. A sentence should be added that states “the Town will continue to explore opportunities to add or enhance parking.”

Page 3-35 through Page 3-36

No changes.

Page 3-37

Bullet 1

No Changes

Bullet 2

Ms. Duffy stated that it has been determined by SHA that a traffic light will be installed at Route 272 and Irishtown Road. Therefore, this comment can be stricken.

Bullet 3 through Bullet 11

No changes.

Page 3-38 through Page 3-39

No changes.

Page 3-40

Bullet 1 through Bullet 7
No changes.

Bullet 8

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie commented that the Department of Emergency Services suggested not installing electric vehicle charging stations up against buildings due to potential fire hazards. Therefore this bullet should be amended.

Bullet 9 through Bullet 14
No changes.

Page 3-41 through Page 3-55
No changes.

Page 3-56

Paragraph 1 through Paragraph 3
No changes

Paragraph 4

On Street Parking:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie and Mrs. Vennell concurred that this paragraph should be removed.

Page 3-57 through Page 3-62
No changes

Page 3-63 through Page 3-82

MAPS

Ms. Vennell informed Ms. Heinrich that WILMAPCO was going to provide updated maps and that Ms. Dahlstrom may have already reached out to WILMAPCO. Ms. Heinrich will look into the status on the maps G1 through G16. The Eric Becket (SHA) maps should have updated notes added to them for grant purposes, unless the maps can be edited another way.

Page 3-63 through Page 3-69
No changes.

Page 3-70

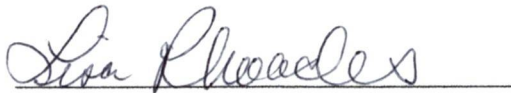
Ms. Duffy commented that there is a crosswalk on Map G7 is no longer needed as a crosswalk was installed at the Route 272 and Route 40 intersection. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie suggested adding a note regarding the crosswalk on the map.

Page 3-71 through Page 3-82
No changes.

The revisions for Chapter 3, Page 3-15 to end of chapter will be added as an attachment to the December 19, 2024 minutes.

Ms. Duffy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 p.m. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully Submitted:



Lisa Rhoades
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Approved:



Judy Duffy
Vice-Chairman