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April 26, 2024

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council

Via: Christopher Jakubiak, Director

From: Eric Leshinsky, Chief of Comprehensive Planning

Re: **ANNAPOLIS AHEAD 2040 DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
PROPOSED MAJOR TEXT AMENDMENTS FOR CITY COUNCIL
APPROVAL**

We look forward to meeting with the Council again on May 2. In this memorandum we've provided the list of proposed changes reviewed at the last work session on March 28 and have added specific text amendments to address the changes. This memo includes two related attachments which are listed below:

- Proposed Edits to Goals and Performance Measures
- Summary Chart of Proposed Edits to Goals and Performance Measures

General Updates

1. To address overall readability:
 - a. Review and edit all Goals and Performance Measures to reduce instances of wordiness and technical jargon.

See Attached Document, Proposed Edits to Goals and Performance Measures, and the Summary Chart of Proposed Edits to Goals and Performance Measures.
 - b. Review and double-check all cross references between the text and the referenced tables and exhibits.
 - c. Overall editing.

2. To address *Small Area Planning*:

- a. In Executive Summary of Action Plan and Chapter 1: Introduction of full Plan, add Ward maps and profiles which generally describe main recommended actions by Ward.

To be provided in a forthcoming separate document.

- b. In Executive Summary of Action Plan and Chapter 11: Development Regulations of full Plan, add clarifying text which describes what is meant by small area planning and small area plans, and the role and benefit of small area planning.

On page 366 in the full plan and page 40 in the Action Plan, add the following text:

“Although this Plan represents a citywide vision, very few of its recommended actions will be broadly implemented citywide. The city is a patchwork of neighborhoods of varying needs and conditions, and in most cases, implementation will be very neighborhood and location specific, relying on small area planning for guidance. Within the practice of city planning, small area planning is a common approach to addressing community needs at a scale which is tailored to the community. Areas of the city are selected for attention based on need and defining features relevant to the need, and the outcome of the small area planning is a *small area plan*. The small area plans supplement the Comprehensive Plan by providing detailed direction for the development of city at the scale of the block, roadway corridor, neighborhood, creekshed or ward. By focusing planning efforts at this scale, small area planning allows residents and other stakeholders to be more engaged in determining strategic priorities for their communities and helping to proactively shape their surroundings.”

3. To address information for and about the *65+ population*:

- a. Add a new section describing “The Growing Senior Population” as a demographic trend.

See proposed text under Chapter 2: Demographic Trends below

- b. Add new sections in Chapter 6: Transportation and Chapter 7: Community Facilities addressing the needs of the *65+ population*.

See proposed text below in the respective chapter sections

4. Add an index to both the Action Plan and full Plan.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Include “Public Safety” as a Plan Priority

On Page 33 of the full Plan and on Page 39 of the Action Plan, add a new Plan Priority under the Functional City section which reads:

“Public Safety: Reduce violence and crime throughout the city using a variety of community-based approaches.”

2. Add text to clarify the expectations for providing equitable service and opportunities to residents, relating to such things as access to quality housing, mobility, education, healthcare, and food. Explore adding similar text to relevant topic-specific chapters.

On page 14 of the full Plan and page 12 of the Action Plan, add the following text at the end of the Equity section:

“These opportunities and resources range from housing options to transportation options, to parks, community facilities, access to nature and the waterfront, and many other facets of life in Annapolis.”

Chapter 2: Demographic Trends

1. Add a new section describing “The Growing Senior Population” as a demographic trend

After page 39 in the full Plan and page 23 in the Action Plan, add a new section entitled “The Growing Senior Population” and under this section add the following text with accompanying images related to housing, transportation, and community facilities, and move the current text from page 48 (“Rising Population Groups: 65 and Older Population”) to be under this new section:

“Since 2010, the growth of the 65 and older population has far outpaced any other age demographic in the city and the needs of this group warrant specific attention in this Plan. This population is generally more socially vulnerable and less resilient to change than other age cohorts which means that the recommendations for several of the key elements of this Plan—namely housing, transportation, and community facilities—have a more direct bearing on this group’s health than other populations. Given this Plan’s focus on addressing equity, health, and resilience for all Annapolis residents, efforts to address these needs for the 65 and older population will have benefits to the larger population.

Common challenges faced by the 65 and older population generally relate to accessibility and inclusion. As individuals age, they gradually lose physical and mental acuity which in turn limits mobility and activity levels, which then can contribute to social isolation

and worsen a person’s physical and mental health. Thus, providing access to options for recreation, transportation to key destinations, social connections and gathering, participation in meaningful activities and programs such as the City’s many volunteer Boards and Commissions, and ways to age in place near friends and family can have substantial positive impacts on the health and well-being of this population.

The Plan provides specific recommendations for the 65 and older population in the Chapter 5: Housing, Chapter 6: Transportation, and Chapter 7: Community Facilities.”

Chapter 3: Municipal Growth

No proposed changes yet

Chapter 4: Land Use

1. To address *Form-Based Code*:

- a. Replace all mentions of “Form-Based Code” with “Form-Based Zoning”

Done.

- b. In the Executive Summary of the Action Plan, and in Chapter 4: Land Use and Chapter 11: Development Regulations of the full Plan, add clarifying text that Form-Based Zoning would be utilized as just one of several potential tools to address community concerns about preserving neighborhood character.

On page 370 of the full Plan and page 58 of the Action Plan, replace the sentence which reads “As described in Chapter 4: Land Use, the Plan’s primary approach to improving the city’s zoning is through the use of form-based codes which provide a more effective means of generating context sensitive development.” with the following text:

“As described in Chapter 4: Land Use, one of the effective tools for improving the city’s zoning standards is form-based zoning. It offers a means of guiding development that is sensitive to existing neighborhood character and supports the small planning approach discussed in this Plan.”

- c. In the Executive Summary of the Action Plan, and in Chapter 4: Land Use and Chapter 11: Development Regulations of the full Plan, add clarifying text which explains that Form-Based Zoning to some degree already exists in Annapolis in several locations.

On page 373 of the full Plan and page 61 of the Action Plan, replace the current images with new images of locations in Eastport, Downtown, and Inner West Street, where the standards for Form-Based Zoning already exist. To accompany these images, add the following text:

“Elements of Form-Based Zoning already exist in parts of Annapolis including in Downtown, Eastport, and portions of the West Street. The zoning standards in these locations are specific to the look and style of new buildings and their sites, and have been instrumental in guiding new development that is consistent with neighborhood development patterns and character.”

- d. In Chapter 11: Development Regulations, add clarifying text about how any future zoning reform would be implemented, specifically that it would be based on small area planning and not applied citywide.

On page 372 of the full Plan and page 60 of the Action Plan, add a new section entitled “Zoning Process”. Add the following text as an overview to the new section:

Incorporating form based approaches into the City’s current zoning ordinance will be achieved gradually over time, allowing the City to benefit from practical experience gained, lessons learned, and the engagement of communities in small area planning. Areas of the city will primarily be selected for zoning attention based on need and in light of development pressures.”

Under this new section, include the current sections entitled “Districts”, Design Standards”, and Planned Development Standards” as sub-sections.

2. Add text about the importance of environmental enhancement to the recommendations for *Large Infill Sites* which currently have large surface parking areas such as the Bay Forest Shopping Center, Hillsmere Shopping Center, West 2 Shopping Center, Clocktower Place, and the Eastport Shopping Center.

On page 106 of the full Plan, in the first paragraph, replace the sentence that reads “This Plan envisions all of these sites becoming exemplary models of mixed use redevelopment including a residential component and generous public realm investment.” with the following sentence:

“This Plan envisions all of these sites becoming exemplary models of mixed use redevelopment including a residential component, a generous public realm investment, and corresponding environmental enhancements to address stormwater management, urban tree canopy, and other goals of this plan.”

On pages 108, 109, and 110, under the specific recommendations for all shopping center sites, add the following new recommendation:

“Include high performing environmental features to ensure a substantial improvement in the environmental quality of the surrounding area.”

3. Add text to clarify how City staff and others will implement the Greenway Plan including next steps.

On page 120 of the full Plan and page 50 of the Action Plan, add the following text as a second paragraph:

“To effectively act on the vision of the Greenway Map, staff from the Department of Planning & Zoning will need to develop an action plan for implementation in coordination with the Annapolis Conservancy Board, and the Departments of Recreation & Parks and Public Works. The plan will clarify the key criteria for conservation; develop a database of existing and potential conservation properties with information on corresponding features; provide an updated map showing specific greenway corridors to connect; and develop a prioritization of specific parcels for both new conservation and existing conservation areas in need of restoration or other improvement to link the greenways.”

4. Add text to clarify Greenway Plan that improvements are needed to properties already protected in addition to new conservation areas.

On page 120 of the full Plan and page 50 of the Action Plan, replace the sentence that reads “A primary means of doing this is through a formalized Greenway Map that depicts all land parcels worthy of conservation.” with the following text:

“A primary means of doing this is through a formalized Greenway Map that depicts both existing properties already in conservation and all other land parcels worthy of conservation.”

Chapter 5: Housing

1. Add a new section addressing the needs of the 65+ population.

On page 152 of the full Plan, add a new section entitled “The Benefits of Aging in Place” and add the following text:

“With the continued growth of the 65 and older population in Annapolis, finding strategies that allow these residents to age in place, within a supportive community, needs to be a component of the city’s housing policy. When aging residents are forced to relocate because of housing costs or other factors, their mental and physical health often declines more rapidly. By contrast, when these individuals live near friends and family, close to important services and amenities, and have access to recreation and other ways of staying active, they have a much better chance of staying healthy. Two specific

policies in this plan will support aging in place: facilitating the construction of more accessory dwelling units, often referred to as “granny flats”, will enable aging residents to live close to family and in smaller, more manageable, dwellings; and the advancement of housing options within new mixed use development will allow aging residents to be closer to conveniences and community amenities.”

Chapter 6: Transportation

2. Add additional text to emphasize the importance of leveraging micro-mobility options to achieve mobility goals.

On page 175 of the full Plan, add a new sub-section entitled “The Importance of Mobility Options” and under this title add the following text:

“In the coming years, improved mobility will rely on not only an improved street network but also having access to more mobility options, particularly for short trips. In 2022, with a substantial reduction in parking due to the reconstruction of the Hillman Garage, the City embraced micro-mobility and micro-transit to facilitate access to from downtown. These options included an improved circulator bus, on-demand shuttles, and an e-bike/e-scooter share program, and all proved successful in reducing automobile dependency which in turn reduced traffic congestion and polluting emissions. To create a transportation system that truly serves all residents and visitors equitably, and limits adverse impacts on the environment, Annapolis will need to build on the success of these mobility options and better coordinate them citywide.

3. Add additional text to clarify the public transit investments needed to achieve better service.

On page 202 of the full Plan, after the second paragraph add the following text:

“When scaled to the citywide transit system, these investments may include the following:

- purchasing high performance electric buses and the related charging infrastructure
- more frequent and/or on-demand service
- real-time service information
- fare reductions
- bus stop enhancements for comfort, safety, and visibility
- improved connections beyond the city and coordination with both Anne Arundel County transit and MTA service
- Planning for route changes to better serve all residents and visitors
- Comprehensive ridership data to improve performance

4. Add a dedicated Goal for bicycle mobility and combine with existing Performance Measures and Recommended Actions related to bicycle mobility from Transportation Goals T1, T2, T3, and T4.

After page 214 of the full Plan, add the following new goal, performance measure, and actions:

Goal T3: Build a bicycle infrastructure network that allows cycling to become a viable transportation option for all residents and visitors regardless of age or comfort level.”

Performance Measure 1: The city’s separated bikeway network increases from 5 miles to 10 miles by 2030 and to 15 miles by 2040.

- T3.1 Complete the Bike network improvements identified in the 2011 Bike Master Plan and this Plan, and regularly track progress on all proposed improvements.
(CURRENTLY LISTED UNDER GOAL T1)
- T3.2 Ensure that all approved bike facility recommendations are budgeted and implemented with CIP roadway improvements.
(CURRENTLY LISTED UNDER GOAL T1)
- T3.3 Prioritize the design and construction of the West East Express (WEE) bike corridor as the spine of the City’s bike network.
(CURRENTLY LISTED UNDER GOAL T1)
- T3.4 Adopt standards for implementing bicycle facility infrastructure that improve safety for cyclists and are tailored to Annapolis.
(CURRENTLY LISTED UNDER GOAL T2)
- T3.5 Prioritize bike and pedestrian facility improvements to the City’s major thoroughfares, where the highest number of traffic fatalities and injuries currently happen, as means of improving safety, minimizing conflicts between modes of travel, and lessening congestion.
(CURRENTLY LISTED UNDER GOAL T2)
- T3.6 Prioritize improved bike and pedestrian connections to schools, particularly along Cedar Park Road, Forest Drive, and Spa Road.
(CURRENTLY LISTED UNDER GOAL T2)
- T3.7 Become a Silver-level bike-friendly and Bronze-level walk-friendly community, designated by the League of American Bicyclists and Walk Friendly Communities, respectively.
(CURRENTLY LISTED UNDER GOAL T3)
- T3.8 Work with MDOT/SHA, NSA-Annapolis, and Anne Arundel County to implement the planned MD 450 Bicycle Retrofit project which will provide a safe bike connection from the B&A Trail into Annapolis.
(CURRENTLY LISTED UNDER GOAL T4)

T3.9 Partner with St. John’s College, St. Anne’s Parish and HACA to design and implement the planned College Creek Connector trail between King George Street and Calvert Street.
(CURRENTLY LISTED UNDER GOAL T4)

5. Add text to clarify that meeting Vision Zero goals will rely disproportionately on improved roadway standards.

On page 185, after the final paragraph, add the following text in bold:

“Among these six areas of emphasis, Engineering (road design, in particular) will be most consequential in reducing roadway crashes and fatalities over the next 20 years. Crashes are most apt to occur where road design is not balanced with the function of the road. There is an interrelated set of road design related factors that can lead to crashes including wide vehicle travel lanes that facilitate speeding in otherwise congested areas; uncoordinated driveways and traffic patterns that encourage excessive lane changing, stopping and speed changes; and inadequate protection for and separation of pedestrians and bicyclists from vehicles. This Plan recommends that the City prepare and adopt road design standards for new roads that fit the intended function of the roads and the neighborhoods they serve. Figure 6-12, Vehicle Crash Map (2015-2021) shows that vehicle crashes are concentrated on West Street and Forest Drive. These roads carry the heaviest volumes which is the primary reason for the high incidence of crashes, but also and essentially important, these roads extend through areas that have substantially changed since the roads were first built, inevitably leading to an imbalance between roadway design and actual function. In recognition of this, this Plan recommends that where necessary, existing roads should be redesigned to, among other things, slow vehicle speeds and protect pedestrians and bicyclists.”

6. Add a new section addressing the needs of the 65+ population.

On page 176 of the full Plan, in the existing section entitled “Aging Population”, replace the last sentence with the following:

“Providing multiple safe and convenient ways of travelling to destinations is a critical need for the 65 and older population. This includes streets purposefully designed for walking with adequate shade with ample places to sit; public transit that is convenient, affordable, comfortable, and reliable; a more connected bikeway network fully protected from vehicular traffic to provide maximum safety; and parking considerations beyond standard ADA requirements.”

Chapter 7: Community Facilities

1. Add a new section addressing the needs of the 65+ population.

On page 240 of the full Plan, add a new section entitled “Benefits of Active Living” and add the following text:

“Although the City and its partners offer recreation programs for a wide spectrum of residents, the city’s fastest growing age demographic is the 65 and older population. More than other age groups, the health of this population depends heavily on staying active because mental and physical acuity decline more rapidly when people become sedentary. Accessible recreation opportunities therefore become one of the most cost effective ways of maintaining and improving the health of persons aged 65 and older. Support for this population can come through recreational programs and events designed specifically for them, accessible and well-maintained recreation facilities, and safe and connected trails that encourage walking and biking. For example, in recent years, the city has supported the 65 and older population through investments in new tennis, pickleball, and swimming facilities at Truxtun Park which are easily accessible by car, on foot, or by bike.”

Chapter 8: Arts, Culture, and Historic Preservation

No proposed changes yet

Chapter 9: Environmental Sustainability

1. Add a Goal dedicated to air quality with associated Performance Measures and Recommended Actions. Explore pulling some actions from existing related goals.

See attached Proposed Edits to Goals and Performance Measures

(Goal ES6 “Shrink the City’s carbon footprint” is revised to read “Improve air quality by reducing the City’s carbon emissions”)

Chapter 10: Water Resources

1. Edit Performance Measures and Recommended Actions of WR4 and WR5 to read as less technical and more straightforward.

See attached Proposed Edits to Goals and Performance Measures

2. Add text to WR4 Performance Measures or Recommended Actions to ensure aquifers remain safe from pollution and of sufficient capacity to service the city.

Add the following recommended action WR4.4:

“Continue to perform annual assessments of the City’s aquifers to ensure they remain safe from contamination and of adequate supply for projected growth.”

Chapter 11: Development Regulations

1. Add text to encourage consistency between the City’s Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan to aid in implementation.

On page 368 of the full Plan, add a new section entitled “Consistency with City Strategic Plan” and add the following text:

“The City maintains and regularly updates a Strategic Plan which is intended to help guide governmental functions and coordination of goals across departments. Although this Strategic Plan has not been updated since 2012, it is imperative that it is updated in the near future to be consistent with the goals and vision of this Comprehensive Plan. Consistency between the plans will ensure that City priorities are addressed, particularly in how the City delivers core services and budgets for these services.”

Chapter 12: Areas of Critical State Concern

No proposed changes yet

Chapter 13: Recommended Action Matrix

1. To address overall readability:
 - a. Review and edit all Goals and Performance Measures to reduce instances of wordiness and technical jargon.

See Attached Document, Proposed Edits to Goals and Performance Measures, and the Summary Chart of Proposed Edits to Goals and Performance Measures.