

# **BWI/Linthicum Small Area Plan**

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By County Council Bill No. 48-03**

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# BWI/Linthicum Small Area Plan

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# BWI/Linthicum Small Area Plan

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## **Introduction**

The *BWI/Linthicum Small Area Plan* is a refinement of the 1997 *Anne Arundel County General Development Plan*.

The purpose of the *BWI/Linthicum Small Area Plan* is to enhance the quality of life in the area, to help implement the goals and recommendations of the *General Development Plan*, and to promote citizen, business and County cooperation in the planning and development process.

The Plan's development was a collaborative process involving the BWI/Linthicum Small Area Planning Committee, staff from the Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ), other County agencies and the public. Together, the Small Area Planning Committee and staff have held public forums, conducted regular committee meetings, sent out and received questionnaires and focus group surveys, and have spoken with and listened to area residents to help identify assets, issues, and opportunities and to formulate a vision for the future of their area. They have worked together to identify where pedestrian and road improvements are needed, what type of land uses are appropriate and where they should be located, and how residential and commercial areas can be designed to improve their overall function and appearance.

This Plan for the BWI/Linthicum area consists of a document and maps. The document addresses community history, land use, zoning, circulation, natural and historic resources, utilities, community facilities and community design. The maps show, among other features, existing and proposed land use and zoning. Together, the text and maps amend the *General Development Plan* and serve as a basis for comprehensive zoning of the Planning Area.

## **The Small Area Plan Process**

Starting with the appointment of committee members and ending with the adoption of a long range plan for the community, the Small Area Plan process is designed to maximize public participation, build consensus and present the best plan for the future of the small planning area. All committee meetings are open to the public. In addition, two public forums are held, one near the start of the process to hear from the community about issues, opportunities and a vision for the future and one near the end to present draft recommendations on the various subject areas of the plan as well as a draft land use map. Once the Committee and staff have formulated their draft plan, it is presented to the Planning Advisory Board (PAB) for further review and comment by the public. Comments from the PAB are provided to the County Executive for consideration prior to introducing the Small Area Plan to the County Council for public hearing and adoption.

Once the Plan has been adopted by the Council and incorporated into the *General Development Plan*, planning staff will begin the implementation of the plan recommendations. It is hoped that the citizens who participated in the plan development will continue to follow the process and provide input during the implementation stage.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Plan Vision**

The future of the BWI/Linthicum area will be shaped by these three forces: residents, businesses, and government. In the 1970's population growth drove development. In the 1980's and 1990's, it was government, represented mainly by the BWI Airport, that changed the landscape of the area. As we move into the next millennium, it appears that business and the opportunities that it provides will be making the largest mark.

The strength of this area lies in its diversity. There are quiet neighborhoods, perfect for raising families or enjoying one's golden years. There are businesses nearby and almost anything can be had without traveling into the city. And yet there is always the city if one wants to see a Broadway show, stroll through a world-class museum, or take in the atmosphere of a Hard Rock Café.

While the vision of the future may not be that of a Colonial Williamsburg, or an Epcot Center, there are clearly opportunities for enhancing these communities and maintaining their character. The wants and needs of the communities must be balanced against the pressures and locations of the businesses that satisfy them. There must be allowances for the transitions that will accompany the changes that cannot be foreseen. And the best plans should be made for welcoming the changes that can be predicted.

The vision of this Plan is to develop a land use approach that maintains the character of these communities, that embraces opportunities which will improve their quality of life, that identifies and removes the obstacles to positive change, and that seeks to mitigate the impacts of the forces that cannot be fully controlled.

## **Key Recommendations**

The recommendations contained in this Small Area Plan consist of policies, strategies, and actions that are proposed to address issues related to land use and zoning, economic development, natural resources, transportation, community facilities and services, and public utilities in the BWI/Linthicum area. While all are important, some specific recommendations have been targeted as being of highest priority for the communities within this Planning Area. These priorities are summarized below, and the related issues of concern are discussed in more detail in the various sections of this Plan.

### **Key Land Use and Zoning Recommendations**

- Encourage revitalization of existing commercial districts by working with property owners, community development organizations, and citizen groups to improve existing properties. Establish commercial revitalization design guidelines which will help to integrate these commercial areas with the surrounding communities. Design guidelines could address elements such as street trees, buffers, planted medians, parking lots, building facades, signage and lighting, and sidewalks and pedestrian access. Specific areas to be considered for revitalization include the Linthicum/Shipleigh Commercial District, the Ferndale Commercial District, the Burwood Shopping Center, and the North Linthicum Commercial District.
- Create zoning incentives in industrial zones that encourage the preservation, or creation of forested areas adjacent to residential uses (e.g., increased floor area ratios (FAR), increased accessory commercial uses, etc.).
- Maintain and improve the relationship between the Maryland Aviation Administration, the County Office of Planning & Zoning, and community organizations in order to encourage enhanced planning of airport facilities, particularly with respect to buffering of adjacent residential communities.
- Encourage the BWI Airport planning staff to incorporate buffers between offsite airport uses and existing communities similar to those required by the County for development in industrial zones.

### **Key Natural Resources Recommendations**

- Restore degraded local streams to their natural state, and maintain healthy conditions in all area streams and wetlands through proactive watershed planning. In order to help to accomplish this, adopt environmental regulations or guidelines to require stream buffers of a minimum 100-foot width along all intermittent and perennial streams in the County.

- Promote preservation of forest and green spaces in the Planning Area. Work with government agencies, conservation trusts, and property owners to obtain forest conservation easements. Provide incentives to property owners to preserve forested land and to make land available for reforestation sites. Develop an Urban Forestry program in the County. Restructure the Forest Conservation Program to allow funds to be earmarked for a particular area or community, and establish a program through which forest conservation fees could be used to acquire land or easements for reforestation.
- Encourage and support the BWI Airport's policies and actions to control and/or lessen airport noise levels where possible.

### **Key Transportation Recommendations**

- Provide a new interchange at the BW Parkway and Hanover Road. This would serve the planned industrial park development west of the BWI Airport as well as the new employee parking and car rental facilities and the Airport.
- Create a West Ordnance Road extension between MD 648 south of Burwood Plaza and I-97. This road would alleviate congestion at a major intersection (Furnace Branch Road and B&A Boulevard) and would allow for a connecting road and additional access to North County High School.
- Reconfigure the intersection of B&A Boulevard/Orchard Road/Hollins Ferry Road to increase safety and provide two way access between Broadview and B&A Boulevard without increasing neighborhood traffic. Some possible solutions that should be studied include the permanent closing of Orchard Road and B&A Boulevard, heightening the Light Rail trestle, and installation of a traffic signal or traffic circle at the intersection.
- Create an access road linking MD 648 and Aviation Boulevard without increasing neighborhood traffic. This would allow easier access to businesses within the Ferndale area from the businesses on and around Aviation Boulevard as well as reduce the amount of traffic in the residential areas of Ferndale.
- Study, identify and protect an alignment to extend Light Rail service from the BWI Business District station to MD 295. Include stations at growth areas or where transit can support current and future development.
- Provide Light Rail service to the new Arundel Mills development to serve the considerable amount of residential, office, commercial and retail development that is occurring and planned in this area.
- Create grade-separated Light Rail crossings to replace the current at-grade crossings at

Maple Road, Camp Meade Road, and Twin Oaks Road. Grade-separated crossings at these locations will alleviate the existing traffic congestion that is expected to worsen as the frequencies of Light Rail trains increase. Grade separation of the crossing at Maple Road should be considered the highest priority.

- In conjunction with current and ongoing BWI Airport expansion plans, construct a grade-separated Light Rail crossing to replace the at-grade crossing at Aviation Boulevard and Elm Road.
- Provide sidewalks and pathways to better connect existing neighborhoods and improve overall pedestrian access throughout area communities.
- In order to preserve green space to the extent possible in the Planning Area, develop multi-level parking structures, as opposed to surface parking lots, when feasible to meet future demands for additional parking in the vicinity of the BWI Airport.

### **Key Community Facilities Recommendations**

- Construct additional single-use ball fields and active recreation areas to allow for added participation in team sports, in particular youth sports and recreation, and other uses.
- Establish greenways connecting parks and recreational areas.
- Establish an interconnected trail system between the existing BWI Trail and the Patapsco Valley State Park.
- Provide funding for completion of the needed renovations at North County High School as well as for construction of a new gymnasium.
- Establish a satellite Senior Center in Linthicum.