

# SPECIAL TOPIC WORKSHOP #8 SUMMARY

## LAND USE INCLUDING PRIORITY PRESERVATION



PlanQAC's eight and last Special Topic Workshop was held virtually on Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:30pm via WebEx, telephone call-in, as well as the option to view the presentation in person at the Sudlersville Fire Hall. The purpose was to solicit community input on topics related to the Comprehensive Plan, more specifically Land Use, including Priority Preservation. Below is a summary of the Workshop's discussions and participant questions and comments.



### Discussion Topic: What are QAC's greatest assets in terms of priority preservation? What are QAC's greatest needs as they relate to priority preservation?

- critical mass that exists in agriculture
- funding for preservation could be funded offset by other development fees; raise capital – make it easier to develop; will spur focus on preservation funding; NO incentive to fund the program today
- greatest assets in terms of priority preservation – large waterfront farms
- greatest needs – ability to correctly manage the impacts (negative and positive) associated with the traveling public and with sprawl;
- I am all for land preservation as long as it is voluntary on the part of the landowner. There should not be any further restrictions placed on landowners.
- Greatest need: funding
- Asset – State program – farmland – willingness to put acres in
- Needs – money to fund MALPF, affordable housing, jobs

### Discussion Topic: Priority Preservation Updated Vision

- Future of Agribusiness should be a focus – but that comes with other demands for services, housing, etc.
- Economics transfer to farmers/families for agricultural land – whether preserved or sold for development

### Discussion Topic: What are QAC's greatest assets in terms of land use? What are QAC's greatest needs as they relate to land use?

- Preserve, preserve, preserve! Once farmland is gone, it is gone and cannot be replaced
- Ag needs to be economically sustainable
- Affordable housing for people that live here especially our children
- Agri-tourism – too restrictive now. Need to be able to have events, short term camping, etc. on our farms (produce markets, pumpkin patch)
- Need for funding for MALPF
- Assets – large blocks of prime farmland
- Needs – more preservation funding

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- Needs – special housing, short term housing; need to address prime farmland and solar fields

### Discussion Topic: Land Use Updated Vision

- Sounds great; need to keep rural character through support of agriculture; need to protect our water resources
- Current vision is excellent – leave it as it is
- Keep as is – preservation of rural farms
- Question the use of rural County when the Southern end of the County is now defined by the Balt. MPO and through census data as non-rural.
- Keep the land use vision as it is! Don't weaken it.

### General Comments Received:

- Make Rt. 301 a priority agricultural scenic byway. No new commercial development along Rt. 301.
- I think the current zoning is working; maybe a little fine tuning but nothing major
- One issue that should be considered is the conversion of Ag farms into solar farms. Preserve the land for food, NOT energy.
- We can't ignore the people that are already coming here (tourism) and/or working here. We just need to be aware of the possibility of unintended consequences of putting restrictions on use & viewsheds ag land. Land owners should be able to provide for family members with other Ag enterprises (other than grain/chicken). This can help balance the business tax base as well.
- Is a commercial business like Chik-Fil-A or Wawa permitted on a agriculturally zoned property?
- If sewer and water are not available on a farm can there be a truck stop, gas station, or other businesses that have a lot of traffic?
- Last year proved how important food was, and we need to preserve land to be able to continue to provide for the community.
- Create ways for ag. Tourism on farms. Also agri-business to help funding
- I support the Dean & McGlaschan Petition to preserve the QA farmland. Some of the most productive farm land is in the Queenstown and Wye Mills area, yet, there is a "bulls eye" painted around that part of the County for future development. Please preserve our bucolic county.
- We are a seventh generation Queen Anne's Co. farming family tilling several thousand acres with children all involved. We are hopeful with the outlook of our County, to keep agriculture thriving.
- Our County has one of the finest ag. Preservation initiatives I have ever encountered. They seem very well informed and dedicated to their jobs.
- I'm on the board of the Old Wye Mill in Wye Mills. We emphasize the importance agriculture has played in the history and development of Queen Anne's County. We are proud that the Old Wye Mill, thanks to the farmers in this region, was able to provide flour to George Washington's troops during the revolutionary war. We, the Eastern Shore, was called the Breadbasket of the U.S. Our agricultural lands are unique on the entire east coast of the U.S. We need to preserve this heritage and the food security our region provides. We MUST preserve our farms and un-developed land.
- The old plan doesn't need much change in my opinion. I would like to see no development – model the plan after Kent County. Nothing changes – heavy on agriculture.

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- Greater effort needs to be made in preserving farmland – encouraging both County & State for more funding.
  - No more commercial growth on agricultural lands
  - Need to address the conversion of prime agricultural lands to solar farms.
  - Lack of incentives/funds to put property in preservation; farmers need to be compensated for preservation or be allowed to develop.
  - Offsets should be considered – for approved re-developments, funding could be provided in the priority preservation fund
  - Even if we become a “commuter” County, services & housing are still needed & scarcity will bid up the existing housing assets with no new housing.
  - First & foremost, a traffic plan for North County needs to be developed in advance of “smart growth” initiatives with 301 overpasses and by-pass (Sudlersville).
  - Traffic planning now could help preserve/achieve pedestrian/walkable communities in North County; hearing complaints from Kent Island residents of traffic planning after the fact
  - Goals should be: (traffic plan around these goals)
    - Jobs
    - Agribusiness/Agriculture
    - Housing
    - Services
    - Quality of Life
    - Pedestrian Village Centers
  - Developments should be thoughtfully considered generally outside of town centers (infill will occur)
  - Finally, 2017 Tax Act that authorized opportunity zones, resulted in designated OZ area in North County that has major economic incentives for development which could include agribusiness and general commercial development.

***All comments and questions will be considered during the development of PlanQAC. Additional comments or questions can be submitted through the project website: <https://www.qacplan2021.com/>***