

## SPECIAL TOPIC WORKSHOP #2 SUMMARY ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION



PlanQAC's second Special Topic Workshop was held virtually on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 9:00am via WebEx and telephone call-in. Its purpose was to solicit community input on topics related to the Comprehensive Plan, more specifically Environmental Resources and Transportation. Below is a summary of the Workshop's discussions and participant questions.



### Discussion Topic: What are QAC's greatest environmental resource and protection assets? What are QAC's greatest community facilities and service needs?

**Assets:** there's no question that we are going through a changing climate; one of the best resources that we have in QAC are our farms and our forests.

**Needs:** In this age where it becomes more important to absorb carbon, every effort should be made to do whatever we can to preserve our forests. Promotes adverse wildlife (shore relies on that); but also the more we can do to keep pavement off of the land; buffer our streams and absorb carbon; every effort should be made to protect this; a lot of permeable surface in QAC so we need to protect that; protect the enormous amount of stormwater runoff; any land stewardship and protection that we can enhance for the county will result in better water quality; land use decisions should conform to the comprehensive plan; the county's implementation reports don't show what the process is. Concern is that there be a more explicit transparent process (a checklist if you will) that would assure us that each of these decisions is in fact being made in conformance with the very good vision statement; The State did a study on sea level rise associated with the SKI project, showing that a not-insignificant portion of existing homes and newly developed lots would likely be under water between 2030-2040. This Comp plan covers to 2030 so has responsibility to that issue. The study was largely ignored previously, and the SKI project allows removal of a high % of forest in South Kent Island, not including the trees already being removed from newly developed lots. Developers in the business park have plowed down trees to expand their buildings along the State park there, and KHOV has too. How will this plan protect Stevensville/Chester?; need to think about the area differently – the current comp plan has a great section on Env. Resources; We have to think about it in an economic concept – cost of decisions relative to longer term, not just short term. We have to be able to measure the economic benefits of hunting, fishing, etc. What is the public good accrued from the wonderful area that we all live in.

### Discussion Topic: Environmental Resources & Protection Vision

Would like to see more specific restoration goals, not just conservation and preservation; Resiliency needs to be included in this vision; This is a good “feel good” vision but there are no teeth to it; how specifically are we going to achieve this?; Constant litter on the way out of Kentmorr and turning up Route 8 from people coming out of the commercial properties; agree with vision statement and chat comments – discrepancy between strong vision statement that should include resiliency; this should also include implementation; this is the time for all municipalities to be thinking big – we need to be thinking across the County – what are the wildlife byways that will exist through resiliency; how do we make this a collective movement to get as much funding as possible to help us with this? Not just to preserve land and protect it – but we need to steward this land. Give people more public access to these areas so there's more interest in protection; would like to speak to conservation and protection of water resources – implementation needs to be strengthened. We have advocated to the county to make better use of data on impervious surfaces; it's been shown that impervious surfaces are beneficial. It appears that in previous years that the county has made effort to look at this, and there was a recommendation to use impervious surfaces. In looking at the 5 year report to the State that the County made in 2016 – mentioned legislative policy issues or funding issues that prohibited it's use. Would like to see that addressed so that we can make better use of that; seems to be lacking in the vision, and something that has dramatically changed since the 2010 plan is climate change. We need to look at areas on Kent Island – the water is rising, storms are getting more intense. Yet almost

---

routinely we keep letting developers build in the critical area. If the critical area means anything, we need to look at true and meaningful protection or we will be literally sinking our own ship. I hope that as we look at this environmental resources and protection vision that we can spend some time underscoring climate change. It's real and we need to address it now.; maybe the planners don't have the tools they need to create stronger regulations. A bullet should be added that our County needs to physically advocate for stronger regulations to actually enforce the vision statement. Better protection for wildlife, buffers, etc. We need the state to set some of these standards so that our local county can enact them; we don't have buffers required on development on the water. We have grass right down to the water so we don't protect the water from fertilizer. We don't have regulations on boat speeds. I would like to see additions of individual responsibilities for environmental protection.

### Discussion Topic: What projects/goals should be focused on over the next 10 years for Environmental Resources and Protection?

- Goal should be to raise access to our natural resources (trails, walking paths, etc..) and then leverage these to promote environmental stewardship. Teach folks as they enjoy our environment.
- with regard to actions – transparency about land use decisions
- QAC should execute a plan about how they're going to outline their goals; also important that we establish and outline and implement a 5 and 10 year resiliency plan; referenced Salisbury's plan. Add new public access points to the river – most are just boat ramps

### Discussion Topic: What are QAC's greatest transportation needs?

**Needs:** multi-modal transportation is severely lacking; we have a commuter bus system but need an actual bus system with more frequent trips; from a transportation standpoint – there is an interest to direct growth to the towns where there is infrastructure to support it. As long as you can direct development towards the towns where you have more walkable communities, that's a benefit to everyone. But if we are going to direct that, we have to make sure that we're being mindful of the environmental impact. There seems to be a disconnect on things that are reflected in the plan and things that are happening. If we were to develop 301 it will cause more traffic issues; pedestrian connectivity is an issue; access through Chester to the Narrows. The County needs to continue to work to improve this, especially given the tourism aspect of QAC.; when we talk about walkable communities and pedestrian access – we should be retrofitting stormwater management at that time. Create more tree canopy, bioretention basins, replacing stormwater pipes; transportation issues are really centered around the Bay Bridge – governments aren't listening. We can certainly improve pedestrian access, but the larger issue is still the Bay Bridge.

### Discussion Topic: What projects/goals should be focused on over the next 10 years for Transportation?

- County needs a plan and a funding source
- Infill is not appropriate without appropriate transportation/traffic and environmental infrastructure – something which does not currently exist.
- I'd love to see a cross County biking hiking trail that is an extension of what has been installed through Chester/Kent Island; economic tourism driver and would also open up public access to the waters.
- Need a transportation subcommittee that brings all stakeholders together to help develop a meaningful transportation plan

*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/>*