
Eagle Harbor 2025

Planning for a Sustainable Community





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Acknowledgements

Board of Commissioners

Mayor, Honorable James D. Crudup, Sr.
Honorable James A. Green, Roads Commissioner
Honorable Joyce E. Prince, License and Permit Commissioner
Honorable Jack B. Martin, Sanitation Commissioner
Honorable James R. Banks, Public Safety Commission
Bertha Guerra, Clerk-Treasurer

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Eagle Harbor Citizens Association

President, Barbara Martin
Vice President, Alice Teffian
Secretary, Romelia Johnson
Treasurer, Sabrina Littlejohn
Sergeant at Arms, Bertha Guerra
Parliamentarian, Carolyn Hamilton
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Paul Christensen, Geographic Information System

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Sasha Land, Coastal Planner, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

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Message from the Mayor

As Mayor of this great Town and with the full support of the Board of Commissioners, I am extremely pleased to put my signature on this project. I owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who contributed to this masterpiece, a compilation of more than a year's worth of outstanding research, documentation and community engagement. Everything that I want to say about this project can be summarized in the following biblical verse: Hosea 4:6 (KJV) "My people perish from a lack of knowledge". Well, now we have that knowledge in the form of materials, maps, pictures, updated ordinances and guidance documents developed during this project that will be invaluable as a guide to protect and preserve the Town for many years to come. As a waterfront community, the challenges of climate change, natural disasters and nature's evolution are all factors that must be mitigated if the community is to survive another 90 years. And this plan is the right tool to accomplish such a daunting challenge. Even though I have been associated with the Town for more than a half century, I've actually learned a few new things about the Town. Wisely, much of what has been learned and proposed in these documents is already being implemented.

This body of work is something that should not be read piecemeal and stored away in some file cabinet or desk drawer. Instead, it should be viewed as a management tool that is shared and used by Town leadership now and later after this Administration has moved on. For this plan to be successful some facet of this product should be a discussion point at every monthly Board meeting. As for the Town folk who have been so helpful and supportive, this plan is the crowning opportunity for all of us to embrace the Town motto "Cherish the past- Plan the future. If there is one single element that will determine our destiny, it is community support.

Additionally, if we are to accomplish all that we have planned, we will need the full support of our many partners, elected officials and most importantly the Town residents. We will need to nurture those partnerships that we have developed with the county government (the Department of the Environment, Housing and Community Development, Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement, Public Works and Transportation and Economic Development Corporation); state government (Department of Natural Resources, Environment and Housing and Community Development); Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission; and colleges and businesses that share and support our community aspirations and goals.

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Lastly, I am truly grateful to all, too numerous to name, who contributed to this project. Additionally, nothing could have been accomplished without the support of county and state government agencies, especially the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), for the grant funding to conduct this project. I salute our contractor, Ms. Ivy Lewis and our Patuxent Riverkeeper and project technical advisor, Mr. Fred Tutman, for their exemplary work in producing all the deliverables required by the Statement of Work (SOW). Lastly, I humbly thank all of the property owners who took the time to be a part of such a valuable process that will help protect and shape the future of Eagle Harbor for years to come. We still have a lot of work to do; however, working together, we can achieve our vision of becoming a sustainable, resilient community that is a **Paradise on the Patuxent**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James D. Crudup Sr.".

James D. Crudup

Mayor, Town of Eagle Harbor

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INTRODUCTION

Why Plan for Sustainability

The Town of Eagle Harbor has been the *Paradise on the Patuxent* in the hearts and minds of its residents and visitors for many years. Dating back to its incorporation in 1929, the Town has been a leisure destination for middle-class African-Americans denied access to area beaches during segregation. The Patuxent River played prominent in the lives of seasonal residents, particularly, who would spend their summers in Town. Many today fondly remember swimming, fishing, crabbing, boating and gazing at the river over their entire lives. At its peak, Eagle Harbor residents enjoyed shops, bath houses, hotels and unlimited access to the Patuxent River for a variety of recreational activities.

Over time, both subtle and not so subtle changes have occurred in the Eagle Harbor landscape that, in more recent times, have become more acute. Through natural wave action, the shoreline has been eroding. Climate change has accelerated this process and contributed to sea level rise, more severe and frequent storms, storm surges and coastal flooding. Coleman Creek has frequently overflowed its banks carrying and depositing large amounts of sand onto adjacent and nearby properties and



Shoreline in Eagle Harbor

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Patuxent Blvd. There has also been significant bank erosion along the creek. The housing stock and population have aged, and increasingly single family and undeveloped properties are conveying to absentee family members who lack the interest or ability to properly maintain or improve their property. These conditions and a lack of new development have resulted in stagnant revenues and an inability of the Town to meet its growing and diverse needs. There are also issues with aging and failing septic systems and the resulting impact on water quality in the creek and river especially with increasing storms and flooding.



Older vacant home on the shore

The Town of Eagle Harbor is 90 years old in 2019. In 1975, resident Dorothy J Russ said, “Let us sincerely trust that the Township of Eagle Harbor MD will live long as a thriving community and that the Board of Commissioners, to follow, and future citizens associations will work in harmony to achieve the same or more”. The Town’s ability “to live long as a thriving community”, over the next decade, will be challenged by these worsening environmental conditions. And if not addressed, on an urgent basis, these conditions will put the Town at greater risk of the effects of climate change and affect the way of life the community enjoyed during its first 90 years.

Becoming a sustainable and resilient community is the only way to address the critical issues facing the Town today, in a way that balances competing needs comprehensively, with a long view towards the future. This Sustainability Plan establishes a framework and direction for the Town of Eagle Harbor to become sustainable and resilient. It seeks to help the Town improve the quality of the natural environment and mitigate risks posed by climate change while achieving its economic development goals. The plan also seeks to increase community awareness of how residents can play a role in building community resilience.

With this plan, the Town builds upon its 2017 Strategic Plan and Sustainable Communities Action Plan and furthers its commitment to planning for a sustainable future.

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What is Sustainability? Resilience?

Communities are increasingly embracing the practice, and ideals, of sustainability as a necessity, in order to be better stewards of the natural environment and to achieve economic stability and social progress for all. At a basic level, sustainability is the ability to continue something of value for the long-term. More formally, sustainability is “the practice of meeting the current environmental, social and economic needs of the community without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”. This means leaving the community much improved for the benefit of future generations. To ensure future needs are not compromised, the community must reduce its impact on the natural environment with a focus on changing harmful practices and protecting and preserving natural resources while also enhancing social and economic conditions.

The symbol of sustainability is three overlapping circles, which depict interrelated elements necessary for a sustainable future. The elements are people, planet and profits; all are relevant and intertwined, and must be given due consideration in all decision making.

Community resilience is the ability of a community to “respond to, withstand and recover from adverse conditions”, natural and manmade. To achieve resiliency, a community must be able to



Figure 1: Symbol of Sustainability

minimize the impact of a disaster and return to normalcy as soon and as effortlessly as possible. More frequent and intense storms have devastated communities, affecting lives and properties. Coastal communities are more vulnerable to these conditions. And while major storm events cannot be avoided, their impact can be reduced. Resilient communities seek to prevent or minimize losses to life, property and the environment and can quickly restore community services and activities through preparedness planning.

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The Language of Sustainability



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What's Inside

This Sustainability Plan is organized into six sections beyond this Introduction. **Section One** outlines the process used to develop this plan and the community engagement activities that generated input that informed recommendations in the plan. **Section Two** provides an overview of the Eagle Harbor community, including its location and history; demographics, community character, amenities and landmarks; and, land use, zoning and growth management objectives. **Section Three** looks at environment features and hazards. **Section Four** identifies key policies and regulations impacting the Town and possibly its ability to meet its sustainability goals. **Section Five** summarizes key community input and presents the Town vision for sustainability and goals and recommendations organized around five themes. **Section Six** incorporates sustainability goals and recommendations into an implementation program that also identifies priority level for actions, reflected in a timeframe (short-, medium- and long-term) for implementation; the person or organization serving as lead implementer and important partners; and, expected outcomes. The document also includes an Appendix of support documents.

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Planning Process

The process to prepare this Sustainability Plan began with an application for funds to prepare the plan and a scope of work containing the following key components and deliverable: 1) Visioning and Strategic Planning; 2) Community Engagement & Visioning Process Plan; and, 3) Guidelines for Sustainable Site Development and Use of Green Infrastructure.

The process involved three major steps.

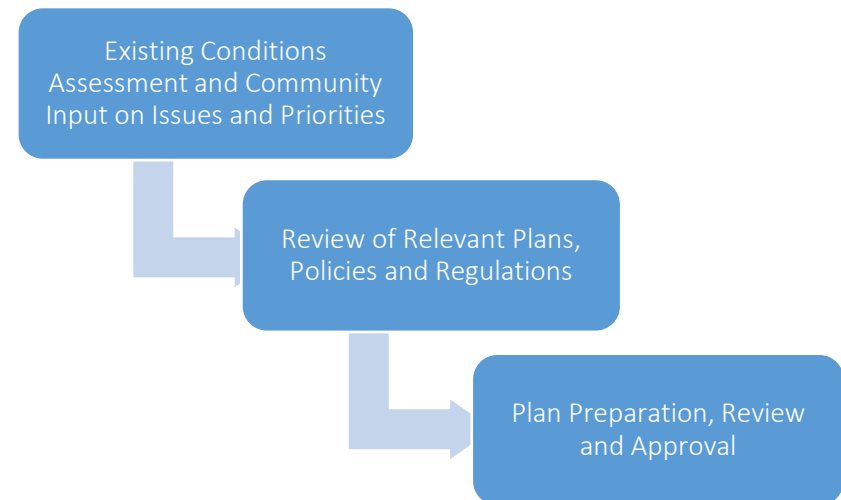


Figure 2: Eagle Harbor Sustainability Planning Process

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Community Engagement

Community engagement had already played a significant role in the Town's efforts to plan for a sustainable future. In 2017, the Mayor and Commissioners completed two major planning efforts that established the foundation for this plan and determined the scope of community engagement activities. In June 2017, the Town completed its first Strategic Plan as "a map for the future" and "an opportunity for long-term and operational thinking, in-depth discussions, and direction setting". The thrust of the plan was sustainability; the objective, to focus the Town's resources to achieve its vision "To become the Paradise on the Patuxent".

Also, in 2017, the Town applied for Sustainable Community designation from the State. This program gives priority consideration for funding from specific state programs that address community development, revitalization and sustainability. Designation is a threshold requirement.

Both planning processes involved extensive public engagement. The Town used an online survey and multiple meetings to solicit input from community members and other key stakeholders on the Strategic Plan. And a workgroup of diverse interests supported the preparation of the Sustainable Community Action Plan. These recent efforts provided the foundation for many of the recommendations in this plan coupled with community input obtained through this planning process for new information and affirmation.

The Board will wisely, ethically, professionally and transparently govern the town. It will utilize the financial and physical resources of the town to promote economic growth and resiliency. The Board will ensure the Town's best interest is number one and it will strategically pursue partnerships, goals, policies and programs that will maintain the long-term health of the town while staying true to its history.

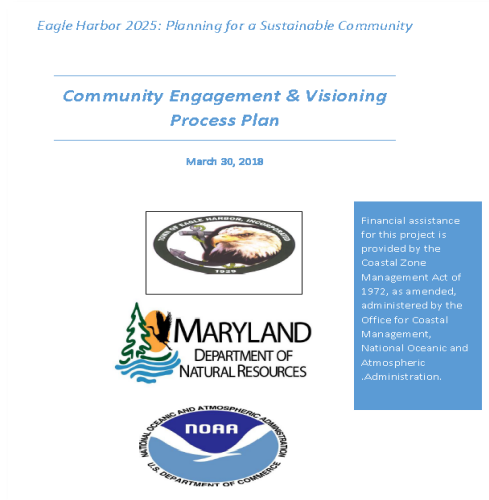
Town of Eagle Harbor Strategic Plan, Board Mission

The *Community Engagement and Visioning Process Plan* (Appendix A) recommended three main engagement activities carried out in this planning process.

1. Community Survey to assess the level of importance placed on key environmental conditions and related plans and proposed projects, and preferred ways to be informed and provide input throughout the process.
2. Phone interviews with owners of riverfront property to document their experiences with shoreline erosion and flooding, and improvements they may have implemented to protect their properties.

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3. Asset Mapping Workshop to identify and document important community assets – people, places and activities. A summary of the results is provided later in the document.



Community Engagement in Eagle Harbor