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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the adoption of the 1987 Comprehensive Plan Update for Queen Anne's County, the development of an area plan for Kent Narrows has been a planning priority of the elected officials and Department of Planning and Zoning. The County officials, residents and business owners recognize a need for special attention to planning future development of Kent Narrows. This Community Plan, recognized as part of the County's 2002 Comprehensive Plan, provides a community vision, goals, objectives, policies and plans for future development of Kent Narrows. This Plan also includes an implementation strategy to support realizing the future vision for Kent Narrows.

### ***Purpose of the Plan***

The Kent Narrows Community Plan establishes a community vision, goals, objectives and recommendations for the long-term growth management of the Kent Narrows Area. The purpose of the plan is to provide a blueprint that defines Kent Narrows as a year-round destination place. The goal of the plan is to facilitate orderly mixed-use, commercial, light industrial, marine oriented and seafood industry oriented uses as well as residential uses integrated with destination attractions, facilities and accommodations. The traditional working waterfront character of the area will be maintained through a focus on strategies to create a destination place by land and water with attractions for visitors, local residents and working watermen.

The plan considers land and water when addressing land use, economic development (*tourism and employment*), recreation, infrastructure and transportation needs. The plan has been developed with an emphasis on visitor attractions, implementation and funding. The plan also seeks to direct public and private investment decisions regarding the development of the community. It is the intent of this plan to put forth a strategy for responsible growth that recognizes the physical character of the area and the needs of its citizens, business owners and visitors, now and in the future.

### ***Plan Hierarchy***

There already exists a hierarchy of state, county and Growth Area plans and regulations which affect planning further development of the Kent Narrows area.

### ***Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992***

The Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992 (the Planning Act) took effect on October 1, 1992. The Planning Act mandated that, by July of 1997, all local governments in the state adopt plans and implementation strategies that achieve seven general "visions:" The Act was subsequently amended in 2000 to add an eighth vision. These "Eight Visions" are as follows:

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive Areas are protected;
3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced;
6. To assure the achievement of the above-mentioned visions, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;
7. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure, under the control of the County, are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur; and
8. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.



In short, the Planning Act requires local governments to reduce sprawl development, concentrate growth in and around existing development areas, promote economic development and protect sensitive natural resources. The Act also requires that all state and local government investments in infrastructure (roads, sewer, water, schools, etc.) be consistent with adopted local growth management plans. These “Eight Visions” of the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992 as amended in 2000 are hereby incorporated as goals of the Kent Narrows Community Plan.

### **2002 Comprehensive Plan**

The 2002 Comprehensive Plan is based on the same general growth management principles adopted in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan and the subsequent Growth Area plans. The original Kent Narrows Plan was adopted in April 1992 as part of the implementation of the County’s 1987 Plan. The County’s 1993 Plan is consistent with the State’s “Smart Growth” initiatives and the 2002 Plan represents a fine-tuning of existing policy.

### **Designated Growth Sub-Areas**

In the County’s 1993 Comprehensive Plan Update, Kent Narrows was one of six designated Growth Sub-Areas. Stevensville, Chester, Grasonville, Queenstown and Centreville are the other designated Growth Areas in the County. The original Kent Narrows Area Plan and its associated zoning changes were adopted in 1992 as part of the implementation of the 1987 Plan. In 1990 the County Commissioners established the Kent Narrows Development Foundation (KNDF), a not-for-profit corporation charged with facilitating mixed-use, commercial, recreation and tourism activities for the area. The Foundation is charged with assisting in the update of the community plan and accompanying ordinances and manuals. The KNDF participated in the development of the 1992 plan.

The 1993 Comprehensive Plan included policies to shift development to designated Growth Areas such as Kent Narrows; the subsequently adopted Growth Area plans provide additional guidance and policies to manage development. The Kent Narrows Area Plan was included as a Chapter in the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, and the Kent Narrows Area Plan has not been updated since. Map 1 represents the Kent Narrows Growth Area boundary as adopted in the County’s 1993 Comprehensive Plan.

While the other designated Growth Areas increased in area as part of the County’s 2002 Comprehensive Plan, the Kent Narrows Growth Area boundary remained unchanged. At present, the County lacks infrastructure, an essential element to encourage growth in Kent Narrows. Implementation of the County’s Growth Area policy (*which is consistent with and to the large part required by State Smart Growth Initiatives*) has been stymied by a lack of available water and sewer infrastructure to serve this Growth Area, as well as the lack of sufficient funding mechanisms to implement the necessary improvements. This issue must be addressed to provide necessary incentives for development to occur in the Kent Narrows Growth Area rather than in areas of the County or region not designated for growth.

### **1997 Smart Growth Initiatives**

In 1997, the State of Maryland enacted “Smart Growth” legislation. The Smart Growth legislative package consists of several key aspects, the centerpiece of which is the “Priority Funding Areas” law. This law limits State funding for infrastructure and economic development to locations that meet specific State criteria for “priority funding areas.” State funding through grants, loans or governmental transfers is critical to the county’s ability to serve both existing and future residents and businesses.





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**1988 Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program**

On June 29, 1988,, the County adopted its Chesapeake Bay Critical Area program and regulations in accordance with State Law, which was updated and amended on February 15, 1989 and June 4, 1996. The Critical Area is generally defined as all lands within 1,000 feet of the shoreline or head waters for the Bay proper and its tidal tributaries. State law governing the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area regulations does not provide much discretion for local governments to change environmental protection standards. The County has adopted local Critical Area regulations consistent with the State guidelines. However, in accordance with State law, the County does have the ability to change a limited amount of Critical Area mapping in order to facilitate local growth management objectives. As part of this program, a State Critical Areas Commission was created to review community development plans for consistency with the program's growth management objectives and regulations.

**Interim Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (IAPFO)/Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFO)**

In March 2001, the County Commissioners adopted an Interim Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. The IAPFO at the time was a growth management tool that linked approvals for new development to available capacity of essential public facilities such as schools, roads, sewer and water. This ordinance allows the County and local governments to manage the timing and sequencing of infrastructure improvements. In short, the developer must either comply with established thresholds for public facilities, or pay for or build the essential public facility improvements, or postpone development until the government plans for and provides the facilities. The County is in the process of preparing an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) and Growth Management Ordinance (GMO).

**Kent Narrows Community Plan**

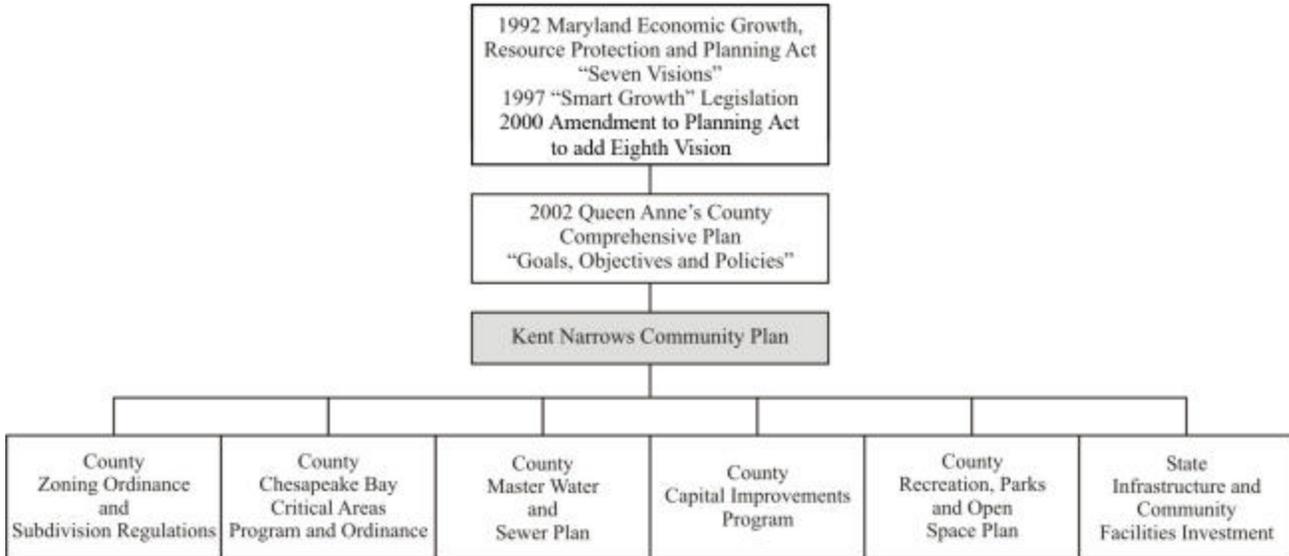
The Kent Narrows Community Plan will ultimately serve as the official Comprehensive Plan for the Kent Narrows Growth Area. It will also be the basis for any required amendments to the County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program and Ordinance, Master Water and Sewer Plan, Capital Improvements Program, and any other County plans or regulations affecting the growth and development of Kent Narrows.

***It is important to note that this Plan establishes a long-term vision for Kent Narrows that will be phased in over a period of twenty years or more. Community priorities, funding resources and market conditions will all affect the implementation time line. The Plan is flexible and should be revised as situations warrant and community objectives change. It is mandated by the State that this Plan be reviewed and if necessary, revised and updated by the County every six years.***



The *Figure 1: Plan Relationships* below shows the relationship of the Kent Narrows Community Plan to these other existing plans and regulations.

**Figure 1: Plan Relationships**



**Plan Development Process**

The Queen Anne’s County Commissioners determined that the formulation of the Community Plans for each growth sub-area would be a public process. The following describes various aspects of the plan development process with a process diagram depicted on the next page.

**Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)**

In the appointment of the Kent Narrows CAC, letters of interest were solicited from residents and property owners while recognizing the important role of the KNDF. An effort was made to select a group that represented a cross section of the community. In March of 2005, the County Commissioners appointed a CAC to work with the County Staff and consultants to prepare the Kent Narrows Community Plan. The consulting team of Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson (JMT) was retained to provide technical assistance. The CAC membership insisted that the plan development process build upon the 1992 Kent Narrows Area Plan goals, objectives and strategies.



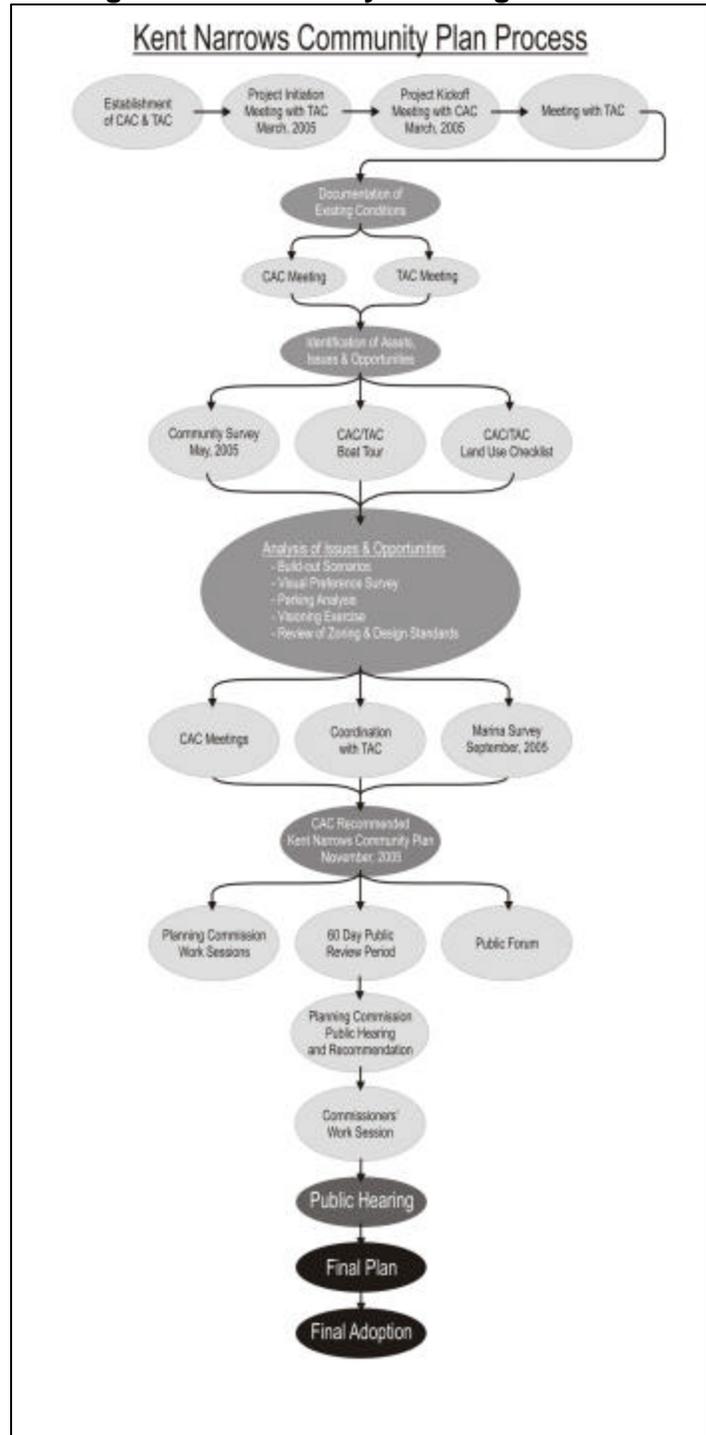


The CAC began working along with the County Department of Planning and Zoning in March 2005, and continued to meet monthly from that point on. The main goal of the meetings with the CAC was to establish a baseline, in terms of where the community has been, where it is now and where the community would like to be in the future. Issues that were researched, analyzed and discussed focused on the current condition of the community, including land use, environmental resources, economic development opportunities and infrastructure. Topics considered by the CAC evolved to include growth projections for the community, development concepts to enhance the community as a year-round destination and other enhancements to Kent Narrows to support access to the waterfront and interconnectivity, and growth management recommendations for the Planning Area as a whole. The CAC contributed valuable input to the planning process and assisted the County Commissioners, Planning Commission, staff and consultant team to better understand the desires, concerns and sentiments of residents, civic groups, businesses, landowners, developers and other special interest groups. Several interim reports, exhibits and maps were prepared for review by the committee. By September 2005, a draft plan was prepared and reviewed with a recommendation made by the CAC in November 2005. The CAC participated in working sessions as well as participated in the review of the draft document. Complete documentation of CAC participation and input is contained in the Appendix.

**Planning Commission**

Planning Commission received CAC's recommended Plan at their regular meeting on December 8, 2005. On January 12, 2006, the Planning Commission conducted a work session and with some minor changes directed staff to issue the Draft Plan for 60-day review in accordance with Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The Planning Commission's Draft was released for 60-day review on January 27, 2006. A public informational meeting was held on March 16, 2006 at the Grasonville Senior Center and the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on April 12, 2006, pursuant to Section 3.07 of Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

**Figure 2: Community Planning Process**





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The public hearing record was left open for submission of written comments until April 24, 2006. The Planning Commission considered all the comments received, and made several revisions to the Plan. The table following Chapter 5 contains summary of these comments, and the Planning commission decision with respect to each comment. This document is the Planning commission recommendation to the Queen Anne's County commissioners for adoption of the updated Kent Narrows Community Plan.

Subsequently, on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the County Commissioners conducted a public hearing to receive comments on the Plan. And, by Resolution No. 06-09 the Queen Anne's County Commissioner's adopted the Kent Narrows Community Plan on September 18, 2006.

**Public Participation**

Public participation included a mail-out/mail-back and on-line community survey giving residents, business, property owners and visitors an opportunity to participate in the survey. The survey solicited preferences of the general public about the vision for the future of Kent Narrows and desired uses to compliment existing land uses and development patterns. The planning process included a public forum and public hearings with the Planning Commission and County Commissioners to provide additional opportunity for public comment. (Note: Public forum and public hearings are pending – details will be added once meetings are completed.)