

TOWN OF GREENSBORO, MARYLAND — COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Greensboro 2050

A river town on Maryland's Eastern Shore

Greensboro's Comprehensive Plan is the Town's guiding document for growth, land use, infrastructure, environment, and community life through the year 2050. This page summarizes the draft plan currently under consideration.

Where this stands: This is a **draft** plan prepared by the Greensboro Planning Commission. It has not been adopted. It is currently being circulated to Maryland state agencies and Caroline County for review and comment, as required before a Comprehensive Plan can be considered for adoption.

ABOUT THE PLAN

VISION

BY THE NUMBERS

LAND USE

GROWTH & HOUSING

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE

GETTING AROUND

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

ECONOMY & HERITAGE

IMPLEMENTATION

GET INVOLVED

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

Maryland law requires every municipality to adopt a Comprehensive Plan that sets policy for how it will grow, protect its resources, and invest in infrastructure. Greensboro's plan is prepared under the state's Land Use Article and updates the Town's 2010 Comprehensive Plan and 2016 Vision Plan.

The plan covers eleven topic areas — land use, community facilities, municipal growth, sensitive (environmental) areas, water resources, housing, transportation, economic development, and historic and cultural resources — plus an implementation chapter that ties them together. It is organized around Maryland's eight Sustainable Growth Planning Principles and recent state mandates on housing production, fair housing, climate resilience, and environmental justice.

Once adopted, the Comprehensive Plan becomes the legal basis for Greensboro's zoning ordinance and guides Town decisions on rezonings, subdivisions, annexations, and capital spending for the next several decades.

THE VISION

A resilient, welcoming river town

"A resilient, welcoming river town on the Choptank, where small-town charm endures, diverse communities thrive, and sustainable growth preserves our Eastern Shore heritage for generations to come."

That's the vision statement at the heart of the plan. In practice, it translates into goals across ten areas: land use, municipal growth, water resources, transportation, sensitive areas, housing, historic and cultural preservation, economic development, climate change, and environmental justice. Each comes with its own objectives — from encouraging walkable, mixed-use infill downtown, to protecting the rural buffer around Town, to expanding affordable housing options.

By the numbers



The throughline across the plan: Greensboro intends to grow slowly and mostly *inward* — filling in vacant and underused lots inside its current boundaries — rather than by annexing new land. No parcels are proposed for annexation in this plan.

Neighborhood character, by area

Rather than traditional zoning categories alone, the plan organizes the Town into five "transects" — areas defined by their existing character and intended future form, from the walkable downtown core to the rural edge.

T-1

Urban Core

Downtown Main Street and the historic center — walkable, mixed-use, the Town's traditional heart. Focus on infill, adaptive reuse, and preserving historic character.

T-2

Neighborhood

Established residential neighborhoods surrounding the core. Modest lots, front porches, mature tree canopy — the plan encourages gentle infill that matches this pattern.

T-3

Suburban

Larger-lot subdivisions on the Town's edges, including areas like Kinnamon Meadows. Growth here is expected to evolve gradually toward more walkable, connected patterns.

T-4

Rural Edge

The agricultural and open-land fringe that buffers Greensboro from surrounding farmland. Held as a long-term reserve, with conservation easements encouraged.

SED

Special Employment District

Industrial, warehouse, and light-commercial nodes along the highway and rail corridor, buffered from residential areas.

Existing land use snapshot

How Greensboro plans to grow

Two growth scenarios

Low Growth (most likely, 70–80% probability): 0.5% annual growth, reaching about **2,254** residents by 2050. Minimal strain on infrastructure.

Baseline Growth (50–60% probability): 1.0% annual growth, reaching about **2,539** residents by 2050, supported by moderate wastewater-system improvements.

Housing snapshot

Median household income is \$44,934, well below the statewide figure. About 35% of Greensboro households are cost-burdened (spending over 30% of income on housing), rising to 45% among renters. The plan sets a target of 59 new housing units over five years, largely through infill.

Fair housing

Maryland law now requires municipalities to affirmatively further fair housing as part of their comprehensive plans. Greensboro's assessment finds no major overt discrimination in the Town today, but identifies structural barriers — housing scarcity, limited variety in unit types, low-density zoning, and infrastructure constraints — that can indirectly limit housing choice. The plan recommends zoning reform to allow more "missing-middle" housing (duplexes, accessory dwelling units), streamlined permitting, expanded affordable housing production, and a more detailed local fair housing analysis in partnership with Caroline County.

WHAT'S NOT PROPOSED

This plan does not include mandatory affordable-housing requirements for large developments (inclusionary zoning), and it does not rely on new annexation to meet housing needs — growth is expected to happen through infill on land already inside Town limits.

Protecting the Choptank and preparing for change

Roughly 15–20% of Greensboro — about 103 properties — sits within the FEMA 100-year floodplain along the Choptank River. Sea levels along Maryland's Eastern Shore are projected to rise 1–3 feet by 2050–2100, intensifying flooding and storm risk.

The plan's central new tool is a proposed **Conservation Overlay Zone**, which would combine floodplain, wetland, forest, stream-buffer, and wildlife-habitat protections into a single, more consistent set of development standards — stricter for new subdivisions and major projects, lighter-touch for existing built-out properties.

Water resources

Greensboro draws all its drinking water from the deep, naturally protected Piney Point Aquifer via three wells, with ample surplus capacity for planned growth. The Town's wastewater plant, upgraded in 2016, is roughly half-utilized. Because the Choptank River watershed is already environmentally impaired, the plan caps additional growth at around 300 new dwelling-unit equivalents without major treatment-plant upgrades or nutrient offsets.

Environmental justice

Under the state's MDEnviroscreen tool, the census tract that includes Greensboro is classified as both "overburdened" and "underserved" — reflecting proximity to regional environmental hazards outside Town limits (such as nearby poultry operations) and socioeconomic factors including a higher share of low-income residents. The plan commits to prioritizing green-infrastructure investment, community engagement, and equitable access to parks and services in response.

Roads, sidewalks & transit

Roads

MD Route 313 carries the most traffic through the area (about 7,550 vehicles/day) but currently operates well within capacity. If Greensboro's population reaches 2,500–3,000, planners expect congestion could increase at key intersections like MD 313 and Sunset Avenue.

Walking, biking & transit

The Town has about 5.8 miles of sidewalk, with gaps still to fill. The plan proposes a town-wide trail network, more crosswalks, a small pilot e-bike/scooter share program, and expanded coordination with the regional Delmarva Community Transit / MUST Bus service.

Services that support daily life

Water and sewer systems both have healthy reserve capacity for planned growth. Parks include Ober Community Park, Choptank River Park & boat ramp, the county's new North County Regional Park, and several smaller neighborhood parks.

ISSUES THE PLAN FLAGS

- Police staffing:** the Greensboro Police Department was reduced to a single officer in 2024; the Town is weighing options including a partnership with the Caroline County Sheriff's Office.
- School capacity:** Greensboro Elementary is now enrolled above its state-rated capacity (about 103%), and the plan calls for county-led monitoring and potential expansion.
- Water system security:** following a 2024 sabotage incident that triggered a temporary boil-water advisory, the Town has added security upgrades; water quality has since met all state and federal standards.

Fire and emergency response is provided by the all-volunteer Greensboro Volunteer Fire Company (about 25 active volunteers, roughly 350 calls a year), which the plan supports with funding for updated rescue equipment.

Downtown, jobs & history

Greensboro participates in the 710-acre North County Enterprise Zone, offering property and income tax credits to businesses that invest and hire locally. The plan supports downtown revitalization, adaptive reuse of historic buildings, a possible small-business incubator/makerspace, and expanded support for home-based and cottage businesses.

Founded in 1732, Greensboro's historic core — more than 50 inventoried properties along Main Street, Sunset Avenue, and the riverfront — anchors a growing heritage-tourism strategy tied to the **Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area** and two sites on the **Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway** within Town limits.

How the plan gets carried out

SHORT-TERM · 1-3 YEARS

Update the zoning ordinance

Adopt the transect-based zoning framework, streamline permitting for ADUs and small-scale infill, and update floodplain and environmental ordinances.

MEDIUM-TERM · 4-10 YEARS

Build out infrastructure & incentives

Fund capital improvements through a layered mix of developer contributions, impact fees, and state/federal grants; expand green infrastructure and heritage tourism assets.

LONG-TERM · 11+ YEARS

Monitor & adapt

Track progress with regular public reporting, and revisit the plan every 5–10 years or sooner if conditions change significantly.

Where the plan stands now

This Comprehensive Plan is still in **draft form**. It is currently under review by Maryland state agencies and Caroline County — a required step before the Greensboro Planning Commission and Town Council can consider it for adoption.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

The Town will hold a **public information meeting** where residents can hear more about the draft plan, ask questions, and share comments directly. Public input from this meeting, together with comments from state agencies and departments, will be considered as the draft plan is finalized.

Once the draft is finalized, a formal **public hearing** will be held before the Planning Commission, ahead of the plan's consideration for adoption.

Residents interested in the meeting date, the review timeline, or how to submit comments should contact the Greensboro Town Office directly, as specific dates are set separately from the draft plan document itself.

Greensboro 2050 Comprehensive Plan

This page summarizes the draft Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Greensboro Planning Commission for the Town of Greensboro, Maryland. It is intended as a plain-language overview and does not replace the full draft document, which governs in the event of any difference.