

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION  
MEETING MINUTES – May 8, 2025**

**Meeting Date:** May 8, 2025

**Time:** 1:00 P.M.

**Location:** Worcester County Government Office Building, Room 1102

**Attendance:**

**Planning Commission**

Jerry Barbierri, Chair  
Phyllis Wimbrow, Vice Chair  
Kathy Drew  
Marlene Ott  
Betty Smith  
Mary Knight

**Staff**

Jennifer Keener, Director, DRP  
Matt Laick, Deputy Director, DRP  
Ben Zito, DRP Specialist III, DRP  
Bob Mitchell, Director, EP  
Katherine Munson, Planner, EP  
Lily Wagner, Planner, EP

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Comprehensive Plan Work Session**

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission met with Michael Bayer and Ainsley Pressl from Wallace Montgomery to discuss the draft Water Resources Element (WRE). Using the 2011 WRE as the basis, they have been working with Wayne Martin of the Wallace Montgomery team as well as Worcester County staff to update the document. Mr. Bayer noted that the chapter is very much a working draft which still needs a lot of data inputs, so the discussion at this meeting will be a broad overview, and it will be brought back at a future meeting with more refined detail and will go section by section to explain it.

Mr. Bayer explained how Nick Walls used the Planning Commission's decisions about the future growth areas at the last two meetings to run the algorithms for the potential build-out scenario, which is based on the current underlying zoning. Applying the assumptions that were previously discussed, a determination on the total number of equivalent dwelling units (EDUs) to be accommodated were input into the WRE model. As shown in the draft, the calculations assume a population increase of 4,859 people\*. The chart assumes 250 gallons per day per EDU (gpd/EDU) which is a baseline figure generally used across Maryland for this calculation. Those EDUs were then evaluated by growth area and watershed. Overall, the model shows that the growth areas will generate 2.08 million gpd of demand. The 2011 Element was 1.9 million gpd, which is not far off.

Mr. Bayer discussed that the next steps were to use the inputs to evaluate the 10- and 20-year planning horizons, using different build-out scenarios that could lead to different values. The state has a tool that will be used to identify those scenarios.

\*Note: Overall population growth could be affected by potential upzoning to residential densities within growth areas, such as the Agricultural zoning in the Snow Hill growth area, or the Industrial zoning of the Showell growth area. Additionally, these numbers do not account for existing remaining infill potential within the municipalities, nor the amount of residential growth that Worcester County experiences outside of growth areas.

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Mr. Barbierri inquired about the spread of potential growth over a 20-year period. Mr. Bayer noted that this is a ground-up model, so it assumes the overall growth potential based on the areas identified and the current underlying zoning, without considering the overall timeframe. The Planning Commission discussed the growth area chart, which was simply labeled by number at this time. Mr. Bayer explained that they will identify the location of those growth areas and make the labeling more intuitive. They will also provide a map as an exhibit.

Mr. Mitchell explained to the Planning Commission how the 2011 element came to be an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the element attempts to answer the question of whether the county can fit development in a respective watershed; addresses nutrient loading and stormwater management and plant capacity or overcapacity. He stated that not all growth occurs in the growth areas, and some will be in towns, but it will likely be in the areas that the Planning Commission has defined. Growth will meet the nutrient budgets for the wastewater treatment plants, and some of this growth may be on septic and well. However, larger subdivisions are required to be on public facilities. With strict agricultural zoning, property owners cannot develop more than five lots/ units per parcel on septic systems. Mr. Mitchell also discussed how the county was working towards interconnections of existing water and sewer resources. Much of the data is predictive, subject to the modeling, and will be dependent upon densities and groundtruthing of the data.

Mr. Bayer noted that his team will be working to finalize the numbers in the WRE, as well as finalize the Land Use chapter, and will send it to the Planning Commission for review in the next month or so. He again noted that once all draft chapters have been developed, the team can decide where certain sections would be most appropriate for placement, as there are some overlaps. The final draft will likely move things around for organizational purposes. Certain elements are required by the state; however they allow leeway on where it goes in the plan.


As this is a preliminary draft, there were no recommendations made at this juncture.

**III. Priority Preservation Area Element**

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission met with Bob Mitchell and Katherine Munson of the Department of Environmental Programs and Mrs. Keener of DRP to discuss the updates that will need to occur to the Priority Preservation Area (PPA) Element. Mrs. Keener provided an introduction and explained that the consultant has considered the updated PPA as “comp. plan adjacent”, meaning it was not included in their scope of work. Environmental Programs staff has prepared a framework for the PPA to be included potentially as an agricultural chapter to be drafted by county staff. Mr. Mitchell and Ms. Munson explained the history of the PPA element. There was brief discussion on the inclusion of topics such as agritourism and solar farms.

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**IV. Adjourn**

  
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Mary Knight, Secretary

  
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Jennifer Keener, Director

