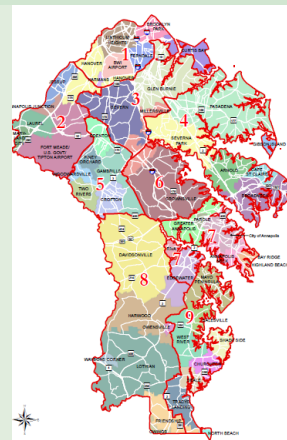




ALLIANCE  
FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

## Plan2040: Few specifics but good guidance

**Regional Planning will need respected guidance going forward.**



**The Office of Planning and Zoning has very effectively presented a web portal for citizen engagement with the draft of four sections of the new Plan2040.** The four sections contain over 400 Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies. In addition, comments are solicited on proposed development policy areas and approximately 250 land use changes that have been requested by landowners or proposed by the OPZ staff. Just presenting this mass of data in a coherent manner and processing citizen responses is a challenging problem. OPZ staff has responded with skill and innovation. Video tutorials and County town hall meetings have been employed to assist citizens with navigation of the portal, and there is good reason to expect that a wealth of feedback data that is amenable to statistical analysis will be gathered.

The full set of 400 Goals, Policies, and Strategies can be downloaded as a [42-page document](#) from the [Community Engagement web portal](#). Review of the large number of strategies, many of which are broadly worded, suggests that an army of County staff could easily find employment for the next several years just attempting implementation. This is unlikely to occur and, if interpreted literally, the reach of Plan2040 seems to be beyond our grasp. As currently written, **Plan 2040 provides guidance, but not enough specificity to serve as an implementable plan of action. However, Plan2040 can still play a strong role in shaping our future.**

**The 2009 GDP was broadly characterized by an earlier County Council and Administration as “just guidance” that could be ignored,** almost at will. Legislative and administrative actions were supposed to be consistent with the plan, but that concept was honored more in breach than observation. In many ways, the 2009 GDP was similar to Plan2040 in that descriptions of actions were often not specific, with no office given responsibility, no timeline indicated, and no priority assigned. Although it outlined many good aspirations, it was considered guidance and not afforded the respect it deserved. Had the guidance been respected and later legislative and administrative

activities been consistent with it, the 2009 GDP could have had a much greater positive influence on the progress of the County.

**An effective long-term planning effort can be composed of broad statements of guidance implemented by a combination of consistent legislative code and smaller actionable plans. The smaller plans should outline specific tasks with:**

1. **Assigned priorities,**
2. **Designated responsible parties,**
3. **Schedules, and**
4. **Reporting requirements.**

**Plan2040 can function as the guidance in this combination provided that the Regional Plans and any relevant legislation are consistent, detailed, and implementable. The requirement of consistency should be formally stated in Plan2040 and approved by the Council.**

Although Plan2040 could be renamed Guidance2040, it should be firm, thorough, and respected guidance. **The value of Plan2040 will be determined by consistency of following legislation and its enablement of effective regional planning.** The current draft of four important sections of Plan2040 is a good start.

Plan2040 now needs to be fleshed out, subjected to close review by as many citizens as possible, approved by the Council...and then treated as respected citizen guidance for current and future generations of our County government.

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## **Next steps on the first draft of Plan2040**

The first drafts of [four major sections of Plan2040](#) have been posted online at the [Plan2040 Community Engagement portal](#). The comment period for these closed on Sept 10.

Additional public comment periods are planned for future drafts of the full plan. The first of these is expected to begin in early October. ALC members and guests are encouraged to carefully review and comment upon each draft as it is released.

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### **About the Alliance**

*The Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities is a non-partisan coalition of 25 local and state organizations advocating for sustainable growth and environmental protections to safeguard and enhance residents' quality of life.*

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## **Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities**



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