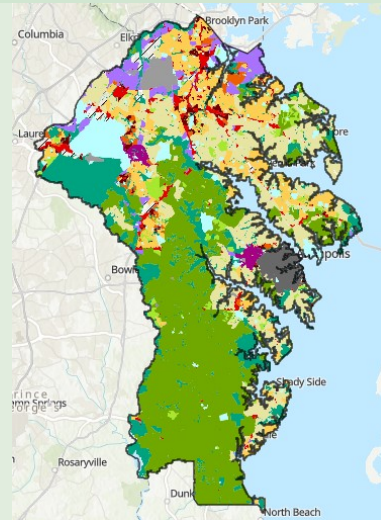




ALLIANCE
FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

A local version of Earth Day



We've recently celebrated another Earth Day and been reminded of the many ways that we love our planet and yet continue to destroy it. We're polluting our atmosphere with fossil fuels, overfishing our oceans, cutting down forests for commercial profit, degrading our earth with plastic trash, creating destructive factory farms to satisfy our insatiable desire for meat; driving many plant, insect, and animal species toward extinction...and the list goes on. It's clear that our planet will not sustainably support its current population at the level of consumption that seems to be desired. But global population growth, the mother of all environmental problems, continues unabated.

There is general agreement that some of these problems urgently require solution for survival of the planet as we know it. Experts suggest that there is still time if we make a sincere commitment to real action. That action, however, doesn't seem to be forthcoming. Gas guzzlers still dominate the roads, meat wrapped in single use plastic still sells well at the grocery store, and global population continues to climb. Our president has committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030. Though we applaud his leadership, we know that it will be a difficult task. What can we do?

The adage is "Think globally, act locally", and it is time to commit to real local action. We have severe local problems with runoff, nutrient pollution and overfishing in our rivers and the Chesapeake. Our forests and open space are slowly succumbing to development. Long-distance, single person commuting in gas guzzling vehicles is common. And our market-driven development-related population growth will inevitably lead to more environmental damage.

Anne Arundel County is now completing Plan2040, which is often described as its plan for the next 20 years. . However, it is unlikely to provide the protection of environment and quality of life that is needed. It will be useful but is not fully adequate. Plan2040 is a land use plan and does not address issues like overfishing, air quality, fossil fuel consumption, trash reduction or growth limits. Progress on these will require citizen advocacy at both the County and State levels.

Plan2040 can be an aid to addressing our future problems, but not a solution. It is intended to be a guide for future County legislation and for coming Regional Area Plans. These will be able to propose regulatory changes in land use and zoning. Plan2040 outlines goals of protecting environmentally sensitive areas, expanding protected green infrastructure, and improving water quality, but follow-on legislation will be needed. Regional Plans will, hopefully, be the key to progress.

Several Master Plans also offer opportunity for environmental protection. These include those for Green Infrastructure, Town Centers, Recreation and Parks, and Pedestrian/Bicycle that are underway or will soon be starting, All will provide many opportunities for citizen involvement.

The Alliance strongly urges all County citizens to engage in the Regional Planning and Master planning processes and to also convey their broader wishes to their state legislators and County Council representatives. We can assist in protection the future of our planet by protecting the future of our County. It's the Best Place ...and it needs our help.

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.

Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities



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