

# The Big Picture



*A quarterly newsletter presented by the Hagerstown Planning Department  
Volume 2, Number 2  
Spring, 2008*

## Comprehensive Plan Adopted!!!

In November 2007, the Planning Commission concluded the preparation of the Draft Comprehensive Plan and forwarded it to the Mayor and City Council for consideration and adoption. The new Plan, is an update of the 1997 Comprehensive Plan.

The Plan was adopted by the Mayor and Council on April 22, and became effective on that date, concluding a process that began in 2004 with public input sessions to gauge significant issues, and extensive analysis and debate by the Planning Commission with the assistance of the consulting firm of Environmental Resources Management (ERM) of Annapolis. The Planning Commission and the Planning Department thank everyone who participated in all ways, great and small, to the success of this process.

With this Plan now adopted, the Commission and staff will proceed with the adoption of the Land Management Code (see companion article), amendments of the zoning and other ordinances to adopt the policies of the Plan, and also proceed with a comprehensive analysis and revision of the City's zoning map for compliance with the Plan. This comprehensive rezoning process should begin later this summer.



## Land Management Code Goes to Mayor and City Council

In February, the Planning Commission completed its review of the draft Land Management Code and held a public hearing on the document on March 26. The Commission forwarded the document to the Mayor and Council who held a hearing on the draft on June 17. It is anticipated that the Mayor and Council will vote to adopt the Code at a meeting in late July.

The concept of a single, unified "Land Management Code" is the current state of land management regulations, and many jurisdictions are moving to this format. The new format will be more "user friendly". For example, the zoning ordinance section will rely on charts to show permitted and special exception uses over general zoning

classification categories (residential, commercial, etc.) and do away with the current "pyramidal" structure which requires cross referencing multiple zoning districts found in different sections of the ordinance.

The currently pending "Code" is a reorganization and consolidation of the existing rules with little new content. Most content changes will wait until a 2<sup>nd</sup> phase later this year or early 2009 in which the "Code" will be adjusted to implement the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. (See companion article about new zoning districts).

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## Maryland State Historic Preservation Conference a Resounding Success

The annual state historic preservation conference hosted by Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust was held in May in downtown Hagerstown. From the feedback received, it appears to have been a thorough success. Held on the two days preceding BluesFest, it allowed visitors from around the state the opportunity to see Hagerstown's contributions to historic preservation while affording the opportunity to stay for the weekend and sample some of our local culture.

Approximately 380 historic preservation professionals, volunteers, board members, consultants and folks just interested in the topic converged on the University Systems of Maryland Building on West Washington Street, which served as the headquarters for the event. Classes, seminars, walking tours and bus tours were available to participants desiring to develop their knowledge and skills in the field.

The plenary session, held at the Bridge of Life

and urban revitalization. Thanks to all who helped make this event a success and showcase the revitalization of our City to a state-wide audience.

### Planning Department Crafting New Zoning Districts to Implement the Policies of the Comprehensive Plan

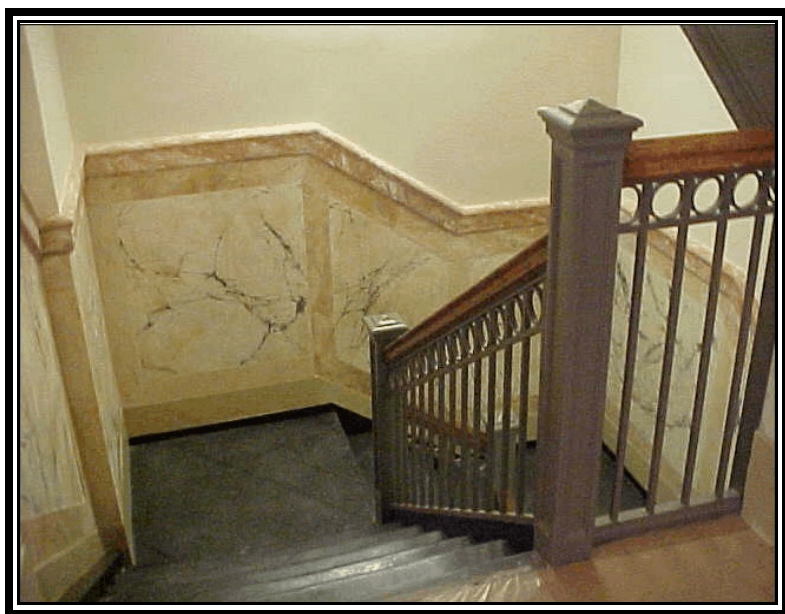
While the structure of the Land Management Code works its way through the adoption process, the Planning Department is already working with the Planning Commission to craft use, bulk and design regulation for three proposed mixed-use districts.

The I-MU (Industrial - Mixed Use District) will diverge from our current industrial districts in that it will allow more mixing of industrial uses with commercial uses that support the industries that are located in the area. This new district is predominantly intended for the Hopewell Valley areas west of I-81 as those lands are annexed into the City, but could be used in other locations as well.

The D-MU (Downtown - Mixed Use) District is intended to replace the current C-3 (Commercial Central) District; allowing a greater variety of uses and higher design standards for new construction.

The N-MU (Neighborhood - Mixed Use) District is intended to allow for medium to high density neighborhoods with mixed use buildings. An example of where such a district could be located would be the Lee Street area south of downtown which was the subject of a recent design study by the American Institute of Architects SDAT Program.

The Planning Department is working with the Planning Commission to have the initial concepts for these districts in place and ready for public hearing at the start of the comprehensive rezoning process.



Historic marble staircase in the University Building

Center (formerly the Colonial Theater) on South Potomac Street, began with a presentation by Mayor Bruchey. The Mayor was followed by a Ed McMahan of the Urban Land Institute who emphasized the relationship between preservation

## Debbie Calhoun The Heart of Planning and Zoning

If regulations and the planning inspector are the “muscle” of the Planning Department, then most assuredly Administrative Secretary Debbie Calhoun is the “heart” of the operation as she keeps things pumping throughout the entire Planning Department.

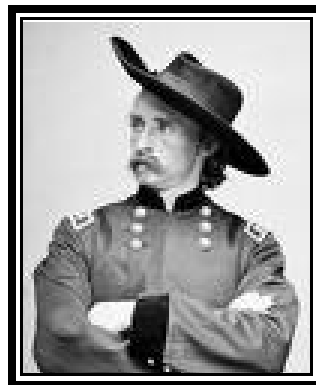
Raised in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania, Debbie moved to Hagerstown to attend Hagerstown Business College. After graduating, she worked briefly for a local law firm before joining the City in 1981 as the Planning Department secretary, making her the most tenured employee in the Department.

Debbie’s is the first face seen in the Planning Department when a member of the public visits our offices on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. She goes out of her way to be helpful to the many folks who visit and really aren’t sure of their needs of our Department. She serves as recording secretary to all of the Boards and Commissions staffed by the Planning Department, and receives, processes and routs all plans and documents that are submitted to the Department for review.

Debbie and her husband Jim live in the Clear Spring area, and are the proud parents of two grown sons...who have chosen careers in forestry and the military...and their beloved Golden Retriever “Lexy”.



## Production Set to Begin on New Round of Civil War Panels



George Custer may have made his last stand on the rolling hills above the Little Big Horn River, but that stand almost came in a Hagerstown belfry thirteen years earlier. As he observed nearby fighting from the bell deck at Zion Church

on North Potomac Street, a Confederate marksman nearly cut the General’s career short, instead hitting one of the church’s bells.

This and other tales will be told in the next round of Civil War stories to be mounted on wayside panels throughout the downtown area. These twelve panels will mostly focus on the actions associated with the Confederate invasions of the area in 1862, 1863 and 1864, and the conversion of local buildings for short and long term hospital use after nearby battles. The panels are part of the Civil War Heritage Area, and are funded in part via State grants. Look for these panels to be installed around town later this year.

The Planning Department has also applied for a grant to create eight panels telling stories about local Hagerstonians who held significant positions in the local community or the military during the war, both Union and Confederate. Among these are an “ironclad” warship captain. Another Hagerstonian to be profiled was the last man to dive off his sinking ship after it was destroyed by the CSS *Virginia* (aka *Merrimac*) at the famous “battle of the ironclads” in 1862. A Union general, a twice-battle wounded Union army major, a Confederate Army Surgeon, the local business leader involved in the 1864 ransoming of the City and officers who served on the personal staffs of Confederate Generals “Jeb” Stuart and “Stonewall” Jackson will also be profiled in this program, which will mark the locations of their homes around our City, most of which still stand.

## Preservation Month Awards

Congratulations to the following recipients of the Preservation Commission's 2008 Awards:

Shiloh Builders and Mike Reffo - For rebuilding the front facade of 29 Charles Street, which had been missing for several years.

Moller Properties LLC and John Laughlin - For rehabilitating the historic Hagerstown Armory.

Chip Alsip - For the construction of an addition to his Terrace home that was architecturally compatible with the existing house.

Richard Aitken and Paul Sadlik - For building a new dwelling at 1342 The Terrace which was architecturally consistent with the historic nature of the Terrace street scape.

CHS Development and Cushwa & Stouffer Architects - For the rehabilitation of the Mount Prospect apartment building for residential condominiums.

Congratulations everyone and thank you for your contributions to historic Hagerstown and the revitalization of our downtown area.

## Dueling Shopping Centers

Two major regional shopping centers are racing to obtain approvals at the intersection of Dual Highway and Interstate 70. The Doub Farm is located on the north side of I-70, visible from the ramp to Dual Highway. The contract purchaser has applied for annexation, and has provided rough plans for four anchor stores, a main street shopping center, two hotels, several "pad sites" and 210,000 square feet of office space. The annexation is working its way through the hearing process, which is currently slowed by the need to secure "expressed approval" of zoning changes from the Board of County Commissioners. If this project moves forward, it will be the second shopping center developed under the City's "big box" regulations (the first being Stone House Square on Leitersburg Pike).

The second shopping center is proposed on the south side of I-70 by Faison Development (the developers of Stone House Square). This plan has a comparable number of anchor stores, and shopping areas are laid out in standard 20<sup>th</sup> Century layouts, without using a "main street" design. In order for this project to work, the developer will need to extend water and sewer lines to the site under Interstate 70. The developer is moving forward with site plans in the County, and would annex the development into the City after build-out.

## Floodplain Management

Steve Bockmiller recently completed a one-day seminar in Baltimore on the current state of floodplain management. Although the City has little floodplain within its boundaries, as Zoning Administrator, Steve also serves as the City's Floodplain Manager. He is considering taking the required tests necessary to become a "Certified Floodplain Manager".

## Hagerstownmd Dot Org

New material has been added to the Planning Department's section of the City website, including digital copies of the downtown and residential historic preservation design guidelines, the City Zoning Map, and the 2008 Comprehensive Plan.

Take a look at [www.hagerstownmd.org](http://www.hagerstownmd.org) !

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## Coming in the Summer Issue

- ☆ The Comprehensive Plan growth areas: What do they mean?
- ☆ Comprehensive rezoning
- ☆ Updates on the Beautification Advisory Committee's activities
- ☆ Who's Who?: Comprehensive Planner Stuart Bass