Residential development makes up the largest single land use category in the City. In fact, the City is well known for its reputation as a bedroom suburb of Washington D.C. As population of the City becomes more diverse, its housing needs are also changing. It is important to provide a wide range of housing opportunities in the community and to guarantee that new subdivisions are designed with an identity and can be integrated into the City’s existing neighborhoods. Residential land use policies should not only address the provision of housing, but should also provide guidance on the development of residential projects.

1. Preserve and enhance the quality of the residential character of the City by maintaining a majority of single-family, detached dwelling units throughout the community and balancing it with a choice of housing types, sizes and styles, including live-work dwelling units and housing for residents of all ages and incomes and for populations with special needs and/or disabilities. The single-family residential character of the Levitt sections of the City shall be preserved and maintained.

2. The inventory of housing opportunities for senior citizens, active adults (age 50+) and for persons with disabilities should be expanded.

3. To continue to provide a broad range of housing types and styles within the planning area, each builder within a new residential development is encouraged to provide at least one single-story unit type or a model which includes a first floor master bedroom in their architectural portfolio to address the needs of the active adult and senior population, persons with disabilities, and empty nesters.

4. Special Exception applications that significantly change the character of an undeveloped land parcel in a residential area are to be discouraged.

5. Housing opportunities for moderately low-, low- and very low-income families, as defined by the City’s Consolidated Housing Plan, are encouraged. This housing should be distributed throughout the City so it is not concentrated in any particular area, and it should support nearby retail areas.

6. Affordable Workforce housing should be provided in all new residential development and redevelopment within the Bowie Local Center. A minimum of 10% of the dwelling units approved for all projects shall be provided as workforce housing units for individuals earning between 60%-80% of the area’s average median income.
COMMUNITY HERITAGE, CULTURE AND DESIGN

HISTORIC PRESERVATION - Historic preservation is a valuable component of the development process as opportunities arise to protect or preserve historic properties and resources. Protection of historic resources, preservation of vistas, etc. are possible if they are considered early in the development review process. The City has a proud history and tradition that is evoked in its conservation of historic buildings such as the Belair Mansion and Stables and the presence of the railroad. A continuing commitment is necessary to guarantee that the many valuable historic properties in and around our community are respected as the area around them develops.

1. Historic resources should be preserved or rehabilitated and be considered for adaptive reuse.

2. When possible, historic resources shall be relocated or rehabilitated, rather than demolished.

3. Historic resources should be surveyed for possible historic significance prior to any proposed demolition.

4. The Huntington section of the City (Old Town Bowie) should be considered a historic resource to be enhanced where possible.

5. A City-County-State collaboration to create an overall improvement plan that enhances the historic characteristics of Huntington (Old Town Bowie) is encouraged.

6. Historic viewsheds should be preserved and complemented by new development.

7. No historic designation, for either a Resource or a Site, should be implemented without the express consent of the property owner.

URBAN DESIGN - Urban design is the process by which the principles and standards of good planning are put into practice. Thoughtful design that includes superior amenities and attention to details contributes to a sense of place by creating a distinctive identity within a community. Quality design should provide not only an attractive visual character, but should also facilitate physical movement and mental orientation creating a greater sense of safety and security. Citywide urban design policies are among the essential tools to guide the physical development of a community. They reflect the intended pattern of development on a planning area-wide scale and are helpful in articulating to developers and the public the City’s desires for location of major land uses and character of development.

Citywide Urban Design Policies

1. Growth should be directed such that Bowie becomes more of a full-service City.

2. Zoning designations should set density and intensity limits related to the Master Plan ultimate land use and should not be used as the basis for negotiation of higher densities.

3. A step-down pattern of densities for residential development throughout the planning area should be encouraged. The highest density of residential development should be limited throughout the planning area to areas within the centrally located Bowie Local Center. Master Plan Activity Centers should be designated as areas of medium only low-density residential and/or commercial-retail-office type development. The remaining residential areas should be developed in a low-density pattern.

4. Development should occur in a pattern where the highest densities and intense commercial uses are concentrated within the Bowie Local Center. The overall Bowie Local Center should contain a range of uses, with a high quality pedestrian experience that incorporates existing natural features and parks as design features.
5. The City should continue to pursue independent planning and zoning authority.

Site-Related Urban Design Policies

1. A hierarchy of street types based on a modified grid street network is preferred in large developments.

2. Visual attractiveness and continuity should be promoted through design approaches that are sensitive to the environment, energy resources, transportation systems, and adjacent land uses.

3. The placement of monopoles, cellular and other public utility towers should be sensitive to adjacent properties and should not occur in existing or planned residential neighborhoods.

4. Streetscape design should be unified and be similar or complementary to that of adjacent properties.

5. Administrative review of architectural revisions is permitted where the HOA or community has indicated its approval, and where the proposed square footage does not exceed what has previously been approved.

6. Existing residential subdivisions are encouraged to retrofit their communities with landscaped entrance features that include BayScaping techniques, in furtherance of the City’s environmental enhancement objectives. Landscape features should be provided in the public spaces located at the entrances to communities that do not have Homeowners Associations.

7. Residential developments should be designed to employ specific techniques to reduce fear and incidence of criminal behavior and increase the perception of security in the community. These techniques may include, but are not limited to: street design to improve natural surveillance and gateway features to deter cut-through traffic; unobscured, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks; lighted parking areas, building/home entrances and yards; clearly delineated private and public areas; properly maintained landscaping to provide maximum visibility to and from the house. Building features should include windows on all sides to provide maximum visibility of property. The creation of blind spots or hiding places should be avoided; open public areas should be visible/observable from nearby homes; lots should be designed to encourage interaction between neighbors. All major development plans should be reviewed by the Police Department to ensure adherence to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and to strive to provide the safest possible situation from a public safety perspective.

8. Mixed use commercial buildings, such as those with retail on the ground floor and office or housing on upper floors are encouraged.

9. Ancillary commercial uses should be carefully planned as pedestrian-scale neighborhood centers.
PUBLIC FACILITIES

The City has long-supported strong Adequate Public Facilities (APF) laws in Prince George’s County. Timely provision of necessary facilities programmed in the County’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the WSSC CIP, or State’s Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), or those funded by developers in accordance with the County’s APF Ordinance, is essential to keeping pace with growth in the community. 100% of the construction funding for such facilities should be committed for a facility to be considered in any APF test, and projects should be staged to coincide with the actual availability of the services those facilities provide.

Public water and sewer facilities are essential to support new growth, as well as the needs of existing development. The City operates its own wastewater treatment plant and water system within the Levitt sections of Bowie. WSSC provides such services elsewhere. The Prince George’s County Ten-Year Water and Sewer Plan is a development management tool that establishes a timing mechanism for providing such service within the County to assure that water and sewer facilities are not overburdened. Amendments to the Plan must be approved to initiate project development dependent upon public water and sewer facilities. The City makes recommendations on proposed amendments, based upon the City’s development review policies, the Master Plan, and County criteria. The provision of public water and sewer greatly influences the development character of an area.

The City provides and maintains recreation facilities and parks for its residents. These facilities are in addition to, and not a substitute for, those facilities needed by the community that are provided by MNCPPC. Having a wide variety of recreational opportunities for all age groups and providing parkland for passive recreation or open space preservation adds significantly to the quality of life and attractiveness of the City.

1. All developments should be staged to coincide with the actual availability of required public facilities (such as schools, roads, libraries, fire and rescue services, etc.).

2. No project should be recommended for approval unless the necessary adequate public facilities, including but not limited to roads and related improvements, are either in place or will be constructed simultaneously with the project itself. Funds approved for public facilities improvements in the latter years of an adopted Capital Improvements Program should not be considered to fulfill this requirement.

3. In general, use of fee-in-lieu to satisfy APF requirements should not be supported. However, pro-rata contributions, where the entire cost of the facility is known is divided between a number of developers, such as road clubs, can be used to satisfy APF requirements provided they contain sufficient enforcement ability. “School clubs” should be investigated as a means of developer funding of needed school facilities. When fee-in-lieu is used, money collected should be used solely for facilities determined necessary to support the specific development that causes the impact.

4. School facilities in excess of 100% of their design capacity should be deemed overcrowded. The County is urged to take the necessary actions to achieve a school system where enrollments do not exceed available capacity.

5. The City encourages major developers to participate in the Partners with Education Program.

6. Public improvements via capital improvement documents should be sized to accommodate only the level of development envisioned by the adopted Master Plan, and should not be used to initiate new development in excess of those levels envisioned by the adopted Master Plan.

7. When performing traffic studies, developers shall be required to analyze accident data and safety relationships, in addition to traffic capacity issues. Safe access should be an integral part of determining whether or not a project should be recommended for approval.

8. Amendments to the 10-year Water and Sewer Plan should not be used to support any change in zoning.
9. City-owned recreation facilities are “in addition to and not a substitute for” County facilities.

10. New developments should provide recreation facilities, including smaller recreational parks for younger children. These facilities should be located and constructed so that impacts (e.g. traffic circulation, environmental impacts, such as tree and wetland loss) are minimized. Developers should also provide open space with parks, walks, gardens, natural exploration areas, etc. and make connections to the trails network wherever the network abuts any such developer’s property.

11. Recreational facilities (i.e. tot lots, etc.) and hiker/biker trails and their access points should be completed and useable prior to the issuance of the first Use and Occupancy Permit for the adjacent buildings or residential units the facilities and/or trails are intended to serve.

12. Recreation facilities, including those constructed by developers on property to be dedicated to a homeowner’s association, shall meet or exceed the City’s minimum recreational design standards maintained by the City’s Department of Community Services.

13. Additional opportunities for water-related recreation, including lakes, ponds, streamside parks, and a water trail should be encouraged.

14. The areas along the Patuxent River should be the focus of the County’s efforts for acquisition, via either the land development review process or a purchase program, for the preservation of environmentally sensitive lands, protection of habitat corridors and the development of a linear trail network for pedestrians and equestrians.

15. Public/private partnerships are encouraged as a means of achieving innovative financing options for construction of public facilities.