



Cecil County is developing a county-wide Green Infrastructure (GI) network and plan. Through this planning process, the County will try to maximize the benefits of existing green infrastructure and seek opportunities to enhance the benefits and values of wildlife protection, shoreline erosion control, flood mitigation, critical infrastructure protection and additional recreational opportunities.

The following are some questions and answers about the GI plan and its goals:

What is Green Infrastructure?

Green infrastructure is our County's natural life support system, made up of forests, wetlands, and floodplains, which includes parks, open spaces, and farms. At broad scales, green infrastructure includes large blocks of forests, wetlands, and stream networks; and at the site scale, green infrastructure may focus on more natural solutions to reduce stormwater runoff, flood damage, and heat. At both scales, these natural areas can be connected and managed to support native species, sustain air and water resources, and contribute to people's health and quality of life.

Why is Cecil County developing this plan?

This planning process will identify a green infrastructure network to improve the capacity to manage stormwater runoff/flooding and enhance recreational opportunities at the same time. Cecil County is continually working to accomplish its Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals, particularly by helping to prioritize preservation and restoration activities of critical natural resources. Protecting water quality is essential for all residents and all aspects of the environment. Through this GI plan, the County will be exploring opportunities and potential partnerships to protect, improve, and expand green infrastructure functions including improved capacity to manage flooding and help prevent future damage from increased storm activity.

Who else is involved in this planning activity?

County staff have been working with a steering committee consisting of our Towns, local non-profit groups, utility companies, development, and agricultural communities to examine the role that green infrastructure can play to help improve resilience through natural resource protection, green

stormwater management practices, coastal defense, and critical infrastructure protection. Cecil County is partnering with the Conservation Fund to prepare the mapping assessment and draft plan, the Susquehannock Wildlife Society to conduct habitat assessments and develop management recommendations on a sample of County-owned land within the GI network, and Jean Akers, AICP, PLA, to strengthen the public input process.

How does the GI plan fit in with other County plans and when will it be adopted?

The GI plan follows from recommendations contained in the County's Comprehensive Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan, Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, and Strategic Plan. These adopted plans contained green infrastructure goals, such as connecting greenways, protecting water resources, flood mitigation, and sustainable capital programs. The draft GI plan will be completed in the summer of 2019 and will seek adoption in the fall.

Is the County looking at new regulations?

No. The GI plan will be considered within the parameters of existing regulations. The idea is to better integrate the plan's strategies across County departments, Towns, State and Federal agencies, and local community partners. The County will consider enhancing current preservation and restoration programs to implement strategic projects in ecologically important areas, with a focus on preserving the land identified as gaps in the GI network and implementing stormwater management projects.

What will GI related projects look like in urban and rural areas?

Preserving gaps in the GI network in urban areas would lead to improved recreational facilities, stormwater management and flood mitigation opportunities, and enhanced quality of life for County residents. Parks can be improved by implementing more conservation-friendly practices, such as meadows and tree plantings. Connecting gaps in the GI network in rural areas would lead to improved forest connectivity, wildlife corridors, and in places, improved flood control. The continued implementation of agricultural best management practices will also improve the resources within the GI network. Additional partnership opportunities with Federal, State, Local agencies, and non-profit groups, will ensure funding remains available for preserving and restoring the GI network in rural areas.

How can I comment on the GI plan?

Comments can be emailed to Bryan Lightner, Resource Plans Reviewer: blightner@ccgov.org. Please include "GI Plan" in the subject line. They also can be mailed to: Cecil County, Attn: GI Plan, 200 Chesapeake Blvd., Suite 2300, Elkton, MD 21921.

For more information about the GI plan, please visit the County website:

<http://www.ccgov.org/government/land-use-development-services/planning-zoning-division/green-infrastructure>.