

QAC 2010 Comp Plan
60-Day Review Comment
RA-07
July 6, 2010

The Value of Trees

In Chapters 14 and 18 of the QAC Code there are several sections that directly or indirectly provide landscape and tree preservation regulations for the County. Much of this code is devoted to providing “buffers” between incompatible land uses. (Think NCD Cornfield Villages next to cornfields and other agricultural activities. Et. al.).

While buffer standards, forest protection and forest mitigation code provisions are necessary regulations, much of these requirements could be avoided through better land development patterns and practices and by including real “landscape architecture” in the development of a residential subdivision design or commercial site plan.

Instead, as any drive through the County reveals, that this is almost never the case. (A recent exception to this lament is the fabulous landscaping of building and grounds at the new ER facility on Nesbit Road.) The standard solution elsewhere is a single sheet in the engineering set, generally prepared by the project engineers following the mundane requirements of our deficient and uncreative code.

On a larger scale compare the residential and mixed-use neighborhoods of Columbia Maryland with the similar areas of QAC. Much of the Columbia was constructed on old farm fields, but the street and open space development included a complete community landscape, much of which has had 30-40 years to mature.

If we are serious about wanting to increase our tax base and the quality of our environment the Planning Commission Comp Plan will direct the Planning Commission to review all relevant code language after considering the principals and observations contained in the two attachments to this paper, then direct Staff to review and revise appropriately required landscape practices and standards.

This work is an essential pre-requisite before heeding the repeated call in the Comp Plan for more compact “village like” growth patterns for the County. It is a necessary ingredient to sustainable smart growth.

Recommended insertion locations:

- A) Element 1.0>§1.8>Goal 1>Objective 1>Recommendations 1-7 [Expand]*
- B) Element 1.0>>§1.8>Goal 1>Objective 6>Recommendations [Add landscape energy benefits.]*
- C) Element 3.0>§3.5>Goal 2>Objective 3>Recommendation 4 [Expand]*
- D) Element 3.0>§3.5>Goal 2>Objective 3>Recommendation 4 [Expand]*
- E) Element 5.0>§5.5>Goal 1>Objective 5>Recommendation [New]*
- F) Element 5.0>§5.5>Goal 1>Objective 7>Recommendation 1 [New additions]*

- F) Element 5.0>§5.5>Goal 2>Objective 1>Recommendation 1 [New additions].*
- G) Element 6.0>§6.6>Goal 2>Objective [New additions discussing Landscape Standards].*
- F) Element 8.0>§8.16>Goal 1>Objective 1>Recommendation [New additions discussing Landscape Standards].*
- H) Element 8.0>§8.16>Goal 2>Objective 2>Recommendations [Include need for Green Infrastructure].*
- I) Element 8.0>§8.16>Goal 4>Objective 1>Recommendations [Expand].*

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2 Attachments