

A product of compromise

Before passage, the WCD was amended to exempt schools and churches. In addition, families on parcels of 10 acres or more were permitted two more lots for family members. A disappointing compromise exempted commercial zoning (except for the tech park). Much of this area lies directly in the Mattawoman streamvalley.

There is still work to do!

There is a large “pipeline” of approved subdivisions in the WCD. These and commercial projects must be closely watched .

In a very troubling amendment, hundreds of acres around the Maryland airport are being considered for industrial development, even though the environment there is exceptionally sensitive. In addition to ecological problems, taxpayers would have to spend millions for new sewer even though market studies find the area is uncompetitive with the surrounding region.

Please contact us to help!



Mattawoman Watershed Society



MattawomanWatershed.org

301-751-9494

Watershed Conservation District ADOPTED!

Good news for Charles County residents—school children—parents—outdoor enthusiasts—commuters—and more!

In June 2017, Charles County Commissioners Peter Murphy, Amanda Stewart, and Ken Robinson passed the “WCD,” a key element of their smarter-growth Comprehensive Plan. Lower zoning-density in the WCD curtails the sprawl development that for more than quarter century has dominated Charles County. Residents can look forward to less traffic growth, stronger schools, better use of taxes, and a healthier Mattawoman Creek—a gem now poised at the tipping point for irreversible loss.



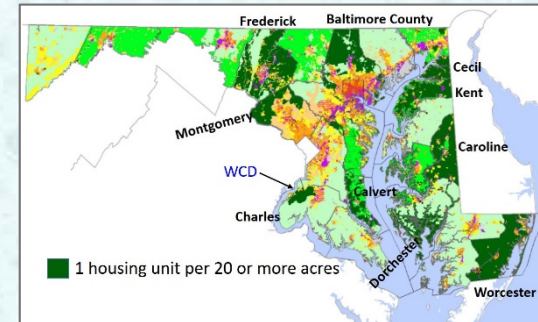
MattawomanWatershed.org

The Watershed Conservation District



The land that “sheds” stormwater and snowmelt to Mattawoman Creek is its “watershed.” The Watershed Conservation District reduces residential density over much of the watershed outside of commercial areas and “Priority Funding Areas” (i.e., where the state helps fund infrastructure). The WCD also limits impervious surface on a building lot to 8%, with exceptions for schools, churches, and parcels less than three acres. The head-waters of the Port Tobacco River are also included.

The WCD limits density to one housing-unit per 20 acres (smaller lots are permitted one unit). Charles County thus joins nine other Maryland counties that conserve important resources with equal or less density, most over much a larger area (see map).



In 1990, most of Mattawoman’s watershed was declared a “development district.” Unbridled growth followed, with wholesale forest loss and polluted runoff from surfaces impervious to rain and snow. In that time, Mattawoman fell from “the best, most productive tributary to the Chesapeake Bay,” to the “tipping point” for “irreversible degradation” according to many experts. *The WCD will stem this slide, a boon for recreation, county prestige, wildlife and tourism.*


As explained in this pamphlet, by curtailing sprawl development the WCD will enhance the quality of life for residents, commuters, taxpayers, school children and parents.


- Increases home values**
- Strong schools**
- Preserves farms**
- Less traffic growth**
- Saves Mattawoman Creek**
- Ends predicted water shortage**
- Protects Indian Head Navy Base**
- Saves rural character**
- Saves taxes from subsidizing sprawl**


The Watershed Conservation District finally curtails sprawl development and its negative consequences


At a Nov. 28, 2016 hearing, the CEO of a real-estate lobby testified that five zoning districts being replaced by the Watershed Conservation District (WCD) allowed 17,000 new dwelling units *without bonus densities*. The lower zoning density in the WCD would prevent the vast majority of these from being built.


Less Traffic Growth

 Charles County *already* has the longest commute time of any county in Maryland.

 WCD means 120,000 to 170,000 fewer car trips per day (depending on housing mix of the 17,000 units).

 Compare with the car trips per day of crammed commuter routes at the county line with Prince George's
 24,400 = trips per day, Route 210
 56,400 = trips per day, Route 301


 New roads *never* relieve congestion for long, and cost taxpayers \$\$.


 Route 210 was widened to 6 lanes when Route 228 (Berry Rd) opened. Look at it now. *The WCD curtails growth along Rte 228.*





Strong Schools

Imagine how students can prosper now that priority is given to schools instead of developers and land speculators.

 Unbridled growth has forced Charles County to use more trailers per student than any other Maryland county. Crowding hampers teaching and fosters discipline problems.

 Inequity grows as funds construct new buildings instead of modernizing existing ones. A 2014 study found that to fund needed renovations would take nearly *\$600 million* over 10 yrs, equal to the cost of eight new high schools.

 Fewer new school buildings means fewer disruptive redistrictings.

 The WCD, with 17,000 fewer new dwellings, saves taxpayers 7 new elementary schools, 2 new middle schools, and 2 new high schools. Schools can now catch up!



Classroom trailers are a common sight throughout the school system.

Supports home values

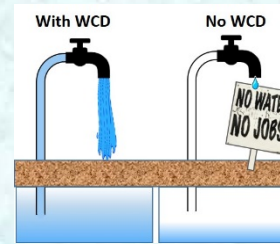
Many studies show that green space enhances home values. Home values will also be supported with less competition from 17,000 new housing units.

Housing affordability for teachers and public safety workers should benefit. Studies find the “housing affordability index” trends downward as growth rate increases. Charles County has the 2nd fastest growth rate and lowest affordability index in MD. The WCD reduces growth rate, and the Comprehensive Plan adopted by Commissioners Murphy, Stewart, and Robinson requires new projects to address affordability.



Reduces threat to water supply

Charles County's water comes mostly from groundwater. Prior to the WCD, state permitted withdrawals failed to supply anticipated growth. Now there appears to be sufficient water to 2040.



Protects Navy Base

The Indian Head naval base is the county's largest employer outside the school system. It is vulnerable to encroachment from over-development. The WCD protects noise complaint areas (Stump Neck), stems traffic growth on the base's main access road, Rte 210, and directs investment to the town of Indian Head rather than competing areas.

Stabilizes property tax rates

Sprawl development costs more to be serviced than it generates in property taxes. It is inefficient to spread schools, roads and road maintenance, water & sewer, sheriffs, and emergency services over large areas.

Saves key recreational resources

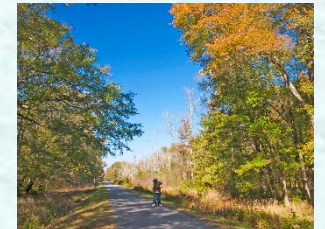
An expert Task Force says Mattawoman Creek is at the tipping point for irreversible degradation from too much pavement and rooftops. Alarming, the number of fish and fish species has declined in the tidal portion, while road salt increasingly pollutes streams, and dissolved oxygen is dropping. The WCD will stem the slide, and protect Audubon Important Bird Areas and the natural setting of the Indian Head Rail Trail!



Mattawoman is too good to lose. It remains “what a restored Chesapeake Bay would look like.” However, signs of stress are evident!



Excess algae sometimes occurs



WCD protects the Rail Trail!