

# Comprehensive Plan Update

Planning Commission Work Session  
January 14, 2026

# Purpose

- Comprehensive Plans capture how people want their communities to function and grow.
- It is a big picture, long-term plan that serves as a guide.
- Public and private developments, projects and initiatives in the City should be consistent with the Plan.



# Required Elements

- Must address the State's 8 Planning Principles (formerly 12 Visions)
- Must include the following “elements”:
  - Goals, objectives, principles, implementation
  - Land Use
  - Municipal Growth
  - Housing
  - Transportation
  - Community Facilities
  - Water Resources
  - Sensitive Areas



# Public Engagement - Efforts

- 2024 – Public Workshop Presentation and Online Survey
- Spring 2025 – Focus Groups
- Written correspondence (emails and letters)

Moving forward – Planning Commission Work Sessions, Required 60-Day State Review, Planning Commission Public Hearing (recommendation for adoption), and Council Public Hearing.





# Public Engagement – Key Themes

- Encouraging new housing development
  - Increased density downtown/where appropriate
  - Focus on infill and annexations within the current growth area
- Preserve existing neighborhood character
- Increase green space
- Improve transit access and connectivity
- Support small, local business
- Upgrade City infrastructure (roads, bridges, drainage systems, etc.)



# Chapter 1- Introduction

The introduction includes:

- Plan Elements
- Purpose
- Legal Basis
- Public Participation
- Vision Statement

## Vision Statement

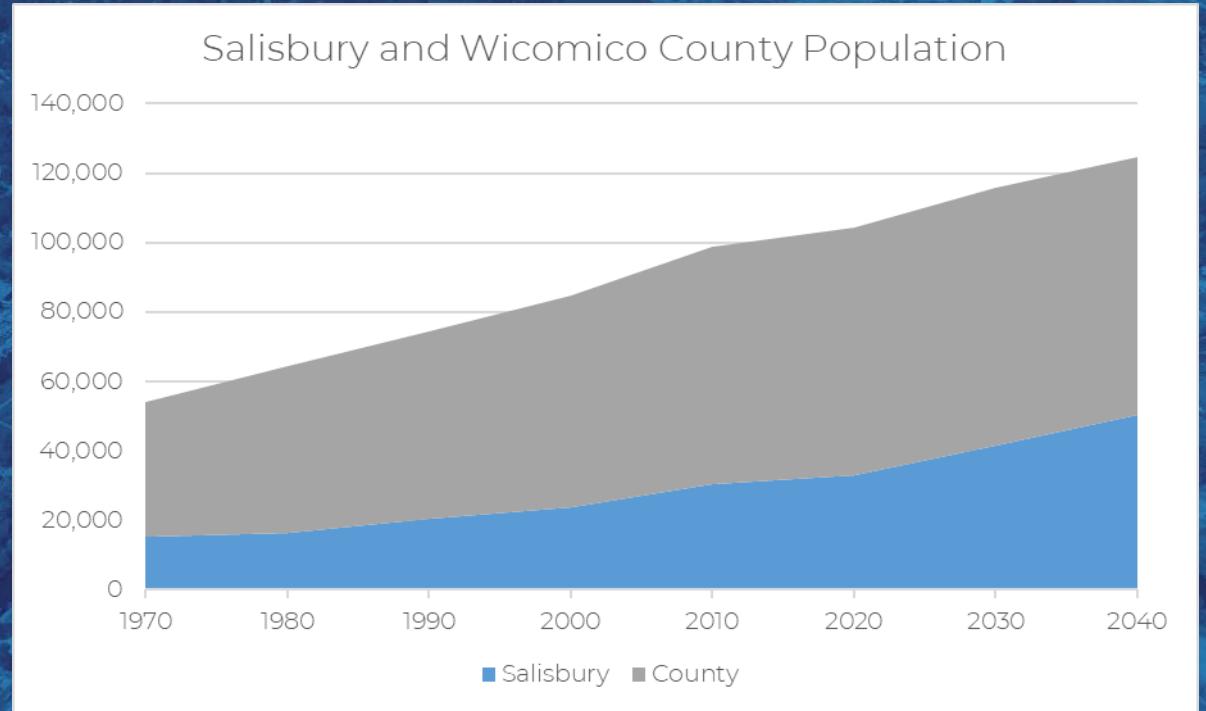
*The City of Salisbury will remain the medical, educational, cultural, and economic center of the Eastern Shore. Our commitment to excellence, innovation and service, combined with sound fiscal management will ensure Salisbury's future as a safe, vibrant, and healthy community.*



# Chapter 2- Community Profile

## Key Points

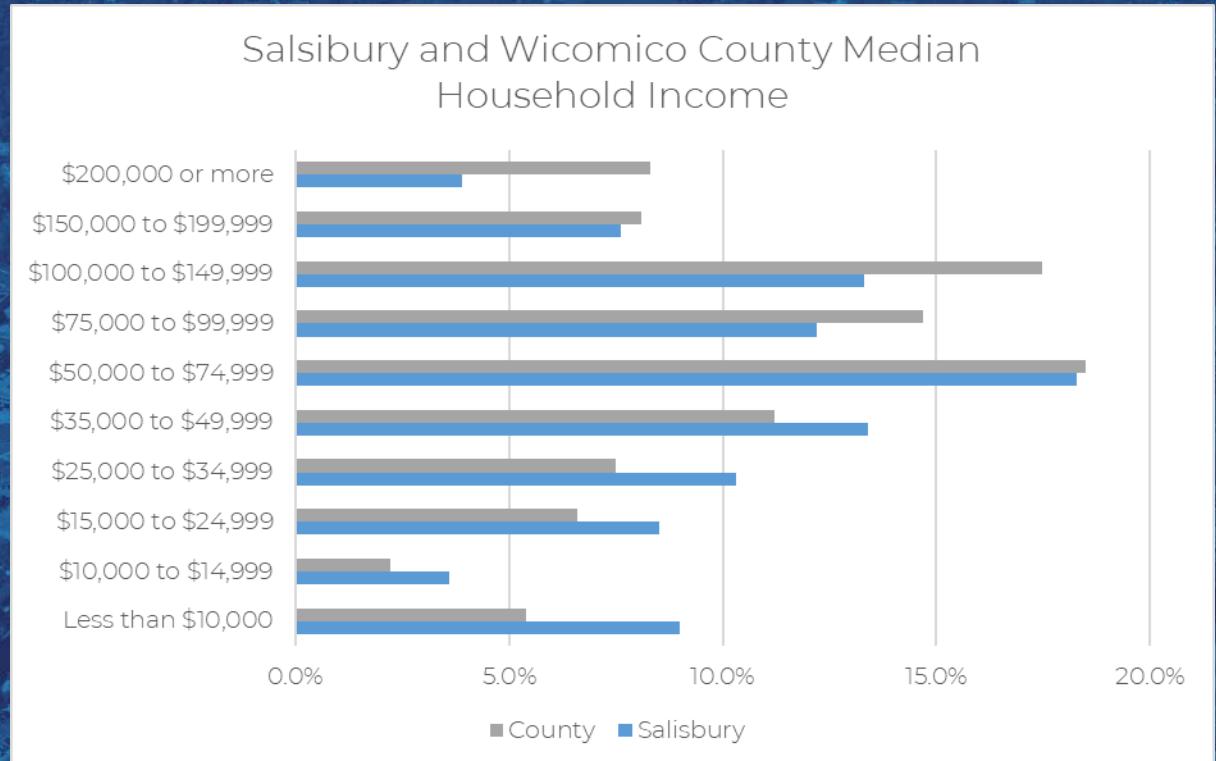
- Salisbury's population has grown from 15,252 in 1970 to 33,050 in 2020. As of 2020, the city makes up 31% of the county population.
- The city has become more diverse over the last 20 years, with the percentage of Asian, African American, and Hispanic residents increasing each decade.
- The average age of residents is 29.9 in the city, compared to 36.2 in the county.



# Chapter 2- Community Profile

## Key Points

- The unemployment rate in Salisbury is 6.8%, compared to the current national rate of 4.4%.
- The median household income in Salisbury is \$56,402, compared to \$72,861 in the county.
- 75% of residents drive alone to work while 13% carpooled, meaning 88% of residents use a car to get to work.
- In 2020, 71% of units in Salisbury are rentals, compared to the county average of 32%.



# Chapter 3- Land Use and Municipal Growth

## Goals

- Provide for the appropriate use of limited land resources within a framework of orderly, controlled, and sustainable growth and development, according to the specific needs of Salisbury.
- Encourage urban development and redevelopment in the city to promote, retain, and reinforce the role of the city as a center of regional activity.
- Maximize existing investment in public and private facilities serving the city by encouraging dense infill and redevelopment.



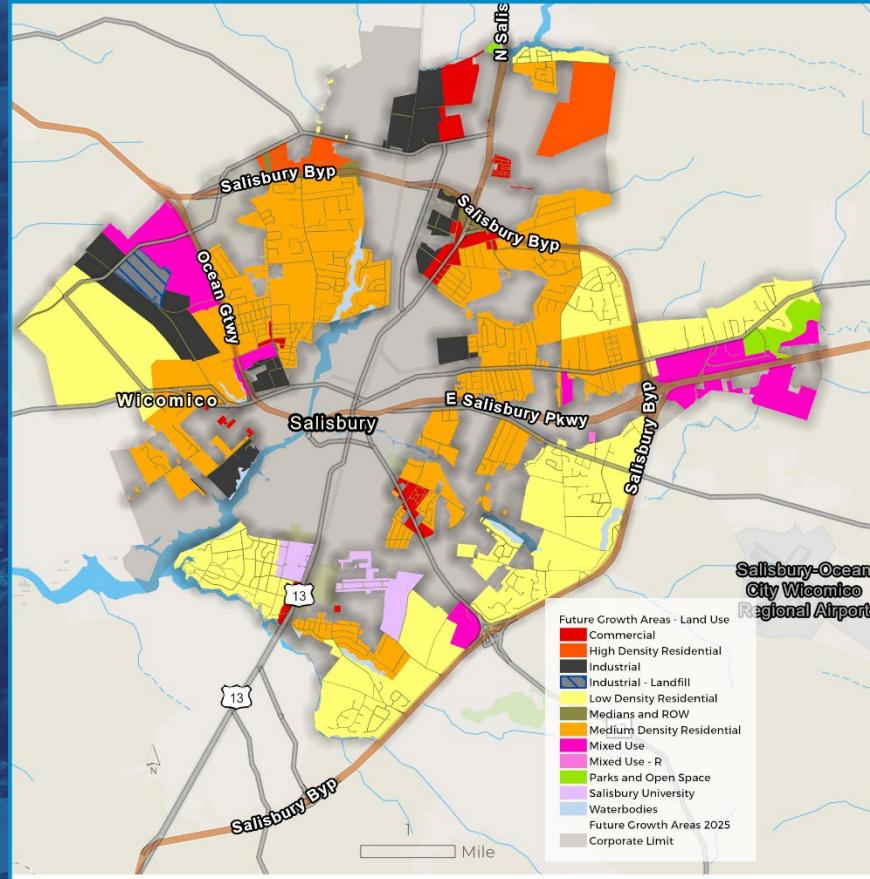
# Chapter 3- Land Use and Municipal Growth

## Objectives

- Ensure proper and efficient land use, and protect from incompatible uses.
- Promote sustainability and conservation of the city's natural resources.
- Reevaluate, simplify, and improve zoning code to promote development.
- Ensure new growth is compatible with existing land use and city priorities.
- Promote redevelopment of existing resources.
- Encourage dense development utilizing mixed uses.



# Chapter 3- Land Use and Municipal Growth



**Future Growth Areas |**  
Land Use & Municipal Growth



## Key Points

- This chapter contains a Development Capacity Analysis. The analysis focuses on residential development and considers:
  - Population Projections
  - Amount of development permitted in zoning districts (density)
  - Proposed density of identified growth areas (not currently in the city)
  - Estimates the impacts of projected growth
- The Salisbury population is also continuously growing and is expected to approach 50,000 people in the decades to come.
- The existing corporate limits and zoning indicates a 140 unit shortage in capacity based on the projected 2040 population. However, the designated future growth area is still adequate and that need can be met through annexation and development.



# Chapter 4- Economic Development and Jobs

## Goals

- Maintain the City of Salisbury as the center of retail trade, health services and entertainment for the Lower Eastern Shore and much of the Delmarva Peninsula.
- Encourage a commercial redevelopment or revitalization that makes appropriate use of the Wicomico River waterfront for private redevelopment, while encouraging maximum public use of the river front.
- Encourage development that strengthens Downtown's position as the City's central hub for government services, retail activity, arts and entertainment, and its connection to the waterfront.
- Support the revitalization of existing neighborhoods and façade improvement of Downtown businesses.
- Improve public safety throughout the City
- Maintain the status of the Port of Salisbury as an essential element of regional commerce.
- Prioritize addressing homelessness, deepening collaborative partnerships, and expanding pathways for community organizations to engage in meaningful work with the city.



# Chapter 4- Economic Development and Jobs

## Objectives

- Attract and encourage businesses and corporations to invest, develop and expand in Salisbury, including health care, research, retail, manufacturing, food processing, and distribution businesses.
- Increase and encourage local job-training opportunities (expand and improve access to trade schools, community college, and higher education)
- Encourage and support locally-owned small businesses
- Support freight operations between metropolitan areas of Baltimore, Washington and Wilmington and the Eastern Shore for local manufacturing operations.
- Provide asset security by decreasing the crime rate, especially Part 1 crimes (violence and property)
- Provide financial incentives and technical assistance to encourage mixed-use development (commercial and residential) in the downtown.
- Promote, develop and support local tourism industries, such as hotels and experience-based businesses



# Chapter 4- Economic Development and Jobs



## Key Points

- Salisbury's employment is led by health care, education, and food production.
  - Educational services, healthcare and social assistance – 24%
  - Retail trade - 14%
  - Construction – 10%
  - Manufacturing – 10%
- Downtown Salisbury is designated as an Arts and Entertainment District, which provides tax and financial benefits.
- Multiple areas within the city are State-Designated opportunity zones which receive special tax incentives and investment.



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Sacramento, showing a dense urban area with a grid of streets, a river winding through the city, and various industrial and residential buildings. The image is tinted with a blue overlay.

# Public Comment Chapters 1-4



# Chapter 5- Historic and Cultural Resources

## Goals

- To promote and preserve the City's historical sites and resources.
- Preserve and celebrate Salisbury's unique community character by honoring the diverse cultures and histories that shape its neighborhoods.



# Chapter 5- Historic and Cultural Resources

## Objectives

- To protect and preserve the City's existing historical sites and resources.
- To identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures with historical or archaeological significance.
- To promote historic resources as a tool for increasing economic development.
- To protect the historic character of the three existing historic districts through adaptive reuse.
- To protect against destruction and encourage the restoration of historic areas and structures.
- To identify and protect structures within a neighborhood that may not be historic but are part of the fabric of the community.



# Chapter 5- Historic and Cultural Resources

## Key Points



- The city has existing historic districts and sites to preserve at the local, state and federal level.
- Identified strategies to continue preservation efforts include:
  - Promoting the use for educational and entertainment through programs and activities.
  - Identifying and promoting financial incentives and assistance for restoration
  - Encourage adaptive reuse
- There may be sites that are culturally or historically significant but do not have any formal designations that should be protected or celebrated.



# Chapter 6- Housing

## Goals

- Promote and encourage safe, decent, and sanitary housing to fulfill the housing needs of current and future residents.
- Improve the quality of housing while offering a variety of housing types to assure that the housing needs of all social and economic segments of the city are met.
- Affirmatively further fair housing to fulfill current and future housing needs.



# Chapter 6- Housing

## Objectives

- Provide an adequate supply of decent, safe and sanitary housing choices for families and individuals of all social and economic backgrounds.
- Increase housing and homeownership opportunities for low-income, moderate-income, and fixed-income people.
- Increase housing opportunities for aging in place and people with disabilities.
- Facilitate and reduce barriers to new development and redevelopment.
- Facilitate the maintenance and modernization of existing housing stock.
- Support the expansion of affordable housing opportunities for first-time homebuyers.
- Support housing counseling, down payment and closing cost assistance for first-time low-to-moderate income homebuyers.
- Provide assistance to extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income homeowners for housing rehabilitation.
- Increase and maintain the supply of affordable housing to low- and moderate-income persons, including renters, owner occupants and persons with special needs.
- Encourage accessibility alterations for existing owner-occupied units.
- Increase emergency shelter and transitional housing space for the homeless.
- Support the development of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for the homeless and disabled by non-profit organizations and governmental agencies.
- Develop neighborhoods that incorporate green spaces, recreational areas, and cultural centers to meet the needs of all income levels and demographic groups.



# Chapter 6- Housing

## Key Points

- Current trends show the city population could reach 50,000 by 2040. This would require 5,619 new housing units.
- Affordable housing is needed for all income levels.
- Housing that provides necessary support and services is needed for the elderly, special needs and homeless populations.
- The city conducts an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing every 5 years. This identified 5 impediments:
  - Fair Housing Education and Outreach
  - Affordable Housing
  - Accessible Housing
  - Public Policy
  - Regional Approach to Fair Housing



# Chapter 7- Transportation

## Goals

- Develop a well-integrated, multi-modal transportation network that ensures the safe, convenient, and efficient movement of people and goods between residential, commercial, educational, and recreational areas.
- Enhance connectivity for both residents and visitors throughout the city and the surrounding region.



# Chapter 7- Transportation

## Objectives

- Develop and expand the existing transportation system in a manner that does not adversely impact the community and neighborhood integrity or environmental amenities.
- Support the development and expansion of public transportation and other forms of motorized and non-motorized transportation to reduce traffic congestion
- Encourage the participation and cooperation of all interested and affected parties in the transportation planning process and roadway improvements, and the public, to ensure that a well-planned and coordinated transportation system is developed.
- Where possible and appropriate, improve existing roads and highways and build new linkages to support the City of Salisbury's Land Use Plan and Municipal Growth Element.
- Ensure that appropriate measures and improvements are proportionally funded by developers when it is determined that new development will create a traffic or safety hazard or necessitate traffic enhancements.





# Chapter 7- Transportation

## Key Points



- Immediate, Mid, and Long-Term Capital Projects include roadway expansions, safety improvements, and pedestrian and bicycle upgrades.
- Public transportation is provided by Shore Transit, which may not meet the needs of all residents.
- The Salisbury Airport is a key resource for those travelling to and from Salisbury, but captures only 15.5% of regional air traffic.
- The Port of Salisbury plays an important role in regional transportation. It primarily handles bulk goods such as fuel and construction material.
- Public Parking is an important issue as the city grows, particularly downtown. The city will work to ensure that new developments provide adequate parking.



# Chapter 8- Community Facilities

## Goals

- Provide community facilities that will ensure an adequate level of public services to all residents of the City of Salisbury.
- Maintain and make efficient use of the existing community facilities.
- Expand the existing community facilities to meet the needs of the expected growth in population.



# Chapter 8- Community Facilities

## Objectives

- Provide adequate management and disposal of all non-hazardous waste materials generated within the City of Salisbury in an efficient and environmentally sound manner.
- Increase availability of recreational areas to improve the quality of life within the City.
- Provide an array of accessible and adequate recreational facilities and programs throughout the City.
- Work toward/plan for an open space network along rivers and branches that traverse residential and other developed areas to establish an interconnected open space network.
- Increase the accessibility of publicly owned community gathering spaces such as schools, fire stations, libraries and parks.
- Continue to support the Wicomico County Board of Education's as enrollment rates increase.
- Provide adequate water, sewer, and storm drainage systems to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all City residents.
- Ensure that the costs associated with providing sufficient public water and sewerage system facilities are equitably distributed between public and private sectors.





# Chapter 8- Community Facilities

## Key Points

- Community Facilities include schools, police, fire, parking, parks, sewerage, water, and garbage collection. Most of these facilities have service areas that extend beyond the city or serve the entire County.
- As Salisbury's population grows, it is essential that the capacity of these facilities and services match this growth.
- Organizations providing these public services generally monitor usage data to help them anticipate needs and ensure that their capacity meets the demand of the service area.



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Sacramento, showing a dense urban area with a grid of streets, a river winding through the city, and various industrial and residential buildings. The image is tinted with a blue overlay.

# Public Comment Chapters 5-8

