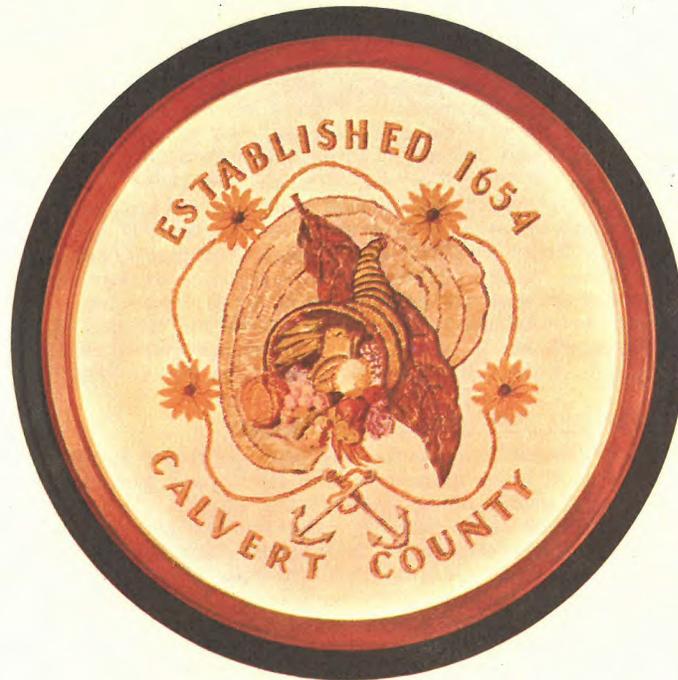


# CALVERT COUNTY MARYLAND

## THE PLEASANT PENINSULA PLANNING PROCESS



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

MR. C. BERNARD FOWLER, PRESIDENT  
MR. H. GORDON TRUEMAN  
DR. GEORGE J. WEEMS

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## Calvert County

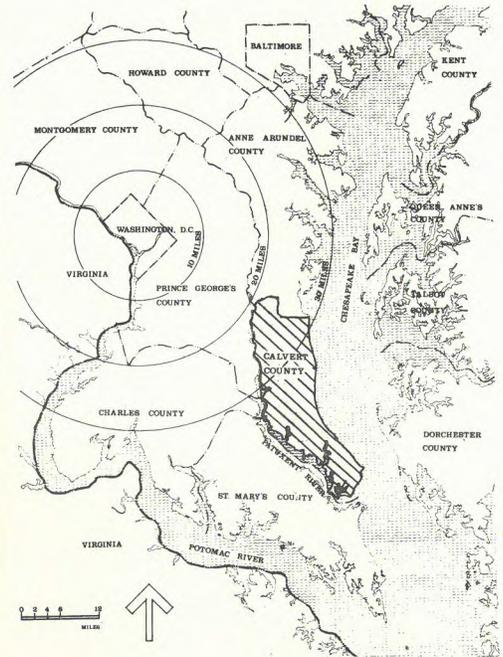
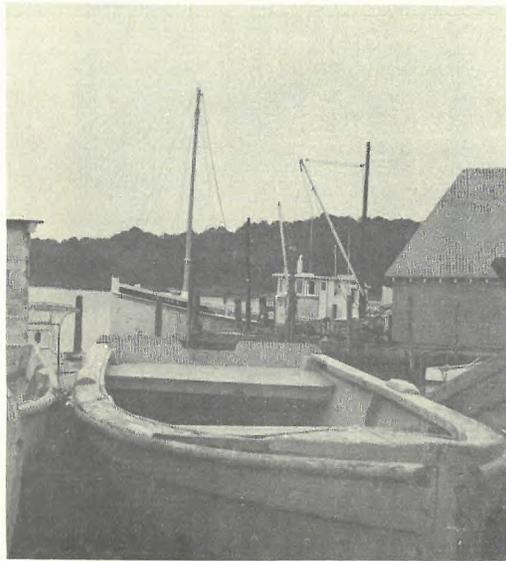
Calvert County is a rural community of approximately 25,000 people located in Southern Maryland. The County is a narrow peninsula of 219 square miles with the Chesapeake Bay located to the east and the Patuxent River to the south and west. With water barriers and limited road access, the county did not share the growth pressures experienced in neighboring counties in the Baltimore-Washington area during the 1950-60's. Beginning in the late sixties, growth pressures for suburban and recreational-second home development intensified. The completion of a dual lane highway from the Washington Capital Beltway to the County Seat of Prince Frederick reinforced these new growth pressures. The construction of a nuclear power plant and a liquified natural gas plant, which began in the late sixties, has exerted, and continues to exert, a significant effect on the local economy and further reinforces growth pressures.

## Growth and Response

In the middle sixties, Calvert County began an accelerated transition from a sparsely populated county, with extensive natural amenities and a primarily agricultural and water oriented economy to one where suburban and intensified recreational home demands had to be accommodated. A Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance were adopted in 1967. These measures were followed by a Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan in 1970, and Subdivision Regulations in 1972. These efforts represented the initial steps toward management of the inevitable future growth as well as protection of the natural and historical assets of the County. Early in 1970, a new Board of County Commissioners was elected and took office. Early in its administration, additional emphasis was placed on the need for broader and more in-depth County Planning. Revision of existing plans was initiated and plans were prepared and adopted for solid waste management, recreation facilities, sediment control and preservation of historical sites.

## Evolution of the Pleasant Peninsula Planning Process

The Board of County Commissioners became more convinced during this period that the effectiveness of local government and the County planning process could be enhanced by directly involving citizens of the county. In early 1971, a Citizens Advisory Committee of 25 members, representing approximately 75 organizations and a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, was appointed to provide direct citizen input on critical issues. On numerous occasions in 1972 and 1973, the Board of County Commissioners and the members of the local delegation to the Maryland General Assembly realized the need for the preparation of a long term County Plan which would be more than the traditional Comprehensive Master Plan. As a result there developed a program to initiate a planning process which would involve the citizens of the County and provide an opportunity for every interested person to offer suggestions for the future development of the County. This Plan was named the Pleasant Peninsula Plan, reflecting the geographic setting of the County. It was the development and implementation of this planning process that earned Calvert County the National Association of Counties Achievement Award in 1975. The first step of the Plan was initiated by the Board of County Commissioners early in 1974 with the appointment of 10 individuals to make appearances before the County civic associations and other organizations to describe the overall planning process. These individuals and Mr. C. Bernard Fowler, President of the Board of County Commissioners, made more than 100 presentations to various groups. As a result of these presentations, 326 citizens volunteered to participate in a process to develop a representative and responsive plan for the future of Calvert County.



### The Pleasant Peninsula Plan

On April 20, 1974, government officials and citizen volunteers met at the County high school and were briefed by Mr. C. Bernard Fowler on the status of the County Comprehensive Plan and on the general procedure that would be followed during the PPP process. The volunteers then divided into 12 topical committees as follows:

Agriculture	Economic Development	Land Use
Housing	Environmental	Education
Health	Transportation	Public Safety
Parks & Recreation	Government	Finance

The committees averaged 25 members and each committee was furnished resource materials, County staff assistance and secretarial services. During the following eight week period the committees met frequently in an effort to identify major problems, opportunities, and courses of recommended action.

### Pleasant Peninsula Plan Recommendations

On June 15, 1974, a second group meeting was held with the reports and recommendations of each committee being presented to the collective group and the general public. These reports included a wealth of issues, information and collective citizen opinion on vital problems. While the nature of the final reports varied between different committees, all contained information of value for future decision making and planning efforts. For a cost of approximately \$7,500 to the County, over 300 citizens had been directly involved in the difficult process of researching vital issues, examining alternative methods of addressing the issues, and reaching acceptable compromise recommendations through debate of problems and alternatives. The product of their labor has since been incorporated into the adopted County Comprehensive Plan which forms the basis for many other county plans, regulatory ordinances, and is used as a guide for ongoing decisions by the County Commissioners.



#### The Pleasant Peninsula Planning Process: An Evaluation

The Pleasant Peninsula Planning Process was a relatively unstructured opportunity for citizens of Calvert County to express their opinions on critical issues through collective debate and compromise. In this respect, the PPP was an unqualified success and the educational value of bringing a large number of citizens into the governmental decision making process has been invaluable. A spinoff benefit of the PPP has been renewed interest and activity by County Commissions and Boards such as the Housing Authority, Forestry Board, Economic Development Commission, Environmental Commission, and others. An important result of the PPP has been the involvement of the local and regional press. The free flow of information through the press has extended the idea of public participation to the County citizenry as a whole.

#### The PPP: Present and Future

Since the adoption of the revised County Comprehensive Plan in October, 1974, the PPP Committees have been invited to meet with the County Commissioners during the Board's weekly meeting to review progress being made by the Commissioners and County agencies towards the implementation of committee recommendations.

The County Commissioners have directed County agencies to prepare annual progress reports with analysis of programs as compared to the adopted goals and objectives of the County plans. These reports will be subject to public review and action by the County Commissioners to assure that there is consistency between the actions and programs of the various County agencies and that those programs are understood and supported by the residents of the County. In summary, the PPP process has provided the mechanism whereby citizens may more directly participate in, and affect, the decisions made by their elected local government.