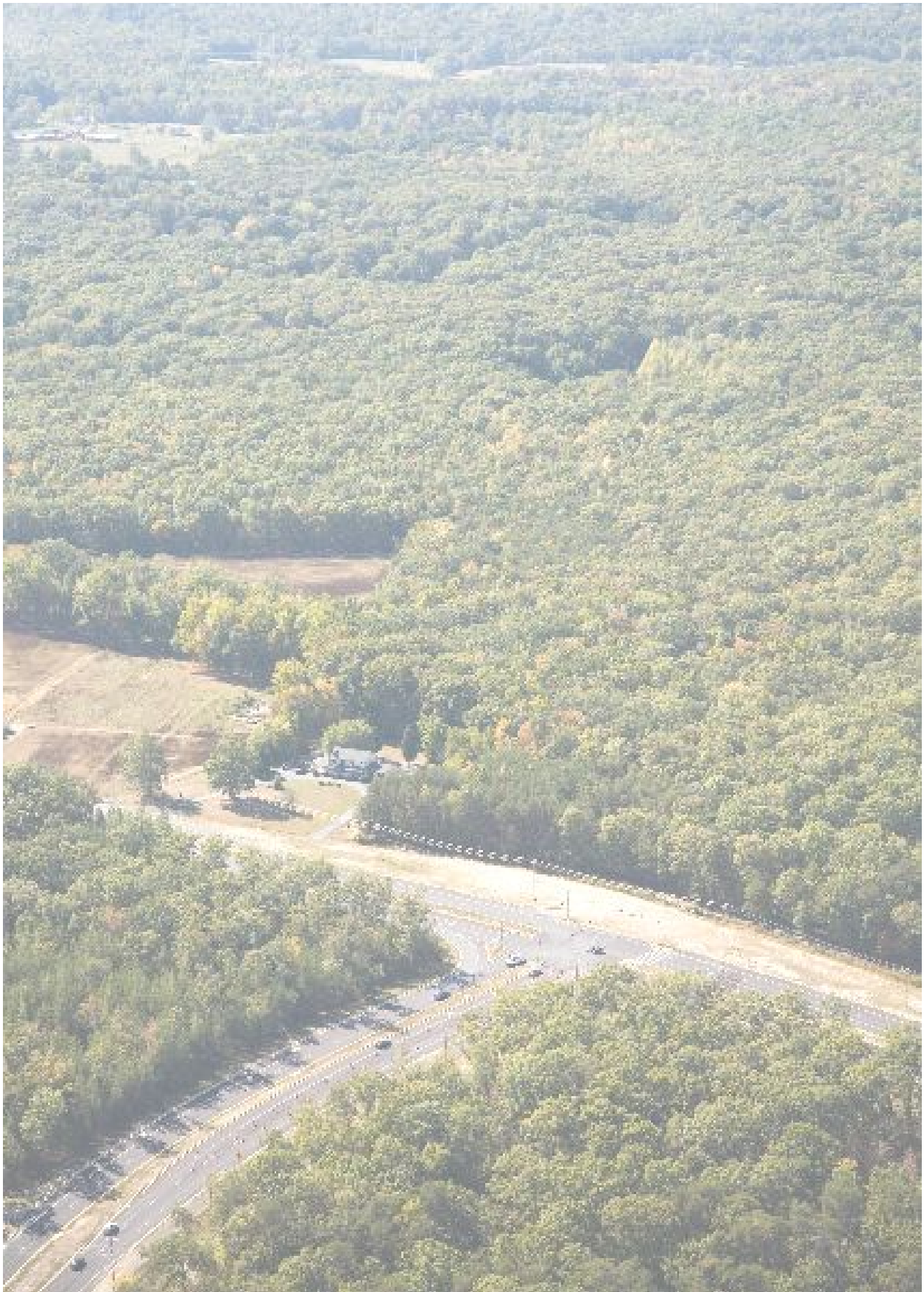




*THE ROAD MAP TO A SMARTER, GREENER,
AND MORE PROSPEROUS CHARLES COUNTY*

THE SMARTER GROWTH ALLIANCE FOR CHARLES COUNTY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Charles County is envisioned as a land “where eagles fly.” But in Charles County, development is consuming natural areas at one of the fastest rates in the state.

Now Charles County government has applied for state and federal permits to build the Cross-County Connector (CCC) highway through the heart of the fragile Mattawoman Creek watershed. Through its direct and indirect impacts, the \$60 million project threatens the world class fisheries and wildlife habitat of the creek and the high quality of life enjoyed by the region’s residents. In response, the Maryland Department of the Environment and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently asked numerous questions about the justification and potential adverse environmental impacts of the highway.

As part of this process, the Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County proposes an alternative to the highway project that would protect Mattawoman Creek, accommodate growth, and connect residents with high-quality jobs:

1. Build what we really need

- Cancel the Cross County Connector
- Program rail transit and transit-oriented-development for construction in Waldorf
- Make our existing roads safe and complete Waldorf’s local roadway network

2. Build Smart

- Match the County’s development district to the Priority Funding Areas
- Protect Mattawoman’s stream valley with property acquisition and strong zoning

3. Build Green

- Cluster new development and raise the standard for new roads to protect water quality
- Install effective stormwater controls to clean up runoff from existing development

The immediate question is not *whether* Charles County should grow, but *how* and *where* Charles County should grow. Suburban-style highways are outdated concepts to solve problems related to growth, and in fact often exacerbate growth problems in the long term. Charles County first conceived the CCC decades ago. We now know that new highways typically end up generating even more growth. We also know a great deal more about the extent to which development affects the health of the natural environment.

Now is the time to fully embrace the modern concept of “smart growth” as the real key to long-term prosperity. The Alliance believes that growth according to these principles carries a double bottom line: protection for Charles County’s natural treasures and prosperity for Charles County’s residents and businesses. With a focus on creating compact, cohesive communities served by a full range of transportation choices, Charles County would improve quality of life, preserve natural areas, generate sustainable economic activity and position itself as a leader in the state for smart growth.

Charles County

Is going in the wrong direction

- Between 1990 and 2005, Charles County had more growth outside the Priority Funding Areas (PFA) than any other county in the state (“Priority Funding Areas are existing communities and places where local governments want State investment to

support future growth. . . . Funding for projects in municipalities, other existing communities, industrial areas, and planned growth areas designated by counties receive priority State funding over other projects. Priority Funding Areas are locations where the State and local governments want to target their efforts to encourage and support economic development and new growth.”)

- Charles County is the second worst county in the state when looking at jobs within the County per household
- Charles County residents have the longest commute time of any county in the state
- Charles County cuts more forests per new household built than any other county in the state
- Charles County’s development district is larger than Washington DC

The Cross-County Connector:

- Is a six-plus mile four-lane highway connecting Waldorf to Bryans Road through the Mattawoman Creek watershed
- Will run through a mostly forested area outside the county’s Priority Funding Area
- Will directly destroy seven acres of sensitive wetlands, 2,000 feet of streams, and 75 acres of forest
- Will spur the development of thousands of new houses (approximately 6,000) outside of the Priority Funding Area
- Places a priority on road construction and new development outside the PFA, ignoring the 21st century economic and environmental realities of the need to focus financial resources in existing communities and mass transit
- Will cost the citizens of Charles County between \$45 to \$60 million

The CCC should be opposed based on the following facts:

- The CCC is contradictory to all Smart Growth ideals
- The CCC runs counter to the goals of the new “pollution diet” for the Chesapeake Bay being established by the EPA (Total Maximum Daily Loads for nutrient pollution).
- Creates sprawl development: thousands of units in new subdivisions outside the PFA
- Development potential within one mile of CCC could result in almost 11,000 new pounds of nitrogen nutrient-pollution/year flowing into Mattawoman Creek
- Impervious surface cover in the Mattawoman watershed is at the “red line” now
- The CCC places a priority on roads instead of rail and/or other forms of mass transit, which could support transit-oriented development and help to alleviate congestion in Waldorf and revitalize the urban core *within the Waldorf PFA*
- Thousands of acres of forests will be lost to induced sprawl
- Seven acres of valuable wetlands lost
- “Mattawoman represents as near to ideal conditions as can be found in the northern Chesapeake Bay, perhaps unattainable in the other systems, and should be protected from overdevelopment.” DNR Fisheries Service

- It is not supported by the county residents according to a recent poll
- It is an antiquated idea borne in the past and not connected with today's realities of good growth management and limited economic resources
- There are better, more viable alternatives for Charles County to grow – invest in Waldorf.

For the complete “Trouble Ahead” report, go to: <http://www.cbf.org/Page.aspx?pid=1147>

Smarter Growth Alliance for Charles County Members

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| 1000 Friends of Maryland | Maryland Conservation Council |
| AMP Creeks Council | Maryland Native Plant Society |
| Audubon MD/DC Chapter | Mason Springs Conservancy |
| Audubon Naturalist Society | Mattawoman Watershed Society |
| Biophilia Foundation | Nanjemoy - Potomac Environmental Coalition, Inc. |
| Chapman Forest Foundation | Port Tobacco River Conservancy |
| Chesapeake Bay Foundation | Potomac River Association |
| Citizens for a Better Charles County | Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter |
| Clean Water Action | Southern Maryland Audubon Society |
| Coalition for Smarter Growth | St. Mary's River Watershed Association |
| Conservancy for Charles County | |
| Maryland Bass Federation Nation | |