**Planning for Clean Water**

**Attachment C: Key Themes from Interviews**

**Water quality and hazard mitigation co-benefits.**

Excerpts from interviews:

* What is the link between the increase in natural hazards such as flooding and Bay water quality? What are the connections between Bay crediting for SWM and hazard reduction? How do you fund flood mitigation and also get some crediting for water quality improvements?
* TJPDC has incorporated their WIP into the HMP for this planning area. [Hazard Mitigation - Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (tjpdc.org)](https://tjpdc.org/our-work/hazard-mitigation/)
* For flood hazards and resilience, the PDCs that touch the Bay shoreline are working with Rear Admiral Anne Phillips (Special Assistant to the Governor) on a master plan for resiliency.
* Louis Lawrence, with the Middle Peninsula PDC may be a good person to talk to about their efforts moving housing out of a flood hazard area.
* Many boroughs have some sort of flooding issue because they are historically located on a stream. We talked about the Muncy Resiliency Project: <https://muncyboro.org/resiliency-project/> This could possibly be an example to share with other planners.

**Plan integration for resilience.**

Excerpts from interviews:

* We need to look at climate impacts and equity in the Bay watershed. There’s a need to identify vulnerable communities and be able to “bake in” how to address inequities into all planning documents.
* There are so many different mandatory plan requirements. Why not consider co-benefits? For example, Program Open Space plans, the MD ag program, and comp plans. There is a project underway now to look at compatible land uses around military reservations. Possibly there is some plan integration and co-benefits, such as forest preservation, etc. There are Community Action Plans that look at infill and revitalization that are also supportive of smart growth objectives, (which helps the Bay).
* What do we need to change about our zoning ordinances and codes to ensure resilience and equity? The codes can be too prescriptive to pivot quickly.

**How Bay science might inform long-range planning**.

Excerpts from interviews:

* There are counties facing development pressure, and not all are on equal footing when it comes to having expertise to do comp plan updates.
* Many of the MD jurisdictions will be taking on their 10-year comprehensive planning as soon as the new demographic data is available from the census, so how Bay science may inform long-range planning may be useful, especially if it can be easy to apply to comp planning.
* What do comprehensive planners need to know about Bay science, and what tools do they need to make decisions?
* So, say we met the 2025 reduction goal: Now what? Comp plans can go way beyond the target year. And we have more people moving here. So how do we live under the cap? What can planners do to allow for continued growth and economic activity and yet not increase pollutant loads?

**How to target and leverage the funding to maximize environmental and other benefits (The American Rescue Plan funding)**.

Excerpts from interviews:

* We’re getting a big boost in funding to upgrade public works like WWTPs. Now how do we find the leverage to fund those other projects we know are just as important, like stream restoration?
* Infrastructure is planned to span fifty years or more. How do we make the investment choices that will carry water quality benefits as well as long-term infrastructure needs?
* Continuing to grow commerce and economic development will be the chief investment concern among municipalities. How do we demonstrate the link between good water quality and economic development? How do we make the argument against sprawl?
* How are the smaller, less-resourced jurisdictions going to equitably participate in investment decisions?

**Bay-wide recreation and open space preservation- what’s available to implement conservation goals?**

Excerpts from interviews:

* The idea of a Chesapeake Bay NRA has been surfaced. What could that look like? How far are we to that goal already? Is it a policy that could help achieve more open space? Are there others?
* What tools exist to integrate into planning documents to enhance conservation and recreation?
* Urban and town green spaces are important for reducing the heat island effect. Aren’t there policies within the Bay program that encourage urban forestry?

**What do small towns and boroughs need to know about the Bay program, and how can it help them?**

Excerpts from interviews:

* The smaller and more rural jurisdictions have budget issues and staffing shortages. They need to maximize the value added of everything they need to work on. Flooding, recreation for economic development, green jobs, community beautification, educational tie-ins for schools, land use and long-range planning, forest and farm/working lands preservation, Healthy Watersheds, hazard mitigation and water quality/quantity- all related to the WIP, coastal resiliency, SLR, and saltwater intrusion… all these topics are of interest.
* Main Street example in Lancaster, PA, at a restaurant beer garden—it combined GI, economic development, and street beautification. Partners came together to complete this project.
* Middle Peninsula PDC where they organized a project to buy homes threatened by flooding and put it into open space.

**Planner’s talking points about the Bay.**

Excerpts from interviews:

* One potential topic for a workshop would be providing planners with what they need to educate homeowners on the Bay. Some basic materials planners could use to communicate about the program and why it’s important. This could be talking points they use with HOA’s. Something that addresses the benefits of GI and water quality, retaining mature trees, leaving buffers intact, etc.
* It would be helpful to have more data and evidence on the economic benefits of clean water with electeds and appointeds.

**Stormwater and wastewater management.**

Excerpts from interviews:

* Failing septics are a priority issue. There’s implementation offered through the VA SWCD in which they are trying to coordinate rural locations to track and map the systems. There’s little data now. Just having access to septic data would be a huge help in getting to go out and check the systems.
* MD started a dialogue and study on where there were septic systems (basically by looking at where water/sewer was not) for code enforcement, etc. back when WWTP requirements were made more stringent. Is there anything like that available for the rest of the States?
* Septics are a problem and getting worse. There’s a general lack of concern about growth on septics.
* [In developing areas and towns], complying with MS4 permits is a concern, especially new jurisdictions that are just coming under regulation. There’s a need to build capacity so they can comply.

**Smart Growth and the Bay.**

Excerpts from interviews:

* Solar farms on productive farmland, big box retail and fulfillment centers, subdivisions developing extra-jurisdictionally- all these land conversions are going on unchecked.
* We need to get back to the basics of planning and the hard choices that need to be made about where growth goes and where it doesn’t. We can’t answer these equity questions without addressing this. If land use is sprawled, then so are the resources, to everyone’s detriment.

**The One Water Approach and how it benefits the Bay.**

Excerpts from interviews:

* The One Water approach is a good concept to highlight regarding connections the Chesapeake Bay outcomes. PA has pushed the concept as far as we can. Currently that’s through the PA state water plan.
* We message about “our water quality” when we talk to people in the community. In PA, it doesn’t matter what people are doing outside of PA, or even outside of their county. What resonates is what places just like them are doing.
* It’s important to make that connection to drinking water, source water protection and some focus on quality-of-life aspects of water.