

V. Development and Implementation of Local Planning Goals

In the Phase II WIP, Maryland used an equity-based approach to set local targets where each jurisdiction and pollution source sector received a goal that would achieve a similar percentage of pollution reductions. Through this approach, the State assumed that similar pollution reductions in each sector would require a similar level of effort. As Maryland implemented the Phase II equity approach, it was clear that some sectors, such as stormwater and septic, faced significant implementation challenges.

Upgrades to stormwater and septic systems often require additional resources and face more roadblocks to implementation than other sectors. These roadblocks include private landowner permission, long planning horizons, and the preparation and approval of engineering plans and permits. Once in the ground, these practices achieve modest reductions relative to large capital projects, like wastewater upgrades. A sustained effort is needed to build the number of these practices and make significant future reductions.

Understanding these challenges, Maryland took a different approach in Phase III to setting local goals. The State met with local implementers, including county governments and Soil Conservation Districts (SCDs), to understand their planned implementation efforts between now and 2025 and identify the challenges and strategies that could increase the pace of work. Local jurisdictions gave these local Best Management Practice (BMP) planning scenarios to the State to run through the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST) model. This model run determined the loads generated by the scenarios and set goals for each local jurisdiction and sector for 2025.

The State compiled this information in county summary sheets (Appendix C) that are components of the statewide strategy. These summary sheets describe anticipated implementation across sectors planned between now and 2025 and resulting estimated nitrogen goals by sector for each county. Additionally, Maryland recognizes that there is an additional level of effort required beyond 2025 to achieve some sector goals and maintain others.

Maryland uses these goals as the basis for tracking local implementation progress through two-year milestones and the annual progress evaluation process. Additionally, the State tracks its overall progress through sector and basin targets. While the primary goal of the WIP is to meet nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment goals, it is necessary to recognize that there are other benefits to implementation. Such benefits include flood control, new public recreational spaces, sustainable infrastructure, climate mitigation, and aquatic resource improvements to local streams and waterways.