September 2026 Government Affairs Director (GAD) Report

Summary of Key Issues and Relevant Information

Prepared by: Mary Ann Lisanti, Cecil GAD

Reporting Period: September 1–30, 2026

The following highlights the most important developments affecting real estate, property ownership, housing, development, and the Cecil County Board of REALTORS® (CCBOR).

1. Major Legislative and Land Use Issues

Solar Development on Agricultural Land

- Cecil County is reviewing 21 solar projects covering approximately 651 acres, representing roughly 1% of County farmland.
- Fifteen projects remain under review; six have been resolved.
- A 2025 Maryland law limits local zoning authority by requiring counties to permit certain solar projects, even where local zoning would otherwise prohibit them.
- Concerns include loss of productive farmland, neighboring property values, solar panel disposal, and long-term land use.
- **CCBOR consideration:** Potential priority for the 2027 legislative agenda.

Data Center Development

- Governor Wes Moore signed an executive order September 23 establishing statewide standards for data center development.
- Standards address electricity costs, environmental protection, community input, economic benefits, and transparency.
- The Governor plans to seek repeal of the data-center personal property tax exemption in 2027.
- Cecil County continues marketing Bainbridge and Principio Business Park as potential data center locations.
- No new local data center applications or approvals were identified in September.
- **CCBOR consideration:** Monitor potential impacts on property values, infrastructure, zoning, and economic development.

Chesapeake City Zoning Ordinance

- Chesapeake City officially adopted a new zoning ordinance and zoning map on September 15.
- Changes affect permitted property uses, lot requirements, parking, signage, and redevelopment.
- **Important for REALTORS®:** Members selling or listing property in Chesapeake City should verify zoning classifications under the new ordinance.

2. Housing, Infrastructure, and Development

North East Water Capacity Concerns

- Chesapeake Club's request for 498 Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs) of water allocation remains unresolved.
- Approval could significantly affect water availability for other developments.
- Proposed Town Code changes include mandatory water connections, conservation measures, expanded nuisance definitions, and increased fines.
- Final adoption of these Town Code changes was not confirmed in the report.
- **CCBOR concern:** Limited water capacity could restrict future housing development.

Cecil County Flood Planning

- County Council introduced a resolution accepting an $85,000 State grant for nuisance-flooding data collection and public education.
- The program would use MyCoast to document flooding and storm damage.
- Better flood information could affect property disclosures, insurance, and real estate transactions.

North East Enterprise Zone Expansion

- County Council approved an application to expand the Enterprise Zone by approximately 63 acres along Pulaski Highway and Old Philadelphia Road.
- The properties are zoned Heavy Industrial.
- The expansion could encourage industrial investment and development.
- Approval applies to the Enterprise Zone application, not a specific development project.

3. Municipal Development Updates

Elkton

- Continued work on the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
- Several residential and industrial projects remain in the planning process, including Southfields, Summit at Walnut Hill, and Singerly Road Industrial.
- These projects indicate continued interest in residential and industrial growth.

Port Deposit / Bainbridge

- The approximately 34-acre Bainbridge annexation remains pending.
- Appointments to the Bainbridge Development Corporation Board were introduced.
- Bainbridge continues to be marketed as a potential data center location.
- A storm-drain improvement project at Granite Avenue and Race Street is moving through the public hearing process.

Perryville

- Comprehensive Plan discussions include:

    - Redevelopment of the former outlet properties.
    - Development near the MARC train station.
    - Potential sewer infrastructure expansion.
    - Future use of the Perry Point VA property.
- These issues could influence future housing opportunities and commercial redevelopment.

4. County Council Changes

- Three of the five County Council seats are on the November 3 election ballot.
- At least two new members will join the Council in December.
- New members will be inaugurated December 7, 2026.
- October 20 was identified as the final 2026 legislative session with action items.
- Issues not completed before the transition may need to be addressed by the incoming Council.
- **GAD recommendation:** Schedule introductory meetings with County Council members following the inauguration, particularly the new District 2 and District 4 representatives.

5. Upcoming Legislative and Advocacy Priorities

The GAD recommends CCBOR begin preparing for the 2027 Maryland General Assembly session and FY2028 County budget discussions.

Three suggested priorities:

1. **Solar Development:** Protect local authority over solar placement on agricultural land and address decommissioning requirements.
2. **Data Centers:** Monitor potential changes to tax exemptions, development regulations, and local zoning authority.
3. **Water and Sewer Infrastructure:** Advocate for infrastructure capacity that supports housing development, particularly along the Route 40 corridor.

6. Important Upcoming Dates

- **November 3, 2026:** General Election.
- **November 5, 2026:** Registration deadline for Maryland REALTORS® State REALTOR Liaison and GAD Training.
- **November 18, 2026:** State REALTOR Liaison and GAD Training in Annapolis, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. Attendance is required for liaisons.
- **December 7, 2026:** New Cecil County Council members inaugurated.

Key Takeaways for the CCBOR Board of Directors

For a Board meeting report, these are the **five most significant points** to highlight:

1. **Solar Farms and Farmland Preservation:** State legislation is limiting Cecil County's control over certain solar developments. This may affect farmland preservation and neighboring property interests.

2. **Data Center Regulations:** New statewide standards and proposed tax changes could influence future development at Bainbridge and Principio.

3. **North East Water Capacity:** The pending 498-ERU allocation request could affect the availability of water for future residential development.

4. **Chesapeake City Zoning Changes:** The newly adopted zoning ordinance may directly affect property listings, permitted uses, and transactions.

5. **County Council Transition:** With at least two new Council members taking office in December, CCBOR should prioritize establishing relationships and communicating REALTOR® concerns.

Overall GAD Recommendation: No formal CCBOR position is recommended on September matters at this time. However, solar development, data center regulations, water and sewer capacity, zoning changes, and County Council transitions should remain priorities for monitoring and potential future advocacy.