



Chapter One:

Concepts & Intentions

Challenges & Choices

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Quality of Life

The 2000 Master Plan for the Future of Carroll County represents the first review and revision of the direction set forth by the original 1964 Carroll County Master Plan. While no one would argue that much has changed in Carroll County since 1964, the fundamental elements of quality communities that were present then continue to invite new residents to the County today. People move to the County because they believe it offers the quality of life for which they are looking. They find safe neighborhoods, good schools, and relatively uncongested streets. Many people also move to Carroll County because they can afford a nicer home due to comparatively lower housing and living costs. Unlike 1964, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to balance the community desire to maintain and increase the quality of life residents have come to expect without increasing the cost to the general citizen.

Challenges & Choices

The planning process used to develop this Plan focused on identifying the challenges that the County is facing and making choices of how to address these challenges. The Goals for how those challenges were and are addressed are contained in Chapter 5 “Vision Statement and Goals”. Policies and recommendations for implementation chosen by the citizens and officials of the County are also presented. They are not simple choices, based solely on the cost of implementing the Plan or what would be nice in an ideal world. Rather, the significance of the quality of life enjoyed by residents of Carroll County was recognized as a major factor in development of the Plan. Thus, the Plan was titled “Challenges & Choices” to reflect the process undertaken and the importance of the decisions that were made in developing and adopting this Master Plan.

Recognizing the traditional challenges posed by residential and commercial development and their respective demands on a variety of public services, the 2000 edition of the Carroll County Master Plan contained herein essentially reaffirms support for the basic premises, concepts and development patterns charted in the 1964 Plan. Carroll’s eight incorporated municipalities and their surrounding planning areas, along with the unincorporated communities of Finksburg and Eldersburg, will continue to accommodate

the majority of the new growth projected to take place in the County. The locally successful and nationally-recognized Agricultural Land Preservation Program will be maintained to continue to encourage farmland preservation, thereby preserving the rural, scenic and cultural character of the County.

Among the principal concerns raised by County citizens during an open and inclusive planning process, and subsequently addressed by the Plan, was the timely provision of facilities that serve new development. In March of 1998, the Board of Commissioners adopted an innovative facility management program named Concurrency Management. Capital improvement projects are now prioritized and appropriately programmed to reflect the public improvements that are necessary to maintain minimum levels of service for communities. These minimum service levels, apply to most public facilities, such as: roads; schools; fire, police and emergency services; and water and sewer services. Because Concurrency ties development approval to the County's ability to fund infrastructure improvements and services, the CIP will have an impact on the amount and rate of growth in different areas of the County.

In addition to the demands development places on facilities, the impacts of development on environmental resources can vary greatly in terms of physical and financial effect. This Plan recognizes the far-reaching impacts of development on the environment and presents methods for maintaining the quality and quantity of those resources present.

The 2000 Plan addresses the types of challenges typical of a community at a crossroads in its history. After several years in the making, the Plan reflects the choices of the citizens to reaffirm support for the direction dictated by the original Carroll County Master Plan. The core planning principals of facilitating and encouraging higher density growth in designated planning areas, the vigorous pursuit of agricultural land preservation, protection of natural resources, and the timing and phasing of development and at a rate the County can afford to fund the new and improved facilities are all contained in this Plan. Specific methods to improve on the level of success achieved by the 1964 Plan are also included in the 2000 revision.

Through the successful implementation of the recommendations contained herein, this Plan will assist Carroll County in achieving its vision and goals developed during the drafting of the Plan and as set forth in the following chapters. While it is the role of Carroll County Government to adopt and implement the Plan, the citizens of the County have a responsibility to monitor the commitment to, and continued support for, the directions contained in the 2000 Carroll County Master Plan.

Fiscal Analysis

As one component in the decision-making process, Carroll County contracted with a consultant, Tischler and Associates (TA), to conduct a fiscal impact analysis of four different development scenarios. The Planning Process had identified timing of development as a primary concern. Therefore, three of the scenarios evaluated different

rates of growth. The fourth consisted of the same growth rate as current trends, but increased economic development and agricultural land preservation. The following table summarizes some of the data and projections for each scenario.

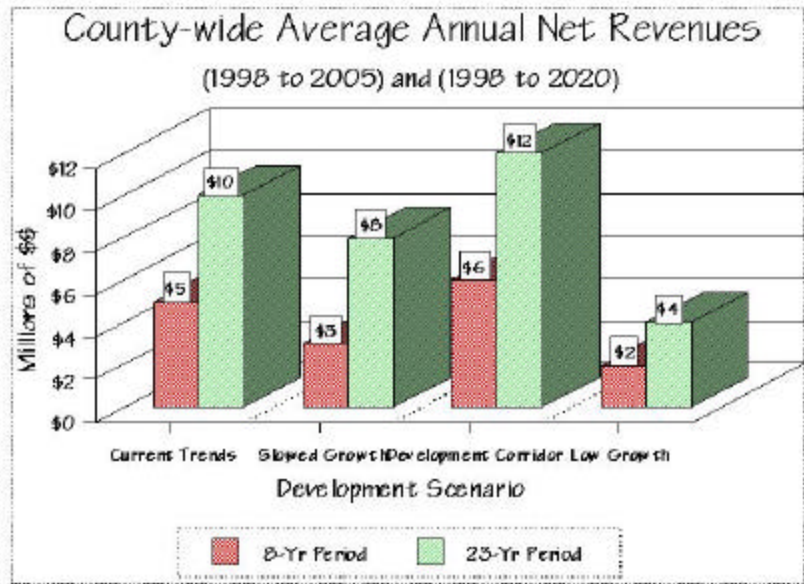
DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS FOR SCENARIO ZONING CAPACITY - NET INCREASE										
	1997		Scenario 1 Current Trends 2012		Scenario 2 Slowed Growth 2020		Scenario 3 Development Corridor 2012		Scenario 4 Low Growth 2020	
Population	143,547		59,985		59,881		59,708		39,832	
School Enrollment	25,484		11,121		11,108		11,017		7,341	
Employment	41,858		17,890		17,864		23,233		1,140	
NEW UNITS										
Large-Lot	14,768	30%	9,664	48%	8,467	42%	7,659	38%	5,990	45%
R-40	5,015	10%	1,890	9%	1,890	9%	1,890	9%	907	7%
Single-Family	20,196	40%	6,496	32%	7,567	38%	8,158	41%	4,870	36%
Townhouse	4,273	9%	1,802	9%	1,817	9%	1,888	9%	1,248	9%
Apartment	5,448	11%	256	1%	367	2%	513	3%	441	3%
Total	49,700	100%	20,108	100%	20,108	100%	20,108	100%	13,456	100%
Residential Distribution			60% CPA		75% CPA		68% CPA		67% CPA	
NEW SQUARE FEET										
Retail	6,442,000	45%	3,005,520	46%	3,001,152	46%	Retail	46%	1,915,200	46%
Office	2,910,315	21%	1,368,585	21%	1,366,596	21%	1,777,325	21%	872,100	21%
Industrial	4,665,142	33%	2,168,984	33%	2,165,831	33%	2,816,769	33%	1,382,136	33%
Total	14,017,457	100%	6,543,089	100%	6,533,579	100%	8,497,238	100%	4,169,436	100%
Agricultural Land Preservation	2,000 AC/yr 25,000 Ttl AC		2,000 AC/yr 37,000 Ttl AC		2,000 AC/yr 73,000 Ttl AC		3,750 AC/yr 85,000 Ttl AC		2,000 AC/yr 73,000 Ttl AC	
Source: Carroll County Department of Planning and Tischler & Associates, Inc.										

The analysis projected the fiscal impacts to County government of new growth based on continuing to provide the current level of service. Projections were made utilizing a computer model. Data inputs included: 1) demographic/economic projections, 2) taxes which would be paid by new residential and non-residential development as well as income tax revenue from new residents, and 3) the cost for government to provide facilities and services at the current level.

The total fiscal results for the General Fund are in the first section below. These results are given over two time periods: 1) 1998 to 2005, and 2) 1998 to 2020, in order to gain perspective on what to expect in the short term, which is useful when evaluating potential level of service changes. The fiscal impacts are discussed in terms of both average annual and annual results. The average annual results are discussed first. All results are those accruing for new growth only and do not include costs and revenues from the existing population and employment base of the County.

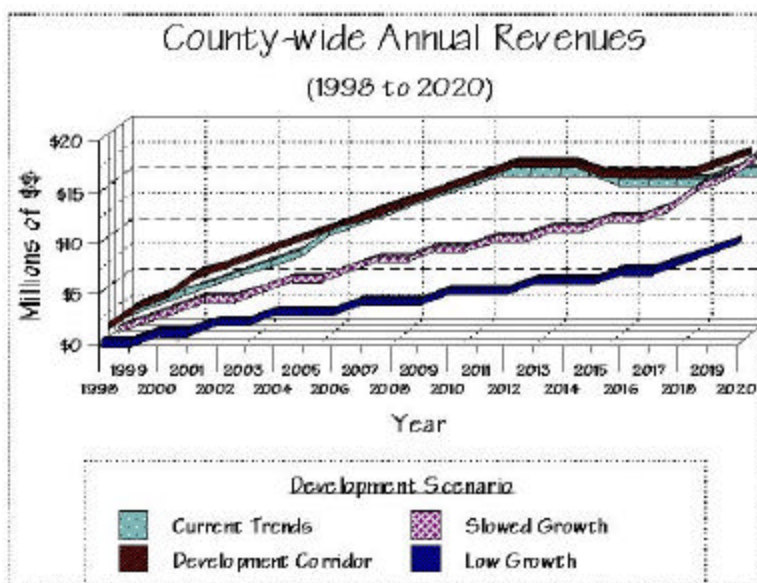
The chart below summarizes the average annual net revenues for all General Fund costs and revenues for the two time periods. The results for all four scenarios are shown and include revenues, expenditures, and capital costs as defined in the *Level of Service, Cost and Revenue Assumptions for Fiscal Impact Analysis of Land Use Alternatives* [Tischler & Associates, May 30, 1997] document.

For all four scenarios, in both time periods, average annual net revenues occur. Over the shorter term, the Development Corridor scenario generates the best results of the four scenarios, with average annual net revenues of \$6.0 million, followed by Current Trends (\$4.6 million), Slowed Growth (\$2.9 million), and Low Growth (\$1.5 million). Over the long term, the ranking is the same, with the Development Corridor scenario producing average annual net revenues of \$12.2 million, followed by Current Trends (\$10.4 million), Slowed Growth (\$7.7 million), and Low Growth (\$4.3 million).



Source: Tischler & Associates, Inc. 1997

The chart below shows the annual net fiscal results for the four scenarios. The Current Trends, Development Corridor, and Slowed Growth scenarios produce positive annual results in every year of the projection period. The Low Growth scenario produces net costs in 1998 and then begins generating net revenues in 1999. As mentioned above, it should be noted that these net revenues are fairly insignificant in relation to the County's total Operating Budget.



Source: Tischler & Associates, Inc. 1997

The chart clearly depicts the difference between reaching zoning capacity at 2012 and 2020. Annual

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revenues peak in 2012 in the Current Trends and Development Corridor scenarios and then begin a downward trend until 2017, as revenue growth fails to keep pace with increasing debt payments from capital facilities. As bonded debt incurred from 1998 to 2000 is retired, revenues begin to increase again by 2018.

Under the Slowed Growth and Low Growth scenarios, revenues increase at a steady pace until about 2016. As bond payments decrease between 2017 and 2020, revenues begin increasing at a faster rate than expenditures.

Selected highlights from the fiscal analysis are listed below.

- Because higher residential values translate into higher property tax and income tax revenues (comprising 85 percent of all revenues), growth generates net revenues in all scenarios.
- Because of higher residential market values, the County benefits from reaching zoning capacity in 2012, as in Current Trends and Development Corridor, as opposed to 2020 in Slowed Growth and Low Growth. The faster growth rate allows the County to maximize use of revenues over the 8-year period from 2012 to 2020.
- The \$6.0 million average annual net revenues for the Development Corridor scenario from 1998 to 2005 is only 3.8 percent of the FY97 Operating Budget. The Current Trends scenario is only 2.9 percent. This could be considered, within the margin of error, as fiscally neutral.
- The fiscal impact of 15 percent versus the current 12 percent non-residential assessed tax base is reflected in the Development Corridor scenario. The cumulative non-residential assessed base is \$241 million, \$55 million higher than Current Trends.
- Growth does allow some room for level of service increases to serve new growth. However, a level of service increase for Police and Fire/EMS protection would eliminate any surplus. In addition, the County would need to find other revenues to pay for providing the higher level of service to the existing population.
- It can be speculated that the reason net revenues are positive in each time period is because of the approach taken regarding capital facilities. Because most County departments did not have a specific policy on thresholds for capital facilities, TA utilized a one-time cost per person, dwelling, or pupil, depending on the facility. This approach distributes capital costs evenly throughout the analysis timeframe, rather than the County incurring a significant short-term cost for “lumpy” capital facilities once an established threshold is reached. “Lumpy” capital facilities refer to incurring the cost of a capital facility at one time, either as pay-as-you go or debt financed.
- Education operating costs alone make up more than half the cumulative total costs due to new development. When capital costs are included, education costs comprise 68 percent of cumulative costs for the four scenarios.

- Factors that could significantly alter the fiscal analysis results are an increase/decrease in levels of service, creation of a new operating department, constructing a type of capital facility not factored in the analysis (i.e., airport building), and/or an increase/decrease of a tax rate for a major revenue source (i.e., property tax, income tax, or impact fee).

Net revenues are only part of the information considered in determining the amount of development the County will plan to serve in a specific time period. While net revenues occur in each scenario, the cumulative expenditures and timing and provision of capital facilities are also considered in making choices for this Master Plan. The table below shows cumulative expenditures by scenario. Expenditures are broken down into major categories.

**COUNTYWIDE CUMULATIVE EXPENDITURES
1998-2020
(X \$1,000)**

Expenditure	Current Trends	Slowed Growth	Difference	Dev. Corridor	Difference	Low Growth	Difference
Gen. Gov.	\$32,789 3.0%	\$24,772 3.0%	(\$8,017)	\$33,570 3.1%	\$781	\$16,440 2.9%	(\$16,349)
Public Works	\$33,245 3.1%	\$24,781 3.0%	(\$8,464)	\$33,110 3.0%	(\$135)	\$16,642 3.0%	(\$16,603)
Permit & Devel Agency	(\$11) 0.0%	\$0 0.0%	\$11	\$0 0.0%	\$11	(\$7) 0.0%	\$4
Natural Resources	\$2,979 0.3%	\$2,252 0.3%	(\$727)	\$2,989 0.3%	\$10	\$1,498 0.3%	(\$1,481)
Public Safety	\$89,124 8.2%	\$70,923 8.5%	(\$18,201)	\$93,239 8.5%	\$4,115	\$51,980 9.3%	(\$37,143)
Culture and Rec.	\$32,846 3.0%	\$24,830 3.0%	(\$8,016)	\$32,959 3.0%	\$113	\$16,520 2.9%	\$16,326
Education	\$566,737 52.3%	\$426,406 50.9%	(\$140,331)	\$567,350 52.0%	\$611	\$282,551 50.4%	(\$284,186)
Citizen Services	\$28,329 2.6%	\$21,415 2.6%	(\$6,914)	\$28,427 2.6%	\$98	\$14,248 2.5%	(\$14,081)
Non-Departmental	\$40,405 3.7%	\$30,480 3.6%	(\$9,925)	\$43,432 4.0%	\$3,027	\$20,102 3.6%	(\$20,303)
<i>Subtotal Operating</i>	<i>\$826,443</i>	<i>\$625,859</i>	<i>(\$200,584)</i>	<i>\$835,076</i>	<i>\$8,633</i>	<i>\$419,974</i>	<i>(\$406,468)</i>
Parks (Debt Financed)	\$49,164 4.5%	\$31,712 3.8%	(\$17,452)	\$49,675 4.5%	\$511	\$15,602 2.8%	(\$33,562)
Parks (Pay-As-You-Go)	\$19,417 1.8%	\$24,837 3.0%	\$5,420	\$19,374 1.8%	(\$43)	\$21,765 3.9%	\$2,348
Education (Debt Financed)	\$91,455 8.4%	\$64,552 7.7%	(\$26,903)	\$92,224 8.4%	\$769	\$42,854 7.6%	(\$48,601)
Education (Pay-As-You-Go)	\$78,315 7.2%	\$78,016 9.3%	(\$299)	\$77,568 7.1%	(\$747)	\$51,675 9.2%	(\$26,640)
Library (Debt Financed)	\$6,081 0.6%	\$4,584 0.5%	(\$1,497)	\$6,090 0.6%	\$9	\$3,050 0.5%	(\$3,031)
Roads (Debt Financed)	\$40 0.0%	\$29 0.0%	(\$11)	\$46 0.0%	\$6	\$17 0.0%	(\$23)
Cit Serv & Gen Gov (Debt Fin.)	\$11,947 1.1%	\$8,786 1.0%	(\$3,161)	\$11,963 1.1%	\$16	\$5,844 1.0%	(\$6,103)
<i>Subtotal Capital</i>	<i>\$256,419</i>	<i>\$212,516</i>	<i>(\$43,903)</i>	<i>\$256,940</i>	<i>\$521</i>	<i>\$140,807</i>	<i>(\$115,612)</i>
Total	\$1,082,862 100%	\$838,375 100%	(\$244,487)	\$1,092,016 100%	\$9,154	\$560,781 100%	(\$522,080)

The Current Trends and Development Corridor scenarios project a large increase in County expenditures over a comparatively short time frame. The need for school facilities by 2008 alone is almost twice that currently planned to be constructed in the Capital Improvement Program. The County's ability to fund and manage construction of the many facilities needed to just maintain the existing level of service is questioned.

After considering the fiscal impact as well as quality of life issues related to development, the citizens decided to recommend to plan for a slower growth than projected in the Current Trends scenario. However, rather than to choose one scenario, a combination of elements from the different scenarios is combined. Growth will be slowed with the County reaching approximately 200,000 people by 2020, economic development will be maintained at 12 percent of the value of new construction, and the rate of agricultural land preservation will be increased to 3,750 acres a year.

An analysis of the fiscal impact of the individual key thresholds is presented in the associated chapter of this Plan.

The Definitions

Vision or Vision Statement ⇨ **A vision is a statement that defines a community's preferred future.** To choose a direction, a community first must have developed a mental image of a possible and desirable future state. This vision should articulate a feasible, achievable, realistic, and attractive future for the community, which should be a future that is better than that of existing conditions. The process of developing a vision not only helps to define the community's preferences and desires for the future but also helps to empower members of the community. A *shared* vision builds community between the public and private, the leaders and the residents. It encourages cooperation and coordination among the stakeholders. It is also easier to establish priorities when community leaders know toward what end they are working. The defined vision must become an integral part of the management and operation of the County and the activities in which residents participate. The purpose of this vision statement is to serve as a guide that community leaders and decision makers use as a basis for the decisions made and activities undertaken.

Goals ⇨ **A goal identifies the purpose toward which an endeavor is directed.** Goals are broad statements of intended accomplishments which, if accomplished as a whole, would bring the community closer to meeting its overall vision of the future. They do not identify specific activities that will be undertaken. Rather, a set of objectives or recommendations that are more specific actions are developed to guide the community toward meeting its goals.

Policies ⇨ **A policy identifies the course of action to be taken when presented with a decision to be made on a given issue.** To fulfill its role as a guidance tool, policy statements are included in the plan. These policy statements express the community's desires for future decisions and help to guide the achievement of the goals they have developed. The policies indicate the direction that decision-makers would take when decisions are to be made regarding County services and land use development. The policy statements are based on an overall set of goals for the community and its future.

Thresholds ⇨ **A Threshold is the minimum or maximum acceptable level allowed for a service, facility, or quality of life variable.**

Concurrency Management Standard Threshold ⇨ This type of threshold represents the maximum or minimum acceptable level for a facility. The level of service for the facility developed through community consensus is based on 1) cost, 2) current laws and regulations, and 3) community desires. The threshold, specified in numerical terms, represents the most a community is willing to commit in dollars beyond what is required by law. These thresholds provide a standard to determine adequacy of a public facility and yearly funding levels needed to move closer toward that numerical figure. Facility Concurrency Thresholds apply to such items as schools, roads, water and sewer (where applicable), fire, and police.

Community Viability Threshold ⇨ This type of threshold applies to factors or variables that affect the quality of life in Carroll County. They also represent the maximum or minimum quantities or percentages of a factor that the community is willing to pay for beyond what is required by law. They serve as a numerical goal toward which to strive. These thresholds could include factors such as the total amount of agricultural land to be preserved, the percentage of County tax base represented by industrial and/or commercial uses, or the amount of park land that should be available in the County per 1,000 residents.

Recommendations ⇨ **Optional courses of action which assist in the achievement of goals.** Goals and thresholds help to identify where a community wants to be and toward what they are striving. However, they do not identify specific things that can be done to help the community get there. Recommendations are planning, land use, and general government-related activities that can be pursued, ideally as a whole, to help the community meet its goals and thresholds. Recommendations can also be described as implementation measures.

Maryland Planning Legislation & Authority

Article 66B

Article 66B, added to the Maryland Code in 1927 and now entitled *Zoning and Planning*, delegates basic planning and land use regulatory powers to the State's municipalities, Baltimore City, and non-charter counties. Important sections of Article 66B apply to charter counties as well.

Under Article 66B, it is the function and duty of the Planning Commission to develop, with help of staff, and approve a plan which will be recommended to the local legislative body for adoption. This required plan serves as a guide to all public and private actions and decisions to ensure that development of public and private property occurs in

appropriate relation to each other. This Plan document satisfies the requirement to provide a statement of goals and objectives, principles, policies, and standards which shall serve as a guide for the development and economic and social well-being of the jurisdiction.

Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992

On October 1, 1992, the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 (the Planning Act) was passed with the intent of encouraging economic growth, limiting sprawl development, and protecting the State's natural resources. The Planning Act amends Article 66B. Most local jurisdictions in the State have established priority areas for resources protection. The Planning Act encourages these jurisdictions to build on that base with consistent development regulations and targeted infrastructure investment by the State.

A premise of the Act is that the comprehensive plans prepared by counties and towns are the best place for local governments to establish priorities for growth and resource conservation, and that once those priorities are established, it is the State's responsibility to back them up.

The Planning Act is based on eight "Visions." County and municipal plans are required to be amended so that the plans implement an established set of policies, which should be based on the Visions. The Visions are stated in the Act as follows:

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive areas are protected;
3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resources areas are protected;
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced;
6. To assure the achievement of 1 through 5 above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;
7. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur; and
8. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

Making the Visions part of Maryland's planning and zoning enabling legislation gives local jurisdictions a succinct statement of Maryland's priorities for their plans.

Local Planning Commissions must now review, and if necessary, amend their plans at regular six-year intervals. Until the adoption of the Planning Act, there had been no State-wide requirement that local jurisdictions review their plans on a regular basis. This provision ensures that plans are frequently reconsidered in light of new needs.

Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act of 1997

The 1997 General Assembly adopted several specific programs, which together form the *Smart Growth* initiatives. Under these initiatives, counties may designate areas as Priority Funding Areas if they meet guidelines for intended use, availability of plans for sewer and water systems, and permitted residential density. The State will not put their funds where development is low in density; there must be an average density of 3.5 dwelling units per acre to qualify for State funds. In addition, areas eligible for county designation are existing communities and areas where industrial or other economic development are desired. Counties may also designate areas planned for new residential communities which will be served by water and sewer systems and meet density standards. As of October 1, 1998, the State will be prohibited from funding growth-related projects not located in a Priority Funding Area.

Smart Growth also establishes a Rural Legacy program to preserve sensitive rural areas and to help jurisdictions purchase agricultural land easements, a brown fields program to encourage redevelopment, a Job Creation Tax Credit to promote revitalization, and a Live Near Your Work program to promote settling in older urban areas.

Meeting the Eight Visions

The 2000 Carroll County Master Plan implements the Eight Visions set forth in the Planning Act. *Development is concentrated in suitable areas, and, in rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resources areas are protected.* The suitable areas for development are the Community Planning Areas, or CPAs. The CPAs are areas designated to accept new growth. Public water and sewer service are generally provided here, along with other services. Most of the CPAs also are centered around an incorporated municipality, which has been in existence since the turn of the century or longer, where densities are higher than in the rural areas, and which boasts historic qualities. The County actively pursues the preservation of agricultural land as a basic premise on which other planning efforts are focused. Preservation of agricultural land helps to protect the resource lands as well as encourage growth to locate where services are available.

The Plan also demonstrates that *sensitive areas are protected and stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.* In addition to making good use of the land through preserving agriculture and concentrating growth in designated areas, the Plan suggests recommendations that can be taken to achieve the goal of preserving environmental resources. The County has already adopted the Environmental Resources Element, which acts as the sensitive areas element of the Master Plan. Innovative and resourceful community design, reduced vehicle miles traveled, and support of existing environmental regulations are among the many recommendations the County considers in using the land efficiently and reduce and mitigate the impacts of development on

environmental resources. These activities show that *conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced* in Carroll County.

Economic development is a vital part of Carroll's economy and tax base. Therefore, the Plan also addresses measures to ensure that *economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined*. The Plan identifies a threshold for the County to maintain the industrial and commercial tax base. The goal is for commercial and industrial uses to represent a minimum of 12 percent of the tax base as new development occurs, as it will help the County provide needed services and the economic development will bring jobs to the County. The Plan suggests that the commercial and industrial land available be assessed to determine what is needed to attain the Economic Development Goal. The County has been implementing numerous streamlining measures to make the regulatory process more efficient, more user friendly, and more effective.

The Carroll County Master Plan addresses the seventh vision, "*funding mechanisms have been addressed to achieve the visions*". A fiscal impact analysis was conducted to determine the cost to the County of implementing some of the key thresholds that are included in the Plan. In addition, an evaluation of costs to increase levels of service and identify new funding sources was also a part of the process of developing this Plan. One of the key concepts in this Plan is the realization by the public that if they want increases in the current levels of service provided they must be willing to pay for it. The seventh vision is achieved through the creative use of the annual Capital Improvement Program, the Town-County Agreement, and other local Master Plan implementation recommendations. Allocating adequate funding for land acquisition and preservation, economic development opportunities, and revenue sharing with Carroll's eight incorporated municipalities further assures the attainment of the seventh vision.

The Plan provides measures to ensure that *adequate public facilities and infrastructure are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur*. The Concurrency Management Program has been implemented through the adoption of a Concurrency Management Ordinance and preparation of an annual Concurrency Management Report. This program, along with the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, is designed to phase and time growth and public facilities through the County's Capital Improvement Program. Planned residential growth is permitted to proceed at a rate that will not unduly strain public facilities, especially schools, roads, water and sewer facilities, and police, fire, and emergency medical services.