

# Chapter Eight:

# Development

## Chapter 8: Development

### Goals

**Pursue policies and Capital Improvement expenditures that facilitate growth in the designated growth areas, thereby protecting and conserving agricultural and environmental resource areas, preserving open space, and providing public facilities and services efficiently and cost effectively.**

**Promote development design that is in harmony with the surrounding built and natural environments, encourages community interaction, and, in rural areas, preserves the County's rural character**

### The Significance to Carroll County

The growth of Carroll County has been guided by a master plan since 1964. The basic premise of the plan has been to direct development into and around the County's nine Community Planning Areas (CPAs) while retaining the rural character and use of the surrounding land. Implementation of the premise was strengthened in 1978, when the allowable density in the Agricultural zone was decreased from one dwelling unit per acre to one dwelling unit per twenty acres.

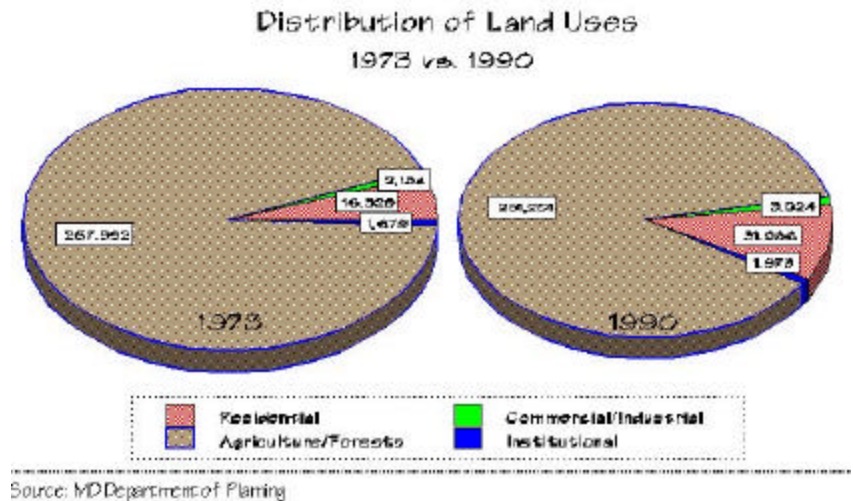
The land use designation map identifies nine CPAs within the County. A CPA is an area on the County-wide Master Plan for which a more detailed comprehensive plan was prepared. Most of the CPAs have a municipality at their centers. These CPAs include Hampstead, Manchester, Mount Airy, New Windsor, Taneytown, Union Bridge, and Westminster. The Freedom CPA includes the Town of Sykesville, but Sykesville is not the focal point or center of the CPA. The Finksburg CPA has no municipality within it and has traditionally been a less dense growth area than the others. These CPAs are the areas in the County where the majority of residential, commercial, and industrial development is concentrated.

The approach to land use that has been guiding development in the County for the past 33 years provides for the efficient use of land for development and the effective provision of services. By concentrating growth, the delivery of facilities and services such as water and sewer, roads, schools, and natural gas, as well as police, fire and emergency services, is much easier and more cost effective.

Community interaction is promoted when developments are well-designed and integrated with each other.

Concentrated growth also accommodates the same number of people on less land, allowing the land outside of the growth area to remain relatively rural. This rural land is composed of agricultural land, open space, and environmental resource lands such as forests, streams, wetlands, and steep slopes. Lots currently are required to be clustered in the Agricultural Zoning District on areas that are not suitable for farm fields. This policy serves to preserve the rural working landscape as well as to maximize the land available for active farming.

Over the last several decades, the County's land use has been changing from an overwhelmingly rural County to a steadily urbanizing County. Between 1981 and 1992, 13,400 acres, or almost 5 percent of the County, was converted from agriculture to another use. While most of this has been planned growth, a substantial amount also has been growth outside of the designated growth areas. As of 1990, the land area in Carroll County was composed of 63 percent agricultural land, 24 percent forest land, 9.5 percent low-density residential land, and 1.6 percent medium or high-density residential land. Only 1 percent of the County's entire land area was used for commercial and industrial development, and the remaining land area was used for various other types of development or resources.



Since 1964, most of the growth in the County has occurred in the CPAs. Currently, about 60 percent of the total County population lives in one of the CPAs, which comprise approximately 23.8 percent of the total County land area. The population percentage in the CPAs has remained steady for the past seven years. Development regulations which require preservation of natural stream buffers and provide for open space serve to maintain the patterns of natural vegetation in these more developed areas, as well as protecting environmental quality. Landscaping further blends these developments into the community.

As part of the process of developing this Master Plan, the adopted land use designation map was reviewed as well. Several alternative development patterns were studied, including creation of additional CPAs and concentrating growth east of Parr's Ridge. After careful consideration, the recommendation was made to the Planning Commission

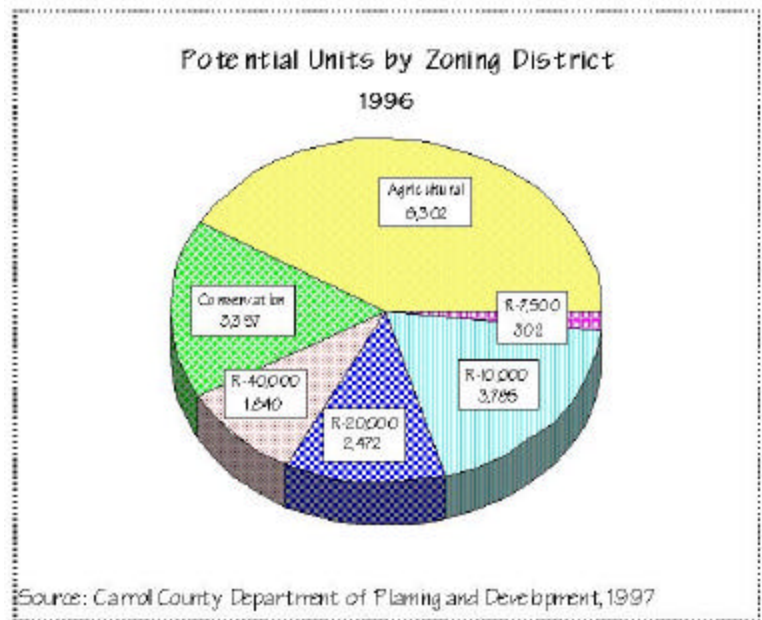
to maintain the existing development pattern as adopted on the Master Plan Land Use Designation Map. This map is included at the end of this chapter.

## The Challenge to Carroll County

Until now, much of the residential development in the County has occurred in the CPAs, where it was planned and where there was sufficient zoned land available for development. Unfortunately, this land is diminishing; slightly less than half of all the estimated remaining zoning capacity is in the CPAs. This leaves approximately 10,000 units to be developed in the rural parts of the County, which is contrary to the goal of agricultural preservation. Based on the acreage outside of the CPAs, this would result in a density of about 1 dwelling unit for every 7.5 acres. This density of housing units will be difficult to absorb while maintaining the quality of the rural landscape. As density in the agricultural areas increases, farmers find it more and more difficult to move equipment, protect livestock and crops from damage, and avoid nuisance complaints by non-farm neighbors.

Additionally, development outside of primary growth areas creates problems for the delivery of services. Rural roads often are not constructed to carry heavy volumes of traffic, causing congestion and hazardous driving conditions. When these roads are upgraded to accommodate new traffic, they lose their rural character. Furthermore, school bussing routes and the provision of emergency services must be expanded to serve more people over a greater area when growth is not concentrated.

Expanding the CPAs so that they continue absorbing the majority of the County's growth in a concentrated manner may be difficult. If the CPAs are to continue absorbing the majority of the growth, creative efforts will need to be investigated and undertaken aggressively, before all options are eliminated simply due to existing development. The Union Bridge, New Windsor, and expanded Taneytown CPAs are practically surrounded by Agricultural Preservation easements. Hampstead and Manchester, due to their location in the Baltimore Reservoir watersheds, have limited opportunities for sewerage disposal, and expansion of Mt. Airy is stopped by existing residential development. Development and expansion of water and sewer capacity would be required before the remaining CPAs could be enlarged. The 1997 adoption of the New Windsor and Taneytown



Comprehensive Plans have increased the overall acreage available for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Land use designations for the *New Windsor Community Planning Area Comprehensive Plan* have added 57.15 acres of residential land (although 34.71 acres of the total residential land is a mixed-use zone); 26.11 acres of business, which includes the 34.71 acres of mixed-use zone; and 152.3 acres of employment type uses (some of which also allows a mix of commercial uses). The Taneytown Community Planning Area now includes an additional 481 acres of residential land, 335 acres of industrial land, and 83 acres of commercial land.

As each of the CPAs are unique, with their own additional challenges and circumstances, the amount and location of additional growth that each CPA can accommodate will need to be reviewed at the time each individual area plan is updated. The additional growth and development that can be accepted and planned for will affect the measures and approaches with which the County and each municipality engage in to implement the Master Plan and the individual comprehensive plans for each CPA.

## The Choice: Goals, Policies, Thresholds, & Recommendations

### Goal 1

**Pursue policies and Capital Improvement expenditures that facilitate growth in the designated growth areas, thereby protecting and conserving agricultural and environmental resource areas, preserving open space, and providing public facilities and services efficiently and cost effectively.**

#### COMMUNITY VIABILITY THRESHOLD 1

THE COUNTY WILL PLAN TO ACCOMMODATE APPROXIMATELY 200,000 PEOPLE BY 2020.

This population is not to be viewed as a cap or an intention to actively pursue trying to have 200,000 people by 2020. Rather, it is meant to serve as a guide for providing zoning capacity, planning capital improvements, and other planning processes. The County would only provide the capacity in facilities and services by 2020 that could serve 200,000 people. The threshold allows for variations in the phasing and location of new residents. If density were increased in certain areas, it would need to be offset elsewhere. The 200,000 figure is consistent with population projections made by the Maryland Office of Planning and Baltimore Metropolitan Council, the regional metropolitan planning organization. It is also consistent with the 1996 zoning capacity of the County.

#### Recommendations

- A. Obtain municipal support for and cooperation in implementing this threshold since the municipalities will likely attract a large percentage of new residents.
  
- B. Adopt a concurrency management program that helps ensure the timely provision of infrastructure so that new populations are adequately served by the public facilities

that support them and so new residents do not contribute to a decrease in service level or add to deficiencies for the jurisdiction that controls a facility.

C. Consider this threshold when updating the comprehensive plans for the CPAs and incorporate ways to achieve it.

D. Review and update the Carroll County Zoning Ordinance to bring it into compliance with the updated Master Plan.

E. Develop an annual concurrency report that monitors development and details remaining capacities to adjust the rate of growth to match the County's ability to fund improvements.

F. Evaluate each CPA to determine when and how much additional growth can be accommodated as each individual CPA comprehensive plan is updated.

### COMMUNITY VIABILITY THRESHOLDS 2 & 3

A MINIMUM OF 75 PERCENT OF NEW POPULATION GROWTH WILL BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE EXISTING OR EXPANDED CPAS.

INCORPORATED TOWNS AND CPAS SHALL NOT EXCEED 25 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL COUNTY LAND AREA.

In 1996, the amount of new growth locating in the CPAs was 73 percent. Since these thresholds would require a majority of new development to occur in the CPAs, the current trend would be only slightly less stringent than the thresholds. Benefits to directing at least 75 percent of new growth to the CPAs include reduced infrastructure costs, minimized sprawl, and maintenance of the current population distribution. Provision of less low-density residential development within the CPAs to accomplish the 25 percent land area threshold will also help these areas of the County meet the requirements of *Smart Growth* as Priority Funding Areas. The updated New Windsor and Taneytown Comprehensive Plans will make it easier to achieve these thresholds, as they have provided for additional residential growth within their CPAs beyond what was considered available at the beginning of this planning process.

### Policies

A. First priority for infrastructure improvements should be given to areas within the CPAs.

B. Developer financed road improvements will be required outside the CPAs.

### Recommendations

A. Forward build planned roads to avoid fragmented infrastructure development and to foster the building of complete and cohesive communities.

- B. If the County forward funds and builds roads, establish a mechanism for the County to recapture the forward funding after development occurs.
- C. Locate new schools, libraries, intense business development, and other public services in the CPAs where they can most effectively and efficiently serve the largest number of people and to promote concentration of growth in the CPAs.
- D. Provide for multi-purpose government centers for areas within CPAs.
- E. Implement the Master Plan through formal town/county agreements that show support from the municipalities for concentrating growth in those towns that have the ability to accommodate it and that provides additional support from the County to assist the towns in accomplishing this threshold.
- F. Review, and update if necessary, areas zoned Conservation in the County and the provisions of the District as specified in the Carroll County Zoning Ordinance.
- G. Encourage the creation of “greenbelts” to prevent the interconnection of CPAs.
- H. Work with the municipalities to study the development of a growth boundary for its ultimate development and corporate limits.
- I. Create a “mixed-use” zone for the County to provide additional opportunities for higher-density housing in the CPAs.

## Goal 2

**Promote development design that is in harmony with the surrounding built and natural environments, encourages community interaction, and preserves the County’s rural character in rural areas**

### Policies

- A. New and expanded development will be encouraged to cluster, limit strip development, and consolidate access points to major and minor collector roads.

### Recommendations

- A. Review residential, commercial, and industrial regulations and modify as necessary to ensure they are consistent with the goal.
- B. Review and update the uses permitted in each Zoning District to ensure consistency with each Zone’s purpose.
- C. Continue supporting Main Street programs and expand them to Rural Villages and CPAs with no municipality to encourage development that is consistent with the character of the Main Street areas.

D. Encourage land preservation around Rural Villages to protect the villages' rural character.

E. Develop and adopt design guidelines for both new construction and rehabilitation to achieve consistency with existing development and compatibility with the natural environment, as well as improve the visual quality of new development.

## Fiscal Impact to the County

According to the fiscal impact analysis prepared for the County by Tischler & Associates, Threshold 1, which is a slower growth rate than current trends, generates a positive cash flow to the County. However, the average net revenues (\$2.9 million) are such a small percentage of the annual budget from 1998 to 2005 that the resulting revenues should be considered unavailable funds, as the small amount would be consumed or be different in any given year. In addition, 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. In addition to potential revenues, the cumulative expenditures and timing and provision of capital facilities are also considered in making choices for this Master Plan.

After considering the fiscal impact as well as quality of life issues related to development, it has been decided to plan for a slower growth than projected if we continued on our current trends. However, rather than choose one scenario, elements from the different scenarios analyzed in the fiscal study are 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.

The fiscal analysis distributed capital costs evenly throughout the time period by assigning a one-time cost per person, dwelling, or pupil. Therefore, decisions made since the study to fund several schools through bonding may effect the short-term fiscal picture.

Several of the recommendations, while important from a planning standpoint, will have a budgetary impact to make the CPAs better able to accept growth. Forward funding major planned street connections is not currently a budgetary item. Additional revenue sources would have to be found to implement this recommendation. Some funding may be transferred from that amount currently used for upgrading rural roads if the policy is changed to secure development in these areas to do road improvements.