



CHAPTER 14: HOUSING & COMMUNITY DESIGN

GOALS

As previously detailed in Chapter 2, Union Bridge has set forth the following goals:

- To make Union Bridge a more attractive place for younger generations to settle and establish families
- To promote housing and business design that is consistent with the historical flavor of the town
- To promote and foster housing opportunities for all income levels and age groups
- To encourage efforts to maintain the quality and appearance of individual properties
- To create usable and friendly public spaces that enhance that small-town atmosphere and foster a neighborly community
- To incorporate traditional, walkable, friendly design into new residential neighborhoods

CURRENT CONDITIONS

1 Housing

A ACREAGE OF LAND IN EACH RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT

The total land area of the Union Bridge Election District is approximately 4,603 acres. In 2007, slightly more than 12 percent of that total, or 562 acres, was located in residential zoning districts, while just over 71 percent of the total land was zoned Agriculture or Conservation, both of which allow for limited residential development as well. In 1990, the Union Bridge corporate limits contained 355 households with 232 households existing within the election district outside of town. According to the Census 2000, the number of households within the town have basically remained static at 372. Excluding the town, the election district had 195 households, which indicates approximately a 16 percent decline in existing households outside of the town itself.

As of 2000, Carroll County had four categories of residential zoning, only three of which are followed by the Town. R-6,000, or urban residential, requires a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet. R-10,000, or suburban residential, requires a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet. R-20,000, or medium-density residential, requires a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. R-40,000, or low-density residential, requires a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet. The table titled “Residential Zoning Acreage” presents a breakdown of the amount of land within each residential zoning category for both the town and the remainder of the election district.



**Residential Zoning Acreage
Union Bridge Election District
2008**

Zoning Category	Town of Union Bridge	Remainder of Election District	Total Residential Acreage	Percentage of Election District (4,603 acres)
R-6,000	101.98	0.00	101.98	2.22
R-10,000	285.93	174.36	460.29	10.00
R-20,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Agriculture	0.00	2,883.16	2,883.16	62.64
Conservation	96.45	306.31	402.76	8.75
Total	484.36	3,363.83	3,848.19	83.61

Source: Carroll County Department of Planning, 2007

B PERCENTAGE OF DIFFERENT HOUSING TYPES

Approximately 80 percent of all units in the election district in 1990 were single-family detached and attached (townhouse) units with multi-family units representing approximately 18 percent. During the period of 1990-2000, the number of units in the election district increased; however, there was little change in the distribution by housing type. The table titled “Housing Type: Union Bridge Election District” shows the percentage of housing types within the election district for 1990 and 2000.

**Housing Type
Union Bridge Election District
1990 and 2000**

Housing Type	1990		2000		% Change
	Units	%	Units	%	
Single-family detached and attached	474	80.0	486	78.5	2.5
Multi-family	106	17.9	130	21.0	22.6
Mobile Home/Trailer	0	0.0	3	0.5	n/a
Other	13	2.1	0	0	n/a
Total Units	593	100.0	619	100.0	4.4

Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000

C CURRENT DENSITY

The 2000 densities for the Town of Union Bridge and the surrounding area were calculated using the complete acreage of the town, election district, county, and state. These acreages include all public and private properties as well as open space, parks, public lands, bodies of water, etc.



Measure	2000 Density				
	Town	Union Bridge Election District	Union Bridge Election District, Less Town	Carroll County	Maryland
Household units	409	619	210	54,260	2,145,283
Acres	482	4,907	4,425	289,568	7,803,501
Square miles	0.75	7.66	6.91	452.45	12,192.97
Units per acre	0.85	0.13	0.05	0.187	0.275
Units per sq. mile	545.3	80.8	30.4	119.9	175.9

Source: U.S. Census 2000

D RENTERS VS. OWNERS

Of the residential structures within the Union Bridge Election District, approximately 59 percent were owner-occupied as of 2000. Approximately 33 percent were renter-occupied, with 8 percent being vacant. The following table exhibits the occupancy status by type of dwelling within the election district in 2000.

Occupancy by Type of Dwelling Union Bridge Election District 2000				
Structure	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Vacant	Total
Single-family detached	340	83	27	450
Single-family attached	13	18	5	36
2 units	6	33	6	45
3-4 units	4	38	2	44
5-9 units	0	29	12	41
10+ units	0	0	0	0
Mobile Home	0	3	0	3
Other	0	0	0	0
Total Units	363	204	52	619

Source: U.S. Census 2000

Census data gathered from 1980 and 1990 showed that the numbers for owner-occupied dwellings had increased within the election district over that time period. However, during the period of 1990 through 2000, owner-occupied dwellings decreased approximately 8 percent. Conversely, rented dwellings decreased 12 percent from 1980 through 1990 and then increased 7 percent from 1990 to 2000. In 2000, 92 percent of all units were occupied versus 8 percent of all units being vacant within the election district. Approximately 50 percent of all renter-occupied units were multi-family units. The following table shows the occupancy trends in the Union Bridge Election District as provided in the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Census.



**Occupancy by Type of Tenant
Union Bridge Election District
1980-2000**

Occupant	Units					
	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
Owner	382	62.4	397	65.5	366	59.1
Renter	213	34.7	188	30.9	201	32.5
Vacant	18	2.9	22	3.6	52	8.4
Total	613	100.0	607	100.0	619	100.0

Source: U.S. Census 1980, 1990, and 2000

**Specified Owner-Occupied Value
Union Bridge Election District
2000**

Value	# of Units
Less than \$50,000	10
\$50,000 - \$99,999	71
\$100,000 - \$149,999	167
\$150,000 - \$199,999	65
\$200,000 - \$299,999	41
\$300,000 or more	9
Total	363
Median Housing Value	\$121,100

Source: U.S. Census 2000

As of 2000, 46 percent of owner-occupied residential units fell in the \$100,000 - \$149,000 price range with an overall median housing value of \$121,100. The table titled “Specified Owner-Occupied Value” presents the number of residential units falling in each value range in 2000.

**Specified Renter-Occupied Residences Cash Rent
Union Bridge Election District
2000**

Rent	# of Units
Less than \$250	14
\$250 - \$499	97
\$500 - \$749	54
\$750 - \$999	7
\$1000 or more	0
Total	172
Median rent	\$542.00

Source: U.S. Census 2000

Cash rent values were also tabulated for renter-occupied residences in the Union Bridge Election District based on 2000 Census returns. The majority of the units (56.4%) fell into the \$250 - \$499 range. The



median contract rent in 2000 was \$542. The preceding table exhibits the monthly cash rent values for specified renter-occupied units in 2000.

E CURRENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS

There are currently several housing assistance programs available to the Union Bridge area. They include: Section 8 Housing Choice Program, Rental Assistance Program, Rural Development Program, and the Family Self-Sufficiency Program. Carroll County Section 8 Program is available to eligible families to assure decent, safe, and sanitary housing in communities of their choice based on the family's income, assets, and deductions. Thirty-one households, making up 9 percent of Carroll County's total Section 8 participants, are currently receiving assistance in the 12th Election District. The Rental Assistance and the Family Self-Sufficiency Programs offer temporary financial assistance for low-income households. Rural Development assistance can be used by low-income families to purchase, refinance, and rehabilitate a dwelling with no down payment.

F GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF CONDITION OF CURRENT HOUSING STOCK

The majority of existing structures in the Union Bridge Election District (56%) were built prior to 1940. Between 1940 and 1970, 21 percent of the current residential structures were built. Approximately 8 percent of the housing stock was built between 1970 and 1979, with the remaining 13 percent being constructed within the last 20 years. The following table indicates the age of the election district's housing stock in 2000.

Age of Housing Union Bridge Election District 2000		
Year Built	# of Units	% of Units
1999 – 2000	5	0.81
1995 – 1998	19	3.07
1990 – 1994	13	2.10
1980 – 1989	43	6.95
1970 - 1979	51	8.24
1960 - 1969	48	7.75
1950 - 1959	55	8.89
1940 - 1949	38	6.13
1939 or earlier	347	56.06
Total	619	100.0

Source: U.S. Census 2000



Length of Residency Union Bridge Election District 2000		
Year Household Moved Into Unit	# of Households	% of Households
1999 - March 2000	86	15.2
1995 - 1998	113	19.9
1990 - 1994	83	14.6
1980 - 1989	96	16.9
1970 - 1979	87	15.4
1969 or earlier	102	18.0
Total	567	100.0

Source: U.S. Census 2000

Approximately 33 percent of the population moved into their current housing units prior to 1980. A significant percentage of households (35%) moved into the housing units between 1995 and 2000. While these figures represent newcomers to the area, they also represent households that have moved from one unit to another within the election district.

2 Community Design

The Town has an expressed desire to meld new development with the existing character of the town, as indicated in Section 13.5.0 of their Zoning Ordinance. This section requires developers to be creative while at the same time drawing on elements of the Town’s built environment for guidance in the design of new subdivisions. Among the characteristics cited in the code as important are: clustering of housing units, a mix of housing types that reflect local needs and site specific conditions, architecture and its compatibility with/impact on existing and future development, and the creation and location of both active and passive open space. This section also empowers the Planning Commission to use these characteristics as features upon which development proposals can be approved, disapproved, or sent back to the developer for revision.

The Town also is working towards enhancing the overall design of the community through the maintenance and construction of sidewalks that will link all parts of the town together. The *2005 Sidewalk Maintenance Program* report identified where sidewalks exist or are lacking and the condition of any existing sidewalks. This will help the Town assess the most crucial links and improvements that need to be made, as funding becomes available, to create a pedestrian-friendly and interconnected community.

ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY NEEDS

The desire for affordable apartments and homes by residents often conflict with crime levels and property appearance issues. These issues result from absentee landlords who do not invest in the aesthetic value or maintenance issues of their rental properties. While there are rental properties available in the area at reasonable prices, the variety of styles is limited. The availability of new homes within the town and surrounding community is virtually nonexistent.



In terms of community design, the community lacks convenient pedestrian or bicycle access as part of the community design. Sidewalks are not available in all areas of town to connect residential areas to goods and services. For example, the lack of sidewalks hinders pedestrian access to the Community Center and Elmer Wolfe School, both of which are within easy walking distance from the Town's residential areas. Little, if any, bicycle and pedestrian pathways exist to connect open spaces and parks to downtown Main Street. Parking for residents and patrons is currently limited throughout the Town, and further development will create the need for additional parking options, primarily downtown.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Pattern new development after desirable qualities of established built environment.*

Smart Growth and the concept of traditional neighborhood design cannot be realized unless Town and County agencies become committed to implementing their defining characteristics. These include providing pedestrian links, creating through streets, adding streetscaping, and supporting the natural extension of development whenever possible. The center of Town should be maintained as the heart of the area, but at the same time as new properties develop, small pockets of civic and commercial activity around which neighborhoods are based could be established. This will begin to create a pattern of development that echoes the traditional pattern and provides opportunities for creating pedestrian-friendly environments and a sense of place.

In order to help preserve the rural atmosphere of the area, the town is encouraged to work with the county in creating design guidelines for both subdivisions and site plans, consider adopting cluster provisions, and provide the option for Planned Unit Development (PUD).

- 2 Allow for diversity of housing types.*

An increased number of housing options for residents has historically been offered in the growth areas of the County. This is due to the availability of services that allow development at greater densities and lower net cost. In order to provide for the housing needs of all Carroll County residents, providing a diverse housing stock must be a priority.

- 3 Seek funding to implement recommendations from Sidewalk Maintenance Program report*

Sidewalks connecting residential areas to commercial areas and downtown are important to the overall connectivity of a community. Areas where sidewalks could be improved or constructed to help provide access for pedestrians to these locations are identified in the *2005 Sidewalk Maintenance Program for the Town of Union Bridge*. This report identifies the overall scope of the program, as well as segments throughout the Town where sidewalks do not exist, where sidewalks are in deteriorating condition and need to be replaced, where slopes or high banks exist, where additional easements may be needed, and where



certain replacement materials (i.e. concrete, brick) should be used. Upgrading of the sidewalk network would provide a more usable alternate means of travel within the downtown area and could also help to reduce traffic congestion.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS & ANTICIPATED CIP PROJECTS

The recommendations contained in this plan may be policy-oriented or action-oriented, and their implementation may be the responsibility of the Town, the County, other public agencies, private landowners and developers, or a combination of these. This section is designed to identify the potential fiscal impacts to the Town and/or County of each of the recommendations. There could be “No Fiscal Impact,” meaning the Town or County would not incur direct or predictable expenses as a result of implementing the recommendation, an “Undetermined Impact,” meaning there likely would be a cost associated with implementing the recommendation but that cost can not be determined at this time for various reasons, or a “Fiscal Impact,” which likely would be incurred by the Town or County if the recommendation were implemented. For recommendations that have an identified fiscal impact, the cost of implementing that recommendation is estimated to the best degree possible.

- 1 *Pattern new development after desirable qualities of established built environment.*

No Fiscal Impact

- 2 *Allow for diversity of housing types.*

No Fiscal Impact

- 3 *Seek funding to implement recommendations from Sidewalk Maintenance Program report*

Undetermined Impact: There would be time required to research and then prepare applications for possible funding sources available to the Town. Based on estimates, that work would take least one week’s time (40 hours), and may take longer. Currently, those contract services are provided to the Town and would cost approximately \$800 per 40-hour block of time.

Currently, construction costs for priority sections would need to be estimated at approximately \$3 per square foot to remove and dispose of existing sidewalks and \$5 per square foot to construct new sidewalk. In areas where curbing would need to be replaced, current estimates would run \$30 per linear foot to remove existing curbing and replace it with new. The projects may be able to be completed more cost effectively if smaller projects are grouped to create larger sections.