



CHAPTER 2: PLAN FOUNDATION

MARYLAND'S EIGHT VISIONS

As discussed in Chapter 1, the 1992 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. Chapter 1 describes how this community comprehensive plan meets and is consistent with these Eight Visions. Again, these visions are stated in the Act as follows:

- Vision 1: Development is concentrated in suitable areas
- Vision 2: Sensitive areas are protected
- Vision 3: In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected
- Vision 4: Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic
- Vision 5: Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced
- Vision 6: Economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined
- Vision 7: Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur
- Vision 8: Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions

MEETING THE EIGHT VISIONS

The Union Bridge & Environs Community Comprehensive 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 resource areas are protected (Visions 1 & 3). The suitable areas for development in Carroll County are the Growth Areas, or GA's. The GA's are areas for which a more detailed plan (than the County Master Plan) is prepared. These areas also are usually designated to accept new growth. Public water and sewer services generally are provided here, along with other services. Most of the GA's have at their center an incorporated municipality that has been in existence since the turn of the century or earlier. As a result, the GA centers possess unique historic qualities and tend to have traditional development patterns and higher densities. The surrounding unincorporated areas of the GA attempt to reinforce this pattern, while at the same time providing a transition from the densely developed towns to the outlying rural areas. In this way, development is directed to existing population centers.

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 where services are available. Through the use of a Growth Area Boundary, which identifies the limit to which the City plans to grow and the area within which higher density development will occur, this plan and the agricultural and resources preservation efforts reinforce each other.

The plan also demonstrates that ***sensitive areas are protected and stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and***



the land is a universal ethic (Visions 2 & 4). In addition to making good use of the land through preserving agriculture and concentrating growth in designated areas, the plan suggests actions that can be taken to achieve the goal of preserving environmental resources. The plan includes a Natural and Agricultural Resources chapter, which acts as the sensitive areas element of the plan, and identifies the sensitive areas, or “environmental resources,” to be protected. Innovative and resourceful community design, participation in the Rural Legacy Program, and provision of measures to further protect the water supply and support the Reservoir Watershed Agreement are among the many recommendations the community will consider to sue the land efficiently and to reduce and mitigate the impacts of development on environmental resources. These activities, as well as the previously mentioned land preservation efforts, show that **conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced** (Vision 5) 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** (Vision 6). The plan seeks to increase industrial growth opportunities and promote the protection of industrial land from preemption by commercial uses. At the same time, industrial land that already is dominated by commercial uses is being designated as commercial land. This will promote the creation of areas that more fully meet the purpose and objectives of the zoning category in which they lie, and will streamline the development process by reducing the number of conditional use requests being submitted.

The plan provides measures to ensure that **adequate public facilities and infrastructure under the control of the County or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur** (Vision 7). The County provides many of the facilities and services needed by the residents of this community. The County adopted an Adequate Public Facilities and Concurrency Management Ordinance and prepares an annual Concurrency Management Report. This program is designed to phase and time growth and public facilities through the County’s Community Investment Plan. Any planned residential growth within the County 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.

The Carroll County Master Plan also addresses the final vision: **funding mechanisms have been addressed to achieve the visions** (Vision 8). The eighth vision is achieved through the creative use of the annual Community Investment Plan, the City-County Agreement, Concurrency Management, and other implementation recommendations. Allocating adequate funding for land acquisition and preservation, economic development opportunities, and revenue sharing with the County further assures the attainment of this vision.

CARROLL COUNTY’S VISION

Through the process of developing a county-wide master plan, the work teams, representing each municipality and many other diverse interests, supported the following vision statement for the county.

Carroll County offers a safe environment in which all its citizens may reside, work, shop, learn, and play. The rural character of our county is preserved through measures that protect our natural and cultural resources, minimize residential sprawl, and save farmland. Carroll County is enriched by sustainable agriculture and agribusiness as well as retention and recruitment of responsible, productive business and industry that offer family-wage jobs



and employ the existing skilled workforce in the county. Adequate public facilities will be provided as Capital Improvement Program funding is available and concurrent with timed and phased development demand.

CARROLL COUNTY'S GOALS

The goals developed to help achieve the county vision address multiple aspects of the county-wide community. They are broad enough to be applicable county-wide. All of the functional and small area (detailed) plans developed within the county strive to achieve and to be consistent with these overall goals.

- Goal 1 Direct new development to the designated growth areas to protect and conserve agricultural and environmental resource areas, preserve open space, and provide public facilities and services efficiently and cost effectively.
- Goal 2 Preserve agricultural land for the production of agricultural products and promotion of related agribusiness.
- Goal 3 Protect, maintain, and restore, where practical, the environmental resources and natural ecosystems in the county by promoting land use practices that are in balance with, and minimize the effects on, the natural environment.
- Goal 4 Promote a healthy economy and additional employment opportunities by 1) supporting the retention and expansion of existing businesses including agribusiness through sensible land use policies and 2) providing land appropriately located and zoned for a variety of types and intensities of new economic development activities.
- Goal 5 Phase and time development at a rate consistent with the county's ability to fund and expand community services and facilities through public and private resources.
- Goal 6 Ensure adequate and appropriate Capital Improvement Program and operating budgets to implement the Master Plan and provide public facilities and services.
- Goal 7 Provide a safe and functional transportation system which implements the land use plan while promoting access and mobility for people and goods through a network of roads, rail, transit, and non-motorized opportunities.
- Goal 8 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.
- Goal 9 Preserve the county's historic, cultural, scenic, and architectural heritage.
- Goal 10 Provide for a wide range of housing types, density, and affordability that is well maintained and will meet the needs of the entire community.
- Goal 11 Provide a coordinated and comprehensive system of public and private parks, recreational



facilities and programs, and open space that will meet the active and passive recreational needs of all citizens of the county and enhance community design, identity, and vitality.

- Goal 12 Provide community educational opportunities, facilities, and resources, particularly libraries and schools, to meet the needs of a diverse population.
- Goal 13 Ensure communication and coordination between the county and the municipalities on projects and issues of mutual concern. Promote interjurisdictional cooperation in planning and land use decisions.
- Goal 14 Involve the community in implementing the Master Plan.

UNION BRIDGE COMMUNITY'S VISION

While the community comprehensive plans within Carroll County support and implement the County Master Plan, it is also recognized that each individual community holds different values and cherishes characteristics unique to that community. Each community has its own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. While these characteristics may also be found in other Carroll communities, each area may choose to address these issues in its own way and within its own set of priorities. Therefore, each community also develops its own vision statement.

The following vision statement represents what the participants in the various forms of community involvement (for this community plan update) felt to be the future that they preferred for their community. Future decisions and activities of the community will be consistent with this vision. Members of the community will strive to bring about the changes that will make this vision attainable.

The Union Bridge community retains its diverse, small, traditional town atmosphere within the larger agricultural landscape. The Main Street business district, at the center of the community, is prospering within a safe and attractive environment. Community-wide there is an emphasis on the preservation of historic characteristics and values. New residential and commercial development respects the heritage of the community and its conservation ideals, which are further enhanced through the preservation of agricultural and natural resources surrounding the community. Vehicular traffic movement is pedestrian safe, provides efficient connections to other areas, and is uncongested due to numerous roadway linkages. Residents and visitors have multiple modes of travel in the community, including by foot, bicycle or other means. Periodic flooding does not prohibit safe roadway access to and from the town. Residents of the community enjoy the environmental benefits of an expanded Little Pipe Creek Park, which offers a bicycle/pedestrian connection between Union Bridge and New Windsor and provides improvements to the stream corridor. Public services and facilities meet the needs of residents and businesses. Industrial development, located in appropriate areas, provides a strong tax base for the town and a variety of employment opportunities for residents.



UNION BRIDGE COMMUNITY'S GOALS

In addition to developing a unique vision statement within the community, a set of goals are also developed that are distinct to the needs of that community and that are more specific than the county-wide goals. The participants in this planning process identified the following priorities for the Union Bridge community. These goals are presented by topic or category.

Growth Management & Land Use...

- To plan and scale the geographic size of the Town and its future growth and enlargement, as well as the designated growth area, to maintain a strong sense of community and small town atmosphere
- To retain the rural surroundings of the Town through land preservation programs
- To arrange for the appropriate balance of residential, industrial, commercial and conservation land uses within the community at preferred locations
- To arrange for transportation networks that support, complement and facilitate the community's land use plan
- To review zoning to permit it to be flexible and adaptable enough to meet the changing needs of all sectors of the community

Transportation...

- To mitigate impacts and hazards of heavy industrial traffic on the main streets
- To improve the safety, efficiency and options for all modes of transportation within the community's existing and future transportation network to the maximum extent feasible
- To provide bicycle/pedestrian links between neighborhoods and destinations within the community
- To promote alternative transportation options within the existing and future transportation network to the maximum extent feasible and safe

Community Facilities...

- To monitor and address as appropriate the capacity of community facilities before they reach crisis levels
- To secure funding for infrastructure expansion/improvements to meet the needs of planned new and existing development
- To ensure availability of all needed community facilities within or close to the community
- To move toward community facilities becoming at least self-sustaining or revenue-neutral
- To provide a variety of recreational opportunities for all age groups

Natural Resources...

- To mitigate the impacts of flooding on community residents and businesses
- To mitigate the impact of mineral resource mining on community residents and businesses
- To support farmland preservation as a means of preserving community heritage and small-town atmosphere

Economic Development...

- To fund the necessary infrastructure expansion to attract and support the commercial and industrial development needed and desired within the community and to increase the tax base
- To encourage a balance of light industrial, retail, and commercial businesses that are complementary



to the residential community

- To increase employment opportunities within the community that make use of the skills of the strong work force
- To foster a welcoming atmosphere to help recruit and retain community business partners via open and accessible support from the Town
- To make the community more attractive for commercial/industrial development

Historic/Cultural/Archeological Resources...

- To work with property owners to preserve and/or restore as many historic structures and sites as possible
- To protect the historic character of the community through the use of historically consistent architectural styles in new and infill development
- To continue and broaden the process of community renewal begun by the Main Street Revitalization project through heritage tourism and related preservation or development efforts

Community Involvement...

- To improve resident awareness of the comprehensive plans, community decisions, and the impacts of each
- To continue to provide, and increase where possible, public participation in community issues and decisions

Interjurisdictional Coordination...

- To partner with other government bodies on local community projects
- To improve communication and coordination with Carroll County and neighboring counties as well as the State

Housing & Community Design...

- 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 provide 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

On-Going Main Street Revitalization...

- To improve the appearance of the downtown, Main Street businesses and residences
- To promote activities that strengthen the success rate of businesses within the community
- To provide amenities that are pedestrian and user-friendly and that promote community interaction

In order to accomplish these goals, the community should be aware of what they are, especially those people in decision-making positions. Decisions and policies should reflect the desire to accomplish these goals. Activities should not be pursued that contradict the goals. A community comprehensive plan does not merely involve elected and appointed officials. All community leaders and residents need to be committed



to accomplishing the goals for the Plan to be successful.

PLAN PROCESS & STRUCTURE

1 Union Bridge Community Comprehensive Plan Update Process

The community comprehensive plan update process is divided into six separate phases, each phase having a distinct and specific focus or set of tasks.

Phase 1 is the Background Work Phase. During this time, staff researches existing uses of land, current conditions of community facilities, and community demographic characteristics. Staff also interviews community officials, develops the initial study area maps, and prepares the survey and the first newsletter.

Phase 2 is the first Community Participation Phase. All community households receive a series of newsletters. These newsletters inform the community of plan update progress and upcoming community workshops. Each household also receives a survey. This survey gives each household in the community the opportunity to participate and share its needs. This phase includes a community workshop series. Participants identify their desires for the community's future, the goals the community wants to achieve, and other issues specific to the Union Bridge community. The community workshops result in a better picture of what the community wants to accomplish and where it wants to go in the future.

Based on the Phase 1 background work and the direction for the future provided by the community, during *Phase 3* Town and County staff develop a recommended list of ways to achieve the goals. Any proposed land use designation changes or additions needed to accomplish these goals are mapped.

Phase 4 is the second Community Participation Phase. A newsletter, which includes all the recommendations, is prepared and sent out to give the community the opportunity to review the recommendations prior to the next set of workshops. These workshops allow the community to give feedback on these recommendations and make additional suggestions before finishing a draft plan.

During *Phase 5*, a draft plan incorporating the workshop results is developed and potential Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects associated with the recommendations are identified.

In *Phase 6*, the draft plan is available for a 60-day public review period. State agencies and neighboring jurisdictions also review the draft. A community meeting is held toward the end of this review period to allow community members to ask any questions needed to fully understand the draft plan and to be able to provide well-informed written or verbal comments at the public hearing. Following the public hearing, the Town and County Planning Commissions review the comments and prepare and approve a final draft plan. This draft is forwarded to the elected officials with a recommendation for adoption along with any implementing measures.



2 Plan Structure

To better identify how the goals that support the vision may be accomplished, this plan uses each of the following topics as a separate element (chapter) of the plan, each with its own individual recommendations for implementation. These topics correspond with the traditional and required elements of a comprehensive plan. These same topics and chapters, with the exception of the Main Street Revitalization chapter, can be found in each community comprehensive plan developed in Carroll County after 1999. Therefore, the types of information and the format are consistent and predictable among community plans.

- *Growth Management & Land Use* addresses issues related to the intended future use of the land as well as issues surrounding measures to manage growth.
- *Municipal Growth* specifically addresses the topic of anticipated municipal growth to meet the requirements of HB 1140.
- *Transportation* addresses issues related to roadway function, improvements, and new roadways.
- *Community Facilities* addresses the need for certain amounts and types of facilities and services based on capacity and future population.
- *Natural & Agricultural Resources* addresses stewardship of environmental resources and farmland.
- *Economic Development* addresses availability of land for commercial and industrial development and related issues.
- *Historic Resources* addresses the significance of historic structures and their preservation.
- *Community Involvement* addresses the input of citizens and leaders to the planning process.
- *Interjurisdictional Coordination & Communication* addresses the relationship between the Town, County, and State and issues of coordination and cooperation between the jurisdictions.
- *Housing & Community Design* addresses the way neighborhoods and features of the community are designed, how design affects the community, and promotion of community connectedness.

These chapters also correspond to the various plan elements required by the State under the Land Use enabling code (Article 66B, Section 3.05). The chapters and corresponding required elements are listed below.

Union Bridge Plan Chapter	State Required Element
Land Use and Growth Management	Land Use Element
Municipal Growth	Municipal Growth Element
Transportation	Transportation Element
Community Facilities	Community Facilities Element
Natural and Agricultural Resources	Water Resources Element (future) (by reference)
	Sensitive Areas Element
	Mineral Resources Element (by reference)
Economic Development	
Historic and Cultural Resources	
Community Involvement	
Interjurisdictional Coordination and Communication	
Housing and Community Design	

The current conditions information describes the existing status on the issue with which a chapter deals, the existing capacity and/or demand of community facilities, and the existing development and use of land. This information was compiled through coordination with other agencies, the Town, and through field research. In compiling the current conditions information, data was collected and reviewed for the entire



12th Election District, which constituted the study area. Considering conditions in the entire election district allowed for a Community Planning Area (Growth Area Boundary) limit to be developed that was appropriate based on current conditions and community needs as opposed to arbitrarily comparing the boundary to the existing Community Planning Area.

The community needs for each chapter were analyzed based on the input received from the interviews, surveys, and workshops, as well as current conditions and population projections. The analysis of community needs does not include suggestions for solutions to problems and needs; these are addressed under recommended actions. The appendix at the end of this document contains a glossary of terms and acronyms used and a tabulation of community survey responses sought as input for the plan.

The State requires that a plan be reviewed and updated every six years. As a result, an opportunity exists to add, delete, and/or modify the recommendations included more often than in the past. Therefore, the recommended actions were developed with the intention that those that are included should be those that are higher in priority, are more likely to begin implementation prior to the next update, and/or are being implemented concurrent with the adoption of the plan. Every possible action that could be taken to address the goals was not included. While the vision and goals are meant to be long-range and are less likely to change, it is also possible that every identified community need may not be addressed with this current update but may be addressed during the next update. Those actions that are possible but did not meet that criteria at this time will be reviewed during the next update, along with any additional actions that are feasible at that time, and recommendations that have already been implemented can be deleted.

Through incorporating a component describing anticipated Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects that may be related to recommendations in the plan, the community will have a plan that is more realistic and better represents what the citizens are willing to accept. It also provides a checklist of projects to be considered each year when the CIP is developed.

FINAL PRODUCT

This plan (text and map documents) encompasses the area currently located within the corporate limits of the Town of Union Bridge, as well as the land in the immediate environs of the corporate limits as shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map and several other map documents – all of which land is in the Growth Area (GA). The bulk of the immediate unincorporated environs that is under the jurisdiction of the County Commissioners is designated for future water and sewer service. The outer limits of water and sewer service areas represent the limit of future annexations, annexation being a prerequisite to receiving water and sewer service from the Town water and sewer systems.

MAJOR CONCEPTS

Despite virtually static growth since 1990, the 2008 Union Bridge Community Comprehensive Plan retains most of the features of the 1990 plan because it laid out a very focused growth area that will allow for the logical, organic growth of the Town. No new residential areas are designated; of the three major properties designated for residential development, two are in the process of subdivision and should satisfy the local housing demand into the foreseeable future. Some additional industrial land is designated to account for the altered alignment of Shepherd's Mill Road, the preliminary path of which had formed the CPA boundary in



the previous plan document. The 1990 plan is a well-recognized and accepted plan for the future growth of the Town, and the 2008 plan reaffirms its logic and far-reaching vision.

This plan also emphasizes a connection to and support from the Town's history and traditions. In particular, it strengthens the exceptional work to Main Street done in conjunction with the State Highway Administration. This major reconstruction and streetscaping project not only beautified the street environment with attractive sidewalks, decorative street lamps, new crosswalks, and the creation of a Town plaza, but also involved substantial water and sewer infrastructure improvements. Main Street revitalization efforts endorsed by this plan will help to capitalize upon the investment already made downtown. Additionally, this plan emphasizes the need for contextual and complementary design of new development that draws upon the existing Town character and works to create a cohesive community rather than a community of separate parts. This idea is reinforced in the plan through strong support for the creation and/or improvement of pedestrian and vehicular links throughout the GA.

The transportation recommendations contained in the plan attempt to address the particular needs and conditions of heavy industrial traffic and residential/business traffic. Most key planned connector roads envisioned in the 1990 plan, including the proposed MD 77 Extension, are retained. Shepherd's Mill Road has been constructed and was placed into service in 2004. A secondary connector road that was to have looped through the Jackson Ridge subdivision has been proven not to be feasible due to geotechnical information and the approved site design. Accomplishing the planned interconnection of roadways will help to move traffic throughout the Town and provide a variety of routes to the same destination, reducing the potential for conflicts between vehicle types and offering alternatives where they do not currently exist.

The adequate provision of parks and open space has been a long-standing goal of the Town, and this plan continues that direction. In particular, the plan calls for enhanced pedestrian connections throughout the Town and continuing to New Windsor, as well as the creation of greenways and the dedication of recreational areas and open spaces as part of the subdivision process. The creation of greenways, as well as the protection of the Little Pipe Creek floodplain, also will help to address water quality and quantity concerns. This plan supports those efforts through appropriate land use designations and recommendations.

The implementation of this plan depends largely upon the adequate provision of water and sewer service. Residential and industrial development will not be able to proceed without significant upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant and adequate water supply permits. It will take a coordinated effort on the part of elected officials of the Town, County and State, as well as the private development sector, to arrange for and make the financial investment in the needed infrastructure to implement this plan. Without these improvements, however, very little else can be accomplished with the plan because so much of it depends upon growth in the Town.

The maps contained in this plan provide a graphic representation of the concepts described above. Differences between the 1990 plan maps and the 2008 plan maps are summarized below.

3 Map Changes

- Adjust the Growth Area Boundary (GAB) to exclude any land designated "Agriculture" and include areas designated "Suburban Residential" and areas intended for future annexation
- Reflect current town limits, zoning and town-owned land



- Reflect Shepherd's Mill Road, the parallel Maryland Midland rail lines and the resulting rehabilitation of Farquhar Street
- Reflect alterations to the alignment of the planned connector street in Jackson Ridge and other revisions to the planned major street network, ~~including the addition of the extension of Shepherd's Mill Road~~
- Identify an area for possible future community facility locations
- Add trail in Little Pipe Creek Park
- Add 500' foot buffers for greenways along Little Pipe Creek, Sam's Creek and Cherry Branch per 2000 Town Master Plan
- Enlarge the area designated for industrial land use in the vicinity of Shepherd's Mill Road and adjust the GAB to reflect the new roadway alignment and the desire to designate land on both sides of the road for industrial use
- Reflect proposed expansions to the priority and future water service areas
- Reflect proposed expansions to the priority and future sewer service areas
- Reflect possible future expansions to the Priority Funding Area (PFA) boundary