
CHAPTER ONE: MASTER PLAN PROCESS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Town of Mount Airy has participated in the Comprehensive Planning Process for more than forty years. Over this period, the Town has experienced tremendous growth in both its residential expansion and in terms of the services it provides to the community.

The overly rapid development of the community often creates negative impacts, especially when the small town is also widely affected by surrounding regional development. The effects can be tangible such as increased traffic or an intangible loss, perceived as an eroding sense of “community.”

MASTER PLAN PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The Master Plan guides land use decisions made by the Planning Commission and Town Council. The plan addresses physical growth, is long range in scope and comprehensive.

It also takes into consideration the rate of community growth, community services and community character.

A town’s Master Plan states broad goals to be achieved over a period of up to twenty years. However, sound long-range planning policies dictate that the Master Plan be reviewed on an annual basis and a comprehensive update done at least once every 10 years.

Citizen involvement and participation are critical elements in the interactive plan update process. It is essential that local surveys and need assessments results be the basis for the first draft of the plan. As the process unfolds, the Planning Commission will seek input from other Town commissions and hold open forums to allow for citizen comments. In addition, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing after which they shall send a final plan for recommendation to the Town Council.

Upon the Town Council’s adoption of the Plan, the Town will begin implementation, utilizing tools designed for that purpose such as: subdivision regulations, zoning ordinance, landscape ordinance, budget and the capital improvements program. The Planning Commission will examine the implementation tools on a regular basis to assess consistency with the Master Plan.

STATE ENABLING LEGISLATION

LAND USE ARTICLE

Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland was added to the Maryland Code in 1927. It delegates basic planning and land use regulatory powers to all of the municipalities within the State of Maryland. Today it is known as the Land Use Article.

Specifically, the Land Use Article, Section 3-101, explicitly states that “it shall be the function and duty of the [planning] commission to make and approve a plan which shall be recommended to the local legislative body for adoption and which shall serve as a guide to public and private actions and decisions to ensure the development of public and private property in appropriate relationships and which shall include any areas outside of its boundaries which, in the commissions judgment, bear relation to the planning responsibilities of the commission”.

The code further identifies the minimum elements the plan should contain that address goals and objectives, transportation, land use, community facilities, and sensitive areas. Section 3.06 of the code discusses plan purpose and vision:

“In preparation of the plan, the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth of the jurisdiction, and with due regard to its relation to neighboring territory. The plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing the coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the jurisdiction, and its environs which will, in accordance with present and future needs, ...including among other things, adequate provisions for traffic, the promotion of public safety, adequate provision for light and air, conservation of natural resources, the prevention of environmental pollution, the promotion of healthful and convenient distribution of population, the promotion of good civic design and arrangement, wise and efficient expenditure of public funds, and the adequate provision of public utilities and other public improvements.”

The State Annotated Code has been updated to encompass much more in its requirements for certain elements to be included in comprehensive plans. The focus in recent years has been to recognize the value and importance of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and how regional and statewide development affects its long-term health. Emphasis has also been on protection of natural, cultural, and historic resources in order to leave a heritage for future generations of Marylanders. The State law also stresses the importance of the provision of adequate public facilities for all local jurisdictions.

1991 FOREST CONSERVATION ACT

The Forest Conservation Act of 1991 (Natural Resources Article, § 5-1601, et. seq.) was enacted to protect the forests of Maryland by making forest conditions and character an integral part of the site planning process. It is regulated by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, but implemented and administered by local governments. The Forest Conservation Act seeks to maximize the benefits of forests and slow the loss of forest land in Maryland, while allowing development to take place.

1992 ECONOMIC GROWTH, RESOURCE PROTECTION AND PLANNING ACT

The State Planning Act of 1992 took effect in October of that year and is a general planning policy within the State Annotated Code. The Planning Act updates the Land Use Article and advocates growth in and around existing infrastructure, which specifically indicates established or designated growth area, municipalities and other areas with development dense enough to support infrastructure systems, such as major Planned Unit Developments and rehabilitation of existing urban communities.

Smart Growth Areas, designated by the State as Priority Funding Areas, reflect the State of Maryland's intention to support the revitalization of existing communities. This act capitalized on the influence of State expenditures on economic growth and development. The "Priority Funding Areas" are existing communities and other locally designated growth areas consistent with the original seven "visions" of the 1992 Planning Act. It is by adhering to these visions that the State plans to achieve sound growth and planning practices. The intention to focus State spending in these areas will hopefully provide the most efficient and effective use of tax dollars and reduce the pressure for sprawl into agricultural and other natural resource areas.

The direct benefit from guiding growth within the areas served by infrastructure improvements is far reaching. The Planning Act encourages responsible development design, overall preservation of environmental resources and other sensitive areas, along with the limitation of sprawling development patterns. The State's concern for the overall health of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed formed the basis of this legislation and has been looked upon as a proactive and progressive move in the field of long-range planning at the State level.

1997 PRIORITY FUNDING AREAS ACT

The Maryland General Assembly passed the Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth initiatives in 1997. This legislation enhances the Planning Act passed in 1992 that established the seven visions to guide growth and development throughout the State. The Smart Growth initiatives go much further by establishing a variety of State programs and fiscal tools in an effort

to protect sensitive areas, plan for better growth and direct resources. The State's Smart Growth toolbox includes a wide range of policies and programs that address land preservation, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, transportation, environmental protection, historic preservation and other initiatives. Some of the more significant initiatives are described below:

PRIORITY FUNDING AREAS: Priority Funding Areas (PFA) define geographical areas within each county where the State wants to target its programmatic efforts and infrastructure funding to support economic development and new growth. Existing or new developments located outside of a State certified PFA would not be eligible to receive state funding for infrastructure improvements such as roads, water or sewer. Generally the PFA criteria require a property to be within a designated growth area, have appropriate zoning and be classified in a 10-year water/sewer service area.

RURAL LEGACY PROGRAM: This program provides funding to identify and protect the State's most valuable farmland and natural resource areas. The State uses the funding to purchase development easements from property owners through a voluntary application process or to purchase the property in its entirety (in fee-simple). The funding can only be used in State designated Rural Legacy Areas.

2006 STATE PLANNING INITIATIVES

The 2006 Maryland Legislative session produced several planning related requirements that affected the way Maryland's counties and municipalities exercise planning and zoning authority.

The specific legislation that came out of House Bill 1141 (HB 1141) and House Bill 2 (HB 2) are described below.

WATER RESOURCES PLAN ELEMENT (WRE): Addresses the relationship between water and wastewater capacities with planned growth. The three components of the WRE include: drinking water supply; wastewater treatment and disposal; and non-point source and storm water management.

MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT: Required municipalities to identify areas for future growth consistent with a long-range vision. This element also requires coordination with the County and recommends the use of joint planning agreements between the municipality and the County.

PRIORITY PRESERVATION ELEMENT: This element came out of HB 2 and is required for counties with certified agricultural land preservation programs. Priority Preservation Areas may designate several connected or unconnected parcels of land with the goal of creating larger contiguous blocks of parcels for agricultural preservation.

WORK FORCE HOUSING ELEMENT: House Bill 1160 established a Work Force Housing Grant Program, which can be used by local jurisdictions that have a Work Force Housing element in its comprehensive plan. This element would assess workforce housing needs and goals to address the needs.

2006 AMENDED SENSITIVE AREAS ELEMENT

The Planning Act of 1992 mandated the inclusion of a Sensitive Areas Element as part of a jurisdiction's comprehensive plan. As amended in 2006 the following sensitive areas are required: Streams and their Buffers, 100-Year Floodplain, Habitats of Endangered and Threatened Species, Steep Slopes and Agricultural and forest lands for resource protection and conservation.

MARYLAND'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR) prepared a Green Infrastructure Atlas in 2000 and a Statewide Green Infrastructure Assessment in 2003. These plans identified large, contiguous blocks of ecologically significant natural areas (Hubs) and natural corridors to create a statewide network of natural resource lands. An important component of the State's plan is the identification of gaps in the links/corridors that create impediments to ecological systems.

HIGH QUALITY (TIER II) WATERS: The Federal Clean Water Act requires the State of Maryland to identify water bodies that are high in quality (Tier II water bodies). Tier II waters indicate exceptional water quality, in-stream and riparian habitat conditions as measured by the health of the biological community—fish and insects—in a stream. In order to be classified as Tier II, waterways must have high values in the following measures of biological health:

- Fish Index of Biotic Integrity (FIBI) – a measurement of the composition, diversity, pollution tolerance, habitat and feeding characteristics of fish.
- Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (BIBI) – a measurement of the composition, diversity, pollution tolerance, habitat and feeding characteristics of stream insects, called benthic macro Invertebrates.

HABITAT OF ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES: The Natural Heritage Program (NHP) is the lead state agency responsible for the identification, ranking, protection and management of nongame, rare and endangered species and their habitats in Maryland. Data collected by NHP provide the scientific foundation for the Threatened and Endangered Species lists mandated by the Act.

THE SMART AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH ACT OF 2009 &
THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT OF 2010

The Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009 and the 2010 Sustainable Communities legislation further define Smart Growth Principles, and set forth twelve “visions” that guide the counties and municipalities in their individual comprehensive planning process. The 2009 Smart and Sustainable Growth Act clarifies the link between local comprehensive plans and local land use ordinances to ensure they are consistent whereas the 2010 Act identifies tax credits for implementing smart growth planning. The twelve state visions for implementing sound growth and development policies are:

1. **QUALITY OF LIFE AND SUSTAINABILITY:** A high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment;
2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals;
3. **GROWTH AREAS:** Growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers;
4. **COMMUNITY DESIGN:** Compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportations resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources;
5. **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner;
6. **TRANSPORTATION:** A well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods and services within and between population and business centers;
7. **HOUSING:** A range of housing densities, types and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes;
8. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Economic development and natural resource-based business that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State’s natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged;

9. **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources;
10. **RESOURCE CONSERVATION:** Waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved;
11. **STEWARDSHIP:** Government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection; and
12. **IMPLEMENTATION:** Strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, State, and Interstate levels to achieve these visions.

The interpretation and implementation of these visions are left to the local governments so that they may be addressed as appropriately tailored to unique local conditions.

THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ACT OF 2012 (SB236)

Senate Bill 236 (SB236), the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 was passed by the General Assembly on April 9, 2012 and signed by Governor O'Malley on May 2, 2012. The purpose of the legislation is to decrease future nutrient pollution to the Chesapeake Bay and other water resources and to reduce the amount of forest and agricultural land developed by large lot developments. It does this by limiting major residential subdivisions served by on-site septic systems.

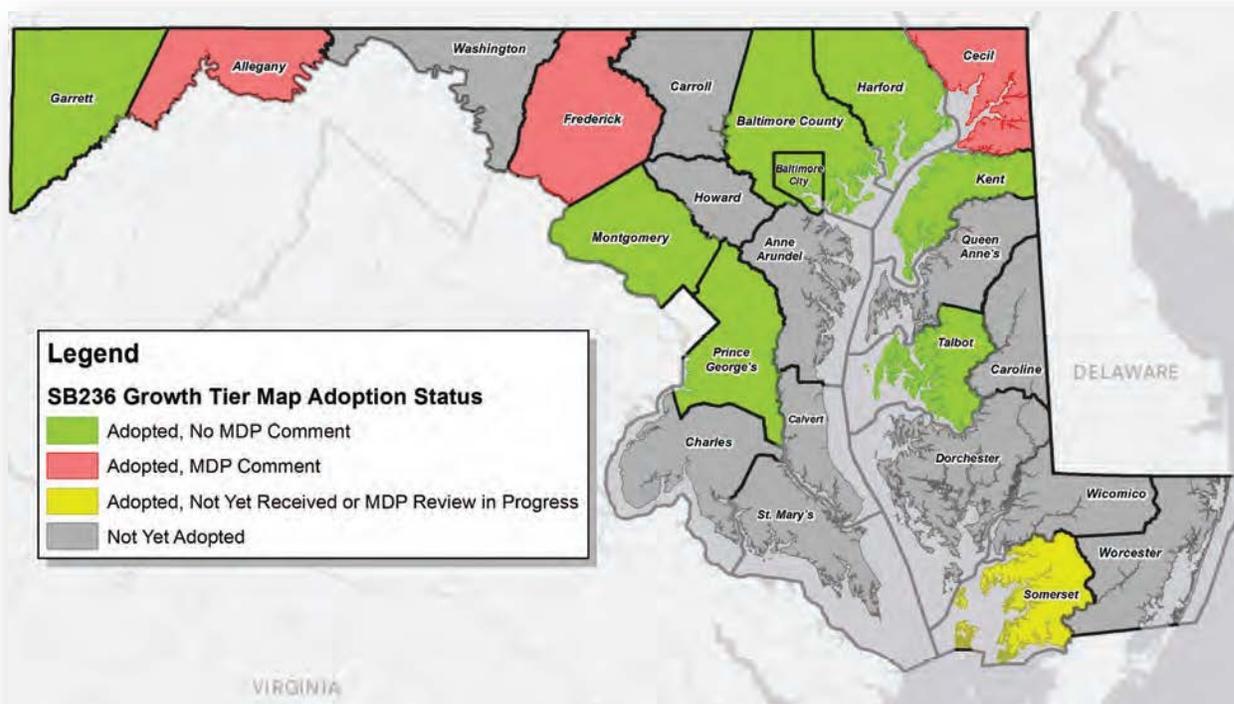
The law provides counties and municipalities the option to adopt a growth tier map that identifies where residential major and minor subdivisions may be located in their jurisdiction and what type of sewerage system will serve them. Without an adopted tier map, a local jurisdiction may not authorize a major residential subdivision served by on-site septic systems, community systems or shared systems. The four tiers described in the Act are as follows:

Tier I areas are currently served by sewerage systems.

Tier II areas are planned to be served by sewerage systems.

Tier III areas are not planned to be served by sewerage systems. These are areas where growth on septic systems can occur.

Tier IV areas are planned for preservation and conservation and prohibit residential major subdivisions.



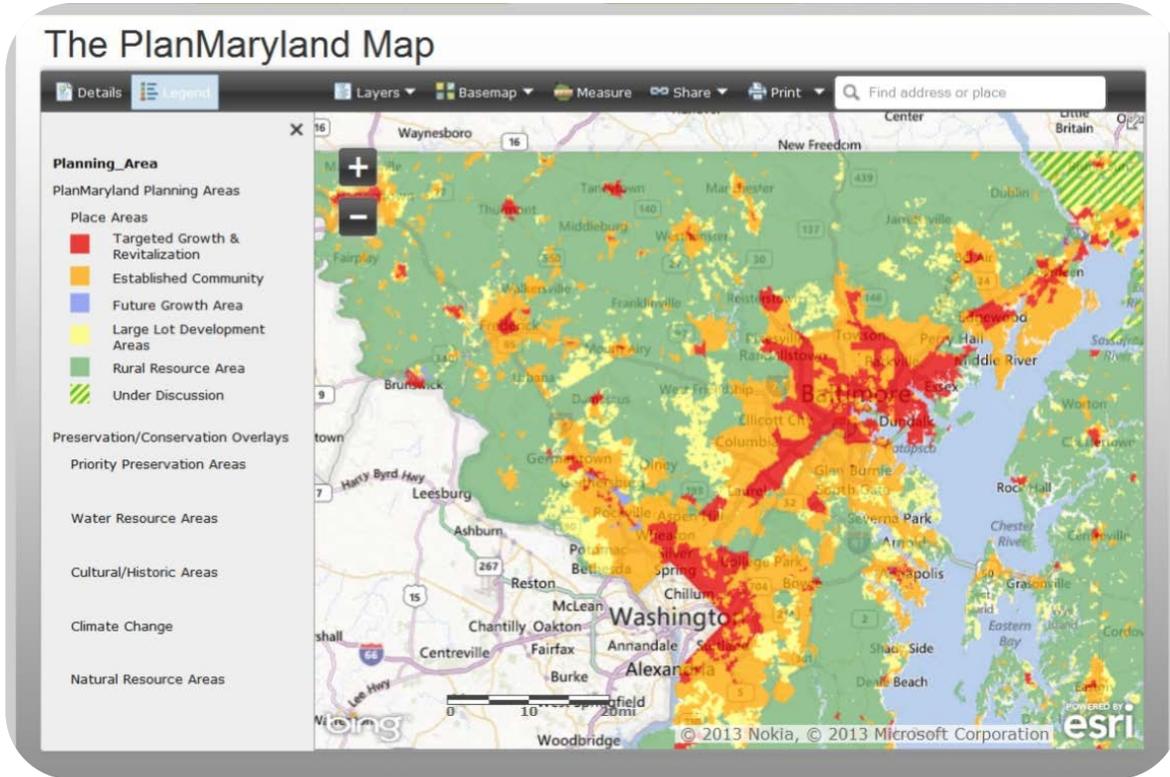
Status of County Tier Maps (as of February 1, 2013) Report to the General Assembly on Implementation of Senate Bill 236, the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012. Feb 2013. Maryland Department of Planning. <http://planning.maryland.gov/PDF/OurWork/SepticsBill/septicsLawImplementationReport20130201.pdf>

In October 2012, the Town coordinated with both Carroll and Frederick County along with the Maryland Department of Planning to consider a draft tier map for adoption. The Town determined that the completion of the 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan update was necessary prior to considering the formal adoption of a tier map. The Town will initiate discussions with the County and State Planning Liaisons to implement these regulations once the plan has been adopted by the Town.

THE “PLAN MARYLAND” INITIATIVE

The State Legislature passed the Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009 in hopes of protecting Maryland’s environment and natural resources and to promote sustainable growth in Maryland. Through, the Act, the State updated its eight existing visions from the 1992 Planning Act to twelve new visions that more accurately reflect Maryland’s ongoing aspiration to develop and implement sound growth and development policy whose primary focus is on protecting and enhancing the Chesapeake Bay watershed areas.

Plan Maryland, the State’s adopted Master Plan for the State requires close coordination of State Planning, through the municipal, county and regional level. The State’s “growth” goal is to concentrate development and redevelopment in towns, cities existing and/or planned and rural centers where there is infrastructure. The preservation goal is to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive and rural lands and resources from the impacts of development. Lastly, the sustainability goal is intended to ensure a desirable quality of life in our communities and rural areas while preserving the significant natural and cultural resources that define the State.



Plan Maryland’s executive summary explains that the plan’s framework lays out policies to guide State agencies towards smart growth. It establishes defined geographic areas where growth and preservation will be treated as highest priorities. It is meant to provide predictability and direction for local jurisdictions by identifying state areas for growth and preservation. Local jurisdictions will be asked to review and consider the Plan Maryland geographies when updating their own plans and will be given opportunity to designate local areas that are consistent with State planning areas.

The Plan Maryland Map includes a portion of the Town as a Targeted Growth and Revitalization area. The area includes the main commercial areas of the Town, west of MD 27 corridor and encompasses several parkland areas and a major school complex residing within the Carroll/Frederick County boundaries.

Additionally, the Town has received several significant program designations. The Town is designated a Priority Funding Area (PFA)(1997), Main Street Community (2004), Community Legacy Area, and received a Sustainable Community Designation (2012). The Town also has a State and Federally recognized Historic District, established in 1984, encompassing primarily the downtown area.

ANALYSIS OF SURROUNDING COUNTY GROWTH POLICIES

In order to get a clear picture of the regional growth influences that Mount Airy has experienced over the last thirty years, it is important to summarize the Master Plan directions of the four counties that abut the Town.

The inter-jurisdictional coordination of the Town with Carroll and Frederick Counties is a vital component in monitoring the growth within our regional area. It allows the Town to evaluate residential, commercial and industrial development directly outside of its boundaries. The Town will continue to closely monitor all development in adjoining counties to assess the long-term impacts for the community.

1. FREDERICK COUNTY PLAN The general intent of the recently updated Countywide Comprehensive Plan is to encourage growth in and around existing municipalities, but also in designated “growth areas” such as Urbana Planned Unit Development (PUD), located directly southwest of Mount Airy. The Urbana PUD is generating a sizeable population base that affects our area. It is slated for 3,500 housing units or 10,000 persons, exactly the size of Mount Airy. The New Market Region is west of Mount Airy. The New Market Region is west of Mount Airy. Future growth of this area is guided by the Frederick County’s New Market Region land use plan. The New Market Region Plan also designates land areas to be included as part of Mount Airy’s



future growth. These land areas are defined as Frederick County’s Mt. Airy Community Growth Area (CGA). Since its adoption in 2006, both the plan and CGA have undergone several revisions. The County’s 2006 New Market Region Plan included the following properties within the County’s Mt. Airy CGA with the following designations: Zeltman, Kraft, Royston, Rigler parcels (Low Density Residential); 84 Lumber area [Highway Service, Limited Industrial, Resource Conservation]; Day/Vosloh properties north of I-70 (Office/Research/Industrial). A subsequent revision to the 2006 New Market Region Plan was made in 2008 and eliminated the Kraft, Zeltman, and Royston properties from the Mt. Airy GCA and removed their Comprehensive Plan designations to Low Density Residential. In 2010, a Countywide Comprehensive Plan update was completed and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, which retained the 2008 changes around Mt. Airy described above. The 2010 County Comprehensive Plan removed a 16-acre parcel, zoned Resource Conservation, adjacent to the 84-Lumber site, from the Mt. Airy GCA. Lastly, in September 2012, the BOCC adopted amendments to the Comprehensive Plan which added a Low Density land use designation to the Zeltman parcel. Additionally, the original plan restricted the majority of development activity to the area immediately surrounding the Town of New Market. The new plan, currently under revision by the Frederick County Commissioners, indicates many more residential re-zonings in the regional area that borders the eastern portion of Frederick County between the Town of New Market and the Town of Mount Airy. Mount Airy Town Government is closely monitoring this issue as it not only affects our water recharge areas, but adds significant population growth outside of the boundaries of the two municipalities.

2. CARROLL COUNTY PLAN The southwestern part of Carroll County is referred to the “Mount Airy Environs” and includes the incorporated limits of the Town. The County last updated the environs plan in 2006, *Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan*. This plan is currently being updated with an anticipated adoption in 2014. It is an update of the current 2000 *Carroll County Challenges and Choices: A Master Plan for the Future*. The Town will work in close coordination with Carroll County to accommodate growth areas planned in the Counties adjacent to our boundaries if they can be served by future public facilities.



3. HOWARD COUNTY GENERAL PLAN The area of Howard County that lies directly southeast of the Town boundaries and Interstate 70 is considered to be the “rural west” area of the County. The current plan describes this area as outside of the Priority Funding Area, not served by public water and sewer, and includes both Low



Density Development and Rural Resource designated place types. The current Adequate Public Facilities chart includes 150 “Rural West” housing allocations per year. The update to the 2000 Howard County General Plan is referred to as *Plan Howard 2030*. The plan proposes to decrease the annual allocation number to 100, slowing future development in the West through 2030. The “Community Design Chapter” of *Plan Howard 2030* speaks towards the need to identify ways to preserve the existing character of established neighborhoods while accommodating some continuing growth. Howard County has maintained a policy of preservation for the western half of the county and has applied the Rural-Conservation Zoning District to this area. This designation requires a clustering provision to preserve the maximum amount of undeveloped land possible. Much of the land in this section of Howard County has had the development rights purchased through the Howard County Agricultural Preservation Program. Mount Airy will continue to serve the basic commercial needs of Northern Howard County.

4. **MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLAN** Montgomery County remains in line with their basic policies adopted in their 1964 Wedges and Corridors Plan for the metropolitan region. The plan calls for development of regional centers along planned transportation corridors, and preservation of agricultural land that fills the remaining “wedges”. The Mount Airy region falls within one of these outer lying wedges. Land between Damascus to our south and Mount Airy is zoned agricultural. Frederick County has approved an extensive amount of residential development up to the Montgomery County line, which has resulted in increased development pressure along MD 27.

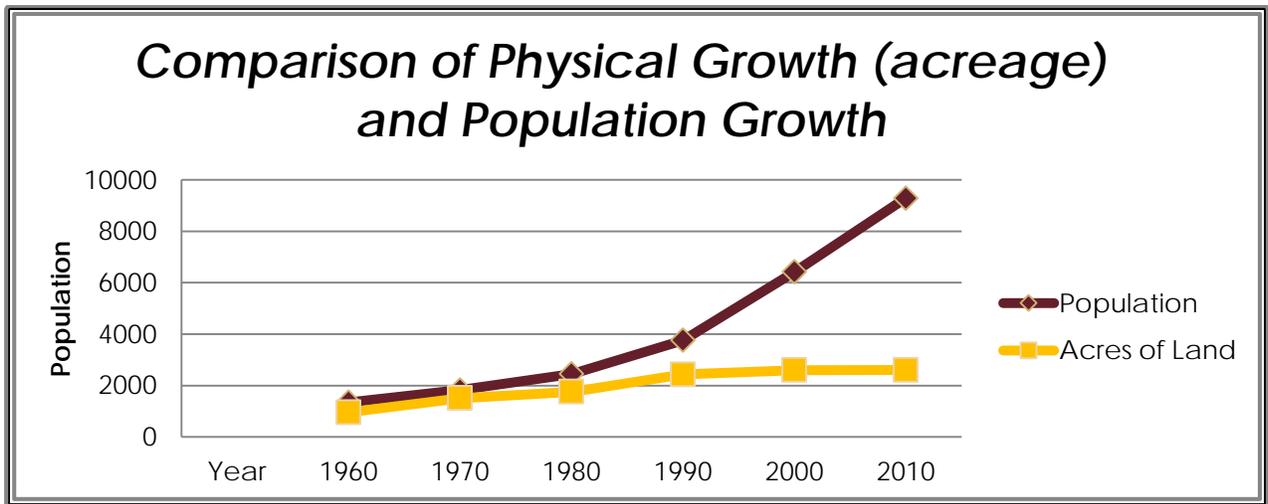


MOUNT AIRY'S MASTER PLAN HISTORY

Mount Airy's first Master Plan was adopted in 1970 and revised in 1973 primarily to address annexations of over 480 acres that increased the Town's physical size by 50% during that period. In 1978, the Town Planning Commission realized that the rate and magnitude of growth, both within and outside the Town boundaries, was far outpacing the projections contained in the 1973 Master Plan. With the support and encouragement of a newly created Mt. Airy Civic Association, the Planning Commission completed an update of the Town Master Plan in 1980, which the Town Council adopted in 1982.

During the 1980s, the Town again experienced rapid development and approved several large annexations significantly impacting natural resources and infrastructure. Accordingly, the 1994 Plan sought to guide development in a way that was beneficial to the Town's citizens and respectful of the environment.

The following chart exists to visually show the population of the Town of Mount Airy from the 1800s to 2010 and the comparison of physical growth and population growth from 1960-2010.



The goal of the subsequent 2003 Master Plan was to create an ongoing vision for Mount Airy that built on the features of the community and the environmental criteria established by the 1994 plan. In addition, the 2003 Master Plan sought to find a balance of both qualitative issues such as streetscapes and neighborhood character, and quantitative issues such as population growth, zoning and adequate public facilities.

The 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan update recognizes that development in Mount Airy has outstripped the Town's ability to meet any more than essential growth in the foreseeable future without major infrastructure improvements that are currently unaffordable and not desired by the majority of the population.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE 2003 MASTER PLAN

PIVOTAL EVENTS

Occurrences and responses overtime to Mount Airy's water capacity.

There have been several key events since the 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan that now require the Town to take a more cautious approach to our growth. Specifically, the Maryland Department of the Environment, as a result of the record drought in 2004, significantly reduced town water appropriations from existing Town wells; MDE's action created a water deficit disrupting the completion of building projects that had already been approved. MDE and the Town entered into a consent order that enabled building to proceed as long as a new water source was brought on line that would meet the demand for new development at the 2004 appropriations levels. The Town considered adding surface water sources to its exclusively ground water supply and in 2006 the Town Council approved a land annexation deal on the Zeltman farm to the north of Town that would have added 275 houses to the Town's building pipeline. The annexation, however, was overwhelmingly rejected by voters in a referendum later the same year.

In 2006, a new Town council instituted a number of growth control measures and sought more modest solutions to meet the Town's water needs. A stricter Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) was introduced and passed in the summer of 2006.

In addition, severe limits were placed on the annual number of houses constructed in residential developments. The Town also opted not to consider large surface water options and instead sought additional ground water sources through exploration. Water savings were achieved through new water metering devices and conservation practices.

A new well was brought on line in 2011 and as a result the demands of the consent order previously placed on the Town by MDE in 2004 were able to be met. The availability of water for additional growth, however, has been severely restricted and dictates the direction of the new Master Plan. Any new growth must be weighed against existing priorities or additional water supplies provided by developers.

A major feature of this Master Plan is a significant advancement in incorporating public participation in the planning process. In 2008, an extensive Town survey was completed to determine resident desires for the future direction of the Town. Over 40% of Town residents

responded to this survey making it a highly reliable indicator for use in preparing the goals and visions discussed in this chapter. This survey was followed up with a needs assessment in 2012 which largely verified the results of the original survey and provided additional information for Town planning.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following are efforts that have led to the implementation of policies, practices, public participation, and interagency cooperation that will serve as the foundation to accomplish the Goals and Objectives in this Master Plan:

Since 2003, there have been some noteworthy accomplishments that serve as a reference for the 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan Update.

- a) The Town continues to host annual joint meetings with both the Frederick and Carroll County Commissioners.
- b) MAMSA and the Town of Mount Airy were awarded a Main Street Maryland Community designation in April, 2004.
- c) The Economic Development Commission was re-established in 2006 in an effort to retain, expand, attract, and recruit diversified business development.
- d) Significant revitalization of the Downtown Area to include the successful rebuilding of the buildings devastated by the September 2007 fire.
- e) The Town continues to participate in an annual Town/County Agreement with Carroll County pertaining to sharing of funds and participation in planning and other governmental functions.
- f) Expansion of Route 27 to include a new dedicated right-turn lane from northbound Route 27 to Twin Arch Road, a new dedicated left-turn lane on northbound and southbound lanes of Route 27 at the Center Street intersection, and the extension of the two through-lane section of northbound Route 27 from Ridge Avenue to north of the Twin Arch Road and Park Avenue intersection.
- g) The Town Council repealed and reenacted Town Code Section 98-23 to increase the required dedication of open space areas from 10% to a minimum of 25%, depending on the respective zoning district of the development area.

- h) With the combined efforts of both the Growth and Development Task Force and Planning Commission, the Town successfully adopted Design Guidelines for “Additions and New Construction” and for the “Rehabilitation of Historic Properties” in April 2010.
- i) Acquisition of the first Rails to Trails Easement in conjunction with the approval of the site development plan for Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church of Baltimore.
- j) The Town repealed and reenacted sections of the Town Code to provide for the manner and process by which the Town is to calculate the Available Yield Capacity, and the allocation of available water and sewer capacity.

INITIATIVES

The following are actions taken or identified opportunities that support defined Goals and Objectives in this Master Plan:

1. Discussions between Town Officials, Carroll County Commissioners, and the Industrial Development Authority pertaining to the Harrison/Leishear Property and the potential benefit of allocation of water and additional park land.
2. In response to the proposed up-zoning of the Zeltman Property, the Planning Commission sent correspondence to the Board of Frederick County Commissioners detailing their concerns with regard to the impact of such proposal. Continue to analyze and respond to proposed changes to land use designations and rezonings along the Town’s border in both Carroll and Frederick County.
3. A speed camera deployment plan specifically targeting schools zones to address speeding is under consideration.
4. Traffic rotaries are being considered as a possible way to provide uninterrupted traffic flow and minimize traffic conflicts.
5. Pursue the acquisition of particular properties located on the border of Town to establish a physical buffer between the Town and both Carroll and Frederick Counties.
6. Identify development along Main Street, Center Street, infill lots and redevelopment opportunities and prioritize available water allocations accordingly.
7. Concentrate efforts to acquire additional easements for the development of the planned Rails to Trails Pathway and identify other pathway connections to provide safe pedestrian

connecting schools, homes, shopping, employment centers, recreation areas, and other destinations.

THE VISION OF MOUNT AIRY'S FUTURE

VISION STATEMENT: To provide a future for Mount Airy that builds on the features of the community and guides development in a way that is beneficial to the Town's citizens while respecting and protecting the environment.

MISSION STATEMENT: The purpose of the Mount Airy Master Plan is to protect the essence of community values and vision, protect and enhance the quality of life and the sense of neighborhood by providing guidelines and standards that ensure:

1. Orderly and balanced growth sensitive to the adjoining and surrounding land uses.
2. Protection of our environmental and cultural resources and groundwater supply.
3. Provision of specific infrastructure thresholds (water, sewer, schools, roads, fire, EMS, police services and the preservation of the character of the Town) to accommodate long-term growth.
4. Establishment of the means to achieve all of the above stated goals.

STATEMENT OF TOWN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives serve as the bridge to implementing this Master Plan.

- **Goals** are defined as “ultimate desirable ends toward which public programs and actions are directed”.
- **Objectives** are defined as “the more specific and immediate needs toward which public programs and actions are directed”. Objectives are more explicit than goals, and wherever possible are stated in terms of obtainable conditions.

TOWN GOALS

Introduced in the 2003 Master Plan, we continue to pursue these five goals:

GOAL 1: Better Manage the Effects of Regional Growth on the Town of Mount Airy

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- a) Take a leading role in discussions with all four counties regarding growth management in the Mount Airy Region.
- b) Pursue opportunities to attract commercial and industrial development to provide a necessary tax base for balanced growth as a regional center. Emphasis should be on the maximum utilization of existing vacancies within Town to minimize the need for additional water whenever possible and to conserve natural resources.
- c) Reach agreements with each county regarding the phasing of growth so that the Town is assured county cooperation with orderly growth.
- d) Seek cost-sharing solutions with both Frederick and Carroll Counties for the provision of infrastructure improvements to accommodate any additional growth.

GOAL 2: Mitigate the Impacts of Regional Growth on Town Character

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- a) Create identifiable boundaries between municipal and non-municipal areas.
- b) Encourage protection of farmland outside the proposed Town limits.
- c) Accommodate regional traffic through Town with minimal conflict on local streets, utilizing traffic calming techniques.
- d) Work with the State Highway Administration to upgrade State Roads within the Town boundaries and to install stop signs or traffic calming devices where needed.
- e) Acquire additional land on the border of Town to establish green space and a physical boundary within the fiscal constraints of the Town budget.

GOAL 3: Preserve and Protect the Town's Environmental and Cultural Resources

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- a) Protect existing naturally sensitive areas from the detrimental effects of development by disallowing development in these areas.
- b) Protect the Town's groundwater resources by increasing wellhead protection and undertaking measures to prevent groundwater pollution. Increase water recharge areas by acquiring land and establishing additional conservation areas, both within and outside of town's corporate boundary. These efforts would also be compatible with providing additional open space to meet public recreational needs.
- c) Concentrate development so there is minimal conflict between the man-made and natural environment.
- d) Establish land uses that are compatible with designated open space or historic areas.
- e) Recognize the value of existing historic structures by providing proper buffering or preservation of immediately surrounding land.

- f) Maintain newly established design guidelines for development that maintain the Town's historic character.

GOAL 4: Provide a Quality Living Environment in the Town of Mount Airy

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- a) Concentrate commercial land uses in areas that best serve the local and regional market.
- b) Maintain quality neighborhoods, including historic Main Street, for the Town's residents.
- c) Maintain public facilities and services and focus development on infill lots of record with water allocations and priority redevelopment to ensure we do not exceed our infrastructure capacity.
- d) Encourage neighborhood and community connections by integrating pedestrian/bicycling networks throughout the Town.
- e) Ensure any future development fosters an attractive visual character and sense of place that is evident in the older more established areas of Town.

GOAL 5: Encourage and Promote Economic Development in the Town

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- a) Encourage tourism by promoting the Town's unique heritage and the future rails to trails paths.
- b) Encourage the use of State Heritage preservation tax credits along with other financial and technical benefits for property owners in the Town Historic District.
- c) Mount Airy's Planning Commission will create and add new Land Use & Zoning Classifications that support the Town's continued economic development as well as provide the opportunity for integrative design as the Town pursues Downtown redevelopment and infill development.

- d) Attract businesses into the Town that can provide jobs locally, such as a professional park.
- e) Mount Airy's Economic Development Commission will work with Frederick County Department of Business Development and Retention and Carroll County Department of Economic Development to further encourage economic development within the Town Limits with the focus on maximization of existing vacant structures and redevelopment of commercial properties within Town borders. Continue to attract commercial and light industrial development for balanced growth as a regional center.
- f) The Town will commit to making businesses viable by fostering a cooperative level of support and dedicating resources to promote unity of purpose within the Town. These initiatives in turn will support the marketing of the Town as a quality designation for living, working, and shopping.

