CHAPTER 2

GROW WITH PURPOSE

HARFORD NEXT
A MASTER PLAN FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

A Master Plan for the Next Generation

GROW WITH PURPOSE

Harford County boasts an enviable combination of quality schools, safe neighborhoods, parks, libraries, and charming Main Street communities making it an ideal place for families to live, work, and play. Those who choose Harford County, do so because it affords them a great quality of life with low crime rates, varied housing options, suburban and rural comforts, and a thriving economy. The importance of maintaining and enhancing this quality of life is fundamental to HarfordNEXT. Recognizing that quality of life is based on multiple factors, HarfordNEXT is grounded in a sustainable approach to land use planning that supports and promotes healthy, vibrant communities. As the County continues to mature, it will be increasingly important for the land use plan to support the ideals that will maintain a high quality of life for current and future residents. The Grow With Purpose theme outlines a framework of policies and implementations that are organized through the development of five principles: Livable Communities, Public Facilities and Infrastructure, Strengthening Communities, Housing, and Government Accountability.

State Visions:

Environmental Protection
Resource Conservation
Stewardship
Public Participation
Quality of Life and Sustainability
Community Design
Infrastructure
Growth Areas
Economic Development
Housing
Implementation

Overlapping Themes:

Economic Vitality
Environmental Stewardship
Preserving Our Heritage
Mobility and Connectivity

Demographic Profile

A look at JOBS

141,926
Labor force in **2013**

$80,622
Median Income

111,204
Total number of jobs

HOME Matters

$1,119
Average Rental Cost per month

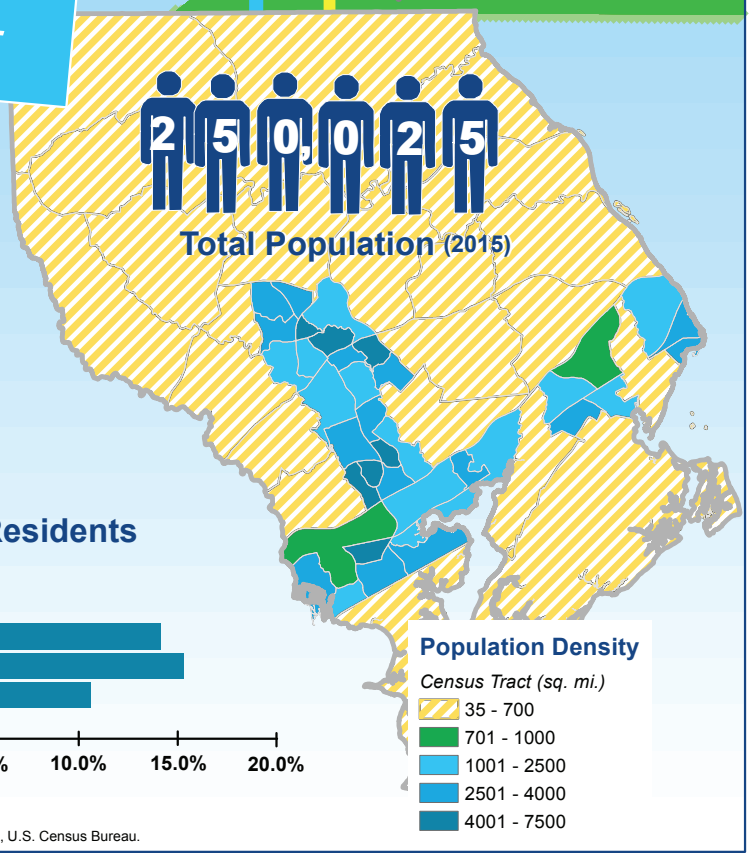
FOR RENT

93,358
Number of Households
(2015)

$281,800
Median Home Value

Counting PEOPLE

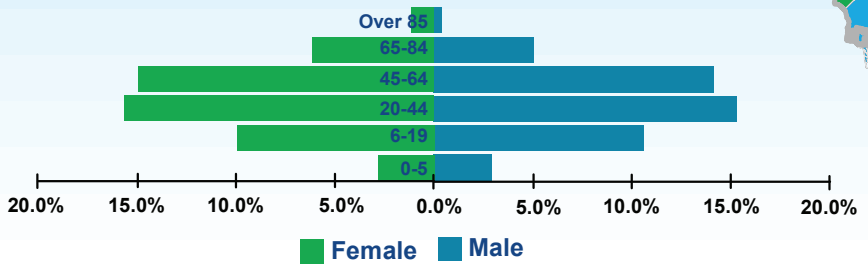
250,025
Total Population (2015)



Growing Young Population

LARGEST AGE SEGMENT IN HARFORD IS 20-44 YEARS OLD

Population by Age of Residents



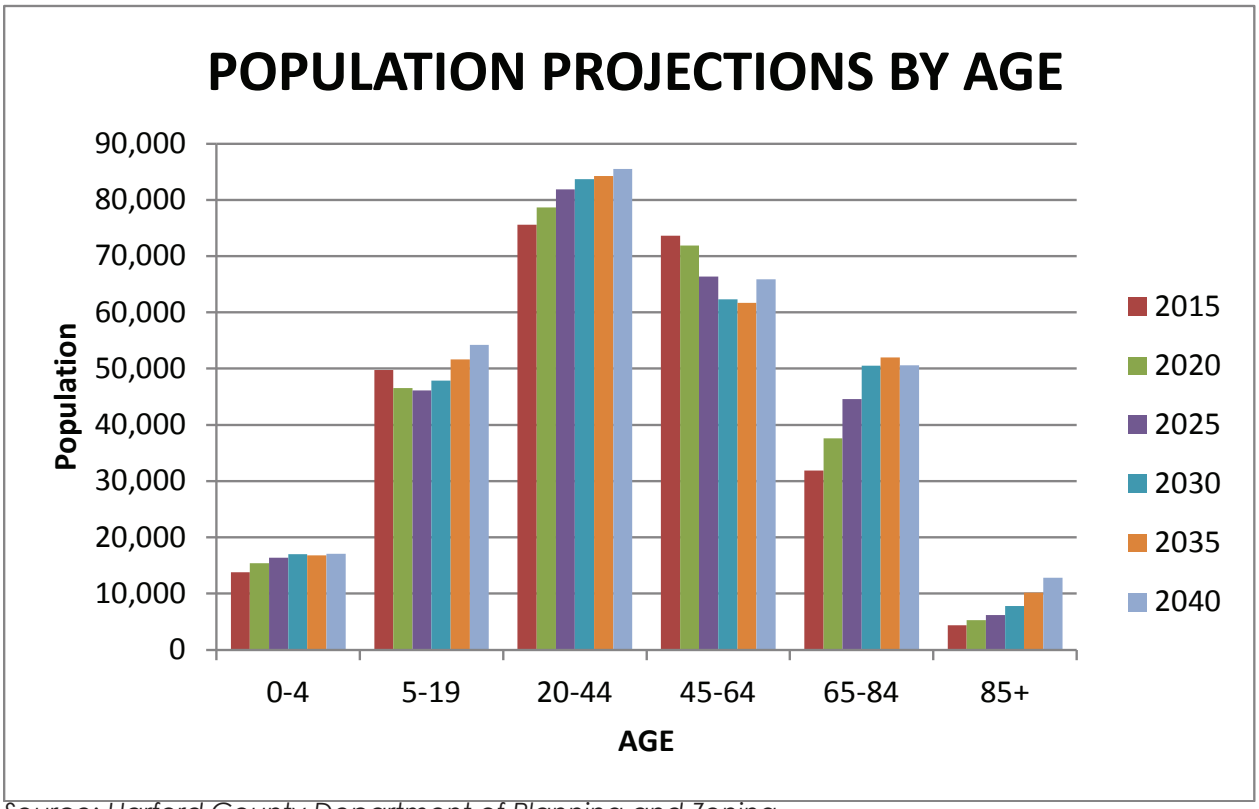
Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey, Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning, U.S. Census Bureau.

Population

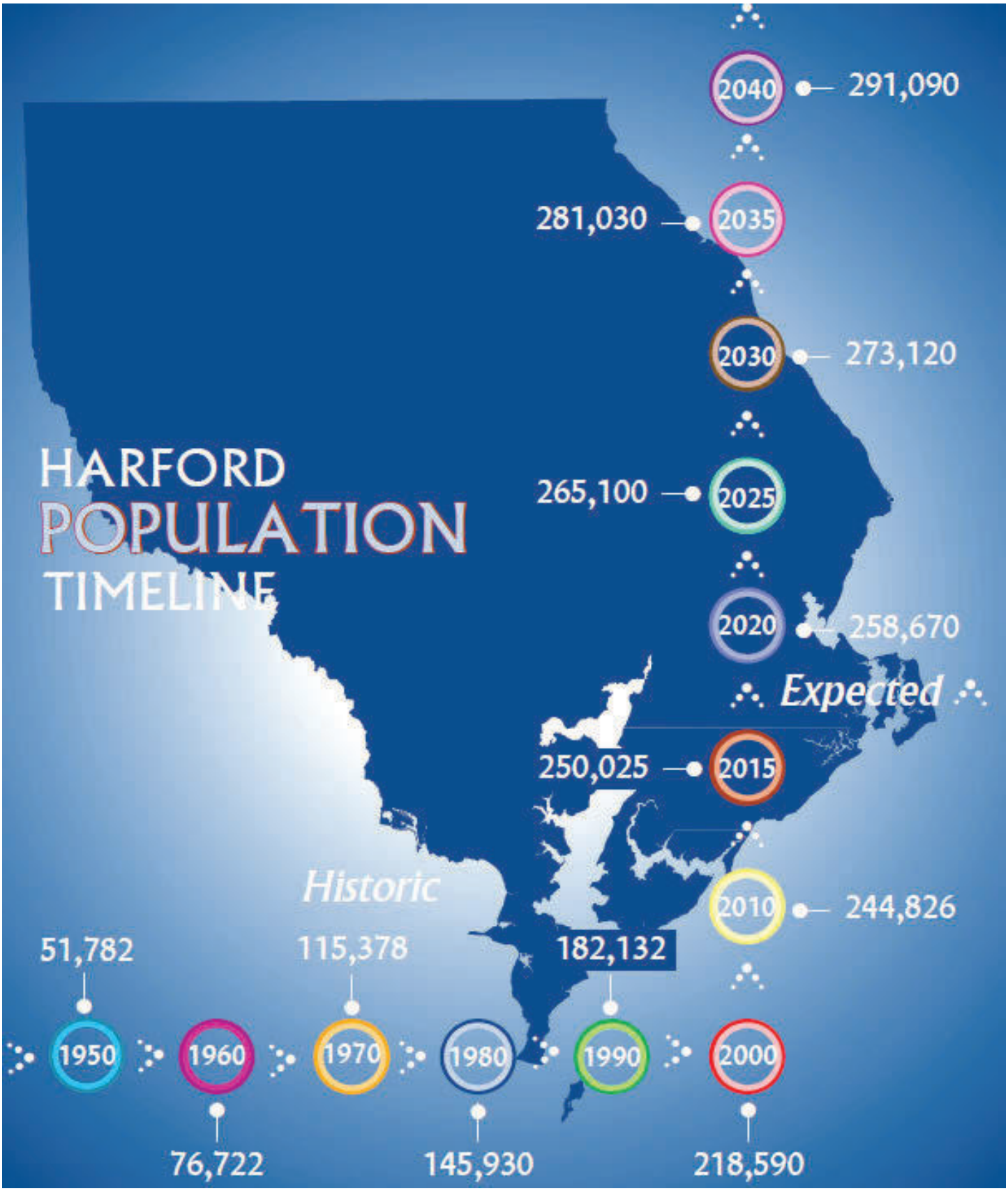
Harford County's population has grown by 70% since 1980 to an estimated 250,025 people in 2015. During the three decades following World War II, Harford's population growth reached historic highs, growing at an average annual rate of 5% between 1950 and 1970; the population more than doubled during the same period. Harford County continued to grow at a lower, though steady rate of 2.5% from 1980 to 2000. Approximately half of the growth during the 1980 to 2000 period was fueled by in-migration from Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

During the latter half of the last decade, the national economic downturn slowed the demand for new housing significantly. Population growth slowed to 0.6% annually between 2005 and 2010. As Harford County emerges from the downturn, the housing market is showing signs of recovery. After a historic low of 511 new housing units in 2008, the number of new housing starts in 2015 rebounded to 705 units.

Though the rate of population growth is unlikely to reach previous highs, population projections for the County reflect an expected increase of over 41,000 new residents (births, in-migration, etc) by 2040. To properly account for the needs of a growing population, it is important to understand the implications of anticipated demographic changes. Perhaps most important among those changes is the aging nature of Harford County's population. By 2040, the population of residents aged 65 and older is projected to grow by 75%, increasing from 36,194 to 63,435 persons. Most notably, the number of people aged 85 and over is projected to triple, increasing from 4,348 to 12,819 persons. The aging of our population is a demographic change that will have significant planning and policy implications for Harford County.

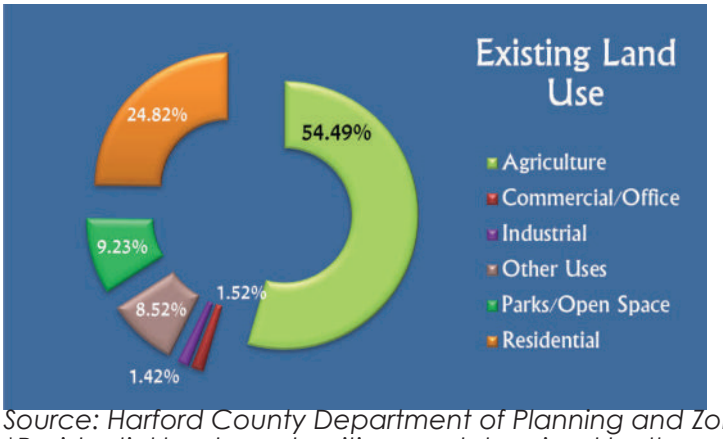


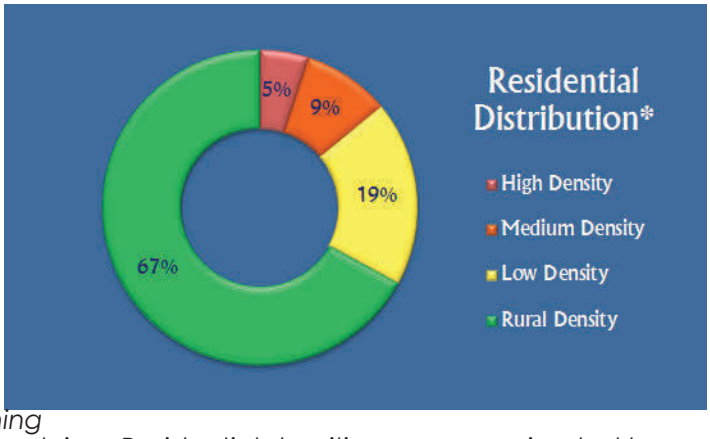
Source: Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning


HARFORD
POPULATION
TIMELINE
2040
291,090
281,030
2035
2030
273,120
265,100
2025
2020
258,670
Expected
250,025
2015
Historic
2010
244,826
51,782
115,378
182,132
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
76,722
145,930
218,590

Existing Land Use

In 2015, the Department of Planning and Zoning analyzed the distribution of land uses within the County to guide the development of HarfordNEXT. The predominant use of a given property was determined through analysis of aerial photography, information from the State Department of Assessments and Taxation, and field verification. Results show a diverse mix of land uses throughout the County. It is important to note that agriculture continues to be the predominant land use, comprising 126,362 acres or approximately 55% of the total land area within the County. The second largest category is residential with approximately 25%, or 57,572 acres, of the County's land area devoted to that use.





Source: Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning
**Residential land use densities are determined by the parcel size. Residential densities are approximated by the following categories: High Density – 6 dwelling units per acre and greater; Medium Density – 3 to 6 dwelling units/acre; Low Density Residential – 1 to 3 dwelling units/acre; Rural Density Residential – 1 dwelling for parcels between 1 and 9.99 acres.*

Land Capacity Analysis

Development Envelope Residential Land Capability

In December 2014, the Department of Planning and Zoning analyzed properties inside the Development Envelope in order to assess the County's residential potential. An inventory of residential land was compiled that comprised both vacant and underutilized parcels and accounted for factors such as parcel size, environmental constraints, zoning type, and permitted densities. The resulting inventory includes four categories: approved preliminary plans with unbuilt units, potential dwelling units from residential zoned vacant/underutilized land, municipal undeveloped land capacity, and potential residential mixed-use dwelling unit capacity. Based on this assessment, there is an existing estimated capacity for 18,883 housing units within the Development Envelope with the potential for an additional 2,652 within the three municipalities.

Residential Land Inventory Category	Units
Plan Approved Un-built Dwelling Units - An inventory of all approved residential preliminary plans, less new construction permits issued for these plans.	4,827
Potential Dwelling Units from Residential Zoned Vacant/Underutilized Land - An inventory of developable land accounting for factors such as parcel size, environmental constraints, zoning type, and permitted density.	11,739
Potential Dwelling Units From Mixed-Use Development - Based on an inventory of parcels five acres or larger with zoning classification B1, B2, B3, CI, GI, and LI that have the potential to include a residential component if developed under Mixed-Use development standards.	2,317
Total Unincorporated County Development Envelope Capacity	18,883

Potential Dwelling Units From Municipalities: Aberdeen, Bel Air, and Havre de Grace - An inventory of all approved municipal residential preliminary plans, less new construction permits issued for these plans.	2,652

Total Development Envelope Capacity	21,535

Source: Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning

Rural Area Land Residential Capability

While the majority of development has been directed toward the Development Envelope, it is acknowledged that a limited amount of development will occur in rural areas. Based on an analysis of the residential potential in the rural areas of the County, the estimated residential capacity available outside the Development Envelope is 7,286 units. This figure includes 5,351 potential development rights available on Agricultural zoned parcels with the remaining capacity of 1,935 units tied to Rural Residential or Village Residential zoned parcels. Potential exists for up to 1,037 additional units through the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's).

Commercial / Industrial Land Capability

Harford County is committed to ensuring zoning and land use decisions are compatible and accommodate economic growth opportunities. To ensure there is sufficient capacity to accommodate commercial and industrial uses, the Department completed a comprehensive inventory of all property currently zoned B1, B2, B3, VB, CI, MO, GI, and LI. The resulting inventory included vacant and underutilized parcels in order to estimate the amount of developable acreage available for future development.

Vacant / Underutilized Land By Zoning Type	B1	B2	B3	VB	CI	MO	GI	LI	Total Acreage
Developable Acreage	90	214	661	108	936	60	1,546	947	4,562

Source: Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning

The inventory identified 2,069 acres of developable land zoned for commercial use (B1, B2, B3, VB, CI, and MO) with an additional 333 acres of similarly zoned land within the County's three municipalities. The inventory identified 2,493 developable acres zoned for industrial use (GI, LI). An additional 155 acres of industrially zoned land is located within the municipalities.

Developable area refers to the total area of land available for development; excluding open space, protected environmentally sensitive areas, and land used for other public facilities.

Infrastructure

It is anticipated that the need for publicly managed services and facilities will rise as the County's population continues to grow and mature. The maintenance of services and facilities will be an ongoing priority for the County to uphold service quality. Upgrades to facilities will require significant capital investment, and the expansion of services will likewise necessitate considerable outlay by the County or its partners that should be considered as part of a broader capital planning process to ensure they are provided in a timely and cost effective way. A method for prioritizing projects should be used to ensure that the Capital Improvement Program is consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in HarfordNEXT.

Public Facilities

To ensure that an acceptable quality of life is maintained, public facilities throughout Harford County must meet the needs of current and future residents. Many County departments and agencies maintain strategic plans to ensure service delivery standards are met.

Plans include:

- 2009 Fire and EMS Services Master Plan
- 2013 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- 2014 Educational Facilities Master Plan
- 2015 Lead, Engage, Exceed, A Strategic Plan for Harford County Public Library
- 2015 Facilities Master Plan

Water and Sewer

The County's public water and wastewater service area generally conforms to the Development Envelope. However, not all properties within the Development Envelope are served by public water and sewer, and services may be extended to properties beyond the boundary to protect human health and safety.

The Water Resources Element (WRE) is an important component of HarfordNEXT, required by the state to ensure the coordination of growth management and water resources planning between the County and the municipalities (Bel Air, Havre de Grace and Aberdeen) as well as

Aberdeen Proving Ground and private providers. The WRE also requires that there be suitable receiving water and land areas to meet the stormwater management needs of existing and future development as identified in this plan. The County's efforts to provide sustainable water resources will be a prominent focus in the coming decade. Protection of its existing surface water supplies, as well as its groundwater resources, is essential to meeting the drinking water needs of the citizens of Harford County. An updated WRE can be found in Appendix II.

The Fallston Commercial Corridor and its associated Sanitary Sewer Service Area has been experiencing planned growth and redevelopment since public sewer service was provided to the region. In 2015, the County received petition requests from two existing groups of residential properties adjacent to the Service Area to obtain sewer service by expanding the Service Area. The sewer system in the Fallston Sanitary Sewer Service Area was originally designed to provide limited capacity to a select group of properties in the Fallston Commercial Corridor. As a result of requests by some of the property owners in the area to expand the Sanitary Sewer Service Area, Harford County will be hiring a consultant to prepare a detailed comprehensive study of the Fallston Sanitary Sewer Service Area. The study will determine what improvements to the sewer system may be required to serve an expanded service area.

Information Technology

In 2014, Harford County unveiled its high-speed fiber optics network, known as the Harford Metro Area Network (HMAN). Once complete, HMAN will provide high-speed connectivity to government buildings, schools, libraries, and economic development zones. Harford County is currently developing a Broadband Strategic Plan. This plan is intended to supplement and provide support for the significant efforts already undertaken by the Harford County Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT) to develop communications infrastructure for economic development and government service purposes. The Plan offers analysis and strategic guidance for steps the County can take, by itself or in partnership with the business community and private communications carriers, to fill existing gaps in the broadband market, to maximize the broadband opportunity in Harford County and, over time to attract and catalyze new investment in broadband infrastructure and services. It is important to note that Harford County's ongoing efforts to create a formal interagency structure for planning and collaboration in broadband is the first of its kind in Maryland.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

Harford County has Adequate Public Facilities (APF) standards that tie the approval of development to the availability of existing public services such as schools, water and sewer, and roads, to accommodate new users. These standards offer a mechanism for managing the pace of development and ensure adequate service levels are in place. In July of each year, the Annual Growth Report is provided to the County Council in accordance with the APF provisions. The Annual Growth Report provides an ongoing analysis of growth trends, facility capacity, and service performance and identifies facilities below the adopted minimum standards. Public officials and County agencies use the report to assess system adequacy and identify crucial deficiencies, which helps in the evaluation of projects in the Capital Improvement Program.

Future Growth

The Development Envelope was established in 1977 to focus growth along the US 40 and MD 924/24 corridors, and it has been largely successful in channeling growth to those areas. Between 1970 and 2012, 86% of residential growth occurred within the Development Envelope. However, in part due to the County's commitment to maintaining that boundary, property outside the Development Envelope continued to fragment as large lot residential development expanded on well and septic systems. It was not until 2012 that residential development outside the Development Envelope started to shrink as a proportion of overall growth. This coincided with passage of the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012, often referred to as Senate Bill 236. The bill set limitations on the use of septic systems, which further concentrated growth inside the Development Envelope. Since 2013, 91% of residential development has occurred on properties inside the Development Envelope.

The appeal of Harford County's exceptional communities, quality schools and parks, abundant rural spaces, and a healthy environment propelled much of the County's growth over the last 30 years, and the Development Envelope served as a safeguard against the rampant expansion of development that might have compromised the very qualities that make Harford County special. HarfordNEXT recognizes that these things remain important to existing residents as well as potential new inhabitants and that any enlargement of the Development Envelope could have significant ramifications with regard to the style and intensity of development. Because the Development Envelope generally corresponds to the County's designated Priority Funding Area, any expansion could also impact the delivery of crucial services.

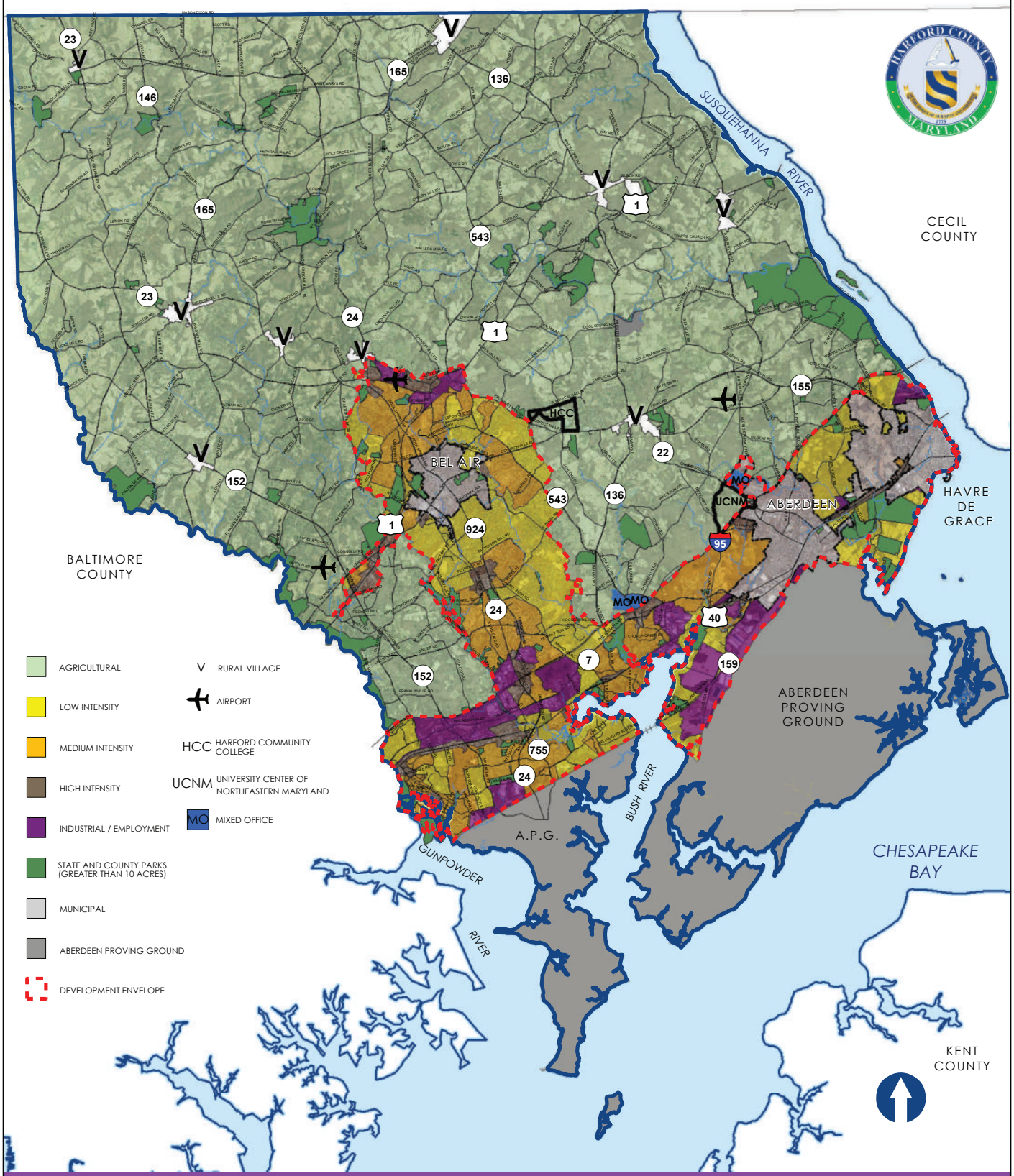
HarfordNEXT proposes three minor adjustments to the Development Envelope, including Fallston (40.8 acres at the SW intersection of MD 152 and MD 147), Forest Hill (25.75 acres at the NW intersection of MD 23 and MD 24), and Creswell (98 acres on the west side of MD 136, south of Cedar Lane). These areas constitute an expansion of just 0.29%. Due to their location adjacent to or surrounded by existing development, the properties should be zoned such that resulting development is compatible with surrounding communities.

The perpetuation of development outside of the Development Envelope can exacerbate conditions that detract from our quality of life and impede economic growth. The distribution of residential areas relative to those with a higher concentration of jobs funnels commuters onto a handful of roadways that are regularly congested. While high volumes of traffic may be anticipated along primary corridors within the Development Envelope, roadways outside of the Development Envelope are frequently the most congested according to the State Highway Administration. In particular, MD 22, MD 543, and MD 152 measure heavy congestion during morning and evening commuting hours.

Land Use Map

The Land Use Map represents a generalization of planned land use patterns and intensities and roughly defines the intended location of development. The Development Envelope is a primary feature of the map and generally includes that portion of the County where public water and sewer services are available or planned. The distribution of these land use designations has evolved over time to provide for balanced growth in the County. Land use designations

Land Use Map


SUSQUEHANNA RIVER
CECIL COUNTY
HAVRE DE GRACE
BALTIMORE COUNTY
BEL AIR
ABERDEEN
HCC
UCNM
MO
MOMO
ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND
A.P.G.
BUSH RIVER
GUNPOWDER RIVER
CHESAPEAKE BAY
KENT COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL
LOW INTENSITY
MEDIUM INTENSITY
HIGH INTENSITY
INDUSTRIAL / EMPLOYMENT
STATE AND COUNTY PARKS (GREATER THAN 10 ACRES)
MUNICIPAL
ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND
DEVELOPMENT ENVELOPE
V RURAL VILLAGE
AIRPORT
HCC HARFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
UCNM UNIVERSITY CENTER OF NORTHEASTERN MARYLAND
MO MIXED OFFICE

and the Land Use Map inform many of the principles, goals, and implementations found in HarfordNEXT. The proposed Land Use Map reflects changes in the disposition of certain areas and highlights opportunities for growth.

The land use categories depicted on the land use map are defined below:

Agricultural – Areas where agriculture is the intended primary land use. Residential development potential is limited and available at a density of 1.0 dwelling unit for every 10 acres. No new commercial or industrial uses are permitted except those intended to serve the agriculture industry or residents of the area while maintaining the character of the surrounding countryside.

Low Intensity – Areas within the Development Envelope where residential development is the primary land use. Development densities shall range from 1.0 to 3.5 dwelling units per acre. Neighborhood commercial uses such as doctors' offices and banks are examples of some of the nonresidential uses associated with this designation.

Medium Intensity – Areas within the Development Envelope where residential development is the primary land use. Development densities shall range from 3.5 to 7.0 dwelling units per acre. Limited commercial uses such as grocery and convenience stores, banks, and professional offices are intended for this designation.

High Intensity – Areas within the Development Envelope that are intended for higher density residential development, exceeding 7.0 dwelling units per acre. These areas are also appropriate for a wide range of commercial uses including retail centers, home improvement centers, automotive businesses and professional offices.

State & County Parks – Areas of land designated for public open space and recreation. These areas also include lands that provide specialized uses such as the Stoney Forest Demonstration Area and the Harford Glen Environmental Education Center

Industrial/Employment – Areas intended for the concentration of manufacturing, warehousing/distribution, technical, research, office, and other employment activities. Generally these designations should be situated along major transportation corridors.

APG – Aberdeen Proving Ground was established in 1917 as a military facility where design and testing of weapons could be carried out in close proximity to the nation's industrial and shipping centers. APG occupies more than 39,000 acres of land and comprises two principal areas, the Aberdeen Area and the Edgewood Area, separated by the Bush River. APG also operates the Churchville Test Area on the east side of MD 136 north of Churchville. The Proving Ground's primary mission is supporting national defense, intelligence, medical research, engineering, and computer technology.

Mixed Office – Areas designated to promote major economic development opportunities such as corporate offices, research and development facilities, and high-tech services which create significant job opportunities and investment benefits. This area may also include residential and retail uses to service the employment center. Designated at strategic I-95 interchanges, development will be subject to specific performance, architectural, and site design standards.

Rural Villages – Areas intended for concentrated residential, commercial and institutional uses located within the agricultural areas of the County that support the character and economy of the surrounding communities by providing necessary goods and services.

Rural Villages

Historically, the communities of Harford County developed as rural crossroads to provide services and support to the agricultural community. Protecting our rural heritage is paramount to protecting the rural way of life and enhancing the character of the landscape and villages. Promoting rural businesses, preservation of historic farms and mills, the development of architectural standards, and the implementation of the Priority Preservation Area and Rural Legacy Area programs will ensure the County's rural villages remain at the center of the communities they serve. It is imperative that policies and strategies be implemented to maintain the viability of the Rural Villages. HarfordNEXT seeks to expand opportunities for existing businesses in the Rural Villages, with an emphasis on businesses that support the agricultural community. This plan also supports directing any growth in the rural areas towards the Rural Villages.

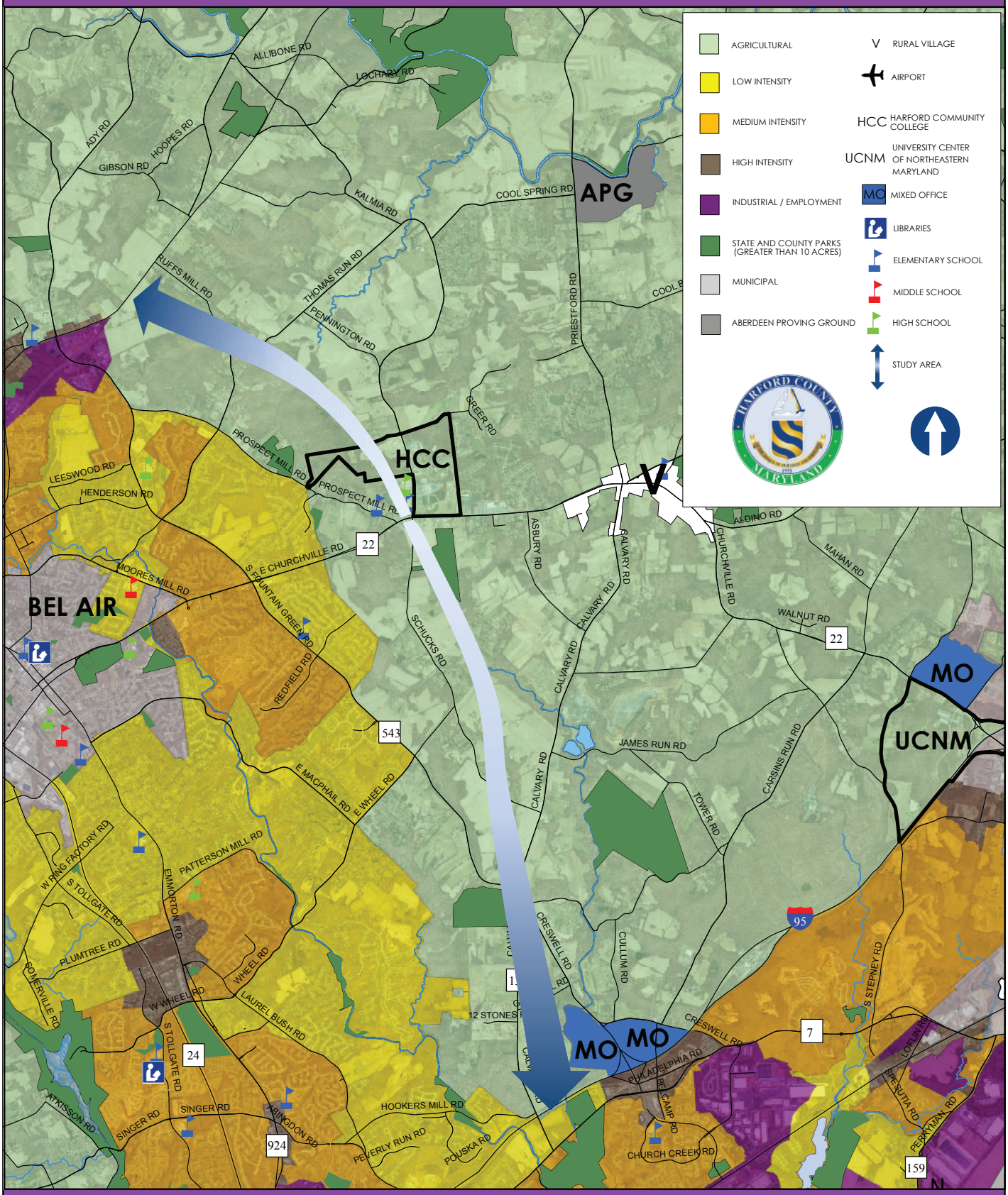
A Rural Village Study was completed in 2007 which evaluated the architectural characteristics of each of the nine Rural Villages. The Rural Village Study shall be used as the basis for developing design standards that can be used to retain or reestablish the original character of the Rural Villages. These standards should also address changes in technology, such as electronic signage, that can impact rural character throughout the County. Because properties outside of the designated villages serve as gateways into the village, commercial properties should also be designed in a manner that aesthetically supports the character of the village area. Redevelopment, infill development or any expansion of Rural Villages in the future should support the character of the village through architectural and aesthetic standards and traditional neighborhood design. New commercial development shall incorporate architecture and aesthetics that respect and enhance the community. The Rural Villages should continue to serve as community focal points, while providing amenities to serve our rural communities.

Study Area

In order to proactively assess the impacts of current or potential growth outside of the Development Envelope, evaluate the integration of new growth areas, and develop a comprehensive infrastructure improvement plan to address existing traffic concerns, the County will initiate a study of the area east of the Development Envelope between US 1 and I-95. The study will include a comprehensive analysis of the community facilities needed to serve this area, including schools, police, fire/EMS, water and sewerage, transportation, parks and recreation, and libraries. The study will also identify strategies for preserving the environmental, historic, and agricultural heritage of the area to ensure the quality of our cultural and natural resources are maintained.

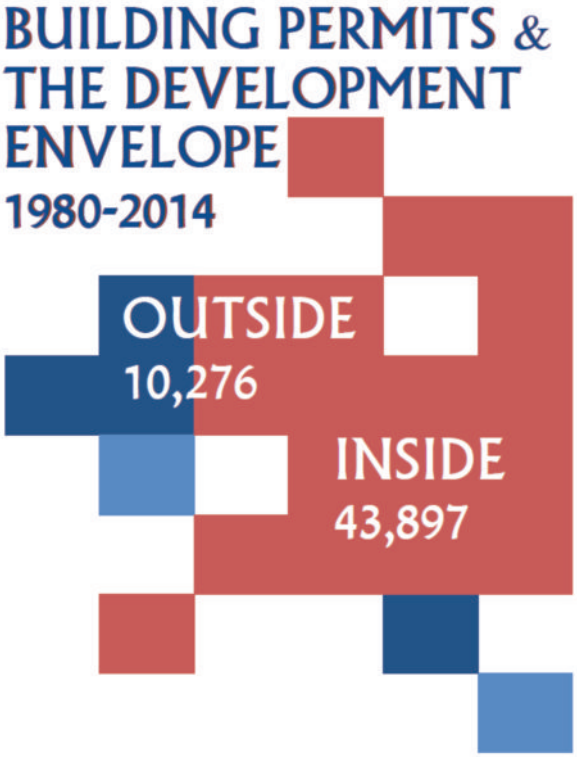
It is essential that this planning study examine development trends and current land holding capacities in order to delineate appropriate size and intensity of use of any potential future growth area.

Study Area


AGRICULTURAL
LOW INTENSITY
MEDIUM INTENSITY
HIGH INTENSITY
INDUSTRIAL / EMPLOYMENT
STATE AND COUNTY PARKS (GREATER THAN 10 ACRES)
MUNICIPAL
ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND
RURAL VILLAGE
AIRPORT
HCC HARFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
UCNM UNIVERSITY CENTER OF NORTHEASTERN MARYLAND
MO MIXED OFFICE
LIBRARIES
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MIDDLE SCHOOL
HIGH SCHOOL
STUDY AREA
HARFORD COUNTY MARYLAND
APG
HCC
V
BEL AIR
MO
UCNM
ALLIBONE RD
LOCHARY RD
ADY RD
HOOPES RD
GIBSON RD
KALMIA RD
COOL SPRING RD
RUFFS MILL RD
THOMAS RUN RD
PENNINGTON RD
PRIESTFORD RD
CREER RD
PROSPECT MILL RD
LEESWOOD RD
HENDERSON RD
ALDINO RD
MAHAN RD
ASBURY RD
CALVARY RD
CHURCHVILLE RD
WALNUT RD
MOORES MILL RD
S E CHURCHVILLE RD
S FOUNTAIN GREEN RD
REDFIELD RD
SCHUCKS RD
JAMES RUN RD
CARSINS RUN RD
TOWER RD
E MACPHAIL RD
E WHEEL RD
W RING FACTORY RD
S TOLLGATE RD
PATTERSON MILL RD
EMMORTON RD
PLUMTREE RD
WHEEL RD
W WHEEL RD
LAUREL BUSH RD
SOMERVILLE RD
CRESWELL RD
CULLUM RD
S STEPNEY RD
12 STONES
PHILADELPHIA RD
BELCAMP RD
LOPLIN RD
SPESUTIA RD
PERRYMAN RD
ATKISSON RD
SINGER RD
ABINGDON RD
HOOKERS MILL RD
BEVERLY RUN RD
POLSKA RD
CHURCH CREEK RD
22
543
24
924
95
7
159

Residential Permit Activity

A total of 54,173 residential building permits were issued during the period between 1980 and 2014. Building permit activity peaked in 1987 when 2,746 permits were issued. Building permit activity declined during the last decade due to the economic downturn, with only 511 permits being issued during 2008. Although building permit activity has increased since 2008, it has not returned to levels previously experienced during the 1980's and first half of the 1990's. Since 1980, 81% of all residential building permits issued have been located within the Development Envelope. The chart below depicts permit activity between 1980 and 2014.



Source: Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning

In 2015, Harford County's population stood at 250,025; by 2040, it is projected that the County's population will be 291,090. There are approximately 2.7 people per household in Harford County which shows that by 2040, the County will need 119,053 housing units to accommodate those residents. There are an estimated 99,053 housing units currently within the County. Of these total units, there are 74,871 housing units within the Development Envelope. Based on housing growth trends there will be 90,414 housing units within the Development Envelope by 2040.

Principles, Goals, and Policies for Grow With Purpose (GWP):

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Goal GWP 1.1: Plan and coordinate growth.

Rationale: Understanding how we grow is crucial to the prosperity of our community. By understanding how we grow and providing solutions to challenges our communities face, we can ensure that our quality of life is maintained.

Implementation

(a) Identify barriers to infill development and determine solutions to remedy those obstacles.

(b) Assist in assembling vacant and underutilized properties in target areas for larger redevelopment opportunities.

(c) Create a tiered incentive program that aims to create quality developments. Some of the factors that can be incorporated into the program are: streamlining the approval process for redevelopment of older commercial areas and/or allow for the usage of the Fast Track program.

(d) Consider implementing Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning in target redevelopment areas. PUD zoning is a flexible zone designated to be customized to proposed projects. A market-based range of land uses in the PUD are established and revisited as the market evolves, which allows for flexibility.

Goal GWP 1.2: Incorporate design standards into the planning process.

Rationale: The built environment is a common thread throughout the themes explored in HarfordNEXT. The future design of the County will reinforce the vision established in HarfordNEXT.

Implementation

(a) Establish clear design objectives for development in different communities or along specific corridors.

(b) Create a development design manual, which depicts land use regulations, site planning and good design features for detached accessory dwelling units.

(c) Conduct visual preference surveys, design charrettes, and public workshops to engage the public on innovative design.

Goal GWP 1.3: Encourage integrated mixed-use pedestrian oriented design.

Rationale: Mixed-use developments are built upon the live/work/play model. Mixed-use developments help promote healthy lifestyles by allowing for greater walkability as people carry out their daily activities.

Implementation

(a) Provide best practice examples of successful mixed use developments to the development industry within Harford County.

(b) Coordinate with the Office of Economic Development and community stakeholders to determine impediments to developing mixed-use projects.

(c) Identify and promote opportunity sites where mixed-use developments can prosper.

(d) Introduce form-based code as a regulatory land development tool.

Form-based code emphasizes the design and operation of development over the actual uses within it.

(e) Consider flexible zoning alternatives such as overlay districts and Planned Unit Developments (PUD) that will help bring about successful mixed-use projects.

Goal GWP 1.4: Assemble a livability agenda.

Rationale: Residents choose Harford County for its outstanding quality of life. By assembling a livability agenda, Harford County can take a proactive approach to maintaining and improving our resident's quality of life.

Implementation

(a) Establish quality of life indicators that affect livability.

(b) Develop lighting standards that aim to reduce light pollution.

(c) Encourage the use of "dark sky" lighting practices.

Dark Sky lighting practices aim to decrease light pollution in the environment.

(d) Establish policies that allow for residents to age in place.

(e) Seek out opportunities for placemaking.

Placemaking capitalizes on local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote health, happiness, and well being.

(f) Prioritize improvements of bicycle and pedestrian access to bus and rail.

(g) Provide opportunities for residents to meet most daily needs within walking distance.

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE HARFORD COUNTY'S PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal GWP 2.1: Require adequate public facilities and infrastructure for all development.

Rationale: Public facilities and infrastructure are critical components to growth within Harford County. By requiring adequate public facilities and infrastructure for all developments, this can ensure that maintenance and enhancements regularly occur.

Implementation

(a) Develop and maintain level of service standards for public facilities and infrastructure that must be adequate for development projects to receive a building permit.

(b) Create phasing requirements that allow for portions of projects that meet the level of service standards to be constructed and phase the remainder of the project to coincide with future availability of public services and infrastructure.

Goal GWP 2.2: Plan for and coordinate the efficient expansion of public facilities and infrastructure to serve future growth.

Rationale: Investing in the maintenance of our infrastructure is important to avoid costly construction of new facilities and disruptive outages (technology, water, power) that can negatively impact the quality of life of our citizens and the ability to do business in the County.

Implementation

(a) Ensure funding for future facility and infrastructure maintenance.

(b) Ensure plans such as emergency services, parks, water and sewer are routinely audited to ensure adequate coverage.

(c) Work with service providers to upgrade and protect County infrastructure such as

power and cable lines.

(d) Utilize the County's Facilities Master Plan to make informed decisions regarding the capital budget.

(e) Support the expansion of the HMAN fiber optics system according to the Broadband Strategic Plan.

(f) Expand high speed wireless data transmission throughout Harford County.

Goal GWP 2.3: Enhance public facilities and services.

Rationale: Public facilities are the anchor of many communities throughout Harford County. The County should promote the use of these facilities and apply smart design choices as new facilities are constructed.

Implementation

(a) Evaluate services delivered by County or state agencies for potential colocation.

(b) Support high-quality library facilities and programs.

(c) Encourage multiple uses at public facilities that allow for business development programs, education, fitness classes, and places for social interaction.

(d) Design public facilities to facilitate better cellular connections and provide cellular boosters for larger buildings.

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

Goal GWP 3.1: Partner with Community Advisory Boards to identify and correct neighborhood issues.

Rationale: Community Advisory Boards were created as a way for residents to discuss topics which may affect their neighborhoods quality of life. These board members have in-depth knowledge of their neighborhoods and work to make their community livable.

Implementation

(a) Collaborate with Community Advisory Boards in the creation of a neighborhood indicators tracking system for tracking neighborhood health and stability based on quality of life indicators such as crime, property values, health, economic development, etc.

(b) Partner with the Community Advisory Boards to create and implement plans for their community.

(c) Work with Community Advisory Boards to develop neighborhood activities such as picnics, block parties and neighborhood night out events.

Goal GWP 3.2: Enhance the character of established neighborhoods.

Rationale: Mature neighborhoods have a character all their own. By enhancing the character of a neighborhood, property values can increase, new investment may occur and the bond among residents will be stronger.

Implementation

(a) Seek grant funding under state programs to foster redevelopment within targeted areas. The County should seek funding for projects such as façade improvements, streetscape improvements, land banking, and mixed use developments.

The State of Maryland offers multiple grants that assist with redevelopment efforts on the County level.

(b) Create a Business Improvement District or

Community Improvement District in targeted areas where it is feasible, such as US 40 between MD 152 and MD 24.

Improvement Districts aim to improve upon existing communities through innovative programs that support existing retail, decrease vacancy, provide opportunities for redevelopment, and increase public and private investment within their boundaries.

(c) Reuse small vacant lots and utility easements/corridors that do not have development potential for community gardens and pocket parks.

(d) Promote community identity through the installation of gateway signage identifying neighborhoods.

Goal GWP 3.3: Encourage the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.

Rationale: By rehabilitating vacant and dilapidated structures, communities improve quality of life, increase property values and reduce crime.

Implementation

(a) Evaluate the effectiveness of County codes in dealing with the rehabilitation or removal of vacant, dangerous, and dilapidated buildings.

(b) Educate residents on the importance of maintaining their homes.

(c) Support non-profits that work to rehabilitate vacant homes.

(d) Establish target areas for future housing rehabilitation and maintenance programs.

Goal GWP 3.4: Identify opportunity sites for reinvestment and revitalization.

Rationale: Harford County has multiple opportunity sites for reinvestment and revitalization. These areas of opportunity already have infrastructure in place and can help the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses prosper.

Implementation

(a) Identify areas with high vacancy rates and target redevelopment efforts to accelerate reinvestment.

(b) Identify areas along US 40, MD 24 south of I-95, US 1 between MD 152 and MD 147, Edgewood, and Perryman that have the greatest potential for redevelopment.

(c) Partner with the Office of Economic Development and Housing and Community Development to create programs that aim to revitalize opportunity sites.

(d) Create a US 40 corridor plan to evaluate land use opportunities for appropriate and compatible development as well as coordinating public investment with development activity.

(e) Assist property owners with land assemblage in order to maximize potential at opportunity sites.

(f) Create and invest in transit oriented development opportunities surrounding MARC station areas.

ENSURE A RANGE OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CITIZENS

To accommodate the projected 40,000 new residents by 2040, the County will need to offer a range of housing choices and opportunities to ensure the demand for housing can be met. The County will aim to diversify its housing stock and provide more housing options. HarfordNEXT promotes innovative methods

to accommodate new growth and allow our residents to age in place.

Goal GWP 4.1: Establish a program to monitor Harford County's housing supply and demand.

Rationale: Establishing, maintaining and updating housing growth targets will ensure the County can maintain an adequate supply of housing.

Implementation

(a) Update the Department of Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan to be consistent with recommendations in HarfordNEXT.

Linking HarfordNEXT with the Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan will allow for a more attainable mix of housing types and promote homeownership.

(b) Work with existing and emerging area employers to identify housing needs.

(c) Coordinate with Housing and Community Development to create marketing strategies to promote emerging housing opportunities in target communities that foster inclusiveness and are free from discrimination.

(d) Determine a manageable vacancy rate for residential homes and monitor the County's supply.

Goal GWP 4.2: Diversify Harford County's housing stock by providing a range of housing options.

Rationale: The traditional single-family home takes up more land, is less affordable and does not offer the opportunity to age in place like other housing options. New developments should include a variety of housing types, choices, and density.

Implementation

(a) Assess existing housing stock and gauge the needs of the County's inventory.

(b) Coordinate with the Department of Housing and Community Development to establish housing targets with an emphasis on a mix of housing types.

(c) Encourage a mixture of residential densities and housing types that are affordable and accessible to all age groups.

(d) Promote the creation of live-work units.

(e) Employ zoning regulations that allow accessory dwelling units.

Goal GWP 4.3: Gear homeownership programs to meet projected affordable housing needs.

Rationale: Rising housing costs within Harford County have created a demand for affordable housing. HarfordNEXT supports affordable housing that allows older residents to remain in Harford County while attracting young families.

Implementation

(a) Identify barriers to homeownership for specific demographic groups and tailor affordable housing programs to remove barriers.

(b) Work with the Department of Housing and Community Development to monitor affordable housing needs.

(c) Create incentives and form partnerships with large employers to develop workforce housing with modern amenities.

(d) Provide educational resources pertaining to affordable housing that includes information on housing cost burden and

qualifications for different assistance programs.

(e) Develop programs which promote affordable homeownership for young families and older residents as an alternative to renting.

(f) Foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunities based on protected characteristics.

Goal GWP 4.4: Improve Harford County's existing housing supply.

Rationale: Reinvesting in our existing housing supply is a cost effective way to reduce development pressure outside of the Development Envelope and provide affordable housing opportunities to existing and new residents of Harford County. Programs that encourage reinvestment in dilapidated or vacant homes can serve a dual purpose of revitalizing communities while creating affordable housing opportunities.

Implementation

(a) Create programs and identify grant opportunities that target rehabilitation and modernization of aging single family homes and communities.

(b) Develop programs to assist property owners with external property renovations.

(c) Provide incentives to address redevelopment needs of aging multifamily buildings. These programs could include renovation loans, tax abatements, or grants.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Transparency and accountability are cornerstones of good governing. County departments and agencies will work together to ensure key action items are implemented in a timely manner.

Goal GWP 5.1: Develop and maintain a HarfordNEXT monitoring program.

Rationale: Annual reporting allows government officials to gauge progress towards goals and objectives.

Implementation

(a) Develop parameters to ensure plan implementations are followed.

(b) Periodically gauge the success of HarfordNEXT by tracking changes in land use, jobs, housing, neighborhood level investment, and zoning capacity.

(c) Monitor the plan implementations and adjust goals and programs accordingly to adapt to socio-economic changes.

(d) Establish an appropriate reporting period and update the County Council on the progress of the plan.

Goal GWP 5.2: Allocate resources to implement the goals in HarfordNEXT.

Rationale: Resources should be allocated to ensure implementation of strategies identified in HarfordNEXT. An effective allocation model may include efficient workforce management or budget appropriation for priority projects.

Implementation

(a) Create a Strategic Plan to guide the implementation of HarfordNEXT. The Strategic Plan will include a prioritized compilation of goals and be updated every two years.

(b) Ensure the annual budget includes funding for priority projects and programs to implement HarfordNEXT.

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