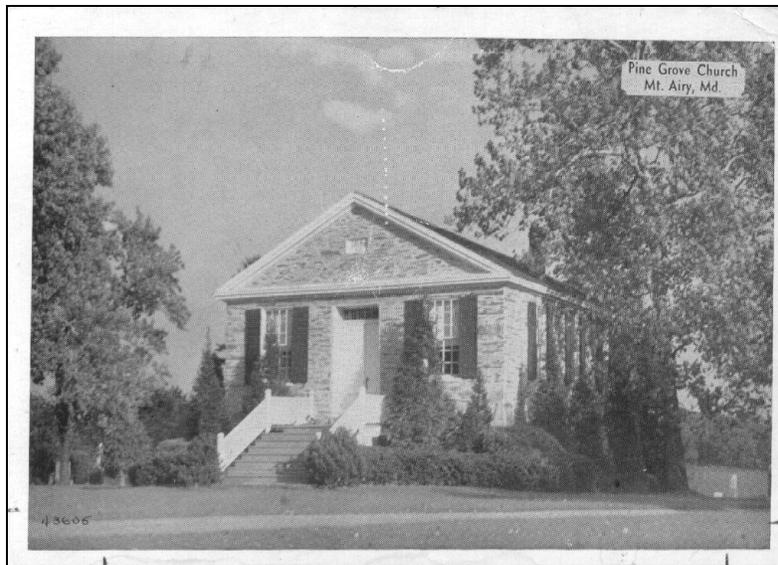


# TOWN OF MOUNT AIRY MASTER PLAN



2003

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Special Acknowledgment – Contribution of Town History  
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## CHAPTER 1

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND REGIONAL SETTING

#### Historical Background of the Town of Mount Airy

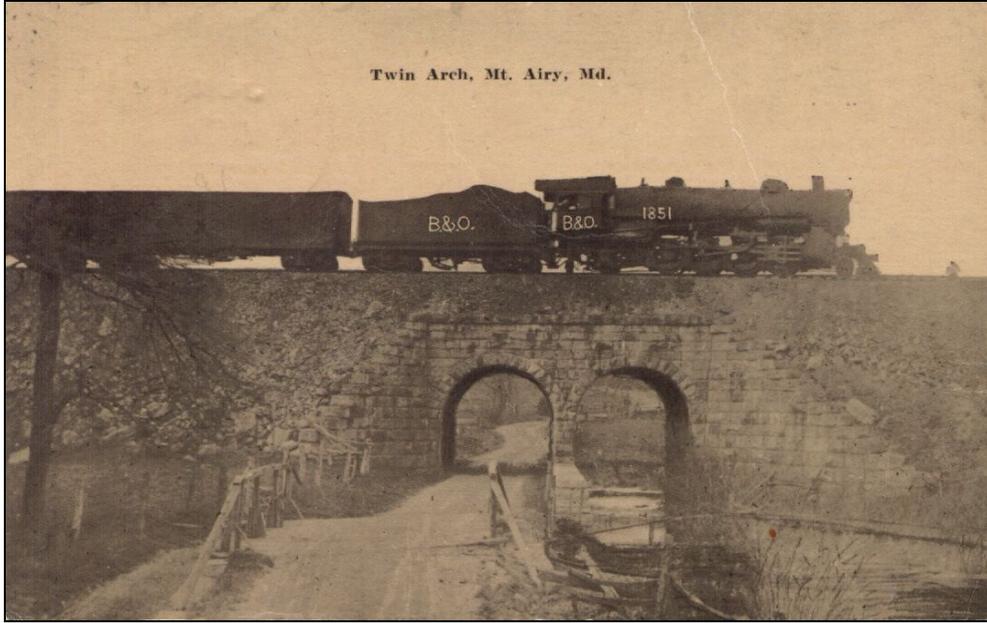
The western movement of the B & O Railroad and close proximity to the National Pike gave identity and significance to the Town of Mount Airy. The hilly topography of the area is responsible for the name of the town. A railroad foreman who commented, “this is an airish mountain” christened it with its name. The name of the town became Mount Airy and remained so from that point forward. The town was divided between two counties, Carroll and Frederick, in 1837, when Carroll County defined its permanent boundaries, and Mount Airy has remained in two counties since that year. About one mile south of the town is the junction of Carroll, Frederick, Howard and Montgomery Counties located at the headwaters of the South Branch of the Patapsco River.



**The Old Mount Airy Hotel and Main Street Looking South – Courtesy of Mount Airy Museum**

The town was originally settled in the early 1830s by a core group of six families. Dorsey, Davis, and Bussard were the most prominent names in that first settlement, which was followed closely by the construction of the B & O railroad line in 1831. Because Mount Airy sits at an elevation of 830 feet, a series of inclined planes were constructed in order for the trains to climb the steep hills. The planes were constructed from June to October

in 1831. Locomotives and cars were moved up the east side by horses and were moved down the other two planes on the western side of the hill. Passengers had to disembark during this process. Plane #4, several miles west of the town at the intersection of Woodville Road and MD. Rt. 144 is still a recognized location today.



**The Twin Bridges – Courtesy of the Mount Airy Museum**

This railroad system was updated in 1839, when more powerful locomotives were put into use. When that occurred, a detour around Ridgeville, located directly west of the town center, was created and a spur line went through what is now the Town of Mount Airy. The first resident, Henry Bussard, was named the station agent for the new train station.



**Druggist Shop in early 1900s – courtesy Mt. Airy Museum**

More significantly, Mr. Bussard was the first major landowner in Mount Airy. By 1846, the town was sparsely settled with several houses, a town store, barber shop and shoemaker shop. Pine Grove Chapel, circa 1846, now a historic monument, was constructed to fill the need for a community church. From the time it was constructed, the chapel basement functioned as a private school. The chapel remained open during the early part of the Civil War despite soldier encampments in close proximity. The school and church were closed later because of distracting soldier activity around the vicinity of the school. After the war ended, the church reopened in 1867, after undergoing a renovation. By 1894, Pine Grove Chapel officially formed a seven-member Board that presided over the church until the 1930s.

In 1893, the Carroll County Board of Education funded the construction of a three-room schoolhouse. The school was not actually funded until the next year and was completed in September 1894. The building, approximately 1,700 sq. ft in size, was located on the east side of Main Street, 1/4 of mile south of the railroad tracks. It is now part of the Calvary United Methodist Church property. The school operated from 9:00 am to 4:00 p.m., much like today's schools.

With the incorporation of the town in 1894, came the establishment of the town government structure, including a Mayor and Council. The first Mount Airy Mayor was Byron S. Dorsey who served eight years in that office between 1894 and 1904.



**Main Street Looking North in 2003 – Town of Mount Airy, Maryland**



**Main Street Looking North, circa 1940s- Courtesy of Mt. Airy Museum**

### **1900-1950s**

In 1900, the town population had grown to 332 residents. By 1910, the town population was 428 and it was determined that the town had enough student population to justify a State accredited high school. A high school with classes was organized but an official high school "building" to house all eleven grades was not built at that time.

Three disastrous fires took place in the town during the first quarter of the 20th century. The first fire occurred in 1902 and destroyed the business section of the southern side of downtown area. The second fire was in 1914 and consumed the north side of the downtown business section. The third fire took place almost twenty years later in 1925 and again, the northern side of the downtown business district was destroyed. As a result of the 1925 fire, the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company was organized in 1926.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, the town continued to grow and provide services despite the onset of the Great Depression. Expanded town services included necessary public utilities such as electric service, an ice factory, and establishment of the Mount Airy Canning Company. The canning company provided about 250 jobs for town residents.

During the Great Depression, the railroad company made it possible for the town to maintain its population. The 1930 census tallied the town population at 845 persons, an increase of 91 people since 1920. The Depression may have affected the national economy, but the town economy was able to expand to include more service-related business during that time. The first motion picture theater opened in Mount Airy in 1932. During the 1930s, several large businesses were initiated, such as a large poultry

operation, and Potomac Edison (providing electric service), and two automobile garages opened, establishing a core business district in Mount Airy.

During that time, the town also saw the purchase of land for a town park, the opening of a grocery store and a lumberyard and the dedication of Pine Grove Chapel for use as a nonsectarian chapel.



**Pine Grove Chapel – Historic Monument, Mt. Airy, MD**

The start of World War II established the pattern of residents traveling to work in defense plants located within the City of Baltimore. In 1946, the first planned subdivision came into existence in town and included 13 single-family homes. Many service organizations such as Lions, Kiwanis, and the American Legion were established at the end of the war. In 1949, the local movie theater began to offer Sunday Show times for the entertainment of the town residents.

In 1951, the town government purchased the building located at the intersection of Main Street and Park Ave, originally in order to widen Main Street, but the structure was instead used as Town Hall for over forty years. The decade of the 1950s saw the beginning of a residential and commercial building boom in the town of Mount Airy. In 1953, the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company purchased what came to be known as the carnival grounds, located at the intersection of Route 27 and Twin Arch Road.

### **1960s - Present**

The decade of the 1960s saw Mount Airy continue to grow into a medium size community and several important physical changes happened in town. The town high school was officially closed in 1967. In 1966, the Maryland Route 27 bypass was proposed. The Ridgeville area at the south end of the town, totaling 263 acres, was

annexed in 1966 and was considered at that time to be a major addition to the town boundaries.



**Mount Airy High School- Mount Airy, MD – 1962**

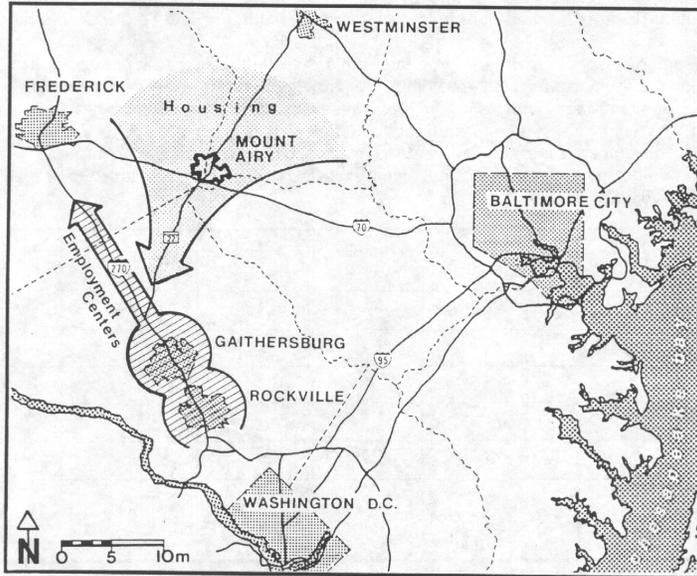
In the 1970s the Town of Mount Airy built a sewerage system for the town. The annexation of 419 acres in three different tracts occurred, adding a significant area to the town boundaries and the first shopping center was built. This shopping center is now known as the Mount Airy Shopping Center. A new 66-acre subdivision known as Mount Airy Village West and East was constructed in 1976. Construction of the Mount Airy Bypass or MD 27, facilitated more residential development at the northern end of town.

During the decade of the 1980s, new residents who were employed outside the two counties began to populate the town and created a need for essential services such as food, restaurants, household items and recreational opportunities. The local economy had always been in a healthy state, but during the next ten years, a commercial and industrial boom occurred in Mount Airy to meet the needs of the growing town population.

Several new institutional buildings were also constructed during the 1980s and 1990s. They were a new elementary school, a new library and a senior center, a fire station, and a post office. This profusion of public buildings was a direct response to not only the growth of the Town, but also of the regional area. This continued to add to the need for new infrastructure, utilities, and road improvements. At the same time, the growth that took place during the last twenty years, began to take its toll on the quality of life that the Town had deemed attractive to existing and new residents.

## **Regional Setting and Related Growth Issues**

Mount Airy's location at a meeting point of the boundaries of four counties and its desirable commuting distance to the major regional employment centers of Baltimore and Washington, D.C. set the stage for its tremendous growth pressure from 1980 - 2000. Other factors that have contributed to development pressure have been the nearness of the intersection of two major highways, I-70 and MD 27, and an affordable and attractive living environment.



**Regional Map of the Baltimore-Washington Suburban Area**

From 1995 to 2003, the Town has been implementing the 1994 Master Plan that addresses the role that the town is destined to play in the regional environment. The plan outlined goals and objectives specifically dealing with various regional growth influences that have a direct effect on the town. Specific policies were established to manage the current and future impacts of regional and local development pressures.

The focus of this Plan Update will be to continue to implement the policies and goals as stated in the 1994 Plan while reassessing the goals to ensure that regional and town growth issues will continue to be addressed.

The interjurisdictional coordination of the Town with Carroll and Frederick Counties is also an important component in monitoring the growth within the immediate vicinity of Mount Airy. It allows the Town to evaluate residential, commercial, and industrial development directly outside its boundaries. The review of land development proposals and land use changes is essential to evaluate whether the changes will affect the town's existing infrastructure such as roads, parks, emergency services, and other public utilities. The Town will continue to monitor development in adjoining counties to assess the long-term impacts for Mount Airy.

## **Regional Growth Patterns**

Growth within the Town limits of Mount Airy closely follows the growth patterns of many of the municipalities located along the I-270 and I-70 corridor outside the metropolitan D.C. area. The northwestward growth of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area was accelerated by the completion of the I-270 highway from the I-495 Beltway to Frederick in 1958. Located along this I-270 corridor, the cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg, and the community of Germantown grew quickly as bedroom communities. During the 1970s and 1980s, these areas were transformed into thriving employment centers.

Mount Airy lies 13 miles from I-270 via MD Route 27, and is similarly affected by the pattern and strength of development along this growth corridor. Mt. Airy and the surrounding rural areas of Frederick, Howard and Carroll counties have seen significant residential development that houses the workforce of the I-270 employment centers.

The regional and town population growth during the last two decades have been significant. Mount Airy grew 33% each decade from 1940 to 1970. From 1970 to 1980, the rate of growth increased to 39% and from 1980 to 1990 the growth surpassed 50%. The State of Maryland indicated in a report published in December of 2001, that Mount Airy was the fastest growing municipality from 1990 to 1997. The Town population increased 44% during that time, 20% more than any other small town in the State.

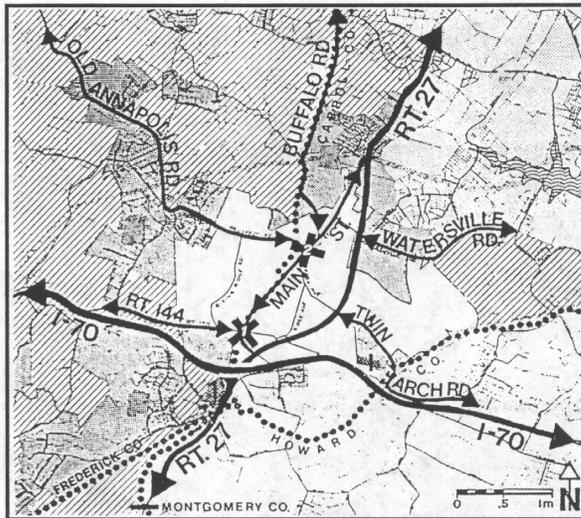
According to a community survey conducted in 1988, more than one-half of the residents who responded worked in Montgomery County and Washington, D. C. The remaining residents were equally distributed between jobs in Howard, Carroll, Baltimore and Frederick Counties.

## **Locational Influences on the Town**

The growth influences of the Washington-Baltimore Region and the job market expansion causing more residential development have been far reaching. The outer suburban development area of the Washington-Baltimore Region now extends well into central/western Maryland, Northern Virginia, the southeastern portion of Pennsylvania and even the eastern region of West Virginia. Maryland Rail Commuter Train (MARC) has provided an alternative to long distance commutes by car into Washington, D.C. from Shepherdstown, West Virginia. A desirable place to live is a valuable commodity in this region. Many families relocated to Mount Airy seeking a quality of life and convenient commuting distance to Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Mount Airy will remain a "bedroom community" with strong growth expected for the foreseeable future.

The Town of Mount Airy is located at the interchange area of I-70 and MD Rt. 27. I-70 is a major east-west connector and provides an essential connection to Baltimore and the

City of Frederick along with access to the I-270 corridor leading to Washington, D.C. Maryland Route 27 provides the north-south connection to the City of Westminster and points northeast.



**Road Network accessing Mount Airy**

While I-270 is a heavily developed employment corridor, I-70 has not been subject to significant development activity and serves primarily as a transportation corridor. In addition, Howard and Frederick Counties are not planning for interstate-related growth in this area. In the 1990 Howard County General Plan, only one area along I-70 is slated for growth as a future employment area and that scenario is dependent on future road improvements as well as available water and sewer service.

Mount Airy is the larger of the two existing municipalities along the Interstate 70 corridor between Frederick and Baltimore. To date, this has resulted in some highway related development, but it is limited to commercial development around the interchange areas of I-70 and its intersecting north-south routes. The Town of New Market, five miles west of Mount Airy, has a population of 486 persons, according to the State of Maryland. The town boundaries of New Market have grown on a limited basis. There is also limited commercial development located at the interchange area of MD Rt. 75 and Interstate 70.

According to the 2000 Census, there were 44,627 persons in the regional area around Mount Airy. With the exception of Damascus, 6 miles to the south, the nearest comparable service area to the west, north or east is located 15 miles away. This indicates that the services available within Mount Airy are sustaining a four-county area with a population more than 5 times the population of the Town. This has several implications, which have been addressed and evaluated in the adopted Master Plan. It indicates that development in all four counties influences the Town and that interjurisdictional coordination with County planning and funding policies is necessary for the balanced growth of the Town.

## **Analysis of Surrounding Counties Growth Policies**

In order to get a perspective on the regional growth pressure that Mount Airy has experienced over the last three decades, it is important to generally summarize the Master Plans of the four Counties, which influence the Town. Following is a brief analysis of each of the Countywide Comprehensive Plans of the four counties on the Town boundaries.

*Howard County General Plan:* In the 2000 General Plan, Howard County plans to concentrate development around existing community centers. The area of Howard County that lies a short distance southeast of the Town boundaries is considered by Howard County to be the "rural west". 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 clustering on 1-acre lots at a ratio of 1 unit per 4.25 acres of gross acreage for the overall parcel. Much of the land for which development rights have been purchased through the Howard County Agricultural Preservation program is located west of MD Rt. 94, close to Mount Airy. It has generally been determined that the Town of Mount Airy would continue to serve the commercial needs of the upper part of Howard County because the upper portion of Howard County is not slated for any development of a commercial nature.

*Montgomery County Plan:* Montgomery County has followed the basic policies adopted in their 1964 "Wedges and Corridors Plan" for the metropolitan region. This plan calls for development of regional centers along planned transportation corridors, and preservation of agricultural land that fills in the remaining "wedges". The Mount Airy Region falls within a wedge. According to the Damascus Master Plan, the current planned water and sewer service areas for the County extend from I-270 to Damascus along Rt. 27. Land between Damascus and Mount Airy is zoned agricultural. A significant amount of residential development has been approved in Frederick County to the west of the Montgomery County line, which will increase development pressure along Rt. 27.

*Frederick County Plan:* Frederick County just completed the update and adoption of the Countywide Plan in 1998, a policy document covering the overall planning goals and objectives for Frederick County. Frederick County identifies Mount Airy as a *Regional Community* in the newly adopted 1998 Countywide Plan. A significant development that has been initiated in Frederick County between Mount Airy and the I-270 corridor is the Urbana Planned Unit Development. This designated growth area will bring 3,500 new housing units to the southeastern portion of Frederick County potentially generating 10,000 more people for that region. The general intent and emphasis of the Frederick County Comprehensive Plan is to encourage growth in and around existing municipalities, but also in specifically designated "growth" areas such as the Urbana PUD, located southwest of Mount Airy. Major development activity outside the Mount Airy Town limits has occurred in the last several years. The Frederick County Election

District surrounding the west side of Mount Airy alone totaled 5,789 persons in 1990. Of this figure 1,544 persons or 26% lived within the town limits and 4,245 people in the immediate adjacent county area.

Carroll County Comprehensive Plan: Carroll County's Master Plan advocates concentrating development around existing communities and infrastructure. This is reflected in the 1982 Mount Airy and Environs Comprehensive Plan. That plan designates some areas directly adjoining the current Town boundaries for low-density residential development. For the most part, the zoning and comprehensive plan designations reflect existing low-density residential development. Beyond those immediately surrounding zones most property is zoned agricultural or conservation. This development around Mount Airy has been controlled by its proximity to the planned Gillis Falls Reservoir. Carroll County has purchased a majority of the property needed for the reservoir, and has restricted the intensity of development around the reservoir to protect the land as a future water resource. Serious environmental constraints have prevented Federal and State authorities from endorsing the use of the reservoir.

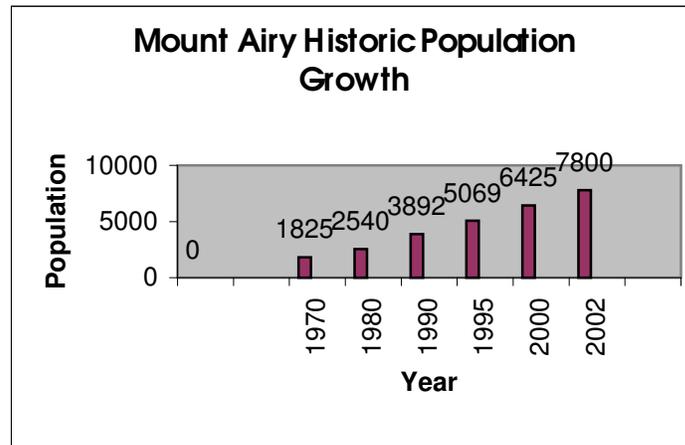
State of Maryland "Smart Growth" Initiative: The State of Maryland has recently adopted a growth management policy that is intended to direct and maintain population growth in and around existing communities. Many counties in the Washington - Baltimore Region, have endorsed the State of Maryland's "Smart Growth Initiative". The initiative basically supports and endorses "Priority Funding Areas". These PFAs reflect the State's policy to support, and where necessary, to revitalize existing communities. These areas are designated where there is already significant financial investment in infrastructure and services to the community. The purpose of establishing the Priority Funding Areas is to

#### **Current zoning adjacent to the Town**

encourage and support for economic development and new growth in areas with infrastructure, thereby reducing the pressure for sprawl into agricultural and other natural resource areas.

## Demographic Analysis of the Town

For various reasons, Mount Airy has experienced a tremendous influx of growth from population in-migration. The majority of new residents have come from the more urbanized areas of Washington suburbs such as the cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg, and the community of Germantown and other more intensely developed areas of Montgomery and Baltimore Counties.



The 2000 Census population for the Town is 6,425 people. The growth from 1990 to 2000 was twenty percent higher than the previous ten years. When the 1990 Census was conducted, the Town of Mount Airy had already experienced two major growth surges during the two previous decades. From 1970 to 1980, the Town population grew by 39%. The decade from 1980 to 1990 yielded a 53% increase. In the five-year period from 1990 to 1995, the population increased an additional 30%. The Town population increased 65% in the last decade. The annual population growth during the last ten-year period has been 6.5% on the average, slightly higher than the overall countywide growth for Frederick and Carroll Counties. In more recent history, the growth in the surrounding counties has outpaced the population growth inside the municipal limits.

Population growth continues to be a factor that directly influences the Town's residential building activity. Concurrently, a steady increase in the regional population has accompanied the increase in town population. The majority of population growth within the Mount Airy election district, both in Frederick and Carroll Counties, has been attributed to the Town. A historic look at the town population growth, along with the growth history of both counties follows:

<b>Mount Airy and Surrounding Counties - Historic Population Growth</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Mount Airy</b>		<b>Frederick County</b>		<b>Carroll County</b>
<b>1970</b>	1,825		84,927		69,006
<b>1980</b>	2,450	+34 %	114,792	+35 %	96,356 + 40 %
<b>1990</b>	3,892	+59 %	150,208	+31 %	123,372 + 28 %
<b>1995</b>	5,069	+30 %	174,200	+16 %	142,154 +15.2 %
<b>2000</b>	6,425	+27 %	195,277	+12 %	150,897 + 6.2 %

Co. Source: Frederick Demographic and Development Data, May 2001 & Carroll Co. Pop. Est. 4/2001.

Although the 2000 Census profile of the Town is now four years old, the majority of the population characteristics are still applicable to today' s town population. Overall, the average age of the residents is between 35 and 44 years, with the majority of those persons in family households with children. Those family households are primarily married family households. Single-parent households make up a very small percentage of the total households, only 8.5%. Half (50%) of the households in Mount Airy are 3-4 person households and those families have been residing in the same house for the last ten years.

### **Population Estimates and Projections**

Population projections are necessary to try to gauge the of population growth taking place in the town over the next twenty years. For the purposes of this plan, the projections are done in a low, middle and high growth scenario to give an idea of the possible level of building activity that may take place in the town. The projections are based on building permit activity, overall vacancy rates of housing units, and constant persons per household figure of 3.10.<sup>1</sup> The residential building permit activity of the town has varied over the years from lows of 50 units per year to a high of 196 units. Over the last six years, an average of 125 residential units per year have been constructed within the Town limits.

Current population of the town is estimated to be 7,811 people. Following are the population projections for Mount Airy for 2003 - 2020 shown with a low, middle, and high growth scenario. Estimates utilize a 3.10 persons per household figure for Mount Airy according to the 2000 census.

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<sup>1</sup> US. 2000 Census/ Mount Airy Town Staff 2002.

<b>Mount Airy Population Projections to 2020</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Low Projections</b>	<b>Middle Projections</b>	<b>High Projections</b>
<b>2003</b>	7,841	7,965	8,089
<b>2004</b>	8,182	8,430	8,678
<b>2005</b>	8,523	8,895	9,267
<b>2010</b>	10,228	11,220	12,212
<b>2015</b>	11,933	13,545	15,157
<b>2020</b>	13,638	15,870	18,102

Source: Town of Mount Airy Dept. of Planning 5/02

Most often, it is the mid-line projections that are believed to be the most accurate, although other economic factors come into play that may affect the population growth through the course of twenty years. Availability of land, the economy, and changes in regulatory conditions can all affect home building levels and the subsequent population growth levels.

Population projections are used as a guide to prepare for the proper planning of needed public facilities and infrastructure. The projections can also be used for setting ultimate population limits for the town and allowing for a specific amount of land development to be able to reach those population growth projections. There are several sophisticated demographic models, which can be used to assist in population forecasting, but these methods are not an exact science. Population projections should be continually checked against semi-annual estimates of the population to see if the population forecasts are providing accurate guidelines for planning and general town land use decisions.

### **Town Employment Trends**

The overwhelming majority of persons residing in the town have jobs outside Frederick and Carroll Counties. The 2000 Census statistics for commuting data show that the majority of these persons commute, for 30-60 minutes, indicating that most of those people are driving to the southern or eastern job markets of Washington, D.C. or Baltimore to work.

Town residents have educational levels equivalent to or slightly above Maryland statewide levels. Ninety percent of the population 25 years and older have obtained a high school diploma or higher level of education.

### **Educational Attainment and Residency - Mount Airy, Maryland**

<b>Educational Attainment</b>		<b>Residence in 1995</b>	
Persons 25 yrs. and older	3,694	Persons 25 yrs. and older	5,681
Less than 9th grade	84	Lived in same house	2,894
9th to 12th grade	275	Lived in different house	2,764
High School graduate	1,292	Same State	1,578
Some College, no degree	801	Same County	799
Associate Degree	171	Different County	1,965
Bachelor' s Degree	730	Different State	387
Graduate or professional degree	341	Lived Elsewhere	23
Percent high school graduate or higher	90.3%		
Percent bachelor' s degree or higher	29.0%		

**Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000**

The resident workforce of Mount Airy is employed in a wide variety of job classifications, but the majority of the town residents fall into two general categories. The first are those persons who are employed in professional, technical, and administrative jobs and the second category is production, craft, and manufacturing jobs. The first classification is 50% of the total employment categories for town residents. The second category represents 27% of the total. The remaining jobs are primarily in service occupations, farming, and general labor (15%) and in miscellaneous categories (8%).

### **Characteristics of the Local Economy**

The local economy is progressing as a primarily service-oriented base with a steady influx of more entrepreneurs deciding to locate or expand within the town boundaries. Currently, there are over 500 businesses located within the Town of Mount Airy and surrounding suburban area. The majority of these small companies are located in the Town of Mount Airy. Because the market is desirable, population growth of the area is healthy, and its proximity to the Baltimore-Washington Regional market is convenient.

The increase in population has contributed to a rise in the general business activity of the town both for service and commercial industries such as grocery store chains, restaurants, convenience stores, daycare facilities, and medical services. The centralized location of the town in relation to both Washington and Baltimore for small businesses such as special craft stores, bookstores, gift shops and local furniture stores has contributed to a rise in the volume of business transactions. The steady increase in population growth and regional population has aided local and new businesses to locate or expand within the designated commercially zoned areas of town.

Overall, the number and type of jobs being created in the community does not serve the resident or surrounding population with employment opportunities. According to the Census Bureau, over 90% of the town's working population still commutes out of Frederick and Carroll Counties to work. The Census data indicates that professional and technical workers increasingly represent the current workforce in the Town. However, the types of jobs offered in Mount Airy are mostly service and trade oriented. This trend dictates that the majority of the workforce living in Mount Airy will continue to commute out of the immediate area for work. Although the town itself will continue to grow with a wider variety of businesses, it does not currently have the size or the economic base to become a "regional employment center", providing a wide range of professional and technical job opportunities for the resident population.

The job opportunities within the immediate area have grown considerably and are located primarily in Frederick City and surrounding area. The City of Westminster and its surrounding area have provided some employment opportunities for local residents. Following is a chart prepared by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in April of 1998, which specifies employment estimates and projections for the counties surrounding the Town of Mount Airy.

<b>Employment Projections 2000- 2020 (Jobs in Thousands)</b>				
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2000- 2020</b>
Frederick Co., MD	99.7	115.7	122.0	+ 22%
Carroll Co., MD	62.7	69.8	73.1	+17%
Howard Co., MD	141.9	164.1	181.7	+28%
Montgomery Co., MD	573.0	664.2	696.4	+21%
Washington Co., MD	71.5	78.1	80.2	+12%
Loudoun Co., VA	72.7	112.7	152.7	+110%

**Source: Maryland Office of Planning, 2/1998.**

As long as a disparity exists in the town and the surrounding region, between the types of jobs provided and the types of jobs needed by the resident workforce, commuting patterns and problems in the area will remain an issue. The majority of out-commuters have also remained high in both Frederick and Carroll Counties, despite the increase in professional and technical jobs in the last ten years in those counties. The greater work place opportunities still remain in the counties surrounding Washington, D.C. and Baltimore.

## **The Consequences of No-Growth Policies**

Throughout the nation, no-growth movements have arisen in an attempt to avoid the negative effects of rampant growth, yet problems can result from no-growth policies. While these policies may prevent future annexations and development within municipal boundaries, pressure for development in surrounding areas is often proportionally increased, resulting in low-density development around the towns. The following impacts of low-density growth outside of municipalities largely negate the possible benefits of a no-growth policy.

- 1. Development outside municipal limits burdens local services without contributing to the Town's tax base.*
- 2. Large sprawling residential developments compete with the Town for construction of county-funded public facilities.*
- 3. Development outside a municipality becomes a barrier to orderly town growth.*
- 4. Development outside a municipality is subject to minimal input from the town planning and zoning authorities.*
- 5. Development outside a municipality makes town boundaries indistinguishable.*
- 6. Building moratoriums prevent developer funded infrastructure improvements.*

## **Summary**

The Town of Mount Airy and the surrounding region will continue to grow. Because of the Town' s accessibility to major highways and its proximity to the cities of the "golden triangle," Mount Airy will continue to experience residential development pressure. The Town could benefit from this utilizing its location to attract office and research and development. No-growth movements may temporarily stall development, but in time these practices have been shown to compound the problems associated with uncontrolled growth. The following methods for mitigating the impact of regional growth on the community and its character are proposed.

## **Policy Recommendations**

*To better manage regional growth and its effects on the Town of Mount Airy, the Town will:*

- 1. Take a leading role in discussions with all four Counties regarding growth management in the Mount Airy Region. Adhere to the principles of the State mandated "Smart Growth" legislation.**
- 2. Advocate support for County policies that concentrate growth around existing centers, and therefore plan for growth.**
- 3. Continue to attract commercial and industrial development to provide a tax base necessary for balanced growth as a regional center.**
- 4. Reach agreements with each County regarding the phasing of growth so that the Town is assured of County cooperation with the orderly growth policies of the Town and the provision for adequate facilities and services.**

**(RESERVED)**

## CHAPTER 2

### MASTER PLAN PROCESS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### **Introduction**

The Town of Mount Airy has participated in the Comprehensive Planning Process for almost thirty years. In this time period, tremendous growth has occurred in the town in all areas, with residential expansion being the most predominant over time. The Town has matured and grown in terms of its services provided to the growing community and will continue to strive towards meeting the demands of the citizenry.

Growth and maturation nearly always create negative impacts to be experienced by a small town affected widely by surrounding regional development. These negative effects come primarily in the form of increased traffic, increased daily demand on public services and recreational services. Rapid population growth often results in intangible loss perceived as an eroding sense of “community”.

The challenges of growth pressures can be addressed by maintaining a five-year update schedule for the Town Master Plan, looking at land use patterns, transportation improvements and examining the timing and provision of adequate public facilities. These regular plan updates along with the coordination of the peripheral development areas of town with the surrounding county regional plans, assist in guiding the town growth in a manageable manner.

#### **Town Master Plan History**

Mount Airy’s first Town Master Plan was adopted in 1970. This document was subsequently revised in 1973 primarily to address annexations of over 480 acres that increased the Town’s raw acreage by 50% between 1970 and 1973. 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 the newly created Mt. Airy Civic Association, the Planning Commission completed an update of the Town Master Plan in 1980, with adoption by the Town Council in 1982.

Sound long-range planning policies dictate that the Master Plan be given cursory review on an annual basis and a comprehensive update at least once every five years. Since 1975, the Town Planning Commission has completed an annual review of planning and development related activities, and is now reflected in the Carroll County Annual Report, which are completed in the spring of each year and contain information on all the municipalities within the County.

During the 1980s, the Town again experienced rapid development and approved several large annexations creating a need for an update of the existing Master Plan. In 1989, the Planning Commission began an update of the 1982 Plan. Mount Airy's rapid growth in the 1980s was typical of many towns outside of major metropolitan areas across the country. In many communities, this rapid development has significantly impacted natural resources and threatens to outpace the capacity of utility and infrastructure systems. Mount Airy has done well to avoid many development related problems; however, there is a real concern that the qualities of Mount Airy that attracted new residents are quickly becoming endangered by the development that accommodates this growth.

It is the intent and purpose of this current plan to continue to work towards envisioning 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 and respectful of the environment as was established in the 1994 plan. The proposals in this Master Plan are intended to be a balance of both qualitative issues such as streetscapes and neighborhood character, and quantitative issues such as population growth, zoning and adequate public facilities.

### **Purpose and Definition of the Master Plan**

The Master Plan is intended to serve as a guide for development for the Town for the next twenty years. Although the plan is laid out in a physical sense, it also serves as a reflection of social and economic issues facing the community. There are several basic characteristics of master plans: a plan should address physical growth, it is long range in scope, it is comprehensive in intent, and it is a policy document addressing issues such as rate of community growth, community services and community character. Ultimately, the plan should be seen as a tool for guiding land use decisions that come before the Planning Commission and Town Council on a regular basis.

The plan states broad goals to be achieved over time, normally spanning a period of time from five to twenty years. The time frame master plans are aimed toward feeding into an ultimate "vision" the community deems favorable. Elements of this "vision" are meant to be both tangible and intangible in definition. This future "vision" of the community should be a consensus of the direction the Town's growth will take and that the local citizenry and elected officials have agreed upon.

Once the comprehensive plan is laid out in its "physical" sense, there are several associated planning tools meant to implement the plan. The subdivision regulations, zoning ordinance, landscape ordinance, budget, and capital improvements program are all intended to implement the policies adopted in the master plan as specific regulatory mechanisms. These implementation tools should be examined and updated on a regular basis in order to reflect the latest recommendations constituted by the master plan.

Citizen involvement and participation are considered important elements to the plan update process. Open forum workshops held throughout the plan update process to allow for citizen comment on the draft chapters of the plan. Public hearings on the draft plan also provide essential information for changes adjustments in the text prior to final approval of the document.

### **State Enabling Legislation**

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.

Specifically, Article 66B, Section 3.05, explicitly states that “it shall be the function and duty of the 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 insure 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 that 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 emphasis in the last five 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. Many of these

municipalities do not have in place mechanisms that will enable them to provide those types of facilities in a timely and prudent manner.

### **1992 Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act**

The State Planning Act of 1992 took effect in October of that year and is stated as a general planning policy in the State Annotated Code. The Planning Act is intended to advocate 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 system 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 seven "visions" of the 1992 planning act. These visions act as goals supported by the State to achieve sound planning practices. The intention to focus State spending in these areas will 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 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.

The Planning Act now sets forth eight "visions" that the counties and municipalities are to adopt and implement through individual comprehensive planning process. These visions are:

1. *Development is Concentrated in Suitable Areas.*
2. *Environmentally Sensitive Areas are protected.*
3. *In Rural Areas, Growth is Directed to Existing Population Centers and Resource Areas are protected.*
4. *Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a Universal Ethic.*
5. *Conservation of Resources, including a reduction in Resource Consumption is practiced.*
6. *To assure the achievement of items (1) through (5) of this section, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.*

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 and;*
8. *Funding mechanisms are addressed 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 first vision may summarize the more specific goals of Visions 2-5, and all of the visions are interdependent. By concentrating development in suitable areas the protection of sensitive areas should be achieved. By directing new growth towards existing population centers, undeveloped natural and agricultural resource areas are protected. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay would be achieved through protection of streams, floodplains, steep slopes, forests, and erodible soils, all of which should be considered “sensitive areas”. Lastly, as called for in Vision 5, conservation of resources would be achieved through adoption of all these policies.

It is not enough to simply address these goals through broad land-use policies. Vision 6 identifies the need to further review existing development regulations in order to coordinate the first five visions with an economic policy. As is addressed in this plan, existing zoning and subdivision regulations do not always produce aesthetically pleasing or environmentally responsible development. The complexity of some regulations along with the lengthy development approval process contributes to directing new development to less regulated areas. It is vital that the town and the surrounding counties both commit to and work together in following these eight visions mandated by the State.

The State law strongly encourages the adoption of land development regulations that streamline the development review process. Section 10.01 of the State Code also discusses various regulatory techniques for following through on the principles and practices of the State Planning Legislation. Some of these regulatory mechanisms include, but are not limited to:

- A. The planning, staging or provision of adequate public facilities and affordable housing.
- B. Off-site improvements or dedication of land for public facilities essential for a development.
- C. Moderately priced dwelling unit programs.
- D. Mixed-use developments.
- E. Cluster developments.
- F. Planned Unit developments.
- G. Alternative subdivision requirements that meet minimum performance standards set by the county or municipal corporation and that reduce infrastructure costs.
- H. Floating zones. – (Zones that may overlay other districts).

## I. Incentive and Performance zoning.

This section also states that the locality may choose to adopt other methods to facilitate orderly development and growth and encourage the preservation of natural resources for the provision of affordable housing.

Smart codes and various Smart Growth regulations are available for review at most public libraries and also accessible from the State Department of Planning Office.

### **Statement of Town Goals and Objectives**

Goals and objectives are stated in the introductory chapter of the Master Plan to set the tone for achieving the “ultimate” vision of the Town into the future.

*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.

*Policy Statements* relate to specific functional areas such as environment, transportation, and public facilities. These are usually stated at the end of each chapter of the plan.

Stated below are the goals and objectives for the Town of Mount Airy.

### **Goal – Better Manage the Effects of Regional Growth on the Town of Mount Airy**

#### *Objectives-*

1. Take a leading role in discussions with all four counties regarding growth management in the Mount Airy Region.
2. Advocate support for county policies that concentrate growth around existing centers, and therefore plan for growth.
3. Pursue opportunities to attract commercial and industrial development to provide a necessary tax base for balanced growth as a regional center.
4. Reach agreements with each county regarding the phasing of growth so that the Town is assured county cooperation with orderly growth.
5. Seek cost-sharing solutions with both Frederick and Carroll Counties for the provision of infrastructure improvements to accommodate future growth.

## **Goal- Mitigate the Impacts of Regional Growth on Town Character**

### *Objectives-*

1. Create identifiable boundaries between municipal and non-municipal areas.
2. Encourage protection of farmland outside the proposed Town limits.
3. Accommodate regional traffic through Town with minimal conflict on local streets, utilizing traffic calming techniques.
4. Work with the State Highway Administration to upgrade State Roads within the Town boundaries.

## **Goal – Preserve and Protect the Town’s Environmental and Cultural Resources**

### *Objectives-*

1. Protect existing naturally sensitive areas from the detrimental effects of development by encouraging sensitive land development.
2. Protect the Town’s groundwater resources.
3. Concentrate development so there is minimal conflict between the man-made and natural environment.
4. Establish land uses that are compatible with designated open space or historic areas.
5. Recognize the value of existing historic structures by providing proper buffering or preservation of immediately surrounding land.
6. Create guidelines for building development that maintain the Town’s historic character.
7. Protect existing streams or tributaries from development by providing adequate physical buffering.

## **Goal – Provide a Quality Living Environment in the Town of Mount Airy**

### *Objectives-*

1. Concentrate commercial land uses in areas that best serve the local and regional market.
2. Provide a variety of high quality residential developments to serve the people moving into Town.
3. Provide for public facilities and services in a timely manner to ensure efficient and orderly development.
4. Encourage neighborhood and community connections by integrating pedestrian networks throughout the Town and create or design for better neighborhood street connections.
5. Provide a coordinated road network based on the needs and patterns of future development.
6. Encourage future development that fosters an attractive visual character and sense of place that is evident in the older more established areas of town.

## **Goal – Encourage and Promote Economic Development in the Town**

### *Objectives-*

1. Encourage tourism by promoting the Town’s unique heritage.
2. Encourage the use of State Heritage preservation tax credits along with other financial and technical benefits for property owners in the Town Historic District.
3. Annex land into the Town that can provide jobs locally, such as a professional park.
4. Mount Airy’s Economic Development Commission will work with Frederick and Carroll County Economic Development Offices to further encourage economic development within the Town Limits.
5. Continue to attract commercial and light industrial development for balanced growth as a regional center.

### ***The Vision of Mount Airy’s Future***

A “Vision” of Mount Airy’s future would entail the following 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 and respectful of the environment.”

A “Mission” Statement claims 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 resources, cultural resources, and groundwater supply.
- 3- Provision of specific infrastructure thresholds, (water, sewer, schools, roads, 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.

## CHAPTER 3

### NATURAL RESOURCES

#### State Objectives

Protection of the Town's natural and environmental resources is absolutely essential to maintaining the quality of life that Mount Airy currently enjoys. Research is under way to identify how development activity is affecting the natural ecosystem. In Maryland, this research has been pursued diligently to understand how we may improve the conditions of the Chesapeake Bay. While Mount Airy is over 60 miles from the shores of the Chesapeake Bay, stream tributaries that begin in Mount Airy eventually terminate in the bay.

In an effort to coordinate environmental efforts across the State, and ultimately improve the condition of the Chesapeake Bay, the State has adopted several regulations requiring local governments to address specific environmental issues. These laws, the *Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992*, and *1991 Forest Conservation Act*, along with the *Smart Growth Legislation of 1997* all directly affect planning decisions in Mount Airy. In addition to these State regulatory measures, the Town has independently addressed protection of steep slopes, floodplains and town well watershed areas. This chapter reviews these regulations, and explores the relationships between natural resource protection and land-use planning.

#### General Climate

Mount Airy is similar to Westminster in its position astride Parris Ridge, and has a humid, temperate climate with four rather well defined seasons. The general atmospheric flow is from west to east but alternate surges of cold air from the north and of warm humid air from the south occurs in the area, causing highly variable weather. Nearness to the Atlantic Coast allows coastal storms to make up any deficiency of precipitation resulting from the passage of weather systems over the mountains to the west.

The average annual temperature is approximately 54 degrees, with January generally the coldest month and July the warmest. Temperatures exceed 90 degrees Fahrenheit an average of 27 days a year.

The average annual precipitation totals about 45 inches, with February the driest and August the wettest months. During the growing season, which averages about 177 days from April through September, the middle half of August is normally the wettest and the last part of July through the first part of August is the driest. The average seasonal snowfall is 28 inches.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Data and climatology analysis taken from the 1970 Town of Mount Airy Master Plan.

## **Topography**

Topography, the shape and lay of the land, is a major factor in controlling and guiding the density, type and direction development is to take place in any area. Severely sloping terrain, if not retained and protected in an undeveloped state, is suitable only for low-density residential use or forestation, while land, which is moderately sloped or rolling, can be appropriate for low, medium, and high-density residential development. In addition, it is the level areas, which are most easily adaptable for industrial and commercial land use.

Mount Airy's Main Street, for the most part, runs atop Parrs Ridge in a NE-SW direction with elevations ranging between 800-850+ feet, which descend in two directions roughly perpendicular to the ridge's spine. Numerous valleys that extend outward toward the east and west from this ridge cause the unusually hilly topography. The present downtown area is located in one of the more pronounced of these valleys and this funnel-like location causes many challenges with regard to development and road network. Although this rough, sloping terrain adds character and creates diversity throughout the Town, the most severe slopes are avoided in order to reduce hazard and eliminate risk in future development.

Mount Airy straddles the division of two major drainage basins; the land on the west side of Parrs Ridge drains into the Potomac via Bens Branch and tributaries of Bush Creek and Woodville Branch. The east side drains into the Chesapeake Bay via tributaries of Middle Run, the South Branch of the Patapsco, and the Patuxent Rivers.

Natural tree cover in the older residential neighborhoods is an environmental benefit while in other sections of town; trees have been preserved in their original stands or removed for development purposes. The trees are hardwoods composed primarily of ash, oak and poplar.



## **Geology**

Geologic formations that underlie an area can be vital to the type of future development the land may sustain. The quality, quantity, and accessibility of ground water is directly linked to the type of rock formation or aquifer involved. The depth of bedrock and the presence of rock outcroppings both have an effect on certain land uses and developmental patterns.

Marburg Schist is found throughout the Mount Airy area with the exception of a N-S elongated strip of Sams Creek metabasalt just to the east and paralleling Main Street. The Marburg schist is mainly a bluish gray to green, fine-grained muscovite-chlorite schist, containing a considerable amount of quartzite. The Sams Creek formation is metamorphosed basalt and also contains large quantities of quartzite.

## **Water**

The following discussion addresses the surface and groundwater sources of Mount Airy and their importance to the future development of the community.

### *Groundwater*

The Marburg Schist is an important water-bearing geologic formation that furnishes a number of commercial, domestic and farm water supplies while Sams Creek Metabasalt is of minor importance as an aquifer. According to the Maryland Department of Water Resources<sup>3</sup>, the Marburg Schist well yields and from 1 to 223 gpm and average about 17 gpm. Well depths average 87 feet. Except for limited areas along the crest of Parrs Ridge in the Ridgeville area, adequate supplies of ground water can be obtained from wells nearly anywhere within the schist area.

Springheads are generally common in this schist formation, but are not a major source of water in the Mount Airy area. The closest springs, according to the Department of Water Resources, are near Watersville in Carroll County and just south of Woodville in Frederick County.

### *Surface Water*

Because of its unique location at the perimeter of two major watersheds it is not surprising that Mount Airy does not have a large supply of surface water. The most important watershed is the South Branch of the Patapsco River that is located directly southeast of the Town limits. Other minor streams that affect Mount Airy are Bens

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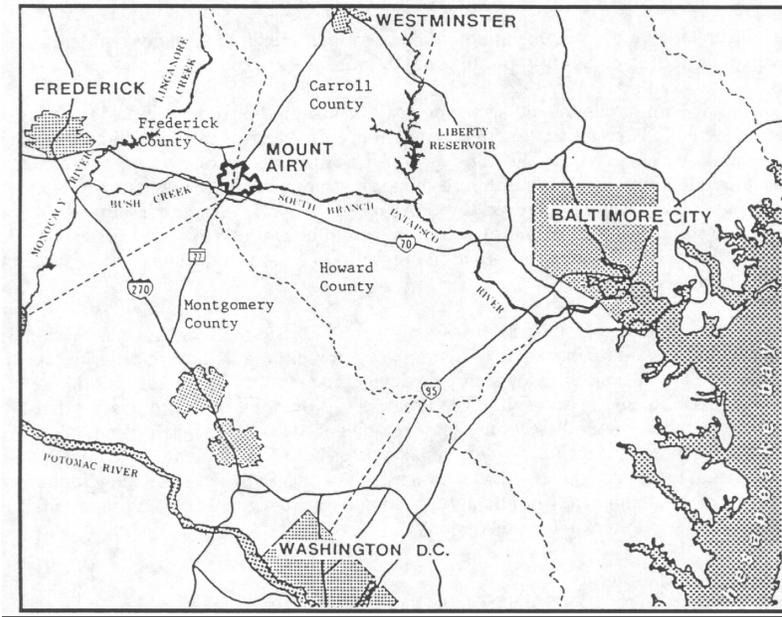
<sup>3</sup> The Water Resources of Carroll and Frederick Counties, Department of Geology, Mines and Water, Baltimore, Maryland. 1958.

Branch, and several unnamed tributaries of Bush Creek, Woodville Branch, and Middle Run.

The South Branch originates at Parrs Spring about 1.6 miles south of Mount Airy and flows in a northeasterly direction where it is joined by several unnamed tributaries that flow east from the Town. It is a relatively clean stream and receives only wastes from overflowing individual sewage disposal systems until well east of Mount Airy.

The Town has recently upgraded its sewage treatment plant cleaning the effluent discharging into the South Branch of the Patapsco River. The State of Maryland tests the quality and composition of the discharge regularly to meet the rigorous State standards of discharge.

**Mount Airy's proximity to the Chesapeake Bay**



### **Soils**<sup>4</sup>

Soils data are useful in helping to determine areas most suitable for future development. By using soil studies, sound estimates can be made about where people will be living, working and playing.

This general soil survey and analysis takes into consideration the limitations, restrictions, and hazards involved in the development of various soils areas in Mount Airy. By selecting an unsuitable use for a specific soil, the risk of loss to the developer and to the Town can be very high. The soils of Mount Airy can be grouped into four major series

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<sup>4</sup> Source: the Soil Conservation Service (USDA) in cooperation with the Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station develops Soil Survey material for Carroll, Howard, Frederick, and Montgomery Counties.

classifications as follow: a) Chester, b) Glenville, c) Mount Airy and d) Manor. Each has characteristics that should be taken into consideration by those who propose to develop and use the land.

#### *Chester*

The Chester series consists of deep, well-drained soils that are usually found on hilltops and the upper part of slopes. Hard rock is generally at a depth of more than five feet but quartzite fragments are common throughout the soil. Chester soils are strongly acidic and have a high available moisture capacity. These soils are found south of Route 40 in the Montgomery County area and any dense development should be avoided or compensated for on slopes greater than 15%.

#### *Glenville*

The Glenville series consists of moderately well drained, very strongly acid soils that occur primarily on flats and at the foot of slopes. The depth to bedrock is generally more than 5 feet; the soils are only moderately productive; and they have a limited capacity to store moisture. The Glenville soils are in limited areas found in the southern section of the Town vicinity and dense development should be avoided or compensated for because of a high water table.

#### *Mount Airy*

The Mount Airy series consists of moderately deep, very strongly acid soils that are somewhat excessively drained. The depth to bedrock in this soil is usually about 30 inches; they have a low to moderate available moisture capacity, and if well managed are moderately productive. These soils are found in the Carroll, Montgomery, and Howard County sections that surround the Town and dense development should be avoided or compensated for on slopes greater than 15%. Furthermore, the shallow depth to bedrock will cause inconvenience in relation to any subsurface excavation.

#### *Manor*

The Manor series consists of shallow, excessively drained and immature soils that are not especially fertile or productive. These soils have a high available moisture capacity and are very strongly acid. Although very susceptible to erosion they are suitable for a variety of uses. Found primarily to the west of Mount Airy, dense development should be avoided or compensated for when the slopes exceed 25%.

For the most part, areas of floodplain and slopes greater than 25% are considered to be unsuitable for development. The floodplain is not a widespread factor in Mount Airy but where it occurs, and indicated by soil analysis; it should remain undeveloped because of its role in quickly absorbing and containing excess water flow. Slopes greater than 25% are considered unsuitable for development and have been mapped here through the use of soil surveys and topographic maps. These areas should be used for open space, natural and primitive recreation areas, such as trail type walking paths, and drainage ways. If

properly protected, they can contribute an aesthetic quality that gives a community a more attractive and livable environment while shaping and ensuring safe, less costly development.

### **Sensitive Areas**

The 1992 Planning Act defines sensitive areas as streams and stream buffers, 100-year floodplain, endangered species habitat, and steep slopes. An evaluation of Mt. Airy's topography helps to describe the sensitive areas in the Town.

The Town of Mt. Airy developed along Main Street. Main Street follows the peak of Parr's Ridge. Parr's Ridge runs in a north-south direction and several minor ridges extend like fingers to the east and west. Between these minor ridges are small valleys in which the many branch streams surrounding the Town begin. Most land slopes at 8 -10% and areas where slopes exceed 15% are common. Land areas within the 100-year floodplain are minimal, located mostly along low-lying streambeds. Similarly, few wetlands have been identified outside the stream valleys.

Less than a quarter mile south of Mt. Airy the South Branch of the Patapsco River begins at Parr's Spring. The Town limits extend east to the South Branch of the Patapsco River, which is the Carroll and Howard County Boundary.

### **Streams and Stream Buffers**

Requiring undisturbed, vegetated stream buffers often regulates the protection of streams. Vegetated buffers can slow the flow of stormwater, reducing the erosion of stream banks. Vegetation also absorbs water and acts as a "filter" for pollutants and nutrients. By slowing the flow of rainwater, buffers allow the water temperature to moderate before entering streams, reducing shock to aquatic species. Stream buffers provide other benefits as well, including improved wildlife habitat and scenic value in developed areas.

The Town of Mount Airy currently does not restrict development along streams, although where wetlands exist, a 25-foot undisturbed buffer is required in the subdivision regulations. Several "models" exist by which an appropriate stream buffer could be established. Rather than establish a uniform buffer width for all streams, most models recommend that a buffer width be established to accomplish specific goals. A review of studies conducted nationwide finds that to significantly reduce the level of phosphorous entering streams, a 300-foot buffer on each side of the stream is necessary. However, if the goal is a reduction of sedimentation of the stream, a 100-foot buffer may suffice.

The effectiveness of a buffer is determined by many factors, including the steepness and length of slope within the buffer, the type of vegetative cover, the soil erodibility, and the presence of impervious surfaces (such as pavement or rooftops). Carroll County recommends a 300-foot buffer around a water supply, and a 100-foot buffer for all other

tributaries; however, in calculating the buffer, impervious surface area and slopes exceeding 25% do not count towards the buffer width requirement in order to give environmentally sensitive areas maximum protection.

### **100-Year Floodplain**

Mount Airy does not permit development within the 100-year floodplain in accordance with Section 2.6 of the Zoning Ordinance.

### **Endangered Species Habitats**

No endangered species have been identified in or near Mount Airy. In an effort to preserve habitat, 300-foot wide forested buffers should be encouraged where practical and beneficial to wildlife. Land-use policies, parks planning, and forestation resulting from the Forest Conservation Act should contribute to enhancement of these corridors.

### **Steep Slopes**

Mount Airy does not permit development on slopes equal to or greater than 30%. Many regulations referenced define steep slopes as being between 15 and 25%, and some regulations also consider the soil type in order to better determine erodibility. The State Forest Conservation Act defines steep slopes as greater than 25%, or slopes greater than 15% with a K value (soil erodibility) of greater than 0.35. It is difficult to develop at any density on slopes in excess of 15% without significant grading.

### **State Forest Conservation Act**

In 1991, the State of Maryland adopted the Forest Conservation Act, which provides that forest retention, reforestation, and/or afforestation be required of new land development. This legislation allows local governments to develop their own programs, provided they meet the intent of the State Law. The Town of Mount Airy worked closely in conjunction with Carroll County to develop a program that could be implemented in the Town. The program has been administered successfully since 1993.

The current program implemented for Carroll County stresses retention of existing forest area as the primary objective in order to fulfill the requirements of the ordinance. For every square acre of forest removed, the same amount will have to be replaced (reforested) on-site or somewhere within the same jurisdiction. Afforestation, establishing a forest where there is none, is also required to meet the State objective of increasing forest cover in the State. Any residential development on property that has less than 20% of its land in forest cover must provide a 20% threshold of afforestation. Industrial and commercial lands are permitted slightly lesser criteria, requiring a minimum of 15% of the post-development land to be forested. To guide forestation

decisions, priority retention areas and priority forestation areas are defined. These areas include stream buffers, steep slopes, wildlife corridors, and similarly valued natural areas.

The requirements of the Forest Conservation Act have contributed to the preservation and aesthetic retention of natural and conservation areas within the Town limits. Although the Town has allowed developers to utilize certain dedicated "open space" and other natural drainage areas or steep slope areas within established subdivisions, lack of suitable land quickly has become a dilemma. The Town has subsequently allowed developers of commercial and industrial projects to fulfill their forestation requirements through Carroll County approved "Forestation Banks". These banks are located in various areas throughout the county but have a set number of acres that can be purchased by developers to fill their requirements. The banking has worked well in the County because that the land used for these banks is located in strategic areas either along streambeds; steep slopes or other officially designated environmentally sensitive areas. The Town is partnering with Carroll County to look into the possibility of allowing additional landscape plantings within developments that could meet forestation requirements. This proposed flexibility in the Forestation Ordinance requirements would encourage more on-site plantings instead of being forced to use off-site forestation banks.

### **Groundwater Resources**

The quality and quantity of groundwater is particularly important to the Town, which relies entirely on groundwater for its water supply. Because supply wells are generally located within Town boundaries, land surrounding Town well sites is subject to a higher density of development than land in either County. Development affects water quality in numerous ways: the introduction of impervious surfaces, mass grading which removes existing vegetation, concentration of pollutants into single high-volume drainage areas (stormwater management ponds), and potential application or spill of chemicals that are not naturally absorbed or filtered. Common sources of contamination include salt from road de-icing, excessive fertilizer and pesticide application, and other "non-point source" pollution.

### **Carroll County Water Resource Management Ordinance**

The Carroll County Bureau of Water Resources Management developed water resource standards with the assistance of R.E. Wright Associates that address surface and ground water quality and quantity protection. In addition, the County retained Horsley, Witten and Hegemann, Inc. to review the standards for compatibility with the County Master Plan. The Water Resource Management Standards, Criteria, and Administrative Procedures prepared by R. E. Wright Associates, Inc. proposed performance standards and management criteria for four primary areas of water resource management:

- a. *Carbonate rock areas* - are rock layers that usually contain a great volume of water but is highly susceptible to contamination. No carbonate rock

is found in Mount Airy.

- b. *Wellhead protection areas* - include the land draining towards and feeding the well. The Town adopted a new wellhead protection ordinance to protect the well recharge areas around all of its active wells and it was modeled after the State wellhead protection ordinance.
- c. *Aquifer recharge areas* - include all the area within the Community Planning Area and outside land in the County that drains into the Community Planning Area. The Community Planning Area is the land within and adjacent to a municipality in which growth is directed.
- d. *Surface watershed* - are surface areas that drain to proposed or existing water supply reservoirs, stream intakes, and the streams that feed them.

The proposed standards for the four management areas address pertinent issues for the respective areas, including nutrient management, groundwater extraction practices, groundwater recharge preservation, stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, as well as chemical storage, usage and application.

*Staff Recommendation:* The proposed Water Resource Management Standards, Criteria and Administrative Procedures are thorough in content and would be a valuable asset in protecting the quality and quantity of Mt. Airy' s water resources from the impact of new development. The Town with modifications to address only those issues that pertain to the Town of Mount Airy could also adopt the Ordinance.

### **Water Resource Management Standards and the Master Plan**

The Carroll County Water Resource Management Standards/ Master Plan Compatibility Study prepared by Horsley Witten and Hegemann, Inc reviewed the relationship between the proposed standards and their conflict or consistency with planning and zoning policies. If planning policies and regulations were not respectful of water resource issues, the success of water resource standards would be limited. The following recommendations apply to Mount Airy:

A. *General Land Use Recommendations* - While contamination is a potential threat regardless of the land use, residential and commercial land uses are less likely than industrial uses to cause groundwater contamination from hazardous material accidents. However, increased nutrient loads and reduced groundwater recharge can result from intense development of any land use within a community well watershed. Water quality problems include excessive nitrate levels from residential and agricultural fertilizers and

business wastewater, and phosphorus that is a result of surface run-off from residential, commercial, and agricultural uses.

*Staff Recommendation:* Where excessive phosphorus or nitrates exist or are projected to exist, master planned land uses and densities are recommended to be revised to more compatible uses. The Carroll County Water Resource Management Standards/Master Plan Compatibility Study provides information on which to base future land-use decisions.

*B. Industrial Development* - The threat of groundwater contamination from industrial leaks and spills can be significant. The study recommends that existing community wells located within industrial zoned areas be abandoned or relocated. The study also recommends that existing and future industrial areas are subject to water resource management standards, and that future planning locate industrial activity outside potential community well watersheds.

Currently, the Town has two wells whose watersheds include industrial land: production well no.6 and production well no.7. Well no.6 is located 1500 feet from current industrial uses and is within a large undeveloped land area owned by Carroll County at Watkins Regional Park. Production well no.7 is located in the developing industrial park of Twin Ridge Professional Center. There are two excavating companies located in that park with the presence of heavy equipment. It is recommended that both of these wells continue to be monitored carefully and future businesses within the watersheds are advised of any activities that may adversely affect those wells.

*Staff Recommendation:* With the exception of the Mount Airy Industrial Park, and future development along the extension of Center Street, no industrial uses are planned within current community well watersheds. The comprehensive plan and any future rezoning should consider limiting additional industrial development within these watersheds. In addition, the Town should consider adoption of the proposed Water Resource Management Standards that address monitoring and cleanup of hazardous materials on industrial sites.

### **Wellhead Protection Areas**

Carroll County' s proposed water resource management standards require a 100foot undisturbed buffer around community wells. The purpose of a buffer area is to ensure adequate time delay before contaminants could reach a well. The Horsley, Witten and Hegemann study explains that the buffer area should be sized according to the potential draw of the well, and most wells draw from an area larger than 100 feet. A well pumped at higher volumes will draw from a larger area over the same period of time than a lesser

pumped well. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends a 325-foot buffer around potential well sites.

### **Mount Airy Wellhead Protection Ordinance**

In 1997, the Town of Mount Airy adopted an updated Wellhead Protection Ordinance that was modeled closely after the State of Maryland' s Model Ordinance. The Ordinance designates the entire Town boundary as the Wellhead Protection Area and therefore, regulates the review and provides a venue for analysis of all land uses within the Town boundaries. The Ordinance lists specific permitted uses, conditional uses, and prohibited uses.

All of the conditional uses must come under an additional layer of review from the Town to ensure that the public groundwater supply will not be threatened by a particular use. The ordinance also specifies the documentation required by the landowner to ensure the prevention of any immediate or long-term hazard to the wellhead protection area of the Town. The majority of the conditional uses relate to fuel or gasoline storage, dry cleaning establishments, and heavy manufacturing uses. An example of prohibited uses may be junkyards, storage of hazardous materials, landfills and open burning or dumpsites. The Ordinance is available for review at the Town.

*Staff Recommendation:* Update the current Wellhead Protection Ordinance to increase the buffer zone directly around the Town wellheads to 325 feet. The ordinance should also be updated to reflect existing critical watershed areas.

### **Stormwater Management**

Stormwater management facilities are an attempt to replace the natural network for rainwater travel and filtering in developed areas. Stormwater runoff is conveyed to a stormwater management facility via sheet flow, storm drain system or another method of conveyance. Once the runoff reaches the facility, its release rate and quality can be managed.

There are various types of stormwater management facilities designed primarily to control the increased volume or rate of runoff and/ or eliminate pollutants that result from rainfall on developed areas. Stormwater management structures help prevent the sudden flow of stormwater into streams, and thereby reduce the risk of erosion and sediment deposit. Stormwater management facilities also help prevent large volumes of runoff from damaging downstream properties. Another primary function of many stormwater management facilities is pollutant removal. In addition, stormwater management facilities often facilitate infiltration of surface water to replenish Mount Airy' s groundwater (drinking water) supply.

Although stormwater management facilities provide many benefits, problems relating to these facilities persist. Because facility design concentrates runoff in one location, there may be an increased loading of pollutants or nutrients at that location. The best way to minimize this loading is to provide as much natural vegetated surface area as possible throughout each new development. Vegetation will help treat pollutant-laden runoff. Stormwater management facilities also require substantial maintenance, which is typically provided by the Town at taxpayer expense within low-density residential developments.

*Staff Recommendation:* The newly adopted State of Maryland Stormwater Management Regulations advocate different design standards to assist in reducing the need for stormwater management facilities. There are many other ways to reduce runoff, but most require modifications to current zoning and subdivision regulations. All options should be considered, and those deemed feasible should be encouraged.

### **State of Maryland NPDES Program**

The State of Maryland created and is an ongoing participant in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System for stormwater management. This program is designed to monitor stormwater flow for pollutants some of which are considered “non-point source” or generating from some distance away from the stormdrain system but ultimately accessing the municipal stormdrain system. These off-site pollutants make their way into the system and could potentially create a negative effect on the groundwater supply for the town.

A NPDES Phase II permit is required from the State for all counties and municipalities to continuously monitor their stormwater flow for contaminants. This permitting process is required from the EPA as part of the Federal Clean Water Act. Under this permit, Best Management Practices are promoted and the implementation of the following six measures is encouraged:

- ♣ Public education and outreach
- ♣ Public participation and involvement
- ♣ Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- ♣ Construction site runoff control
- ♣ Post - construction runoff control
- ♣ Pollution prevention/good housekeeping

This permit will be carried by Carroll County. The Town of Mount Airy will be attached to their permit and therefore be in compliance with the program. In order for the County to meet the requirements of the permit, the stormdrain system for the County and all of the municipalities participating will need to be put into a mapping program. The County has hired a staff person to log in all new stormdrain system information and make the

necessary reporting requirements to the State, because so much information is needed to monitor storm water flow.

**Mount Airy Ordinance No. 1989-2- Responsibility of Developers to Provide New Water Sources**

In 1989, the Town adopted an ordinance that requires developers to find a significant well within their project area or pay a fee into a well exploration fund. Following adoption of this ordinance, several good wells have been found. However, the new wells may be located within the development regardless of the proposed density or permitted land use. As a requirement for most major residential annexations, the development of a well is a necessity. Growth of the Town over the last ten years has created the need for a new well for a major development of over 100 units to offset the draw on the existing water system.

*Staff Recommendation:* The ordinance should be amended to require that high-density residential, commercial and industrial developments must pay the well exploration fee or prove that a proposed on-site well will not be subject to contamination from the anticipated use of the development site.

**Gillis Falls Reservoir**

In 1988, the Carroll County Bureau of Water Resources released a study including estimates of water supply and demand in the south Carroll area. This Water resource Study concluded that water demand would exceed supply by the year 2015.

In order to plan for the future water usage, Carroll County has been planning for a surface water source, the Gillis Falls Reservoir, located 2 miles northeast of Mt. Airy. The County has purchased about 91% of the total 1,200 acres needed to establish the reservoir. However, at this time, the Army Corps of Engineers has environmental concerns regarding the reservoir development.

*Staff Recommendation:* The expected yield from recently found wells will meet the demand of potential development within current Town boundaries. However, continued success at future well exploration is uncertain. To meet the needs of development that could be permitted by future annexations, the Town may need to rely on other water sources. The Town should continue to be involved in the debate over future water supply to the South Carroll area, and support the continued consideration of the Gillis Falls Reservoir Project.

## **Natural Resources Policy Summary**

Increased awareness of the effects of development on the environment has led to additional environmental legislation at the State and local levels. The *1992 Maryland Economic Growth Resource Protection and Planning Act*, the *1991 Forest Conservation Act* and the *1997 Smart Growth Legislation* will significantly affect the planning policies of the Town. Mount Airy' s reliance on groundwater for the Town' s water system will require comprehensive groundwater management as the Town grows. Appropriate environmental regulations are suggested.

### **Policy Recommendations**

- 1. Comply with the requirements of the 1992 Planning Act and the 1997 Smart Growth Legislation for Priority Funding Areas.**
- 2. Consider adoption of stream buffer standards based on the Carroll County Water Resource Management Standards and other available resources.**
- 3. To facilitate goals of the Forest Conservation Act, identify priority forestation area in the Town and make available appropriate additional public property for off-site forestation.**
- 4. Consider adoption of the Water Resource Management Standards developed by Carroll County or other legislation to better protect groundwater resources.**
- 5. Support Carroll County efforts to develop the Gillis Falls Reservoir.**
- 6. Follow the guidelines for the State NPDES program and track the sources of local illicit discharge points.**
- 7. Require additional well exploration and development for any future expansion of the Town boundaries because the current well system is obligated to existing planned development.**
- 8. Endorse Hazard Mitigation Plans for both Frederick and Carroll Counties.**

## CHAPTER 4

### LAND USE AND ZONING

Land use patterns constitute the "fabric" that makes a town viable and unique. The pattern that is established early on in a town development history can be a strong determinate in future growth patterns if regulations are not changed to establish a more desirable development direction. Zoning regulations are the Town's most influential control over future development. Zoning and subdivision regulations determine what land may be used for and when, but also affect the appearance or "character" of new development, regulate site design, and regulate the connections between new and existing development.

Existing zoning regulations and land-use definitions, particularly as they affect commercial and industrial development, can significantly affect the success of the Town's economic base. Inappropriate definitions, categories, and regulations can needlessly complicate the plan review process, and provide minimal benefit to the property owner or the Town.

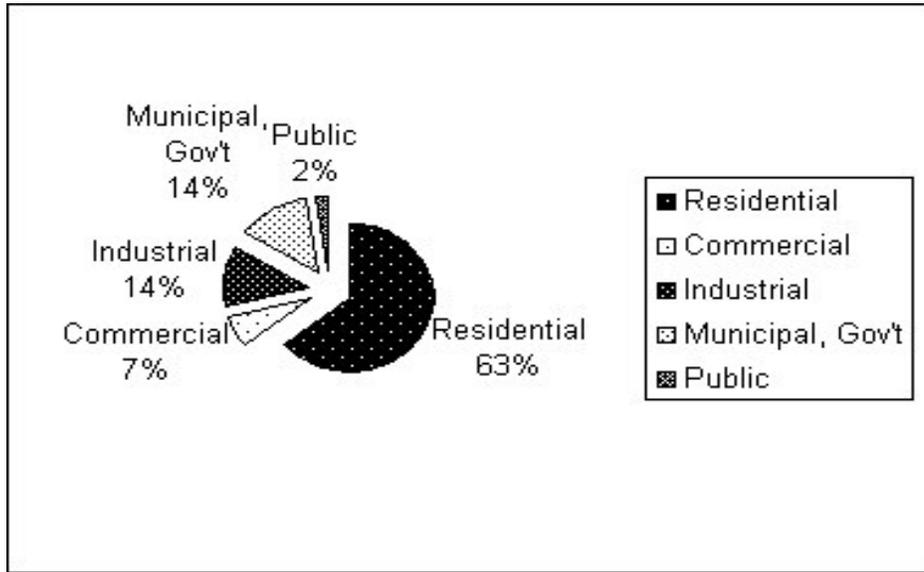
The first section of this chapter analyzes the existing zoning and current land-use patterns. These evaluations lead to the recommendations in the last section of the chapter, proposed changes to the current zoning, if any, and the revised Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

The second section of this chapter examines how existing zoning and subdivision regulations are affecting the physical characteristics of the Town, and establishes goals for new land use and zoning policies.

#### **Review of Existing Land Use and Zoning**

The Town of Mount Airy has experienced a large amount of land development since the last Comprehensive Plan was updated in 1994. To date, the majority of this land development has been in a residential capacity. Nearly 500 acres of land have come under residential development to some degree in the last seven years. During the late 1980s to late 1990s, the land that was under development was primarily in the Frederick County portion of Mount Airy. During the most recent two to three years, the Carroll County portion of the Town has taken the majority of the development activity and continues to do so. The Town is now experiencing the related effects of that major push of residential activity in terms of increased traffic flow, traffic congestion, increased park usage, and increased density of the Town population.

Overall, in the last seven years, the Town has developed roughly half of the vacant land inventory that was present in 1994. Residential is the largest land use with 62% of the total 2,600 acres now within the Town boundaries. Municipal, government, and road rights-of-way represent 17%, industrial land use totals 13%, commercial use totals 6%, and public uses such as the library, carnival grounds and post office constitute 2% of the land uses. Below is a chart showing the current state of land use within the Town boundaries.



<i>Land Use /Zoning Classification</i>	<i>Acres</i>
Residential	1,610
Commercial	162
Industrial	339
Municipal, Gov' t, State Rightsof-Way	445
Public Uses	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,601</b>

Currently only 23% of the zoned land inside the Town boundaries is vacant. Of that vacant land inventory, 40% of the existing vacant land inventory is in industrial zoning, 57% is in residential zoning and 3% is in commercial zoning. Lack of availability of uncommitted commercial zoning has brought about a trend in Mount Airy that some of

semi-commercial uses are utilizing the industrial zoning in the Town. Of all the vacant land in town currently, close to 70% has an approved development plan.

A low supply of commercially zoned land has enabled land zoned commercial to command high prices. The main commercial activity is still centered on the interchange of I-70 and MD Route 27. The Peacock Property, which is now developed as the Peacock Center, was the only area of Town added to the inventory of commercial land since the last Master Plan Update in 1994. No additional commercial zoning was added to the downtown area during the last update.

All land development in the past six years has followed precisely what the comprehensive plan designated in the 1994 plan. Approximately 90% of all land use, including residential, mirrors the zoning category and comprehensive plan designation as stated on the official map. Most of the new residential development taking place in Town has been in R2 low density residential zoning; 56% of housing stock has a low-density residential classification and claims 73% of the land area devoted to housing. Medium density residential classifications comprise 29% of the housing stock on 21% of the land area, and high-density residential zoning comprises 15% of the housing stock on 6% of the residential land area. The large percentage of land use devoted toward residential development continues to classify the Town as a “bedroom” community.

**Town Subdivision Activity** The Town has processed more residential permits in the last three years than in the four years prior to that time period. Four major subdivisions have come under development and have been in the construction phase since 1995. Three of those subdivisions were single-family developments and one is strictly senior housing. By the start of 2004, there were 811 homes in the residential pipeline, of which only 34% had permits issued. Of that total pipeline, 16% are senior housing units, 31% townhouse units and the remainder is detached single-family development. There are no plans for new multi-family development.

This development pipeline will generate close to 2,500 people, a 32% increase to the current Town population of 7,811. Following is a current listing of the residential pipeline in Mount Airy.



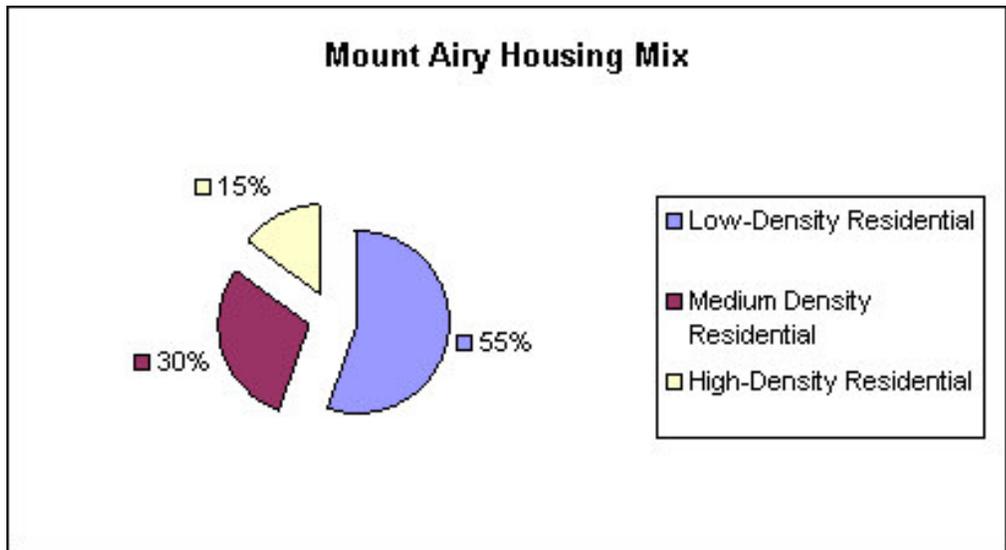
**Current Development Pipeline for the Town of Mount Airy – December 2003**

<b>Development Name</b>	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Permits Issued</b>	<b>Permits Outstanding</b>
1- Wildwood Park V (Senior Housing)	R-3	69	57	12
2- Twin Arch Crossing- TH	R-7	255	135	120
3- The Woodlands of Nottingham -SF	R-2	185	43	142
4- Sterling Glen - SF	R-2	143	0	143
5- Ridgeville Heights - Duplex	R-3	38	0	38
6- Willow Glen - TH	R-7	49	35	14
7- Larel Estates - SF	R-2	11	8	3
8- Wildwood Park VI (Senior Housing)	R-3	61	0	61
<b>Total</b>		<b>811</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>533</b>

Desirability of the area the Town’s proximity to the Washington-Baltimore job market and subsequent regional growth have created a demand for housing that has been consistent for the last ten years. At times, any County or State policy changes have not affected County or State regulatory changes can affect the level of building in a certain municipality, but the level of demand for building in Mount Airy.

**Housing Inventory and Housing Issues**

The town has developed over the course of many years with primarily single-family housing. The current stock of housing is still predominantly single-family, still the preferred type for new residents. There have been more incidents of townhouse communities in town that range from small groupings of townhouses to developments of 100 to 200 units. The town has only one apartment complex that remains as rental units and it has been in existence for thirty years. The town zoning ordinance provides for the allowance of several different densities to be utilized either individually or together in various combinations. At this time, the town does not have a PUD (Planned Unit Development) type of zoning that combines existing residential densities with commercial or public uses. The current inventory of housing is shown, broken down into the following categories:



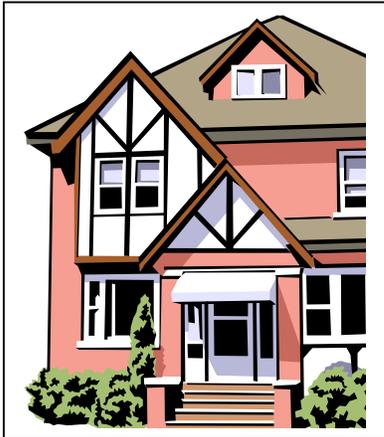
<b>Low Density Residential</b>	<b>Medium Density Residential</b>	<b>High Density Residential</b>
55% - All Single Family Larger Lots - 1/3 to 1/2 acre	30% - All Single Family Smaller Lots- 1/4-1/8 acre	15% - Townhouses and Multi-family

**Residential Permit Activity**

The residential permit activity in the Town of Mount Airy has substantially increased in the last four years. This increase directly relates to the land annexed into the Town boundaries in the early 1990s that was assigned residential zoning. This recently annexed land went through the development review process in the mid 1990s and started construction in the late 1990s. The years subsequent to those annexations show a sharp increase in the amount of new residential permits issued in the town.

<i>Permit Year</i>	<i>Single-Family</i>	<i>Townhouse</i>	<i>Multi-Family</i>	<i>Total Residential Permits</i>
<b>1992</b>	44	7	0	51
<b>1993</b>	118	4	0	122
<b>1994</b>	81	16	0	97
<b>1995</b>	60	16	0	76
<b>1996</b>	50	0	0	50
<b>1997</b>	55	0	0	55
<b>1998</b>	107	0	1	108
<b>1999</b>	157	10	0	167
<b>2000</b>	164	25	0	189
<b>2001</b>	146	50	0	196
<b>2002</b>	66	25	0	91
<b>2003</b>	58	55	0	113

In order to control the amount of housing activity in any one calendar year, the Town of Mount Airy passed an ordinance in the late 1980s limiting each development to 40 residential permits per year. This worked well in allowing adequate facilities to keep pace with development in the early 1990s. However, in the later 1990s, the Town had three to five residential subdivisions building at one time, hence the sharp increase in overall permits. It may be prudent for the Town to consider an "overall" limitation of residential building permits on an annual basis to ensure that public facilities keep pace with development. *Emergency measures have been implemented for the past year and a half to reduce the allowable number of building permits per development in order to upgrade Town infrastructure that is vitally needed. These building permit limitations will remain in place until the Town considers all of the available resources necessary to serve the approved pipeline of development. The town may also consider an overall limitation of residential building permits in order to be able to provide adequate facilities over time.*



### **Housing Stock**

The first major alternative housing in terms of "type" occurred with the development of a strictly senior housing community called Wildwood Park in the early 1990s. This development is not only unique in its design, but it also incorporates an assisted living and nursing home component in the center of the community. It is a "senior campus" that incorporates graduated levels of living for seniors, from independent to semi-

dependent to dependent care without having to move out of Mount Airy.

The core stock of housing in the older sections of town varies from large Victorians to smaller brick cape cods with much variety in-between. The lot sizes also have great variety in size, which adds to the fabric of residential development composing the older sections of town. The peripheral areas of the town are developed with new housing developments, some townhouse subdivisions, but predominately single-family detached houses.

Future areas of annexation that have considerable acreage should be able to offer a variety of housing types and price ranges within one subdivision. This may be accomplished by combining two or three residential zoning classifications of varying density within one "master planned" subdivision.

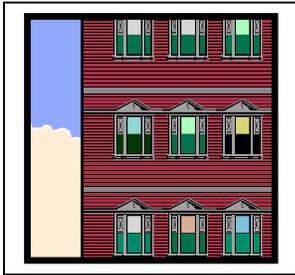
The town should continue to advocate the subdivisions that provide a variety of housing types in a range of prices. This would better serve and accommodate the diversity of needs for the growing resident population.

### **Housing vs. Employment**

The balance between employment types of land uses and residential development has improved since the last plan update took place in 1994. Although an inventory of primarily service jobs has been created with the initiation of industrial land development, the town still leans heavily toward existing as a more residentially based community. That slant towards a residentially based community does not show any significant pattern of changing. Even with the balance of jobs to housing at a fairly low number, the majority of the residential population still has all essential services met in town with higher-level personal or shopping services available within a 20-mile radius. The town residents seem to be willing to accept a smaller range of services as a trade off for less congestion, traffic, and generally a less hectic lifestyle.

## **Downtown Land Use and Development**

The last ten years have yielded a slow transition of business uses in the Mount Airy Downtown district. The building structures, including significant building structures such as the old firehouse and the old municipal town hall building, are still intact and significantly unaltered from their original architecture. The slowness of this transition has assisted in a way that ensures the protection of individual building integrity. Lately, in the last five years, there has been a trend toward renovating the interior of these downtown buildings and occupying them with specialty stores that provide specialty retail goods and crafts for the regional market. There have been discussions referring to a mix-used commercial zone that may help stimulate additional redevelopment in the downtown area.



### **Review of Existing Zoning Categories**

The residential zoning classifications were updated during the last Master Plan Update and have functioned according to the intentions behind how the zones were structured. All of the zoning categories have been utilized within the last five years and have resulted in designs that were in compliance with the zone.

***CON- Conservation Zone (newly adopted zone):*** This zone was adopted to allow for a very low-density district (minimum of 3 acres per home site overall). This zone would be strictly limited in use to certain environmentally sensitive areas. The minimum lot size in this zone would be 24,000 square feet with an average of 40,000 square feet. It is meant to provide maximum protection to the outlying residential areas surrounding the Town. It will not be used as a “stand alone” zone except where recommended to address specific environmental concerns.

***RE- Residential Existing:*** This zone was designed and functions to represent the majority of existing town low and medium density development. The minimum lot size for this zoning classification is 14,000 square feet, with an average of 18,000 square feet. The zone is designated in the core area of town along Main Street, North Main Street Area, Park Ave, and Ridge Ave. It is also designated in the western portion of Mount Airy and includes all of Twin Ridge, Village Gate, Mount Airy Village East and West and the Westridge Subdivision.

***R1- Low Density Residential (newly adopted zone):*** This zoning designation was recently adopted to allow the provision of low-density development potential with concentration on good land management and harmony with the physical environment. This zoning classification allows a minimum area of 18,000 square feet with an average of 24,000 square feet. This zoning classification has not been assigned to any land areas within the municipal limits, but may be used alone or in conjunction with other residential densities on larger tracts of land.

*R2- Low Density Residential:* This zoning designation is typically assigned to newly annexed land in the peripheral areas of the town where new residential use is designated to be located. It also represents land area along East Ridgeville Boulevard, the new northern development of Summit Ridge and Twin Ridge III, as well as the residential zoning along the eastern portion of Watersville Road. The minimum lot size allowed within this zone is 11,000 square feet, with an average of 14,000 square feet. Two community park areas such as the Fireman's Carnival grounds and Watkins Park have a zoning designation of R-2, low density residential. The majority of newly designated low-density residential development is assigned an R-2 classification.

*R3- Medium Density Residential:* There are two main areas of R-3 Residential zoning and that is the area lying in-between Park Ave. and Ridge Ave. before entering the downtown area. It is designated in the Senior Housing complex and in the residential area north of Park Ave. This zoning classification represents smaller single-family lot sizes of 6,000 - 10,000 square feet. In the town this zoning classification is centered in a rather limited area. Conditional uses within this zone are those primarily allowed in the lower density residential zones.

*R5- Medium Density Residential:* This residential zone is provided in very specific areas of the town and was created in the last Master Plan update to provide for potential "Neighborhood Centers". The zone also allows for medium density detached and attached housing units and provides for some flexibility of design for a mixture of types of units allowed within the zone. The minimum lot size for this zoning classification is 6,000 square feet, with an average lot size of 6,000 to 8,000 square feet. The zone was intended to accommodate "community" based uses compatible to residential development such as daycare centers, recreational centers, non-profit organizational centers or churches.

At this time two such R-5 areas have been utilized in town. One neighborhood center area houses a nursing home/assisted living facility. The other area was dedicated to a recreational area; community pool nestled among smaller lot single-family homes. There is still one area of R-5 zoning that has not been developed and resides on the western portion of town.

*R7- High Density Residential:* There are five areas of high-density housing located in the Town. Three of these areas reflect existing townhouse developments and the other two are vacant and undeveloped parcels. There is an intermingling of townhouses in small amounts in other scattered areas around the town, but the large concentration of R-7 zoning represents existing townhouse developments.

*NP- Neighborhood Professional (newly adopted zone):* The purpose of this district is to encourage a transition in-between existing residences and more intensive commercial zoning. It will allow the redevelopment of existing homes and structures for professional

offices while protecting the lower intensity residential uses that adjoin the district. This zoning in the future will be placed in the peripheral commercial areas around town.

*LC - Limited Commercial (newly adopted zone):* This zone is intended to provide areas for a limited number of used retail and service establishments in close proximity to the residential area around them. This district is also intended to be a transitional zone while protecting the less intensive residential areas and the lower level neighborhood professional office areas.

*CC- Community Commercial:* This zone allows a wide variety of commercial uses, including shopping centers and special uses within the commercial zone such as gas stations, hospitals, institutions, and nursing home facilities, etc. The primary areas of community commercial zoning are along Rt. 27 and along Ridgeville Boulevard. There are several areas of commercial zoning, which abut existing residential development and cause conflicts as well as basic compatibility problems. This zone also does not prevent large box retail users from being built in town if they have adequate land area.

*I- Industrial:* The town only has one industrial classification that accommodates a wide variety of industrial uses. The main areas of industrial zoning are located in the five designated industrial parks located within the town limits. Four of these parks are situated in the eastern portion of the town in Carroll County and one is located in the Frederick County portion of Mount Airy. Commercial zoning is in short supply and some of the industrial parks have attracted commercial retail business. There have been some professional offices and "flex-space" type of buildings established in these parks that are compatible with other allowable uses within the zone.

### **Future Zoning Opportunities**

The Town of Mount Airy is still considered a "bedroom" community consistent with the percentage of land in existing and proposed residential development. There are still over 200 acres of residentially zoned land that has development potential inside the Town boundaries and that is an adequate amount given the rate of growth in the Town during the ten years preceding this Master Plan. During the last Master Plan Update, there were an additional 250 acres of land given industrial zoning in order to help balance out the deficit of opportunities for "employment" zones and therefore future job creation and opportunity for local business expansion. The amount of industrial zoning is also quite adequate for the future growth for that type of development.

There is adequate vacant land inventory for both residential expansion and industrial expansion; the commercial land opportunities within the Town should be examined closely for the Town to be able to provide for continued business growth of a retail/service nature. This is an area of continuing concern and the plan should concentrate on the provision of commercial land opportunities for new or expanding local businesses without overburdening the current infrastructure improvements to handle such

expansions. Commercial zoning locations should be closely evaluated so that they are established in areas of planned infrastructure improvements.

The unbalancing effects of major episodes of residential growth are things such as a lack of balance of other types of land use growth and development. The percentage of residential growth that has occurred in Mount Airy in the last ten years has greatly surpassed the amount of commercial and industrial development in that same period of time. Whenever there is a shortage of services in relation to population, the job to housing ratio is lower than a healthy mix should allow. Therefore, the Town should strive towards providing enough alternative zoning categories that assist in providing adequate employment opportunities.

One area of zoning classification that has just received updating is the creation of a lower intensity commercial zone that focuses on utilizing the existing housing inventory along peripheral commercial areas for office space and home-based businesses. Two intermediate zones have been created, which were previously discussed. These new zones are of less intensity than the standard "Community Commercial" zone and will allow a calming effect of "transitional" commercial uses. It should also provide opportunities for business expansion but at the same time provide buffering for adjoining residential uses from the more intensive commercial activity and allow adaptive reuse of existing residences.

### **Comprehensive Land-Use Plan**

The comprehensive land use categories will remain the same and continue to establish the desirable land use activity as designated in the last Master Plan. A concise description of the existing comprehensive plan classifications follows:

*Open Space and Public Use:* This category is applied to land currently used for open space and public use, but includes school grounds and town parks. It has also been applied to the greenway and linear park proposed for the South Branch of the Patapsco River. Where land is identified as Open Space or Public Use but not currently developed, the dedication can be achieved through application of the residential zones in place.

*Low-Density Residential:* This category corresponds to the RE-Residential Existing or the R-2 zone. Approximately 138 acres of low-density residential zoning not yet developed fits into this category. This acreage could potentially yield 250 homes. It also includes future development in the Nottingham subdivision, which borders the rails to trails right-of-way and can protect it from more intensive development in the future.

*Medium-Density Residential:* This category corresponds to the R-3 and R-5/neighborhood center zoning that is assigned in various locations in town. Thirty-six 36 acres in this zone are undeveloped. The undeveloped land has a potential of yielding 144 homes if developed.

High-Density Residential: This category corresponds to the existing R-7 zone. Only one site is vacant and does not have any current development plans on it. The remaining R-7 zoning classifications reflect existing developments or high-density subdivisions under development. The amount of R-7 zoning still represents a small amount of the total housing inventory in town. Forty-four acres remain in undeveloped R-7 land located on the east side of MD 27, north of the Twin Arch Shopping Center. This property could yield up to 300 housing units within the zone.

Commercial: This category corresponds to the existing Community Commercial zone, and is concentrated around the intersection of I-70 and Route 27. It is undesirable for continuous strip development of commercial zoning to occur along the corridor of Route 27, north of Ridgeville Boulevard. To do so would compromise traffic flow along Route 27, especially during peak periods.

Employment: This category corresponds to the Industrial zoning classification. Properties designated for employment are all of the existing Industrial Parks along with the industrial types of businesses located along Center Street that is planned to eventually connect up with Route 27. The only other future area of employment that is designated is below Rt. 144 and north of I-70 on the Frederick County side of Route 27. The proposed future extension of Rising Ridge Road to South Main Street would assist in servicing business traffic into this area.

**Estimated Residential Development:**

Under the 2003 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, residential development on vacant land *currently within the Town limits* is anticipated to yield the following number of housing units.

<i><b>Town of Mount Airy Residential Development Potential</b></i>				
<u>Category</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Avg. Density</u>	<u># Units</u>
Low Density	RE/R-2	136	1.75 du/ac	230
Med. Density	R-3/R-5	30	4 du/ac	102
High Density	R-7	36	7 du/ac	214
<b>Totals:</b>				<b>546</b>

This estimate of new units does not include the potential for the possible future annexation areas of Town, but takes into consideration areas of residential zoning that are vacant but do not have any current development plans on them. Based on an average of 75 to 100 new residential building permits issued per year, the above number represents

roughly a five and half-year buildout of current vacant zoned land. The amount of building permits may vary from year to year dependent upon economic factors or other controlling regulatory mechanisms that may be instituted by the Town.

**Future Annexation Areas:** The ultimate town boundaries as defined in the 1994 plan will not be further expanded. The future service area for water and sewer capabilities will also remain the same. There are four major farms that include 900 acres of land not yet annexed into the town. The ultimate town boundaries were established as a result of surrounding county development policies, environmental features, and road configurations, both existing and planned. The accompanying map delineates the potential annexation areas and the text summarizes issues that are involved in the decision of whether or not to annex a property, what the proposed uses of the property should be, and what priority each property would command.



### **Opportunities and Constraints of Future Annexation Areas**

As previously stated, there are 900 acres of land between the current town limits and the ultimate town boundaries as established in the 1994 Master Plan. This acreage is split into four farms, two on the Frederick County side of Mount Airy and two on the Carroll County side of Mount Airy. Frederick County and Carroll County identify much of this land for residential development at densities higher than that, which would normally be permitted in the county, with the intent that the Town would someday annex this property.

There is no obligation on the part of the Town to annex additional property. If a decision to annex additional land were to be made, it should be a conscious decision by the Town to permit additional development within the corporate limits.

If the Town chooses to annex additional property, it should always do so with the knowledge that some potential annexation properties offer more advantages than others, and the sequence of annexation should be considered so that services are not unnecessarily burdened by low-priority development. The Town may also encourage the development of a "master plan" for large parcels of land that could ensure the maximum efficiency of the parcel along with assurance of adequate capital facilities, land density and recreational improvements.

The accompanying map, "Future Annexations Areas", breaks the future potential annexations into parcels, and illustrates the opportunities or constraints of each land area. Opportunities a parcel may offer include additions to the planned road or open space

networks, potential well sites or protection of well recharge areas, conditions that make a property ideal for a needed land-use, and other significant features.

Constraints may include poor accessibility or undue burdens on the existing road network, extreme environmental conditions that make the property unsuited for certain types of development, and similar factors that may limit potential use of a property. Constraints do not suggest that a property should not be annexed, but should influence potential land use decisions, and may affect the prioritization of annexations. Site-specific conditions, including slopes, floodplain, wetlands, forested areas, streams, accessibility, viewsheds, and similar characteristics should be thoroughly considered before any annexation and zoning decision is made.

*The following discusses the merits of each parcel:*

**Parcel A:** Parcel A includes a 25-acre property north of Prospect Road, west of Westridge subdivision. It is currently being used agriculturally and is known as the Rigler Property. It is located directly south of the 90-acre Town-owned parcel with public well number 9 on it. The land uses surrounding this property in the Town and Frederick County are single-family residences on lots that range from one-third of an acre up to two acres. This property should be developed in a low-density residential manner because of the surrounding residential land uses.

**Parcel B:** Parcel B contains 275 acres and includes land northwest of the Town in Frederick County. Some of this property would include the planned Old Annapolis Road extension, which would serve as the northern Town boundary. The southern edge of this parcel borders the planned open space network and could significantly contribute to this feature.

If this property were to develop the option should be reserved to provide a major road connection from Buffalo Road to Rising Ridge Road. Otherwise, traffic generated by this development would be forced through the older areas of the Town. Much of this land is relatively flat and unwooded, making it ideal for active recreation purposes and fairly easy to develop. Given the distance from I-70 and Route 27, it is recommended that this property be primarily residential.

**Parcel C:** Parcel C contains 32 acres and is within Carroll County. This long parcel is sandwiched between N. Main Street and Route 27, slopes eastward. It is highly visible from Route 27. Two properties that lie between Watersville Road are a twelve-acre track belonging to St. James Episcopal Church and a 5-acre parcel belonging to Mt. Airy Baptist Church; they were both annexed into Town in 2000. The twelve-acre commercially zoned parcel located at the corner of Candice Drive and MD 808 was annexed into the Town in 1995.

The remaining properties are considered to be "Dorseytown" and are slated to be in the Town limits eventually. The ultimate Town limits will continue to show the entire area from Watersville Road and North Main Street to the intersection of North Main Street and MD 27 as entirely within the corporate limits. The recommended zoning classification for this infill area is RE or R-1 Low – Density Residential.

**Parcel D:** Parcel D consists of 300 acres and is within Carroll County. It borders MD 27 and Watersville Road. Some residential development has already occurred on Boetler Road. If this property is developed a road is proposed to link MD 27 at North Main Street to Boetler Road. Some of this land is low-lying and may be floodplain or wetlands. The property abutting Watersville Road is relatively flat, and would be ideal for recreational purposes. Future development of this parcel should be primarily low-density residential and should include the dedication of a future 40-acre school site. If this property were to be developed in Carroll County it would be eliminated from the future growth area of the Town.

**Parcel E:** Parcel E is known as the Knill property and contains 200 acres within Carroll County. This parcel consists of right-of-way for Rt. 27 and one large dairy farm. This property is relatively level, and is highly visible from Rt. 27, Watersville Rd. and the proposed recreational trail. Two major roads are proposed through this property, as delineated in the 1994 plan. One road runs north to south, connecting Center Street extended to Watersville Road. The other runs east to west, connecting the new road to residential property already within the Town. These roads are intended to help interconnect neighborhoods on the east side of Rt. 27 and limit unnecessary traffic on MD 27.

Because of its size, the property would need to be “master planned” to create the most efficient and environmentally sensitive design. It is likely that this property would be a combination of zoning classifications, residential, commercial and recreational. No well site has been identified on this property, although a new town well should be considered with the development of this large parcel. It is also within the recharge area for well #6.

**Parcel F:** Parcel F contains 120 acres and is within Carroll County. It is moderately hilly, and borders the South Branch of the Patapsco River. There are several significant wooded areas within the parcel. There are many large residential parcels on this lot, and a request for annexation of this area may be anticipated in the future. Two potential well sites are identified within this parcel, and the Twin Arch Bridge borders the southeast end of the site. The Towns water consultants have strongly recommended well exploration and development in this area. It has been generally determined as the last area of the Town that should be explored to yield well development. Recommended future land uses are primarily residential, although commercial or industrial uses may be considered if the surrounding properties develop with non-residential uses.

**Parcel G:** Parcel G is entirely within Frederick County and contains 180 acres. It is currently farmed although a significant wooded hillside exists on the west side of the property. The site is visible from I-70, and could be readily accessed by the planned extension of Rising Ridge Road to Rt. 27. No well has been identified on the site; however, the property lies within the recharge area for town well #7. The property has good potential for office and related uses given its visibility from I-70 and excellent accessibility from Rt. 27.

Future Annexation Plan: Parcels B, D, E, and G offer the most opportunities and least constraints. Parcel G could provide the highest priority planned road, Rising Ridge Road Extended, and provides for additional office development. Parcel E includes a central link to the planned recreational trail, and an important road network accessing the property to its west. Parcel B would also contribute to the open space network. Parcel D has potential for a combination of recreational and residential development.

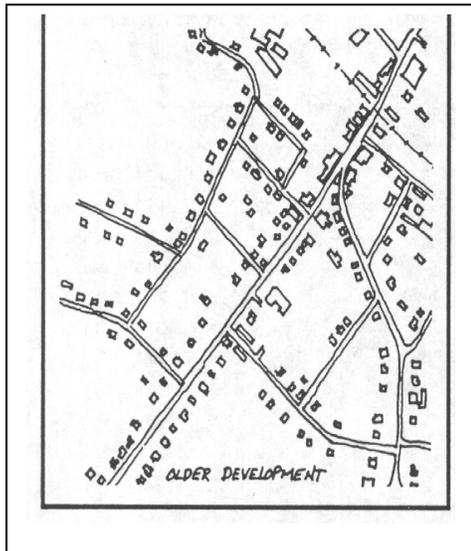
Of the seven parcels, Parcel G is a good candidate for additional employment land use. *The remaining six parcels are all recommended for low to moderate density residential development.*

The Town has vacant land already inside its limits. It is recommended that any future annexation decisions weigh the ability of existing services to handle the growth impacts of all currently incorporated vacant property as well as the annexation parcel.

**Diversity of Zoning and the Town Character** (*Patterns and diversity of land uses*)

Current zoning categories tend to define a narrow range of permitted building types or land uses. These categories are typically applied to an entire property such that a 200-acre parcel may be designated as one zone only. This practice results in residential sprawl or lengthy commercial strips.

The contrast between the old and new areas of Town is exaggerated by this different "pattern" of development. The older areas of Mt. Airy were developed over a long period of time and were generally not regulated by restrictive zoning categories. Within the older areas, a great variety of residential building types and small and large commercial facilities can be found intermingled. There is minimal conflict caused by this integration, and the mix of building types and uses has greatly contributed to the character of the Town.



**Older Development pattern of Main Street and Park Ave.**

The diversity of land-uses in the older areas of Town also accommodates activities that tend to be excluded by the strict

categorization of current zoning. Home-based businesses, small professional offices, bed and breakfasts, daycare, apartments above retail shops, and similar uses that do not fall neatly within a zoning category have difficulty finding an acceptable site within the Town. The possible creation of a zoning classification for the downtown area that accommodates a variety of mixed uses may be in order.

Older areas of Town are sources of pride to the community. Much of their attraction is derived from the unique mix and diversity of land uses. Plans for new development are often the source of confrontation between officials, citizens and developers. Many times, controversy surrounding new development is respectful to the existing town or neighborhood surroundings.

### **Neighborhood Connections**

As mentioned previously, a single zoning category is typically applied to large tracts of land. Because the Town previously had relatively few zoning categories, the incompatibility of development in adjacent zones had become more noticeable. To address this disparity, the two new transitional commercial zones were created. The careful placement of these transitional zones will assist in buffering established residential areas from heavy commercial activity. The specific requirements of both zones, special requirements for buffer landscaping and special lighting requirements assist in the creation of a good relationship between office uses and residential uses.

The connections that are sometimes provided between adjacent developments are sidewalks, but special lighting and buffering requirements can make those connections safer and more aesthetically pleasing. Higher speed collector or arterial roads especially need this buffer to protect adjoining residential areas. Through the subdivision design process, the Town has worked to foster more pedestrian and bikeway connections through newer neighborhoods.

The overriding goal of good design and infill development should be to complement the surrounding existing development. Zoning regulations should encourage this complement instead of creating isolated and disconnected uses.

<p><b><u>Recommendation:</u></b> Continue to create Zoning and supplemental regulations along with subdivision design that fosters community cohesiveness by providing that all development is accessible, visible, and interconnected.</p>
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### **Site Design and Zoning**

The type and intensity of land use is not always compatible with the site features of the parcel it was designated for. Properties with slopes of over 15% are difficult to develop, given any land, use without significant grading that destroys the existing topographical

features, forests and other vegetation. Similarly, developments in older areas of town are forced to conform to regulations for new development, rather than being forced to conform to the established character. The Town has recently adopted some additional residential and commercial zoning classifications that will assist in providing development with good site design in appropriate locations.

**Recommendation:** Review and revise the zoning regulations where they conflict with good site design practice.

**Reverse Frontage Lots are not desirable off a major collector road**



**Lot Design and Zoning**

Zoning criteria including lot size, setbacks, minimum lot width and parking requirements have a significant effect on the design of a building site.

Rather than provide minimum guidelines, the current zoning regulations tend to be very demanding, and most of the lots developed under the same zone are almost identical. The impact of this inflexibility on new residential lot design can be compared to the character of older residential development. On Main Street, lot sizes range from 2 acres to 12,000 square feet or less. The average lot size in newer subdivision is about 18,000 square feet.

The existing RE- residential existing zone was devised during the last plan update and has been assigned to the majority of core neighborhoods and established new subdivisions constructed during the previous 10 to 15 years. In this zone, which is the lowest residential zoning classification assigned, typical lots are 18,000 square feet, but may go up to 22,000 square feet.

The R-2 zone instituted during the last plan update allowed the minimum lot size to be reduced to 11,000 square feet. In most cases, the lot sizes in new subdivisions range from 14,000 to 20,000 square feet but having a lower minimum lot size allows more flexibility in design. This flexibility in design can help to make new peripheral subdivisions more environmentally friendly and help infill housing developments more sensitive to the surrounding established neighborhoods.

Recently the Town has added two more residential zoning classifications to allow a greater range of lot sizes. The *R-1 residential zone* allows a larger minimum lot size than is currently mandated in the R-2 zone affording adjoining low-density outside of town a greater level of protection. The newly created *Conservation zone* allows a low-density residential “clustering” in order to protect and promote environmentally sensitive design.

Recommendation: Zoning criteria should continue to be reviewed to allow for better design options that result in more attractive neighborhoods.

***The following rezoning recommendations are being made for this update of the comprehensive plan:***

1. Norma Lee Dennis Property/ Calvary Church Property-
  - Current zoning RE- Residential Existing
  - Rezone existing RE zoning to LC - Limited Commercial on both parcels.
  
2. Humphreys/Lloyd/Fleming Property -
  - Current zoning R3 - Medium Density Residential
  - Rezone all three properties to LC - Limited Commercial
  
3. South Main Street Properties -
  - Current zoning RE- Residential Existing
  - Rezone Gehle, Runkles, Moxley properties on the east side of South Main Street
  - as CC- Community Commercial
  - Rezone Weierbach and Baker properties on the west side of South Main Street
  - as NP- Neighborhood Professional.
  - Rezone the properties from Gehle to Verizon as LC- Limited Commercial.

- Rezone the German and Brightwell properties on the east side of South Main Street as NP- Neighborhood Professional.
- 4. Beck Property - West side of MD 27 at Center Street
  - Current zoning I- Industrial
  - Rezone as CC- Community Commercial
- 5. Center Street Corridor - All properties west of the Beck property along the Center Street Corridor
  - Current zoning I- Industrial
  - Rezone as CC- Community Commercial
- 6. Runkles Property - Arlene Runkles Property located on Plainview Ave.
  - Rezone from current R5- medium density residential to R2- low density residential.

**Policy Recommendations:**

- 1. Maintain the current ultimate growth boundaries and ultimate water and sewer service areas as approved in the 1994 Master Plan with adjustments made for recent annexations.**
- 2. Continue to assign transitional zoning categories between residential uses and more intensive commercial and industrial classifications.**
- 3. Continue to require buffer areas between residential uses and more intensive commercial and industrial uses.**
- 4. Work with Carroll and Frederick Counties to establish ultimate growth limit lines and ultimate population growth limits that are beneficial to the town and match future infrastructure improvements.**
- 5. Continue to require 10% open space dedications on *useable* ground as part of the subdivision approval process.**
- 6. Plan for additional commercial growth only where planned or existing infrastructure can support it.**
- 7. Provide comprehensive adequate public facilities analysis at the concept plan stage in order to completely evaluate new development proposals for residential, commercial or industrial development.**

**8. Encourage the "master planning" of large parcels of ground at the development stage to ensure maximum efficiency of land density, open space and adequate infrastructure improvements.**

**9. Develop an infrastructure balance sheet to determine deficiencies in public infrastructure prior to approving new development.**

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Development of the Town's Street System**

The Town of Mount Airy has the advantage of having a major Interstate Highway bordering it on one side. Historically, the close proximity of Interstate 70 and Maryland Route 144 caused the development of the Town north, west, and east of the original settlement of Parrsville. The original east-west connector to the Town from Frederick to Baltimore was Route 144, until Interstate-70 was constructed in the 1960s. The other major road historically existing through the Town was Main Street, which enabled the Town to grow on both the east and west sides. The Town continued to expand during the 1960s along these two main transportation corridors, with a concentration around the downtown core. Main Street has traditionally represented the Carroll County/Frederick County dividing line with low-density residential development primarily on both sides of the street. Main Street continued to feed the downtown and surrounding residential development through the early 1970s. The Mount Airy Bypass, MD. 27 (Ridge Road) also came into existence during the early 1970s and proved to be a major physical determinant on the pattern of development in the Town for the following twenty-five years.

Route 144, which has always provided an east-west connection from Frederick to Baltimore, became a section of local road inside the Town limits. The in-town section of road is named Ridgeville Boulevard, reflecting the original settlement of Ridgeville around which the Town was created. The close proximity of Ridgeville Boulevard to Interstate 70 – MD 27 interchange has led to the majority of commercial development along the in-town section of Ridgeville Boulevard. These three main roads served the commercial and residential land use patterns that are still evolving and developing today. These routes served and continue to serve residents traveling to Frederick and Baltimore and also provide a direct route north to the rapidly growing City of Westminster. Mount Airy became a preferred living location because it is the only Town in Carroll County with excellent Interstate access.

#### **The Relationship of Land Use and Transportation**

The transportation - land use relationship underlies all of the principals of transportation and planning. The two major factors that contribute to the complexity of the land-use/transportation equation are: (1) that the relationship between land uses and (2) transportation is reciprocal. The activity patterns of business and families change independently of land-use and transportation, in response to changing values, norms and preferences. These changing patterns of daily lifestyle and commuting work patterns have influenced the use of primary roadways throughout the metropolitan region. These

established patterns of home-to-work and the heavy use of major routes to regional employment centers would continue to burden the primary highway network of the Town.

Economic and development pressures of both Frederick and Carroll Counties and the regional development and growth of the Washington - Baltimore corridor have caused the Town of Mount Airy to grow. The main transportation network that exists in Mount Airy not only feeds the Town, but also accommodates a large number of commuters traveling from points north of the Town into southern lying county employment centers. Therefore, the land use developing along these transportation corridors not only feeds the needs of the Town residents, but the commuting population along with it. It is important that the Town allow alternative modes of transportation along the main routes, such as safe pedestrian access and also bicycle facilities. The Town has concentrated on increasing the opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle passages through the design of good subdivision layout that provides for interconnections between neighborhoods. It is equally important in the development of the Town park system, downtown area and commercial development that alternative access to the car is considered in site design or in conjunction with the renovation of certain commercial areas.

### **Roadway Functional Classifications**<sup>5</sup>

The Town of Mount Airy utilizes the Carroll County criteria for functional classification of roads. The assignment of a functional classification for a roadway is accomplished through a process by which streets and highways are grouped into systems according to the types of service the roads are intended to provide. Functional classification defines the role that any particular roadway should fulfill in meeting the demand of the traveling public. The assignment of functional classifications facilitates the logical travel patterns within the state and local roadway network. Primarily, *local* road classifications represent an emphasis on access to property, *arterials* represent a high level of mobility, and *collectors* represent a compromise between property access and mobility. Following is a brief definition of functional road classifications according to Carroll County standards.

- **Principal Arterial** - A principal arterial links large population or employment centers. Principal arterials can range from expressways to two-lane roadways. They are inter-county or interstate oriented and indicative of long travel lengths. Interstate-70 is a principal arterial.
- **Intermediate Arterial** - An intermediate arterial supplements the principal arterial system. Intermediate arterials provide service to trips of a moderate length while distributing travel to smaller geographic areas than those served by principal arterials. MD 27 (Ridge Road) is an intermediate arterial.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Carroll County Functional Classification Criteria and Assignment, Carroll County Office of Planning and Development, 10/1995.

- **Minor Arterial** - Minor arterial roadways provide a lower level of mobility while placing more of an emphasis on land access than the other arterial classifications. These roadways typically provide a link to the collector roadway system and connect small population centers to the overall arterial system. MD 144 within the town limits is an example of a minor arterial.
- **Major Collector** - A major collector provides for both land access and movement within residential, commercial, industrial or agricultural areas. They are the links from the land uses to the arterials. Major collector roads provide service to areas not on an arterial route and to other important traffic generators such as schools, parks, etc. MD 808 (Main Street) is a major collector along with Rising Ridge Road and Center Street.
- **Minor Collector** - Minor collectors provide service to the remaining traffic generators and are spaced at intervals consistent with population densities. They bring all developed areas to major collectors or arterials. Watersville Road, East Ridgeville Boulevard are considered minor collectors.
- **Local System** - Local roads or streets provide for direct access to individual land uses. They discourage through traffic and are typically low in traffic volumes and speed. Prospect Road, Park Ave, Ridge Ave., Merridale Boulevard and all other local subdivision roads would be considered in the local street system.

### **Town Primary Road System**

There are three State Routes that have shaped the historic growth pattern in Mount Airy. Interstate 70, MD 808 (Main Street), and MD 27 have all contributed to the shape of the residential and commercial development pattern of the Town. Following is a brief analysis of how each one of these roads contributes to Mount Airy's development, access and land use patterns.

*Interstate 70: Classified as a Principal Arterial.* This Interstate Highway provides a major east-west route throughout the State, but primarily from the Baltimore Beltway to Frederick City and other points west. The location of the Town adjacent to this major interstate has provided opportunities for direct access to job centers to the east and the south, but also provided for small local economic development opportunities to spring up around the interchange of I-70 and MD Route 27. Mount Airy is actually one of the few small towns in the state of Maryland that has direct access to an Interstate highway. The benefit of the highway location also comes with increased pressure for land development. Because of the good access and development of the Town at the convergence point of four counties. Location continues to be ideal for lower level economic and residential growth. The challenge for the Town will continue to be how to handle the increased

pressure for growth, while still enjoying and utilizing the excellent access to major job and larger commercial centers in the urbanized areas outside the Town.

*MD 27: Classified as an Intermediate Arterial.* This State Route was constructed in the early 1970s and intended to function as a "bypass" east of the Town and relieve pressure from the use of Main Street, Rt. 808 going through the downtown area. This route became a major transportation corridor from the lower Montgomery County job centers to points north, bedroom communities, and the City of Westminster where the route continues through the City of Westminster as a City Street. It continues north of Westminster and Rt. 140 and terminates at the town of Manchester at the intersection of Rt. 30. As the last two decades have passed, the majority of commercial land activity has centered on the interchange of MD 27 and I-70.

Over a period of twenty years, the commercial zoning classifications were concentrated around the areas of good access and prevented corridors of "strip centers" along MD Rt. 27. This road also became increasingly important to move commuters to outlying suburban growth areas in the lower southwest Carroll County area.

As the working population of Mount Airy and Carroll has grown, the amount of traffic using MD 27 has become increasingly congested and burdensome within the Town limits. The road is functioning in two primary ways: to move people daily between work and home and to provide access to the main commercial center of the Town. It also serves as a transportation corridor for commuters living in northern Carroll County traveling south to Montgomery County.

During the peak times of the day and evening when commuting traffic is heaviest and competition for resident access to the commercial opportunities is greatest, congestion is the most serious. Some people do divert, utilizing MD 808 (Main Street) to travel north or south, but conflict with peak hour commuting traffic is inevitable if the commercial areas of Town are to be accessed. Over the last five years, increasing residential development north of Mount Airy has caused the volume of traffic traveling these two northbound routes to increase significantly.

It is important that the Town continue to work with the Maryland State Highway Administration for road improvements and signalization upgrades to eliminate recurrent accident locations and ongoing or worsening peak hour congestion issues within the Town limits.

*MD Route 808/Main Street: Classified as a Major Collector.* Historically, Main Street was the primary route through town for all local traffic as well as north and southbound commuter traffic. Presently it serves more as an access for the downtown area business, and centrally located subdivisions, as well as the central historic developments of the Town. It also serves as a secondary or "relief" route for commuter traffic, during peak periods. The right-of-way and paving width for Main Street is very narrow and has not

been widened or had pedestrian sidewalk problems addressed over time. The continuing challenge for the Town will be to retain the character of Main Street, by limiting commercial development along its corridor to primarily the downtown area, but also enhancing its appeal by working with the State to improve its physical structure and upgrading or providing better pedestrian access with sidewalk and street lighting improvements.

### **Existing Secondary Road Network**

The secondary road network feeds the needs of local traffic, but also provides collective routes to the primary road system that is meant to facilitate through traffic and move commuters from work to home. Most of the secondary road system in Mount Airy has been in existence for a long period of time and received minimal upgrades to the system's existing structure. Most of these roads lead from both Carroll and Frederick County into the primary Town road network. Following is an analysis of those roads that are essential to the Town's internal flow of traffic.

*Ridgeville Boulevard:* This minor Arterial road is the primary route that connects the western portion of Mount Airy and Frederick County residents with MD 27 and MD 808 (Main Street). Ridgeville Boulevard (the original Maryland Route 144) is not only a historic road alignment, but also one that serves the Town residents for essential commercial services and major shopping areas. It will continue to function as a collector connecting residents from Main Street to MD 27. Road right-of-way width (32'-36' ) varies along the section. There are sidewalks along both the north and south sides of the road with some connections missing. An additional signal at the intersection of Ridgeville Blvd and Ridgeside Drive was completed in 2001, as part of the Mount Airy Shopping Center improvements.

**Staff Recommendation:** East Ridgeville Boulevard should be upgraded to a four-lane in-town collector road with continuous sidewalk, curb and gutter improvement along both the north and south sides of the road. The actual right-of-way width to do these improvements is currently available.

*Twin Arch Road:* Twin Arch road is presently serving a variety of commercial, industrial and residential uses. It is a main access for the Twin Arch Shopping Center, Mount Airy Carnival Grounds, two industrial parks, and Twin Arch Crossing Townhouse Subdivision. It is currently built at a standard below what is needed to handle the traffic generated by the industrial and residential development currently under construction.

**Staff Recommendation:** The road should be widened to a 36' pavement from the intersection of Rt. 27 to the end of the Twin Arch Business Park (Full property) with sidewalk, curb and gutter improvements on the north and south sides of the road within the town limits. Staff also recommends a concrete median divider from the intersection 50' - 75' east towards the first entrance to the Twin Arch Shopping Center to assist in traffic flow on Twin Arch road at that intersection.

Watersville Road: Watersville Road currently functions as a rural collector for both Carroll County residents and subdivisions of Nottingham Village and the Fields of Nottingham. It will continue to serve the future housing construction for the remainder of the Nottingham Subdivision and the Knill property, a significant parcel of ground that could eventually be within the Town limits.

**Staff Recommendation:** Watersville Road should remain primarily as a rural collector with road frontage improvements to include curb and gutter on the southern side of the road that will be in the town limits. Improvements to the intersection of MD 27 and Watersville Road should include the establishment of an exclusive left-hand turn onto MD 27 south coming from the east on Watersville Road and an exclusive right turn lane onto MD 27 south coming from the west. Both of the intersection improvement projects should include a general widening of the road right-of-way a minimum of 150 ft. back from the intersection.

Park Ave./Ridge Ave: Park Avenue assists in transporting residents from the western portions of Mount Airy and downtown traffic east towards MD 27. It also provides western movement from MD 27 to the downtown area and MD 808. This road also provides access to the Lorien Life Center Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facility as well as the Mount Airy Post Office. The road section varies in width between its connection with Rt. 27 on the eastern end and South Main Street on the western End.

**Staff Recommendation:** With right-of-way limited, the road section for Park Avenue should remain the same, but the right turn lane at the intersection of MD 27 should be extended beyond what currently exists to alleviate evening peak hour congestion at that intersection.

Prospect Road: This collector road feeds the western portion of town and Frederick County into the downtown area of Mount Airy and terminates at South Main Street. The right-of-way width narrows down as the road approaches Main Street. It will continue to function effectively as it also allows access to Rising Ridge Road which provides a western bypass alternative to Main Street.

**Staff Recommendation:** Continue to retrofit sidewalks along the in-town portion of Prospect road to allow safe pedestrian access to the neighborhoods in the western portion of Town.

Buffalo Road: Buffalo road is a rural collector that is maintained by the Town in the section closest to Main Street, Frederick County in the middle section and Carroll County in the upper section that intersects with MD 26, near the community of Taylorsville. Buffalo Road provides access primarily for Frederick County residents coming in to town and for existing residential subdivisions on the west side of Main Street. Sectional improvements for widening and upgrading to in-town standards have taken place as part of the new subdivision development along that road.

**Staff Recommendation:** Buffalo Road will retain its rural collector status in the upper sections moving west of town, but should be improved with widening, installation of sidewalk, curb and gutter on the north side as part of any new subdivision development that occurs along the right-of-way area. The southern, in-town section of Buffalo Road is a portion of the designated bike path around the Town.

Rising Ridge Road: Rising Ridge Road is an in-town 36 ft. collector road projected on the Master Plan to function as a western "bypass" for the Town of Mount Airy. In the Master Plan the proposed road is shown to connect at its southernmost point to MD 27 and its northern termination point is Buffalo Road. The middle section of the road is currently built and functional. It provides access to the Twin Ridge Subdivision, Village Gate Subdivision, and Twin Ridge Professional Park. Current road standard is more than adequate to accommodate present and future traffic flows.

**Staff Recommendation:** Future road alignment to the north should be constructed as the remainder of the Kraft property is developed at the same in-town collector standard with sidewalk curb and gutter. The southern end of the proposed alignment should be further evaluated for future feasibility. The entire length of Rising Ridge Road should be designated as a bikeway.

Century Drive: Century Drive is an established collector road that services an established industrial/commercial corridor but also accesses a residential townhouse development. The road is built to in-town collector standards and is planned to traverse north and form a connection with MD 27. The road is shown on the master plan to retain its collector standard through the continuation of its alignment shown to go through the Beck Property, currently zoned Industrial.

**Staff Recommendation:** Retain the northern alignment of Century Drive through the Beck property, minimizing entrances onto that roadway. It has a collector classification.

Ridgeside Drive: Ridgeside Drive is a local road built to an in-town closed section standard of 40 ft. It connects South Main Street with East Ridgeville Boulevard. It has multiple entrances providing access to major commercial/retail areas of town. It is currently built to its ultimate standard.

**Staff Recommendation:** Minimize any new entrances onto Ridgeside Drive to avoid problems with multiple commercial uses along the right-of-way.



### **Future Roads of the Secondary Network**

Future road alignments were approved in the 1994 Master Plan to provide access to the outer growth areas of town. Several of those road alignments have already been implemented. Lack of development of the involved land, lack of funding or regulatory or environmental constraints has held up construction of several roads. Standards of some of those roads may be revised over time depending on the type of land development that they are meant to

serve. A brief discussion of those future road construction projects follows:

*Center Street Extended:* The extension of Center Street has been in the Mount Airy Master Plan for many years. It is considered by the Town to be an essential connection between South Main Street and the downtown area and MD 27. It would assist in diverting truck and other heavy vehicle traffic from the downtown area. In addition, it would serve the Beck's Industrial Park and provides access to Watkins Regional Park. There are two sections of the road currently constructed. The closer in-town section is built to a 28 ft. standard with no sidewalk, curb and gutter. The eastern section is built to a 40' closed section town standard with sidewalk, curb and gutter installed.

**Staff Recommendation:** Complete the remaining section of Center Street to the current in-town standard for the new road section connecting to Rt. 27. Road improvements should be made for the western section of the road connecting to Main Street and should include upgrading the paving width, installation of curb, gutter and sidewalks along the southern side of the road. Engineer intersection improvements for the intersection of Center Street and Main Street with possible signalization at Main Street. Future signalization at the intersection of MD 27 and Center Street would also be necessary if the Beck Subdivision were to develop the remainder of its property.

*Merridale Boulevard:* This road alignment has been partially constructed while the senior housing subdivision of Wildwood Park is under construction. It is a 28' in-town local road that connects Ridge Ave. with Park Ave. It was designed with a sidewalk along the western side on the upper section and sidewalks on both sides of the road in the middle and lower sections. It is currently designed and constructed to its ultimate standard.

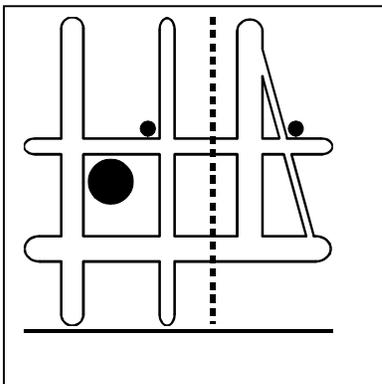
**Staff Recommendation:** Provide an entrance for the Mount Airy Library off of the lower section of Merridale Boulevard as designated with the fifth section of Wildwood Park Senior Housing. (Completed, spring of 2003)

*Rising Ridge Road Extension North:* This road alignment will be completed when the remainder of the Kraft property is annexed into town and a subdivision plan is devised.

**Staff Recommendation:** Construct the road to a 36 ft. in-town collector standard with sidewalk, curb and gutter on both the north and south sides of the road. Minimal interference with intersecting road should be encouraged. Design the intersection of this road with Buffalo Road so that good sight distance is created to the north and the south. A two-way stop may be needed at that intersection.

*Candice Drive Extension:* The extension of Candice Drive, which is a Carroll County Road, is proposed to be extended through the Flickinger property, which will become an in-town subdivision. The road is currently built to a county collector standard of 36' but with an open section. The Greentree Village Senior Housing Complex will be constructed on the southern side of this road and sidewalk, curb and gutter will be provided when that center is constructed. The extension that will traverse through the Flickinger property will also be constructed to a 32 ft.- 36 ft. in-town collector standard with sidewalk, curb, and gutter improvements through the entire section. It will terminate at Buffalo Road to the west. Most importantly it will provide direct access from Buffalo Road and the Flickinger property to MD 27, via North Main Street.

**Staff Recommendation:** Complete the extension of Candice Drive through the Flickinger Property to implement the Town Master Plan. Evaluation and upgrading of the signal at MD 808 and MD 27 is mandatory in order to accommodate the future commercial and residential development in the vicinity of the intersection. A designated bikeway should be provided along this alignment.



### **Evaluation of Existing Intersections**

The Town roadway system has been in existence for the last thirty years and is still responsible for handling the majority of traffic in and out of the town limits. Although this network may still be functioning for the most part adequately for in-town dispersal of traffic, “pass-through” traffic, which is primarily commuter traffic, has brought about an increasing burden on the town current highway system. The cumulative effect of this increasing traffic flow on the main highway system is

taking its toll in several ways. The initial and most visible effect of the commuter traffic that passes through town is the creation of congestion problems, evident during morning and evening peak hour times. Because this traffic is generated from out-of-town sources it will continue to happen and will continue to deteriorate over time. As the outer suburban area of Mount Airy continues to develop residentially, MD 808, MD 144, and MD 27, will become increasingly used by pass-through traffic. Below is a chart listing heavily used intersections that intersect with the primary highway system in Mount Airy and the corresponding level of service.

**Critical Lane Volumes – Mount Airy Road Network**

<b>Intersection</b>	<b>Level of Service P.M. Peak Hour</b>	<b>Critical Lane Volume</b>
MD 27 n/s of Ridgeville Blvd.	“C”	1211
MD 27 at MD Rt. 808	“C”	1151
MD 808 at Ridgeville Blvd.	“A”	996
Ridgeville Blvd. & Ridgeside Drive	“A”	841
MD 27 & Twin Arch Road	“B”	1096
MD 27 & Park Avenue	“C”	1175
MD 27 & Watersville Road	“C”	1201 (a.m. peak)
MD 27 at Leisher Road	“A”	946

The majority of the heavily used intersections around Mount Airy in the morning peak hour operate at an "A" level of service meaning little or no delay at the existing intersections. The in-town roads are much more burdened by traffic in the later afternoon time frame and evening rush hour. As the town and outer suburban area grow, traffic counts taken at regular intervals will help to track the level of service of the primary roads and intersections in town. Plans for future capital improvements for these major routes may be based on decreasing levels of service over time.

**2002 Traffic Counts for the Town's Major Road Network**

The Maryland State Highway Administration maintains traffic volume counts for the road network throughout the State. The majority of these counts are updated on an annual basis. Some recently tabulated traffic volumes for a few of the major roads in Town follow:

### Maryland State Highway Administration Traffic Volumes - 2002

Location	Total Volume
I-70, west of MD 27	59,325
I-70, east of MD 27	61,225
MD 27, north of I-70	26,075
MD 27, north of Twin Arch Road	19,975
MD 27, at MD 808 (North Main St.)	16,875
MD 144, west of MD 27	8,425

#### Level of Service Characteristics<sup>6</sup>

Service (LOS)	Stopped Delay Per Vehicle (Sec)	Expected Delay to Minor Street Traffic	Stopped Delay Per Vehicle (Sec)	Expected Problems To Intersection
'A'	Less than 5.0	Little or no delay	Less than 5.0	Low Delay
'B'	5.1 – 10.0	Short Traffic delays	5.1 to 15.5	Short Delay
'C'	10.1 – 20.0	Average Traffic delays	15.1 to 25.0	# of Cars stopping is significant
'D'	20.1 – 30.0	Long traffic delays	25.1 –40.0	Influence of congestion becomes more noticeable
'E'	30.1 – 45.0	Very long traffic delays	40.1 – 60.0	Limits of acceptable delay
'F'	Greater than 45.1	Extreme Delays- Usually warrants intersection improvements	Greater than 60.1	Oversaturated and Unacceptable

<sup>6</sup> Source: Highway Capacity Manual, Special Report 209. Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, Washington, D.C. 1994.

## **Street Improvement Program/Capital Improvements**

An inventory of existing physical conditions of the primary in-town roads is kept by the Town of Mount Airy that assists in compiling a list of improvement or upgrade needs for future roadwork. An inventory of each street is described as to its physical condition, any problems or attributes of the street, and recommendations for future improvements. All elements of the street are considered, including the appropriate right-of-way and pavement width, sidewalks, lighting, storm drainage, signage, landscaping and building setbacks. Improvements are then prioritized and a schedule for implementation of improvements is outlined.

Based upon the above analysis, plans to finance and construct improvements are developed yearly. The financing plan is based on the desired completion dates of priority projects. Appropriate alternate funding sources are pursued in order to accomplish those needed improvements within a specified period of time. Regular maintenance and annual paving work is also included to evaluate required yearly funding for general road improvements.

## **Bikeways and Pedestrian Pathways**

The State of Maryland Annotated Code now requires, as part of the comprehensive plan element, a provision within the transportation plan for bicycle and pedestrian access and travelways. There has been an increasing emphasis over the last six years on provision of interconnected streets between neighborhoods that were delineated in the 1994 Master Plan. The Town has over the last five years implemented several of those road alignments as particular properties have come in for development plans. These new road alignments along with overall new subdivision design have emphasized the use of sidewalks on both sides of collector roads, but also within local roadways so the connections between neighborhoods is facilitated by these sidewalks.

The Town has also made a concerted effort to implement the retrofitting of sidewalks in locations in which they did not previously exist. The Town routinely requires sidewalk installation in older sections of Town with regards to in-fill residential development of varying sizes. Areas of commercial redevelopment along heavily traveled routes such as Ridgeville Boulevard and Ridgeside Drive have also been required to provide sidewalks where there had previously not been any provided. Pedestrian crossings have been increased throughout the Town over the last five years with emphasis given to locations where there is continuous pedestrian access to public buildings such as schools, library, senior center or post office. The Town should continue to pursue opportunities to provide safe walking conditions throughout the town' s neighborhoods and in the core downtown area.

Frederick County and Carroll County have both implemented a trails/bikeways plan that has been incorporated into their Master Plans and includes involvement of all the

municipalities. These plans should be incorporated into the Town Comprehensive Plan Map for future facilities. Bike paths may also take the form of trails. That network should also be designated into the transportation map of the Master Plan.

Three levels of bikeways facilities are explained in the Frederick County Bike and Trails Plan. They are defined as the following:



- *Class I* - This type of route provides the largest degree of separation and most often involves a path that runs parallel to a street and is separated from the sidewalk by a buffer of some sort. Rails to Trails network, multi-purpose trails, or park systems are examples.

- *Class II* - The facility is described as a bicycle lane, which is located between the curb and the drive lane of a road. Any local or collector road may be delineated with a signed or striped bike lane.

- *Class III* - The facility provides the least amount of separation and requires sharing the lane with other vehicles. This would only be designated as a bike route.

Frederick County has delineated Main Street, Buffalo Road, and Prospect Road and Maryland 144 (Old National Pike) as possible rural bikeways into the Town. Carroll County has delineated MD 27 and Watersville Road traveling east as future designated rural bike routes. The Town should take a proactive approach to designating these bikeways for possible utilization for current and future residents. The roadbed itself may be marked with bike lane striping if the paving width permits and marked with signage on the shoulder. The Town or County already utilizes many in-town roads without any formal designation. Clearly marked and established bike routes will help both riders and drivers in creating safe roadways for bike users. Future bike routes will be recognized on the Town Comprehensive Plan Map.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

The overall goal for the Master Plan will be to provide a safe and efficient transportation system, which will correspond to and implement the overall land use plan of the Town.

- 1. Plan for current and increased traffic on the Town's street system, and to use the street system to foster and retain community character. The Town should continue to pursue the construction of an interconnected street system.**
- 2. The Town should continue to explore and implement alternative modes of transportation. These alternatives may include, but are not limited to, carpool/vanpool or mass transit, and coordination of hiker/biker paths proposed as an element of the Parks and Recreation Plan to serve as a safe transportation option within Town.**
- 3. The Town will continue to monitor the level of service on all secondary roads within its jurisdiction, and implement improvements to those roads to maintain a level of service of "C" or higher.**
- 4. The Town will encourage the use of "traffic calming techniques" in new subdivision design and retrofit of older sections of town. Techniques such as landscaping improvements, and pavement design, should be suggested.**
- 5. Sidewalk improvements will continue to be required in all new projects, but emphasis should also be placed in providing safe pedestrian access in older areas of town and filling in sidewalk locations, where they currently do not exist. All sidewalk installations shall provide for adequate separation distance from the road travelway.**
- 6. The Town should continue to work with the Maryland State Highway Administration to monitor the traffic conditions of MD 27 and work closely with the State on future improvements to that road to help maintain an acceptable level of service.**
- 7. As mandated by GASB- 34, continue to update a complete inventory of roads for the Town, which would include physical condition, paving width, storm drainage characteristics, sidewalk locations and width, mileage and needed improvements to those roads. This information should be compiled and updated by the Town Streets and Roads Department to assist in the yearly improvements done to the town street system.**

**8. The Town will encourage the incorporation of safe pedestrian and bikeways in the design of new roads and the upgrading of existing roads.**

**9. Future proposed road alignments in the outergrowth areas of Town would be delineated to ensure the reservation of right-of-way areas, and will minimize the impact on environmentally sensitive areas.**

**10. The Town will support efforts to pursue State or Federal Funding for non-highway transportation improvements.**

**11. Primary intersections within the Town will be evaluated on a regular basis to effect changes to signal phasing in order to maintain an acceptable level of service at those intersections.**

**12. The Town should conduct a Town-wide traffic study and intersection analysis to evaluate existing and future conditions of all vital intersections to ensure the adequacy of service level throughout the Town transportation network.**

**(RESERVED)**

## CHAPTER 6

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

One of the primary goals in long-range community planning is to plan for and coordinate the expansion of vital infrastructure improvements. Community infrastructure needs are paramount when planning for the future growth of a Town, County, or a specially designated growth area within a jurisdiction.

Many jurisdictions have recognized that public infrastructure or facilities are not always capable of handling the impact of new development. Public agencies cannot always provide increased services needed by new growth, and new development does not necessarily mitigate the problems it may cause.

The responsibility for maintaining acceptable levels of service rests with the governing body, who must either limit growth so services need not be expanded, or assure that service levels keep pace with the planned development.

Two traditional planning tools by which public services are scheduled to keep pace with new land development are the *Capital Improvements Program* or "CIP" and *Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance* or "APFO". The APFO is intended to work in conjunction with the Capital Improvements Program, by timing development, which is based on level of service currently available within a jurisdiction.

The *CIP* is a long range planning implementation tool by which needed public improvements are placed into a specific time frame for funding, design, engineering, and construction. The *CIP* is an adopted document that delineates a schedule of the improvements for public facilities such as roads, parks, fire stations, schools, etc. The typical time frame for a capital improvements program is five years, with a yearly update to reprioritize needed facilities and associated funding for the listed projects.

Many municipalities do not have traditional Capital Improvement Programs (*CIPs*) in place to obligate a specific schedule for needed public improvements. This often leads to a continuous shortfall of facilities with no specific plan in place to construct them and therefore alleviate the demand on the system. When this continual shortfall of provision of services occurs, and the demand of the new residents is not met, the quality of life within the community begins to noticeably deteriorate. The Town of Mount Airy recently adopted an Adequate Facilities Ordinance that requires proposed development to meet specific standards.

The decline of the overall quality of life in a growing community is not a desirable result from allowing growth. The desired scenario is an overall balance between growth and

provision of adequate services: that balance should be continuously pursued. Recently the Town adopted its first formal Capital Improvements Program for a variety of facilities relating to water and sewer improvements, road improvements, recreation facilities and other various capital projects. This will ensure a specific schedule by which certain improvements will be made to offset any deficiencies of infrastructure that the town may have.

Primary infrastructure improvements that will be discussed within this chapter that are necessary to serve new population growth and development are:

- ♣ Water Services
- ♣ Sewer Services
- ♣ County School System
- ♣ Parks and Recreation
- ♣ Emergency Services
- ♣ Police service
- ♣ Solid waste and recycling

This chapter will also discuss and analyze current inventory of facilities for each category of public facilities, but also future long-term and short-term needs.

**WATER AND SEWER**

## Town Water and Sewer System

### Town Water System

The Town of Mount Airy owns and operates a public water system, which is a community well system, and provides water to Town residents only. Development currently in the unincorporated areas uses individual private wells. Unincorporated areas, which are planned to be serviced with Town water, must first be annexed into the Town boundaries, prior to that service being connected.

The Town's existing water supply system consists of eight wells, transmission and feeder mains and four pumping stations with four aboveground retention/contact tanks. The Town also operates two elevated tanks capable of holding 775,000 gallons in reserve. The main wellfield is located in Frederick County and consists of wells #1-4. Wells #5 and #6 are located in Carroll County west of MD 27. Well # 7 (Twin Ridge Subdivision) and well #8 (Summit Ridge Subdivision) were brought on line as a result of the those two subdivisions.

Wells 1,2,3,4,7 (Main Well Field)	437,000 gpd (68%)
Wells 5 and 6	165,000 gpd (25%)
Well 8	43,600 gpd (7%)
Total Yield	646,200 gpd (Existing Supply)
<i>Future Well Sources</i>	
Well 9 (Town Property)	167,000 gpd (Projected) (16%)
Well 10 (Flickinger Property)	216,000 gpd (Projected) (21%)
Total Future	383,000 gpd (Projected) (37%)
Total Existing	646,200 gpd (63%)
<b>TOTAL SUPPLY (Future and Existing)</b>	<b>1,029,200 gpd</b>

Current Maryland Department of the Environment has allocated and permitted the Town for a total of 648,00 gallons per day to be extracted from all eight wells currently on line. The Town is currently withdrawing more water from Well #8, than the MDE permit allows. The Town has applied to MDE to come into compliance. The Town has requested an increase in well #8 production from the Maryland Department of the Environment as part of the system wide water system expansion. The town is also purchasing land to construct a third water storage tank capable of holding 1,000,000 gallons of water in reserve.

## Town Water Study

The Town of Mount Airy recently contracted with Hyder North America consultants (Now, Arro Consultants) to conduct a water study to get an evaluation of the current water supply within the Town's aquifer recharge areas. This was a necessary step to evaluate current supply and future needs for the large amount of land development that has occurred during the past six years. In that time, the Town experienced significant growth. Additionally, a drought period from 2000 to 2002 has generated concern on whether the current wells could meet the average daily demand. Below is a chart providing a summary of the Town's daily average water production from 1997 to 2002. Based on this information, the Town's average daily demand for water is around **600,000** gallons per day.<sup>7</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average Water Production Gallons Produced</b>	<b>Actual Usage Daily Average</b>
1997	191,646,845	525,060
1998	196,987,090	539,690
1999	190,331,660	521,460
2000	215,114,620	589,360
2001	239,626,530	656,511
2002	243,510,150	667,152

This particular water study for the Town also established a definition for "Equivalent Dwelling Unit Assessment" (EDU) in order to be able to assign EDUs to existing customers and project future water needs. An EDU is equal to one (1) dwelling unit, ten (10) employees at a commercial or industrial establishment or 250 gallons per day. This is also a standard that is established by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

### **Equivalent Dwelling Units (Committed but not yet connected)**

The following is a list of equivalent dwelling units that have received approval to connect to the existing water system but were not connected by April 2002.

- Residential            663 EDUs
- Industrial             63 EDUs
- Commercial          66 EDUs
- Total                    792 EDUs

### **Available Areas within the existing Town Corporate Limits**

The following is a list of possible "in-fill" areas within the Town's existing corporate limits that could be developed. This was compiled using the Town's latest land use information.

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<sup>7</sup> Town of Mount Airy Ground water Supply Evaluation, Hyder North America Consultants, February 2001.

**Available Land Development within the Corporate Limits – Total Water Usage**

R-2	136 acres	1.75 dwellings per acre	24.4%	238 EDU
R-3	15 acres	3.0 dwellings per acre	4.6 %	45 EDU
R-5	15 acres	5.0 dwellings per acre	7.7 %	75 EDU
R-7	36 acres	7.0 dwellings	26.0 %	252 EDU
CC	13 acres	500 gallons per acre	2.7 %	26 EDU
<u>Ind.</u>	<u>101 acres</u>	<u>1,000 gallons per acre</u>	<u>34.6 %</u>	<u>337 EDU</u>
Total	316 acres			973 EDU

**Available Areas within the Ultimate Corporate Limits**

The following is a list of possible areas outside the Town' s corporate limits but within the outer growth area that could be developed if annexed. This was compiled using the latest land use and subdivision data.

**Available Land Development within the Ultimate Corporate Limits – Total Water Usage**

R-2 *	522 acres	1.75 dwellings per acre		913 EDU
R-3	125 acres	3.0 dwellings per acre		375 EDU
R-5	45 acres	5.0 dwellings per acre		225 EDU
R-7	60 acres	7.0 dwellings per acre		420 EDU
CC	10 acres	500 gallons per acre		20 EDU
<u>Ind.</u>	<u>100 acres</u>	<u>1,000 gallons per acre</u>		<u>334 EDU</u>
Total	862 acres			2,287 EDU

\* Acreage Updated due to the Flickinger Annexation now within the corporate limits

**Water Consumption**

In order to evaluate the water supply and demand of the Town' s existing water system, average billing cycles for customers was analyzed. The average consumption per household, for the period from 1998 to 2000, was 169 gallons per day. The State of Maryland has determined a standard of 250 gallons per day per residence as normal usage. By the same token, commercial and industrial land uses recorded 318 gallons per day usage. Average combined usage per day between residential, commercial and industrial land uses was 243 gallons per day.

**Projected Future Water Needs**

Hyder North America Consultants has determined the following list showing average daily water supply needs. These lists show the projected water demand that will be

needed to meet the future demand based on the approved and projected future Town growth.

<b>Projected Water Usage for Planned Development and Ultimate Growth Area</b>			
<b>Water Needs for EDU's Committed but Not Connected</b>			
Residential	663 EDU	=	166,000 GPD
Industrial	63 EDU	=	16,000 GPD
Commercial	66 EDU	=	17,000 GPD
<b>Projected additional average water needs =199,000 GPD</b>			
<b>Water Needs for "In-fill" EDUs within the Existing Corporate Limits</b>			
R-2	250 EDU	=	63,000 GPD
R-3	27 EDU	=	8,000 GPD
R-5	123 EDU	=	31,000 GPD
R-7	315 EDU	=	79,000 GPD
CC	54 EDU	=	14,000 GPD
Ind.	337 EDU	=	85,000 GPD
<b>Projected additional average water needs = 280,000 GPD</b>			

<b>Water Needs for EDU From Ultimate Growth Limits</b>			
R-2	1,051 EDU	=	263,000 GPD
R-3	375 EDU	=	94,000 GPD
R-5	135 EDU	=	34,000 GPD
R-7	420 EDU	=	105,000 GPD
CC	42 EDU	=	11,000 GPD
Ind.	334 EDU	=	84,000 GPD
<b>Projected additional average water needs = 591,000 GPD</b>			

The grand total of the projected average daily water needs, including current usage and what has already been committed to the ultimate corporate limits based on the latest available Town land use data, is 1,653,360 GPD.

**Summary of the Town Water System**

The Town of Mount Airy currently has adequate groundwater supply for average demands on the established public water system. The water study has verified that the eight wells from which the Town is drawing water can supply enough water for the current average demand and average peak demand. However, the overall system may very well be stressed during drought conditions.

Recent studies done by the Town's water consultants, Arro Consulting, recommended the annexation of the Flickinger property into the Town limits in order to bring an additional good yielding well on line (future well # 10). This well development should also be coordinated with the addition of a ninth well which is located on the town-owned property north of Westridge Subdivision. The ninth well will be developed within the next 1-to 2-year period of time and will be located on the Town-owned property north of Westridge Subdivision. It is obvious from the data that the two new Town wells to come on line within the next two years and added to the water supply system can only serve the current commercial and residential pipeline. Any development on the land in the Town's outer growth area would have to supply a significant water source.

The water study has concluded that ultimate projected build out demand will range from 1,250,000 million gallons per day to 1,600,000 gallons per day. Carroll County has stated in the Master Water and Sewer Plan that success in increasing the water supply from available groundwater will depend on persistent well exploration, along with groundwater quality protection.

### **Town Sewer System**

Existing Sewer System The Town of Mount Airy owns and operates the sewer system which includes nine pumping stations, interceptor and collection lines ranging from 6" to 15" and a newly expanded sewer treatment plant.

The Town of Mount Airy conducted a major expansion of its Wastewater Treatment Plant from 1998 to 1999. The plant was modernized and expanded to double its capacity to accommodate the ultimate growth of the Town. The project was completed in July of 1999, and the newly expanded plant became fully operational at that time. This newly expanded plant has increased the sewage flow capacity from 600,000 GPD to ultimately 1.2 million GPD capacity. This increase of capacity relates to a more serious level of effluent testing from the State and therefore stringent compliance to a new standard for water quality.

The most important aspect of the project was the Biological Nutrient Removal Process. This has greatly reduced the nutrients flowing into the Chesapeake Bay and its respective tributaries. Prior to the upgrade, the average total nitrogen content was 16mg/L in comparison to the current nitrogen content at a level of less than 7mg/L. The phosphorus levels also fell after the expansion, from 3mg/L to less than 1mg/L. The plant has also demonstrated a reduction of all other parameters that are monitored from the State. The new wastewater treatment plant in Mount Airy has received recognition from the State as a "model" facility to serve a small town growth and development plan.

The Town's Waste Water Treatment Plant is located approximately one mile east of MD 27 along an abandoned length of the B & O Railroad. The plant discharges treated

wastewater into the South Branch of the Patapsco River. The average flow into the WTP during 1996 and 1997 was 553,500 gallons per day. During 1998, the flow was 515,000 gpd, 1999 totaled 523,000 gpd, and 2000 was 558,000 gpd. The treatment process consists of the following: a bar screen, grit removal, NNR aeration system, clarifiers, ultraviolet lights and post aeration tank, solids process, sludge holding tank, belt filter press with lime stabilization.

**Projected Sewage Flows**

Typically, the sewer flow is calculated at 90% of water usage barring significant infiltration during very wet seasons. During a six-month study in the mid 1990s, this approximation held true as the sewer use was about 93% of the water use. During the first half of 2001, the sewer flow was 94% of the water usage. Some infiltration may occur into the older sewer lines or an excessively wet year can cause a higher than normal sewer flow into the system. Future development, however, can be safely projected to produce a sewer flow of 90% of the water usage.

	<u>Projected Sewer Flow</u>	
	<u>Water Use:</u>	<u>Sewer Flow:</u>
A. Existing Use:	620,000	558,000 gpd
B. Approved Development	284,750 x 90%	256,275 gpd
C. Vacant Land	467,750 x 90%	420,975 gpd
CURRENT DEMAND (A+B)	904,750	814,275 gpd
ULTIMATE DEMAND (A+B+C)	1,372,500	1,235,250 gpd

Build-out of approved development could occur by the year 2007, if residential development proceeds at an allowed rate of 40 building permits per development per year. The Town has processed a record number of residential building permits in the last four years with indications that this strong demand for more housing units will not abate for the next several years. Recently, to accommodate an ordinance was passed limiting each development to 24 building permits per year due to infrastructure deficiencies. If the various components of infrastructure are brought up to an acceptable level, the Town will return to allowing 40 units per subdivision per year.

The above figures indicate that the expansion of the sewage treatment facility has occurred with proper timing to be able to feed current and future development appropriately. The plant is currently operating with a permit to ultimately process 1.2 million gallons per day.

## **Water and Sewer Service Areas**

The Water and Sewer Service Area map outlines planned expansion of the water and sewer systems.

The Existing Service Area indicates areas of Town that are currently being serviced by the systems.

The W-1/S-1, or 0-6 Year Service Area indicates areas of Town that would be permitted to connect to the system if they chose to develop. The W-1/S-1 service area includes all undeveloped property within current Town limits.

The W-3/S-3 or 7-10 Year Service Area indicates land that is expected to utilize the Town' s water and sewer service system in the future, but is not allowed to hook up at this time. The W-3/S-3 service area includes property outside current Town Boundaries but within the Ultimate Town Boundaries. The W-3/S-3 designation does not indicate that property should be annexed, but if a decision to annex were made, the property would be permitted to connect to the Town water and sewer systems at a future date.

The W-5/S-5 or No Planned Service Area indicates land that is not recommended to ever be part of the Town' s water and sewer system.

The "year" designations are descriptive only and do not guarantee a property the right to connect to the Town' s water or sewer system within any time frame. Any property that is intended to be developed within the Town must be within the Existing Service Area or the 0-6 Year Service Area, or apply for a Water or Sewer Service Area Plan amendment in order to acquire the desired plan designation.

## **SCHOOLS**

## Schools

Both Carroll and Frederick County school systems serve Mt. Airy. Typically, the children attend schools in their respective counties. Mt. Airy students attend Twin Ridge Elementary, New Market Middle, and Linganore High in Frederick County. The Carroll County students in Mount Airy attend Mount Airy Elementary, Mount Airy Middle, and South Carroll High.

State funding requirements that often result in overcrowded conditions prior to authorization of funds for new construction have resulted in a condition whereby all of these schools operate near or above rated capacities. Most schools utilize portable classrooms to alleviate overcrowding until new construction or redistricting occurs.

Resident children are divided between Carroll and Frederick Counties, although they often live in close proximity to each other. Most municipalities the size of Mt. Airy have their own elementary and middle schools, and many have their own high schools. Mount Airy has not had a high school since 1967.

The Town's effort at lobbying for new school construction has resulted in a new elementary school adjacent to Watkins Regional Park. The new school is slated for opening in fall of 2005. The Town's next focus will be to support the efforts for a new middle school on the Carroll County side of Mount Airy, which is needed for both in-town development, and regional development northeast of the Town boundaries.

The high school for the Frederick County students also has capacity issues. Mount Airy's population and surrounding areas in Frederick and Carroll Counties could provide enough students for a regional high school located in Mount Airy. The location of a high school within the Town would be consistent with planning policies of both Carroll and Frederick counties, which have adopted policies to support the State of Maryland's "Smart Growth" legislation which advocates growth in and around the municipalities. Both Carroll and Frederick Counties continue to alleviate the Mount Airy school capacity problem by redistricting in each county rather than consider a regional solution in accordance with State policy to set school districts by County.



**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAPACITY AND  
PROJECTED ENROLLMENT**

	State Rated Capacity	<b>FTE*</b> 2003	<b>FTE</b> 2004	<b>FTE</b> 2005**
Mount Airy Elementary	666	831 <i>125%</i>	886 <i>133%</i>	927 <i>139%</i>
Twin Ridge Elementary	676	724 <i>107%</i>	732 <i>108%</i>	740 <i>109%</i>

Source: Frederick County and Carroll County Schools Enrollment Projections 2002

\*FTE is defined as full-time enrollment. \*\* Parris Ridge Elementary School to open in fall of 2005.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL CAPACITY AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENT**

	State Rated Capacity	<b>FTE*</b> 2003	<b>FTE</b> 2004	<b>FTE</b> 2005
Mount Airy Middle	638	611 <i>119%</i>	600 <i>117%</i>	602 <i>118%</i>
New Market Middle	900	820 <i>91%</i>	825 <i>92%</i>	818 <i>91%</i>

Source: Frederick County and Carroll County Schools Enrollment Projections 2002

\*FTE is defined as full-time enrollment

**HIGH SCHOOL CAPACITY AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENT**

	State Rated Capacity	<b>FTE*</b> 2003	<b>FTE</b> 2004	<b>FTE</b> 2005
South Carroll High	1233	1194 <i>95%</i>	1186 <i>97%</i>	1230 <i>100%</i>
Linganore High	1305	1498 <i>115%</i>	1530 <i>117%</i>	1558 <i>119%</i>

Source: Frederick County and Carroll County Schools Enrollment Projections 2002

\*FTE is defined as full-time enrollment



**Twin Ridge Elementary School, Town of Mount Airy, MD- June 2003**

The Town of Mount Airy should continue to work with both Frederick and Carroll Counties to correctly estimate the number of housing units currently in the pipeline so that any anticipated need in the school system may be properly programmed in the Board of Education Capital Improvements Program. These construction numbers are becoming increasingly important because the majority of residential housing growth will occur in municipalities to be in compliance with the State "Smart Growth" initiatives. Close monitoring is necessary to amend increasing student loading. Carroll County subdivision growth directly outside the Town limits is such that monitoring of the County' s Adopted CIP is also necessary to mitigate any oversight of the future school enrollments.

The Town should also actively support the requirement of land dedication for a school site, as part of the approval process for new subdivision developments. This strategy should be coordinated closely so that new school construction or school expansion can be rationally based on current and future growth projections for the Town.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**



## **Parks and Recreation**

Park and recreation opportunities are available to residents from many sources. The Town owns and maintains seven parks; several private organizations own recreational fields, and both Carroll and Frederick County Boards of Education own recreational fields within the Town boundaries. Parks contribute to an active urban environment and can substitute for the perceived amenities of large lots in rural areas.

The Town Parks and Recreation Commission, however, is in charge of overseeing the provision of adequate parkland and coordinating use of Town owned fields. New residential developments must have a portion of their property dedicated to the Town for Parks and Recreation purposes, or the developers pay a fee-in-lieu into the Parks and Recreation Commission fund to be used to improve Town-owned park facilities. This dedication is the primary means by which the Town improves its park system, although the Town, through the State Program Open Space, purchases some physical equipment.

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), 10 acres of public park space should be provided for every 1,000 persons. Mt. Airy' s population is 6,400 as of the 2000 Census, and would require 64 acres of parkland according to this standard. An additional consideration is that many adjacent county residents use Town park facilities. The four town parks, Watkins Park, Prospect Park, East-West Park, and Summit Ridge Park total close to 100 acres, which is adequate to meet the standard.

The type of park and recreation activity provided is equally important. A variety of recreation options must be provided for all age groups. Such a range of options may include ballfields for organized team sports, tennis and basketball courts for couples or small groups, hiking and biking trails for individual exercise or leisure, and natural areas for sedentary activities such as fishing or bird watching. Tot lots should be provided at most public facilities within larger residential developments.

The Town has aggressively pursued the development of dedicated open space into active recreational areas. The town has had tremendous responsibility in providing adequate recreation facilities for regional participants to meet the demands for active recreation areas and the regional population within the surrounding environs. The volume of activity at these recreational areas involves needs for long-term and seasonal maintenance, parking facilities, repairs and security to prevent vandalism.

There is also increasing concern among subdivision residents about smaller community parks that are nestled among subdivisions. These parks end up being used regionally because they have active facilities located on them. In many cases this situation results in local parks being intrusive to the local residents directly adjacent to the park location.

The Town may look into restructuring its parkland dedication of 10% and require a monetary contribution in lieu of the parkland in every case. This new alternative would require developers to put needed facilities on a centrally located "regional park" of 40 - 50 acres. This would accommodate many different uses and many participants in both the Town and the county. However, there is still a need for neighborhood facilities to serve individual subdivisions.

<b>Town of Mount Airy Park and Recreation Facilities</b>			
<b>Current Inventory of Town Owned Parks Facilities:</b>			<i>Village Gate</i>
<i>East/West Park (5ac)</i>	<i>Watkins Regional Park (40ac)</i>	<i>Summit Ridge Park (7ac)</i>	<i>Park (6ac)</i>
baseball field	picnic pavilion	soccer field	2 tennis courts
playground equip	2 tennis courts	2 baseball fields	1 soccer field
nature trail	1 basketball court	parking area	walking path
parking area	walking/bike trail	playground equip.	parking area
basketball court	2 soccer fields, 2 baseball fields playground area, volleyball area skateboard park, horseshoe pit parking area, gazebo, sitting area, ice skate area		
<i>Prospect Park (10ac)</i>	<i>Wildwood Park (3ac)</i>	<i>Vest Pocket Park (1/2ac)</i>	<i>TwinRidge Park (5ac)</i>
roller hockey court	walking path	benches	1 Baseballfield (lighted)
playground	gazebo	passive recreation	1 soccer field
playground equip.	benches		
picnic pavilion			
horseshoe pit			
basketball court			
volleyball net			
Fishing Pond, pavilion			

The Mount Airy Youth Athletic Association (MAYAA) and other organizations have over many years, used the Fireman’s Carnival grounds for local league activities such as baseball, football, horse shows held by Mount Airy Saddle Pals and special playoff games. The schedule of these fields is extremely busy and very heavily relied upon to provide playing space. The Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company owns the carnival grounds privately. If any development of the land occurs, the community will lose the ballfields and football field heavily used by the town athletic associations. The Town should actively pursue an alternative location to replace those fields in the next five years.

Frederick County recently developed a plan for regional park facility, named the Old National Pike Park. This park lies four miles west of Mount Airy outside the Town of New Market. It is intended to serve the New Market/Mount Airy population. The master plan for the park, which has been formally adopted by the Frederick County Commissioners, includes several baseball and soccer fields, an extensive nature trail,

amphitheater, and public swimming pool. The park plans will be implemented in phases, as funding becomes available over the next decade.

There are always a variety of park types available within a certain community and demand for certain types of active recreation is greater in some locations than others. The Town of Mount Airy has the greatest need for regionally based baseball, soccer, and football fields. According to MAYAA, the need for a greater supply of baseball and soccer fields is increasing rapidly with the increase in population. It must be understood that the population around the Town has been growing just as rapidly. The local athletic associations rely on the cluster of in-town recreation facilities very heavily because the Town parks are centrally located.

Parks and recreation facilities are important to the perception of the Town's character. Attractive and accessible facilities encourage use and are symbols of civic pride. Town parks should be visible and accessible from public roads. Ideally public roads should line an edge of parks to provide visibility and accessibility. The landscaping and furnishing of park facilities should be done with quality and care.

Guidelines for Parkland Acquisition: There are general guidelines for creation of park facilities for a certain municipal population. Listed below are some general standards for providing parkland. A municipality should generally comply with these standards and monitor their acquisition of parkland over time to see if it meets the standard criteria.

<p><b>Neighborhood Parks</b> -5 Acres/ 1,000 persons population/ <i>Average 1-10 acres</i> Services Area is 1/2 mile</p> <p><b>Community Parks</b> - 10 Acres/ 1,000 persons population/ <i>Average 20-75 acres</i> Service Area is 2+ miles</p> <p><b>District/Special Use Parks</b> - 10 Acres/ 1,000 persons population/ <i>Average 100+ acres</i> Regional Location</p>
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There are also more specialized Regional/Resource types of Parks, which may traverse several counties and provide hiking, biking or camping opportunities. Two examples of this would be the Gillis Falls Watershed area located northeast of Mount Airy, and the Rails to Trails Greenway that is designated on the current Master Plan. Neither of these greenways is developed but both have been included in the long range planning projects at both the County and local level.



Rails to Trails Facilities Plan: The *rails to trails* right-of-way have been designated in the Mount Airy Master Plan for the last ten years. The actual trail pathway runs along the right of way for the old B & O railroad that travels from the center part of downtown Mount Airy to Watkins Park. The trail then is designated to continue across MD 27 to the east and run one more mile to the main line rail line

traveling east towards Baltimore.

This future “greenways” corridor that is designated in the comprehensive plan continues all the way from Mount Airy to Sykesville. It is also a designated greenways corridor in the Carroll County Comprehensive Plan. Bikeways have also been designated within the Transportation Chapter of this Master Plan but are coordinated with both the Frederick County and Carroll County Master Plans that show designated bikepaths and delineated trailways.



**(RESERVED)**

## **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

## **Emergency Services**

Fire Department: Mt. Airy depends on the Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company for fire, rescue, and ambulance service. Fire company personnel include 65 active volunteers and 14 part-time (day) paid emergency medical service providers. Three of the paid providers staff the station Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and from 11 am to 11 p.m., one paid staff person works on the weekend. The new fire station, constructed in 1992, is located at North Main Street and Cottonwood Ave.

The “first due” service area, or area where the Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company is expected to respond first extends well beyond Town limits into both Carroll and Frederick Counties, and a small portion of Howard County. In addition, the Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Department may be called outside the first due response area to assist departments in any of the four surrounding counties on “mutual aid” calls. Of the 1,900 calls annually, 51% were into Carroll County, 38% were into Frederick County, 8% were into Howard County and 3% were into Montgomery County.

Significant residential growth in the Town of Mount Airy has created a significant increase in calls. This increased volume coupled with a decrease in volunteerism (particularly weekdays 4 a.m. - 4 p.m.) has resulted in the need for increased paid staff. Because of the difficulties encountered with covering varied shifts with part-time employees, it is likely that in the future the company will need to hire full time employees. This need is especially evident for EMS trained personnel as the population increases. Recently the Town passed an ordinance making a \$1,000 fee assessed at the building permit stage, mandatory in order to provide for the local fire company’s future needs.

It is likely that continued growth inside the Town and surrounding area will result in the need for additional paid staff and a resulting increase in payroll and associated operational costs for the fire company. As of this time, the Town Fire Company receives limited funding from Carroll County for paid staffing, 25% of the payroll budget. With the limited funding from Carroll County for the payroll, the fire company will need additional funding from some source to cover the increase in personnel costs.

The fire company also is looking toward its future equipment needs. Increasing costs of standard equipment replacements is placing an additional financial burden on the operational costs of the fire company. The costs of fire apparatus and ambulances have increased dramatically over the past ten years. On average, the cost of purchasing new standard equipment such as an ambulance, fire engines and engine-tankers has increased 50%. The number of calls and increase in calls determine how often the ambulances need to be replaced due to standard wear and tear. With the current level of service provided to the Town and environs, ambulances will need to be replaced every three years.

The Town now has a number of commercial facilities (The Lorien Life Center for example), and a number of larger houses that have upper story windows and roof areas that cannot be accessed utilizing standard ground ladders. As a result, the Fire Company's operations plan includes a plan to purchase an aerial apparatus (ladder truck or tower). The cost of this equipment is significant, \$750,000, and directly related to the increased growth and density of the Town.

A particular burden has been placed on the fire company by nursing homes and similar facilities. Any type of facility that classifies as an assisted living facility or nursing home is required to provide a private ambulance and EMT service on site at all times. This requirement for those types of facilities to have a private company provide ambulatory services will prevent the town volunteer fire company from being seriously burdened by the number of daily calls to that facility. The closest hospital is a 36-mile round trip from Mount Airy.

Jurisdictional issues between Frederick and Carroll Counties also affect the fire company call area. There is a delay problem in service because the 911 calls are routed through two dispatch centers. All 911 calls originating in the Frederick County side of Mount Airy are routed.

One policy decision regarding fire and rescue safety that has been implemented by the Town Council is the requirement for installing residential sprinklers in all new houses. Statistics show that residential sprinklers reduce the number of fire-related deaths significantly. Another policy that may be implemented is a voluntary program whereby lock boxes are placed on commercial establishments. This would allow the fire company to enter into the premises in an emergency situation without the owner having to be present via telephone contact from Frederick ECC to Carroll ECC.

**(RESERVED)**

## **POLICE PROTECTION**

## **Police Protection**

Since 1975, the Resident Trooper Program has provided police protection for the town. The Maryland State Police instituted this program as a service to Maryland towns. Mt. Airy has five resident troopers assigned to protect the Town plus one more local trooper to provide for 24-hour coverage. Additional troopers are assigned to the Town upon request. State funding for the Resident Trooper has declined quite substantially in the last ten years, making the Town primarily responsible for funding the resident trooper program.

The ratio of officers to population is generally one position per 1,000 persons of population. As of 2003, the sixth officer was added to the resident trooper program to ensure protection of the 7,800 residents inside the Town limits. This will allow the Town to maintain an adequate ratio of officers to population.

The offices for the Mt. Airy Resident Troopers are currently located in the "Old Town Hall" located at the corner of Park Ave. and Main Street. Calls from the public are routed to the troopers via the "911" emergency telephone system. The troopers also assist with traffic and crowd control throughout the year for specially held public events.



## **SOLID WASTE**

## **Solid Waste and Recycling**

The Town of Mount Airy has been handling several forms of solid waste and recycling for the town residents for several years. Enacted State Legislation requires mandatory recycling; the Town created a Recycling and Sanitation Commission in 1990. Over the past thirteen years the commission has directed and monitored the sanitation and recycling activities of the Town. According to the Town Code, the Commission may have up to nine members and they are responsible for determining the appropriate means for trash removal, collection along with the monitoring and oversight of a town-wide recycling program.

The curbside recycling program has been in operation since 1992. All paper, glass, plastic, paper, and cardboard are picked up once weekly throughout town. Frederick County provided recycling bins for the town residents to use for their recycling articles. The Town provided bins for the Carroll County side of Mt. Airy. The total tons of recycling collected by our recycling contractor in 2000 were 1,722 lbs. for residential and 1,803.45 lbs. for commercial. On the average 144 lbs. of residential recycling and 150 lbs. of commercial recycling are collected each month.

The program has been well received by the community, and there are several “recycling” types of services that Mt. Airy has provided. The town, in conjunction with the Jaycees, holds bulk trash pickups in the spring and in the fall. The town residents utilize these services greatly. In spring of 2002, 21 tons of bulk items were collected within one day. Last winter in 2002, the Town also collected over 900 Christmas trees in a special pickup conducted for residents.

For nine years the town had provided as a service, a Yard Trimmings-to Mulch Center (YTTMC). The center was located in the Twin Ridge Professional Park. This industrial park is located in the *Frederick County* portion of Mount Airy. This facility over time had provided a location for both town and county residents to take their yard waste and trimmings to be mulched.

The Frederick County Government provided a grinding machine to mulch the yard materials. For the time the center had been open, an average of 1,300 to 2,300 yards of materials were processed. The total amount of yard waste mulched during 2000 was 11,930 yards.

Over time, odor and distribution problems became an issue for the town resulting from the level of use and the amount of yard waste created by the residents. It was discussed among town officials to see if an alternative site either in Frederick County, Carroll County or in the town could be secured. Several months of research were spent in trying to find an alternative site but no reasonable alternative has been found at this time.

The site was closed in 2001, with no alternative site located. The residents of the Town could utilize the yard waste sites at either the Frederick County or Carroll County landfill for their yard trimmings. Recently the Town has instituted yard waste pickup every two weeks on Saturdays during the summer months.

### **Other Public Services and Facilities**

Other public facilities in Mt. Airy include the Mount Airy Library and Senior Center, the Mt. Airy Post Office, and Town Hall, which is the administrative offices for Town business and located in the old Library Building at 110 South Main Street.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

#### *Water and Sewer:*

- 1. Add to the water system well #9 (Town Well) and #10 (Flickinger Property) as recommended by the Hyder Associates Water Study, 2000.**
- 2. Construct and complete the new water storage tank to supplement the Town storage reserve of water.**
- 3. Continue to require well site development as part of the annexation process for new residential land development.**
- 4. Institute water conservation policies when necessary during drought conditions.**
- 5. Continuously monitor the WWTP flow according to current MDE Standards.**

#### *Schools:*

- 1. Continue to work with Carroll and Frederick Counties to efficiently monitor current and projected town residential growth.**
- 2. Continue to lobby both Carroll and Frederick County for school improvements and new construction to serve the resident school population.**
- 3. Actively require land dedication for future school sites as part of the approval process for new subdivisions.**
- 4. Expedite the town development review process for any school-related projects.**

**5. Promote the coordination of the Town and Board of Education to share school athletic facilities.**

*Parks and Recreation:*

**1. Work to establish the “Rails to Trails” path from the downtown to Watkins Regional Park.**

**2. Create policies that require developers to provide parking facilities with the parkland requirements for residential subdivisions.**

**3. Develop a connecting rail-trail south to the Twin Arch bridge. A trail should be developed alongside the South Branch of the Patapsco River. This trail should be coordinated with Carroll County, Howard County, and State of Maryland to reflect the “Greenways” corridor for the regional area.**

**4. Encourage a pedestrian route interconnecting the west and east sides of Town south of Prospect Road. This route should utilize sidewalks within existing road rights-of-way. If sidewalks along this route are not adequate, they should become priority projects when the Town considers such improvements.**

**5. Determine a location for an additional 40-50 acre regional park in close proximity to Watkins Regional Park. This would be developed as a Town “regional facility” where multiple recreational facilities could be built to serve the town and surrounding population.**

**6. Continue to provide pedestrian ways and bikeways within subdivisions to dedicated open space areas.**

**7. Do not allow any dedication of "unusable" open space to fulfill the Town of Mount Airy parkland dedication requirements.**

**8. The Town will work to increase the designated portion of open space.**

*Emergency Services:*

**1. Work with Frederick and Carroll Counties to determine a logical dispatch location to make the response time to alarms the most expedient.**

**2. Require that all private nursing home and assisted living facilities have private ambulance and EMT services on site at all times.**

**3. Continue to consider the needs of the Fire Department when reviewing commercial, industrial site plan layouts and residential subdivisions.**

**4. Require major subdivisions to have multiple access points to the Town of Mount Airy road network.**

**5. Monitor the population growth in order to adequately staff EMT staff at the Fire Company.**

***Police Protection:***

**Evaluate the criteria that determine the number of resident troopers that is adequate to serve the resident population. Ensure that an adequate ratio of officers to population is maintained at all times.**

***Solid Waste and Recycling:***

**1. Continue to educate the public about the advantages of recycling.**

**2. Make semi-annual bulk trash pickup financially feasible for the town.**

**3. Enforce fines for illegal yard waste dumping throughout town.**

**4. Find improved ways to deliver trash and recycling services to Town residents.**

**(RESERVED)**

## CHAPTER 7

### COMMUNITY DESIGN GUIDELINES

A person's perception of his or her community comes from experiences that are in part shaped by the structure and elements of the public realm. A tree-lined street provides a peaceful setting for evening walks. Main Street and Park Avenue host festive community parades. The mere presence of religious and civic buildings can both comfort and inspire as well as historic sites recalling the roots to our past. All of these elements of the built environment serve a purpose greater than the bricks, mortar, or landscaping from which they are made. It is this ability of the man-made environment to evoke emotional responses that obligates us to manage the public realm in a responsible and thoughtful manner.

The public realm is the network of places, spaces, and buildings of which many people in the community feel a part. It is not enough for new development only to provide good roads, expand water and sewer systems, or meet building codes. New development should respect the qualities of the town and contribute new features designed to be compatible with the old.

The Master Plan can play a central guiding role in enhancing the public realm by identifying existing qualities in order to preserve them, by identifying missing needed elements of the community and planning for their provision, and by requiring future growth to respect and contribute to the Town character.

#### **Setting a "Big Picture" Vision**

The community can identify the "Big Picture" vision as well as the specific design elements and various regulations can be established to protect those characteristics. Growth can be successfully accommodated when it does not irreparably harm or erode the major components that constitute an established or emerging community character. The community needs to concentrate on those assets or features that are truly distinctive or worthy of conservation. Elements significantly contributing to community character should be recognized, so that designers may more appropriately handle finer details.

Aesthetic standards will not be legally upheld if they are deemed arbitrary or capricious. There must be a clear link between the purpose of the regulations and the requirements. In other words, the regulation must have a valid public purpose that is clearly articulated. If the regulations instituted are mandatory, the design process must establish fair and timely review and appeal procedures.

The general plan policies should also anticipate opportunities for new development by defining the Town's visual character. Compatibility with existing development is

emphasized in the retail area in order to maintain the walkable, pedestrian scale. The policies extend not only to buildings but also to the spaces between them, not limited to, but including, street corridors, intersections, plazas, and parks - essentially any public pedestrian space. Collectively, the goals, policies, and programs define the vision in very precise terms.

Establishing the Town's visual character, policies are created to encourage gateways, plazas, and parks. It also is aimed at maintaining scenic view corridors to increase pedestrian access to and through the retail area and to preserve the existing character and identify shopping areas.

Beyond the downtown retail core or highway corridor, policies for residential areas are established and include design standards that require infill development to be compatible with existing neighborhoods, that minimize disruption of the sites natural topography and that discourages identical unit design for single-family residences on adjacent or opposing lots. Standards for design and appearance developed by the community consensus are the most effective.

### **Identifying and Preserving Existing Community Features**

Existing community features currently in evidence in Mount Airy and other similar small towns include civic and public buildings, parks, historic sites, and churches. These sites are important because they remind residents of the meaning and significance of "community" and the related architectural features that instill a sense of pride for town residents. The following section identifies how some important places and buildings may be preserved or enhanced.

*Site Improvements:* Almost all of the places or buildings identified as significant to the community are located on the Town's historic streets. By implementing the landscape improvements that enhance the Town's main entranceways, these landmarks can be improved. Visibility of prominent features is also important. Landscaping framing the views to the site would add to their aesthetic nature. Appropriate signage, decorative site lighting, flagpoles and similar elements can further enhance the prominence of significant sites.

*Street Alignments:* Changes to road patterns, or the alignment of planned streets can emphasize important buildings or sites. Streets can be aligned to focus views on important buildings, similar to how the view north on Main Street is terminated by the location of Saint James Episcopal Church. Pine Grove Cemetery is highly visible from Wildwood Park, and streets that are planned on axis with this view may reinforce its significance.

*Historic Preservation and Downtown Revitalization:* In 1984, a survey was undertaken by the Maryland Historical Trust that resulted in the delineation of a Historic District in Mount Airy. This district is now listed in the National Register of Historic places. The Historic District is centered in downtown and located predominantly along Main Street, between Flower Ave. and the Mount Airy Elementary School. The District includes the downtown area and most surrounding older residential areas.

The Historic District survey rated every building for its contribution to the historic character of the District. Three properties were rated "A" having exceptional significance; the Mount Airy Train Station, Calvary United Methodist Church, and Pine Grove Chapel. About a dozen buildings, mostly in the downtown area, received a "C" rating, which designates buildings that are potential historic resources but require rehabilitation or restoration. Most other buildings, particularly residences, were rated "B" historically significant. The historic district listing can be used to promote rehabilitation of buildings in the downtown area through tax credits, grants, and low interest loans available for historic preservation of commercial buildings.

Revitalization of the Downtown, the most significant place in Mount Airy' s public realm, must give due consideration to historic preservation. A "Downtown Improvements" plan could be established to suggest methods by which the historic downtown may be improved. The plan should be directed at taking a comprehensive look at how to improve the Downtown area, including the potential for historic preservation and restoration, possible changes to zoning and land-use to encourage Downtown development, marketing strategies to attract new businesses, public improvements such as lighting and signage, and available grant and loan programs that may be available to execute such programs. The plan could also serve to educate residents about future history and future growth options for the Downtown. The plan creation should involve discussion and feedback from many groups, including downtown merchants, local historians, architects or persons with related professional backgrounds, the Planning Commission, the Town Council and local residents.

*Heritage Tourism:* The term heritage tourism refers to tourist activity that is oriented around the visitation of historic and cultural attractions, natural resources, and local dining and lodging establishments that impart a unique, regional experience not duplicated anywhere. Heritage tourists are in search of the “real” and “authentic” qualities of a place. The heritage tourism market is a lucrative one to pursue since studies have shown that tourists who fit the heritage tourist profile often are more highly educated, older and wealthier and, as a result tend to spend more per trip, than the average tourist. However, to attract the heritage tourist, Mount Airy must be able to offer them the type of unique and authentic experience they seek. Mount Airy is fortunate to have many of the requisite qualities for heritage tourism – quaint and attractive downtown that have been preserved to a large extent, an array of unique local dining and shopping opportunities, a calendar of events that reflect the region, and beautiful rural scenery. But in order to capitalize upon the potential that exists, a conscious effort must be put forth to retain and attract unique businesses and cultural facilities, preserve the historic fabric of the towns, and protect the rural countryside and way of life.

One effort that is currently underway to do just this is the designation of the Maryland Civil War Heritage Area. This effort seeks to gain certification as a State Heritage Area for Mount Airy. In Mount Airy, these sites primarily relate to troop movement through the area prior to and just after the Battle of Gettysburg. The Union VIth Corps and 6<sup>th</sup> Calvary passed through Mount Airy on their way to Gettysburg and Union Troops were quartered in Pine Grove Chapel to guard the National Road and the Mount Airy Station, a freight depot for the B&O Railroad. Properties within certified heritage areas are eligible for grants for planning, design, interpretation, marketing, and programming in support of Heritage Area Management Plan objectives. Additionally, Target Investment Zones (TIZs) have been identified as part of this process. TIZs are areas towards which substantial amounts of funding are to be directed as a result of their having concentrations of heritage resources and visitor resources. Mount Airy should seek to become a Targeted Investment Zone (TIZ). Properties within the TIZs are eligible for additional grants and loans for capital projects and economic development projects, as well as state income tax

credits for the rehabilitation of certified heritage structures. Presently, the Maryland Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan is in the final stages of completion. It is expected that the plan will be presented to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority for approval in the summer of 2004.

### **Analysis of the Town Structure**

While individual buildings and sites contribute to a community' s design and identity, the street system is the foundation of the community framework. The organization of the street system often reflects the unique environmental features, social or economic factors, cultural influences or the settlement period. Three typical street system organizations are the grid, radial, and linear.

In each pattern a different order hierarchy is established that inherently determines appropriate locations for important spaces and buildings. In the grid system a "square" defined by four streets may assume the role of town center. In the radial system, by comparison, the center is the obvious "heart" of the community and many streets may play both a ceremonial or functional role. The linear street system relies on a single street to serve both functional and ceremonial responsibilities, and the "heart" of the community is usually located where important crossroads intersect that street.

Mount Airy' s street structure is similar to the linear street pattern because most development occurred along the length of Main Street between Ridgeville and Dorseytown. Mount Airy' s core is in the downtown, which developed where the main line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad crossed Main Street. Several major thoroughfares also intersected Main Street near the downtown, including Buffalo Road, Prospect Road, and Twin Arch Road. Ridgeville, Parrsville, and Dorseytown were all nearby "cross-road" communities.

A limitation of the linear system in Mount Airy is the amount of growth that can be "connected" with Main Street. The Town' s hilly topography will continue to restrict the growth that will continue. Historically, all development occurred along the length of Main Street, which runs north-south along the top of Parr' s Ridge. Most new development that has occurred is only incidentally tied to Main Street.

Most often, new development occurs off of older, secondary roads that occupy the more gradual grades leading to Parr' s Ridge. Most of these older roads are below standard or lack sidewalks, limiting travel to car trips through Town rather than more memorable encounters that happen while walking or biking. A functional and symbolic link is needed to provide a community amenity within new development and provide connection directly to Main Street.

New residential developments are designed with few connections to Main Street, and often isolated from one another. Zoning regulations that encourage the distinct separation

of different building types has fostered these “single entrance” subdivisions. The subdivision review process exacerbates the problem by requiring buffers and berms that are constructed around each increment of new development.

These clustered developments are fundamentally different than the three basic street systems because they are not designed to be a compatible expansion of the Town residential pattern. Adding new parallel streets can expand the grid and the underlying structure remains the same. Lengthening the “spokes” and adding new rings can expand the radial town. The linear system could be expanded along its length, or by adding cross-streets. New development clusters are often only connected to the Town along secondary streets and are rarely designed to be extended into future development.

A third challenge to the development of a cohesive community is the lack of a location for community interaction within new development. New developments are only indirectly connected to Main Street and rarely connected to adjacent developments or adjoining subdivisions.



*Newer Townhouses in an older section of Town do not blend well.*

In new residential developments almost all lots and buildings are a uniform size. This helps to perpetuate the belief that the introduction of a different building type will not "fit in". In the older areas of Town many different lot and home sizes are

found on any one street. This variety can better assimilate a different use, such as how the Calvary Methodist Church assimilates in with the existing residences along South Main Street. It is unlikely that any public use will ever be located within completed new developments.

In new development, similar homes are built on lots of uniform size, fronting on streets of uniform width, and are setback an equal distance from the street. There is very little differentiation in character from one street to the next, and many new neighborhoods are

strikingly similar to each other. This uniformity does not provide the interest or character that is cherished in the older neighborhoods of Town.

### **Development of the Community Framework:**

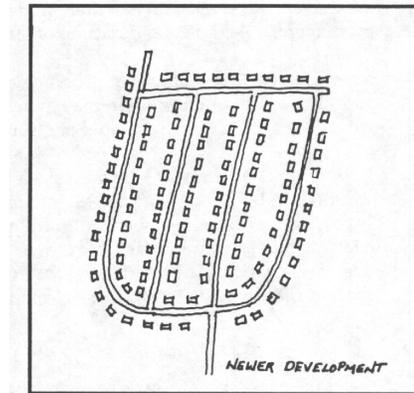
The Community Framework should reflect both the inherent order of the Town and address the growth-related problems in order to achieve a coherent sense of community. The following are the four basic principles of the proposed Community Framework.

#### **Typical Pattern of Newer Development**

##### ***Reinforce the primary importance of Main Street:***

Landscape improvements along Main Street can be reinforced by implementing the landscaping plan discussed in previous chapters and by establishing the program for Downtown Revitalization discussed earlier in this chapter.

Some of Main Street' s unique qualities should also be maintained. The historic flavor of the residential architecture should be protected, and infill buildings should be compatibly designed. The landscaping along Main Street is informal, with large old trees gracing front yards but not formally lining the street. As many older trees are dying now, new young trees should be planted in their place. The residential use of homes has been vigorously protected, successfully preventing the commercialization of Main Street.





**Downtown Mount Airy, looking south- 2003**

*Preservation and Enhancement of Gateways:* The existence of Route 27 Bypass provides a great opportunity to reinforce the significance of Main Street. Main Street used to be part of the major north-south route from Westminster to Damascus and points south in Montgomery County to move traffic around Town. This arrangement has provided an opportunity to "announce" Main Street at its north and south entrances from Rt. 27 by a gateway element at each end of Main Street, where it meets Route 27. Signage, a flagpole, landscaping or other similar special feature could easily accomplish this.

*Downtown Improvements:* Downtown is the physical, historical, and symbolic heart of Mount Airy, and the focal point of Main Street. Maintaining active businesses in the Downtown area, improving the sidewalks and building facades, and continuing the parades and festivals that are centered in Downtown are just a few ways the Town can celebrate this special place. The newly formed Downtown Revitalization Committee may provide a framework from which to initiate some of these efforts.

*Provide an east-west "spine" to connect new areas of Town with Main Street:* It is not possible or desirable to try to create a new Main Street, linking development to the east and west of Town. Rather, a new "spine" that is compatible with new development characteristics is possible. Much open space has been left undeveloped at the periphery of new developments, often due to steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains or similar environmental limitations.

This open space has tended to occur along swales flowing in an east-west direction away from Parr' s Ridge. These swales form interconnected stream systems, and provide an ideal path for a new east-west linear park. This new "spine" will naturally interconnect undeveloped open space around existing development, as well as be protected from development on vacant land by environmental regulations.

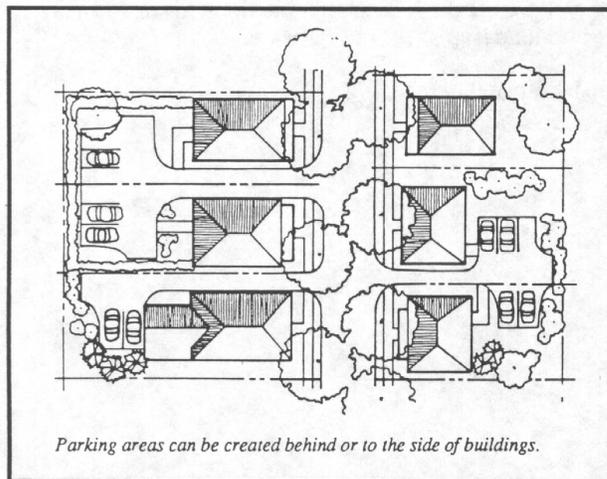
While Main Street presents the features of the built environment, the linear park will show off the spectacular hills, valleys and views framed by the rolling topography. The park will meet Main Street at its heart, the Mount Airy Train Station, further reinforcing the importance of the railroad on the development of Mount Airy. History continues to be an integral element of the park as it extends east, along a two-mile length of the historic Baltimore and Ohio Railroad track, which was abandoned in the early 1970s.

On its route east, the linear park meets Watkins Park, providing a short and beautiful half-mile walk from the Train Station through the ravine, which was cut for rail passage across Parr' s Ridge. At its eastern most point, the trail will meet the original stone bridge that carried the railroad over the Patapsco River to downtown Mount Airy. From this point, the trail could be continued south to the Twin Arch Bridge, and east, connecting to the Gillis Falls Reservoir or all the way to Sykesville.

To the west, the park would extend to the 90 acres purchased by the Town. On its route west, the linear park will connect with Prospect Park and East-West Park, increasing the accessibility of these amenities to many residents by walking or biking. At its western end, one of the prominent hilltops on the Town property could be capped with a large pavilion or similar civic feature, appropriately terminating the western end of the park.

Along its route, several "green fingers" could reach into new developments, further increasing accessibility to residents not directly adjacent to the park system.

*Provide street connections between new developments and with Main Street:* An interconnected road network will relieve the major roads of some minor in-town car trips,



as well as provide for opportunity for community interaction. Without these minor connections, all car trips are relegated to heavily traveled "collector" roads, which, in turn, are not pleasant for pedestrians or bikers. Collector road design standards exacerbate this problem by severing or isolating communities.

The interconnected "local" roads should be designed with appropriately scaled and landscaped streets, inviting

walking and biking between neighborhoods.

Provide a location for social interaction within new developments: For new developments that are more removed from Main Street, it would be beneficial to provide settings for community interaction at the neighborhood scale. Ideally, a civic or public use should be central to several developments, and within a short, five to ten minute walking distance. Some of the locations of these neighborhood centers have developed as the following: a community based recreation area, a nursing home and assisted living facility within a senior housing complex, small neighborhood library and senior center. Local street connections are possible between each center and Main Street, and also directly or indirectly between each other.

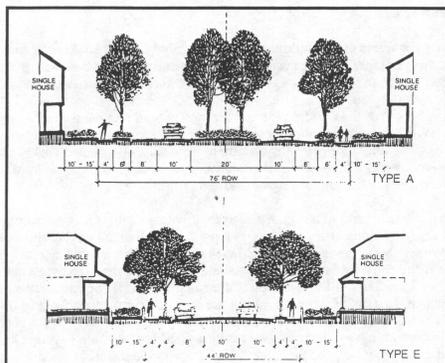
Public and partly public as well as private enterprises can provide a place for socialization. A passive recreational park with a bench or two can provide a small social setting. However, uses that attract moderate levels of activity better encourage such interaction. Churches, association meeting halls, and community activity buildings are civic-minded uses that can be designed sensitively within the context of residential areas.

### **Improve the Quality of New Development**

As mentioned earlier, the public realm consists of all places or spaces that people perceive as an intrinsic part of the Town character. Public as well as private development contributes to the perception of Mt. Airy' s character. While the Town has direct influence over the location and design of public buildings and parks, the control the Town has exercised over private development has been largely limited to basic zoning and infrastructure decisions.

To ensure that future development respects and enhances the Town character, elements of new development that make up the public realm must be thoughtfully designed and integrated into the existing character. Unique site features, the arrangement or addition of street trees and blocks, the relationship of buildings to the street, and the landscaping all contribute to the character created by new development and determine the "fit" between the new and the old.

Consideration of the "design" of new development should be an integral part of the development review process. The following section outlines some basic design techniques that could increase the Town' s ability to improve the quality of new development at three levels of detail: the site plan, the streetscape and the building lot.



Site Plans: The site plan should be shaped by many factors, only one of which is zoning regulations. The topography, views to and from the site, historic or other significant features, adjacent patterns of development, environmental features,

parks and recreation opportunities, and similar site influences should all be used to help shape the site plan. These features should be compiled as a "Site Analysis Plan" and submitted at the sketch plan phase of a development.

The sketch plan or what is termed a "concept plan", should illustrate how the proposed site design responds to the various site issues. Site sections across the major areas of the site may be required to help illustrate the site design's response to topography, views, open space definition, or similar features.

These submissions should enable the Planning Commission and the applicant to be more aware of unique opportunities each site presents, and result in better site design. The Subdivision Ordinance should require that all submissions from the preliminary plan to the final plans incorporate specific design elements.

The submissions should also show the most efficient pattern of development for the land in question, so that maximum utilization of topography, open space, sensitive areas, and density allowances may be emphasized.



**Senior Housing designed for small town community cohesiveness.**

*Streetscape Design Elements:* The streetscape is a very important determinant of a new development's contribution to the public realm. Street trees are remembered with admiration and are a credit to the Town. Streetscapes with bad proportion, inappropriate or lack of

landscaping detract from the Town character or create unattractive characteristics.

Larger developments have the ability to create entire streetscapes. Each new street can have a unique character, or a hierarchy can be established where each streetscape may reflect higher, moderate, or lower street classifications within the development. If a street hierarchy is developed it should be identified early at the concept plan stage.

A street section can easily illustrate review of a project's impact on or development of a streetscape. The street section should include a section through a typical building elevation (cross-section) showing the front yard, sidewalk, any landscaping, the street

width (identifying parking and travel lanes), street lighting, and any other relevant information.

If several types of streets are proposed, including alleys, a street section should be submitted for each. Each of these street section(s) should be delineated on the Concept or Preliminary Plan.

*The Building Lot:* There are many features of the building lot that contribute to the qualities of the streetscape, most notably the front yard landscaping and the building front. It is difficult to regulate optimal design in these areas, as judgments can become subjective.

There are two major elements of the building lot that can and should be reviewed: the parking and lighting provisions. While the number of cars owned by families continues to rise, the parking provisions have become more visually dominant in subdivision and site plans. Lighting designs are often designed for the individual site use, but intrusive and disrupting to adjoining properties. The Town recently adopted a Town Lighting Ordinance to serve as a regulatory mechanism for commercial and industrial site design. This ordinance sets standards for pole height, wattage of fixture, type of fixture and photometrics.

The main goal of site plan review for the Town is to take into consideration the optimal arrangement of parking spaces that minimizes negative visual effects on the streetscape and lighting design that enhances the site within the surrounding environment while meeting the needs of the individual use.

*Design Guidelines:* Many communities adopt Design Guidelines as a way to facilitate better development design. Design Guidelines can guide the design of site, streetscape, parking provisions, and lighting. They can often be used to guide improvements in historic districts. Guidelines can specify different levels of detail, and should be no more restrictive than necessary to achieve the desired goals.

Design guidelines should be explored as an option to further encourage better site design for new developments in Town whether they address residential, commercial or industrial development.

Basic design guidelines can determine standards for buffering, lighting, parking, etc. These guidelines allow flexibility with those items without having troublesome situations arise with adjoining property owners. Consistency between properties can be achieved by setting basic options for lighting fixtures, fencing types, and buffering specifications.

Guidelines can also provide suggestions for architectural style depending on the location of the new business or building structure to ensure visual and physical compatibility with the surrounding district.

These guidelines are not intended to function as an "architectural review" type of control. Rather they should be structured as options to be incorporated into any new building or an adaptive reuse of an existing structure.

### **Protection of Cultural and Historic Features**

The Town of Mount Airy has a designation "historic district" that is recognized by the State of Maryland, but it is not regulated at this time by any architectural review type of board. For the most part, many of the older Victorian homes along Main Street have been kept intact in terms of their original architecture and drastic changes to the exterior of these homes have been avoided.

Within the context of the cultural and historic buildings, and other structures, every effort should be made to preserve these places in their original style. Any development or changes in land use around these existing recognized buildings or structures should be highly sensitive and protective of their preservation.

The Town should investigate possible nominations to the National Register if these sites within the Town boundaries qualify for that recognition. In addition to having sensitive site design techniques employed, the Town should also look into the addition of decorative features such as special lighting techniques or ornamental landscaping to enhance the individual sites.

### **State Smart Development Suggestions for Neighborhoods**

The State of Maryland has developed basic guidelines and principles that should be incorporated into the subdivision and zoning regulations throughout the State. The State's intention is to implement standards through regulatory tools to ensure that the "Smart Growth" principles stay intact from policy to practice. Below is a summary of some of those design principles.

- Permanent preservation of land outside of smart neighborhoods balances the increase in density in smart neighborhoods.
- Logical extension of communities, smart neighborhoods respect and reinforce the existing pattern of development through connections, spatial hierarchy and well-defined edges.
- Pedestrian and vehicular connections to existing and future development to disperse traffic flow and provide route options.
- Continuity of protected on and off-site environmental features increases environmental protection and supports community benefits provided by natural systems.

- An establishment of a variety of open space amenities serves a range of interests and creates spatial hierarchy within the community.
- Design and location of open spaces can protect important natural assets.
- Smart neighborhoods use landscaping to accentuate the appearance and improve the function of the public realm, including streets and open spaces.
- Landscaping accentuates and reinforces the built environment, along with providing community connections and community identity.
- Smart neighborhoods should balance mobility, safety, and other needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicular traffic.
- The hierarchy and design of streets constrict to the sense of place and helps orient people.

*Architectural and Building Design Suggestions:*

- Building design and massing in smart neighborhoods achieves a graceful mix of uses and housing types, ensures privacy and safety and contributes to the long term desirability of the community.
- Smart neighborhood developments shall include a mix of commercial, office and employment, civic and residential uses, and shall mix commercial/office/employment and residential uses within buildings and blocks.
- Minimum net residential density is 3.5 units per acre in a small town rural setting. The design should reflect the density of the surrounding community but in no case be less than 3.5 units/acre.
- The smart neighborhood shall pursue the connectivity of pedestrian and vehicular networks, natural systems and open space networks with adjacent communities, existing and future.
- The neighborhood shall contribute to unmet commercial, housing, civic, and open space needs in nearby neighborhoods.
- The buildings in this neighborhood should not be constructed to a height greater than its distance from any adjoining residentially zoned or residentially developed property, unless topographical features permit a greater height without usually impacting adjacent land uses.

- The smart neighborhood shall incorporate public open space to meet residential needs, stormwater management requirements, and environmental protection goals through a variety of parks, squares, playgrounds, plazas, greenbelts, preserves, and water infiltration areas. The development shall make the maximum use of existing natural systems and features.

- The smart neighborhood shall include landscaping to soften and enhance the built environment, enhance the streetscape, form public spaces, provide shade and reduce glare, improve the quality of the natural environment, reduce visual blight and noise, break up impervious surfaces of parking lots.

Access and Circulation:

- The smart neighborhood shall include pedestrian and vehicular connections to existing or planned transit, adjacent communities, and other off-site destinations.

- The internal street network shall not employ the use of closed street systems except when environmental or topographical constraints, or barriers such as railroads or freeways prohibit full street extensions, or where use of closed street systems enhances the design of the community.

- The internal street network shall include sidewalks on both sides of the street and bike lanes on major streets.

- Block lengths should not exceed 200' - 400' .

Parking Design:

- Landscaping should break up the impervious surface of the parking lot.

- Parking lot design should incorporate safety needs of pedestrians.

- All parking lots should be oriented toward the rear of the buildings.

- Parking for a specific use may be located off-site, but still within the boundaries of the smart neighborhood.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

- 1. Reinforce the primary importance of Main Street to the Town by creating "gateways" to Main Street, encouraging streetscape improvements, and researching downtown preservation and revitalization opportunities.**
- 2. Develop a linear park along an east-west route to interconnect new development, existing Town parks, the historic B & O Railroad right-of-way, and the South Branch of the Patapsco River.**
- 3. Provide a secondary street network to interconnect all areas of Town.**
- 4. Propose public or semi-public functions within new developments to impart a sense of community activity and involvement.**
- 5. Pattern new development after desirable qualities of established subdivisions.**
- 6. Look for opportunities to enhance significant Town features during the site design and development process.**
- 7. Improve the quality of new development through greater attention to site development, enhanced streetscapes and lot designs.**
- 8. Develop specific criteria for individual lighting standards for residential, commercial, and industrial zones in Town.**
- 9. Employ all available tools to protect and enhance the Town's cultural and historic resources and structures**
- 10. The Town will encourage the continued retention of its Historic District by drafting and publishing a set of Architectural Guidelines.**
- 11. The Town should explore the creation of a tax credit program as an incentive for property owners to adhere to the Architectural Guidelines.**
- 12. Mount Airy apply to become a Maryland Civil War Heritage Area and a Targeted Investment Zone (TIZ).**

**(RESERVED)**

## CHAPTER 8

### IMPLEMENTATION

The Comprehensive Plan serves many purposes. It is an analysis of the current state of the Town and a "vision" of where the Town desires to be in the future. The plan is an internal policy document guiding local decision-making effort. A strategy is identified and discussed to identify means of achieving the goals. The Plan serves as a statement of intent for neighboring governments, developers, and similarly interested parties so that they may be aware of the Town of Mount Airy's concerns. It will also help to coordinate the Town's plan with the comprehensive plans of surrounding jurisdictions.

One of the fundamental challenges of the Plan is the constant reminder that all issues are interrelated. Land-use planning, environmental stewardship, infrastructure provisions, and adequate public facilities provisions are all affected by each other. When making decisions on any one issue, the indirect impact on other concerns must be weighed.

Many of the Plan recommendations will impact new development. This does not necessarily mean more regulation, but intends to better regulate by ensuring that the Code and Ordinances achieve their intent, that different criteria do not conflict with each other. It should be a goal to streamline the regulations so they address only what is necessary to achieve the desired result.

Each chapter of the Plan has specific policy recommendations that can be undertaken to achieve the stated goal. The following text outlines an order for implementation of the primary policies and actions.

#### *1. Zoning Amendments*

The primary priority after the Comprehensive Plan adoption is the revision of the current Town Zoning ordinance to reflect any changes recommended by the plan. A new comprehensive map must also be updated to reflect any zoning changes that are made during the Comprehensive Plan process. Ideally, the Comprehensive Plan Map should match the existing or updated zoning map, which then should accurately reflect existing land use.

The Comprehensive Map is a guideline for future development and should be adhered to as closely as possible. Zoning ordinances implement the principles of the Comprehensive Plan and should be updated on occasion to continue to reflect the policies advocated by the comprehensive plan. Regular evaluations of the Town Zoning Codes are necessary to ensure the Comprehensive Plan is being followed. A comprehensive evaluation of the Town Zoning Ordinance is scheduled to take place after the Comprehensive Plan for the Town is completed.

## *2. Natural Resource Policies*

Once the revised Zoning Ordinance and Map are adopted, attention should be focused on review of natural resource protection policies. Some of the primary concerns are water-resource issues including well exploration, protection, and stormwater management practices. Conflicting policies with regard to well exploration and development within the Town Code should be revised.

Problems with the effectiveness, maintenance and design of stormwater management facilities affect every development and will have lasting implications for the Town. Improved steep slope regulations can achieve water resource goals as well and should be part of this second step of policy review.

## *3. Subdivision Regulations*

Many of the regulations within the Subdivision Ordinance should be reviewed for compatibility with land-use and zoning goals and natural resource policies. In addition, the chapter on Community Design Guidelines recommends that a more detailed review be given to site plan analysis. This attention should also emphasize the character and aesthetics of new development as well as infrastructure provisions.

## *4. Public Facility and Infrastructure Policies*

Town policies that affect the provision of infrastructure and facilities required by development should be evaluated. It is vital that new development does not decrease the level of services for the existing community, or create a demand the Town is unable to meet. "Sustainable development", a phrase often used to describe global environmental responsibility, is also appropriately applied to the responsibility that should be borne by development.

Infrastructure or facilities that the Town manages, including water, sewer, trash, recycling, street and parks maintenance and similar services can be comprehensively managed by the Town. The Town should cooperate with county or state efforts to maintain levels of service for schools, county and state roads, libraries and other facilities in part or wholly provided by the county or state.

The Town can improve its management of services and facilities by better tracking techniques. "Master Plans" for the water and sewer systems, road maintenance and construction, parks and recreation improvements and stormwater management can be drawn to anticipate development at the applicable zoning category and density. Impact fees or dedications that are applicable can also be anticipated; helping to evaluate whether required exactions would meet the intended goals for the Town.

System wide regular evaluations of the public facilities will also assist in avoiding any serious "shortfall" situations that may place the Town residents in jeopardy.

#### *5. Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation*

The second chapter of the Master Plan outlines some of the complex issues the Town must address given its location at the corner of four counties and pursue discussion of how each county' s planning policies affect the Town and the Mt. Airy region.

Of particular importance are Frederick and Carroll Counties support in building a better Mount Airy. This has been achieved and continues to be achieved by permitting the Town to control development within its limits, limit development outside the Town and by locating services where they properly belong within the established community boundaries. It will take several years to address most of the issues raised in this Plan.

The next plan effort, which is required within six years after the adoption of this plan, should review the success or problems encountered in adherence to the policies presented herein. Inevitably, some recommendations will have been successful and others may have been too difficult to implement. The underlying concern of all recommendations is the betterment of the community for all residents, present and future. Following the overall "vision" of what the Town wants to be in the future is essential. Adherence to this conviction, through the implementation of this plan and subsequent revisions, will lead the Town toward a better future.