

4 Economic Development

Many of the goals of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan relate to economic development in Cecil County. This chapter describes the County's economy and recent economic trends, discusses key issues, and documents the Comprehensive Plan's economic development goals, policies, and action items through 2030.

4.1 Goals and Objectives

1. Designate sufficient land in appropriate locations as employment, commercial and business areas.
2. Increase employment in Cecil County to provide jobs for residents, reduce the need to commute outside of the County to work, and expand the tax base.
3. Increase the ratio of jobs to housing units in the County.
4. Encourage the expansion of the manufacturing, high tech, and research and development industries.
5. Expand the job skills of the County workforce.
6. Encourage sustainable agribusiness and other natural resource based industries, including mineral extraction and fisheries.
7. Maintain the equity value of agricultural land.
8. Support a productive base of forestland and a forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.
9. Promote tourism.

4.2 Overview

Located midway between Baltimore and Philadelphia and a short distance from Wilmington, Cecil County benefits from a multi-modal transportation network that provides easy connections to metropolitan areas throughout the Eastern Seaboard. As such, the County offers an attractive location for employers seeking to establish, expand and relocate their businesses.

Although Cecil County remains largely rural, its population growth over time is attributed in part to the in-migration of residents from neighboring jurisdictions. These relocators generally have retained their jobs, which has influenced the County's jobs-to-housing ratio, one measure of the local economy. This ratio is important because it relates the number of jobs in an area to the number of housing units; the more jobs per housing unit, the more economic opportunities for local residents and the less commuting to other jurisdictions that is required by local workers.

Compared to neighboring counties, Cecil County generally lacks jobs, as measured in terms the ratio of jobs to housing.¹ As the County grows and becomes more populous, it will need more jobs to provide economic opportunities for residents and to increase the tax base needed to support public services.

The availability of developable land, growth pressures originating in larger, surrounding jurisdictions, the effects of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), and the influence of

¹ In 2005, Cecil County had a jobs-to-housing units ratio of 0.99, compared to 1.22 in Harford County, 1.25 in Kent County, 1.60 in Lancaster County, 1.69 in Newcastle County and 1.76 in Chester County (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and U.S. Census Bureau). A portion of Cecil County's lower ratio is attributable to a higher housing vacancy rate.

Interstate 95, US 40 and other elements of the Northeast's transportation infrastructure bring the potential for rapid residential growth in the years ahead.

The County's challenge is to both stimulate economic development and manage it proactively in a way that creates a balanced tax base while protecting the County's environment and rural character and providing adequate infrastructure for this growth. Part of creating this balanced tax base is developing an economic environment that attracts high-wage employers and businesses that contribute to indirect economic development opportunities such as secondary job creation and spinoff spending that supports existing businesses and creates new opportunities.

This Plan seeks to bolster the County's economic position by providing the land use framework to support increases in both the absolute number of jobs in the County and the ratio of jobs to households. Plan policies support the growth of local employers and encourage the development of high-tech, research and development industries, as well as manufacturing, in designated employment areas, mixed-use areas and in employment areas in the towns.

Agribusiness and natural resource-based industries are important economic engines for Cecil County (see Section 4.2.2). As the county grows and development pressures increase, protecting natural resource-based land from extensive development will be critical so that the County retains a sustainable natural resource-based economic sector.

This element also addresses fisheries in Cecil County.

4.2.1 *Employment*

Cecil County benefits from a diverse business community of more than 2,000 employers that provided more than 28,000 jobs as of 2008 (Table 4.1)². Eighty percent of these jobs are in the private sector, while one-fifth is in the Federal, State or local governments. More than 30 of these employers have 100 or more workers, led by W.L. Gore, the Perry Point VA Medical Center, Union Hospital of Cecil County, Alliant Techsystems (ATK), Cecil County Government, Wal-Mart and IKEA (Table 4.2).

² Note, the numbers in Tables 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4 reflect "covered employment"; jobs on which unemployment insurance taxes are paid. The employment numbers in Table 2.1 are higher because they include all jobs.

Table 4.1: Full Time Jobs in Cecil County and Maryland, 2008

| Sector | Cecil County | | State of Maryland | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| | Jobs | Share of Total | Jobs | Share of Total |
| Government | 5,407 | 19% | 470,409 | 19% |
| Federal ¹ | 1,250 | 4% | 127,150 | 5% |
| State | 323 | 1% | 99,683 | 4% |
| Local | 3,834 | 14% | 243,576 | 10% |
| Private Sector | 22,944 | 81% | 2,066,991 | 81% |
| Natural Resources and Mining | 623 | 2% | 6,528 | 0% |
| Construction | 1,354 | 5% | 178,076 | 7% |
| Manufacturing | 4,600 | 16% | 128,440 | 5% |
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 6,332 | 22% | 461,249 | 18% |
| Information | 246 | 1% | 49,820 | 2% |
| Financial Activities | 787 | 3% | 149,220 | 6% |
| Professional and Business Services | 1,534 | 5% | 398,952 | 16% |
| Education and Health Services | 3,273 | 12% | 367,671 | 14% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 3,241 | 11% | 236,048 | 9% |
| Other Services/Unclassified | 954 | 3% | 90,987 | 4% |
| Total Employment (Non-Farm) | 28,351 | 100% | 2,537,400 | 100% |

¹ Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation's official federal number is 3,567, but this number includes all Veterans Administration Healthcare System in Maryland (an official break out by County is not available). Table 4.1 uses 1,300 (1,125 from table 4.2 plus an estimated 125 for post office and other federal employment).

Sources: Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR), 2008 Cecil County, State of Maryland Fact Sheets

As a primarily rural county in one of the country's most urbanized states, Cecil County has an economic profile that differs from the State of Maryland. The County continues to have a significant manufacturing sector (16 percent of all jobs in Cecil County, versus 5 percent of all jobs statewide) that offers competitive pay and benefits. In fact, the manufacturing sector represents the second highest payroll category of all industry sectors in Cecil County (Table 4.3).

Given its location along major transportation corridors, the County also has a large warehouse and distribution sector (included in the "Trade, Transportation and Utilities" category on Table 4.1), representing more than one in five jobs countywide in 2008. Retail jobs are counted in this category, which generally has relatively low-paying jobs (the third lowest among the sectors listed in Table 4.3).

Cecil County lags behind the state in terms of jobs in the Professional and Business Services. Only five percent of jobs in the County are within this category, compared to 16 percent statewide. The County also has a small financial sector, with 787 jobs, or three percent of all jobs in the County. Six percent of all jobs statewide are in this sector.

Approximately one in five jobs in Cecil County are government jobs, the same proportion than exists statewide. Four percent (1,250 jobs) are for the Federal government, which is comparable to the percentage of Federal jobs for the state as a whole (five percent). More than 1,100 of these jobs are at the Perry Point VA Medical Center in Perryville.

Table 4.2: Major Employers, 2009

| Company | Workers | Product / Service | Industry |
|--|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| W. L. Gore & Associates | 2,667 | Medical products / R&D | Manufacturing |
| Perry Point VA Medical Center ¹ | 1,125 | Medical services | Health care |
| Union Hospital of Cecil County | 864 | Medical services | Health care |
| ATK | 795 | Propellants, rocket motors | Manufacturing |
| Cecil County Government | 610 ² | Government | Government |
| Terumo Medical | 565 | Medical products/ R&D | Manufacturing |
| Wal-Mart | 500 | Consumer goods | Retail trade |
| IKEA | 370 | Home furnishings distribution | Wholesale trade |
| Cecil College | 300 | Higher education | Educational services |
| Performance Food Group | 265 | Food products distribution | Wholesale trade |
| Burriss Logistics | 250 | Refrigerated trucking | Transportation and warehousing |
| Moon Nurseries | 240 | Nursery products | Agriculture |
| Terumo Cardiovascular Systems | 220 | Medical products / R&D | Manufacturing |
| Chesapeake Publishing | 200 | Newspaper publishing & printing | Information |
| Upper Bay Counseling and Support | 200 | Medical services | Health care |
| Calvert Manor Healthcare Center | 186 | Nursing care | Health care |
| C&S Wholesale Grocers | 180 | Food products distribution | Wholesale trade |
| Petro Fuel Operation | 175 | Truck fueling station | Retail trade |
| General Electric / Holman | 163 | Appliance distribution | Wholesale trade |
| Acme Markets | 160 | Groceries | Retail trade |
| Estes Express Lines | 150 | Truck terminal | Transportation and warehousing |
| Laurelwood Care Center | 150 | Medical services | Health care |

1: Employee counts for federal and military facilities exclude contractors

2: Full time equivalent

Source: Cecil County Office of Economic Development

Table 4.3: Employment and Payrolls, Cecil County, 2008

| Industry | Average Number of Reporting Units | Annual Average Employment | Average Weekly Wage Per Worker |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Total Employment | 2,039 | 28,351 | \$842 |
| Government | 76 | 5,407 | \$1,160 |
| Federal Government ¹ | 27 | 1,250 | \$1,554 |
| State Government | 6 | 323 | \$748 |
| Local Government | 43 | 3,834 | \$828 |
| Private Sector | 1,963 | 22,944 | \$735 |
| <i>Goods Producing</i> | 398 | 6,577 | \$1,121 |
| Natural Resources and Mining | 40 | 623 | \$628 |
| Construction | 295 | 1,354 | \$689 |
| Manufacturing | 63 | 4,600 | \$1,314 |
| <i>Service Providing</i> | 1,565 | 16,367 | \$581 |
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 469 | 6,332 | \$576 |
| Information | 18 | 246 | \$804 |
| Financial Activities | 188 | 787 | \$700 |
| Professional and Business Services | 300 | 1,534 | \$819 |
| Education and Health Services | 184 | 3,273 | \$757 |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 231 | 3,241 | \$300 |
| Other Services | 175 | 954 | \$418 |

¹Per Table 4.1 Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation's official federal number is 3,567, but this number includes all Veterans Administration Healthcare System in Maryland (an official break out by County is not available). Table 4.3 uses 1,300 (1,125 from table 4.2 plus an estimated 125 for post office and other federal employment).

Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR)

Cecil County experienced 14 percent job growth between 2002 and 2008 (Table 4.4). The largest increases in jobs occurred in the manufacturing, education and health services, trade transportation and utilities, and local government sectors. The fastest growing sectors in terms of rate of growth were education and health services, manufacturing, professional and business services and local government.

4.2.2 Key Industry Sectors

This section describes some of the major components of the County's economy.

Warehousing and Distribution

The largest employment sector in Cecil County is trade, transportation and utilities, which includes warehousing and distribution, as well as commercial/retail employers. As of 2008, this sector had 6,300 full-time jobs or more than one-in-five of the full-time jobs in the County. This figure represents a 13 percent increase over 2002.

Table 4.4: Employment Trends, Cecil County, 2002-08

| Industry | 2002 | | 2008 | | Change 2002-08 | | Job Growth (%) |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| | Units | Jobs | Units | Jobs | Units | Jobs | |
| Total Employment | 1,696 | 26,873 | 2,039 | 30,668 | 343 | 3,795 | 14% |
| Government | 48 | 6,978 | 76 | 7,724 | 28 | 746 | 11% |
| Federal Government ¹ | 28 | 1,250 | 27 | 1,250 | -1 | 27 | 1% |
| State Government | 7 | 333 | 6 | 323 | -1 | -10 | -3% |
| Local Government | 13 | 3,105 | 43 | 3,834 | 30 | 729 | 23% |
| Private Sector | 1,648 | 19,895 | 1,963 | 22,944 | 315 | 3,049 | 15% |
| <i>Goods Producing</i> | 363 | 5,791 | 398 | 6,577 | 35 | 786 | 14% |
| Natural Resources and Mining | 32 | 525 | 40 | 623 | 8 | 98 | 19% |
| Construction | 266 | 1,583 | 295 | 1,354 | 29 | -229 | -14% |
| Manufacturing | 65 | 3,683 | 63 | 4,600 | -2 | 917 | 25% |
| <i>Service Providing</i> | 1,282 | 14,098 | 1,565 | 16,367 | 283 | 2,269 | 16% |
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 438 | 5,582 | 469 | 6,332 | 31 | 750 | 13% |
| Information | 15 | 258 | 18 | 246 | 3 | -12 | -5% |
| Financial Activities | 115 | 724 | 188 | 787 | 73 | 63 | 9% |
| Professional and Business Services | 217 | 1,233 | 300 | 1,534 | 83 | 301 | 24% |
| Education and Health Services | 135 | 2,450 | 184 | 3,273 | 49 | 823 | 34% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 206 | 2,991 | 231 | 3,241 | 25 | 250 | 8% |
| Other Services | 156 | 860 | 175 | 954 | 19 | 94 | 11% |
| Unclassified | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | -3 | -6 | -100% |

¹ See footnote to tables 4.1 and 4.3 for adjustments to federal employment.

Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR)

Cecil County has a significant distribution industry that benefits from the County's location on Interstate 95, US 40 and two rail corridors, and its proximity to major metropolitan centers. This industry sector also has relatively minor water and wastewater infrastructure needs, which has made it a viable industrial use in areas of the County that have had limited public infrastructure.

The largest existing facility is the 1.7 million square foot IKEA distribution center in Perryville, which employs 370 people. The General Electric/Holman Distribution center at Principio Business Park is the second largest facility in terms of size, with 1.1 million square feet. The second and third largest distribution facilities in terms of employees are Performance Food Group (265 jobs) on MD 279 north of Elkton and Burriss Logistics (250 jobs) at Broadlands Business Park in Elkton.

In 2007, the Cecil County Economic Development Commission created a workgroup to develop a growth study compiling and analyzing data for use in policy and decision-making. The resulting *Growth Study* discussed the future of the distribution industry in light of the

County's efforts to diversify the local economy.³ One of the key questions the study identified was whether the County should continue to actively pursue large distribution centers and warehouses. Many factors underlie this concern. Wages in this sector are generally lower than in the manufacturing and professional and business service sectors; warehousing supports fewer jobs per acre than these sectors; distribution facilities generate significant truck traffic; and developing more distribution facilities will reduce the amount of employment land available for other, higher wage purposes.

Since 2007, in light of this study, the County has focused economic development efforts on attracting jobs in sectors with higher wage structures that provide more secondary benefits and spinoff spending. The County does not offer tax incentives to companies seeking locations for warehouse and distribution centers but will otherwise support their development.

As the County grows, it will need commercial and retail establishments to serve the local population. Therefore, the retail segment of this sector likely will grow as the County does.



North East Commerce Center provides over 345,000 SF of industrial space.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing has been an important element of Cecil County's economy for many years. Although the number of manufacturers is relatively small (63 employment units in 2008), together they generate 4,600 jobs, making manufacturing the County's second largest employment sector. Manufacturing also represented the fastest growing employment sector in the County between 2002 and 2008, in terms of the number of jobs, with 917 new jobs generated, a 25 percent increase from six years earlier (Table 4.4).

Cecil County is home to several large and innovative manufacturers that have continued to perform well in a challenging economy. The largest among these is W.L. Gore, with 2,600 employees across 13 locations in Cecil County, as part of its "eastern cluster" in the Delaware Valley. These facilities produce electronic interconnects, fabric laminates, industrial sealants, filtration media and membrane technologies. W. L. Gore also has a growing research and development operation at its Cherry Hill facility.

Alliant Techsystems Inc. (known as ATK) operates its Tactical Propulsion and Controls unit in Elkton with 795 employees, up from 350 a few years ago. ATK is one of the largest aerospace and defense contractors in the United States. Terumo Medical has two plants in Elkton employing 565 people who make cardiovascular equipment. The *Growth Study* noted

³ The 2007 Growth Study was completed after the 2004 Cecil County Strategic Plan and shares much of its data.

that average weekly wages in manufacturing recorded the largest increase in Cecil County in the five years prior to 2007 due to increased demand for specialized labor.

Given the importance that manufacturing plays in the local economy, the County will need to continue its efforts to support workforce development, so that local residents have the skills needed to work in the evolving manufacturing sector (see Section 4.2.4).

Education and Health Services

The fastest growing employment sector in Cecil County since 2002 has been education and health services. This reflects growth at Union Hospital of Cecil County, the Perry Point VA Center, as well as many smaller medical services and nursing care providers. As the local population ages, this sector is likely to continue to grow.

In terms of education, Cecil College is the fastest growing community college in Maryland, with enrollment growing more than 20 percent between 2005 and 2009, to 3,175 credit students. To serve this growing enrollment, Cecil College employs 300 people. The college plans to continue to expand enrollment at its campus in North East, a satellite facility in Elkton and a planned facility at Bainbridge in Port Deposit.

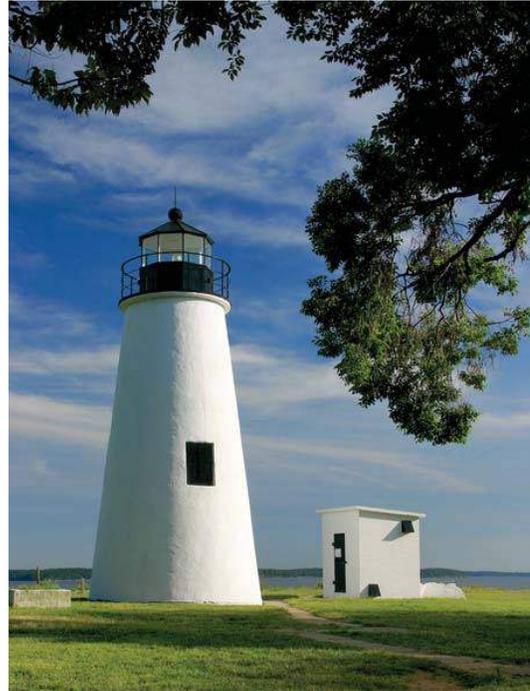
Tourism

Cecil County's rural character, quaint small towns, 220 miles of shoreline, water-oriented sporting activities, equine industry, and accessibility to the Chesapeake Bay attract visitors from throughout the region. The County's proximity to Washington D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York City provide opportunities to market the County's historic, cultural and natural resources to large populations within a short drive.

Cecil County's colonial history dates to the 17th Century when Captain John Smith established a settlement named Head of Elk near the confluence of Big Elk and Little Elk creeks, the area's oldest transportation corridors. Later, the Town, now named Elkton, became known as the "Marriage Capital of Maryland," drawing couples wanting to marry quickly to Cecil County.

Today the County has approximately 1,500 historic sites and structures, 50 of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Significant historic resources include Elk Landing, the Mount Harmon Plantation, Principio Iron Works, Rodgers Tavern and the Turkey Point Lighthouse. The incorporated towns also feature many historic resources, including Historic South Chesapeake City (a village located along the southern bank of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal) and the entire Town of Port Deposit, both of which are listed on the National Register, and the Big Elk Creek Covered Bridge.

Cecil County also contains many recreational and natural areas that draw visitors. Elk Neck State Park includes 2,200 acres of forests, cabins and campsites, as well as trails, a beach and the Turkey Point Lighthouse. It is also a popular destination for birdwatchers due to hawk migration patterns. The Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area includes 5,600 acres of natural areas and 40 miles of trails. Together, these two state parks are the most popular



Elk Neck State Park features the Turkey Point Lighthouse, a National Register Site.

tourist destinations in Cecil County, accounting for 800,000 visitors in 2008, half of whom came from outside the County, according to the Cecil County Office of Tourism.

Other important resources that attract tourism include the Elk Neck Trail, Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, and the East Coast Greenway. In 2001, Cecil County adopted the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Management Plan and it is appended by reference onto this 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The Heritage Plan documents the Susquehanna's cultural, natural and recreational resources and is designed to increase and enhance visitation in the region. Cecil County has several state-designated scenic byways that attract visitors, including MD routes 213, 222, 273 and US 1. MD 213 south of Chesapeake City is in the National Scenic Byways Program.

Leisure and hospitality, a category that includes tourism-related industries, accounted for 11 percent of the County's full-time jobs in 2008, although wages in this sector tend to be low (see Table 4.3). Expanding the base of tourism-related industries can help to diversify the local economy and provide economic opportunities for residents and businesses.

In 2008, voters approved gambling at five sites across Maryland, including one in Perryville. The proposed 138,000-square foot gaming parlor would be on 36 acres west of Perryville Road (MD 222) north of Interstate 95 in Perryville. The parlor, which is proposed to include between 500 and 1,500 slot machines, is scheduled to open in October 2010. The property is part of a larger 140-acre site proposed as an entertainment destination featuring shops, restaurants, entertainment venues, a theater, conference center and hotels. An economic and fiscal impact analysis completed for the Office of Economic Development in January 2009 estimated that the project, once completed in three proposed phases, would generate a total economic impact of \$123 million locally and support 967 new jobs representing potential wages of \$31.6 million.

Agriculture

Agriculture remains an important component of Cecil County's economy, and the rural landscape defines the County's character. As of 2007, about 38 percent of the County's land area was in farms. The exact number of acres (85,206 in 2007) has varied in recent agricultural censuses but has been in the range of 85,000 acres, or slightly less than 40 percent of the County's land area, since at least 1992.

Table 4.5 summarizes key data about Cecil County's agricultural industry. These data show



Agriculture is an important component of the County's economy and heritage. *Photo Courtesy of Cecil Soil Magazine.*

several key trends:

- The number of farms in Cecil County has increased since 2002, but the average farm size has decreased. Although this increase may be surprising given the amount of growth in the County, it is not inconsistent with other Maryland counties, eight of which also saw increases between 2002 and 2007.
- The number of farm operators identifying agriculture as their primary occupation has increased with the number of farms, though the number is small (296).
- The market value per farm of agricultural products has increased steadily since 1997.
- The number of small farms (defined as smaller than 50 acres) has increased over time, while the number of large farms (180 acres or larger) has remained the same since 1997.
- The amount of acreage dedicated to corn and beans has increased as prices for these commodities have risen.
- The amount of acreage planted in wheat, forage and other cropland has decreased over time.

In 2007, prior to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, an *Agriculture Study* was prepared for the Office of Economic Development. The study included an extensive review of data, as well as interviews with stakeholders in the agricultural industry. Among the study's key findings were:

- Cecil County has not lost farms or farmland as rapidly as the State of Maryland as a whole
- Cecil County farmers report higher net cash farm income on average than their counterparts in the rest of the state. However, farms reporting net losses in Cecil County outnumbered net gainers by a ratio of approximately 3 to 2
- Farm incomes were neither high nor stable enough to promote high survival rates
- The County's horse breeding industry is in decline
- The next generation is not interested or prepared to guarantee agriculture's future in Cecil County
- Agri-tourism and horticulture represent promising opportunities

Virtually all interviewees in the study agreed that the greatest threat to the future of Cecil County agriculture is generational. According to the farmers interviewed, younger family members were generally not interested in farming, with many lured to nearby metropolitan areas in search of more lucrative opportunities.

Several interviewees suggested that the widespread lack of interest in farming was the result of a lack of awareness among young people about farm-related opportunities. These interviewees believe that agriculture-related courses should be available at all county high schools and that the county would benefit from a new trade school (see Chapter 8, Community Facilities).

Mining

Mining has played an important role in the economic and employment history of Cecil County. The County's primary mineral resources are aggregates, including sand, gravel, stone, as well as clay. On average, approximately 3 to 3.5 million tons of sand, gravel, and stone are produced and sold annually by the County's three largest producers. In 2008, this sector provided 623 jobs in Cecil County, or two percent of all full-time jobs (see Chapter 10, Mineral Resources).

Table 4.5: Agricultural Economic Data

| | 1997 | | 2002 | | 2007 | | Change 2002 to 2007 | |
|--|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Land in County (acres) | 222,655 | | 222,655 | | 222,655 | | | |
| Number of farms | 510 | | 468 | | 583 | | 115 | 25% |
| Land in farms (acres) | 86,419 | 39% | 77,089 | 35% | 85,026 | 38% | 7,937 | 10% |
| Land in farms by land use (acres) | | | | | | | | |
| Cropland | 62,168 | 81% | 56,603 | 73% | 60,147 | 78% | 3,544 | 6% |
| Woodland | 13,213 | 17% | 9,520 | 12% | 11,960 | 16% | 2,440 | 26% |
| Pasture | 6,517 | 8% | 7,446 | 10% | 8,040 | 10% | 594 | 8% |
| Other (house lots, roads) | 4,521 | 6% | 3,520 | 5% | 4,879 | 6% | 1,359 | 39% |
| Number of Farms by Size | | | | | | | | |
| 1-9 acres | 44 | 9% | 49 | 10% | 68 | 15% | 19 | 39% |
| 10-49 acres | 194 | 38% | 192 | 41% | 239 | 51% | 47 | 24% |
| 50-179 acres | 143 | 28% | 113 | 24% | 162 | 35% | 49 | 43% |
| 180-499 acres | 88 | 17% | 77 | 16% | 72 | 15% | -5 | -6% |
| 500-999 acres | 28 | 5% | 22 | 5% | 25 | 5% | 3 | 14% |
| 1000+ acres | 13 | 3% | 15 | 3% | 17 | 4% | 2 | 13% |
| Market Value of Products Sold \$ millions | | | | | | | | |
| Crops (including nursery & greenhouse) | \$22.70 | 39% | \$30.20 | 44% | 44.1 | 46% | \$13.90 | 46% |
| Livestock | \$35.90 | 61% | \$38.40 | 56% | \$51.70 | 54% | \$13.30 | 35% |
| Total | \$58.70 | | \$68.60 | | \$95.80 | | \$27.20 | 40% |
| Market Value of Land and Buildings \$ millions | \$367.40 | | \$457.10 | | \$653.90 | | \$196.80 | 43% |
| Farms by value of sales | | | | | | | | |
| \$24,999 or less | 381 | 75% | 342 | 73% | 403 | 69% | 61 | 18% |
| \$25,000 and above | 129 | 25% | 126 | 27% | 180 | 31% | 54 | 43% |
| Top crops (acres) | | | | | | | | |
| Corn for grain | 19,570 | 31% | 18,760 | 33% | 21,970 | 39% | 3,210 | 17% |
| Soybeans | 14,203 | 23% | 13,849 | 24% | 18,006 | 32% | 4,157 | 30% |
| Forage (hay, grass) | 8,523 | 14% | 8,713 | 15% | 8,365 | 15% | -348 | -4% |
| Wheat | 6,639 | 11% | 6,724 | 12% | 6,589 | 12% | -135 | -2% |
| Other | 13,233 | 21% | 8,557 | 15% | 5,217 | 9% | -3,340 | -39% |
| Principal Farm Operator Characteristics | | | | | | | | |
| Farming as primary occupation | 248 | 53% | 255 | 54% | 296 | 51% | 41 | 16% |
| Other as primary occupation | 262 | 56% | 213 | 46% | 287 | 49% | 74 | 35% |
| Average age | 56 | | 57.3 | | 56.6 | | | |
| Hired Farm Labor (full and part-time) | 629 | | 1,423 | | 1,110 | | -313 | -22% |

Note: Total County acreage (222,655) does not match other tables in this Plan because USDA uses a different map base.

Sources: USDA, 2007, 2002 and 1997 Censuses of Agriculture

4.2.3 County Economic Policy

Cecil County Office of Economic Development

The Cecil County Office of Economic Development is responsible for coordinating and implementing the County's economic development strategy to increase jobs and capital investment. The Office of Economic Development partners with the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED), Cecil College, the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor (CSSC), the Cecil County Chamber of Commerce, the Susquehanna Workforce Network, the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) and federal agencies to provide a variety of incentives and technical assistance to employers.

The Cecil County office of the Maryland Small Business Development Center Network (MSBDC) was established through a cooperative effort between the Maryland Small Business Development Center and Cecil College. The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) provides counseling, training and technical assistance in all aspects of small business management to emerging and small businesses. Its goal is to strengthen small and medium sized businesses, and contribute to the growth of the local economy.

Cecil County Growth Study

In 2007, the Office of Economic Development commissioned the *Cecil County Growth Study (Strategic Plan)*, a detailed statistical analysis of the issues facing the County, intended to provide policymakers and stakeholders with information needed to adopt a coherent set of policies and principles to guide economic growth and development. Although the plan does not list specific goals, it states its "overarching purpose" is to help shape, channel and marshal growth to create better quality of life outcomes, given the growth forecast for the County by 2030.

The Strategic Plan plan offers six recommendations intended to promote economic growth and prosperity while securing the County's rural heritage and fiscal viability. These recommendations include:

1. Developing an aggressive County-led infrastructure strategy for the growth corridor.
2. Enabling the County to enact impact fees and excise taxes, and creating tax incremental financing (TIF) districts to spur redevelopment in areas characterized by low quality, unattractive development.
3. Moving the I-95 tollbooths to the Delaware border to support the potential for more intense and higher quality development in the county's growth corridor, particularly in and around Perryville and Port Deposit; and continuing support for commuter rail extensions linking Perryville and Elkton to Newark and Wilmington, Delaware.
4. Committing the County to concepts of clustering development and creating shared facilities that would permit more land to be set aside as open space and that would use land more efficiently.
5. Focusing the County's economic development efforts on recruiting and retaining high-wage service sector and research and development (R&D) jobs, including R&D efforts that take place within manufacturing contexts, spurring further economic development.
6. Designating a County Growth Coordinator to coordinate economic development activities and maximize the proportion of growth that takes place within designated growth areas.

The Offices of Planning and Zoning and Economic Development have taken on the role of growth coordinator. The other recommendations outlined in this report are discussed in this Comprehensive Plan.

4.2.4 Existing Economic Activity

Cecil County has nine business and technology parks, totaling more than 2,600 acres (Map 4.1). As of September 2009, approximately 1,200 acres were available for development (Table 4.6). This includes business parks in towns, such as a portion of Bainbridge in the Town of Port Deposit, the Upper Chesapeake Corporate Center and Triumph Industrial Park in the Town of Elkton, the North East Commerce Center in the Town of North East, and Perryville Industrial Park in the Town of Perryville. The business parks not in towns account for approximately 1,600 total acres, and 784 available acres as of 2009.

Each of these business parks are state-designated Enterprise Zones. Businesses that locate or create jobs in Enterprise Zones are eligible for property tax or state income tax credits.

Each of the industrial parks has existing buildings, ranging in size from 5,000 to 600,000 square feet, available for occupancy. A 600,000 square foot crossdock distribution facility, expandable to 1.2 million square feet, is available in the Principio Business Park. Construction has been completed on a 45,000 square foot flex/office building at the Cecil Technology Campus at Principio. The campus has been permitted for five buildings totaling 225,000 square feet.

Bainbridge represents the redevelopment of the former Bainbridge Navy Base, west of MD 222 and south of MD 276 in Port Deposit. The site includes 1,200 acres, of which approximately 350 acres have been set aside for employment uses and a campus for Cecil College. The remaining land will be developed as residential uses, except for a parcel containing the former Tome's School buildings, which are being refurbished as a retirement community.

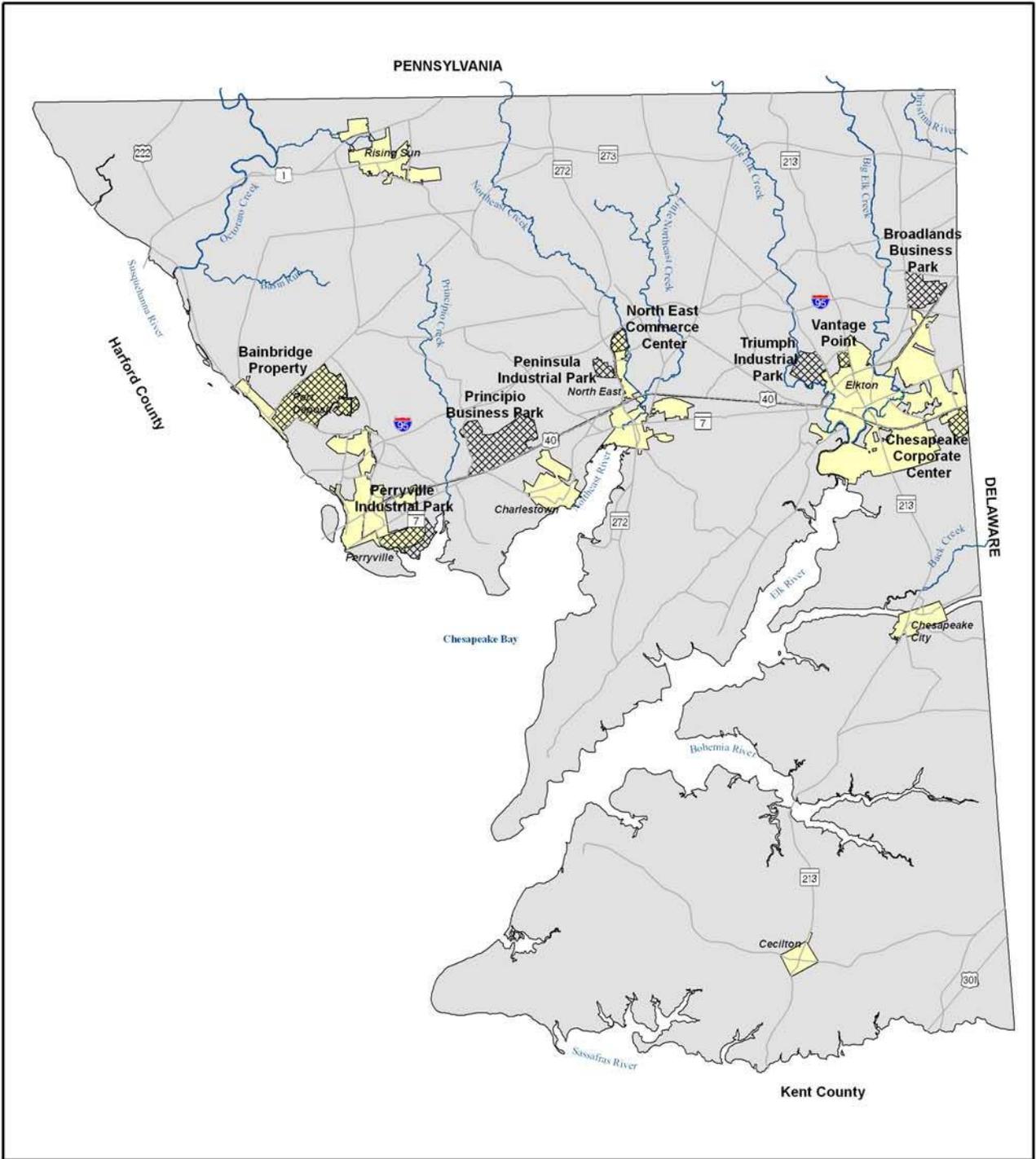
Major Economic Development Projects

Between 2005 and 2009, the County attracted nearly \$200 million in new and expanded industrial investment, generating almost 4.4 million square feet of building space and approximately 1,850 jobs (Table 4.7). Most of this development was new construction. Employment areas that attracted multiple projects include the Triumph Industrial Park, North East Commerce Center, North East Business Center, Principio Business Park, the Upper Chesapeake Corporate Center and the Town of Elkton.

Commercial Areas

Commercial (retail) activity in Cecil County is concentrated in the towns of Elkton, North East and Perryville, as well as along the US 40 corridor within unincorporated areas of the County. Cecilton, Rising Sun, Charlestown, Port Deposit and Chesapeake City also have limited commercial areas primarily serving the local population. A number of villages (see Chapter 3, Land Use) also have some retail activity, reflecting the County's historical settlement and commercial patterns. One example of this village-type development is Conowingo/Kilbys Corner, at the corner of Rock Springs Road and US 1 in the northwestern part of the County.

Map 4.1: Business Parks



Cecil County Business Parks
2010 Cecil County Comprehensive Plan

- Legend
- Municipalities
 - Business Park
 - Major Roads
 - Major Streams

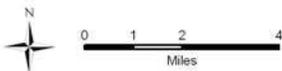


Table 4.6: Business Parks, 2009

| Business/Technology Parks | Location | Acres | | Major Occupants | Infrastructure |
|---|---|--------------|--------------|---|---|
| | | Total | Available | | |
| Broadlands Business/Gore Industrial Park | Cecil County (I-95 and MD 279) | 313 | 90 | Burris Logistics, Michelin | Water, sewer, natural gas, broadband |
| North East Commerce Center | North East | 93 | 15 | New England Motor Freight, Herr's Foods | Water, sewer |
| Peninsula Industrial Park | Cecil County (I-95 and MD 272) | 100 | 4 | Composites USA, Tim Plastics, Buildings First Source | Water, sewer, broadband |
| Triumph Industrial Park | Cecil County (MD 279 and MD 545) | 375 | 90 | Colonial Metals, Liqui-Box, Veltec, Fluoron | Water, sewer, natural gas |
| Upper Chesapeake Corporate Center | Elkton | 149 | 35 | W.L. Gore, Estes Trucking, Delmar Surgical, Cecil County Government | Water, sewer, natural gas, broadband |
| Perryville Industrial Park | Perryville | 373 | 0 | IKEA | Water, sewer, natural gas |
| Principio Business Park | Cecil County (US 40 and Belvidere Road) | 800 | 600 | General Electric/Holman, Perryville Cold Storage, General Resonance | Water, sewer, broadband intended but not available as of 2009 |
| Bainbridge ⁴ | Port Deposit | 350 | 350 | None (Cecil County Public Library and Cecil College, under development) | Water, sewer, natural gas |
| Vantage Point | Elkton | 59 | 59 | None | Utilities nearby but not on site |
| Total Business/Technology Parks | | 2,612 | 1,243 | | |
| Total within Cecil County (outside towns) | | 1,588 | 784 | | |
| Percentage within Cecil County (outside towns) | | 61% | 63% | | |

Source: Cecil County Economic Development

⁴ The Bainbridge site includes 1,239 acres, 350 of which have been designated for employment uses.

Table 4.7: Major Industrial Construction and Expansion, 2005-09

| Type of Development | Square feet | Jobs | Investment (\$millions) |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Expansions | 1,414,400 | 529 | \$43.95 |
| New Construction | 2,965,000 | 1,335 | \$150.74 |
| Total | 4,379,400 | 1,864 | \$194.69 |

Source: Cecil County Office of Economic Development

4.3 Discussion of Issues

4.3.1 Employment Areas

One of the primary goals of the Comprehensive Plan is to make sure the County has sufficient land for employment, commercial and business uses, so as the County grows the employment base can increase to provide jobs for residents, reduce the need for residents to commute outside the County to work, and to increase the tax base that supports public services.

The Comprehensive Plan projects that Cecil County will gain 19,500 jobs between 2010 and 2030, a 47 percent increase. Identifying employment areas sufficient and appropriate for this growth was a central task of the planning process. As noted in Chapter 3, Land Use, one of the key differences between this plan and the 1990 Comprehensive Plan is the addition of employment areas as a land use category. Although thousands of acres are zoned for business, industrial and commercial uses, this is the first time the County has had a specific Employment designation in the Comprehensive Plan. This action reflects Cecil County's interest in reserving land for economic development purposes to stimulate economic development, especially in employment sectors with higher-paying jobs, in particular, office-based employment.

In addition to existing business and technology parks (Section 4.2.4), new areas along rail lines adjacent to existing industrial uses and along major roads are designated as Employment areas. The Future Land Use map designates approximately 5,700 acres for Employment, plus 1,450 acres for Mixed Use, a significant portion of which is intended for employment uses (Table 3.6).

Employment areas are intended to provide for major industrial, manufacturing, office, and business uses and economic development opportunities in business parks and campuses near major roads. By adding this land use category, the County intends to promote economic development in areas served by infrastructure and best located to generate high-wage employment while protecting these areas for future employment. Many of these locations are along the US 40 corridor and CSX rail line.

Mixed Use areas offer opportunities to integrate residential, employment, and commercial uses. These areas have been designated to support US 40's role as the County's primary business corridor and provide a land use framework that will enable the County and State to coordinate land use with future transportation facilities, including rail and bus transit. (More information on the development character of the US 40 corridor is included in Chapter 3, Land Use.)

Commercial (retail) areas do not have their own land use category but could be located in any land use district, at intensities consistent with the land use district's density designation. Limited commercial uses also are permitted in Villages, consistent with existing development and their historic development pattern.

In 2010, Cecil County had 5,700 acres zoned for light or heavy manufacturing. This figure includes scattered industrial sites throughout the County. An additional 1,800 acres were

zoned for commercial use (including the Business General, Business Intensive and Business Local categories). The incorporated towns also include scattered employment sites not located in business parks. The industrial and employment sites can be located in any land use category at an intensity appropriate for the land use district.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies approximately 2,900 acres for new employment uses (Table 4.8). This includes the land available in business and technology parks (Table 4.6), as well as Employment areas that are not currently zoned for employment. In addition, it is the Plan’s goal to develop 70 percent of the Mixed Use Employment and 30 percent of the Mixed Use Residential area as employment uses. This would yield another 688 acres (557+131) for employment in the Mixed Use areas.

Table 4.8: Land Available for Employment Uses, 2009

| Land Available for Employment Uses | Acres |
|--|--------------|
| Business and Technology Parks | 1,243 |
| Employment areas not in Business Parks | 955 |
| Mixed Use Employment area | 557 |
| Mixed Use Residential area | 131 |
| Total | 2,886 |

Source: ERM

At a low density of 15 employees per acre, typical of one-story industrial development, the land identified in Table 4.8 would support more than 43,000 jobs, more than twice the projected job growth. Office-based employment can average 150 employees per acre in multi-story buildings, which would use land more efficiently and generate a higher yield of jobs. The more successful the County is at encouraging the development of office jobs, as envisioned in this Comprehensive Plan, the better able it will be to concentrate employment density and job growth and have land available for economic development projects and utilize public transit.

Table 4.8 does not include scattered industrial sites in the County or employment areas in Towns not located in business parks. Nor does it include the potential of redevelopment of existing employment areas. Therefore, the potential yield of employment lands designated in the Plan is higher than 43,000 jobs.

4.3.2 Infrastructure: Sewer, Water, Roads and Broadband

The 2007 *Cecil County Growth Study (Strategic Plan)* highlights the need for the County to take the lead in developing infrastructure in growth areas. In the past, the County has relied on the municipalities to supply infrastructure – primarily sewer and water service – to these areas. However, complexities between the County and some of the towns in the Growth Area have complicated the implementation of this effort, primarily in regard to residential development. The County will need to continue to lead this effort to ensure that the provision of infrastructure is consistent with its economic development goals.

The provision of public infrastructure, including roads in addition to water and sewer, is critical to attract and retain employment. All of the county’s



North East Commerce Center offices of Delmarva Power, which provides power for much of Cecil County.

business and industrial parks (Section 4.2.3) have water and sewer service. A few new employment areas designated in this plan lack water and sewer, including the area west of MD 316 and across from Broadlands Business Park, an area near Childs along the CSX line north of I-95 and west of MD 213, an area west of MD 213 north of Cherry Hill Middle School, and an area northeast of the Town of Rising Sun.

As these employment areas develop, road infrastructure will need to be expanded and upgraded. In particular, the western portion of the Elkton Loop Road described in Chapter 5, the Transportation Element, linking MD 781 (Delancy Road) to MD 279, through Elkton West to Marley Road and to US 40 will provide access to employment areas and the Mixed Use Residential area envisioned north of US 40. The intersections of this loop road with major north-south roads such as Appleton Road (MD 316), Singerly Road (MD 213) and Blue Ball Road (MD 545) could become mixed-use “nodes.”

Intersection upgrades are needed at the US 40 intersections with MD 213 in Elkton and MD 222 in Perryville. A north-south connection between US 40 and MD 7 would serve the Mixed Use Employment area.

Another important infrastructure issue related to economic development is the location of the tollbooths on Interstate 95. Just north of the Susquehanna River along the northbound lanes, the tollbooths serve as an economic barrier between areas to the south, including the Baltimore metropolitan area, and provide an incentive for through-traffic to divert to local roads to avoid or pay lesser tolls.

The *Growth Study* attributed the relative lack of economic activity in the western part of the County, especially in Perryville and Port Deposit, to the tollbooth location. Relocating the toll to a point closer to the state line would remove this barrier between Cecil County and the rest of Maryland. Such an action also would support the County’s efforts to maximize the economic benefits of BRAC, as it would remove an obstacle between Cecil County and the Aberdeen Proving Ground. The relocation of the tollbooths also would support the effort to establish the Perryville area as a regional entertainment destination.

In 2004, the *Maryland Eastern Shore Broadband Strategic Plan*, conducted in conjunction with DBED, Maryland’s Technology Development Corporation, the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore and the Mid-Shore Regional Council, concluded that the Eastern Shore suffers limited access to competitively priced high-speed communication technologies that are widely available in urban areas.⁵ As of 2010, not all of the County’s existing and proposed employment areas have broadband service, and rural areas also lack access to high-speed Internet service. Working in partnership with service providers can help to fill this gap.

Financial Tools

The infrastructure improvements described in the previous section will require resources. The *Growth Study* emphasizes the need for the County to take the lead in assuring the provision of infrastructure to ensure that growth is directed to areas the County has designated for it. County government should look at tools to finance this infrastructure, including impact fees and excise taxes, both of which were recommended in the past.

The need to diversify the financing tools the County has available, using special taxing district and Tax Increment Financing districts (TIFs), for example, will become more acute as growth occurs.⁶ Without these tools, the County will be dependent upon property taxes, bonds, and

⁵ *The Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, the Mid-Shore Regional Council and the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) are working together to expand the Eastern Shore’s communications infrastructure capacity and competitiveness. The Maryland Eastern Shore Broadband Strategic Plan seeks to resolve the lack of quality access on the Shore by determining best practices to use the region’s assets, analyzing and defining critical gaps in infrastructure, and providing specific solutions for all counties on the Eastern Shore.*

⁶ Cecil County has authorized TIFs on three occasions, although their use was not executed.

state and federal aid (when available) to pay for necessary infrastructure improvements. Other financial tools and approaches are discussed in detail in Chapter 11, Implementation.

4.3.3 *Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)*

The Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program is expected to have significant impacts in Cecil County. BRAC is a long-term effort by the Federal government to consolidate facilities for the Armed Forces and make these facilities more efficient. In 2005, the Department of Defense announced the most recent round of realignments and closures, actions that would relocate functions from Fort Monmouth in New Jersey to the Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) in Harford County.

BRAC is expected to bring 8,200 jobs to APG and generate almost 28,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs within 40 miles of the base. In 2007, the County's *BRAC Action Plan* estimated that five percent of these jobs were likely to locate in Cecil County. The growth in jobs will spur population growth as well. As discussed in the BRAC Action Plan, Cecil County would receive about 12 percent of the projected population growth associated with BRAC at APG, or more than 5,000 residents.

The BRAC Advisory Panel, a group of Cecil County officials and residents, developed the recommendations in the BRAC Action Plan and expressed concern that the County does not have sufficient land zoned for office, industrial and commercial uses that is "fully approved and permitted and available for immediate use," in response to the demands of BRAC. The lack of commercial office space was seen particularly acute, given the lack of available office space in the County.

This Comprehensive Plan responds to the needs generated by BRAC by designating employment areas in strategic locations along major transportation routes. The Plan also designates two large mixed-use areas along US 40. The Mixed Use Employment area is envisioned as an attractive location for master planned office parks interspersed with retail and residential uses. This area would be a primary location for multi-story office uses and provide a prime "address" for companies locating in Cecil County.

4.3.4 *Affordable Housing*

The availability of adequate affordable and workforce housing can encourage businesses to expand and locate in Cecil County. The County is more affordable compared to adjacent counties like Harford and New Castle, and it would be well positioned to build upon this advantage by increasing infrastructure availability in the Growth Corridor.

The *BRAC Action Plan* specifically noted that workforce housing is a critical component of the County's business development and growth strategy. The jobs generated by BRAC will help to diversify the local economy and bring higher-wage jobs to the County. However, not all of the jobs locating in Cecil County will be high income, so provisions are needed to assure that a range of housing at various price points are available. The BRAC Advisory Panel envisioned mixed-use development and incentives to develop affordable units within the growth corridor, as well as transportation improvements and amenities that make the growth corridor an attractive place to live, as key to the County's success in maximizing the benefits of BRAC.

Chapter 9, Housing, explores affordable and workforce housing in greater detail.

4.3.5 *Workforce Development*

The 2007 *Cecil County Growth Study (Strategic Plan)* highlighted some of the challenges Cecil County will face as the local economy evolves with BRAC and the development of higher-wage and higher-skilled jobs. The County's labor force participation rate has been declining since 1990, especially among men, and is projected to decline through 2030, according to data from the Maryland Department of Planning. Part of this decline is traced to the aging of the population, but it is also tied to the County's educational attainment. Of the

population aged 25 and older in 2005, 13 percent of County residents had at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 19 percent of Maryland residents, according to the Census Bureau's 2007 American Community Survey.

With jobs demanding a higher skill level, many residents may find it more difficult to get a job locally as the economy evolves. A number of interviewees cited in the *Cecil County Growth Study (Strategic Plan)* noted the lack of availability of technically proficient labor, including workers with specialized skills in engineering, health and information technology. Both the *Growth Study (Strategic Plan)* and *BRAC Action Plan* noted the need for more workforce development programs, to augment the classes provided by Cecil College and the Cecil County Public Schools.

These efforts can focus on vocational offerings at the high school level (carpentry, automotive, HVAC, plumbing, electrical), as well as Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs at all levels from kindergarten through college. Adult and workforce education also can take place through the Small Business Development Center and Business Training Resource Center.

4.3.6 Agriculture

Land in farms in Cecil County has remained fairly stable since 1992 and the number of farms has risen slightly, reflecting a shift from large- and medium-sized farms to smaller farms (Table 4.5). The agriculture industry and agribusiness face a number of challenges.

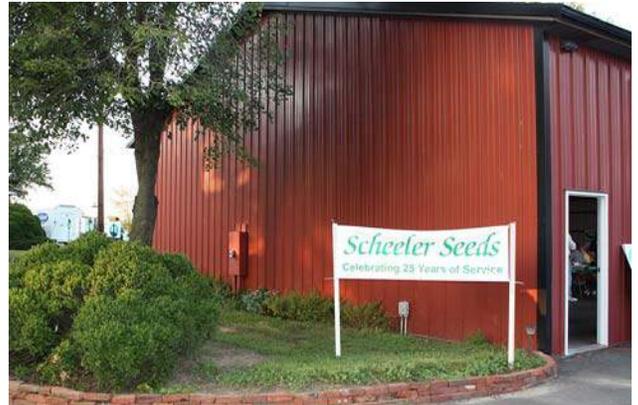
Much of the most productive agricultural land (and prime soils) are in the northern part of the County, part of a large agricultural region that extends through southern Pennsylvania. This area is also the portion of the County most affected by rural residential development since 1990 (see Chapter 3, Land Use). As large tracts are parcelized and rural areas suburbanize, the County faces the potential of losing the critical agglomeration of rural lands that sustain its agriculture industry.

Directing growth to Growth Areas is one way the Comprehensive Plan addresses this issue. But other measures are needed to support agriculture, especially among smaller farmers whose families have farmed their land for generations. For these farmers, the monetary value of their land for future development can outweigh the benefits of agriculture, creating an incentive to sell their farms for residential uses when this option is available.

Supporting farmland preservation, including through an attractive Transfer of Development Rights program, promoting agribusiness by expanding the types of activities considered to be value-added agricultural related enterprises as permitted uses, and expanding permitted sales so as not to be strictly limited to agricultural products can help to generate more income for farmers and help to support the County's agriculture industry.

4.4 Fisheries

State law requires that all counties located on tidal waters include a Fisheries Element in their Comprehensive Plan, focusing on the designation of areas for loading, unloading, and processing finfish and shellfish, and for docking and mooring commercial fishing boats and vessels.



Scheeler Seeds, LLC, located near Cecilton, has been supplying seed to farmers, landscapers and homeowners in and around Cecil County for 25 years.

Photo Courtesy of Cecil Soil Magazine



Recreational fishing is popular along the County's shores.

Photo Courtesy of Cecil Soil Magazine.

A handful of commercial fishing operations are based in Cecil County. Although more than 200 individuals from the County held state-administered commercial fishing licenses in 2009, a lack of local facilities limits the ability to offload catch in the County. No commercial docks operate in the County, and there are only 13 publicly owned boat ramps, despite the County's 220 miles of shoreline.

According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, fishing in local waters yielded almost 2 million

pounds of catch in 2008 valued at \$1.4 million (Table 4.9). This represented about three percent of the total catch in Maryland and two percent of the total value. These figures account for commercial fishing in the Elk River, Bohemia River, Northeast River, Susquehanna Flats, Susquehanna River, Sassafras River and Upper Chesapeake Bay region. The data do, however, include segments of the rivers not in Cecil County.

Table 4.9: Total Fish Catch in Cecil County and Maryland, 2008

| Year | Total Catch in Cecil County-Area Waters | | State of Maryland Totals | | Share of State Total from County-Area Waters | |
|------|---|-------------|--------------------------|--------------|--|---------|
| | Pounds | Dollars | Pounds | Dollars | Pounds | Dollars |
| 2008 | 1,953,601 | \$1,439,913 | 59,862,351 | \$74,886,212 | 3% | 2% |

Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources

In addition to commercial fishing, two wholesalers operate in the County.

A 2003 *Tourism Industry Impact Study* prepared for the Office of Economic Development found that, of 804 people surveyed, 187 or 18.4 percent of visitors came to Cecil County for fishing, creating 96 (29.9%) of 321 overnight stays. They also accounted for 91 (18.8%) of 483 day trips.

Encouraging recreational fishing will remain a key component of the County's tourism strategy.

4.5 Policies and Actions

1. Encourage the development of flex space/office uses along the US 40 corridor, especially in the Mixed Use areas, where they can be integrated with residential and commercial/retail uses.
2. Focus the Mixed Use area between US 40 and MD 7 west of Elkton on employment uses, in campus-like office settings, supporting the County's goal of making US 40 its primary business corridor and center for economic development and providing opportunities for office uses.
3. Make available a listing of all commercially and industrially zoned land that can be developed as office uses in support of BRAC.
4. Provide infrastructure, including water, sewer and roads, to designated employment and mixed use areas.

5. Continue efforts to relocate the tollbooths on Interstate 95 to the Maryland-Delaware state line.
6. Support the economic viability of farming, equine, forestry and related business activities.
 - a. Review the need to expand the types of activities considered to be value-added agricultural related enterprises as permitted uses in the Resource Protection and Rural Conservation areas (see definition of agriculture in the zoning regulations).
 - b. Consider expanding permissible agriculture and forestry support enterprises in the Rural Conservation and Resource Protection areas, for example, add farm implement servicing as an accessory use to farm implement sales, which is currently permitted by special exception.
 - c. Review standards for retail on-site sales on land not zoned for business use (currently addressed in the zoning regulations as farmers markets and roadside stands). Consider expanding permitted sales so as not to be strictly limited to agricultural products produced by the owner or within the immediate neighborhood, though County products should be the preponderance of goods sold, with the balance coming from the local region.
7. Promote tourism by continuing to build upon the County's character, including small towns, rural agricultural enterprises, heritage, scenic byways, water and equine related recreational opportunities including access to the water, and County and State parks. Coordinate with the State, towns, and businesses to attract tourists from nearby major population centers, especially to the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway trail system and other off-road and on-road trails.
8. Take advantage of the freight rail lines that traverse Cecil County by promoting this asset as an economic development opportunity and directing employment uses that rely on fuel-efficient cargo operations to designated employment areas along rail lines.
9. Encourage and support the provision of broadband high-speed internet services / telecommunications to commercial, industrial, governmental, and residential users in the Growth Areas to advance the economic, essential services, and cultural development of the County. Work with service providers to extend broadband to other areas of the County so that all residents can be served.
10. Encourage the training and development of the local labor force to fulfill the future needs of local industry, especially in science, technology, engineering and math. Continue to work with Cecil College, the Cecil County Public Schools and other partners to expand workforce development programs.
11. Explore the potential to develop a commercial fishing dock in Cecil County to provide opportunities for the offloading of seafood.