

importance of protecting this heritage and the associated agricultural industry, the Department will evaluate options to determine if the County's Priority Preservation Area should be expanded, and if appropriate the County will pursue the expansion of the area or the designation of additional PPAs.

While the County remains an advocate of agricultural land preservation and continues to support the evolution of its agricultural industry, anticipated growth and the Phase II WIP requirements must also be addressed in the rural areas. Looking at alternatives that minimize the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses, while maintaining the landowner's equity, has led to an increased focus on other growth management tools.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a "smart growth" tool that can be used to manage land development. It is a method of protecting land by transferring the property owner's rights to develop from one area – "the sending area" to another area – "the receiving area". These transfers allow for the preservation of land, while generally allowing another area to increase its density. However, other guidelines for requiring TDRs can be established unrelated to density increases.

Recently, TDR programs have become a focus of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation's recertification process. Many Harford County citizens have also proposed that the County's TDR program be revised. The Department of Planning and Zoning will undertake a review and update of the County's TDR program. The goal will be to protect land owner equity while establishing new receiving areas focused on the Designated Growth Areas in a manner that supports the Plan's policies and is consistent with State initiatives.

In addition to directing where growth occurs, it is important to address the types of land uses that are permitted within the various designations, and how these can be provided to enhance community character. The Community Area section of the Plan describes the character of 13 different community areas, and provides guidance for the future of each area. Nevertheless, strategies in the Plan need to comprehensively address how changes in use should relate to the surrounding community and how design standards and the establishment of community gateways and focal points can support community identity. Strategies also need to support a variety of housing options and a healthy lifestyle.

Future growth and redevelopment in the County will have to focus not only on the Plan's goals and strategies, but also on State and Federal initiatives. The EPA's Bay Restoration Program will have a major influence on how and where Harford County grows. In order to meet State and Federal requirements for TMDL, wastewater nutrient loadings will have to be addressed, particularly in the rural areas. These strategies include reducing the number of additional septic systems in the County; therefore, this Plan removes the Rural Residential (RR) designation from the Land Use Element Plan Map. Addressing these issues while continuing to foster viable, sustainable communities that support a healthy lifestyle will require the County, State and the three municipalities to continue to work together.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Policy: Promote economic opportunity for all segments of the population and support the development of a diverse, innovative, and competitive economy.

Harford County recognizes that supporting economic prosperity is a key component of maintaining a high quality of life in the County. The County's economic development program promotes business growth and new investment that generates valuable employment opportunities and supports the development of a sustainable, dynamic economy.

While Harford County's strategic mid-Atlantic location along the I-95 corridor is a major asset, the County recognizes the need to enhance its competitive position by creating an environment that allows business and industry to respond to today's rapidly changing economy at the local, regional, national, and global level. Since 2005 when the Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission recommended a series of military relocations and alignments, that changed the mission of the Aberdeen Proving Ground, Harford County has been a leader in supporting the facility's new mission. Switching from a predominately military mission to civilian contractors at the forefront of technical achievements in national defense, intelligence, chemical and biological research, engineering, and computer technology has increased economic development interest in this area.

In addition to the benefits associated with this economic growth, the potential impact on infrastructure and the surrounding communities needs to be taken into consideration. While planning for economic development, consideration must be given to improving the quality of life within the community. With careful planning and the incorporation of appropriate amenities, businesses will remain good corporate neighbors.

Another component of the County's economic prosperity focuses on maintaining and developing a strong agricultural economy. Increasingly, local farmers are moving toward marketing their products to the surrounding community, and this effort is supported by the concept of sustainable agriculture. Maintaining the County's agricultural industry is a major component of the County's economic prosperity, and it also offers County residents a healthy option as it relates to food production, distribution, and consumption.

The strategies included in this section are intended to improve economic prosperity by ensuring that the local economy can grow in ways that strengthen the County's businesses and industries-large and small-while also supporting the mission of Aberdeen Proving Ground. They are designed to help retain and create jobs that offer self-reliant wages, provide a highly trained workforce that can meet the needs of employers, and support the initiatives of the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THEME - *Adapting to a changing economy.*

Harford County's economic development policies are geared toward improving economic prosperity by supporting and strengthening our businesses and industries, retaining and creating jobs, and stimulating investment in the County's communities. Maintaining economic prosperity in the 21st century requires flexibility and recognition that businesses must operate in the broader context of the regional, national, and global community. The County needs to ensure its competitive position by creating an environment where businesses can create, respond, and adjust rapidly.

Recognizing this changing economic climate, the County's Economic Development Advisory Board has developed a five year Visioning Plan. While the Plan adopted in December of 2010 recognizes that the County has entered into the final phase of BRAC, it also recognizes that the County must be prepared for the future economic growth beyond BRAC. The Visioning Plan provides a strategic approach to sustaining and enhancing the County's economic vitality while establishing its long-term regional viability as a "technopolis" in northeastern Maryland and the mid-Atlantic region. It recognizes the importance of land use, workforce development and education, and finance.

Implementation Strategies

1. Review, on an annual basis, the Economic Development Advisory Board's Visioning Plan to ensure that its strategic approach sustains and enhances the County's economic vitality.
2. Develop and implement an Office of Economic Development business expansion plan.
3. Develop, implement, and periodically assess the effectiveness of established incentives to attract and retain targeted businesses.
4. Maintain the County's inventory of vacant commercial and industrial lands to ensure that an adequate assortment of properties is available for use.
5. Increase the availability of higher educational opportunities that provide advanced degrees to support the needs of the County's technology based employers.
6. Evaluate the designated community and neighborhood centers and establish boundaries that provide for appropriate growth and redevelopment consistent with community character.
7. Continue to demonstrate a commitment to environmental stewardship through the promotion of energy efficiency, resource management, and sustainability.
8. Establish a process which includes an architectural design review for commercial projects to ensure that structures, landscaping and other features of the project complement and enhance the community in which the proposed project is located.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THEME – Support a diversity of businesses and jobs including farm based businesses.

Aberdeen Proving Ground has been one of the County's primary employers for many years, and the Base Realignment and Closure Act has been a driving force of the County's economic development program since its passage in 2005. However, Harford County must remain diligent in its efforts to be a diversified business community. It must not become totally centered in the defense industries, but rather it must remain a County that supports all its businesses and industries regardless of size.

The County's location in the mid-Atlantic region continues to be an asset. Combined with a sound industrial and commercial land inventory, transportation availability via road and rail, and the County's proximity to major airports and harbors in Baltimore and Philadelphia, Harford County remains a prime location for prospective companies.

Another component of Harford County's economic development strategy is maintaining and developing a strong agricultural economy – one that recognizes the importance of farming as an industry and one that supports and promotes sustainable agriculture. The Division of Agriculture provides information and assistance to existing and prospective farmers. Their programs help farmers to become well educated about grant opportunities, expansions, and improvements. Each year the Division of Agriculture establishes a series of priorities. While these priorities vary, they continue to focus on marketing, education, and public awareness.

Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to support the startup, expansion, and relocation of businesses by providing an adequate inventory of usable properties along with sufficient infrastructure and a well trained labor force.
2. Support and coordinate efforts to provide adequate infrastructure and community investment in areas identified for employment opportunities.
3. Create partnerships at the local, State, and national level to support the implementation of economic development policies.
4. Develop and implement educational training that provides a well prepared diversified workforce.
5. Encourage the redevelopment of commercial areas to strengthen community identity and contribute to overall neighborhood revitalization.
6. Evaluate the design criteria for retail commercial buildings to ensure that they support the maintenance and enhancement of the surrounding community character.
7. Continue to recognize and support the agricultural industry as an important part of the County's economy and heritage.
8. Support the expansion of existing farm markets and the diversification of on-farm production.
9. Continue to support the County's tourism industry in a manner that benefits County residents and encourages community reinvestment.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THEME – *Maintain an emphasis on the U.S. Route 40 Corridor.*

Harford County identified the U.S. Route 40 Corridor as the foundation of its designated growth corridor in 1969, and the importance of this corridor continues today as evidenced by the designation of the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor (CSSC) and the Enterprise Zone (Figure 24). The U.S. Route 40 Corridor offers a mix of land uses and intensity of development that serves to attract both short and long term investment. It provides business opportunities combined with housing and amenities that are linked by a multimodal transportation network.

An example of the potential the Corridor can offer is seen in the redevelopment of the former Bata Shoe Factory at Belcamp. Now a corporate campus, Water's Edge is a mixed use development that includes office and professional centers combined with housing at a waterfront location. The planned revitalization of the Aberdeen Train Station as a Transit Oriented Development along with the planned improvements to the Edgewood MARC station will continue to build on numerous other projects that support the resurgence of this area.

Because of the Enterprise Zone and CSSC designations along the Corridor, these areas will be targeted by the State and Harford County for growth and community revitalization. The U.S. Route 40 Corridor presents an unparalleled opportunity for defense-related contractors and other companies looking to

relocate to this area. These changes will bring with them an improved quality of life supported by the services and amenities that support this type of economic prosperity.

Implementation Strategies

1. Work with the State and the municipalities to identify infrastructure improvements for the U.S. Route 40 Corridor that support its role as the County's primary business corridor.
2. Investigate the possibility of expanding the boundaries of the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor.
3. Provide state of the art information technology services throughout the U.S. Route 40 Corridor.
4. Work with the State to identify alternative opportunities to support redevelopment and revitalization as an offset to the sunset provisions of the County's Enterprise Zone.
5. Encourage the provision of workforce housing within employment areas.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THEME – *Continue to support the mission of Aberdeen Proving Ground.*

With the adoption of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act, efforts were initiated to prepare Harford County for the change of mission and associated workforce that would reshape Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG). Jobs began moving incrementally to APG in 2008 with the official changeover occurring in 2011. In total, over 18,000 jobs resulted from the BRAC reassignment, which also generated over one billion dollars in economic activity throughout the County.

Aberdeen Proving Ground remains one of the County's largest employers with an employment base of approximately 24,000. However, as the operations at APG switched from a predominately military mission to a civilian based high tech contractor workforce, it generated a multiplier effect in terms of future needs. Similar to the rest of the County, quality of life has emerged as a focus for those now working at APG. Providing workforce housing, quality schools, and other associated amenities and services along with improved transportation options are important to supporting the Proving Ground's mission.

Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to work with the State to improve access to the facility including roads, upgrades to MARC service and facilities, and the establishment of a Transit Oriented Development centered on the Aberdeen train station.
2. Maintain a permanent liaison with Aberdeen Proving Ground to support the retention of the facility in Harford County and to ensure the coordination of future initiatives.
3. Promote the development of service industries and technology companies that support the facilities workforce and mission.
4. Identify potential opportunities for the development of mixed use projects that offer a variety of housing types, services, and office space that supports the Proving Ground's mission.

SUMMARY

The type and supply of employment based lands is a significant factor in the County's ability to meet the needs of a rapidly changing economy. Harford County has a sufficient inventory of industrial and commercial lands to meet projected needs for the life of this Plan and well into the future (Figure 25).

Based on the 2010 Industrial Land Inventory, there are 416 parcels totaling 3,348 acres of vacant industrially zoned land. Of these, 83% are within the Development Envelope, plus there are an additional 37 sites totaling 155 acres within the municipalities.

The 2010 Commercial Land Inventory identifies 2,644 acres of developable vacant commercial land that has the potential to generate over 24.8 million square feet of additional commercial space. Based on an annual average of 410,400 square feet of commercial space being built during the 2000 to 2010 period, there is sufficient capacity to meet the County's commercial space needs for the foreseeable future.

A majority of these parcels are located in the southern region of the County along I-95 and U.S. Route 40. Efficient utilization of these areas would, in some cases, require the consolidation of lots. This confirms the County's Economic Advisory Board concern that the size of some of this land could present a challenge from an economic development perspective.

In past Land Use Element Plans, Neighborhood and Community Centers and the Rural Villages have been designated as the focal points for shopping and commercial services. Within these designations, the provision of commercial development should consider the location within the community, and these areas should be in appropriately sized, well defined groupings. New commercial development shall incorporate architecture and aesthetics that respect, contribute and enhance the community. Commercial development should be harmonious with the existing community. They should continue to serve as community focal points, and they should provide quality shopping and commercial areas that are an enhancement to the community.

One of the County's most important investments, that supports economic prosperity, is infrastructure. This applies particularly to infrastructure that helps communities and businesses become more productive, that leverages private investment, and helps direct investment to areas that have the greatest need or potential benefits. These infrastructure improvements must also be planned and completed in a manner that supports the preservation of community character.

Recognizing the need to address issues on a regional level, the County continues to participate with the Baltimore Regional Council and has joined with the municipalities to develop the Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). The WIP will address Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements associated with the Environmental Protection Agency's action to clean up the Chesapeake Bay.

The availability of information technology infrastructure is yet another important component of economic prosperity. The accessibility and dependability of this technology is considered by businesses during their site selection process. Harford County is moving forward with the establishment of a countywide fiber optic network. A wireless initiative is also being investigated. Strategies supporting this are presented in the Public Facilities, Services, and Safety section of the Plan.

Another important component of a strong local business network is access to a well trained labor and technology workforce. The availability of higher education institutions and opportunities are an

important part of this. Harford County Public Schools has taken steps to prepare students through its efforts to promote its Science, Technology, and Math program (STEM) and by the establishment of a series of magnet programs and specialized areas of study that prepare students for work in today's changing economy. Harford Community College, including its operation of the Higher Education and Applied Technology (HEAT) Center, is also immersed in the education continuum. It serves as the primary resource for higher education in the County. It provides high quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities and services that promote professional competence, economic development and improved quality of life in the community. Efforts must continue to provide additional opportunities for continued higher education and advanced degrees as well as continued training for technical skills.

Equally important is Harford County's agricultural industry. Harford County recognizes the agricultural community as an important segment of its economy. The County's strong commitment to agricultural land preservation, combined with efforts to provide for the diversification of agriculturally related businesses, demonstrates the importance of the agricultural industry. The Division of Agriculture, with the help of the Agricultural Economic Advisory Board, offers a variety of services to the local agricultural community including promoting the Farmer's Markets and the Buy Local Program. The continuation and enhancement of all of these efforts is needed to help local farmers remain a strong component of the local economy.

Also supporting the County's economic diversity is tourism. Harford County offers visitors a variety of recreational, historic, and scenic venues that contribute to residents' quality of life. Heritage tourism is among one of the fastest growing sectors of tourism in Maryland, and the County's many museums and historic properties offer the opportunity to develop and promote an effective heritage tourism initiative. The County's location, along the main travel route connecting New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington D.C., makes it easily accessible to visitors. Through the Office of Tourism, the County is marketed to a broad range of venues, and the importance of supporting and encouraging the County's tourism business is included in EDAB's five year plan.