



ENVISION EMMITSBURG

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
TOWN OF EMMITSBURG

ADOPTED: July 2025

Envision Emmitsburg

2025 Comprehensive Plan

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Envision Emmitsburg

2025 Comprehensive Plan

2025 Mayor & Commissioners

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Amy Boehman-Pollitt, President
Jim Hoover, Vice President
Valerie Turnquist, Treasurer
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2025 Planning Commission

Patricia Galloway, Chair
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Najila Ahsan

The Town extends its sincere gratitude to the citizen volunteers whose time and dedication made the Comprehensive Plan possible.

1

A Blueprint for the Future

Envision Emmitsburg offers a comprehensive plan to steer the sustainable growth, development, and preservation of this charming small town in northern Frederick County, Maryland. Founded in 1785 as a farming community, Emmitsburg has grown into a prominent religious and cultural destination.



Figure 1.1: Emmitsburg Historic District

With its rich historical heritage, scenic charm, and strategic location along U.S. Route 15, the town holds high potential for growth. Grounded in the community's shared aspirations, the plan incorporates public input, demographic insights, economic potential, environmental stewardship, and strategic municipal planning to shape a thriving and resilient Emmitsburg for future generations.

Purpose of the Plan

This plan is a policy document that outlines a long-term framework for managing change and guiding development. It aims to fulfill the requirements of Maryland law, which mandates that municipal comprehensive plans be updated every ten years. This plan recognizes the dynamic nature of federal and state fiscal policy decisions and the impacts they may have on future land use, grant funding, and other social and community services. Furthermore, the plan should not preclude the Town from taking action to address future impacts or opportunities, even though they may not be readily known, apparent, or specifically addressed during this plan's preparation and adoption. Beyond legal compliance, the plan is a proactive tool to coordinate land use, public investment, and community aspirations. It provides a foundation for local decision-making related to zoning, infrastructure, capital improvements, and municipal services.

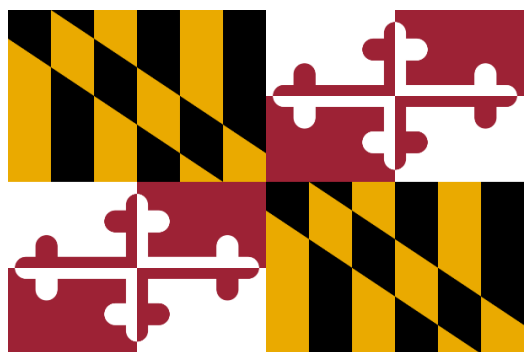
Plan Organization

This plan integrates Maryland's 12 Planning Visions while utilizing the 3 pillars of sustainability to understand and address environmental, economic, and social factors of this community. Chapter 2, titled "Community Input & Vision," focuses on how public input has shaped this plan for Emmitsburg. It discusses the engagement process used to collect insights from residents through surveys and workshops and presents the key themes that helped shape the community's vision for the future. The subsequent seven chapters delve into specific areas of focus and provide forward-thinking goals and actionable strategies. The plan concludes with an implementation chapter aimed at transforming goals into actionable steps.

Planning Process and Community Engagement

The planning process for *Envision Emmitsburg* was intended to be inclusive, transparent, and responsive to community needs. Through public workshops and surveys, the participants identified key priorities: increasing local economic opportunities, improving access to housing, investing in infrastructure, preserving the Town's character, and promoting environmental stewardship. These themes shaped each chapter and reinforced the need for integrated solutions.

Maryland's 12 Planning Visions



This plan integrates Maryland's 12 Planning Visions, which embody the state's long-standing commitment to fostering sound growth and development policies.

These visions serve as a consistent framework across the state, guiding local governments in developing strategies that promote sustainability, equity, and coordinated land use planning. Emmitsburg's comprehensive plan reflects these principles throughout each chapter:

Quality of Life and Sustainability

A high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air, resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment.

This plan strives to guide policies that enhance the quality of life for its residents through environmental stewardship, particularly in Chapter 5.

Public Participation

Citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, through surveys and workshops, the Emmitsburg community played a vital role in shaping this document.

Growth Areas

Growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers.

In addition to the Growth Boundary Area, the plan introduces a Growth Opportunity Area in Chapter 6. It provides the Town with flexibility while maintaining control to ensure that growth aligns with infrastructure capacity, serves the public interest, and supports the Town's vision for orderly development.

Community Design

Compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources.

By focusing on revitalizing historic structures and creating pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, this plan supports the state's vision for community design. This is addressed in Chapters 3, 6, and 7.

Infrastructure

Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner.

This plan addresses the need for expanding infrastructure, particularly water capacity, to support future development in Chapter 9.

Transportation

A well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers.

This plan addresses the transportation challenges by proposing the development of alternative routes to decrease dependence on a single roadway in Chapter 7.

Housing

A range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes.

This plan identifies challenges such as housing affordability and availability and proposes strategies to promote inclusivity through varied housing options in Chapter 3.

Economic Development

Economic development and natural resource–based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State’s natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged.

Chapter 4 highlights the town’s challenges, such as a limited job market, income disparities, and economic dependence on nearby urban centers, and presents strategies to address these issues.

Environmental Protection

Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources.

Chapter 5 mentions efforts to minimize impervious surfaces, promote green infrastructure, and maintain vegetative cover to help reduce air and water pollution and promote a healthy environment for residents and wildlife.

Resource Conservation

Waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved.

Careful management of the town’s land and water resources to ensure long-term sustainability, ecological balance, and resilience to environmental challenges are highlighted in Chapter 6.

Stewardship

Government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection.

The plan calls for a collaborative approach among the local government, businesses, residents, and other stakeholders to create a thriving community.

Implementation

Strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, state, and interstate levels to achieve these Visions.

To translate the plan's goals into reality, a set of guiding principles along with short-term and long-term action steps are suggested in Chapter 10.

Three Pillars of Sustainability



The Plan, particularly public input, is also grounded in the **Three Pillars of Sustainability**:

- **Environmental Stewardship:** The Town is committed to protecting natural resources, improving water quality, preserving open spaces, and building climate resilience through green infrastructure and smart growth.
- **Economic Vitality:** Strategies are designed to support local business development, tourism, workforce opportunities, and a balanced tax base that reduces overreliance on residential revenue.
- **Social Equity:** The Plan seeks to address the needs of all residents—particularly ALICE households, seniors, youth, and renters—by expanding access to housing, transportation, education, and health services.

Through the integration of sustainability principles and Maryland's Planning Visions, Emmitsburg is poised to achieve a future that is environmentally responsible, economically robust, and socially inclusive. The *Envision Emmitsburg* Comprehensive Plan reflects the Town's dedication to preserving its heritage while embracing progress, promoting a thriving community for generations to come.

Chapter 2

Community Input & Vision



This plan is shaped by public input, which serves as an important foundation for this document. This chapter outlines the insights collected from workshops and surveys, organizing them into key themes. These themes then guide the creation of vision statements.

Public Participation

The Town engaged in multiple efforts to gather public input for the Plan. Three workshops were held in October 2023, January 2024, and March 2024. The workshops included simple activities with a focus on the three pillars of sustainability—economic development, community development, and environmental sustainability. The activities were designed to help participants reflect on their community’s needs and preferences based on personal experience. The participants were encouraged to craft vision statements inspired by those reflections. Additionally, three surveys focused on the same pillars were conducted. These surveys were made available online as webforms, and citizen volunteers distributed paper copies to various groups. Citizen volunteers also engaged in conversations

with various groups to gather more input. The findings of these efforts are categorized into the following themes.

Economic Development



The general sentiment among those who provided input was that the town's economy is underperforming and has room for improvement. Overall, public input showed significant interest in both small and large business development, infrastructure improvements, and community involvement in promoting economic growth.

Job Growth

The workshop, surveys, and discussions indicated a generally neutral to negative perception of the economic conditions and job opportunities in Emmitsburg. Despite having two of the largest employers in the County nearby, job opportunities in proximity are still limited for those living in Emmitsburg. Many people must travel long distances to reach their workplaces, and numerous employees in Emmitsburg do not reside here. A major employer reported having difficulty in retaining staff due to the town's remote location and lack of amenities. It was also reported that the absence of childcare services in town has led some employees to move out of town.

When asked about specific industries or sectors regarding economic development and job growth, the responses included:

- Small Business and Retail Development: Desire for small businesses and shops on Main Street to revitalize the town's appearance and economy.
- Distribution Center and Light Manufacturing: Interest in establishing distribution centers, production businesses, and light manufacturing to provide steady jobs without overwhelming local infrastructure.
- Tourism Development: Interest in tourism-related businesses and services to capitalize on historical interest.
- Agriculture Sector: Interest in encouraging local agriculture businesses and farmers' markets to enhance local food production and community health.
- Research and Development (R&D) Labs: Interest in exploring partnerships with educational institutions or private companies to establish R&D facilities, potentially focusing on agriculture or local industry innovations.

Support for Local Businesses

Most respondents reported that they frequently buy products and services from locally owned businesses, but the limitation in variety leads them to shop elsewhere. This indicates a need for expansion and improvement of local business offerings. The surveys showed that the factors that would encourage residents to shop local more frequently include:

1. Improved parking
2. Relevancy, quality, and diversity of products and services
3. Online presence
4. Loyalty programs
5. Better promotion of businesses and events.

When asked about the types of businesses and services that the Town needs more of, the responses included the following:

- Childcare and youth services: High demand for daycare/childcare facilities that meet the needs of working parents and offer various enriching activities for children.
- Retail and Commercial Development: Interest in diverse retail options and commercial services, including gift/book shops, boutiques, specialty shops, bakeries, computer repair, and tech support services.
- Hardware and Practical Services: Demand for practical and everyday services, including hardware stores and a convenient drive-thru car wash facility.
- Grocery and Local Food Options: Better grocery options and locally grown food. Access to delivery services like Grubhub and DoorDash were also mentioned.
- Tourism and Recreational Activities: Interest in attractions and activities that draw visitors, including a family-friendly arcade and other recreational activities.
- Transportation and Accessibility: Need for better transportation options, including ridesharing, car rental, and more accessible shuttle bus service.
- Family-Oriented Dining and Restaurants: Strong desire for family-friendly dine-in restaurants with diverse menus, including a cozy café for casual dining and socializing

Infrastructure Improvements

The responses revealed strong support for the idea that infrastructure improvements would boost economic development. While many expressed a general satisfaction with the current infrastructure, some noted that enhancements are necessary before further growth can occur. Ensuring sufficient water and sewer taps for new developments was highlighted as a key concern, along with improving road accessibility and traffic management to accommodate future growth.

Surveys and workshops also demonstrated a strong interest in revitalizing the Village Zone district at the heart of the town. Discussions emphasized the importance of renovating and repurposing underutilized Main Street buildings to host a variety of businesses. Accessible parking options and sidewalk improvements were also mentioned as priorities for the area.

Community Development



Most respondents reported feeling a neutral connection to the community and generally perceive it as inclusive. However, some expressed feelings of disconnection and emphasized the need for greater inclusivity to create a more welcoming environment for all members. There was also strong interest in utilizing

public-private partnerships to fund and support community projects and improvements.

Community Engagement

Workshop participants and survey respondents highlighted several favorite aspects of the community. Events like Community Heritage Day, National Night Out, the Halloween Parade, Mother Seton Carnival, local sports events, and charity events play a vital role in fostering community engagement. Participants also noted their enjoyment of recreational spaces, such as E. Eugene Myers Park and the Community Pool, which significantly enhance their quality of life in Town.

Improving Amenities

Participants frequently discussed the lack of childcare, recognizing its significant impact on residents' lives. Addressing this shortage is viewed as essential for the well-being of families and to improve their quality of life. Providing more childcare options would also enhance economic conditions by allowing more parents to participate in the workforce while ensuring a nurturing environment for young children. As a potential solution, participants suggested partnering with Mount St. Mary's University's School of Education to establish childcare facilities that could also offer internship opportunities for students pursuing degrees in early childhood education.

Transportation-related issues were also highlighted. Participants discussed the importance of improving parking, especially on Main Streets, as it directly affects business activity in these areas. Accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges or those relying on public transportation was recognized as a significant challenge in the Town. To address these concerns, ridesharing, car rental, and accessible bus

services were considered as potential tools. Additionally, the need for improving and expanding roads in conjunction with new development was discussed.

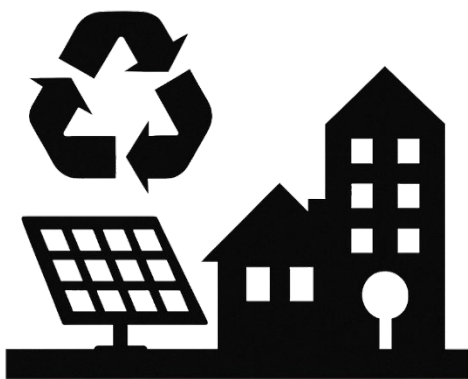
Affordable Housing

The need for affordable housing was emphasized, with suggestions that developers be required to include low- to moderate-income housing in their projects. Additionally, the development of mixed-use or medium-density areas was discussed as a way to provide a broader range of housing options.

Poverty Alleviation

During the workshops, it was noted that the Town has the highest proportion of ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households in the entire County. Addressing this critical issue will require a focus on creating public-private partnerships to bring more jobs to the Town.

Environmental Sustainability



There was a consensus among survey respondents and workshop participants to preserve the historic, small-town charm and natural beauty while allowing for smart growth.

Preservation

Participants emphasized the importance of preserving scenic natural areas, farmlands, riparian zones, parks, and other green spaces to maintain the Town's rural

and ecological beauty. One suggested approach is the use of agricultural preservation easements to create natural boundaries that manage growth. Additionally, there was strong interest in preserving structures within the historic district to maintain the community's architectural heritage. While there were some concerns about development near Irishtown Road, participants generally supported a balanced approach to growth.

Climate Change

Responses to the survey indicate residents view climate change as a significant or moderate issue, reflecting a shared recognition of its impact on the Town. The community's call for balancing rural and developmental areas through thoughtful planning further emphasizes the need to consider environmental impacts, including those related to climate change.

Awareness and Community-led Initiatives

The survey results shed light on the community's engagement with environmental issues and the growing awareness of sustainability challenges. Responses to questions about environmental awareness in the Town reveal a diverse range of perceptions, with some residents highly attuned to these issues and others less so. However, there is a strong commitment to participation in recycling programs, with most respondents actively engaged.

Community-led initiatives are viewed with cautious optimism, as many respondents expressed a conditional interest in supporting efforts to address environmental challenges. Key areas for potential action include enhancing local infrastructure, such as improving recycling facilities and establishing vehicle charging stations, as well as promoting awareness and education about environmental issues.

Several respondents highlighted the importance of preserving green spaces and biodiversity, particularly in areas like Irishtown Road, where development could impact traffic and greenspaces. Balancing rural and developmental areas through thoughtful planning that considers environmental impacts was a common sentiment among participants.

Energy conservation and water-saving practices are already being adopted by many residents, who are eager to see more government support, such as incentives for using energy-efficient products. The community's concerns about health, safety, and the cost of sustainable practices underscore the need for accessible and affordable solutions.

Vision Statements

The following vision statements are broad, aspirational descriptions of what the community wants to achieve in the long term. These forward-looking statements serve as a guiding star, articulating the desired future state and reflecting the community's core values. These statements guide the goals and strategies stated in subsequent chapters. While the goals and strategies may change, a vision statement typically remains consistent over time.

Vision For a Prosperous Economy

The future Emmitsburg has a strong economy that provides a wide range of job opportunities and supports local businesses. There is a vibrant economic base in Main Street and other areas of the Town to serve residents and visitors in various ways. There are partnerships among public sector, private businesses, and educational institutions that stimulate economic growth by investing in the

community and creating hundreds of jobs. These job opportunities provide livable wages and alleviate poverty among residents. Infrastructure such as transportation and utilities are largely improved to reinforce economic growth. The Town supports and encourages entrepreneurship through various incentives that are also created through public-private partnerships. Overall, Emmitsburg is a place of inclusive growth, where everyone can thrive and contribute to the Town's economic prosperity.

Vision For a Connected Community

Future Emmitsburg is a place where residents feel a strong sense of belonging and actively engage with one another to create a vibrant and inclusive environment. Transparency in governance is enhanced by improving all communication channels that reach all residents. There are accessible, high-quality childcare options and residential developments with affordable housing choices. The proportion of ALICE families has declined due to the availability of jobs that pay livable wages. There are many mixed-use, compact developments in Town that provide opportunities for residents to live, work, and play in proximity. Infrastructure projects are strategically planned to support growth and implemented to improve accessibility for all residents and visitors. Emmitsburg's historical, cultural, and natural attractions are leveraged to promote tourism and growth.

Vision For a Sustainable Environment

The future Emmitsburg has achieved balanced growth and development by promoting smart growth principles that prioritize compact, mixed-use development, efficient transportation systems, and protection of natural resources. This is a community that thrives economically while preserving its natural beauty. The Town

capitalizes on its strengths, including its beautiful green spaces, mountain ranges, parks and trails, the Rainbow Lake, and spaces for hunting opportunities, to enhance the quality of life for its residents. Street designs prioritize narrower streets and wider sidewalks to enhance walkability. Developments occur at a sustainable pace, ensuring minimal strain on water, sanitary sewers, and other infrastructure. Proper land use decisions have led to better traffic conditions. Sustainability initiatives promote long-term wellbeing and create a more resilient community.

3

Population & Housing

This section examines historical and current characteristics of the population and housing to provide insight into the pace of development over time. Understanding the population's characteristics will guide the determination of the types of facilities and services required. The housing characteristics provide a snapshot of the population's living conditions that can be used to assess and plan for future housing needs.

Population Characteristics

The 2020 Decennial Census reported that Emmitsburg has a population of 2,770. The following table and graphs present the average growth rate and change in Emmitsburg and Frederick County from 1960 to 2020, in 10-year increments. The population table and charts indicate a substantial increase in Frederick County's population. While Emmitsburg exhibited some growth between 1980 and 2010, it experienced a 1.6% decline in population in the latest decade-long census period. Emmitsburg's growth rate is notably lower when compared to that of Frederick County over the same 30-year span.

Table 3.1 Average Growth Rate and Rate of Change: Emmitsburg and Frederick County								
		1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Emmitsburg	Total	1,369	1,532	1,552	1,870	2,290	2,814	2,770
	Percent Change	-	11.9%	1.3%	20.5%	22.5%	22.9%	-1.6%
	Average Growth Rate	-	1.2%	0.1%	2.0%	2.2%	2.3%	-0.2%
Frederick County	Total	71,930	84,927	114,792	150,208	195,277	233,385	271,717
	Percent Change	-	18.1%	35.2%	30.9%	30.0%	19.5%	16.4%
	Average Growth Rate	-	1.8%	3.5%	3.1%	3.0%	2.0%	1.6%
Source: US Decennial Census, Frederick County, & Emmitsburg Planning Department								

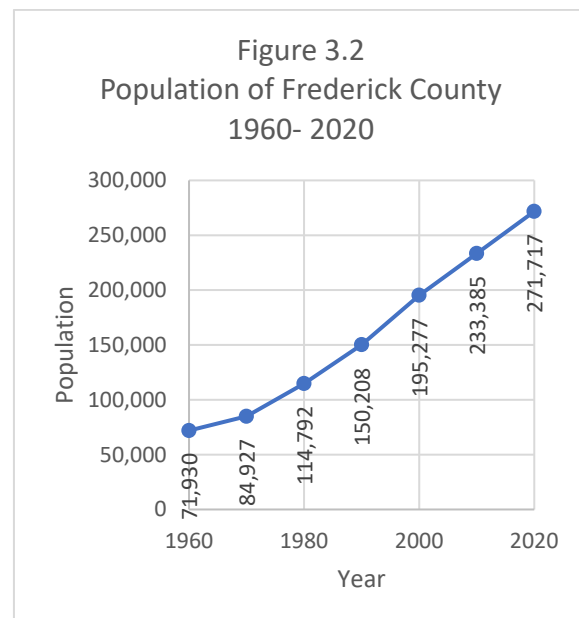
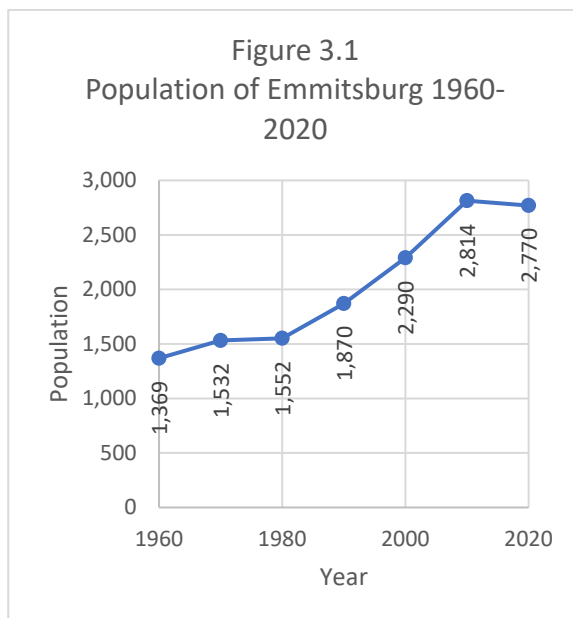


Figure 3.3
Population Change by Percentage
Emmitsburg & Frederick County
1960-2020

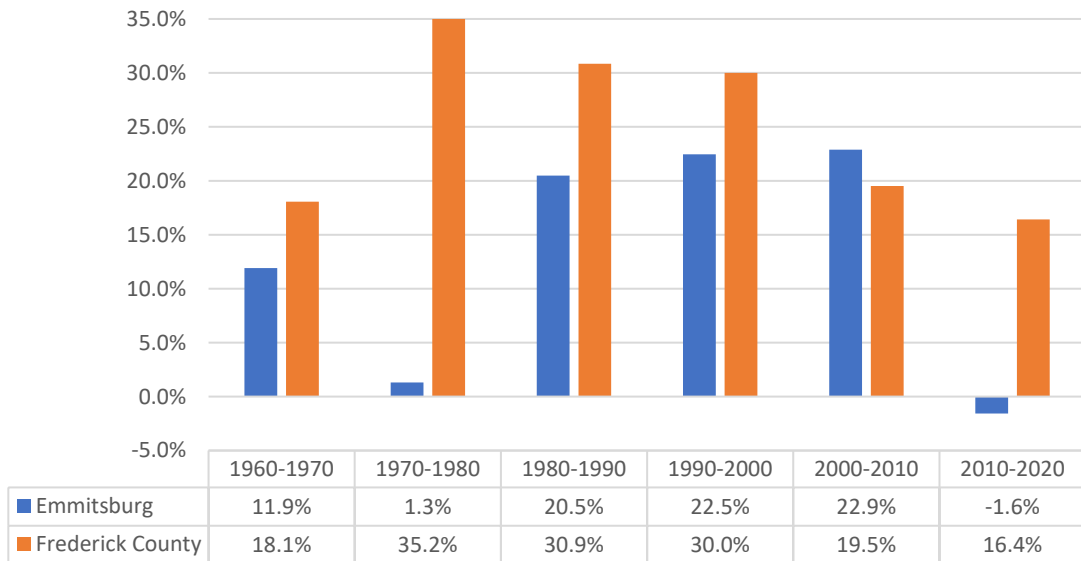
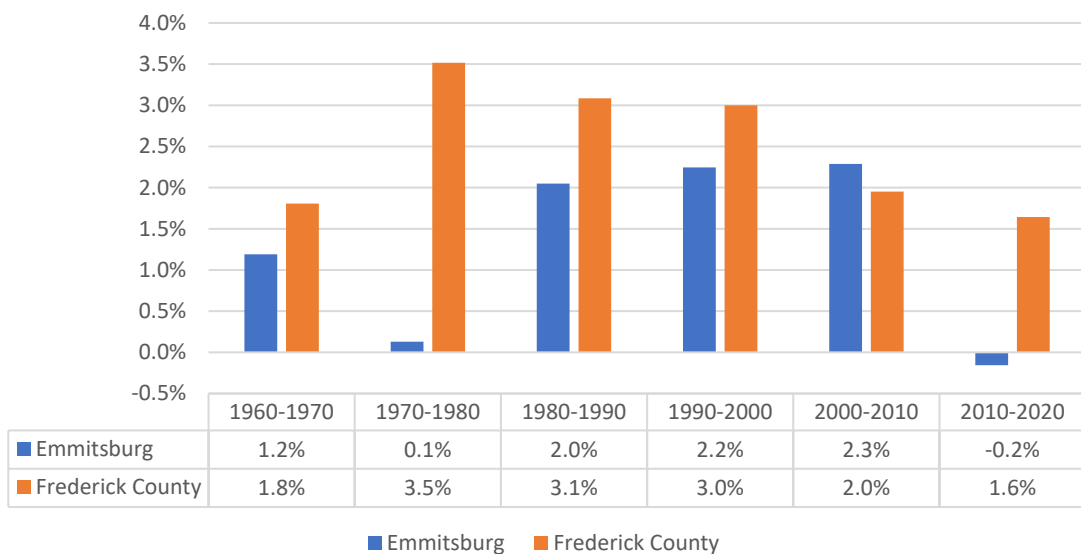


Figure 3.4
Average Growth Rate
Emmitsburg & Frederick County
1960-2020



Past population growth in Emmitsburg can be attributed to the annexation of nearby lands and the establishment of US 15, US 70, and Interstate 270. These highways allowed people to live in a more affordable area and commute to the larger metropolitan areas for work. The new housing developments in Brookfield, Pembroke, and Southgate subdivisions between 2000 and 2010 likely played a significant role in the population increase during that period. During that time, a robust housing market provided affordable single-family homes for individuals working in major population centers such as Frederick City, Baltimore, and Montgomery County. The population decline from 2010 to 2020 may possibly be a lasting impact of the Great Recession, which led to falling home values, stalled development, business closures, and out-migration of people seeking jobs in larger cities.

The 2023 American Community Survey estimates a population of 2,855 in Emmitsburg. The addition of new housing units in Emmitsburg since 2020, combined with the broader migration trends driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, likely contributed to an increase in the town's population. During the pandemic, many individuals and families sought to relocate to smaller towns, drawn by the promise of more space, a quieter lifestyle, and a greater sense of community. This shift, enabled by the rise of remote work, made Emmitsburg an attractive destination and likely played a role in the town's population growth and housing expansion during this period.

Age and Gender Distribution

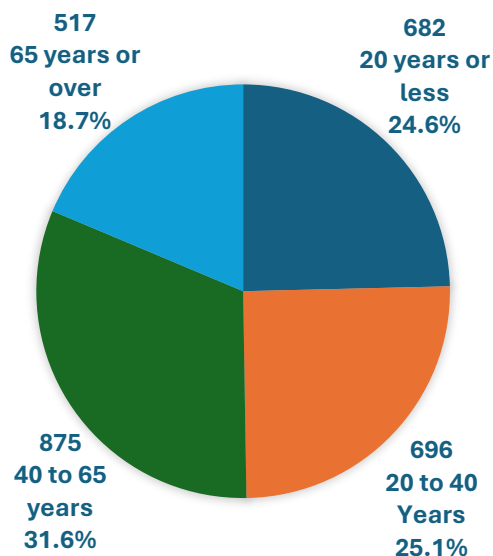
Table 3.2
Median Age Distribution

Median Age (Years)	40.2
Male	37.7
Female	42.7

Source:
2020 Decennial Census

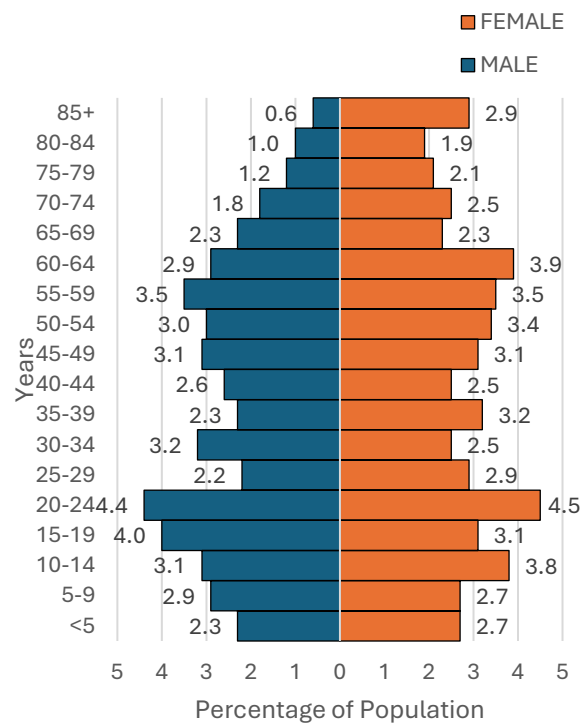
The following charts depict the age and gender distribution in Emmitsburg, using data from the 2020 Decennial Census. Charts for 2010 (Figure 3.7) and 2000 (Figure 3.8) are included for comparative analysis, offering insights into the evolving composition of the population in terms of age over the decades.

Figure 3.5
Population of Emmitsburg By Age Groups (2020)

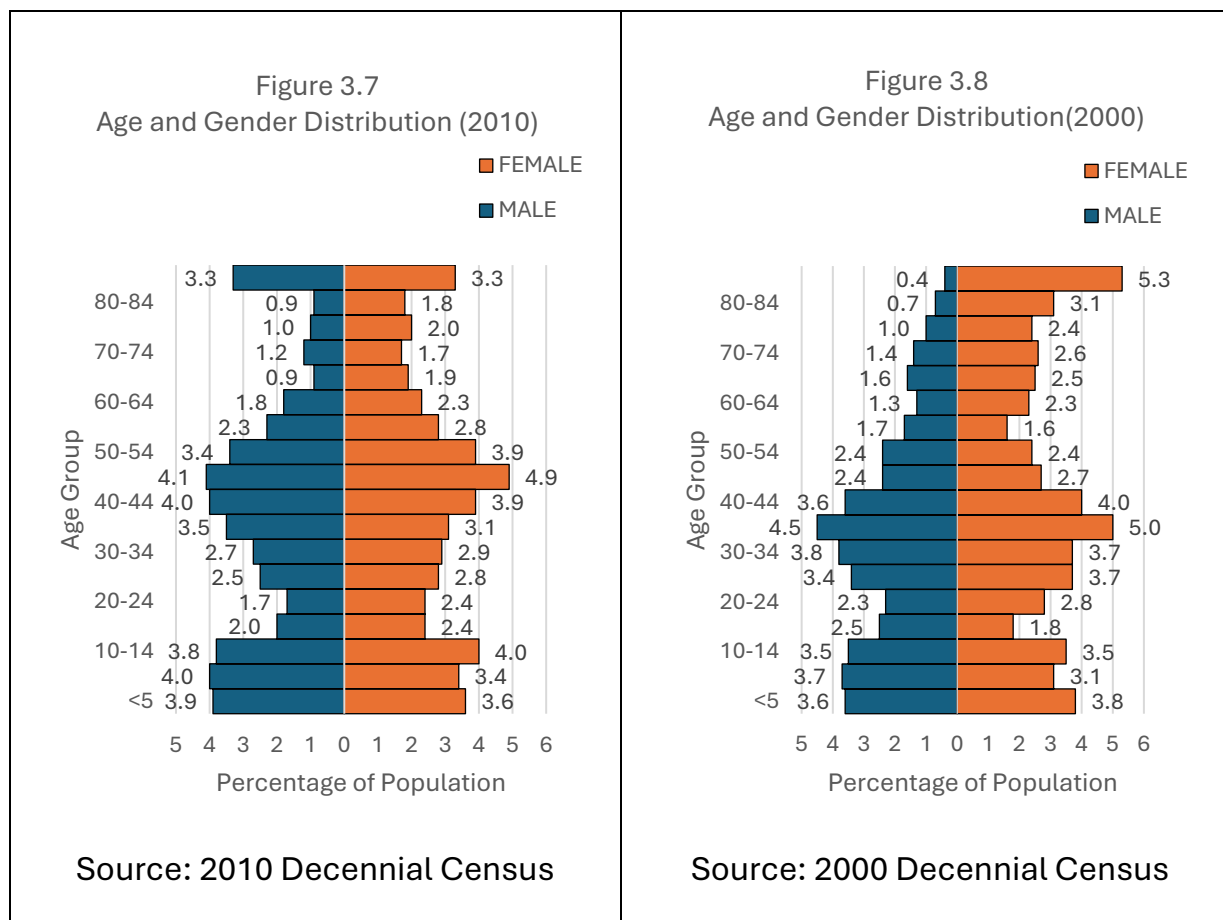


Source: 2020 Decennial Census

Figure 3.6
Age and Gender Distribution (2020)



Source: 2020 Decennial Census



The population pyramids for 2000 and 2010 reveal a broad base, indicating a high youth population (up to 14 years old). This suggests a period of stability or slight growth, likely driven by families attracted to affordable housing and a quieter lifestyle compared to more densely populated areas. However, the 2020 pyramid shows a narrower base, reflecting broader trends of declining birth rates and the possibility of younger families moving out, perhaps due to a lack of job opportunities or sufficient amenities. The 25 to 49 age group likely includes families who moved in during the subdivision boom and have since matured. The older population, aged 50 and above, started smaller but has gradually increased, indicating a trend of aging in place.

Despite these aging trends, the prominent 20 to 24 age group and a sizeable population below 40 suggest that the town still retains a youthful component. With a median age of 40.2 in 2020, the population is evenly distributed, with half below 40 and half above. The decline in population by 2020 may reflect broader economic or housing challenges that need to be addressed to maintain the town's livability.

Housing Composition

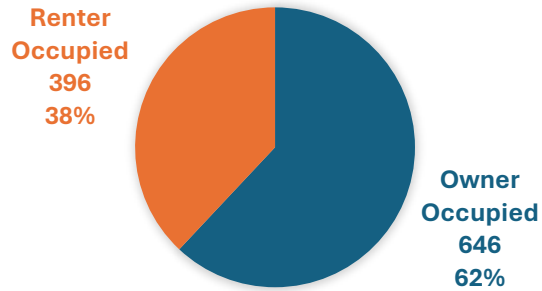
Housing is a fundamental factor of livability as it provides shelter, stability, and a sense of belonging for individuals and families. It is significantly influenced by economic conditions, zoning laws, population density, land and infrastructure availability, and community preferences. Emmitsburg's housing profile highlights a growing and relatively affordable housing stock; however, affordability remains a significant challenge for low- to moderate-income households.

Housing Occupancy

Emmitsburg's housing supply grew by 2.9% from 2010 to 2020 and 24.1% from 2000 to 2010, while the County experienced a larger increase of 14.8% between 2010 and 2020 and 23.5% between 2000 and 2010. The increase in housing units in Town during this period is largely due to development in Brookfield, Pembroke, and Southgate, along with the conversion of part of the Daughters of Charity's property into 43 senior apartment units. These developments provided a mix of housing options, accommodating both family-oriented single-family homes and senior housing, but overall, Emmitsburg's housing market remains largely characterized by single-family detached homes.

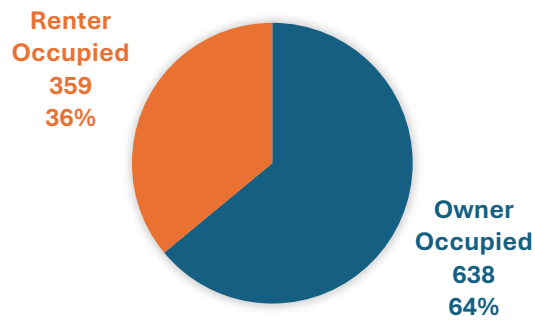
Table 3.3 Housing Occupancy Comparison Emmitsburg & Frederick County						
	Emmitsburg			Frederick County		
Census Year:	2020	2010	2000	2020	2010	2000
Number of Households:	1,042	997	811	98,358	84,800	70,060
Total Housing Units:	1,101	1,070	862	103,493	90,136	73,017
Surplus Units:	59	73	51	5,135	5,336	2,957
Vacancy Rate:	5.4%	6.8%	5.9%	5.0%	5.9%	4.1%
Source: US Decennial Census 2000-2020						

Figure 3.9
Housing Occupancy (2020)



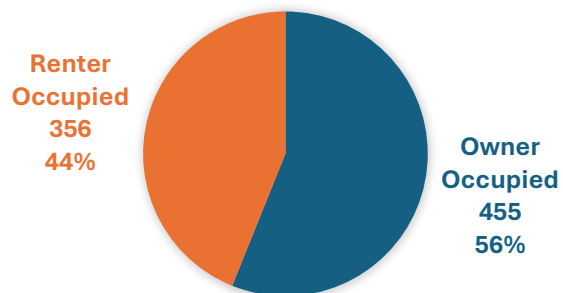
Source: US Decennial Census 2020

Figure 3.10
Housing Occupancy (2010)



Source: US Decennial Census 2010

Figure 3.11
Housing Occupancy (2000)



Source: US Decennial Census 2000

The 2023 ACS (American Community Survey) 5-Year Survey estimates that Emmitsburg has approximately 1,119 housing units. Since 2020, 48 additional homes have been added to the housing stock, as reported by property data from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation. This brings the total number of housing units in town to 1,149 as of 2024, representing a 4.4% increase since 2020. This increase can be attributed to the heightened demand for housing during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, many individuals and families sought to relocate from densely populated urban areas to smaller towns offering more spacious homes and a quieter lifestyle. The pandemic accelerated trends in remote work, allowing people greater flexibility to choose where they live. As a result, towns like Emmitsburg became attractive destinations for those seeking larger homes, more outdoor space, and a stronger sense of community.

Table 3.4 Emmitsburg Housing Profile 2024	
Total Housing Units	1,119
Total Number of Households	1,092
Owner- Occupied	799
Renter- Occupied	293
Vacant Housing Units	27
Single Family Detached	838
Single Family Attached	84
3 or more units	197
Source: 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates & Emmitsburg Planning Department	

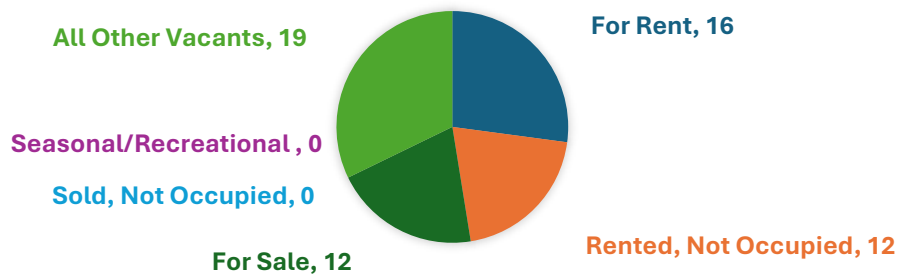
While Emmitsburg contains a mix of single-family detached homes, townhomes, and multifamily residential units, the town's zoning and historical development patterns have resulted in a predominance of single-family detached housing. As of 2024, single-family detached homes account for approximately 75% of all housing units, with 838 out of 1,149 units falling into this category. Townhomes, or single-family attached units, make up about 8% of the housing stock (84 units), while multifamily units (buildings with three or more units) account for 197 units, or approximately 18%.

The dominance of single-family detached homes can be attributed to factors such as zoning regulations, historical development patterns, and community preferences. Many of the town's major subdivisions—Brookfield, Pembroke, Southgate, Northgate, and Emmit Gardens—are zoned R-1, which requires a minimum lot size of 12,000 square feet, reinforcing a pattern of low-density, single-family residential development. While the town does allow some higher-density development, most of the existing housing stock reflects past policies favoring spacious, suburban-style residential areas. Emmitsburg's earlier housing growth aligned with regional commuting trends, where workers sought affordable single-family homes within driving distance of Frederick, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. The expansion of major transportation routes (US 15, US 70, I-270) made Emmitsburg an attractive location for homebuyers seeking affordability and larger lots, further reinforcing the development of detached homes over multifamily or mixed-use housing. The town's residential character has traditionally catered to families and homeowners who prioritize larger lot sizes, private yards, and a quieter suburban environment. While there is some demand for multifamily and rental housing, the

market has historically leaned toward homeownership over rental housing, contributing to the town's high percentage of detached single-family homes.

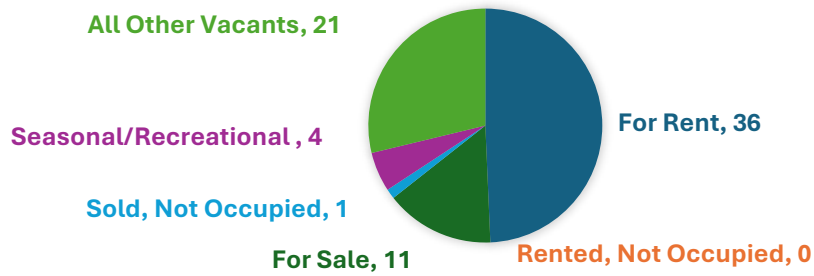
The Town's housing vacancies are generally higher than the County's. This vacancy rate can be attributed to the challenges the Town has faced in retaining existing businesses, amenities, and population, as well as attracting new ones. It's worth noting that while there is a housing surplus, this does not fully address the affordability challenges that may also contribute to the high vacancy rate. While housing in Emmitsburg may be relatively inexpensive compared to other surrounding large population centers, it can still be a significant expense for low-income residents.

Figure 3.12
Housing Vacancy (2020)



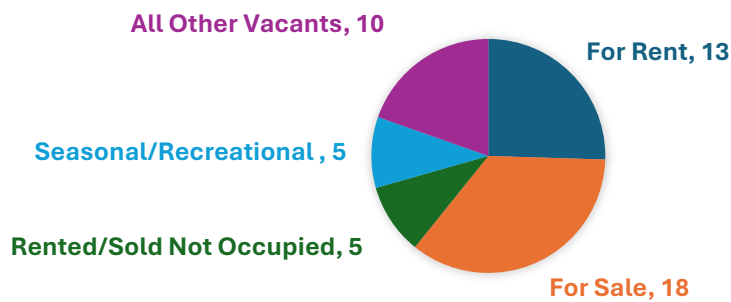
Source: US Decennial Census 2020

Figure 3.13
Housing Vacancy (2010)



Source: US Decennial Census 2010

Figure 3.14
Housing Vacancy (2000)



Source: US Decennial Census 2000

Housing Affordability

Affordability is a cornerstone of community development and quality life. Ensuring affordable housing is essential for fostering equitable, sustainable, and thriving communities. The analysis based on affordable workforce and low-income housing is important to assess inequality and gaps in meeting basic needs. Affordability is measured by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development's concept of Area Median Income (AMI). Housing is generally considered affordable if a household spends no more than 30% of its gross income on housing costs (rent/mortgage, utilities, and fees). Using AMI helps create a standardized threshold for determining who can afford housing in a given area. The income brackets based on the AMI HUD levels are low income with households earning 51%-80% of AMI, very low income with households earning 31%-50% of AMI, and extremely low income with households earning 30% or less of AMI.

AMI accounts for regional income disparities to provide a localized measure of affordability. By relating income to local AMI, planners and policymakers can determine whether housing options in a region are realistically affordable for the area's population. The Area Median Income (AMI) is determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is provided on a county-wide basis. As of 2024, the AMI for Frederick County, which includes Emmitsburg, is \$154,700. This AMI will be used as the basis for determining housing affordability in Emmitsburg.

Workforce housing refers to housing that is affordable for households earning between 60% and 120% of AMI for homeownership and between 50% and 100% of AMI for rental housing. In Emmitsburg, this translates to an income range of \$92,820

to \$185,640 for homeownership housing and between \$77,350 to \$185,640 for rental housing. A household with an income of \$77,350 should pay no more than \$1,934 per month in rent, as this represents 30% of their income. The median gross rent in Emmitsburg is \$777, which is significantly below the maximum affordable rent for someone earning at the lower end of the workforce housing income range. These figures suggest that housing in Emmitsburg appears to be relatively affordable; however, these may not fully capture the broader context or nuances of housing affordability in this town. Emmitsburg has a median income of \$78,986, meaning half of the households earn less than this amount and half earn more. With the figure being around 51% of the AMI in Frederick, it is reasonable to assume that many households face significant challenges in affording housing. This aligns with the fact that the town has the highest percentage of ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households in Frederick County, highlighting the financial struggles faced by many working families in the community.

Recognizing these challenges, the Town has taken proactive steps to support affordable housing and provide resources for residents in need. These partnerships have already proven successful, exemplified by the Town's collaboration with Homes for America and the Daughters of Charity Ministries to facilitate subsidized housing through an adaptive reuse project, which resulted in the development of the Seton Village and Lincoln on the Park senior apartment complexes. These projects demonstrate how strategic public-private partnerships can help address housing affordability while repurposing existing structures to meet community needs.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

1. Accommodate the population's needs by offering diverse housing options that support an inter-generational community, catering to residents of all ages, groups, and income levels.
2. Develop a robust comprehensive land-use program that promotes infill development, diverse housing options, and varying densities while preserving the Town's unique character.
3. Implement programs and policies to eliminate vacant and blighted buildings that can potentially be transformed into safe, livable housing units.

The objective of these goals is to foster a community that is inclusive, accessible, and sustainable. Inclusivity across demographics ensures that housing addresses the needs of all age groups, from young professionals and families to seniors who may require smaller, accessible, or assisted living arrangements. Offering affordable housing options for a range of income levels creates a community where all residents can enjoy safe and stable housing, regardless of financial status, age, or life circumstances. Diverse housing options also contribute to economic development by providing suitable accommodation for employees at various career stages, supporting a vibrant local workforce. This approach aligns with the vision of a connected and inclusive community, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual connection among residents. By implementing the following strategies and tracking progress through benchmarks and performance indicators, this vision can be transformed into reality.

Strategies

1. **Launch a Public Awareness Campaign:** Educate residents and stakeholders on the benefits of diverse housing, emphasizing its role in fostering resilient, inclusive, and connected communities.
2. **Partner with Community Organizations:** Collaborate with local groups to identify and address the specific housing needs of various demographic groups, such as seniors, young families, students, and low-income residents.
3. **Revise Zoning Regulations:** Update zoning policies to allow for greater housing diversity, including higher-density options and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), to accommodate a broader range of housing types.
4. **Prioritize Redevelopment of Underutilized Parcels:** Identify and focus on redeveloping underutilized properties, particularly in areas with existing infrastructure, to optimize land use.
5. **Establish a Vacant Property Registry:** Create a registry to monitor vacant and blighted properties, ensuring they are tracked and prioritized for redevelopment opportunities.
6. **Implement Design Review Guidelines:** Introduce a design review process to ensure new developments align with the community's aesthetic and historical character, maintaining compatibility with the town's identity.
7. **Collaborate on Rehabilitation Grants:** Work with property owners to secure grants for rehabilitating and repurposing vacant buildings into housing units, contributing to the community's housing stock.

8. **Strengthen Code Enforcement:** Launch a code enforcement initiative to address neglected properties, using notices and penalties to encourage property owners to rehabilitate blighted buildings.
9. **Incentivize Infill Development:** Explore and implement incentives, such as tax abatements, fee reductions, or expedited permitting, to encourage developers to build on vacant or underutilized lots within existing neighborhoods.

4

Economy & Fiscal Health

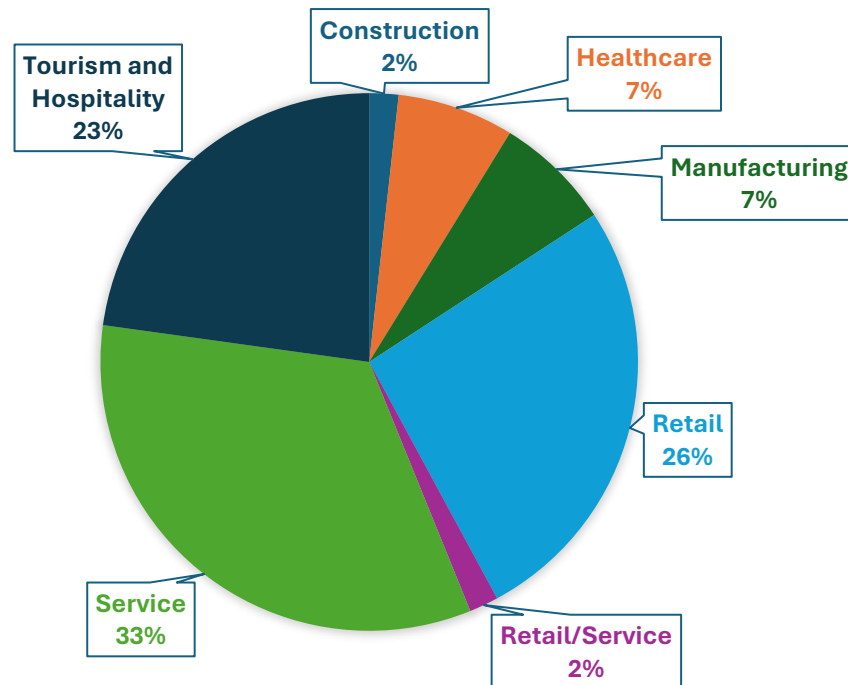
A basic examination of a community economic framework can shed light on the patterns of commercial land development in the area. This chapter provides details on employment and industry composition, income and poverty statistics, and overall business environment. These details aim to offer insights into the actions needed for Emmitsburg to achieve economic prosperity.

Economic Structure

Emmitsburg hosts various types of businesses, predominantly in the sectors of Retail, Service, and Tourism & Hospitality industries. While these businesses contribute to the Town's economic vitality, their numbers remain relatively modest. However, the Town's charming ambiance and proximity to popular tourist attractions (i.e., the grounds of National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton) present opportunities for growth in tourism-related industries. The Town boasts many buildings along Main Street and Seton Avenues with architectural styles that embody the cherished small-town charm that defines the community. These buildings present the great opportunity to attract more small businesses, including restaurants, cafes, boutiques, and other unique enterprises. Proactive measures can help capitalize on these opportunities for economic growth.

Table 4.1 Business Establishments by Sector (2024)	
Construction	1
Healthcare	4
Manufacturing	4
Retail	15
Retail/Service	1
Service	19
Tourism & Hospitality	13
Source: Emmitsburg Planning Department	

Figure 4.1
Business Establishments By Sector
within Corporate Limits of Emmitsburg (2024)



Emmitsburg has a small number of businesses due to a limited customer base influenced by its location and the size of the population. Moreover, this town was not immune to the challenges posed by the powerful market forces of COVID-19, which

disrupted supply chains and altered consumer behavior on a global scale. In recent years, the Town has seen increased interest in development, with a few projects advancing through the permitting process. With the right policies in place, the Town can capitalize on this development interest to drive the much-needed growth and economic revitalization.

Workforce, Employment, & Income

Workforce characteristics, employment levels, and income are closely intertwined and have a significant impact on a town's economic health, social conditions, and overall quality of life. Emmitsburg faces several challenges related to these factors, and implementing the right policies will be essential for promoting sustainable growth and enhancing the well-being of the community.

Place of Employment

Data shows that nearly three-quarters of Emmitsburg's working population commutes outside the town, with more than half facing commutes exceeding 30 minutes. This trend reveals that a significant portion of the workforce must travel considerable distances to earn a living wage, indicating that Emmitsburg's economy is heavily influenced by neighboring high-population centers.

Figure 4.2
Place Of Employment

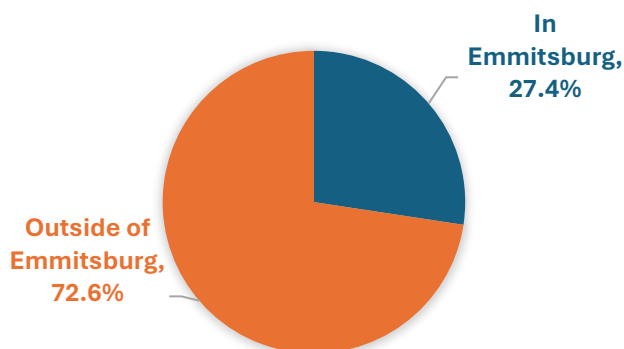


Table 4.2
Employment Locations of
Emmitsburg Residents

Work in Emmitsburg	27.4%
Work Outside of Emmitsburg	72.6%
Work in Frederick County	75.3%
Work in Maryland	88.4%
Work outside of Maryland	11.6%
Source: 2022 American Community Survey Estimates	

This dependence impacts economic stability, as economic downturns or job losses in these neighboring areas could directly impact residents' livelihoods in Emmitsburg. Additionally, the town experiences a leakage of economic benefits, as much of the income earned by commuting residents is likely spent where they work rather than within this town. The long commutes also negatively affect residents' quality of life, reducing time available for family and community activities and potentially leading to lower overall satisfaction. This dissatisfaction may contribute to outmigration, as residents seek to move closer to their workplaces.

While it's not practical for the entire population to rely solely on this town's economy for employment, having a portion of residents working within Emmitsburg can make a significant impact. Local employment opportunities can be expanded by implementing policies that attract more businesses to the town. With a significant number of people now working remotely in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era, Emmitsburg has the chance to position itself as an appealing place for these workers to settle. By creating a welcoming environment that caters to remote workers, the

town can encourage them to spend more of their income locally. Enhancing amenities and boosting economic activities will help draw this population, leading to growth. These, in turn, will generate economic benefits and improve the community's well-being, addressing the current gaps.

Household Income

As shown in Table 4.3, Emmitsburg has a significantly lower median household income compared to both the County and the State, correlating with elevated poverty levels relative to these larger geographical entities.

Table 4.3 Employment & Income			
	Emmitsburg	Frederick County	State of Maryland
Median Household Income	\$74,563	\$119,122	\$94,991
Employment Rate	59.5%	67.8%	63.7%
Poverty Rate	12.3%	5.1%	9.6%
Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates			

The town's economic landscape mirrors the widespread financial challenges faced by ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households, which make up 52% of the total households in the town. ALICE families are employed but earn incomes that fall short of covering the cost of living, including essentials such as housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, and food. With the highest percentage of ALICE families in Frederick County as of 2023, Emmitsburg exemplifies

the challenges faced by individuals whose incomes are insufficient to meet the rising costs of living.

The high proportion of households with limited disposable income after covering basic needs leads to reduced consumer spending on non-essential goods and services. This decline in spending weakens demand for local businesses, hindering economic growth and potentially leading to business closures or job losses. Additionally, ALICE households often experience limited economic mobility, which can stifle the overall economic dynamism of the community. Addressing the needs of ALICE families is crucial for fostering economic stability and growth. Beyond utilizing resources from the United Way of Frederick County, the Town can continue to address the unique challenges faced by the ALICE population by leveraging public-private partnerships to expand support and housing opportunities.

Town Fiscal Health

Table 4.4 Emmitsburg Tax Revenue FY23			
Real Estate Taxes	# of Properties	% of all Properties	Total Tax Revenue \$\$ Amount
Residential	889	86%	\$633,625
Non-Residential	109	10%	\$164,287
Total Taxable	998	96%	\$797,912
Exempt Properties	41	4%	\$ 0
Total Properties	1039	100%	\$797,912
Source: Town of Emmitsburg Accounting Office			

Table 4.5 Other Revenue Sources in Emmitsburg FY23	
Personal Property Tax	\$45,513
Local Income Tax Sharing	\$344,884
State Highway Use Tax	\$144,143
State Aid Police	\$17,873
County Tax Equity	\$482,331
Grants Received	\$622,728.25
Source: Town of Emmitsburg Accounting Office	

The Town's fiscal health, as reflected in FY23 tax revenue and other revenue sources, reveals a heavy reliance on residential property taxes and external funding, with limited contributions from non-residential properties. Residential properties, which account for 86% of all taxable properties, generated \$633,625 in FY23, while non-residential properties, comprising only 10% of the taxable base, contributed \$164,287. Exempt properties make up 4% of all properties, further limiting the taxable base. This significant reliance on residential taxes indicates a lack of diversity in the town's revenue streams, leaving Emmitsburg vulnerable to economic downturns or fluctuations in the housing market.

Non-residential properties contribute a relatively small portion of overall tax revenue, underscoring the need for economic strategies that promote commercial and industrial development to balance the tax base. Additionally, a substantial portion of the town's revenue comes from external sources such as grants, county tax

equity, and state programs. While these sources are essential to sustaining fiscal operations, they also create a dependency that poses financial risks if state or county funding priorities change. Diversifying revenue streams and encouraging non-residential growth are crucial steps toward ensuring the town's long-term fiscal stability.

Main Street Affiliation

The Main Street grassroots movement, launched by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is a comprehensive revitalization strategy aimed at reinvigorating towns by focusing on economic development, historic preservation, and community engagement. The program achieves this by encouraging small business growth, enhancing infrastructure, and celebrating a town's unique cultural and architectural assets. Successful implementation of these efforts can strengthen local economies, attract tourism, and foster a sense of pride and identity among residents. By revitalizing downtown areas—which often serve as the economic and social heart of a community—towns can experience increased foot traffic, job creation, and renewed vibrancy, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

The Main Street program operates under a tiered structure designed to support communities at different stages of downtown revitalization. Full Designation represents the highest level of recognition within the program and signifies an accredited Main Street community. To achieve this status, a town must meet rigorous standards established by the National Main Street Center and often by state or regional Main Street programs. These standards include establishing a formal organizational structure, securing consistent funding sources, appointing a

dedicated Main Street manager to oversee program implementation, developing a revitalization strategy based on the *Four-Point Approach* (Organization, Economic Vitality, Design, and Promotion), and setting clear goals with annual work plans and measurable outcomes. Full designation offers significant benefits, such as access to funding opportunities, exclusive grants, and technical assistance to advance revitalization efforts.

The Affiliate Program is a tier for towns in the early stages of adopting the Main Street approach. While it requires some organizational structure and demonstrated community support, the standards are less stringent compared to full accreditation. This tier serves as a steppingstone, providing access to resources like workshops, webinars, and networking opportunities, as well as guidance to help towns progress toward full designation.

Emmitsburg is currently a Main Street Affiliate with the goal of achieving full designation. Public workshops held during this comprehensive plan process revealed strong community support for this initiative, as it aligns with residents' aspirations for economic development and a vibrant downtown. Participants expressed a desire to see a variety of stores, restaurants, and small businesses in town, which would help revitalize the local economy, attract visitors, and enhance the quality of life. However, the town faces several challenges that have slowed its progress, primarily due to capacity issues. A small population and leadership gaps have hindered the organizational development needed for formal accreditation. Limited community buy-in and a shortage of volunteers have slowed momentum. The town's struggling local economy, marked by insufficient business investment and interest, further complicates efforts to drive visible revitalization. However, with the development of new subdivisions and an expanding housing market, Emmitsburg has

an opportunity to attract more residents, increase investment, and generate the economic activity needed to support its journey toward becoming a fully designated Main Street community.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen Emmitsburg's local economy and business environment.
2. Improve local employment opportunities and workforce development.
3. Address income inequality and Support ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Households.

The objective of these goals is to address economic and social challenges that Emmitsburg faces while aligning the community's expressed desire for growth. Residents have voiced concerns about the town's underperforming economy and the lack of variety in local businesses. These goals align with the community's visions for a prosperous economy. Survey and workshop participants also highlighted interest in industries such as light manufacturing, distribution centers, and tourism-related services. These goals respond to the desire for stable, local employment options. Community input also emphasized the need for affordable childcare, housing, and better access to resources. With over half of Emmitsburg households falling into the ALICE category, addressing income inequality is critical. Therefore, another objective of these goals is to uplift ALICE households by connecting them to assistance programs, creating economic mobility and supporting affordable living solutions.

Strategies

- 1. Support Small Businesses:** Facilitate access to funding opportunities for small businesses to help them establish and grow within the town. Promote “shop local” initiatives through targeted campaigns that highlight the benefits of supporting local businesses, create a loyalty program offering rewards for purchases at Emmitsburg businesses, and organize community events and markets that encourage residents to shop and dine locally.
- 2. Leverage Tourism:** Continue to promote existing tourist attractions through regional marketing efforts and partnerships.
- 3. Enhance Infrastructure:** Continue to use available grants to fund sidewalks and parking improvements in the downtown area to attract both visitors and businesses. Identify opportunities to renovate and repurpose underutilized buildings, transforming them into spaces for new businesses.
- 4. Implement a Main Street improvement program** that restores historic buildings, revitalizes public spaces, and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes to attract residents and tourists who will support local businesses.
- 5. Attract new industries:** Collaborate with nearby counties or economic development organizations to market the town as a location for light manufacturing, small-scale R&D, or distribution centers. Emphasize the town’s affordability and charm to attract businesses looking for cost-effective locations.
- 6. Continue to support local outreach programs that connect ALICE households** with various assistance programs, including financial literacy workshops, job training, childcare services, food assistance, healthcare access, transportation support, and other available resources.

5**Environment & Natural Resources**

Examination of the natural environment and resources can reveal steps that are needed to protect them while fostering harmony with the built environment. This chapter delves into the details of environmental factors that can guide thoughtful planning for the future. The analysis is followed by a set of goals and strategies to ensure a sustainable balance between growth and environmental preservation.

Geographic Influence on Development

Emmitsburg's development has been strongly influenced by its natural surroundings. Its location on the Piedmont Plateau, at the base of the Catoclin Mountains and eastern edge of Appalachian Mountain Range, creates a landscape of rolling hills, fertile valleys, and small waterways. The town is located within the Tom's Creek watershed, a sub-watershed of the Upper Monocacy River Watershed, which spans 966 square miles and includes regions of south-central Pennsylvania and Maryland's Frederick County. This area is part of the larger Chesapeake Bay watershed, which stretches from Upstate New York through Pennsylvania and Maryland. This setting offers scenic views and natural features that contribute to the town's appeal and support for community development. Its location away from major population centers, such as Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Frederick, provides a setting suitable for those seeking a quieter lifestyle with less metropolitan congestion. To retain its small-town charm, the Town should manage growth by incorporating design principles that align with and protect its natural features.

Geological Characteristics

Emmitsburg's geological and soil composition shape the local topography and hydrology. The Town's geology is closely tied to formations such as the Wissahickon, Weverton, and Metarholite Formations, along with associated pyroclastic sediments, which collectively define the Upper Monocacy River watershed, Catoclin Mountains, and Piedmont province. With its location within the Piedmont Valley, Emmitsburg is characterized by the New Oxford Formation, Gettysburg Shale, and Frederick and Grove Limestone, with minimal presence of the Antietam Formation, Diabase Sills & Dikes, Harpers Formation, and Ijamsville Formation.

Emmitsburg's soils include varieties like the Penn series, Readington, Croton, and Lehigh soils. The town's soil includes varieties like Penn series, Readington, Croton, and Lehigh soils. In the western part of the town, hydric soils, which form under saturated conditions, are prevalent. The town's soil composition varies widely, from nearly level to very steep, and from well-drained to poorly drained soils, originating from red shale, siltstone, and sandstone on steep ridges, hills, and lowlands.

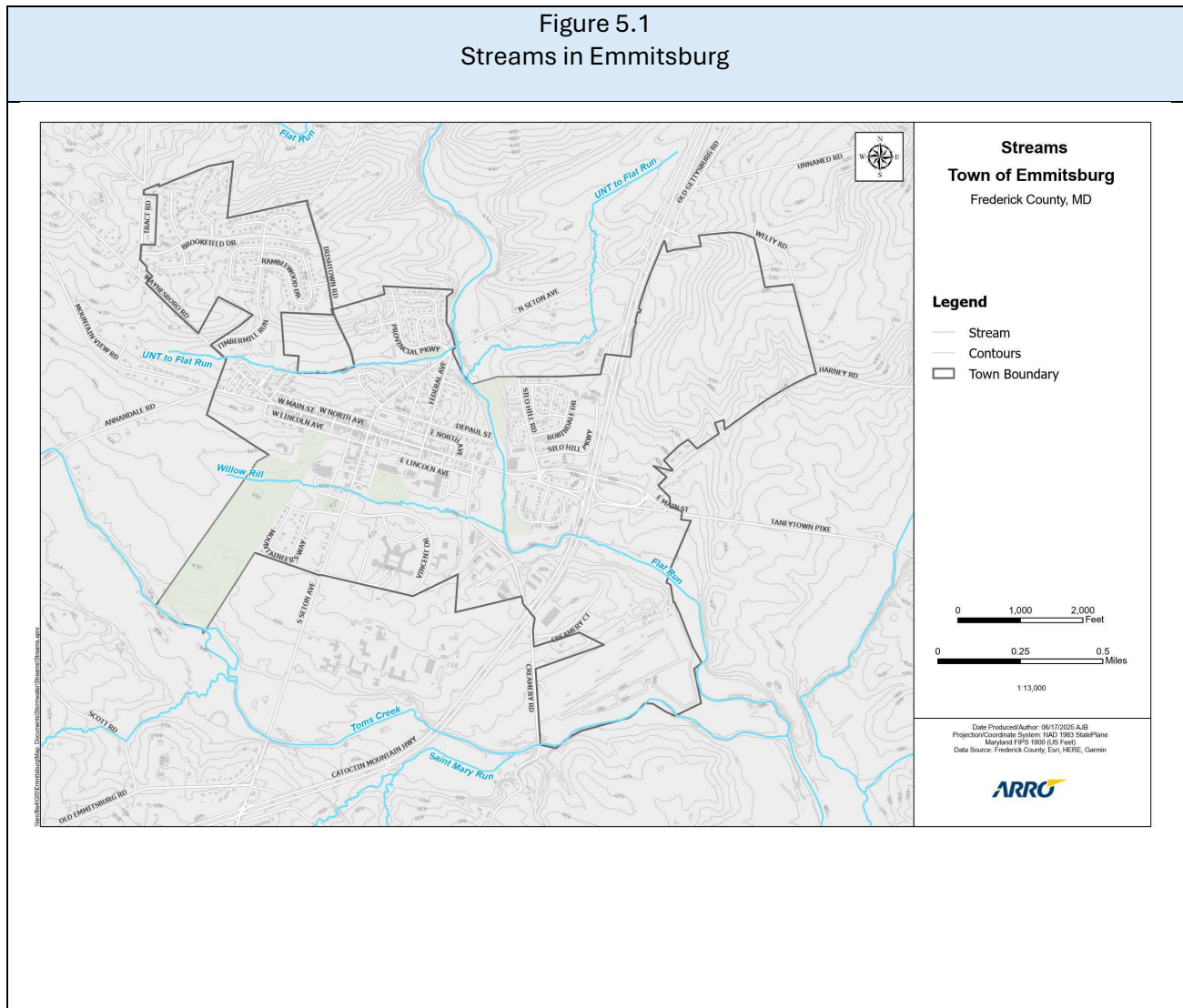
Emmitsburg's landscape features moderately sloped terrain, with steeper slopes near the Mason-Dixon Line and along sections of Flat Run and Tom's Creek. Steep slopes, defined as terrain with an incline exceeding 22.5 degrees or a 25 percent grade, are prone to erosion and flooding when disturbed for development or agriculture. The Town owns about 1,300 acres on College Mountain, much of which consists of steep terrain. The ownership of the Rainbow Lake watershed area protects the town's wells and reservoir, and its elevated position supports a gravity-fed water distribution system.

Water Resources

Surface Waters & Stream Buffers

Located in the Tom's Creek watershed, the town's high-relief topography shapes its intricate natural landscape. Water from the Catoclin Mountains flows into the town's streams and floodplains. Flat Run, a perennial stream within the town, is fed by three intermittent streams: 1) Willow Rill, running south of Main Street and crossing South Seton Avenue; 2) Little Run (Tributary No. 40), which flows north of Main Street and meets Flat Run near North Seton Avenue; and 3) Tributary No. 41, which flows southwest from north of North Seton Avenue, joining Flat Run south of North Seton Avenue. Flat Run then flows into Tom's Creek, which touches the southern edge of the town, eventually merging with the Monocacy River, Potomac River, and ultimately Chesapeake Bay. Another notable source of surface water is Rainbow Lake. Although it's outside of municipal boundaries, this 33-million-gallon surface water reservoir is the primary source of water for the Town. Rainbow Lake is situated within a scenic natural setting at the base of Catoclin Mountain, and while it primarily functions as a water source, it also offers recreational opportunities, such as fishing, hiking, trail running, and mountain biking, in the surrounding area.

Figure 5.1
Streams in Emmitsburg



Over the years, the Town has worked to implement and protect the existing vegetative buffers around its streams. Vegetative buffers are zones of natural or planted vegetation, including grasses, shrubs, and trees, situated alongside water bodies. They serve as protective barriers between the water and surrounding land. These buffers filter pollutants like sediment, excess nutrients, and chemicals from stormwater runoff before they reach the water. The plant roots help stabilize streambanks, reducing erosion, while the vegetation absorbs excess rainwater and

runoff, naturally slowing the flow and decreasing the risk of flooding in nearby areas. In addition to these protective functions, vegetative buffers provide vital habitat for wildlife and help regulate the temperature of streams by offering shade. They also enhance the landscape's aesthetic appeal, creating scenic areas for recreation and relaxation. As the Town pursues future developments, it must continue to prioritize the preservation of these buffers by upholding all buffer standards. These standards should specify the required width and coverage along the streams to ensure the continued environmental benefits these buffers provide.

Groundwater

Over 50% of the Town's water supply comes from groundwater extracted by several wells, which are presently operational as per regulatory directives. The wells vary in depth and are maintained under specific Groundwater Appropriation Permits from the Maryland Department of the Environment. Water travels from its distribution system through Hampton Valley and Annandale Road to the town.

Groundwater replenishment is facilitated by precipitation within a watershed, and such phenomenon is significantly influenced by vegetative cover and impervious surfaces in the area. Vegetative cover enhances infiltration of precipitation since root systems of plants create pathways for water to percolate into the ground. On the other hand, impervious surfaces such as concrete and asphalt prevent water from infiltrating into the soil, reducing the amount of groundwater available and increasing flooding and erosion from runoff. As the Town undergoes further development, the importance of maintaining vegetative cover and minimizing the effects of impervious surfaces should be recognized so that sources of water are sustained.

Wetlands & Floodplains

Wetlands in Emmitsburg are predominantly situated within the floodplain associated with Tom's Creek. These areas are regularly inundated by surface or groundwater, providing enough moisture to support a habitat for various forms of plants and aquatic life. These store and gradually release water from the soil's saturated root zone into surface bodies, groundwater, and the atmosphere. Floodplains are low-lying areas, typically adjacent to streams or other bodies of water, that are subject to flooding during periods of high-water levels. Some of the wetlands in Emmitsburg are within the regulatory floodway. These areas are to remain free of encroachment to allow floodwater to pass through without raising water levels beyond a specified limit.

Wetlands help maintain water tables, recharge groundwater, filter organic compounds and nutrients, and support rare species while serving as breeding grounds for birds, fish, and reptiles. These environments, including swamps, marshes, bogs, wet meadows, river overflows, mudflats, and ponds, are vital for regulating water in a watershed. The Town recognizes the importance of preserving this area and enforces regulations outlined in the Floodplain Management Ordinance in the Town Code. This ordinance covers various aspects such as flood protection setbacks, development affecting flood-carrying capacity, elevation requirements for residential and nonresidential structures, limitations on the use of fill, and guidelines for horizontal additions and accessory structures. Enforcement mechanisms, including permitting, notice of violations, and penalties are also addressed in this ordinance. As of 2023, none of the wetlands in

Emmitsburg have been designated as wetlands of special concern by the State of Maryland; this is an indication that the wetlands in Town are relatively stable.

Environmental Corridors

Environmental Corridors or stretches of ecological habitat that connect fragmented landscapes and allow movement of plants and animals between different areas. These areas play an important role in maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem functions as they facilitate dispersal of various species. The natural lands, forests, streams, and wooded areas within Emmitsburg serve as environmental corridors, playing a crucial role in mitigating stormwater runoff, pollution, and temperature fluctuations. The Town enforces regulations to safeguard the environment, requiring developers to incorporate forest conservation and stormwater management best practices into their plans. This ensures the preservation and enhancement of these vital ecological assets for the benefit of the community and the surrounding environment.

In its ongoing commitment to environmentally responsible practices, the Town has consistently demonstrated proactive measures to manage stormwater runoff and enhance water quality. In 2018, the Town received a Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) Permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment, directing efforts to manage stormwater runoff in compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Utilizing a range of best management practices (BMPs), the town addresses up to 20% of its impervious surfaces and implements additional control measures such as street sweeping, catch basin cleaning, public education, and outreach to meet the MS4 Permit requirements. Regular circulation of educational materials aims to inform

residents about minimizing pollutant discharge from stormwater runoff. Furthermore, in 2019, the town introduced a rain barrel program, providing residents with affordable access to essential equipment and fostering active involvement in preserving the health of local streams. In 2023, the town successfully concluded a significant project funded by a grant—a sophisticated stormwater management pond in the Silo Hill subdivision, designed to fulfill state requirements. These collective efforts underscore the town's holistic approach towards stormwater management and fostering community engagement in the preservation of local water resources.

Climate Change

Climate change results from an increase in greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere. The long-term shifts in global or regional climate patterns are characterized by temperature, precipitation changes, and extreme weather events (i.e., floods, droughts, heatwaves etc.). As of 2024, many communities across the globe have experienced the devastating impacts of climate change. Emmitsburg is not immune to its far-reaching impacts. Extreme weather patterns such as droughts and heavy rainfall have already posed challenges to the Town's infrastructure and resources. Prolonged droughts threaten to deplete the Town's water supply that relies heavily on both surface and groundwater sources. With water demand expected to rise due to population growth and development, the risk of water shortages becomes a pressing concern. This underscores the need for proactive resource management and conservation strategies.

The Town has already faced significant strain on its sewer system due to heavy rainfall. In 2023, flooding from intense rainfall overwhelmed a pump station, causing a sewage overflow that leaked onto nearby land and into a local creek. While the Town was able to promptly hire a contractor to resolve the issue, the incident highlights the potential impacts of climate change. Such events not only disrupt local services but also increase maintenance costs and pose serious public health risks through the contamination of waterways.

Extreme weather events also threaten the integrity of the Emmitsburg Dam. Damage to the dam could have devastating consequences, including flooding, property damage, and interruptions to the Town's water supply. To mitigate these risks, the Town has an Emergency Action Plan for the dam, which is updated annually to ensure preparedness for potential emergencies. Ensuring that the dam and associated infrastructure are properly maintained and fortified against extreme weather is essential to the Town's resilience.

Given these risks, it is imperative for Emmitsburg to integrate climate adaptation and resilience planning into its long-term strategies. The Town already engages in water conservation initiatives, enhancing stormwater management systems, and conducting regular assessments of critical infrastructure like the dam. By maintaining these efforts, the Town can protect its resources and ensure the well-being of its residents and environment for future generations.

Goals & Objectives

1. Safeguard natural resources and water systems to ensure long-term ecological integrity by minimizing the environmental impact of development on these vital ecosystems.

2. Ensure new development aligns with the Town's natural landscape and minimizes environmental impact.
3. Enhance climate resilience in infrastructure and planning.
4. Increase public awareness of environmental issues and foster community stewardship of natural resources and sustainable practices

The objective of these goals is to enhance environmental sustainability, promote climate resilience, and preserve the natural resources of Emmitsburg.

Strategies

1. Periodically evaluate the buffer zones around Flat Run, Tom's Creek, and other wetlands to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of healthy vegetative buffers where necessary.
2. Create and implement a water conservation program that provides incentives for rainwater harvesting, water-efficient landscaping, and the installation of rain gardens in residential areas.
3. Develop and implement a native tree planting program to improve water retention and boost biodiversity.
4. Establish design guidelines for developments that protect scenic views of the Catoctin Mountains and Piedmont Valley, encouraging projects that blend with the natural environment while preserving key sightlines.
5. Revise zoning ordinances to promote compact, low-impact developments and incorporate climate-resilient building standards.
6. Launch a community-wide environmental stewardship program that includes volunteer opportunities for stream cleanups and tree planting.

7. Host educational workshops on sustainable gardening, water conservation, and green building techniques, targeting homeowners and businesses in Emmitsburg to increase the adoption of sustainable practices.
8. Partner with local schools and conservation organizations to develop hands-on environmental education programs, including outdoor learning activities around the town's natural resources such as Rainbow Lake, Tom's Creek, and the Catoctin Mountains.

6**Land Use & Community Design**

Examination of land use patterns and their impacts on the community can reveal opportunities to improve space for housing, commerce, and public amenities while preserving the town’s character. This chapter explores the intricacies of land use planning, considering how development decisions shape the future of the built environment. The analysis is followed by a set of goals and strategies aimed at promoting efficient and responsible land use that supports economic growth, enhances quality of life, and ensures the protection of vital community assets.

Land Use Patterns

Emmitsburg exhibits a diverse blend of land uses, encompassing residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, and conservation focused areas. The heart of the downtown village closely resembles the Town’s traditional developmental design. It features historical structures and a grid network of relatively narrow streets, most notably along Main Street and Seton Avenues within one or two blocks of the central square. Conventional suburban style development has emerged, marked by wider, curvilinear streets and more spacious lots in the Town’s residential districts. Residential developments are exclusively situated to the west of US Route 15, while the eastern side of the highway encompasses a mix of uses related to commercial, industrial, institutional, and conservation.

Zoning Districts

The zoning ordinance establishes 10 Euclidean designations, separating land uses into distinct categories. In the town center, there is a single mixed-use zone, accounting for less than 2% of the town's total area. Acknowledging the limitations of rigidly separated land uses, the town has adopted a more progressive approach by incorporating a floating zone to enhance flexibility in planning.

Table 6.1 Acreage of Land by Zoning Districts	
C-R	212.51
R-1	91.46
R-2	35.13
R-3	14.62
B-1	2.23
B-2	106.10
IP	56.90
ORI	5.53
INST	236.55
VZ	9.94
Total	770.97

Figure 6.1
Acreage of Land by Zoning Districts

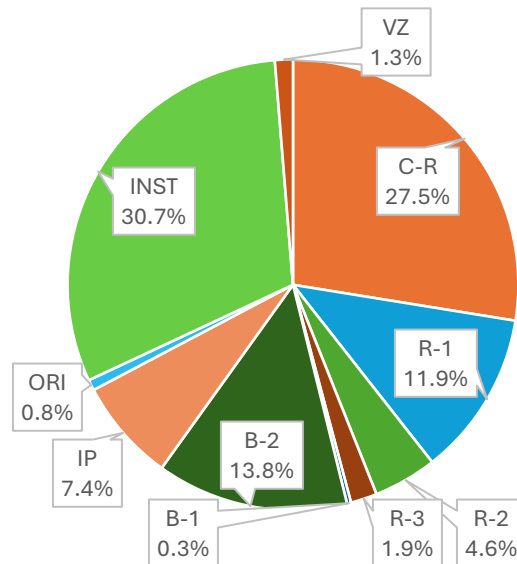


Table 6.2
Residential Zones

There are multiple residential neighborhoods characterized by single-family homes, townhouses, and apartments in Town. Nearly all low-density residential expansion has extended from the village center mainly towards the west. These new developments are distinguishable by the presence of cul-de-sacs and suburban street layouts, which differ from the traditional grid street pattern observed in other parts of the town.	
Residential Suburban (R-S)	Established by the zoning ordinance but not present on the zoning map. Upon annexation, an area will automatically be classified as R-S unless otherwise specified by the annexation resolution or changed by ordinance.
Low-Density Residential (R-1)	Allows for single-family residential units characterized by spacious lots and ample green areas. The minimum lot size is 12,000 square feet with a minimum lot width of 85 feet. Property requirements include a front yard setback of 35 feet, a side yard setback of 12 feet, and a rear yard setback of 30 feet. This zoning district permits not only single-family homes but also planned-unit developments, community facilities, and specific business uses within historic structures.
Medium-Density Residential (R-2)	Promotes compact development while preserving green spaces, potentially for recreational purposes, and avoids locations like floodplains and steep slopes that are unsuitable for construction. The minimum lot size falls within the range of 6,000 to 8,000 square feet, with mandatory setbacks of 35-foot front, 10-foot side, and 30-foot

	rear setbacks. In addition to all the permitted uses in the R-1 zoning district, this district accommodates duplexes and townhouses. For townhouses, there are specific regulations in place, allowing a density of 7.26 units per acre. Typically, townhouses require a 25-foot front yard setback and a 35-foot rear yard setback.
High Density Residential (R-3)	Aims to offer a variety of housing options that grant residents access to street networks and activity centers while promoting the creation of green spaces. Lot sizes here range from 6,000 to 8,000 square feet including a 35-foot front, 10-foot side, and a 30-foot rear yard setback. The R-3 zoning district accommodates multifamily residences in addition to the permitted uses of R-1 and R-2 zones. Townhouses are also permitted with a density limit of 7.26 units per acre.

Table 6.3
Commercial Zones

Various service-related and some retail businesses are located within the historic downtown and in designated commercial zones, mainly to the east near the junction of the Catoctin Mountain Highway and US Route 140.	
Neighborhood Business District (B-1):	Permits a diverse blend of retail and service businesses designed for pedestrian accessibility. Permitted uses include lodging, retail operations, food & beverage establishments, pharmaceutical services, and recreational enterprises, as well as professional

	services, all in accordance with the definitions outlined in §17.20.020 of the Emmitsburg Zoning Ordinance.
General Business District (B-2):	Allows for grouping of shopping, service, office, and entertainment establishments while ensuring the necessary provisions for vehicular access and pedestrian safety. Allowable uses include all those allowed in the B-1 district, along with additional types of businesses such as banks, repair services, service stations, restaurants, and car wash facilities

Table 6.4
Mixed-Use Zone

Village Zone (VZ)	The area surrounding the intersection of Main Street (MD Route 140) and Seton Avenue (Business Route 15), extending approximately half a mile in each direction, permits a wide variety of uses. These include medium to high-density residential developments, community facilities, health care services, lodging, places of worship, neighborhood retail, business and professional offices, banks, and essential services such as fire and rescue. This is also the Historic District, which is recognized on the National Register of Historic Places and includes 216 contributing buildings.
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Table 6.5 Other Non-Residential Zones	
Industrial	Accommodates both light and heavy industrial uses that may be unsuitable for typical commercial or industrial zones due to their scale or nature. Permitted activities include warehousing, storage, and light manufacturing, as long as they do not cause significant environmental disturbances or noise pollution. The existing industrial zones focus on supporting these light industrial operations while minimizing environmental impacts.
Institutional	Designated for the purpose of hosting civic, educational, and cultural activities, which may include libraries, meeting halls, schools, fire and rescue stations, post offices, government buildings, memorials, amphitheaters, museums, places of worship, and similar types of facilities.
Office, Research, and Industrial (ORI)	This zoning district allows research and development functions, comprising of office spaces and limited manufacturing activities. Allowable uses include light manufacturing, research and testing facilities, offices, public buildings, restaurants, and hotels/motels.

Figure 6.2
Zoning Map

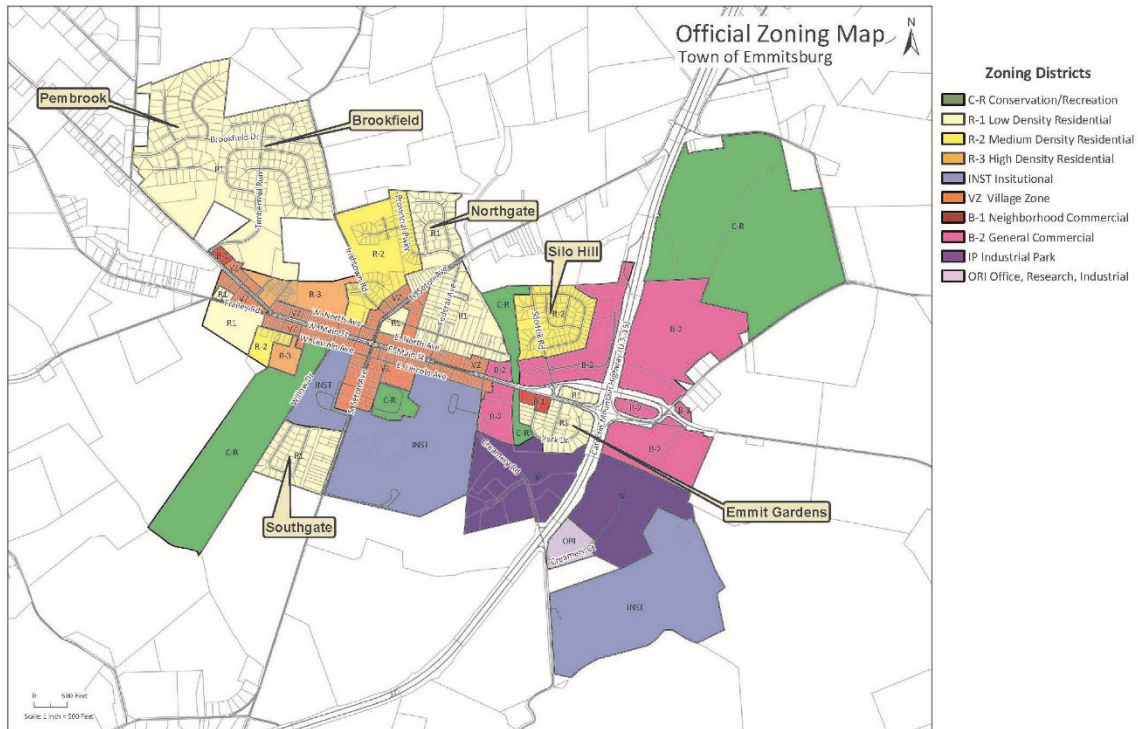


Table 6.6
Floating Zones

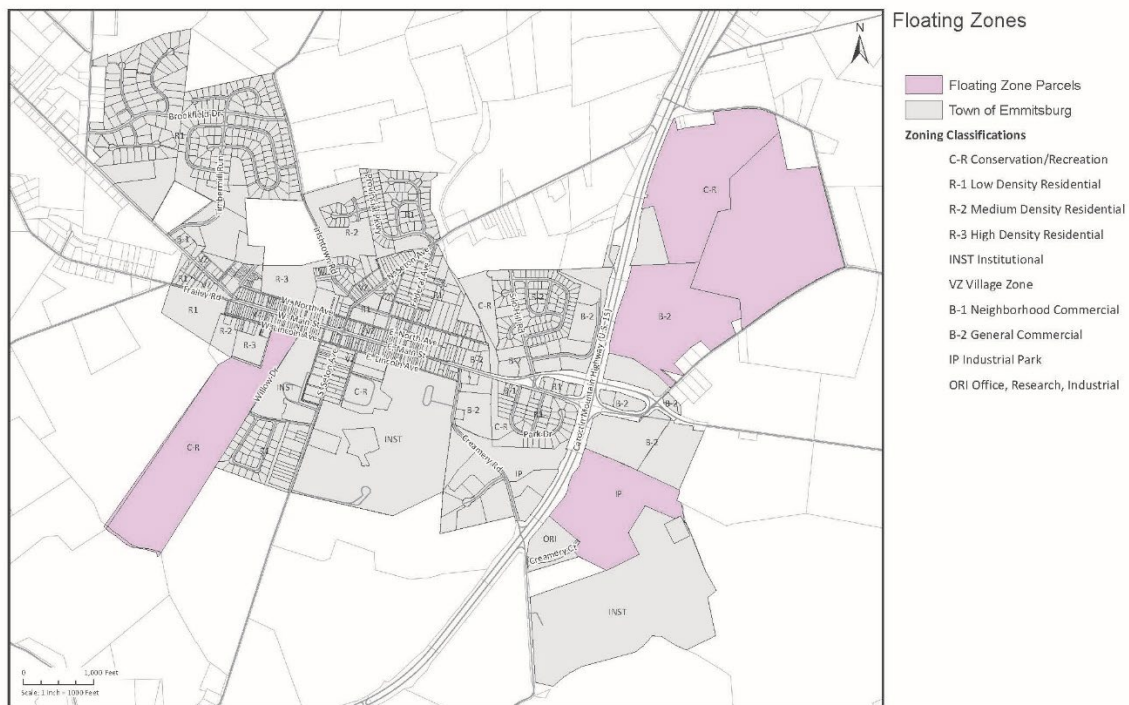
Economic Development Flex District (EDFD):

In 2023, the Town implemented a flexible zoning district, which is not fixed to a specific location, but can be applied to different areas based on specific criteria or conditions. The purpose of the EDFD is to allow flexibility for compact land development

	design that is generally possible under the Town’s B-2, ORI, and IP zoning districts on parcels 25 acres or greater. The Floating Zone regulations seek to balance economic growth, environmental preservation, and efficient development while aligning with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and the objectives of the Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway.
Planned Unit Development (PUD)	Planned Unit Developments or PUD’s is an existing permitted use/land use arrangement in each of the Residential Districts. As currently defined in the Town Code a “Planned Unit Development” means a development comprised of a combination of land uses or varying intensities of the same land use in accordance with an integrated plan that provides flexibility in land use design approved by the town with at least twenty (20) percent of the land permanently dedicated to open space and correspond to the town's institutional (INST) zoning classification. The purpose of a planned unit development as a floating zone or optional method of development is intended to provide flexible design of residential communities within the Town to support creative site planning and land use arrangement in order to establish a built environment that maintains and enhances neighborhood character and aesthetics, and offers various levels of interaction to all members of the community while allowing for innovative design. The Town recognizes that to achieve the overarching comprehensive plan goals, there are inherent design

characteristics and needs that require alternative regulatory standards from what has previously been established and implemented in conventional subdivisions.

Figure 6.3
Floating Zones

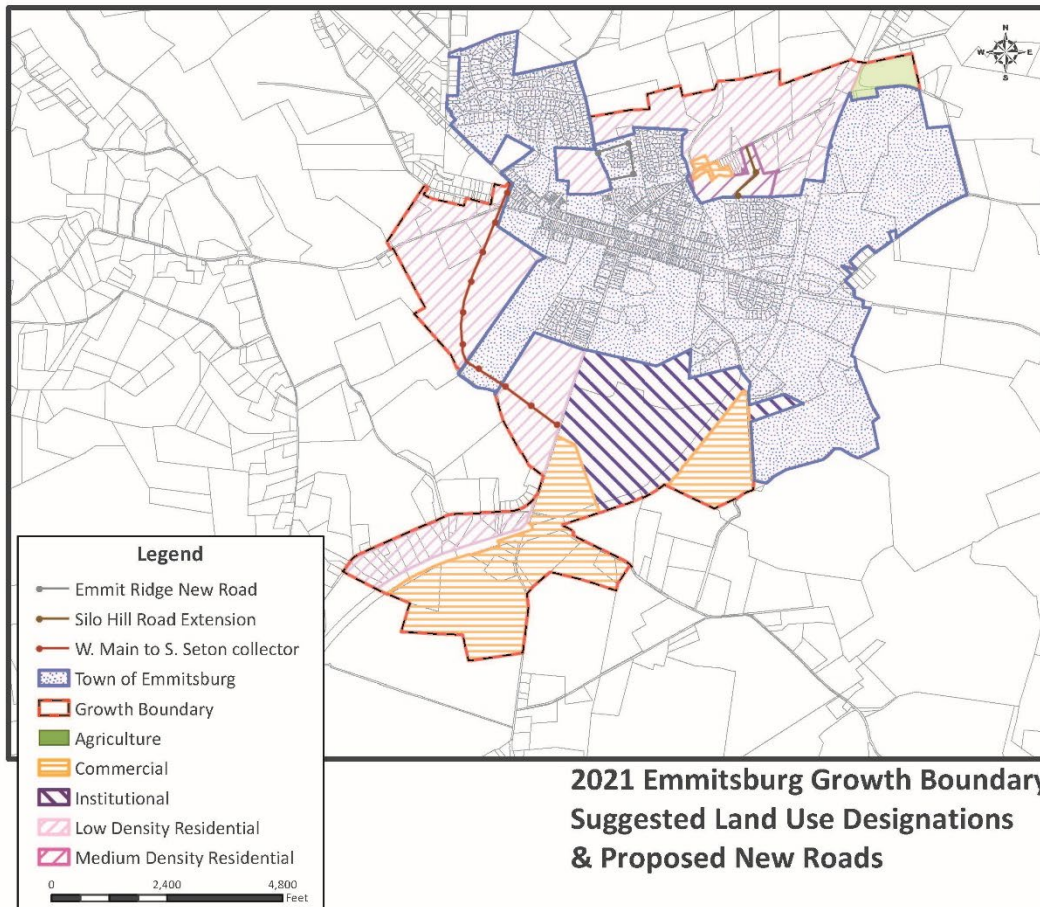


Growth Boundary & Opportunity Areas

Establishing growth boundaries is a strategic approach to planning future development and expanding public infrastructure. These boundaries help control unnecessary sprawl and guide sustainable growth. Growth Opportunity Areas (GOAs) offer a more flexible secondary growth tier to the typically rigid Growth Boundary Areas (GBAs). GOAs create a buffer beyond the established GBA, allowing for adaptability in response to unforeseen needs, such as infrastructure expansion or new economic development opportunities. Emmitsburg is a small-town, bedroom community with a unique location and ample available land. This positions the town as a prime candidate for future employment centers and a vibrant mixed-use community. Preserving its charming, small-town character while fostering growth requires a carefully planned growth boundary to realizing the town's full potential.

The Town's current growth boundary, established in 2021 after careful evaluation against state criteria. It outlines land use plans through 2030, designating areas for residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial purposes. These designations are aligned with the County's growth objectives.

Figure 6.4
Current Growth Boundary



The map shows a designated area for low-density residential use spanning approximately 449 acres. This area already includes several single-family lots and residential units. Additionally, the designated medium-density residential within the growth boundary covers 23 acres and was earmarked for uses permitted under R-2 in the Town's zoning ordinance. Such inclusions align with the County's plans and facilitates connectivity to Mount St. Mary's University. The institutional designation within the growth boundary occupies 188 acres, comprising properties already

developed by Daughters of Charity and FEMA/NETC. These areas were included to ensure continuity for the proposed annexation of adjacent properties. Commercial designations encompass roughly 255 acres, including vacant land owned by Mount St. Mary's University and Daughters of Charity. This area currently houses a few businesses including a gas station, two restaurants, an auto-service garage, and a rehabilitation center.

In addition to the proposed land use, the map also incorporates several roads essential for the future annexation of the areas within the growth boundary. Among them is the Silo Hill connector road, intended to link North Seton Avenue and Silo Hill Road. This suggestion is aimed at alleviating traffic congestion in the Town Square and enhancing the convenience of local travel for residents. The Northgate subdivision currently has only one entrance and exit, which is susceptible to flooding during significant rain events. Recognizing the need for a secondary access point, the Town explored possibilities for connecting to Irishtown Road and included the conceptual suggestion on the map above. However, this is unlikely to materialize until the land along Irishtown Road is developed and a road is constructed as part of that development. Another conceptual route depicted on the map is a collector road stretching from West Main Street to South Seton Avenue, designed to address traffic circulation requirements stemming from potential development, as well as anticipated rise in commuter traffic originating from outside of Emmitsburg.

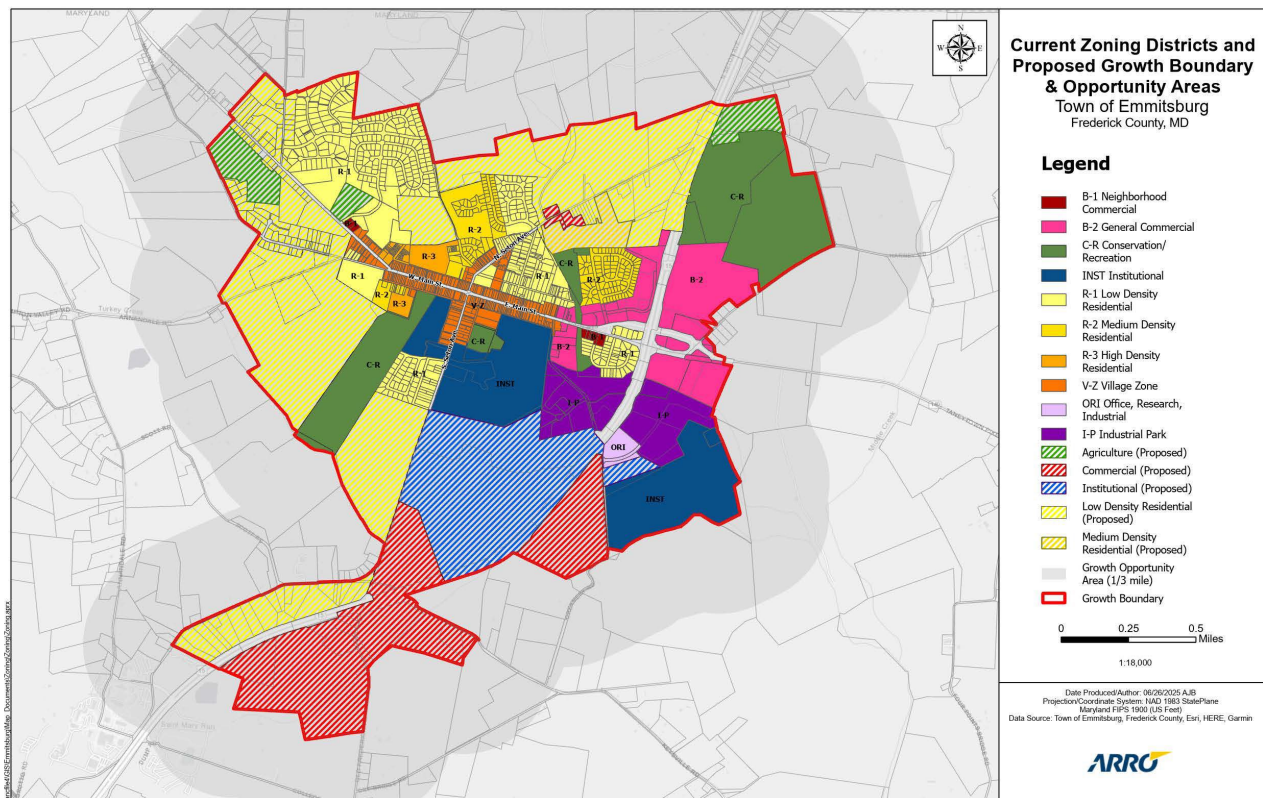
In pursuit of development through 2045, the following section of the Plan proposes a new GBA and GOA. The GBA includes some properties located at the northwest of the Town's borders while retaining the suggested land use designations from 2021. These properties are along Tract Rd. and US Route 140, and they're

included to address issues related to fragmented water and sewer service. Several of this cluster of properties are already connected to the Town's water and/or sewer systems, while others are not. The Town's Code of Ordinance prohibits the establishment of water or sewer connections outside its jurisdiction. Consequently, service cannot be extended unless these areas are annexed. Furthermore, for these properties to be eligible for future annexation, they must be within the Town's growth boundary. Including these properties in a revised growth boundary would provide their owners with the opportunity for annexation and allow those currently without water and/or sewer service to connect to these utilities.

Growth is not restricted to its current corporate limits or the designated GBA. The comprehensive plan and growth boundary provide guidance for the orderly growth and development of the town over time. Unanticipated opportunities, such as economic development, residential expansions, or infrastructure projects, may arise in the future, offering benefits to the Town if incorporated within its corporate limits. The proposed GOA acts as a flexible buffer, extending roughly 1/4 to 1/3 mile beyond the growth boundary. It is intentionally non-specific to individual properties, allowing for potential annexation of all or parts of properties that fall within the GOA. While development is expected to occur primarily within the current growth boundary before expanding significantly into the GOA, the town may consider development in the GOA earlier if there are clear public benefits, compatibility with existing areas, and sufficient water and sewer capacity. The GOA is naturally limited by factors such as physical constraints, topography, and County Agricultural Preservation Easements on some parcels, so the type and intensity of future development within the GOA will be carefully managed. It is designed to provide flexibility for the town to seize future development opportunities without frequent amendments to the

Comprehensive Plan. Moreover, since properties within the GOA would require annexation, the Town will maintain control over the process, using Annexation Agreements to ensure appropriate timing and secure public benefits.

Figure 6.5
Proposed Growth Boundary and Opportunity Areas



The combination of a thoughtfully defined GBA and GOA will allow Emmitsburg to strategically manage its growth while preserving its small-town character. By including key properties along Tract Rd. and US Route 140 within the revised growth boundary, the Town can address fragmented water and sewer service issues and offer

the possibility of future annexation. The GOA, acting as a dynamic extension of the GBA, provides the town with the flexibility to accommodate unforeseen opportunities in a controlled manner, ensuring that development remains compatible with existing land use patterns and public infrastructure capacities. This balanced approach enables Emmitsburg to guide its future growth thoughtfully, seizing opportunities as they arise while maintaining oversight through careful planning and annexation agreements.

Community Design

Public input for the Plan highlighted a strong desire to preserve the Town's historic character while accommodating future growth. Planning and shaping the physical layout, infrastructure, and aesthetics of Emmitsburg is essential for creating a functional, appealing, and sustainable community where people can live and thrive.

Historic Preservation and Main Street Development

With buildings dating back to the late 1700s, Emmitsburg's historic structures, including churches, residential and commercial buildings, and civic landmarks, embody a rich cultural heritage. This National Register Historic District, which include 216 contributing structures, anchors the town's sense of place. Since 2013, the Town has been utilizing the Community Legacy Grant from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to improve facades in this area. Preservation efforts are guided by architectural guidelines that were established in 2012. These guidelines play a crucial role in maintaining aesthetic harmony and ensuring that new developments respect the town's historical context while allowing for modern growth. These provide clear recommendations on building

materials, colors, and architectural styles, helping to preserve Emmitsburg's small-town feel and protect its visual character. New construction and renovations should be designed to complement the existing built environment, ensuring that the town retains its unique identity even as it evolves. This balance between preservation and growth will allow Emmitsburg to accommodate future needs while safeguarding its historic charm.

Emmitsburg is part of two significant Heritage Management Areas: the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area and the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area. The Journey Through Hallowed Ground is a 175-mile route along US Route 15 that spans multiple states, dedicated to preserving and celebrating the historical and natural resources connected to the Civil War. Emmitsburg serves as a key waypoint along this route, benefiting from the collaborative efforts of national, state, and local partners in resource preservation and economic development. Additionally, Emmitsburg lies within the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, a state initiative focused on conserving and promoting the historical significance of Frederick, Carroll, and Washington Counties during the Civil War. This designation allows Emmitsburg to receive grants for projects related to preservation, tourism, and community development, further supporting the town's commitment to safeguarding its cultural heritage.

The development of Main Street is a key element in Emmitsburg's approach to growth and preservation. As the heart of the historic district, Main Street showcases the town's heritage and serves as a main point for both community life and local businesses. By revitalizing the area with pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, vibrant public spaces, restored dilapidated structures, and historically aligned

developments, Emmitsburg can enhance its economic vitality while maintaining its distinct character. The town currently holds "Main Street Affiliate" status with the Main Street America movement, which supports place-based economic development. To reach full Main Street designation, the town must meet additional criteria. Though several buildings along Main Street are in disrepair, they offer significant potential to house new businesses that could strengthen the local economy and foster community engagement. By implementing a well-planned Main Street program that prioritizes careful planning and adherence to architectural guidelines, Emmitsburg can unlock this potential, achieve full Main Street status, and create a thriving space that supports both commerce and community.

Accessibility

The gateways into the town play an important role in creating a welcoming atmosphere for both residents and visitors. The main entry points are North Seton Avenue, South Seton Avenue, East Main Street, and West Main Street. They are marked by architectural and landscape features such as vistas of the Catoctin Mountains and iconic church steeples. Besides providing a visual introduction, they contribute to wayfinding, helping people navigate easily.

Designated as US 15 Business South, the North Seton Avenue road serves as the initial roadway leading into the first town in Maryland. As motorists embark on this route, picturesque scenes of farm fields and the Catoctin Mountains unfold. The journey then transitions into a blend of small-commercial establishments and residential areas. Crossing over a tributary to Flat Run, the landscape transforms to reveal church steeples and a more concentrated residential environment within the

town limits of Emmitsburg. This progression continues until reaching the intersection with Main Street, marking the Town square.

On the eastern side, once vehicles cross over Tom's Creek on South Seton Avenue, they traverse a sequence of prominent structures set in a campus-like environment. Notable among these are the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and the Daughters of Charity complex, comprising St. Joseph's Ministries and the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

The West Main Street starts in the vicinity of Tract Road and MD 140, featuring a low-density residential development within the Brookfield Subdivision to the north. To the east, the historic village center gradually becomes more prominent. Upon entering the town, a Y intersection is formed by MD Route 140 and Frailey Road, directing traffic into Town, where MD 140 adopts the name West Main Street. Situated at the fork created by these two roads is the historic Emmit House, accompanied by a WWI Doughboy Monument on the triangular island in front of the Emmit House.

Approaching the town from the east on MD Route 140 or from the US 15 exit at MD 140, the East Main Street gateway is situated at the signalized intersection of East Main Street (MD 140) and Silo Hill Road. This eastern gateway is marked by a shopping center, hotel, and highway services on the north side, complemented by low-density residential development on the south side of MD 140.

The aforementioned streets intersect to create the Town Square. In the past, this area housed the Town's well, and later, a decorative fountain adorned the center of the Square. The fountain was eventually removed to accommodate the growing traffic, particularly vehicular truck traffic. It's important to note that these state-owned roads are relatively busy, which has made it challenging to maintain a quiet

atmosphere on Main Street. However, the sidewalks are spacious enough to support and encourage pedestrian activity as it is a vital element of having a vibrant Main Street.

The town's location near the Catoclin Mountain range provides scenic views. Both US Route 15 and US 15 Business hold national scenic byway designations, contributing to the picturesque charm of Emmitsburg and tourist drawing. These roads are integral parts of the Catoclin Mountain Scenic Byway, further enhancing the town's scenic appeal. Emmitsburg itself is recognized as an Old Main Streets Scenic Byway by the State of Maryland, with MD 140 Taneytown Road and Seton Avenue forming key segments of this designated route. Preserving sightlines to natural landmarks, such as the mountains and rolling farmland, will maintain the small-town character while offering residents a connection to the surrounding environment.

Sustainable Elements

Emmitsburg actively demonstrates and has received recognition for its environmental stewardship. Its commitment to sustainability is reflected through its participation in state programs that are focused on energy savings and environmentally beneficial initiatives. The town has made strides in energy efficiency, including upgrading energy-efficient LED streetlights and investing in solar energy to power municipal buildings. Emmitsburg's solar fields generate significant power, reducing electricity costs and environmental impact. Water conservation and stormwater management efforts, such as the use of rain barrels and the creation of stormwater ponds, demonstrate the town's commitment to protecting natural resources while planning for future development.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

1. Promote smart growth and sustainable development by encouraging infill development and efficient use of land within the growth boundary and growth opportunity areas.
2. Continue efforts to preserve and enhance the character of Emmitsburg by protecting the integrity of the historic district and key structures.
3. Enhance connectivity and public spaces to create a pedestrian-friendly, well-connected community, while ensuring accessible parking and accommodations for individuals with mobility challenges.

The goals above aim to balance development and preservation in Emmitsburg, creating a community that is economically vibrant, environmentally sustainable, and socially inclusive. Promoting infill development minimizes sprawl and reduces habitat loss. Smart growth strategies encourage efficient land use and revitalization, attracting businesses and investments that contribute to a resilient economy. Enhancing connectivity and public spaces fosters social interactions, community engagement, and inclusivity. Ensuring accommodations for individuals with mobility challenges promotes equity, making Emmitsburg accessible to all residents and visitors.

Strategies

1. Identify vacant or underutilized parcels for redevelopment, streamline approval processes for mixed-use projects, and promote the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

2. Encourage zoning that supports green infrastructure projects (i.e., rain gardens and permeable pavements to manage stormwater runoff) and energy-efficient buildings.
3. Leverage growth boundaries and growth opportunity areas (GOAs) to guide development, promoting a diverse mix of housing types and strategically clustering buildings to reduce environmental impact and optimize land use.
4. Implement a comprehensive Main Street revitalization program to meet the requirements of Main Street designation.
5. Use zoning regulations and design review processes to restrict incompatible land uses near historic areas, while encouraging mixed-use development that preserves the small-town character and accommodates growth.
6. Continue to add to the sidewalk networks to connect all areas and develop traffic calming measures to ensure safety of pedestrians and cyclists.
7. Continue revitalization efforts and add elements like seating, landscaping, and public art to create an inviting space.
8. Implement a comprehensive parking plan that includes designated parking areas, improved signage, and efficient use of shared spaces, while exploring opportunities for structured or off-street parking to minimize congestion and enhance accessibility in key areas like the town center.
9. Develop the Planned Unit Development floating zone to implement the flexible and creative land use arrangement as envisioned through the Comprehensive Plan.

7

Transportation & Mobility

Understanding the transportation network is essential for creating a more efficient, safe, and sustainable system that meets the needs of both residents and businesses in Emmitsburg. Transportation modes and networks play a vital role in ensuring mobility, and a thorough analysis of the existing infrastructure is key to making informed decisions about future improvements and investments. By identifying areas with the greatest needs—such as congestion points, unsafe intersections, and under-served regions—resources can be allocated effectively. This chapter provides analysis of Emmitsburg’s transportation networks to support the development of a more sustainable and well-connected system.

Existing Road Network

Emmitsburg’s transportation system consists of various road types that serve different purposes. The town’s street network includes a traditional grid pattern with a central intersection and supporting alleys, alongside subdivisions with cul-de-sacs and loop roads.

Principal arterial roads include a variety of road types, ranging from expressways to two-lane thoroughfares, and are classified into two categories: principal arterials and minor arterials. Principal arterials provide connections between large populations and key employment centers. US Route 15, also known as Catoctin Mountain Highway, is a principal arterial that links Emmitsburg to major urban centers, serving as the primary north-south highway in the County and offering direct access to I-70 (leading to Baltimore) and I-270 (leading to Washington, D.C.).

Minor arterials, on the other hand, are designed to handle high traffic volumes within urban or suburban areas and act as intermediaries between local streets and principal arterials. Maryland Route 140 (MD 140), designated as a minor arterial, features a diverse range of characteristics, transitioning from multi-lane sections in urbanized areas to two-lane segments in rural areas. Within Emmitsburg's downtown, MD 140 includes both East and West Main Street, highlighting its importance as a key transportation corridor.

Collector roads serve as intermediaries between local streets and arterial roads in the road hierarchy. Positioned below minor arterials, they fulfill the essential function of collecting and distributing local traffic within neighborhoods and districts. Characterized by fewer lanes and a design tailored for moderate traffic volumes, collector roads are ideal for local traffic distribution in residential and commercial areas. These roads are marked by their capacity to facilitate access to properties, residences, and businesses.

Within the category of collector roads, there is a further distinction between major collector roads and minor collector roads. Major collectors are equipped to handle higher traffic volumes, maintaining controlled access while serving a broader region with higher speed limits. Within Emmitsburg, major collector roads include Old Frederick Rd and South Seton Avenue, which is also known as US15 BU or a branch of US 15. On the other hand, minor collector roads offer more frequent access points and are typically situated in residential and local commercial areas. They often feature lower speed limits to enhance safety. Examples of minor collector roads include Harney Road, Tract Road, Mountain View Road, North Seton Avenue (US15 BU), Brookfield Drive, and Frailey Road. Both major and minor collector roads play an indispensable role in cultivating efficient transportation networks within urban and

suburban environments, facilitating the flow of traffic, and ensuring accessibility to various neighborhoods and local destinations.

The local street network is designed primarily for access to residential areas rather than through traffic. It includes residential streets, cul-de-sacs, loop roads, and alleyways. While the town center features a traditional grid layout, newer residential neighborhoods tend to have more curvilinear street designs.

Circulation Challenges in Emmitsburg

The town's transportation infrastructure primarily centers around automobile use, although there are some limited alternative means of access available. This autocentric focus is partly due to the Town's location along the commuting corridors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., resulting in a significant influx of regional commuter traffic. Over the past decade, the town has made noteworthy progress in enhancing connectivity and pedestrian-friendliness.

Automobile Usage

Emmitsburg, like many small towns, is largely autocentric due to its location and existing infrastructure. Positioned within a major commuting corridor, the town relies heavily on personal vehicles, which also contributes to substantial truck traffic as major arterials are frequently used to transport goods through the region.

The layout of Emmitsburg, with Main Street serving as the primary east-west route, presents unique challenges. During peak hours, Main Street experiences significant congestion, leading to noise and traffic issues in the downtown area. This congestion has become a major obstacle to the town's goal of establishing a vibrant historic commercial and residential center.

In response to the gridlock on Main Street, motorists often use alleyways, originally constructed for loading and service access, as alternate routes. However, some of these alleyways are pedestrian-only walkways that connect Main Street to nearby neighborhoods, which creates further challenges in maintaining safe and pedestrian-friendly spaces.

Parking

Participants in the public workshops and surveys highlighted parking as a major issue in the Town, especially along Main Street. They noted that the limited availability of parking spaces frequently drives potential customers away, as they find it difficult to secure convenient parking near shops and restaurants. This lack of adequate parking hinders the success of businesses that depend on foot traffic and easy access, ultimately discouraging people from visiting those areas and impacting the overall vitality of the downtown economy. A comprehensive parking study should be conducted to fully understand the scope of this problem, verify these concerns, and identify potential solutions.

Alternate Transportation

While Emmitsburg lacks abundant reliable alternative transportation options, significant progress has been made to enhance accessibility. The town has invested in sidewalks and crosswalks, improving walkability and making it safer for residents and visitors to navigate on foot in certain areas. Additionally, TransIT Services of Frederick County operates the Emmitsburg/Thurmont Shuttle, providing weekday service between Emmitsburg and Thurmont, with Saturday service available to

expand weekend mobility. This shuttle connects Emmitsburg with Frederick City, further integrating the town into the regional transportation network.

Frederick County’s Transit-plus service offers demand-response paratransit for residents aged 60 and older, as well as individuals with disabilities. The ADA paratransit service accommodates those unable to use fixed-route options, with other passengers permitted as space allows. The Taxi Access Program (TAP) supplements these services by providing a subsidized taxi option for eligible Transit-plus customers, requiring a small copay based on their zip code.

As an option available to Emmitsburg residents, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments’ Commuter Connections Program provides free carpool and vanpool matching services, a vanpool incentive program for new vanpools starting or ending in Frederick County, and the Guaranteed Ride Home Program for registered commuters.

These combined efforts—investments in pedestrian infrastructure, expanded transit options, and regional connectivity—have significantly improved local transportation compared to the past, making Emmitsburg more accessible and better connected for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Goals and Objectives

1. Reduce traffic congestion on Main Street by establishing an alternate route that will decrease reliance on the main thoroughfare and enhance the overall downtown experience.

2. Promote the development of alternate transportation modes, including walking, cycling, and rideshare services, to create a more connected, accessible, and sustainable transportation system
3. Address the lack of adequate parking in downtown Emmitsburg to support local businesses and improve accessibility for customers and visitors.

These goals aim to address the town's mobility challenges by enhancing safety and accessibility. Reducing congestion on Main Street by redirecting commuter and truck traffic will ease bottlenecks during peak hours. It will also enhance the pedestrian-friendly atmosphere of the commercial district by creating a quieter and more enjoyable environment. Like many small towns, Emmitsburg residents are accustomed to driving; however, the existing pedestrian infrastructure plays a crucial role in promoting walkability. To enhance connectivity and encourage more walking, it is essential to identify and address key areas where pedestrian access is lacking or insufficient. Addressing parking challenges is crucial, as convenient access to parking near businesses is vital for both customers and business owners, enhancing accessibility and driving local economic growth.

Strategies

1. Work with the State Highway Administration, Frederick County, and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to conduct a traffic study to identify potential road(s) that can serve as alternate route(s).
2. Fill the gaps in sidewalk infrastructure to provide safe, continuous routes for pedestrians.

3. Explore options for bike lanes to improve connectivity within the town, especially on the west side of Catoctin Mountain Highway.
4. Gather data on commuter patterns to highlight the demand for rideshare and county transportation services. Use this information to engage rideshare companies, advocate for expanded county transit options, or develop community-based rideshare initiatives.
5. Identify underutilized or vacant land in the downtown area that can be converted into public parking lots, offering additional spaces for visitors and customers to park conveniently close to businesses.
6. Implement time-restricted parking in high-demand areas, such as Main Street, to encourage short-term parking and frequent turnover, ensuring more customers have access to parking throughout the day.
7. Collaborate with local property owners to establish shared parking arrangements, utilizing unused spaces from businesses, churches, or institutions to maximize resources without new construction.

8

Community Facilities

Community facilities and services play a crucial role in Emmitsburg, contributing significantly to the town's social, economic, and cultural well-being. This section provides an overview of the existing amenities and services accessible to the community, encompassing education, recreational offerings, emergency services, water and sewer systems, social support, and government operations. Evaluating existing facilities provides valuable data for efficiently allocating resources and prioritizing investments, such as upgrading aging infrastructure or expanding facilities to accommodate growing demand.

Educational Institutions Serving Emmitsburg

Primary & Secondary Education

Public Schools

The public school system serving Emmitsburg residents is overseen by the Frederick County Board of Education. Emmitsburg is served by Emmitsburg Elementary, Thurmont Middle School, and Catoclin High School. According to the 2022 Board of Education Educational Facilities Master Plan, students from Emmitsburg Elementary, Thurmont Elementary, and half of Lewistown Elementary transition to Thurmont Middle School, which then feeds into Catoclin High School.

Table 8.1 Capacity for FCPS 2024		
School	Enrollment	Percent Capacity
Emmitsburg Elementary	214	95%
Thurmont Middle School	499	54%
Catoctin High School	783	75%

Table 8.2 Projected Capacity for FCPS Schools serving Emmitsburg							
School	Year						State Rated Building Capacity*
	2025*	2026*	2027*	2028*	2029*	2030*	
Emmitsburg Elementary	201	200	202	200	207	208	225
Thurmont Middle School	451	442	427	446	423	429	924
Catoctin High School	782	739	677	655	626	622	1,046
* BOE Educational Facilities Master Plan, June 2022							

Private Institution

Mother Seton School (MSS), located on Creamery Road in Emmitsburg, is a private, independent Catholic school offering faith-based education from Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade. It is sponsored by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul and follows the curriculum and guidelines of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, though it operates independently and does not receive Archdiocesan funding.

The school provides a range of academic programs and facilities, including a science lab, library, integrated classroom technology, and a middle school Spanish program. MSS incorporates hands-on learning experiences and grade-specific activities aligned with the curriculum. Additional instructional support includes

reading intervention, speech-language services, and academic enrichment for diverse learner needs. Facility improvements completed in 2023–2024 include perimeter security upgrades, classroom technology additions, a new Pre-K playground, and expanded access to Chromebooks.

The school serves students from 28 ZIP codes across Maryland and Pennsylvania, with an enrollment of over 360 students for the 2023–2024 academic year. With a 460-student capacity, MSS is operating at approximately 78% utilization, leaving room for potential growth. As of 2024, over 40% of students received some form of tuition assistance, and nearly 10% qualify for free or reduced lunch, though MSS does not receive federal funding for this program. This data signals a commitment to affordability and socio-economic diversity.

Mother Seton School partners with local and regional institutions, including Mount St. Mary's University, whose students intern at the school and participate in student engagement activities. The school conducts several service-oriented projects annually, including donations to local organizations such as the Seton Center and other national charitable efforts.

MSS holds certification as a Maryland Green School, reflecting its commitment to environmental stewardship.

Higher Education

Mount Saint Mary's University

Mount Saint Mary's University, founded in 1808 by Father John DuBois, a French priest, holds the distinction of being one of the United States' oldest Catholic

universities. Despite its location just beyond Emmitsburg's official boundaries, the university maintains a close and mutually beneficial relationship with the town. Situated only a few miles from the town center, the university's educational resources, encompassing a diverse array of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs spanning liberal arts, business, education, health sciences, and more, serve as an asset for Emmitsburg residents. Although the Mt. St. Mary's main campus is just outside of existing town limits, the Mount has recently established a footprint within the corporate limits of Town by establishing the School of Health Professions in a portion of the Daughters of Charity building on South Seton Avenue. The school's purpose is to house the Physician's Assistant Program (PA) and the Applied Behavioral Analysis Program (ABA). The building also houses the Mount's Pre-Seminary program, or Propaedeutic Year for the seminary. Additionally, due to its proximity, students have a range of housing options available, further enhancing the accessibility of the university. The institution collaborates with the town on a variety of educational and community outreach initiatives, reinforcing its integral role in the local community.

Frederick Community College

Frederick Community College (FCC) was founded in 1957 in Frederick, with a mission to offer accessible educational opportunities for the local community. Initially established as an evening school held at Frederick High School, FCC later found its permanent home on Opossumtown Pike in 1970. Over time, FCC has adapted and expanded its educational offerings to meet the evolving needs of both students and the community. Today, the college boasts a diverse range of programs, including associate degree offerings, workforce development training, and continuing education courses. FCC's commitment to accessibility extends to its

varied learning formats, including remote, hybrid, and in-person classes, catering to the diverse needs of its student body. This growth and ongoing commitment to education have firmly established FCC as an indispensable institution in the region, benefiting not only Frederick's residents but also those of Emmitsburg who have access to these valuable educational resources.

Hood College

Hood College, founded in 1893 and located in Frederick, Maryland, is a private liberal arts institution with a rich history. Originally established as the Woman's College of Frederick, it transitioned to a coeducational model in 1971. Offering a diverse range of undergraduate and graduate programs, the college emphasizes interdisciplinary studies across arts and humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, business, education, and nursing. Nestled in the historic city of Frederick, the campus provides modern facilities, including academic buildings and residence halls. The Beneficial-Hodson Library supports students in their research endeavors. Committed to community engagement, Hood College encourages students to participate in service-learning, internships, and research projects that contribute to the local community. The Blazers, Hood College's athletic teams, compete in NCAA Division III within the Middle Atlantic Conference. The college prioritizes diversity and inclusion, fostering a supportive environment for students.

Collaboration Among Institutions

In support of community scholarship, Mount St. Mary's University and Hood College currently offer transfer pathways for Frederick Community College students. These arrangements, established between the institutions, reflect their ongoing roles

in supporting regional higher education and their broader partnerships with the Emmitsburg and Frederick County communities

Recreation and Civic Resources

Parks & Green Spaces

E. Eugene Myers Community Park

Emmitsburg Community Park covers an extensive 55 acres and boasts a diverse array of amenities. These include two baseball diamonds, two tennis courts, a pickleball court, corn holes, an all-inclusive children's playground, a disc golf course, a dog park, a swimming pool with a separate kiddy splash area, picnic pavilions, barbecue facilities, bandstands, horseshoe pits, restrooms, walking paths equipped with exercise stations, and ample parking. The current playground was constructed in the fall of 2019 to cater to diverse needs, featuring wheelchair-accessible gliders, musical percussion play, multi-user cloud swings, bonded rubber flooring, sunshades, and more. The Dog Park consists of a secure, fenced-in area divided into separate sections for small and large dogs, with double-gated entrances designed to ensure the safety of pets. The swimming pool has a depth ranging from 1.5 feet in the shallow end to 10 feet in the deep end and includes a diving board. Adjacent to the main pool is a splash pad area, and a pavilion with seating is available for visitor use. Conveniently located behind the Community Center, the park serves as a focal point for recreational activities in the area.

Emmitsburg Memorial Park

Emmitsburg Memorial Park, spanning six acres, offers a range of amenities. These include playground equipment, a T-ball diamond, three baseball/softball diamonds complete with dugouts and bleachers, a picnic area, barbecue sites, a seasonal snack bar, restrooms, a pavilion, and ample parking. The park is conveniently located off Chesapeake Ave.

Playground in Silo Hill

The Silo Hill residential subdivision has a one-acre dedicated playground area for children's recreational activities and a basketball court. Additionally, there is a Town-owned property located behind the houses and Flat Run. While this area is unsuitable for active recreation due to its steep slope and other site characteristics, it serves as a space for passive recreational use.

Northgate

The one-acre private park, equipped with playground amenities, is situated close to the entrance of the Northgate Residential Subdivision, and maintained by the homeowner's association.

Emmitsburg Multi-User Trails and Rainbow Lake

The Emmitsburg Multi-User Trails offer an extensive and professionally designed network of natural surface trails, covering a total of thirteen miles. These trails, situated on town-owned property near Rainbow Lake, consist of four challenging loops that cater to outdoor enthusiasts engaged in activities such as mountain biking, hiking, and trail running. Furthermore, an additional trail winds through the densely wooded College Mountain, connecting the mountain trails with

Annandale Road. This area also provides opportunities for hunting and fishing, enhancing the range of outdoor experiences available to visitors.

Civic Spaces

Town Offices of Emmitsburg

The Town administrative offices are located in the community Center Building on South Seton Avenue. The offices of the elected officials (Mayor and Town Board) and Town Staff (Manager, Clerk, Planner, Accountant, and support staff etc.). The Emmitsburg municipal government oversees public services, waste management, public infrastructure management, and works to contribute to safety and quality of life in Town. The Town's government is actively engaged with its residents, holding town meetings and public hearings to gather input and address local concerns. The Town exercises transparency and community engagement by utilizing its social media platforms and well-equipped meeting room, featuring broadcasting capabilities. These meetings are broadcast on the local Channel 99 and via Zoom, ensuring that residents can stay informed and participate in local government affairs. Furthermore, for those unable to attend in person or watch the live broadcasts, these meetings are readily accessible on the Town's YouTube channel, providing an additional avenue for residents to engage with the town's governance.

Emmitsburg Community Center

The Emmitsburg Community Center is owned by Frederick County and offers several facilities and services to the community. Within the center, there is an indoor

gymnasium that serves as a recreational space for various nonprofit recreational organizations. Additionally, the building houses several essential entities, including the Emmitsburg Town Office, the Frederick County Emmitsburg Branch Library, a Senior Center, and it accommodates various County programs.

Emmitsburg Branch Library

The Emmitsburg Branch Library, part of the Frederick County Public Library system, is located in the Emmitsburg Community Center. Staffed by professional librarians, the library offers information and literary services to people of all ages. Resources available to patrons include public computers, a wide selection of books, popular films and audiobooks, and the latest issues of magazines and local newspapers for cardholders. The library also partners with community organizations to provide services such as tax and job-related assistance. Additionally, local artists frequently display their work in the facility. With Wi-Fi access and a range of programs for children, teens, and the public, the library serves as a vital community resource.

Senior Center

The Emmitsburg 50+ Community Center, also known as the Senior Center, provides a diverse range of programs aimed at supporting wellness and independence. From informative speakers and workshops to special events, social engagements, and fitness classes, our offerings cater to a broad spectrum of interests, ensuring there's something to engage the members of this community.

Public Safety Services

Fire & Rescue Services

The Vigilant Hose Fire Company, located at 25 W Main St., provides fire protection services to the Town of Emmitsburg and a 44-square-mile service area, extending into Pennsylvania. This volunteer-based organization merged with the Emmitsburg Volunteer Ambulance Company (EVAC) in 2018 to form a unified Fire/Rescue Department. The merger included acquiring the former EVAC station on Creamery Road, now serving as the Vigilant Hose Company Activities Building. Today, over 100 active members, along with nearly 50 auxiliary, social, life, and honorary members, support the company's mission and community service activities.

Police Protection

The County Sheriff is responsible for delivering police services in Emmitsburg. Their service area encompasses a significant portion of Northern Frederick County, which may occasionally result in the reassignment of personnel from the town for extended periods. To enhance local law enforcement capabilities and address potential staffing challenges, the Town has entered a contract for the services of two additional deputies. These deputies operate from a satellite office situated in a town-owned building at 22 East Main Street.

Emergency Communication

The Frederick County Department of Emergency Communications operates as the designated Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) responsible for handling all 911 emergency and non-emergency requests for assistance within Frederick County. It also manages the dispatch of fire, rescue, ambulance services, Frederick County

Animal Control, and various law enforcement agencies, including the Frederick County Sheriff's Office, Brunswick City Police, and Thurmont Police Department. Additionally, it plays a crucial role in coordinating after-hours communications for county agencies.

Healthcare Facilities & Services

Primary and Specialized Healthcare

Emmitsburg Osteopathic Primary Care Center, Inc. (EOPCC)

The EOPCC was established in 1999 and obtained non-profit status in 2000. It began in rented space in Thurmont and later expanded to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. In 2005, they established their permanent location in Emmitsburg. EOPCC provides medical education and care to all, regardless of insurance status. They actively engage with patients, participate in various insurance programs, and work to provide access to crucial diagnostic services.

Emmitsburg Physicians Care

Located on Main Street, Emmitsburg Physicians Care is another local medical practice offering specialized services in addiction treatment and internal medicine.

Frederick Health Facility at Mount St. Mary's University

Since August 2022, the Frederick Health branch at a nearby university has been offering a wide array of healthcare services to both Mount students and residents of

Northern Frederick County. Situated on university-donated land for just \$1.00, this state-of-the-art facility, as part of the Frederick Health network, provides urgent care, primary care, physical therapy, sports rehab, and lab and imaging services. It is staffed by a team of medical professionals, including urgent care doctors, primary care doctors, physician's assistants, and nurse practitioners. This facility significantly enhances healthcare accessibility for Emmitsburg residents.

Pharmacy

Med One Pharmacy is a family-owned independent, full-service pharmacy chain with eight locations, including one in Emmitsburg. The pharmacy provides an extensive inventory to meet all prescription needs and accepts most insurance companies.

Public Assistance

Emmitsburg Food Bank

The Emmitsburg Food Bank is a charitable organization that collects, stores, and distributes food to individuals and families. This organization plays a crucial role in addressing hunger and food insecurity by collecting surplus food from various sources. The Emmitsburg Food Bank relies on volunteers to reach the portion of the population who face food insecurity. The organization serves approximately 65 families each month, a figure surpassing its historical numbers primarily due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Catoctin Pregnancy Center

The Catoctin Pregnancy Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization officially registered, dedicated to helping families in need during pregnancy. With a history spanning more than two decades, the center sustains its operations entirely through donations, without any funding from state or government agencies. The organization offers essential items such as clothing for children and mothers, baby food, disposable diapers, and various children's furniture for infants to children up to six years of age. This organization also provides counseling services to individuals facing crisis pregnancies and operates a 24-hour hotline crisis service to offer immediate assistance when required. To date, the Catoctin Pregnancy Center has met the needs of over 1,200 families.

Seton Center

Seton Center, a non-profit organization with a dedicated mission to support low-income families, particularly those in northern Frederick County. Their multifaceted programs address fundamental human needs, prevent homelessness, nurture resilient families, provide referral services, uphold the health of seniors, offer comfort to the homebound, and support individuals navigating the path out of poverty. Many of the families they serve are hardworking individuals living at or below poverty or ALICE Report income levels, making them vulnerable to unforeseen emergencies that can lead to unpaid bills or housing loss. Through these impactful initiatives, Seton Center strives to create a positive and lasting influence on the lives of those it serves.

Senior Housing

Seton Village

The Daughters of Charity, a religious organization dedicated to serving those in need, have a longstanding presence in Emmitsburg, Maryland. In 2015, they collaborated with Homes for America to address the pressing need for affordable senior housing in the area. This partnership led to the development of Seton Village, a 43-unit affordable housing community for seniors aged 62 and older. Seton Village is situated within a repurposed wing of the historic St. Joseph's Provincial House. The adaptive reuse of this 52,000-square-foot space not only preserved a significant historical structure but also provided a creative solution to the underutilization. The renovation transformed the space into 31 one-bedroom and 12 two-bedroom apartments, each equipped with modern amenities such as full kitchens, high-efficiency HVAC systems, Energy Star appliances, and water-conserving fixtures. Residents of Seton Village benefit from various communal facilities, including a meeting space, computer room with free Wi-Fi, library, resident lounge, laundry facilities, and management offices. The community's location offers proximity to the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, providing residents with access to the basilica, visitor center, and the memorial of the first American canonized as a saint. Additionally, the campus attracts approximately 45,000 tourists annually, fostering a vibrant and engaging environment for the residents.

Lincoln on the Park

Located at Lincoln Avenue, this community is intended to provide affordable, accessible housing with supportive features for senior residents and individuals with

disabilities. The community offers 32 one-bedroom, 600-square-foot units in a small-scale setting that accommodates diverse resident needs and mobility levels.

Water & Sewer Infrastructure

Water plays an important role in sustaining growth and allowing future development in a municipality. The surface water and groundwater resources discussed in this Plan are integral components of Emmitsburg's water system. Town Staff operate a comprehensive water and wastewater management system to ensure a reliable and safe water supply.

Municipal Water System

The Town of Emmitsburg owns and operates its own water system to meet the needs of its residents, sourcing water from a combination of surface and groundwater sources. The water supply is derived from Rainbow Lake and Wells 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Rainbow Lake, a 33-million-gallon surface water reservoir located along Hampton Valley Road and positioned on Turkey Creek, is fed by natural springs and runoff from the surrounding watershed. The Town is permitted to withdraw an annual average of 0.168 million gallons per day (MGD) and a daily average of 0.350 MGD during the peak month under Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) regulations.

Wells 1 and 2 draw water from the Catoctin Metabasalt Aquifer and pump it directly into the Water Treatment Plant (WTP), where it is treated with soda ash and

chlorine. Wells 3, 4, and 5 also draw from the aquifer but feed water into the transmission pipeline from Rainbow Lake to the WTP for complete treatment. The wells vary in depth and operate under specific Groundwater Appropriation Permits (GAPs) issued by MDE.

The Town's WTP, located on Crystal Fountain Road, has a total capacity of 0.398 MGD, with approximately 0.254 MGD provided by filtration and disinfection processes and an additional 0.144 MGD from Wells 1 and 2, which only require disinfection. The water from Rainbow Lake is optimized for treatment using an LG SONIC device, which employs soundwaves to control algae. This device is connected to satellites and operated by Town staff in collaboration with a Netherlands-based company, with settings adjusted based on real-time data.

Treated water is stored in two storage tanks with a combined capacity of 118,000 gallons before being distributed through a gravity-fed distribution system. Pressure-reducing valves are used to manage water pressure across the system. In addition to the active sources, the Town maintains several other reservoirs and wells that are currently not in use, including Reservoirs 1, 2, and 3, as well as Wells 7 and J. As of 2024, the Town is exploring options to increase its water supply to support the future developments outlined in the Municipal Growth chapter.

Wastewater System

The Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in Emmitsburg is Solar Powered and has a treatment capacity of 750,000 gallons per day. The treatment plant itself is a complex system that involves chemical coagulation, dual filtration processes,

chlorine disinfection, and pH control to support the distribution system. Multiple instruments, including turbidity meters, pressure gauges, and online analyzers, continuously monitor the water quality. Data from all equipment, which can be operated both on-site and remotely by town staff, is collected and analyzed. Additionally, there are equipment safeguards in place to automatically shut down any treatment process that doesn't meet state regulations, ensuring that water sent to the town complies with all standards. The WWTP discharges into Toms Creek that drains into the upper Monocacy River.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen collaboration between local educational institutions and the community.
2. Partner with Frederick County Public Schools to modernize and improve school facilities serving Emmitsburg residents.
3. Ensure public safety and emergency services are adequate for the current and growing population.
4. Enhance support for vulnerable populations by strengthening community services.
5. Ensure a sustainable and efficient water system to support current and future growth.

Strategies

1. Collaborate with Mount St. Mary's University to establish an early childhood education program that provides employment opportunities for university students while offering valuable services to Emmitsburg residents.

2. Work with Frederick County Public Schools to upgrade Emmitsburg Elementary School and Catoctin High School, ensuring modern, high-quality facilities that foster student success. Advocate for classroom enhancements at Catoctin High School, including the addition of windows to improve the learning environment. Additionally, support expanding student capacity at Emmitsburg Elementary School to accommodate future growth and development.
3. Conduct a needs assessment to identify gaps in staffing and equipment, then secure funding through grants or partnerships to enhance emergency response capabilities.
4. Launch an educational campaign and incentive program to encourage residents and businesses to engage in tree planting, install energy-efficient systems, and participate in local recycling and composting efforts.
5. Partner with local nonprofits and organizations to increase funding, volunteers, and outreach efforts for programs like the food bank and childcare services.
6. Conduct a comprehensive water system capacity assessment to identify current infrastructure limitations and future demands.
7. Secure grants and partnerships to fund the expansion of water treatment facilities and upgrading distribution networks.
8. Explore the feasibility of establishing a regional Water Authority in partnership with Mount St. Mary's University to formalize and potentially expand shared use of the university's well water supply, enhancing long-term water security and operational efficiency.

9

Municipal Growth

Municipal Growth refers to the expansion or development of a town or city, involving increases in population, housing, and land use. It encompasses changes in infrastructure, public services, and that accommodate growing communities. Sustainable growth requires careful planning to manage resources, balance land use, and ensure that development meets the needs of current and future residents without compromising the quality of life or environmental health. This chapter analyzes land use demands and anticipated effects on public facilities due to the projected population growth from 2,770 residents in 2020 to approximately 3,237 in 2040. This growth will necessitate the development of additional water and wastewater resources, expanded school capacity, and improved community facilities.

Growth Trends & Patterns

Past Population Growth

Emmitsburg's population growth has been shaped by broader regional trends and economic shifts. Between 1960 and 2020, Emmitsburg's population increased gradually from 1,369 to 2,770, with periods of both moderate growth and slight decline. Substantial population growth occurred between 1980 and 2010, driven largely by new housing developments like Brookfield, Pembroke, and Southgate, which attracted families seeking affordable housing options within commuting

distance of larger employment centers. This growth trend was supported by infrastructure developments, including U.S. highways, which improved access to nearby cities such as Frederick, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.

However, from 2010 to 2020, Emmitsburg's population declined by 1.6%, a change likely linked to economic challenges following the Great Recession, which affected home values, local employment, and migration patterns. Despite the recent decline, the town's relatively affordable housing and proximity to metropolitan areas continue to make it a desirable residential community, with potential for future growth if economic conditions stabilize.

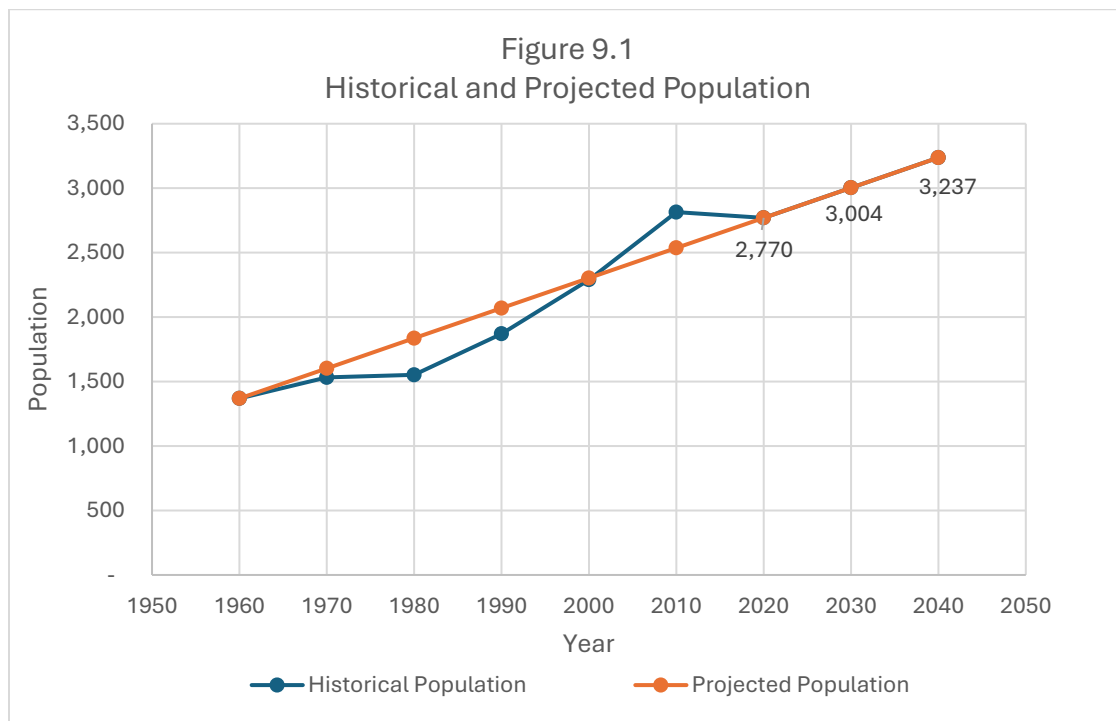
Baseline Data

The baseline for population projection in this plan is the 2020 Decennial Census, which recorded Emmitsburg's population at 2,770. Households, defined as occupied housing units, serve as the primary demand units when assessing potential impacts on community facilities. An accurate forecast of household growth enables the Town to estimate future residential demand for essential services, such as water and sewer infrastructure, school enrollment, parkland, and other community amenities. Based on the 2020 Census, Emmitsburg had 1,042 households, which will serve as the baseline for household projections in this plan, with an assumed average household size of 2.67 persons. This assumption provides a foundational metric to estimate the community's evolving needs as new residential areas are developed.

Population Projection

A linear growth model was applied to project the population of Emmitsburg through the year 2040, based on observed historical data. Using this model, the population is projected to increase steadily over each decade. For example, the

population is expected to rise from 2,770 to approximately 3,004 by 2030, reflecting an 8.43% increase. This upward trend continues, with a projected increase to 3,237 by 2040, marking an additional 7.77% increase from the 2030 estimate. The linear growth model assumes a consistent rate of growth based on historical averages, making it suitable for modest, steady population changes like those observed in Emmitsburg. This approach provides a clear trajectory for anticipated growth and can be helpful for planning future community needs and infrastructure development in the town.



Development Density by Zoning:

To project future residential growth and plan accordingly for community facilities, it is essential to consider not only household growth but also the density at which new development occurs. Development density is typically measured by the number of units that can be accommodated per acre within each zoning district (i.e.,

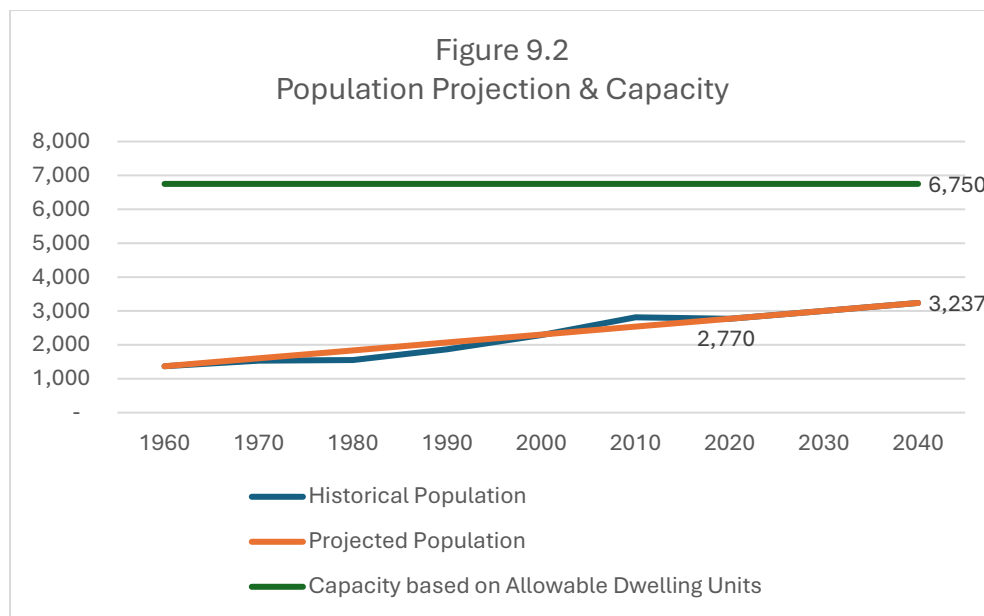
Permitted Density). This density calculation often uses a "zoning yield" factor, although the actual built density—reflecting the number of homes per acre actually developed—frequently falls below the maximum allowable density. Based on practical experience, the Maryland Department of Planning assumes a yield factor of 75% of the maximum allowable density for residential zoning (i.e., Probable Density). The projected density for each of Emmitsburg's residential zoning districts within the town boundary, as well as for designated residential areas within the growth boundary, has been calculated using this approach. For zoning districts offering a range of densities or permitting mixed-use development, such as R-2 and R-3, an assumed or average residential density has been derived for estimation purposes. R-2 zoning, for instance, allows 6,000 square feet for duplex and multifamily dwellings and 8,000 square feet for single-family homes, while R-3 permits similar specifications.

Table 9.1 Density Yield Calculation				
Zoning District	Description of Allowable Uses	Minimum Lot Sizes ¹	Permitted Density ²	Probable Density ³
R-S	Suburban Residential	20,000 sq.ft.	2.18 dwelling units/acre	1.63 dwelling units/acre
R-1	Low Density Residential	12,000 sq.ft.	3.63 dwelling units/acre	2.72 dwelling units/acre
R-2	Medium Density Residential	7,000 sq.ft.*	6.22 dwelling units/acre	4.67 dwelling units/acre
R-3	High Density Residential	7,000 sq.ft.*	6.22 dwelling units/acre	4.67 dwelling units/acre
1. Average of minimum lot sizes 2. 1 acre (43,650sq.ft.)/minimum lot size 3. 75% of "Permitted Density" to account for typical site conditions and infrastructure that may limit achieving actual permitted density on any given parcel.				

The following table shows all developable land within the Town corporate limits and the growth boundary discussed in the Land Use chapter. The table includes both Permitted (Allowable) Density as well as Probable (or “Proposed” if known project). This provides a reasonable planning level range of potential future dwelling units to guide planning for other capacity requirements.

Using the Maryland Department of Planning’s methodology for development density, 81 residential units are allowed on properties within the current town boundaries. For properties outside of the town boundaries but within the designated growth area, zoning district assignments and allowable density calculations indicate a potential for between 807-1,076 additional units. Based on a household size of 2.65, the additional population projection is between an additional 2,360-3,243 people. This estimate exceeds the projected population based on the linear growth model.

	Table 9.2 Residential Development Projection by Zoning				
	Property ID	Acreage	Residential Zoning District by Density	Permitted Dwellings ¹	Probable/Proposed Dwellings ²
Buildable Lots within Corporate Limits	1105591507 (102 Creekside Dr.)	0.68	R-2	4	3
	1105160790 (1 Emmit Ct.)	2.1	R-2	13	10
	1105179408 (2 Irishtown Rd.)	0.5	R-2	3	2
	Brookfield (Warthens Ct. & Gabes Ct.) ³	9.96	R-1	36	15
	Southgate (Mountaineers Way) ⁴	0.84	R-1	3	3
	1105160804 (Emmit Ridge II) ³	13.60	R-2	85	48
	Total Municipal Units			144	81
Annexation Pipeline	1105161584 (Frailey Farm)	115.67	Low Density	420	350
	1105168031 (McNair Property)	22.91	Medium Density	143	107
Other Buildable Lots within Growth Boundary	1105159016	27.26	Low Density	99	74
	1105172039	66.24	Low Density	240	180
	1105159024	1.79	Low Density	6	5
	1105178754	1.88	Low Density	7	5
	1105170176	16.39	Low Density	59	45
	1105158664	0.97	Low Density	4	3
	1105161886	1.47	Low Density	5	4
	1105164885	0.74	Low Density	3	2
	1105170427	2.29	Low Density	8	6
	1105160693	0.28	Low Density	1	1
	1105173809	14.76	Low Density	54	40
	1105161827	3.68	Low Density	13	10
	1105169011	3.81	Low Density	14	10
	Total Future Units			1,076	807
	Total Potential Units			1,220	888
1. Property Acreage x Dwellings per Acre per Table 9.1 2. Probable (accounting for site conditions) or Proposed/Approved Density (as known) 3. Includes additional proposed lots to original subdivision Includes remainder of approved lots of original subdivision					



Development Pipeline

As of 2024, the residential development pipeline includes several anticipated projects expected to be completed within the next 5 to 7 years. With an assumed household size of 2.67, these developments could add approximately 1,280 people to the town's population during that period. Furthermore, two additional projects—a distillery and a church—are underway. While these non-residential developments have unique demands, both require access to water and sewer services, which will be addressed in the following section.

Table 9.3 Residential Units Development Pipeline		
	Subdivision	Units in Pipeline
Within Corporate Limits	Brookfield	10
	Southgate	3
	Emmit Ridge II	48
Potential Annexations	Frailey Farm	350
	McNair	63
Total		474

Impacts on Community Facilities

With the anticipated residential development pipeline for the next 5 to 7 years, and any growth beyond that, there will be clear impacts on community services and facilities. As the population is projected to increase, demand for these services will rise accordingly. The town will need to coordinate with Frederick County Public Schools to monitor enrollment at Emmitsburg Elementary School. Additionally, upgrades to the municipal water system will be necessary to support more households, and the town will need to expand parkland square footage to meet the needs of a growing community.

Water & Sewer Capacity

Analyzing water and sewer capacity is essential for municipal growth because these utilities are fundamental to sustaining a growing population and supporting new developments. As a town expands, so does the demand for clean drinking water and effective wastewater treatment. Ensuring adequate capacity helps prevent resource shortages, minimizes risks of water contamination, and maintains health and sanitation standards.

In a development context, the connections linking a property's water and sewer systems to municipal utility lines are called "taps." A water tap is the point where a property connects to the town's water supply, enabling water to flow into the development. Similarly, a sewer tap links a property's wastewater system to the town's sewer line, allowing wastewater to be directed away for treatment. For residential developments, each unit is allocated one water tap and one sewer tap, with each tap representing 15 fixture unit values. For non-residential properties, the required number of water and sewer taps is determined based on a fixtures and

connections chart provided in the Town Code, with many non-residential units needing multiple taps to meet demand.

Determining the number of available taps is essential for effective municipal growth management and infrastructure planning. Tap counts are based on the state-permitted maximum usage, calculated at 250 gallons per day (gpd) per tap. In Emmitsburg, the allowable maximum usage is 750,000 gpd for sewer and 398,000 gpd for water. This translates to 1,592 water taps and 3,000 sewer taps. The current availability of water and sewer taps is detailed below:

Table 9.4 Availability of Water & Sewer Taps 2024 Projected Residential Development		
	Water Taps ¹	Sewer Taps ²
Total Number of Taps	1,592	3,000
Currently Active Taps	1,374	1,494
Taps Remaining	218	1,506
Current Development Pipeline		
Residential Corporate Limits ³	81	81
Residential Corporate Limits ⁴	16	16
Taps Remaining	121	1,409
Future Development Pipeline		
Potential Annexation	457 - 563	457 - 563
Other Buildable Lots within Growth Boundary	350 - 513	350 - 513
Total Future Residential Development Pipeline ⁵	807 – 1,076	807 – 1,076
Taps Remaining – Surplus/(Deficit) After Accounting for Future Development Pipeline	(686-955)	333-602
1. State Permitted usage/250 gpd = 398,000/250gpd = 1,592 2. State Permitted usage/250 gpd = 750,000/250gpd = 3,000 3. Proposed Dwelling Units Municipal Limits noted in Table 9.2 4. Includes 11 taps allocated for a church and 5 taps for a distillery currently in progress 5. Range of Allowable Future Dwelling Units noted in Table 9.2		

Based on the figures in Table 9.4, if the anticipated residential developments within the existing corporate limits proceed as planned, there will be sufficient sewer taps, with 1,409 taps remaining. Even with all allowable dwelling units built on all available lots within town and growth boundaries and potential residential annexations, the sewer tap supply would still be sufficient with an estimate between 333 - 602 sewer taps available. However, there will be a significant shortage of water taps, which would prevent the potential residential annexations or other significant developments within the next 5 to 7 years from moving forward, as only 121 water taps remain after accounting for all active and proposed taps within the existing Town limits. As new developments require adequate water capacity, it's crucial for the town to take steps to increase the number of available water taps.

Currently, there are some unutilized sources of water: Reservoir 1, Reservoir 2, Wells J, and Well 7. Utilizing Wells J and 7 could provide an additional 468 water taps, but only if the Emmet Gardens Water Treatment Plant is constructed. Although the project will cost over \$2 million, it would be an essential investment to support future growth. Additionally, developers will need to contribute to expanding the water supply, ensuring sufficient infrastructure is in place to meet the demand generated by new developments.

School Capacity

Growth in Emmitsburg is likely to have a significant impact on local schools, as new residential developments bring more families into the area. Increased population means a rise in school-aged children, which can lead to higher enrollment numbers. For Emmitsburg Elementary School, this could result in the need for

additional classrooms, teachers, and resources to maintain quality education and manageable class sizes. To stay proactive, the town will need to work closely with Frederick County to monitor enrollment and plan for potential changes, ensuring the educational infrastructure can support the anticipated population increase.

The following table presents the projected enrollment and school capacity, calculated by Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS), using equated enrollment. Equated enrollment adjusts student counts to reflect the differing demands of various grade levels on school resources. For example, high school students may require more specialized facilities than elementary students, so their enrollment numbers are weighed accordingly to provide a more accurate measure of capacity utilization.

Table 9.5 Projected Enrollment & Capacity (%)								
School	Capacity	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Emmitsburg Elementary	225	201	200	202	200	207	208	209
		89%	90%	89%	92%	92%	93%	89%
Thurmont Middle	924	451	442	427	446	423	429	443
		49%	48%	46%	48%	46%	46%	49%
Catoclin High	1,046	782	739	677	655	626	622	621
		75%	71%	65%	63%	60%	59%	75%
Source: BOE Educational Facilities Master Plan, June 2022.								

The following table presents the current school enrollment and capacity, providing critical insight into how well existing educational facilities can accommodate the student population in Emmitsburg. This information is particularly important in the context of increased residential development, as growth in housing typically leads to an influx of families and school-aged children. Comparing this table to the previous one shows that the projected enrollment is lower than the actual

enrollment for 2024, indicating that the student population is likely to grow further. While Thurmont Middle and Catoctin High have the capacity to absorb additional students, Emmitsburg Elementary, already operating at 95% capacity, will face greater challenges in accommodating this growth. This highlights the need for strategic planning to ensure adequate educational resources, particularly at the elementary level.

Table 9.6 2024 School Enrollment Report				
School	Total Enrollment	Equated Enrollment	State Rated Building Capacity	Percent Capacity
Emmitsburg Elementary	214	214	225	95%
Thurmont Middle	499	499	924	54%
Catoctin High	783	783	1,043	75%
Source: FCPS Enrollments and Capacities, September 2024				

With the elementary school already operating at 95% capacity, further enrollment increases will strain resources, impacting the quality of education and overall student experience. To address this, the town should work closely with Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) to evaluate potential solutions, including expanding the existing facility, adding modular classrooms, or planning for a new school site in the future.

In 2020, FCPS undertook a Facility and Program Assessment for the four “northern county” (Emmitsburg, Lewistown, Thurmont, and Wolfsville) elementary schools. Their objective was to provide a limited renovation strategy for each school that addresses existing conditions, the ability of the school to meet educational specifications, and the ability to meet current codes when renovated. The report

summary indicated several limited renovations and findings for Emmitsburg Elementary, and specifically noting that:

“Emmitsburg Elementary School includes a limited number of spaces which are not identified in the FCPS Educational Specification requirements and are therefore ‘surplus’ space within the existing structure. At the same time, the school shows space deficiencies in other program areas when compared to the FCPS Educational Specifications. Of specific concern are space needs in Administration, the Health suite, Kindergarten, and core classroom spaces for grades 1 – 5. ... The full report for Emmitsburg Elementary School describes a limited renovation estimated to have a total project cost of \$9,799,000. This equates to a cost of approximately \$214 per gross square foot or \$43,551 per student (at State Rated Capacity).”

Advocating for these improvements will require data-driven presentations showing projected enrollment growth, the impact of residential development, and the benefits of proactive investment in education infrastructure. Collaboration with developers to secure impact fees and state or county funding for school expansion will be crucial. Prioritizing these efforts is important for ensuring that the school remains a supportive, high-quality learning environment for its students.

Parks & Recreation

Parkland is essential for fostering health, quality of life, and sustainability in communities. It enhances community well-being by offering spaces for active lifestyles and promoting mental health. Parkland contributes to environmental benefits such as improving air quality, absorbing stormwater, mitigating urban heat

island effects, and acting as natural buffers to reduce noise and filter pollutants. Beyond its desirable environmental impact, parkland serves as a hub for social interaction, strengthening community bonds and fostering a sense of belonging. It also boosts property values, making neighborhoods more attractive and economically vibrant. Given these significant benefits, it is crucial for the town to prioritize the development of adequate open spaces as part of its growth strategy, ensuring a balanced and sustainable future for all residents.

In addition to preserving parkland, improving access to recreational amenities—particularly trails—can enhance public health and stimulate the local economy. Providing trail connections directly from neighborhoods encourages residents to engage in outdoor activity and invites visitors to explore local amenities and businesses. In Emmitsburg, neighborhoods like Southgate benefit from proximity to the Community Park loop trail, serving as a model for walkable recreation access. Community members have identified opportunities to expand this connectivity by linking the Emmitsburg Multi-User Trails more directly to town, especially through potential future development near Scott Road Farm that could establish a continuous connection to Community Park.

The Town Code includes an ordinance on parkland dedication and residential development, designed to ensure that new residential projects provide sufficient parks, recreational spaces, and open areas. This ordinance aims to promote the health, safety, and welfare of future residents by regulating land use and development. Under the ordinance, developers of residential land after January 11, 2021, are required to dedicate parkland or pay a fee in lieu of dedication. The minimum required parkland is calculated as 0.010 acres per individual residing in the development, with an assumed occupancy of 2.67 individuals per single-family

detached unit. This requirement applies to developments with more than five residential units. The calculation for required parkland uses the formula: (Number of dwelling units) $\times$ (2.67 individuals/unit) $\times$ (0.010 acres/individual). For instance, a development with 48 units would need to provide 1.28 acres of parkland: $50 \text{ units} \times 2.67 \times 0.010 = 1.34 \text{ acres}$.

In mixed-use developments, the parkland requirement applies only to the residential portion of the project. Alternatively, developers may choose to pay a fee in-lieu of parkland dedication if additional recreational areas are deemed unnecessary or impractical. This fee is assessed upon approval of the final subdivision plat or site plan. All fees collected through this process are deposited into the capital projects fund and are used to enhance publicly owned parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities, ensuring they continue to serve the needs of the growing community.

Given the current residential units development pipeline, the following parkland requirements are projected:

Table 9.7 Parkland Requirements for Residential Development Pipeline			
	Subdivision	Units in Pipeline	Parkland Requirement ¹ (acres)
Within Corporate Limits	Brookfield	10	0.3
	Southgate	3	0.1
	Emmit Ridge II	48	1.3
Potential Annexations	Frailey Farm	350	9.3
	McNair	63	1.7
Total		474	12.7
1. Calculated Using: (Number of dwelling units) $\times$ (2.67 individuals/unit) $\times$ (0.010 acres/individual).			

Expansion of Other Community Facilities

As Emmitsburg's population grows, facilities like the Town Offices, community center, library, and senior center will need to expand to meet the evolving needs of the community. Increased staffing will be essential to handle higher workloads. While current facilities are sufficient for now, planning for a larger space in the future is advisable. Similarly, services such as senior center programs, public safety, emergency response, and public assistance will require scaling to support the larger population. However, the most critical priorities will be ensuring adequate water and sewer infrastructure, expanding school capacity, and developing parks to accommodate future growth effectively.

Goals & Objectives

1. Address the critical need to expand water supply and sewer capacity to support anticipated residential and non-residential developments.
2. Collaborate with Frederick County Public Schools to address school capacity challenges by building new facilities.
3. Focus on creating parks and green spaces that meet the requirements of the Town Code and promote public and environmental health benefits.

The primary objective of these goals is to ensure that Emmitsburg grows into a sustainable, balanced, and inclusive way while preserving its small-town character and natural beauty. Expanding the water supply and sewer capacity is essential to supporting anticipated developments, ensuring that infrastructure aligns with growth while upholding public health standards. Collaborating with Frederick County Public

Schools to monitor and address school capacity challenges will ensure that students continue to have access to quality education in an environment that supports their success. Focusing on the creation of parks and green spaces will foster environmental and public health benefits, enhancing the quality of life for residents.

These goals align with Emmitsburg's community vision by supporting economic growth, fostering a connected community, and promoting environmental sustainability. Expanding infrastructure and schools reinforces the vision of a prosperous economy and a connected community by accommodating growth while addressing essential needs like education, jobs, and housing. The emphasis on parks and green spaces reflects the vision for a sustainable environment, ensuring that development occurs responsibly while preserving the town's natural assets and promoting a high quality of life for current and future residents. Together, these goals provide a foundation for Emmitsburg to thrive as a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient community.

Strategies

1. Develop Additional Water Sources. Explore options for activating Wells J and 7 by necessary infrastructure, such as the Emmit Gardens water treatment plant. Explore opportunities to upgrade and rehabilitate existing reservoirs to increase capacity.
2. Collaborate with Developers by requiring them to invest in infrastructure expansion as part of their development plans.

3. Expand trail connectivity between neighborhoods and public parks to support active lifestyles, meet parkland requirements, and enhance environmental and economic benefits.
4. Continue to pursue grants and loans from the state and federal programs to fund water and sewer improvements and other infrastructure projects.
5. Collaborate with Frederick County Public Schools and other relevant stakeholders to support the expansion and reconstruction of Emmitsburg Elementary School and Catoclin High School.

10 Implementation

The purpose of Envision Emmitsburg is to create a blueprint for sustainable economic growth, community development, and environmental stewardship. To ensure the plan becomes more than just a document, it must be successfully implemented. Achieving this success will require collaboration among the town government, local organizations, property owners, and the broader community, alongside continuous monitoring of all goals and initiatives. This final chapter of the plan focuses on translating its goals into actionable and measurable outcomes, which are essential for tracking progress, making informed adjustments, and turning the Plan’s vision into a tangible reality.

Guiding Principles

This Plan addresses a range of issues—housing, transportation, environmental sustainability, and economic development—that directly impact residents, businesses, and organizations. For successful implementation, it must align with the community’s values, priorities, and unique character. The implementation process should be rooted in guiding principles that can serve as a compass to ensure that efforts align with overarching goals and visions of the entire community. These principles – community engagement, data-driven decision-making, and flexibility & adaptability, are meant to provide clarity, consistency, and a shared framework for all those impacted by policy decisions. Adhering to these will help make decisions that are consistent with long-term visions of sustainable growth.

Community Engagement

Fostering strong partnerships with residents, businesses, and local organizations is essential to building collective ownership of the Plan. Community engagement is a guiding principle because fostering shared ownership ensures that the plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the community. It also builds the trust and collaboration necessary for successful implementation. Emmitsburg's annual community events play a vital role in promoting social cohesion and highlight the potential for meaningful collaboration to achieve shared goals. To strengthen community involvement, the Town should engage diverse groups, provide opportunities to discuss the plan's progress, and build a volunteer network for community projects.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Effective implementation relies on robust data to prioritize actions and allocate resources efficiently. This plan aims to provide the town's demographic, economic, and environmental data as a foundation for identifying needs and tracking progress. Actions for data-driven decision-making include monitoring key indicators, conducting community surveys to gather feedback, creating accessible dashboards to track progress, and establishing benchmarks to set clear expectations for achieving goals. Data ensures that decisions are grounded in evidence, making it easier to measure success and adjust strategies when needed.

Flexibility and Adaptability

In a dynamic world influenced by shifting economic conditions, evolving state funding, and emerging technologies, adaptability is essential. For smaller communities like Emmitsburg, where resources are limited, a flexible approach is

crucial to address challenges and seize opportunities. To maintain relevance and effectiveness, the Plan's implementation must include biannual progress reviews to adjust efforts. Contingency planning for unforeseen obstacles, pilot programs to test feasibility, and active stakeholder engagement to align strategies with changing community needs will be important. This will ensure that the Plan remains a practical and responsive roadmap, capable of evolving alongside new circumstances.

Implementation Strategies

Goals and objectives from all focus areas are translated into action steps with time frames for completion.

Housing	
Time Frame	Action Steps
Short Term	• Complete an inventory of vacant and underutilized buildings • Complete an inventory of vacant and underutilized lots • Launch a vacant property registry • Conduct a detailed housing market analysis to assess gaps in affordability and housing types • Identify ordinances that hinder the development of diverse and affordable housing
Long Term	• Revise zoning regulations to require mixed-income and diversified housing. • Revise zoning regulations to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs)

	• Work to secure grants for rehabilitating and repurposing vacant buildings into housing units. • Rehabilitate and repurpose vacant and underutilized properties
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Economy & Fiscal Health

Time Frame	Action Steps
Short Term	• Identify ordinances that impede business development • Create a “shop local” campaign to support local businesses • Create a business resource guide for new and existing businesses (permits, funding, marketing etc.) • Connect ALICE households with assistance programs • Continue to engage in tourism marketing to promote local attractions • Promote Emmitsburg as a remote worker-friendly community
Long Term	• Formalize a tourism development strategy that involves branding and coordinating events • Work towards becoming a Main Street Maryland community to access technical assistance and grants • Pursue efforts to attract employers that will generate new employment opportunities.

Environment & Natural Resources

Time Frame	Action Steps
Short Term	• Evaluate areas to identify natural buffer enhancements within corporate limits and growth areas.

	• Launch a water conservation program that includes rain harvesting • Revive the Green Team to help establish an environmental stewardship program • Establish a monitoring program to inspect and maintain vegetated buffers • Continue to apply for funding to implement MS4 permit requirements and stormwater retrofits • Continue to administer the stormwater utility fee program to fund long-term system maintenance
Long Term	• Update zoning ordinances to encourage compact development • Establish and implement a program for the planting of native tree species • Retrofit older developments and public properties with green stormwater infrastructure

Land Use & Community Design

Time Frame	Action Steps
Short Term	• Conduct a town-wide parking study to assess and improve parking options • Conduct a town-wide study to identify fragmented sidewalks • Implement signage and streetscape improvements in the historic district • Identify and prioritize historic structures for reuse and restoration

Long Term	• Pursue the installation of seating, enhanced landscaping, and public art in prominent public spaces • Streamline development project approval process • Identify and implement strategies to address existing parking challenges. • Enhance the connectivity and accessibility of the sidewalk network. • Use the Growth Boundary and Opportunity Area maps to guide annexation and infrastructure investments • Periodically reassess growth boundaries based on population trends and service capacity.
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Transportation & Mobility

Time Frame	Action Steps
Short Term	• Analyze feasibility and alignment of roads proposed in the Growth Boundary map. • Continue filling sidewalk gaps, especially around schools and parks • Identify priority corridors for pedestrian and bicycle improvements • Address parking constraints through agreements with various institutions for off-hours use
Long Term	• Develop a connected trail and bike lane network linking neighborhoods to downtown, parks, and Mount St. Mary's.

	• Explore partnerships for regional rideshare hubs or micro-mobility pilot projects (e.g., bike-share) • Plan and develop a structured parking facility in alignment with broader Main Street revitalization initiatives, ensuring that parking solutions support economic development, pedestrian accessibility, and the overall aesthetic and functional goals of the downtown area.
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Community Facilities & Services

Time Frame	Action Steps
Short Term	• Conduct a needs assessment to evaluate condition and capacity of parks, water/sewer, and public buildings. • Continue to identify and address aging infrastructure, especially water and sewer systems • Continue routine maintenance and upgrades to playgrounds, trails, and civic buildings. • Collaborate with Frederick County to track school enrollment and capacity at Emmitsburg Elementary.
Long Term	• Construct the Emmit Gardens Water Treatment Plant to expand water tap capacity. • Expand or enhance community parks as population increases. • Secure long-term water and sewer system investments through state and federal grants. • Support new school facilities or expansions as enrollment projections exceed current capacity.

	• Expand or upgrade public safety facilities in line with projected growth.
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Municipal Growth

Time Frame	Action Steps
Short Term	• Engage the public in growth discussions through open houses and visual planning tools (e.g., scenario mapping). • Establish a formal annexation review process that considers fiscal impact, infrastructure capacity, and compatibility. • Maintain and update tap availability tracking for both water and sewer systems. • Require applicants for large-scale development to demonstrate infrastructure readiness or planned upgrades. • Track and report on the residential development pipeline annually. • Review zoning and permitted densities in the Growth Boundary to confirm alignment with population projections. • Collaborate with housing developers to identify barriers to project delivery (e.g., infrastructure, permitting).
Long Term	• Use annexation agreements to ensure new development contributes to infrastructure costs (e.g., water/sewer extensions, roads) • Establish a policy framework for when and how growth can occur in the Opportunity Area (GOA)

	• Monitor and guide development so that it aligns with available school capacity, emergency services, and water/sewer infrastructure. • Construct the Emmit Gardens Water Treatment Plant to alleviate future water tap shortages • Continue to pursue funding and partnerships for large infrastructure investments, including grants and developer contributions • Adjust long-term growth strategies as actual population trends emerge, ensuring sustainable pacing of development.
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The successful implementation of the Envision Emmitsburg Comprehensive Plan hinges on a shared commitment to building a future that is environmentally responsible, economically resilient, and socially inclusive. Rooted in the Three Pillars of Sustainability, this plan takes a holistic approach—balancing environmental protection with economic opportunity and social equity. It lays the groundwork for compact, walkable neighborhoods, strategic infrastructure investment, revitalized downtown spaces, diversified housing, and environmental stewardship, all guided by the community’s values and vision.

The Plan's strategies reflect Maryland’s 12 Planning Visions, serving as a framework for sound growth management and community design. It advances the vision for Quality of Life and Sustainability through smart land use and environmental protection. The Public Participation vision is fully realized through public engagement process that informed each chapter. Emphasis on Growth Areas, Infrastructure, and

Transportation aligns development with capacity, promotes connectivity, and supports multimodal mobility. Community Design and Housing are reflected in efforts to revitalize historic areas, promote infill development, and offer diverse housing choices. The Plan addresses Economic Development and Resource Conservation simultaneously by identifying local job opportunities while protecting farmland, forests, and waterways. Its implementation process incorporates Stewardship by requiring collaboration across sectors, and it fulfills the vision of Integration by aligning strategies across local, county, and state levels.

Ultimately, this plan is a living document—meant to evolve with changing conditions and community priorities. Through short- and long-term action steps, guided by principles of community engagement, data-driven decision-making, and adaptability, Emmitsburg can translate vision into action. With thoughtful leadership, broad collaboration, and a unified commitment to sustainability, the Town is poised to grow in a way that honors its past, serves its present, and builds a thriving future for generations to come.



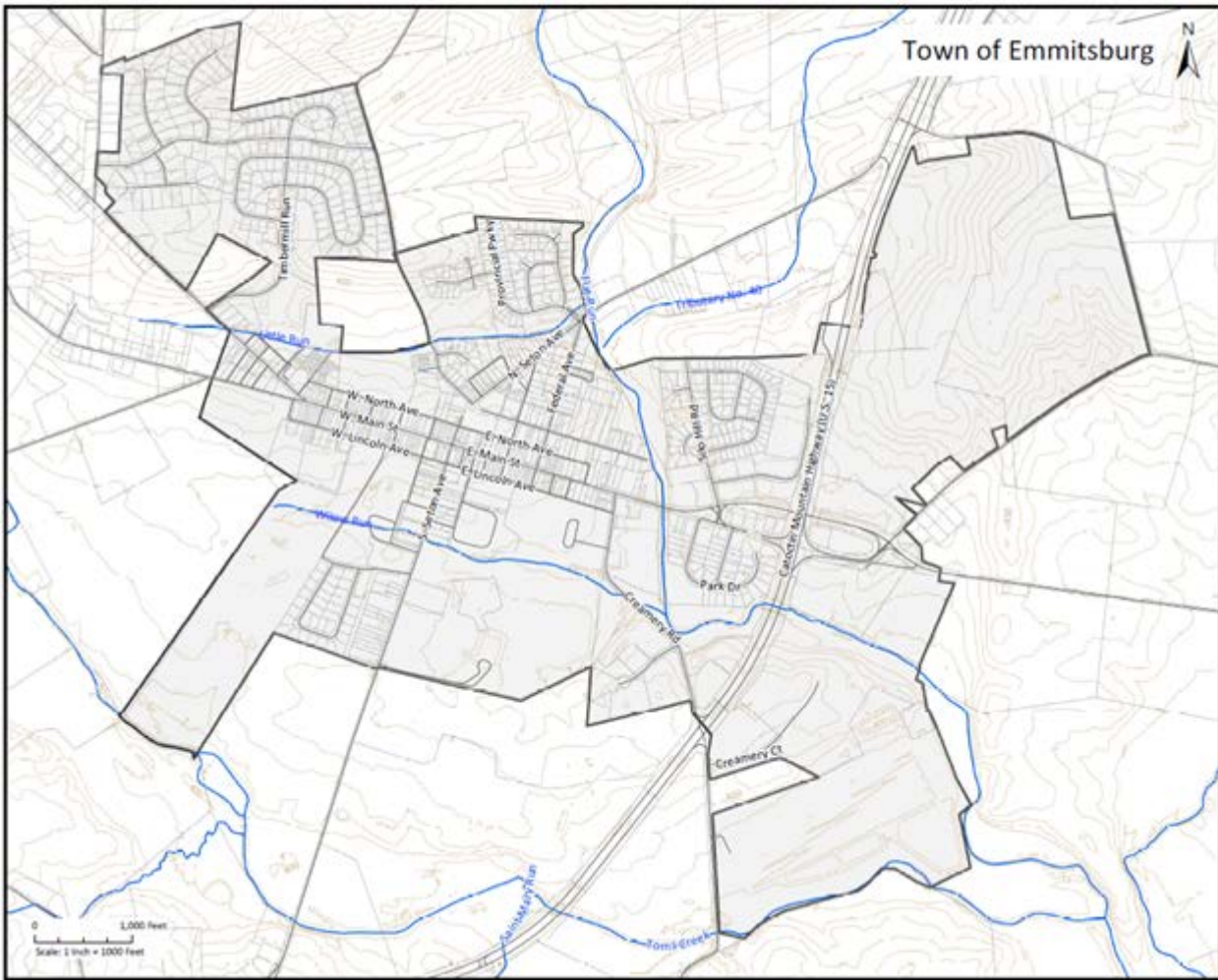
Envision Emmitsburg

2025 Comprehensive Plan

Appendices



Town of Emmitsburg





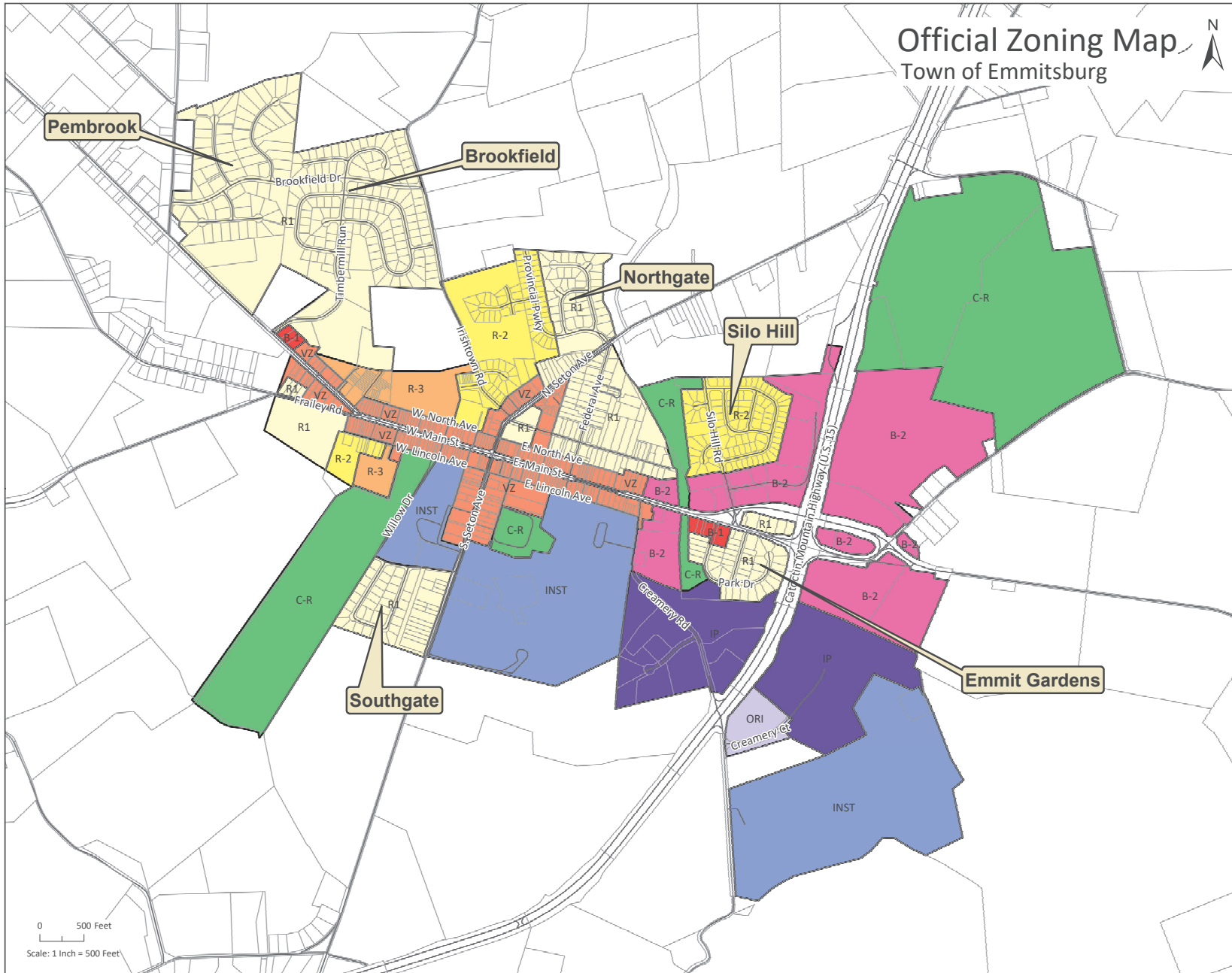
Official Zoning Map

Town of Emmitsburg

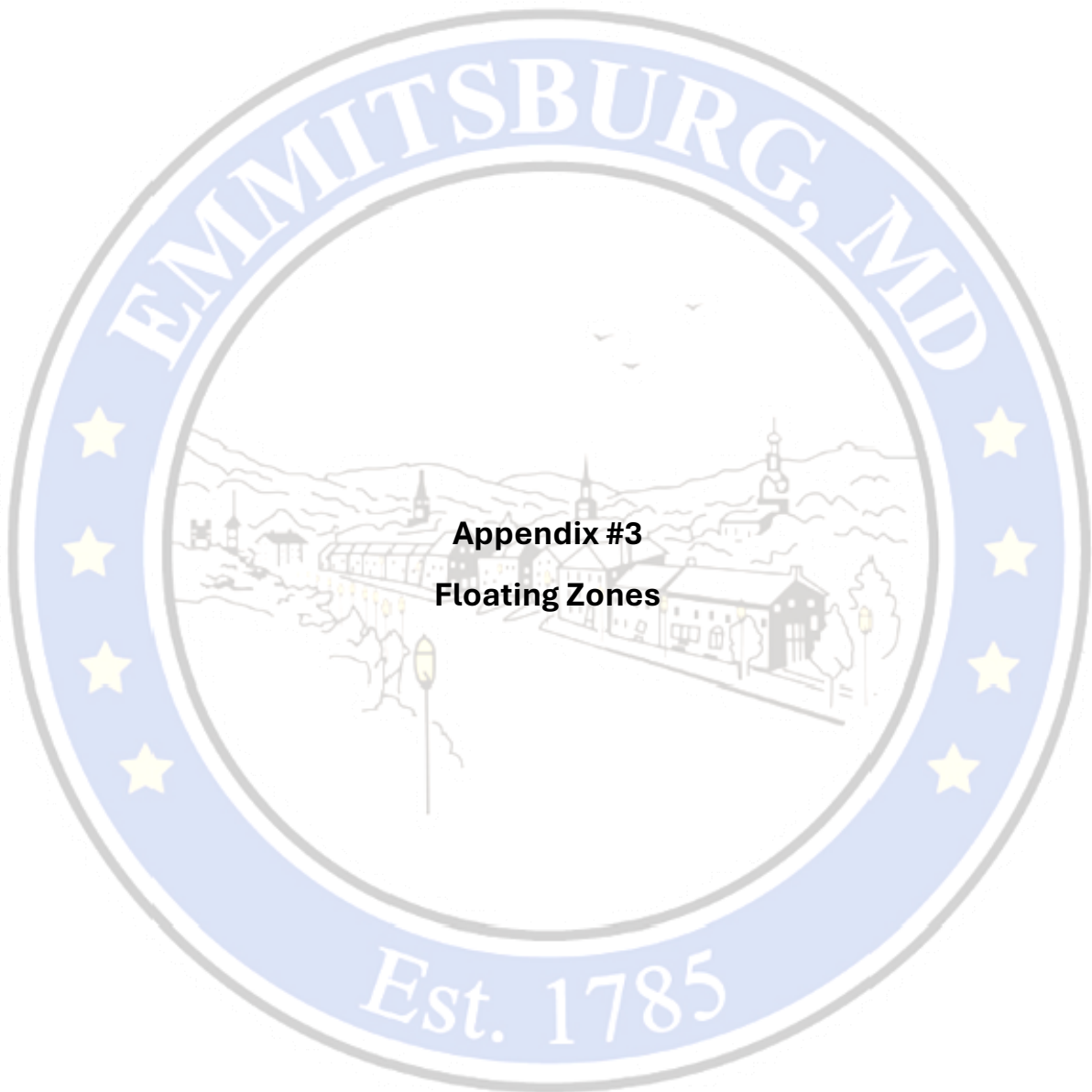


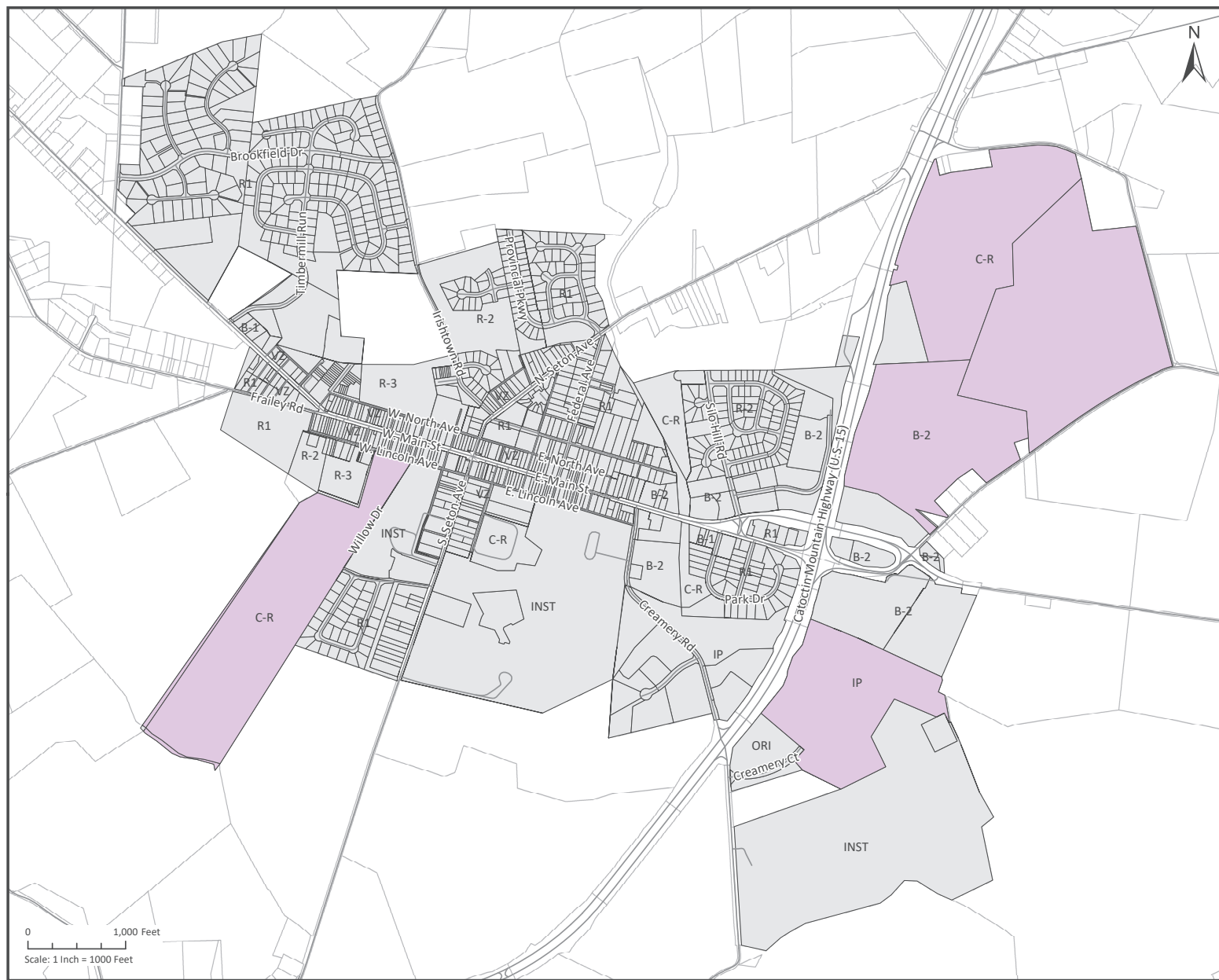
Zoning Districts

- C-R Conservation/Recreation
- R-1 Low Density Residential
- R-2 Medium Density Residential
- R-3 High Density Residential
- INST Institutional
- VZ Village Zone
- B-1 Neighborhood Commercial
- B-2 General Commercial
- IP Industrial Park
- ORI Office, Research, Industrial



0 500 Feet
Scale: 1 Inch = 500 Feet



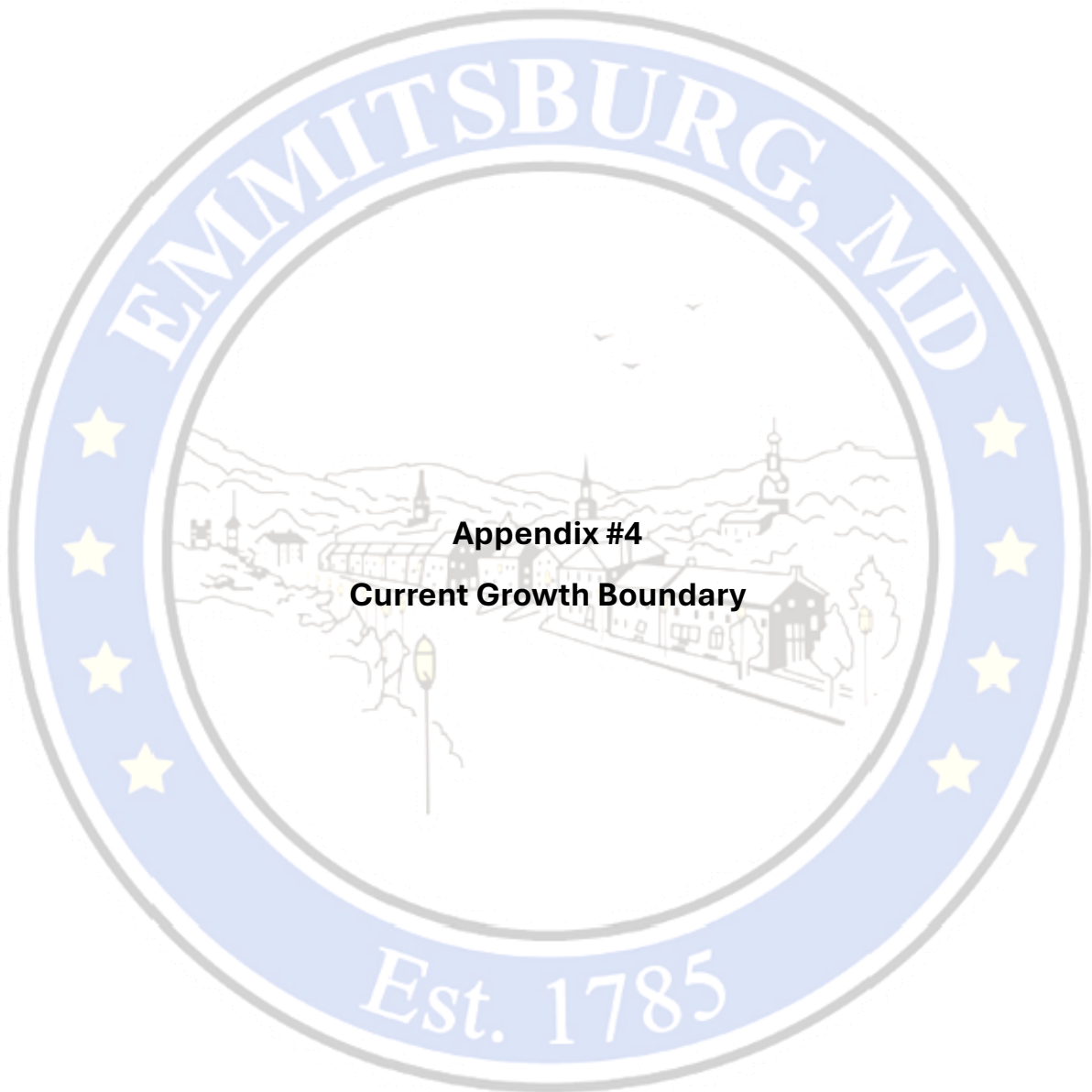


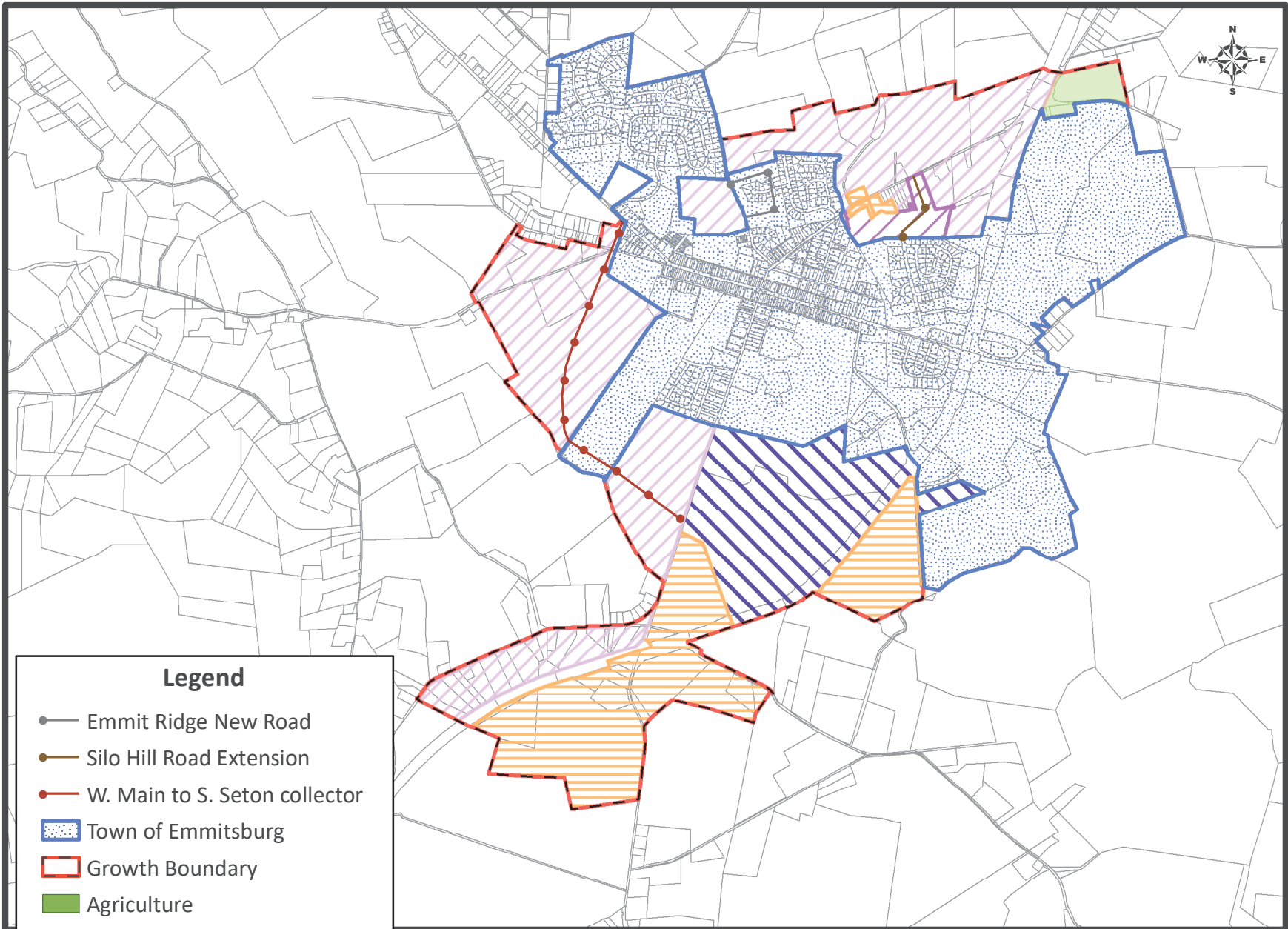
Floating Zone

- Floating Zone Parcels
- Town of Emmitsburg

Zoning Classifications

- C-R Conservation/Recreation
- R-1 Low Density Residential
- R-2 Medium Density Residential
- R-3 High Density Residential
- INST Institutional
- VZ Village Zone
- B-1 Neighborhood Commercial
- B-2 General Commercial
- IP Industrial Park
- ORI Office, Research, Industrial





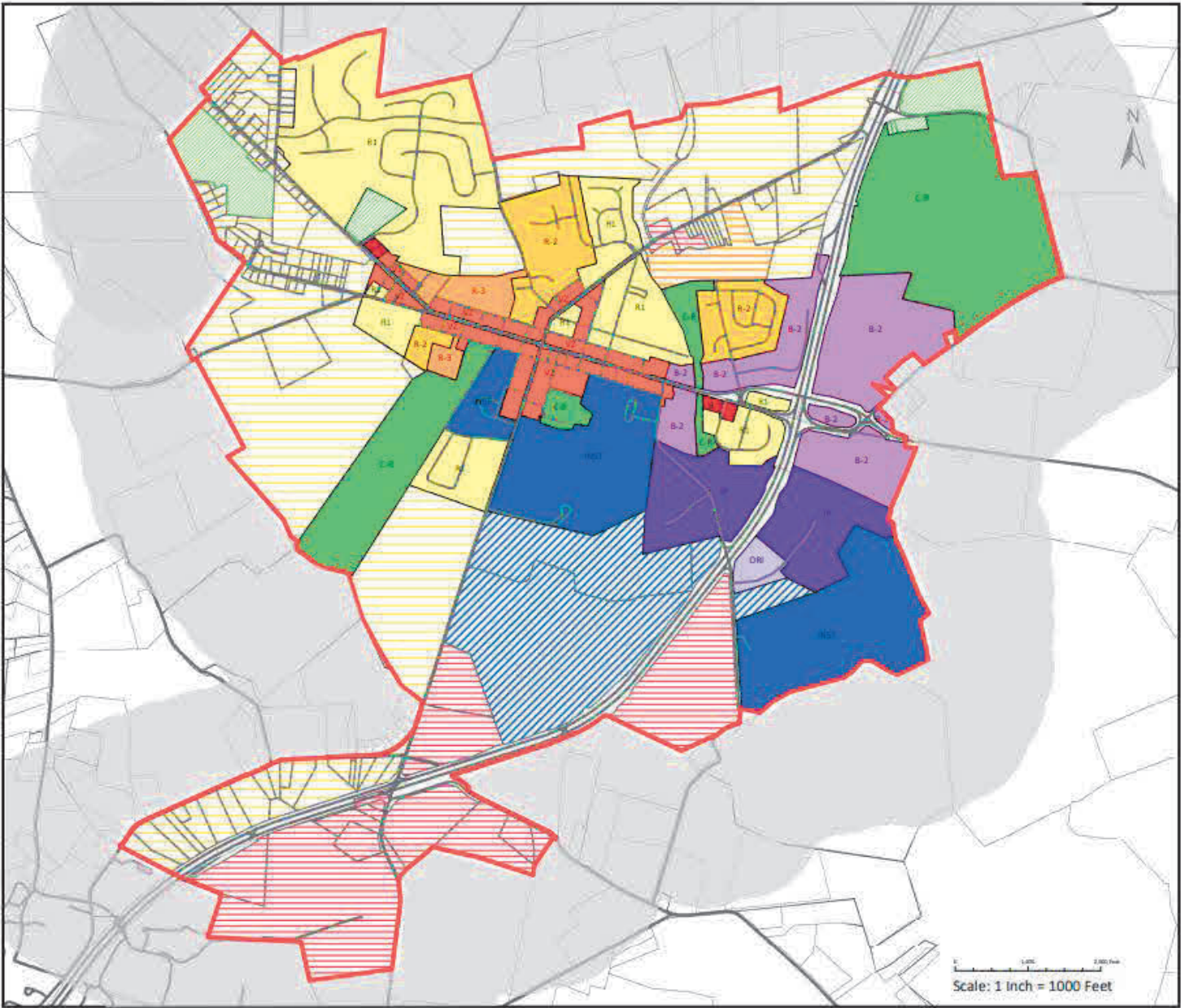
Legend

- Emmet Ridge New Road
- Silo Hill Road Extension
- W. Main to S. Seton collector
- Town of Emmitsburg
- Growth Boundary
- Agriculture
- ▨ Commercial
- ▨ Institutional
- ▨ Low Density Residential
- ▨ Medium Density Residential

0 2,400 4,800
Feet

2021 Emmitsburg Growth Boundary Suggested Land Use Designations & Proposed New Roads





- Growth Opportunity Area
- Growth Boundary
- C-R Conservation/Recreation
- R-1 Low Density Residential
- R-2 Medium Density Residential
- R-3 High Density Residential
- INST Institutional
- VZ Village Zone
- B-1 Neighborhood Commercial
- B-2 General Commercial
- IP Industrial Park
- ORI Office, Research, Industrial
- Commercial (Proposed)
- Low Density Residential (Proposed)
- Agriculture (Proposed)
- Institutional (Proposed)
- Medium Density Residential (Proposed)



**A RESOLUTION
APPROVAL OF THE 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

BE IT RESOLVED, ENACTED AND ORDAINED, this 14th day of July, 2025, by the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the Town of Emmitsburg, Maryland, pursuant to the authority granted to them by the laws of Maryland and the Charter of the Town of Emmitsburg, do

WHEREAS, the Annotated Code of Maryland requires that the Planning Commission shall prepare and approve a comprehensive plan which the Planning Commission shall recommend to the local legislative body, the Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners, for adoption; and

WHEREAS, the Emmitsburg Planning Commission certified the Board of Commissioners of Emmitsburg, Maryland in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended, the approved and recommended Emmitsburg 2025 Comprehensive Plan titled *Envision Emmitsburg*; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners, after providing the required public notice, conducted a public hearing on July 14, 2025, to consider all recommendations of Planning and Zoning Commission, public comments, and other correspondence concerning the Plan by the State of Maryland and Frederick County; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners finds the updated Emmitsburg Comprehensive Plan has been made in accordance with the general purpose of guiding and achieving coordinated and harmonious future development of the Town of Emmitsburg, while addressing present and future needs and promoting the general welfare of the Town and its residents; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners adopts the Town of Emmitsburg Comprehensive Plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY enacted this 14th day of July, 2025 by the Mayor and Board of Commissioners, that Resolution Number 2025-03R is true, correct, and duly adopted by the Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the Town of Emmitsburg.

PASSED this 14th day of July, 2025 by a vote of:

Commissioners:	For	Against	Absent	Abstain
Boehman-Pollitt	✓			
Hoover	✓			
Hagan	✓			
Sweeney	✓			
Turnquist	✓			
TOTAL:	5	Ø	Ø	Ø

ATTEST:

EMMITSBURG BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Sabrina King
Sabrina King, Town Clerk

Amy Boehman-Pollitt
Amy Boehman-Pollitt, President

✓ APPROVED VETOED

this 14th day of July, 2025.

Allen F. Davis Jr.
Allen F. Davis Jr., Mayor