

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

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

Source: Cecil County Office of Economic Development

4.3 Discussion of Issues

4.3.1 Employment Areas

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 4.8: Land Available for Employment Uses, 2009

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

Source: ERM

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

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

4.3.2 *Infrastructure: Sewer, Water, Roads and Broadband*

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Financial Tools

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

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

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

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

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

4.3.3 *Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)*

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

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

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

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

4.3.4 *Affordable Housing*

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

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

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

4.3.5 *Workforce Development*

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

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

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

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

4.3.6 Agriculture

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

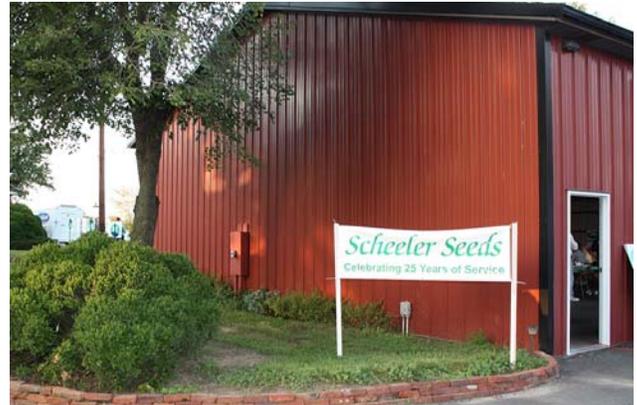
Much of the most productive agricultural land (and prime soils) are in the northern part of the County, part of a large agricultural region that extends through southern Pennsylvania. This area is also the portion of the County most affected by rural residential development since 1990 (see Chapter 3,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

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

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

4.4 Fisheries

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



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

Photo Courtesy of Cecil Soil Magazine