

Sustainability Indicators for Somerset County, Maryland and State of Maryland

Sustainability Indicator	Somerset		Maryland	
	Estimate	(+/-) Percent MOE*	Estimate	(+/-) Percent MOE*
Transportation				
Share of commuters who don't drive alone to work	21.9%	3.6%	26.4%	0.3%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	23.9	2.1	32.2	0.1
Housing				
Percent homeowners paying 35.0 percent or more of income for housing	31.5%	6.9%	25.3%	0.4%
Percent renters paying 35.0% or more of income for rent	56.7%	11%	42.4%	0.6%
Equity				
Poverty rate	27.1%	4%	10.2%	0.2%
Share of income held by top 5% of households	19.44%	2.26%	20.29%	0.24%
Economic Development				
Percent of jobs inside PFAs held by residents living in the PFA	41.8%		41.7%	
2014 annual average unemployment rate	8.8%		5.8%	
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	14.3%	2.4%	37.1%	0.2%
Income				
Median household income (dollars)	\$32,997	\$4,564	\$72,345	\$375
Development				
Percent of single-family residential parcels developed inside of PFAs, 2007-2011	50.0%		71.9%	
Ratio of preserved land to developed land	4.08		0.97	
Percent of resource land preserved	37.2%		25.7%	
Percent of agricultural and resource lands which are unstable	12.1%		27.5%	

* MOE= Margin of error for the 90 percent confidence interval. The estimate, plus and minus the MOE, gives you the lower and upper bounds around the estimate, indicating the range in which there is a 90 percent probability that the range contains the true value. The smaller the margin of error, the more reliable the estimate.

Prepared by the Maryland Department of Planning, March 2015.

EXPLANATION OF SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES

TRANSPORTATION

Definition: This indicator shows the average number of minutes a person spends traveling to work.

Significance: Time spent traveling means less time to spend with family or on other activities. Longer commute times are also related to longer distances traveled, which will increase air pollution and other environmental impacts.

Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey

HOUSING

Definition: This indicator shows the percent of households that have housing costs greater than 35 percent of their income. It was calculated by dividing total households with housing costs greater than 35% of income by total households in the community.

Significance: Housing is generally considered affordable if it accounts for roughly 35 percent* or less of a household's monthly budget. Households that spend more money on housing may have less money to spend on other needs such as health care and education.

Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey

EQUITY - Poverty Rate

Definition: This indicator shows the percent of all people who live in poverty.

Significance: The higher the poverty rate the more stress is on a community and the more unsustainable is the health of a community

Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey

EQUITY - Income Concentration

Definition: This indicator shows the share of income within the community held by the 5 percent of households with the highest incomes.

Significance: This indicator suggests the extent to which wealth is concentrated in a small number of households. A value of 5 percent would mean that every household's income is equal. The higher the value, the more wealth is concentrated.

Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PERCENT OF JOBS IN PFAs HELD BY RESIDENTS LIVING IN PFAs

Definition: This indicator shows the percent of a jurisdiction's jobs inside their priority funding areas that are held by residents that live in the jurisdiction's priority funding areas

Significance: Priority funding areas (PFAs) are local/state designated growth areas. Most jobs are located in PFAs, and the higher the percentage of workers living in PFAs, the more likely that commute times and distance would be minimized.

Source: Maryland Department of Planning using data from the 2011 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program (U.S. Census Bureau)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Definition: This indicator shows the unemployment rate, or the percentage of the total workforce who are unemployed and are looking for a paid job. The unemployment rate does not include long-term unemployed who have given up looking for work.

Significance: A higher unemployment rate indicates a depressed economy that may not provide an adequate standard of living for all its residents.

Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation - 2014 annual averages

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - EDUCATION

Definition: This indicator shows the share of the community's population that holds a college degree, including 2-year, 4-year, or advanced degrees

Significance: A post-secondary education is essential to many of today's jobs, especially higher-paying jobs. A well-educated workforce can provide a competitive advantage to communities for helping to attract and retain businesses. College graduates can expect to earn over 80 percent more over their lifetime than high school graduates; even an Associate's degree can boost earnings by one-third*.

* Carnevale, A.P., S.J. Rose, and B. Cheah. "The College Payoff: Education, Occupations, and Lifetime Earnings." Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Based on analysis of the 2007-2009 American Community Survey

Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey

INCOME

Definition: This indicator shows the income level that is exceeded by half of the households in the community. It is defined as the income in the past 36 months in 2013 inflation-adjusted dollars.

Significance: A higher median income indicates a more prosperous community. In comparison to the average or "mean" income, which may be skewed by a small number of high-income households, the median income provides an indicator of the wealth of a broader section of the population.

Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey

DEVELOPMENT - PERCENT OF SINGLE-FAMILY PARCELS DEVELOPED INSIDE OF PFAS

Definition: This indicator shows the percent of single-family parcels on 20 acres or less which are developed inside of PFAs over the last five years.

Significance: The higher the percent of single-family residential development inside of PFAs, the more compact the development and the less land consumed by that development.

Source: Maryland Department of Planning from MD Property View

DEVELOPMENT - RATIO OF PRESERVED LAND TO DEVELOPED LAND THROUGH FY 2012

Definition: This indicator shows the ratio of the acres of permanently preserved land to the acres of developed land.

Significance: It is a State goal to have a balance of preserved and developed land, specifically to preserve an acre of land for every acre developed.

Source: Maryland departments of Planning, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Maryland counties.

DEVELOPMENT - PERCENT OF RESOURCE LAND PRESERVED

Definition: This indicator shows the percentage of land outside areas planned for growth, development and sewer service that is permanently preserved by state, federal or local programs

Significance: Preserving agricultural, forested, and important natural and water resource lands is a State priority.

Source: Maryland departments of Planning, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Maryland counties.

DEVELOPMENT - PERCENT OF AG AND RESOURCE LANDS WHICH ARE UNSTABLE

Definition: Unstable resource lands are those already or are most likely to be residentially subdivided and developed inconsistent with State goals for land and resource conservation.

Significance: Maryland's land preservation goals call for local plans and land use tools that limit subdivision and development commensurate with achievement of those goals.

Source: Maryland departments of Planning, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Maryland counties.