

# Why Do We Need Plan Maryland?

Plan Maryland Sketch Series

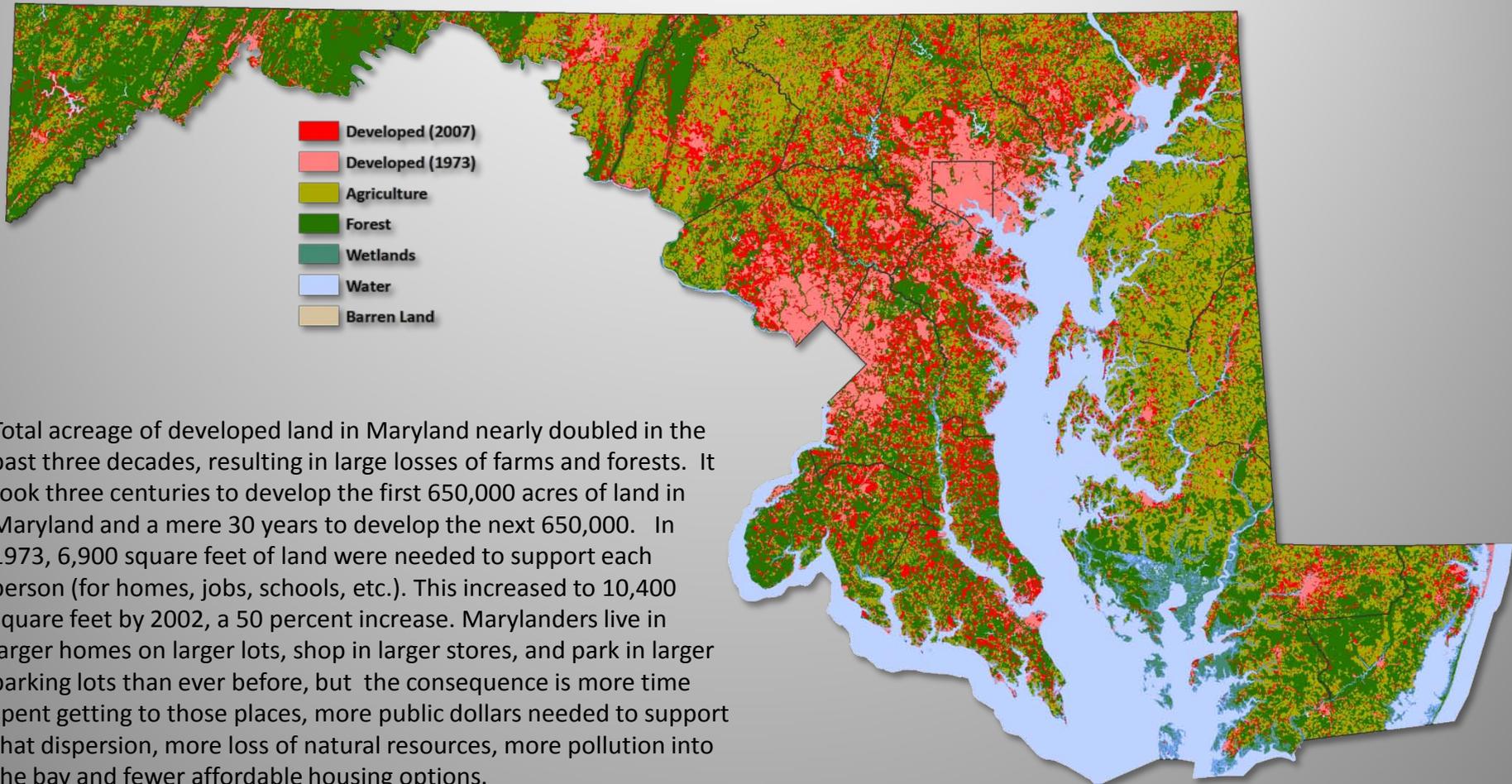
*Produced by the*

*Maryland Department of Planning*

DRAFT – November 2009

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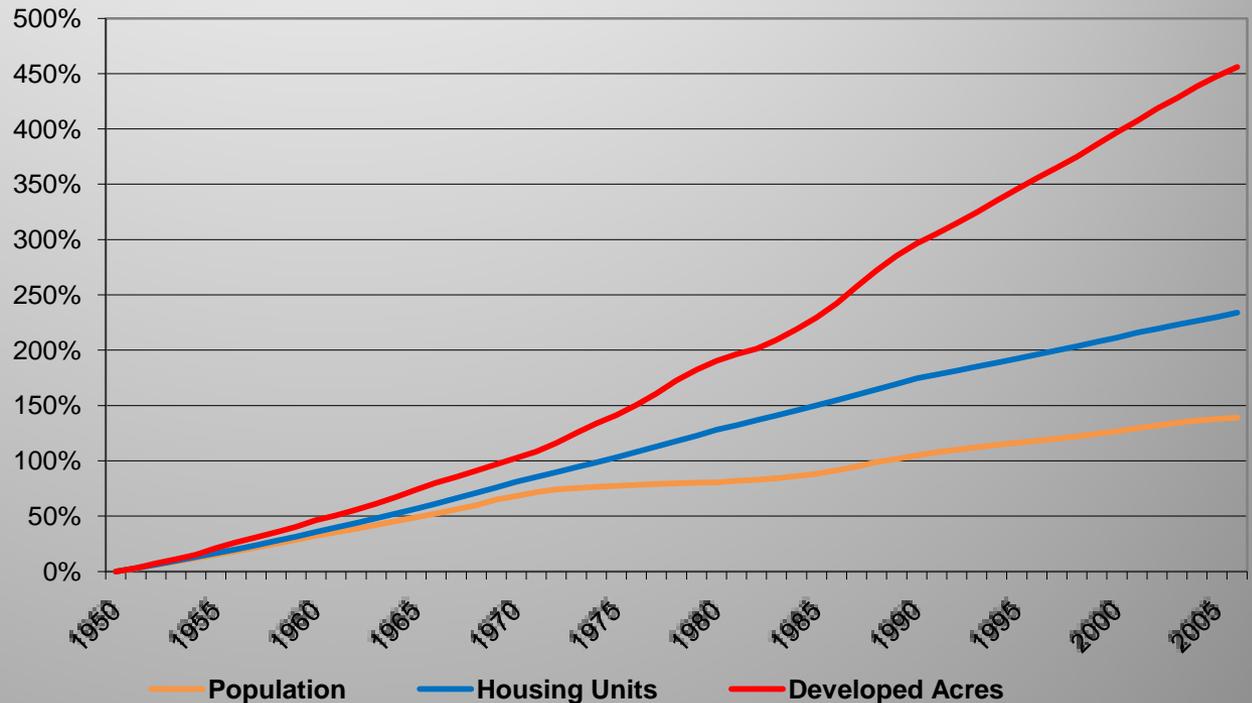
# ***1. To encourage sustainable development and protect quality of life.***



## 2. To develop land at a pace consistent with growth in population and housing.

Since the late 1960s, the nature of residential development (with an increasing share of homes built on large lots), combined with declining household size, has resulted in an increase in developed acres that far exceeds growth in either population or housing units. Since 1950, developed acres for single-family residential units has increased by 455 percent, nearly twice the rate of increase for housing units (234 percent) and more than triple the growth in population (139 percent).

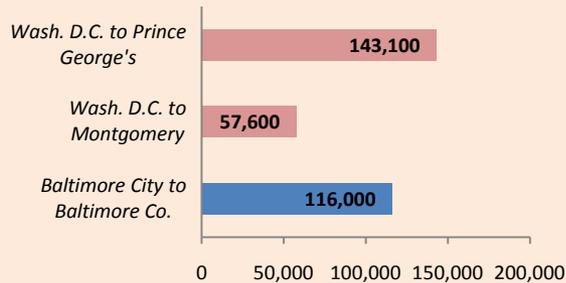
**Cumulative Percent Change in Population, Housing Units and Single-Family Residential Acres for Maryland, Since 1950**



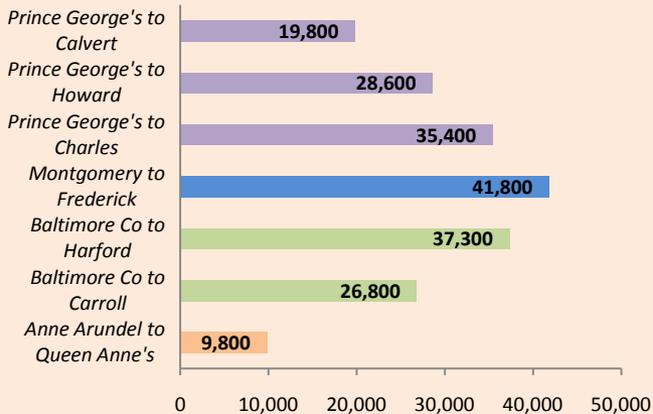
### 3. To strengthen existing cities and communities.

#### Net Migration within Maryland, 1980 to 2007

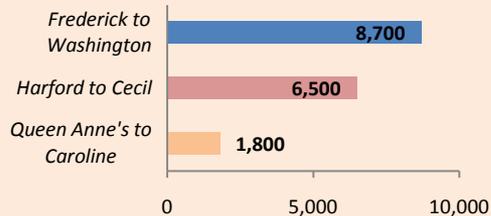
Central Cities to Inner Suburban Counties



Inner Suburban to Outer Suburban Counties

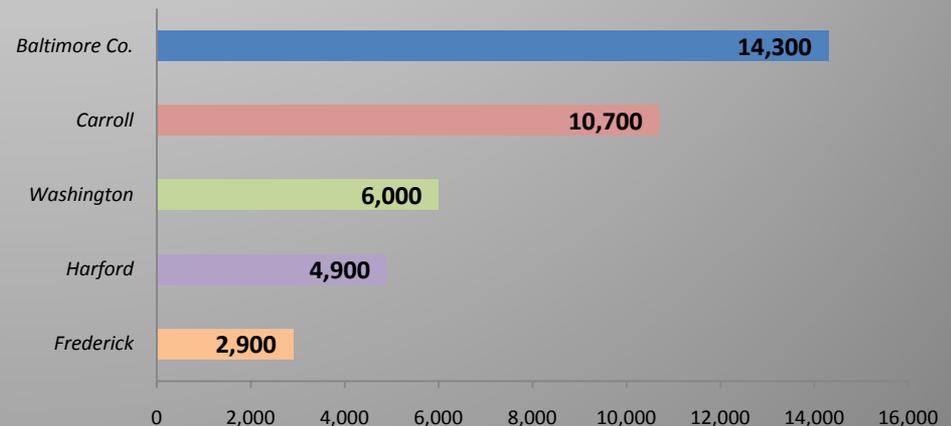


Outer Suburban to Third Tier Counties

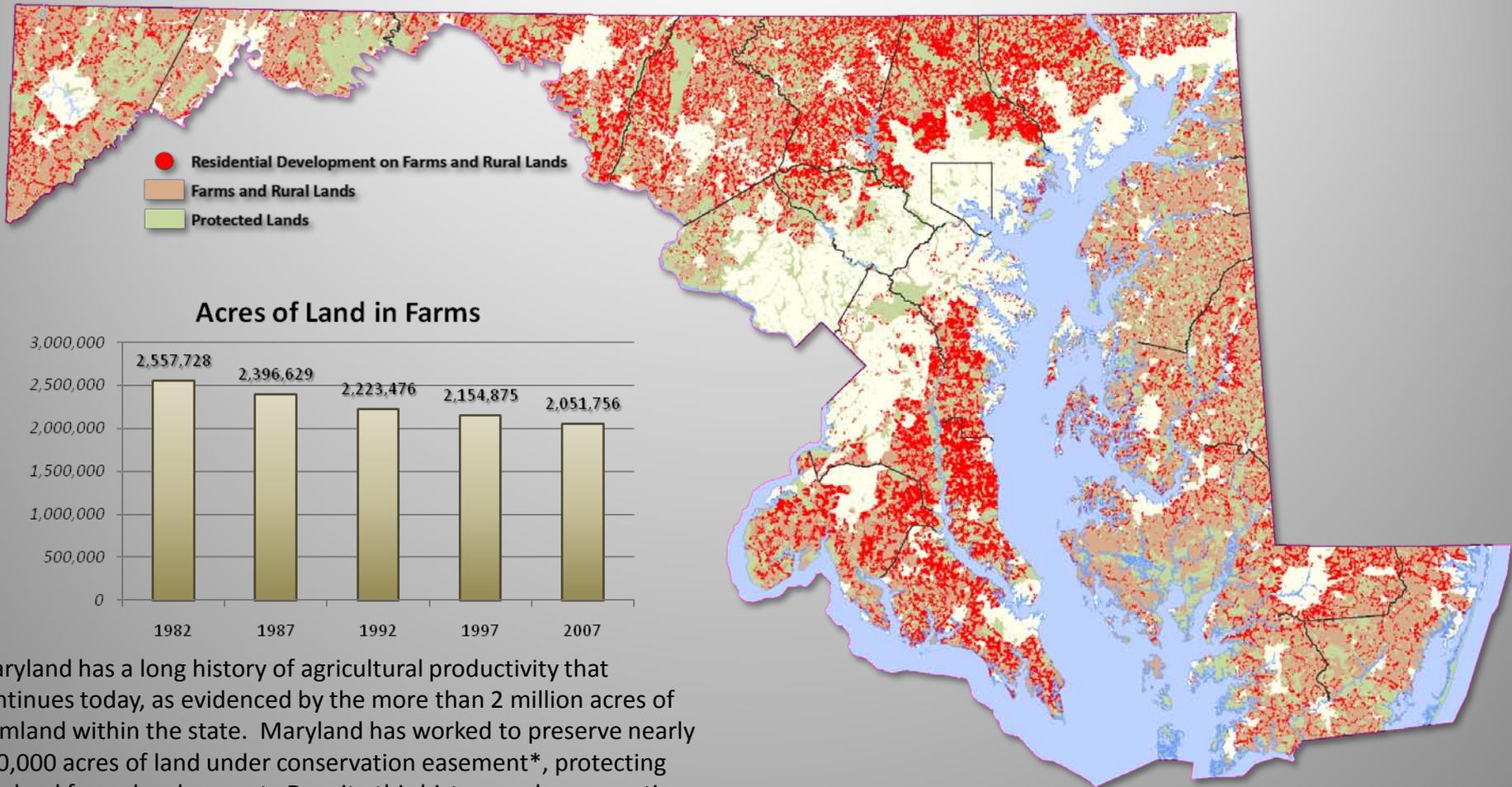


Sprawl has become an unrelenting cycle in which one malady feeds the next. Outmigration from existing communities leads to disinvestment in those communities, resulting in greater need for new roads and schools which helps drive up the cost of land and housing. These are contributing factors driving young families further out into suburban areas. While Maryland is near the midpoint of state growth nationwide, it has experienced enormous churn from within, with tens of thousands of residents journeying from city to suburb to exurb and beyond. Nearly 40,000 Maryland workers relocated to Pennsylvania since 1980, with many trading lower housing costs for longer commutes. Development patterns fuel an income stratification that creates uneven schools and impoverished communities.

Net Migration from Maryland to bordering Pennsylvania Counties, 1980 - 2007



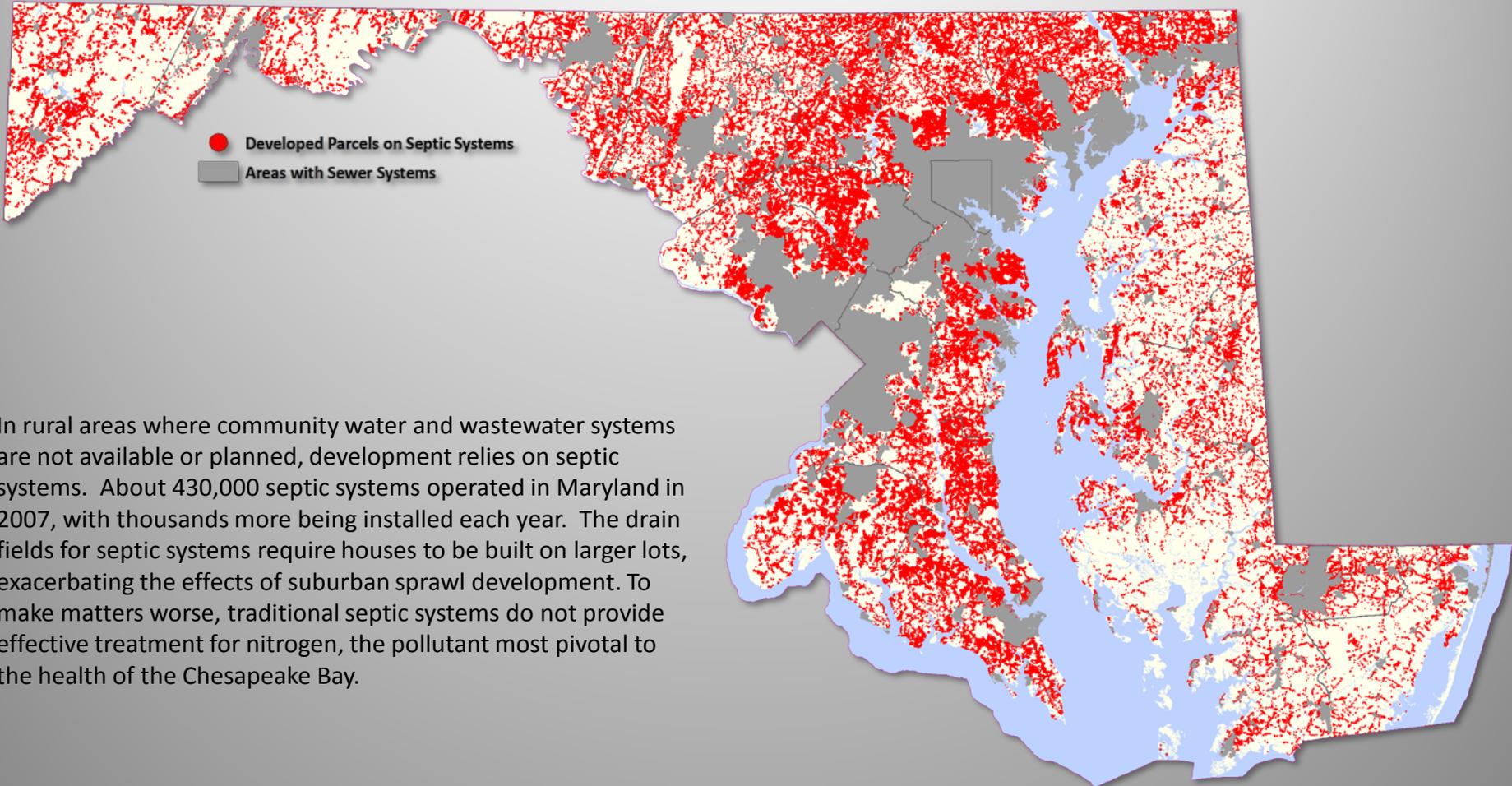
## 4. To protect our farmland.



Maryland has a long history of agricultural productivity that continues today, as evidenced by the more than 2 million acres of farmland within the state. Maryland has worked to preserve nearly 700,000 acres of land under conservation easement\*, protecting this land from development. Despite this history and conservation efforts, 500,000 acres of farmland were lost to development between 1982 and 2007— or one-fifth of the 1982 acreage. Sprawling development patterns have placed increasing value on these lands for development, pressuring Maryland farmers to remove their farms from agricultural productivity.

\*Figure provided from The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation – 2008 Annual Report

## ***5. To preserve our natural resources.***

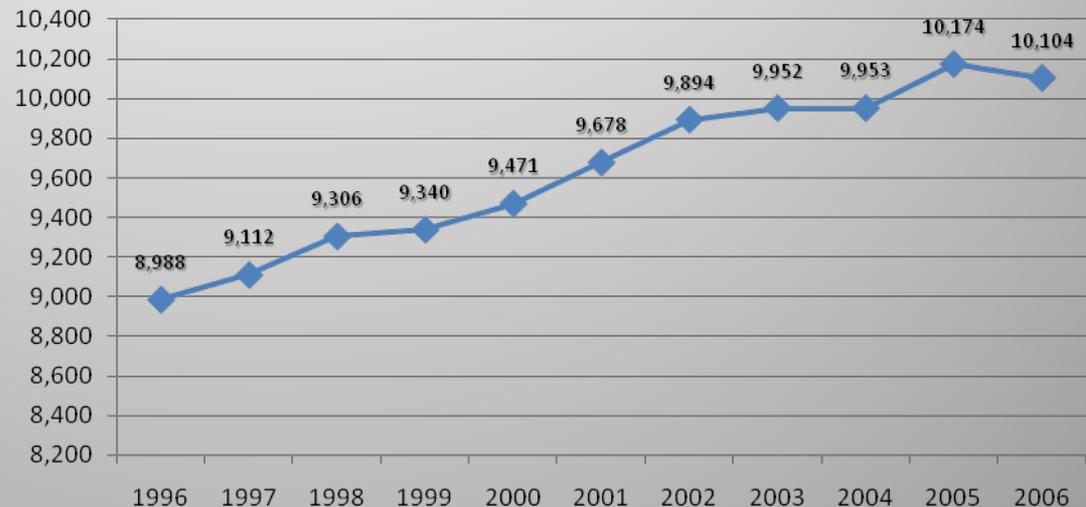


In rural areas where community water and wastewater systems are not available or planned, development relies on septic systems. About 430,000 septic systems operated in Maryland in 2007, with thousands more being installed each year. The drain fields for septic systems require houses to be built on larger lots, exacerbating the effects of suburban sprawl development. To make matters worse, traditional septic systems do not provide effective treatment for nitrogen, the pollutant most pivotal to the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

## 6. To reduce automobile dependency.

As a result of increasing population and continued sprawl development patterns, vehicle miles traveled are projected to increase by 28 percent between 2005 and 2020. Although new Federal fuel efficiency standards will help, current patterns will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions from mobile sources unless we reduce our dependency on automobiles to reach jobs, schools, stores, cafes and groceries.

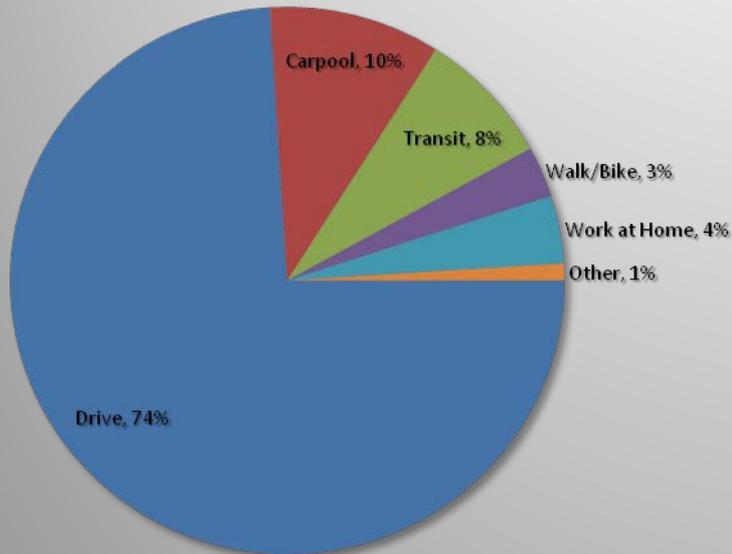
Vehicle Miles Traveled Per Capita, 1996 to 2006



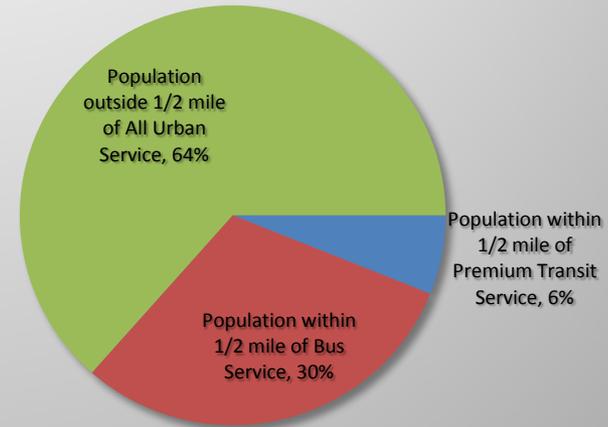
## 7. To increase access to transit options.

### Mode of Commute to Work

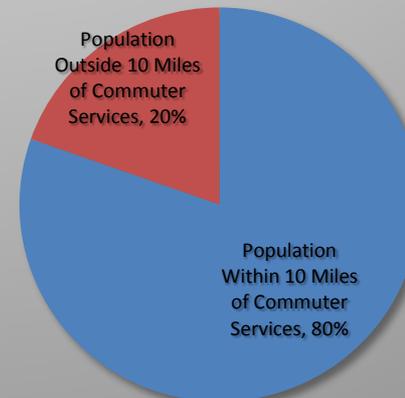
Source: MDOT Annual Attainment Report, 2008



### Accessibility to Transit Stations

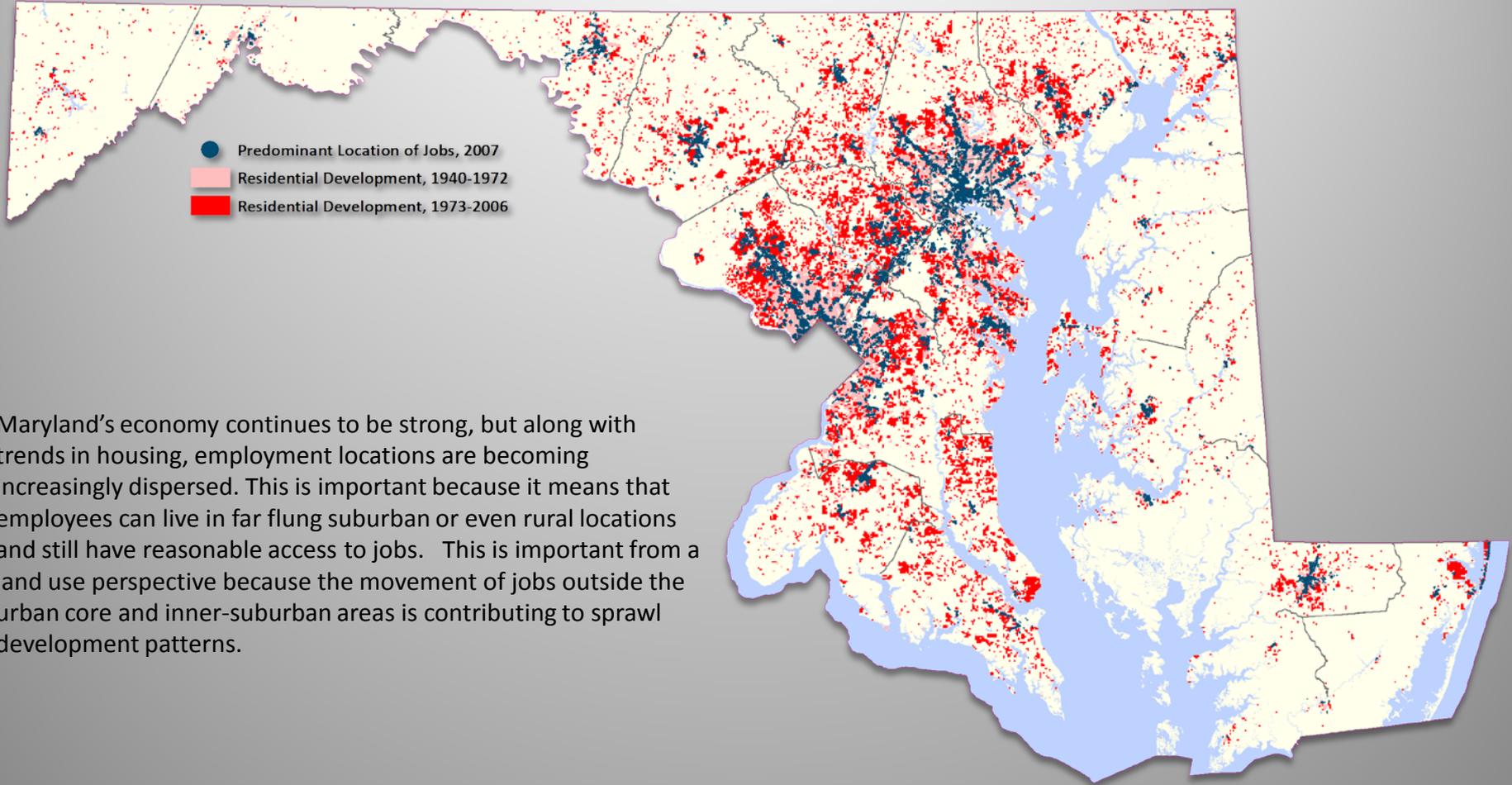


### Accessibility to Commuter Services



As population and jobs have become less concentrated, providing transit services to Maryland residents has become increasingly challenging. Nearly three-quarters of all workers in Maryland drive alone to work. And, though transit services are available to many (almost 80 percent of the state's population live within a 10- minute drive of a commuter service such as the Maryland Transit Administration's MARC and commuter bus services), development patterns make it difficult to take transit to non-work destinations, such as shopping and recreation.

## ***8. To concentrate jobs in existing cities and communities, strengthening economic development.***

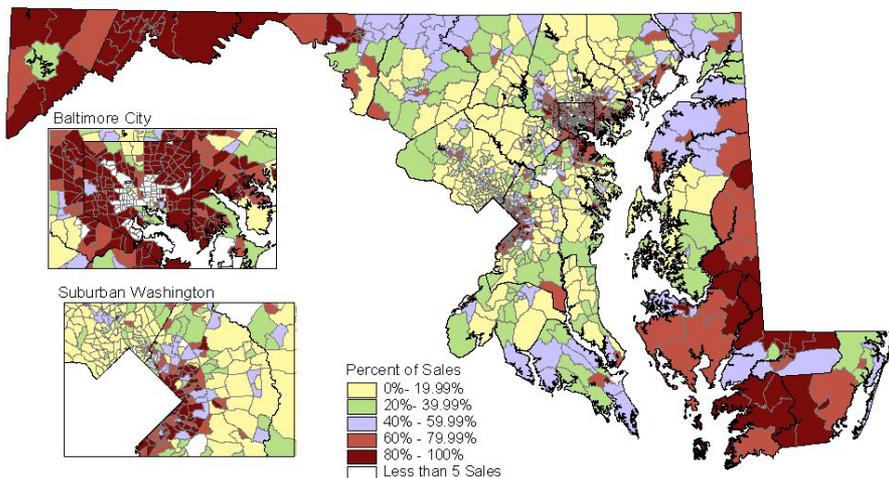


Maryland's economy continues to be strong, but along with trends in housing, employment locations are becoming increasingly dispersed. This is important because it means that employees can live in far flung suburban or even rural locations and still have reasonable access to jobs. This is important from a land use perspective because the movement of jobs outside the urban core and inner-suburban areas is contributing to sprawl development patterns.

## 9. To increase housing affordability.

As land is consumed by larger houses, stores, and office parks, the supply of affordable housing and business space shrinks, increasing the cost of living and doing business in Maryland. Many moderate income workers, not to mention lower income workers, cannot afford to live in the communities or even in the counties where they work. In much of Central Maryland, housing and transportation costs are unaffordable when compared against standard benchmarks. For example, the percent of home sales in Maryland that were affordable to the State's teachers declined from 41 to 26 percent between 2002 and 2008.

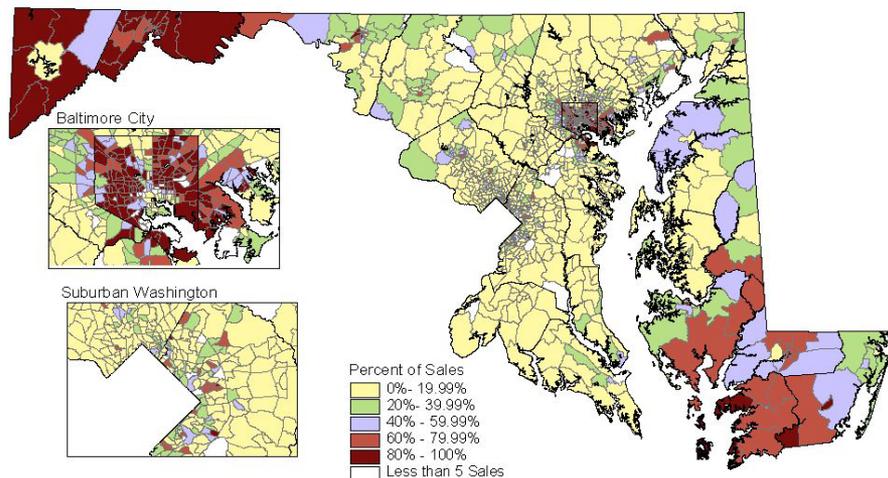
Percent of Housing Sales Affordable by County Teachers in 2002 \*



\* Based on County - Specific Median Household Income of teachers with 10% down payment

**MDP** Source: The Maryland Department of Planning, Planning Data Services

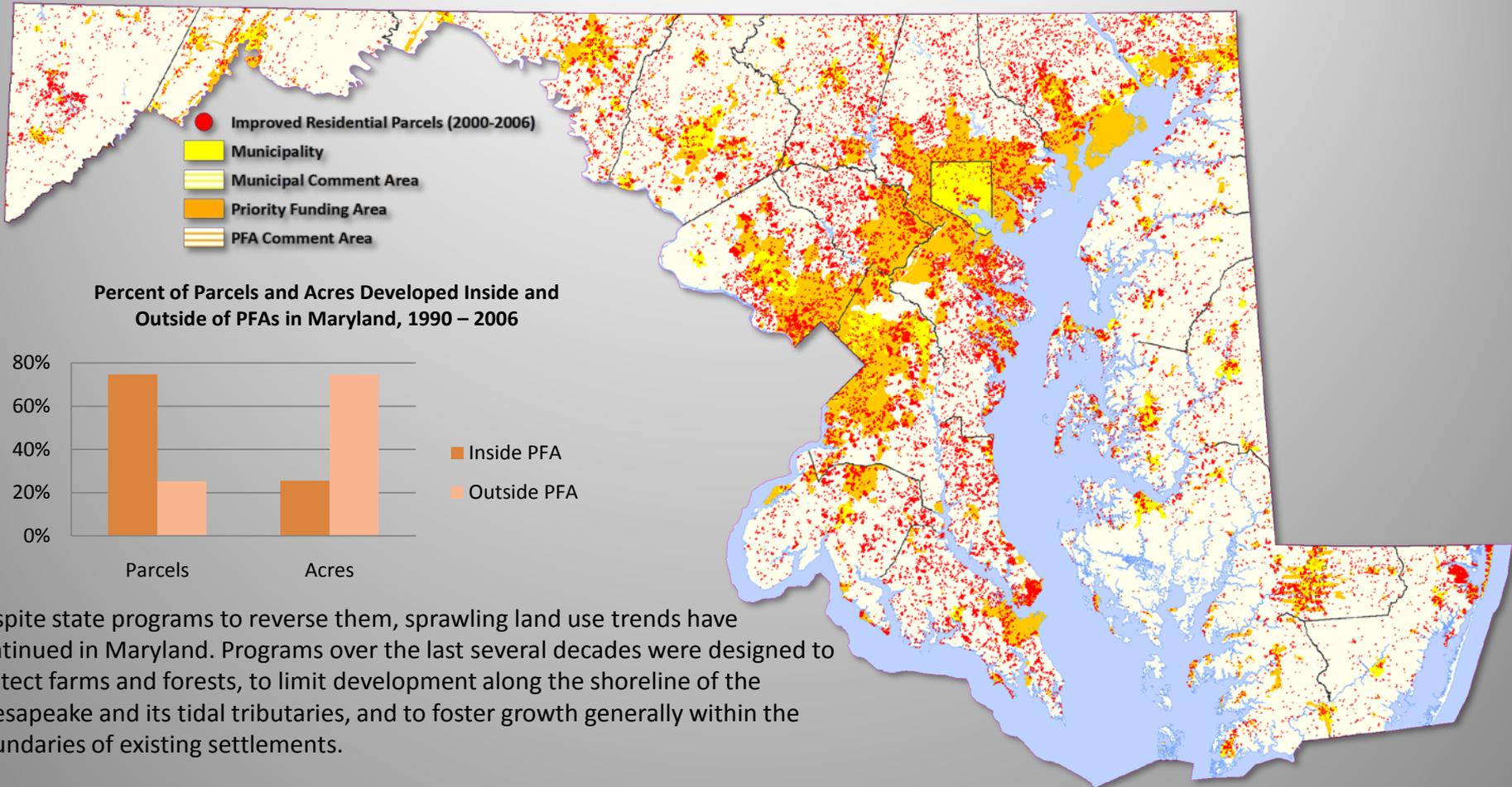
Percent of Housing Sales Affordable by County Teachers in 2008 \*



\* Based on County - Specific Median Household Income of teachers with 10% down payment

**MDP** Source: The Maryland Department of Planning, Planning Data Services

# 10. To minimize residential land consumption outside of existing communities.



Despite state programs to reverse them, sprawling land use trends have continued in Maryland. Programs over the last several decades were designed to protect farms and forests, to limit development along the shoreline of the Chesapeake and its tidal tributaries, and to foster growth generally within the boundaries of existing settlements.

Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) were created in 1997 to encourage development in and around existing towns and cities by concentrating public investment for new infrastructure such as roads and schools in those areas. Despite these efforts, since 1990, 75 percent of statewide acres associated with residential development have been outside of PFAs.

# Conclusion

The genesis for a statewide growth plan began 50 years ago when the Maryland legislature recognized the need and created the authority for developing such a plan. Legislation passed in 1959 created the State Planning Department and provided the first mention of the State Development Plan. By 1992, the Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act established “seven visions” (later eight) to be incorporated into local plans. Governor O’Malley’s 2009 Smart, Green and Growing legislative package, enacted by the General Assembly, broadened the scope by establishing 12 Visions for growth, strong communities and resource conservation.

Maryland has been a national forerunner in land-use planning for much of the past century, partly out of necessity. As far back as 1933, members of the state’s first planning commission -- also the first of its kind in the nation -- recognized that Maryland’s natural riches could be imperiled by the very attribute that made it economically resilient, its connection to two of America’s great cities, one of them the nation’s capital. That first commission feared the rise of “string towns” and “premature subdivision” in rural areas and hoped to encourage more planned “greenbelt” type communities centered on businesses, schools and other community magnets. The group’s perception was impressive given that William Levitt’s first suburban subdivision on Long Island, N.Y. was still a decade away.

There’s no need for a crystal ball now. The costs and troubles associated with land-use patterns as we know them are many. The pressure on taxpayers to pay for roads and utilities to serve an ever-spreading metropolitan core is unsustainable, at a time when systems put in a half-century or more ago are coming to the end of their useful life and need replacement. Concepts such as green living and energy conservation weren’t part of the debate a half-century or more ago, but they’re very much on the minds of people now. If we continue to consume land for new development without greater regard for the overall impact and at the current pace,

Maryland is on track to add almost 600,000 acres of new developed land in the first third of this century alone.

We need to develop a planning mechanism that isn’t so vulnerable to the winds of economic change. Great turbulence in real estate and in oil prices in recent years have demonstrated how quickly societal tastes and market demands can sway. Public health is a mounting concern that probably did not factor into the discussion of land-use patterns a half-century ago but it is certainly relevant now. Development so reliant on autos has contributed to a rise in heart disease and obesity in adults and children. Maryland’s standing has continued to slip against the national average for physical activity as measured by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Planning involves maps, projections and timetables, but as that first commission and subsequent leaders realized, it’s about much more than that. It’s about smart and long-sighted decision-making that has a profound and enduring impact on the economic and social fabric of the state and its residents. Effective and efficient management of land-use -- a prescient vision in the 1930s, a pressing need by the 1970s -- has reached a critical point now. It is virtually impossible for the State and local governments to successfully address these serious and intertwined challenges without first embracing a comprehensive plan with shared goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for development of our communities and conservation of our resources.

Our strategies must establish how and where the State will develop, what resources it must protect and how, and the proactive role that the State and local governments and the private sector must take during the 21st century to make it possible. Plan Maryland will be a blueprint for such a strategy.