Rockville and Frederick City Lead State's Municipal Gains in 2015

(Frederick City second largest municipality after Baltimore City)

Rockville in Montgomery County had by far the largest population increase in Maryland in the last year, according to recently released estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.[1] Between July 1, 2014 and July 1, 2015, the city of Rockville grew by an estimated 1,379 residents (2.1%), and the second largest annual gain for the city this decade.

Following Rockville in population gains over the last year was Frederick City (1,148, or 1.7%) in Frederick County, Gaithersburg (645, 1.0%) in Montgomery County, Annapolis (634, 1.6%) in Anne Arundel County and Bowie (433, 0.8%) in Prince George's County. (See **Chart 1**.) The largest estimated municipal percentage increase in 2015 was for Leonardtown (3.3%) in St. Mary's County.[2] The percentage gains in Rockville, Church Hill Town and Willards Town were the second, third and fourth largest, respectively, in the last year (See **Chart 2**).

The Census Bureau's municipal estimates are based on a housing unit methodology – essentially driven by the number of building permits issued for the construction of residential units – and are then controlled to previously estimated countywide totals.[3] The county population estimates are derived by a cohort component methodology using estimates of births, deaths and domestic and international migration.

The top numeric gains since the April 1, 2010 Census mostly follows the same order as the most recent one-year increase: Gaithersburg (7,559, 12.6%), Rockville (5,695, 9.3%), Frederick City (4,192, 6.4%), Bowie (3,095, 5.6%), and Salisbury (2,534, 8.3%). (See **Chart 3** and **Table 1**.)

Frederick City (69,479) remains the second largest city in Maryland outside of Baltimore City (621,849) in 2015, followed by Gaithersburg (64,456), Rockville (66,980) and Bowie (58,025). (See **Chart 4** and **Table 2**.) In 2013, Gaithersburg surpassed Rockville in population size with a gain that year of 2,791, the largest numeric gain in any one year this decade for any Maryland municipality. This year, there were no changes in population size rank among the top 20 municipalities.

In percentage terms, the largest increase since April 1, 2010 was in Leonardtown in St. Mary's County, with a 23.4 percent gain, followed by Gaithersburg (12.6%), Rockville (9.3%), Salisbury (8.3%) and Centerville (8.0%) in Queen Anne's County. (See **Chart 5** and **Table 3**.)

There were 58 municipalities (out of a total of 157) which were estimated to have experienced population declines in the 2014 to 2015 period, although most of these losses were less than 10 people.

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[1] Release date of May 19, 2016

[2] With a 2014 population total of 3,516, the 3.3 percent gain to 2015 is an increase of only 117 people.

[3] The Census Bureau also keeps the Census 2010 municipal average household size and vacancy rates constant in their post 2010 municipal population calculations.

The largest declines over the last year occurred in Baltimore City (-1,862, -0.3%), Cumberland (-157, or 1.0%) in Allegany County, Bel Air (-66, -0.6%) in Harford County, Cambridge (-49, -0.4%) in Dorchester County and Frostburg (-38, or -0.4%) and in Allegany County.[4]

Since 2010, the largest total losses are estimated to have occurred in Cumberland (-700, or -3.4%) and Frostburg (-311, or -3.5%). After these two Allegany towns, the estimated declines drop off significantly with Chestertown (-131, or -2.5%), Westernport (-78, or -4.1%) and Federalsburg (-77, or -2.1%) rounding out the bottom five. (See **Chart 6** and **Table 1**.)

Municipal Shares Hold Steady

Overall, the percentage change in total municipal population between April 1, 2010 and July 1, 2015 (2.7%) was well below the non-municipal portions of Maryland (4.5%). However, if Baltimore City is subtracted from the municipal total, then the municipal percent change (4.5%) is the same as non-municipal increase of 4.5 percent. (See top of **Table 1**.)

The overall municipal share of the State's total population has declined slightly from 2010 (26.2%) to 2015 (25.9%). On the other hand, the municipal population share less Baltimore City in 2015 (15.5%) is slightly higher than in 2010 (15.4%) and is actually at its highest share since 1930. (See **Chart 7**.)

Baltimore City's share of total municipal population continues to fall despite its 706 gain since 2010. In 2015, the city's share of total municipal population was 40.0 percent, down from 41.0 percent in 2010 (in 1930 the City made up over three quarters of the State's municipal population). (See **Chart 8**.)

Overall, the municipal population share of countywide population tends to be higher in the more rural areas of Maryland. Leaving out the extremes of no municipal population in Baltimore County and Howard County, and all municipal population in Baltimore City, the municipal share ranges from 3.3 percent in St. Mary's County in Southern Maryland to over 50 percent in Talbot County and almost 50 percent in Dorchester County. In Kent and Wicomico counties on the Eastern Shore and Allegany and Frederick counties in Western Maryland the percent of municipal share is at or over 40 percent. (See **Table 4**.)

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[4] The Census Bureau treats the City like a county in its estimates methodology, and uses the cohort component, rather than the housing unit method, to estimate population changes. See 2015 Estimates for Maryland and its Jurisdictions for the components of change.