

II. Community Analysis

Frederick County is situated on the edge of two major metropolitan areas: Baltimore and Washington, D.C. These two areas have profoundly impacted Frederick County's demographic and economic growth. As our population grows, so does our need for school facilities and services.

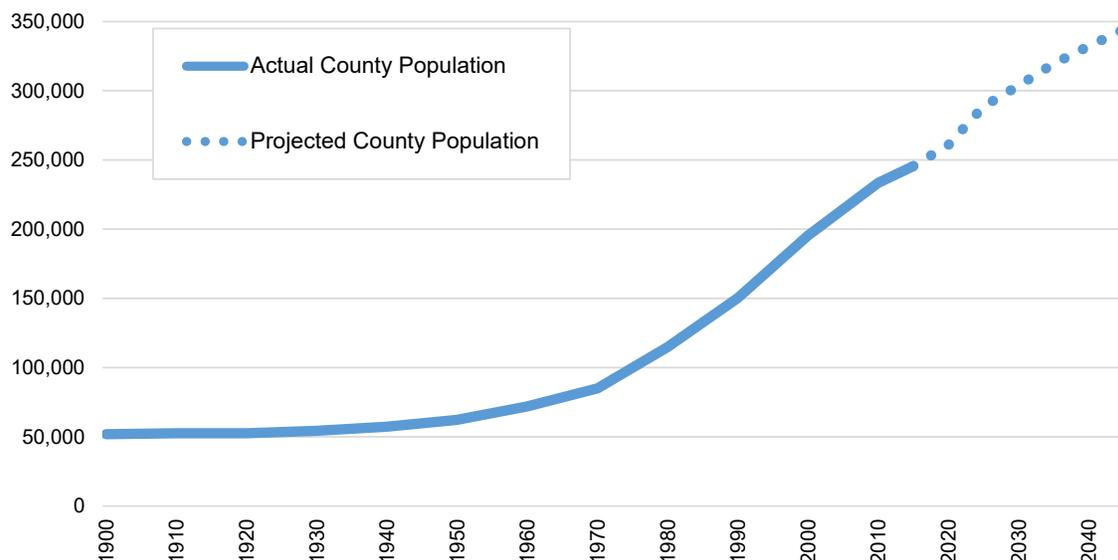
Geographically, Frederick County is the largest county in Maryland. It stretches north-south from the Mason-Dixon Line to the Potomac River and east-west from the rolling Piedmont along Sam's Creek, across Catoctin Mountain to South Mountain. It contains thirteen incorporated municipalities and numerous other historic, well-established communities. Frederick City is the county seat and commercial and population hub.

Until the 1950s, Frederick County relied primarily on an agricultural economy; the county is still the largest producer of dairy products statewide. However, since the 1950s, the county's economy has expanded and diversified as a result of population growth and migration from other areas of the state and metropolitan region.

Migration was encouraged by the construction of I-70 and I-270 in the 1960s and the continued expansion of business and government agencies. In this respect, growth in Frederick County has been primarily influenced by the expanding Washington, D.C. metro area and employment growth in Montgomery County. The County's population growth rate increased significantly after 1970 and has remained fairly steady, as shown in [Figure 2A](#). FCPS enrollments increased steadily over the years consistent with county population growth. However, enrollments experienced a significant growth during the 1990s (see [Figure 4A](#)). Although the scale of total population growth exceeded enrollment growth, both grew at the extraordinary rate of about 50 percent in the twenty years from 1990 to 2010.

In the 25 years from 1990 to 2015, Frederick County's population increased by approximately 95,000 or an average of 3,800 persons/year. According to the Maryland Department of Planning projections, Frederick County's population is expected to grow by over 83,000 by 2045.

Figure 2A: County Population 1900-2045 (projected)



Sources: Maryland Department of Planning August 2017 projections and March 2018 population estimate through July 2017

Population growth has been driven in part by abundant affordable housing (relative to the region). According to records from the Frederick County Planning and Permitting Department, housing growth was highest in Frederick County between 1980 and 2000, with average annual housing permits issued between 1,600 and 2,000 during that period. Housing growth was lower from 2006 to 2012 with 500 to 900 housing permits issued annually. In more recent years, the number of housing permits issued has increased to 1,300 to 2,000 annually. There are many large residential projects that are in development or proposed for future development (see [Appendix J](#)). While many of the county's municipalities have major residential developments within their boundaries, most new development has been focused in and around Frederick City and the unincorporated areas of the county along the I-70 and I-270 corridors.

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

FCPS coordinates with local governments to align school facility plans with residential growth patterns and local planning efforts. The sections below outline FCPS participation in the review of development, comprehensive plans for the two largest jurisdictions, and adequate public facilities ordinances that help ensure that the County and FCPS are able to plan for future growth in enrollment.

Review of Development

FCPS participates in the review of residential developments submitted to the County and incorporated communities for approval. Capital Programs Department staff submit official comments and work with local planners to make sure future residential developments have safe walking routes to schools and adequate access for bus service. When a development occurs near an existing or future school site, FCPS works to ensure that development impacts are minimized, particularly during the construction phase. Finally, where future schools are needed and required for development approval, FCPS works with the developer and local planners to identify an appropriate school site and the conditions by which the site will be transferred to FCPS.

Frederick County Comprehensive Plan

Frederick County's current comprehensive plan, Frederick County's Future: Many Places, One Community, was prepared by the Frederick County Division of Planning and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in April 2010. The Land Use and Zoning maps were amended in 2012. The Comprehensive plan explains the county's response to projected future population growth and development. [Appendix G](#) contains excerpts from this plan.

Rather than being an update of the previous 1998 comprehensive plan, the 2010 plan is unique. It is organized around nine themes, each with its own goals, policies, and action items. They are: Conserving Our Natural Resources and Green Infrastructure; Protecting and Preserving Our Heritage; Preserving Our Agricultural and Rural Community; Providing Transportation Choices; Serving Our Citizens; Supporting a Diversified Economy; Assessing Our Water Resources; Managing Our Growth; and Community and Corridor Plans.

The 2010 plan broadly defines Community Growth Areas. It continues to encourage compact growth and support identifiable communities. To implement the current comprehensive plan, the county identified short-term (0-2 years), intermediate-term (2-6 years), long-term (6+ years), and on-going action items. These include amending the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, and storm water management regulations, and preparing strategic growth area plans.

Of particular interest to FCPS, the 2010 County Comprehensive Plan identifies these school policies and action items:

Table 2A: 2010 County Comprehensive Plan School Policies and Action Items

Policy or Action Item	Status
SC-P-07: Standardize school design to accommodate additions and reduce design and construction costs.	Current policy
SC-P-08: Maintain a system-wide enrollment capacity of 90% at the elementary, middle and high school levels.	Current policy
SC-P-09: Stage development of new school facilities concurrent with new residential growth.	Current policy
SC-P-10: Maximize the use of school sites through the construction of multi-story buildings to reduce building footprints and emphasize bicycle and pedestrian access to minimize parking needs and bus transportation.	Current policy
SC-P-11: Re-use school building(s) or sites no longer needed for educational purposes as public uses or private redevelopment.	Current policy
TR-A-13: Require Safe Routes to Schools planning for all existing and proposed county schools. Plans will address coordinated education, enforcement, encouragement, design and school siting to provide for safe bicycling and walking options for students.	Not initiated
SC-A-01: Develop a school land banking program as part of an overall land development review process.	Not initiated
SC-A-02: Promote Safe Routes efforts with plans and programs that enhance pedestrian accessibility and safety.	Ongoing
SC-A-03: Update the Pupil Yield Factor Study every 2 years (see Appendix J for most recent Pupil Yield Rates).	Updated 2017

The county’s comprehensive plan also identifies twelve school sites to address school capacity needs in the future. These sites are discussed in [Appendix G](#).

The County Planning Commission has recently finished their work on the new countywide master plan entitled the Livable Frederick Master Plan. The Plan is now under review by the Frederick County Council. The section of the Plan called “Our Common Vision” serves as the foundation of the Livable Frederick Master Plan and is intended to support the public and private sectors, institutions and nonprofit partnerships in enhancing and maintaining a high quality of life for Frederick County citizens. The “Action Framework” section of the Plan highlights County goals and initiatives that will support achievement of the vision within the categories of community, health, economy, and environment. Finally, the “Development Framework” section utilizes scenario planning and a thematic plan map that illustrates a preferred geographic distribution of future growth, continued efforts to conserve our natural resources through the Green Infrastructure component, and an ongoing commitment to the protection and preservation of the County’s farmland and agricultural economy through the Agriculture Infrastructure component.

Frederick City’s Comprehensive Plan

Frederick City’s 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update envisions a city that will continue to be a major population and employment center. Through the plan’s visions, policies, and implementation strategies, Frederick City will continue to grow while protecting its sensitive areas and character, providing a range of housing choices, and ensuring adequate public facilities and infrastructure. The plan calls for a tiered approach to growth in Frederick City: infill and redevelopment growth in



tier 1, growth at the municipal boundary in tier 2 and growth in future areas in tier 3. [Appendix H](#) contains excerpts from Frederick City's comprehensive plan. The City has begun the process to update the comprehensive plan and expects to release an update in fiscal year 2020.

Both the county and city plans include a Municipal Growth Element as required by HB1141 adopted by the Maryland General Assembly in 2006. HB1141 requires that local land use plans consider public services and infrastructure needed to accommodate growth within the identified growth areas. This includes public schools. Public schools are to be sufficient to accommodate student populations consistent with the state rated capacity (SRC) standards established by the Interagency Committee on School Construction.

The Municipal Growth Element of the 2010 Frederick City plan estimates that eleven of the twenty-five schools serving Frederick City will be impacted by potential annexations, although future redistricting could result in impacts on additional schools. In addition, the city plan estimates that expected growth will generate nearly 23,000 students in Frederick City over the next thirty years. The city's plan identifies an additional two elementary, one middle and one high school site within the Frederick City growth area.

ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES ORDINANCE

An Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) is a growth management tool that conditions development approval on the availability of public facilities. This ensures that development occurs when infrastructure and services are available to support it. In Maryland, Article 66B, Section 10.01 specifically enables municipalities and counties to adopt an APFO; local jurisdictions are permitted and encouraged to enact ordinances providing for or requiring the planning, staging, or provision of adequate public facilities.

The Frederick County Board of County Commissioners adopted an APFO in 1991 as Chapter 1-20 of the County Code; it has been amended several times since then. In its current form, the county's APFO evaluates the adequacy of roads, water, sewerage, and school facilities at the time of subdivision or site plan approval.

For school adequacy, the ordinance states that all elementary, middle, and high schools serving a proposed residential subdivision must be under 100% of state rated capacity (SRC) during the entire period for which APFO approval is granted. The ordinance includes guidelines for determining school adequacy and requires the BOE or its designee (FCPS staff) to perform the school adequacy test. The ordinance also requires that all parcels located within county jurisdiction receive APFO approval prior to site plan, subdivision or Phase II approval by the Frederick County Planning Commission. If the project does not meet the standards for school adequacy, the applicant has the option to wait until adequate facilities are available or to provide the improvements necessary to ensure adequacy before moving forward with the project. An exception is granted if school adequacy improvements are scheduled in the first two years of the County CIP within the project's attendance area.

Development projects served by schools at or over 100% of capacity would fail the county's APFO test for school adequacy. Other projects may also fail due to the number of students generated from the proposed development as well as other developments approved but not yet constructed, and background growth.

Between 2011 and 2016, the county APFO included a provision that allowed residential developments that failed the school adequacy test to move forward after paying a school mitigation fee and complying with certain provisions of the APFO. Even though the provision no

longer exists, developments with Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreements (DRRAs) approved prior to July 20, 2016 can still move forward after paying the fee. The county expects to collect over \$76 million in mitigation fees from 41 previously approved projects.

Incorporated municipalities also adopt and craft municipal ordinances to best meet individual community needs. Each authority is unique in its approach to determining adequacy; each may include different facilities to be tested and have different standards of adequacy, as shown in [Table 2B](#) below.

Table 2B: APFO Summary by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	School Adequacy Limit (% of SRC)	School Levels Tested	School Constr. Fee?	Repercussions of Failure to Meet Adequacy
Frederick County	<100%	All	No	Project must wait until adequate facilities are available or the developer may provide the improvements necessary to ensure adequacy.
City of Brunswick	<105% <110% <110%	Elem. Middle High	No	Project must wait until adequate facilities are available or the developer may provide the improvements necessary to ensure adequacy.
Frederick City	<100%	All	Yes	Project must be retested each year for 3 years before a development will be permitted to proceed, or the developer may pay a School Construction Fee to move forward.
Mount Airy	<100%	All	No	Project must wait until adequate facilities are available or the developer may provide funds, direct facility improvements, or donation of facilities.
Myersville	<100%	All	No	Project must wait until adequate facilities are available or the developer may provide the public facility improvements necessary to support the proposed development and to ensure adequacy of public facilities. Phasing may be requested for elementary SRCs not exceeding 115% and secondary SRCs not exceeding 120%.
Thurmont	<100%	All	No	Project must wait until adequate facilities are available or the developer may provide the public facility improvements necessary to support the proposed development and to ensure adequacy of public facilities.
Walkersville	<105%	All	No	Project must wait until adequate facilities are available.

