

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.

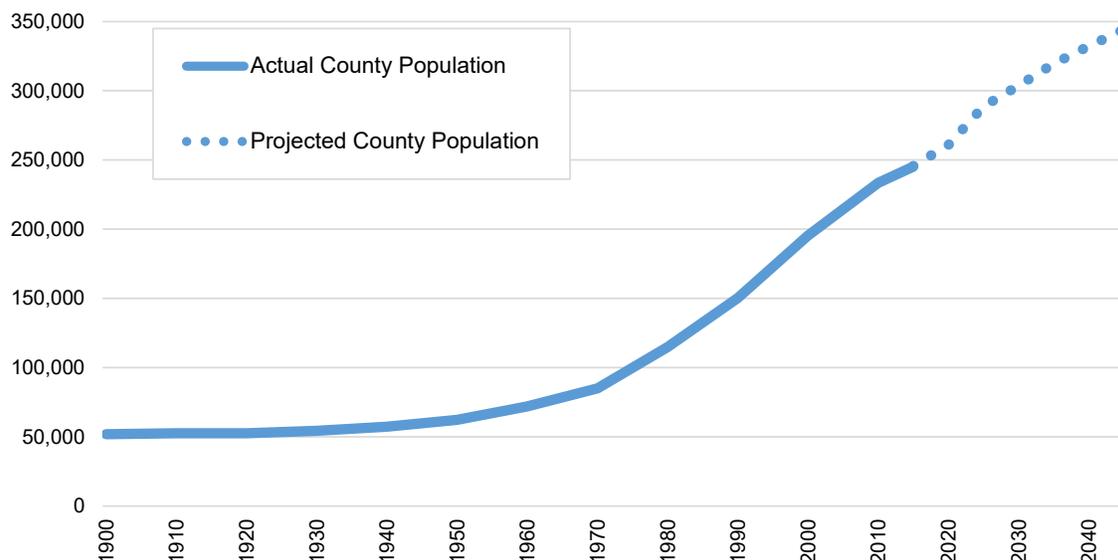
Geographically, Frederick County is the largest county in Maryland. It stretches north-south from the Mason-Dixon Line to the Potomac River and east-west from the rolling Piedmont along Sam's Creek, across Catoctin Mountain to South Mountain. The county has 12 incorporated municipalities ranging in population from about 150 to over 70,000 along with many small, rural communities and large growing communities. The City of Frederick 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 with strong bio-tech, tourism and service industries.

Migration was encouraged by the construction of I-70 and I-270 in the 1950s 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 April 2019 population estimate through July 2018

Population growth has been driven in part by the relatively affordable housing as compared to Montgomery County and other areas in the region. According to records from the Frederick County Planning and Permitting Division, 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, due to the recession, with 500 to 900 housing permits issued annually. In more recent years, the number of housing permits issued has increased to 1,200 to 2,300 annually. There are many large residential projects in the pipeline that are either in development or have development approvals (see [Appendix H](#)). As of April 2020, there were 16,857 dwellings in the available pipeline, with approximately 53% (8,866 dwellings) in the county's municipalities. The City of Frederick has by far the greatest share with 6,762 dwellings in its pipeline. The county's primary residential development areas include Urbana/Green Valley/Monrovia communities along the I-270 corridor, Frederick City, and the New Market/Linganore communities along the I-70 corridor.

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 the County and FCPS plan for future growth in enrollment.

Review of Development

FCPS participates in the review of residential developments submitted to the County and municipalities 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 county or municipal planners to identify an appropriate school site and the conditions by which the site will be transferred to FCPS.

Frederick County Comprehensive Plan

The County adopted a new comprehensive plan in September 2019 called The Livable Frederick Master Plan (LFMP). This Plan has a broad, strategic focus, establishing a vision for the future of Frederick County. For now, the LFMP maintains the comprehensive planning and zoning maps adopted in 2012. To implement the LFMP, Frederick County planning staff will develop small corridor plans as well as infrastructure and special interest plans over the next several years. As the small corridor plans are adopted, the comprehensive plan and zoning maps will be amended. The County's 2012 Land Use Plan map identifies 12 planned school sites to address school capacity needs in the next 20 years. This map is shown in [Appendix F](#).

The Livable Frederick plan includes a vision statement and four vision themes: Our Community, Our Health, Our Economy, and Our Environment. These themes are 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 vision themes of community, health, economy, and environment (see [Table 2A](#) below). 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. The theme of coordinating development with infrastructure needs such as schools is discussed throughout the plan.

Table 2A: Livable Frederick Goals, Initiatives, and Supporting Initiatives Referencing Schools

| | |
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| COMMUNITY | |
| | Supply: Reduce the congestion and overcrowding of transportation and infrastructure through a diversified approach of short-term and long-term strategies to improve capacity. |
| | Needs Identification: Employ ongoing capacity needs identification and prioritization processed for transportation and public infrastructure. |
| | <p>4) Systematically prioritize bicycle and pedestrian network implementation as identified in the Bikeways and Trails Master Plan (or future non-motorized transportation plan), based on providing safe and functional transportation connections between complementary uses such as: housing, workplaces, parks, shopping, schools and transit centers.</p> <p>8) Update the pupil yield factor study every two years.</p> <p>11) Establish acceptable criteria and planning processes for school sites – including the development of a protocol for the early identification of prime school sites – as recommended by the Frederick County School Construction Work Group (SCWG).</p> |
| | Capacity Expansion: Improve and expand capacity in our transportation and public infrastructure systems where it is needed and where it is strategically targeted. This may include roads, transit, charging stations, rail, bikeways, schools, and other supporting infrastructure. |
| | <p>10) Develop realistic metrics to gauge the overall capacity of the school system at each level and throughout all geographic areas of the county, in cooperation with FCPS.</p> <p>11) Revise the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) to fully support concurrence of public facilities with development.</p> <p>12) Support policies for the systematic and integrated identification of suitable development sites for public facilities, especially sites that can accommodate standardized school designs and colocation criteria, and site that can accommodate future expansion, where appropriate.</p> <p>13) Maximize the use school site through the construction of multi-use and multi-story buildings when feasible, to reduce building footprints and environmental impacts, and emphasize bicycle and pedestrian access to minimize parking needs and bus transportation.</p> |
| | Optimization: Ensure that transportation and public infrastructure investments provide maximum value, sustainability, and resilience to citizens through responsible stewardship and continuous, deliberate improvement. |
| | Efficiency: Maximize efficiency and seek opportunities for cooperation to minimize operating costs for transportation and public infrastructure. |
| | <p>3) Support standardized designs to accommodate additions, support colocation, and reduce design and construction costs in county facilities where appropriate.</p> <p>7) Reuse, redevelop, or liquidate obsolete or surplus public buildings (such as schools) or sites.</p> |
| | Maintenance: Prioritize preventive maintenance and strategic capital resource replacement practices to ensure that our public infrastructure, including roads, rail, schools, libraries, parks and other public infrastructure, remains operational and keeps pace with state-of-the-art technologies and practices. |
| | 3) Maintain and improve the quality of schools, libraries, parks, and other community facilities. |
| | Safety: Provide public infrastructure systems that minimize the risk of injury and maximize protection from harm. |
| | Design and Operations: Include and encourage safety in the design and operation of all transportation and public infrastructure projects. |
| | 5) Support the Safe Routes to School initiative and require Safe Routes to School planning for all existing and proposed county schools to address coordinated education, enforcement, encouragement, design and school siting to provide for safe bicycling and walking options for students. |



| ECONOMY | |
|---------|--|
| | Access to Education: Ensure that all students, regardless of age, have access to high quality educational opportunities and programs available in Frederick County to prepare them for jobs of the future or to enable them to become part of the workforce, contribute to the economy, and maintain a high quality of life. |
| | Early Childhood: Expand opportunities for early childhood education programs and services in the county to ensure that all children have access to high quality early educational programs, which are predictors to success later in life. |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Work in collaboration with the public school system to plan and provide adequate facility space for public school early educational programming, especially as the needs for those program opportunities expand in the future. 3) Expand the number of county-run early educational facilities to increase the number of opportunities available and the number of students who have access to county or FCPS early childhood educational programming. |
| | Primary and Secondary: Continue to place top priority on the provision of outstanding educational facilities and opportunities to assist students in preparing for work and post-secondary education. |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Support efforts to increase opportunities for students to be trained in science, technology, engineering and mathematics to encourage students to pursue careers in those areas that will provide the workforce of the future. 2) Support continuous student exposure throughout K-12 education to the environmental sciences to instill a value for nature in future decisions about careers, life choices, and informed participation in public policy development. 3) Support strategies that can increase the percentage of individuals within specified racial, ethnic, gender, age, and military groups that have obtained high-quality post-secondary educational degrees or credentials. 4) Expand opportunities for additional Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs that will prepare students for a wide range of high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand jobs. 5) Seek opportunities to co-locate specialized educational programming regionally or within area colleges and universities. 6) Encourage and actively support the collaboration between schools, colleges, businesses, and other training organizations, such as with the LYNX program at Frederick High School (Linking Youth to New Experiences), in order to expose and encourage students to train for new businesses and industries emerging in our region and to tailor training and education to meet labor demands. 7) Extend agricultural educational opportunities into primary and secondary schools and encourage partnerships, such as with the Great Frederick Fair, on agricultural education initiatives. 8) Support arts centers and robust arts opportunities during and after school, which can pay dividends in ensuring students are skilled, optimistic, and positively engaged and prepared for today's economy. |
| HEALTH | |
| | Our Children: Improve the lives of all children by ensuring that no child is prevented from achieving positive goals, fulfilling their potential, or taking part in their community. |
| | School Readiness: Support school readiness for all children in the county such that all children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. |

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 G](#) contains excerpts from the City's comprehensive plan. The City is underway with the process to update the comprehensive plan and expects to release a draft in 2020.

The Municipal Growth Element of the 2010 Frederick City plan estimated that 11 of the 25 schools serving the City will be impacted by potential annexations. However, future redistricting could result in impacts on additional schools. In addition, the Plan estimated that expected growth will generate nearly 23,000 students in Frederick City by 2040. The City's Plan identified sites for two elementary, one middle and one high school within the Frederick City growth area. One of the elementary sites has been developed with the Butterfly Ridge elementary school. The other three sites are all located in the northern part of the City where much of the recent annexation activity has taken place.

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, the Land Use Article 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 County 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. A school is considered adequate if capacity 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.

In 2011, the County amended the APFO to include a provision that allowed residential developments that failed the school adequacy test to move forward after paying a school construction fee (commonly referred to as the mitigation fee) and complying with certain provisions of the APFO.

Even though this provision was repealed in 2016, developments with Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreements (DRRAs) approved prior to July 20, 2016 can still continue to build out after paying the fee. The county expects to collect over \$75 million in mitigation fees from 45 previously approved projects.

Municipalities may also adopt APFO's that would apply to developments within their boundaries. Each municipality is unique in its approach to determining adequacy; each may include different facilities to be tested and have different standards of adequacy for schools, 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 meet 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 meet adequacy. |
| Frederick City | <100% | All | Yes | Project must be retested each year for 5 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 meet adequacy of public facilities. |
| Walkersville | <105% | All | No | Project must wait until adequate facilities are available. |