

2. Community Analysis

BACKGROUND

As a satellite community to two major metropolitan areas (Baltimore and Washington, D.C.), Frederick County has seen significant demographic and economic growth. Our need for school facilities and services is growing along with our population.

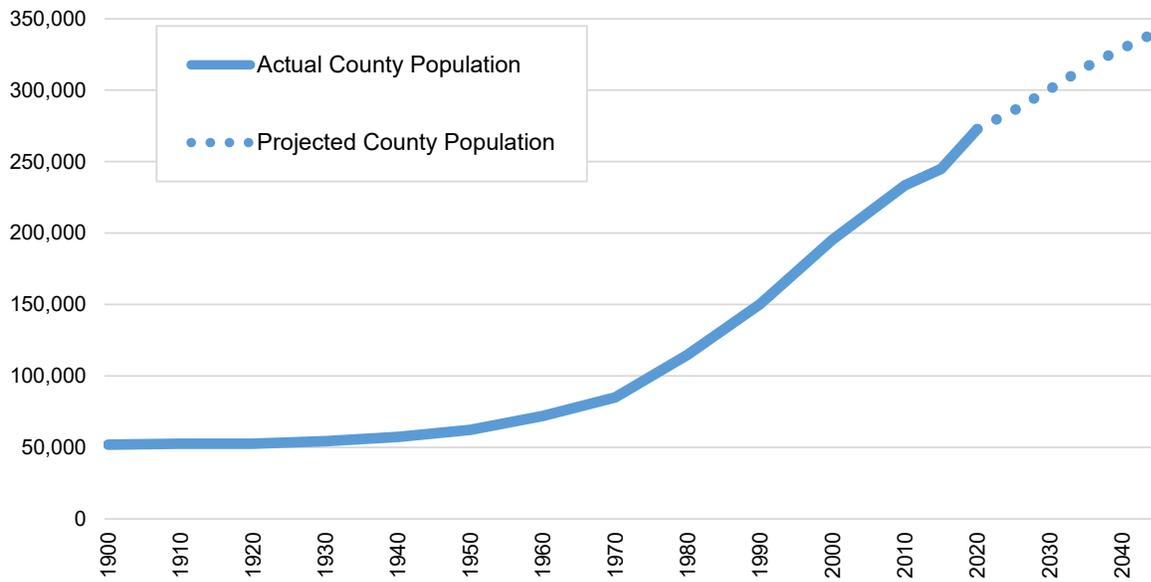
Geographically, Frederick County is the largest county in Maryland. It stretches north-south from the Mason-Dixon Line to the Potomac River and east-west from the rolling Piedmont along Sam's Creek, across Catoclin Mountain to South Mountain. The county has 12 incorporated municipalities ranging in population 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.

Historically, Frederick County relied primarily on an agricultural economy. Today 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. The growth in individuals working from home during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, has also encouraged the migration of families to Frederick County over the past few years. This is expected to continue as more companies no longer require employees to commute to a central office.

County Population Projections

Influenced by employment growth around the two metro areas, Frederick 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 5A](#)). 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 30 years from 1990 to 2020, Frederick County's population increased by approximately 109,000 or an average of 3,600 persons per year. According to Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) projections, Frederick County's population is expected to increase by more than 68,000 by 2045, or an average of 2,700 per year. These projections are inconsistent with the last five years of actual population growth for Frederick County which has been an increase of approximately 4,000 persons per year. FCPS will continue to monitor population growth and projections including school aged population.

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

Sources: Maryland Department of Planning December 2020(projections) and March 2022 (population estimate through July 1 2021)

Housing Growth

There is a strong demand for housing in Frederick County due to low interest rates, a moderate median home price in comparison to other counties in the Washington metropolitan area, good schools and a large pool of qualified homebuyers. According to records from the Frederick County Planning and Permitting Division, the average annual number of housing permits issued between 1980 and 2000 was between 1,600 and 2,000. Housing growth was lower from 2006 to 2012, due to the recession, with 500 to 900 housing permits issued annually. However, in the last five years, the number of housing permits issued has increased to an average of more than 2,300 annually. And in 2021, the number of housing permits issued reached a new high of almost 2,800. It is anticipated that this record number of new housing units will continue for the foreseeable future.

FCPS Capital Programs Department staff review proposed residential subdivision plans in the County and municipalities commenting on the impact on existing school facilities and proposed pedestrian and vehicular transportation improvements. Staff also tracks progress of the buildout of large residential development (see [Chapter 4](#) for additional details). During FY21, FCPS staff reviewed 31 proposed residential developments. As of May 2022, staff has reviewed 21 submissions for FY22.

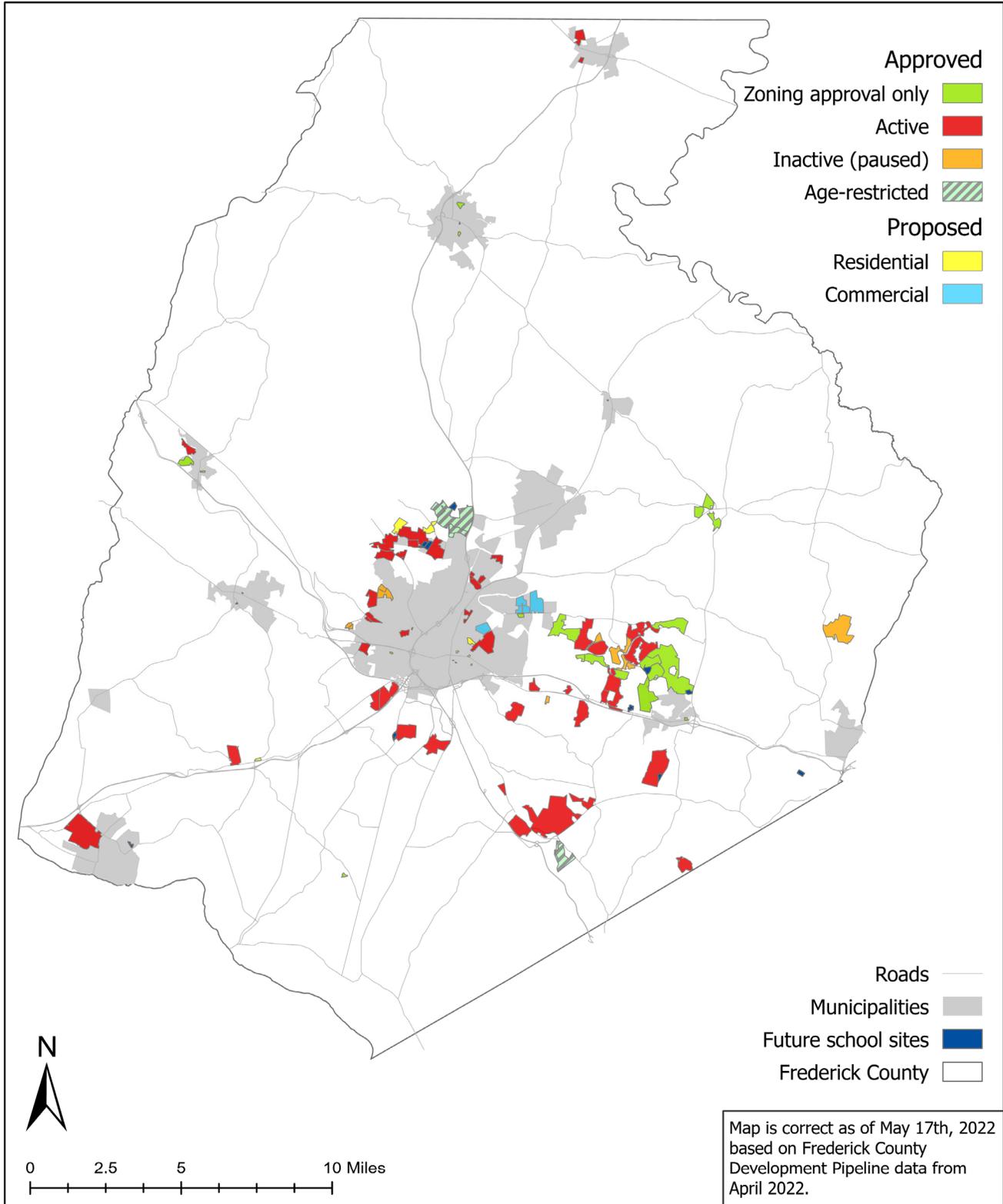
There are many large residential projects in the pipeline that are either in construction or have some level of development approval (see [Appendix H](#)). As of April 2022, there were 11,698 dwellings in the available pipeline (excluding active adult communities), with approximately 56% (6,568 dwellings) in the county's municipalities. The City of Frederick has by far the greatest share with 4,871 dwellings in its pipeline. The county's primary areas of new residential development include the areas on the east and north side of Frederick City as well as along the Route 40 corridor, and communities on both the north and south side of the I-70 corridor. Outside the major growth areas, smaller (but not insignificant) areas of residential development can be found in several urbanized areas such as Brunswick and Urbana.

[Figure 2B](#) shows the location of new residential development with some form of development approval. The interactive map provides additional detail on number of remaining approved housing units by type and expected student generation.

Figure 2B: Residential Development Pipeline
[Visit the interactive map.](#)



Frederick County Development Pipeline 2022



Census Data

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts a count of every person living in the United States every 10 years, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution. The census is important because it is used in federal allocation of funding to states, counties, and communities.¹

Population estimates are vitally important for school planning to determine changes in existing neighborhood demographics and determine where future growth (or decline) can be projected. The US census counts inform population statisticians at the national, state, and county level. Initial data was released in August 2021 including total population, total housing and race and ethnicity. Additional details on demographics and housing are expected to be released in spring 2023.

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 local comprehensive plans as they relate to school planning, and FCPS participation in annexations, adequate public facility ordinance testing and dedication of school sites.

Frederick County Livable Frederick Plan

The County adopted a new comprehensive plan in September 2019 called 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 is developing area plans, as well as infrastructure and functional plans. As the small area 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 partners in enhancing and maintaining a high quality of life for Frederick County residents. The Action Framework section of the Plan highlights County goals and initiatives that will support achievement of the vision within the vision themes (see [Appendix F](#) for a summary list of goals and initiatives referencing schools). 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.

County Regional Plans

The Livable Frederick Master Plan articulates a long-range vision for Frederick County that includes a concept called "Treasured Landscapes." These Treasured Landscapes are areas that stand out with many inspiring, productive, and naturally-diverse lands and can benefit from a separate planning effort. The draft Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan for the Sugarloaf Mountain area is currently under review by the Planning Commission. This plan seeks to protect and enhance the Sugarloaf area's natural resources and strengthen the distinct place-based identity of the Sugarloaf area through the stewardship of its scenic and rural character, and its agricultural and cultural resources.

Planning is also underway for an area of the county that has been a major economic center for decades. The South Frederick Corridors plan is focused on the existing commercial and industrial land to the

1. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/about/why.html>

south of downtown Frederick City along Urbana Pike (MD-355) and Buckeystown Pike (MD-85). This area constitutes 20% of the county's jobs, 15% of the county's business establishments, and 15% of the county's total wages. The South Frederick Corridors Plan seeks to reinforce economic strengths and assets, support existing business and industries, foster innovation and opportunity, and support the creation of walkable, mixed-use communities.

Frederick City's Comprehensive Plan

The City of Frederick released its draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan in February 2021, with the vision of making Frederick the "most livable city in the mid-Atlantic region by 2040." The Comprehensive Plan builds upon the recently completed City of Frederick strategic plan, Community 2030, by providing a vision for the City's growth, a blueprint for public and private investment in infrastructure and a guide for consideration of land use. The objectives of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan are:

1. Defining a clear vision for the future
2. Enhancing the relationship between land use, transportation, and urban design
3. Supporting policies and planning efforts at the neighborhood level
4. Ensuring that regulations are consistent with the vision
5. Establishing accountability through benchmarking & progress reporting

The plan is organized around four themes: vibrant neighborhoods, connected community, sustainable city, and predictable future. The 2020 Comprehensive Plan retains the 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. Land within the City is divided into eight areas for more focused small-area planning in the future. The plan projects that within City boundaries, housing development will lead to the addition of 1,064 elementary, 560 middle, and 728 high school students. The plan establishes several implementation measures relating to schools which can be found in [Appendix G](#) along with excerpts from the plan. In March 2022, Frederick City passed an amendment to the comprehensive plan that includes a map of potential future school sites (see [Appendix G](#)).

Other Municipal Plans

- The [City of Brunswick](#) is located in the southwestern corner of Frederick County and has a population of about 6,200 residents. The Master Plan was published in 2010 with the goals of management of future growth, protection of the natural environment, and creating a quality community for all Brunswick citizens and businesses. The plan indicates two additional school sites to accommodate future growth. The school site dedicated by the Brunswick Crossing neighborhood on the west side of the city adjacent to the existing Brunswick ES has been transferred to FCPS. A replacement of Brunswick ES is under construction on the larger campus adding 217 seats. The replacement of Brunswick ES will open in the fall of 2023. FCPS also owns a small site dedicated by the developer of Galyn Manor on the east side of the city. However, this site is too small to construct a school and would require the acquisition of additional adjoining land.
- The [Town of Burkittsville](#) is located on the western side of Frederick County, nestled in the Appalachian Mountains and has a population of approximately 148 residents. A comprehensive plan was published in 2015 and goals include to preserve Burkittsville's integrity as a rural historic village, to preserve Burkittsville's quiet rural character and quality of life, to protect sensitive areas within Burkittsville, and to restore potable water resources and effective wastewater treatment for the residents of Burkittsville. There are no existing or future planned school sites in Burkittsville.
- The [Town of Emmitsburg](#) is located towards the center of the northern end of Frederick County and has a population of about 3,000 residents. The comprehensive plan was published in 2015 and it follows an outline of the State's 12 Visions. The land use decision-making guidelines include a provision to "consider logical future locations relative to potential school facility needs."

- The Town of Middletown has a population of about 4,600 residents and is located on the western side of Frederick County along alternate US Route 40 and MD-17. The Town's last comprehensive plan was published in 2010 with four goals: provide for a quality living environment, protection of important natural resources and historic landmarks, encouragement of a sound economic base and to manage and sustain Middletown's future growth. The 2010 plan has an emphasis on limiting development to ensure adequate public facilities, such as schools. The 2020 comprehensive plan is underway and is expected to be published by the end of 2022.
- The Town of Mount Airy has a population of almost 9,400 residents and is located in both Frederick and Carroll counties. The primary goals of the 2013 comprehensive master plan were retaining the Town's small-town charm through infill development and preservation of agricultural land. The Town also committed to provision of community infrastructure such as schools to accommodate long-term growth. As of spring 2022, efforts are underway for the 2023 Comprehensive Town Master Plan.
- The Town of Myersville has about 1,900 residents and is located north of I-70 in the western part of Frederick County. The Town's comprehensive plan was published in 2016. Goals of the plan include preservation of the town's small-town character, historical resources, water resources and environmentally sensitive areas; provision of adequate public facilities including schools; implementation of smart and sustainable growth practices and improvement of pedestrian connectivity, particularly near Myersville Elementary School.
- The Town of New Market is located just north of I-70 in the eastern part of the county and has a population of approximately 1,500 residents. The most recent comprehensive plan was published in 2016. The four visions outlined in the plan are preservation of New Market's historic identity, careful geographic expansion and population growth, economic development sensitive to the historic downtown, and preservation of natural resources. The plan emphasizes a need to provide for the adequacy of the local schools.
- Rosemont is a village in the southwest part of Frederick County adjacent to Brunswick City with a population of about 300 residents. Rosemont does not exercise planning and zoning authority and therefore does not have a comprehensive plan.
- The Town of Thurmont is located in the northwest part of the county, nestled in the Catoclin mountain range and has a population of about 6,600. A 2020-21 update to the comprehensive plan was approved in April 2022. The goals of the plan are development of the local economy and tax base, revitalization of downtown Thurmont to support businesses and preserve historic buildings, connect neighborhoods with outstanding open spaces and streets, and guide the future residential development. As part of the update process a comprehensive rezoning is planned. Due to excess capacity in the schools and limited proposed housing growth, the plan does not identify any future school sites.
- The Town of Walkersville is located in central Frederick County, northeast of Frederick City, and has a population of about 6,100 residents. A comprehensive plan was published in 2011 and had the following goals: maintain and protect the small-town character of Walkersville, allow for future development to support limited growth provided adequate public facilities are available, protect Walkersville's natural, historic and scenic resources and maintain a high quality of life for Walkersville residents. Although the plan anticipated the potential for overcrowding in the schools serving Walkersville, the plan recommends redistricting of areas outside the town limits rather than construction of another school within the town. Walkersville is currently updating its comprehensive plan and expects to adopt it by the end of 2022.
- The Town of Woodsboro is located northeast of Walkersville and has a population of about 1,100. A comprehensive plan was published in 2008. The plan's goals included increasing involvement in the comprehensive planning process and implementation, protection and conservation of environmental resources, promotion of Woodsboro's cultural heritage, provision of a safe transportation network, provision of adequate community facilities, manage the Town's growth rate to provide adequate services and infrastructure and facilitate a compatible mix of land uses.

Annexations

Municipalities within Frederick County have opportunities on occasion to consider the annexation of additional land into their boundaries for the purpose of development. Proposed annexation properties are typically not planned for development under the County zoning but once annexed, become developable under municipal zoning with municipal infrastructure. FCPS Capital Programs Department staff review proposed annexations to provide comment on the existing and future capacity of schools serving the proposed parcels for development. Staff also provide comments on the need for school sites, if applicable.

The City of Frederick is considering two annexations at its northwest edge in the Yellow Springs ES, Monocacy MS, and Gov. Thomas Johnson HS attendance areas. The Winpenny Tell property is 79 acres, proposed for the development of up to 210 single family and 106 multifamily units. Nearby, the developer of the 57-acre Christoff property proposes up to 114 single family and 114 townhomes if annexed. Based on current pupil yield rates the annexed properties could yield 118 and 115 total students, respectively. The Christoff annexation was approved by the planning commission and is undergoing further negotiations prior to Mayor and Board consideration. The Winpenny Tell annexation is still under review by Frederick City.

The Town of Emmitsburg has had initial discussions with three property owners for potential annexations within the next 10 years. One property is actively pursuing annexation. FCPS will be monitoring the status of these properties and their potential impacts to enrollment.

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 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 a Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement (DRRA)

approved prior to July 20, 2016 can still continue to build out after paying the fee. The county expects to collect an additional \$71 million in mitigation fees from the remaining 49 previously approved projects with a DRRA.

Municipalities may also adopt an APFO 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 2A below. FCPS staff completed 16 APFO tests in FY21 and as of May 2022 have completed 16 APFO tests.

Table 2A: 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.
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.
Emmitsburg	<100%	All	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 improvements necessary to meet adequacy. 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 improvements necessary to meet adequacy.
Walkersville	<105%	All	No	Project must wait until adequate facilities are available.

Dedication and Donation of School Sites

City and county officials identify property for school sites through the residential development approval process. Both county and city zoning regulations can compel developers to dedicate land for school sites when the council determines that a need exists for a school based on established standards of service. Construction on dedicated school sites saves taxpayers millions of dollars in land acquisition costs.

FCPS continues to work with both the county and municipalities to secure additional school sites for future construction. [Appendix J](#) contains a list of potential future school sites. Three sites are planned to be dedicated through approved rezoning, annexed properties, or preliminary plan approvals, while the BOE already owns seven sites for future schools.

The municipal and county comprehensive plans continue to identify, in cooperation with FCPS, future school site needs. Existing comprehensive plan maps indicating the general locations of additional school sites will remain in effect until new area comprehensive plans are approved. FCPS will continue to work with local governments and developers to secure identified school sites as new residential development plans are submitted. FCPS is currently seeking a school site on the east side of Frederick City to construct additional elementary school space. An elementary school is also planned for construction on the future Tuscarora Creek/Sanner Farm combined site on the northwest side of Frederick City. A third new elementary school at a location to be determined may be needed within the 10-year plan. Finally, a future high school site will be needed in eastern Frederick County to address projected capacity issues at Walkersville, Linganore, Oakdale and Urbana high schools.