

Chapter 9: Facilities & Services

Goals

Ensure adequate and appropriate Community Investment Plan projects and operating budgets to implement the Master Plan and provide needed public facilities and services.

Provide community educational opportunities, facilities, and resources, particularly libraries and schools, to meet the needs of a diverse population.

The Significance to Carroll County

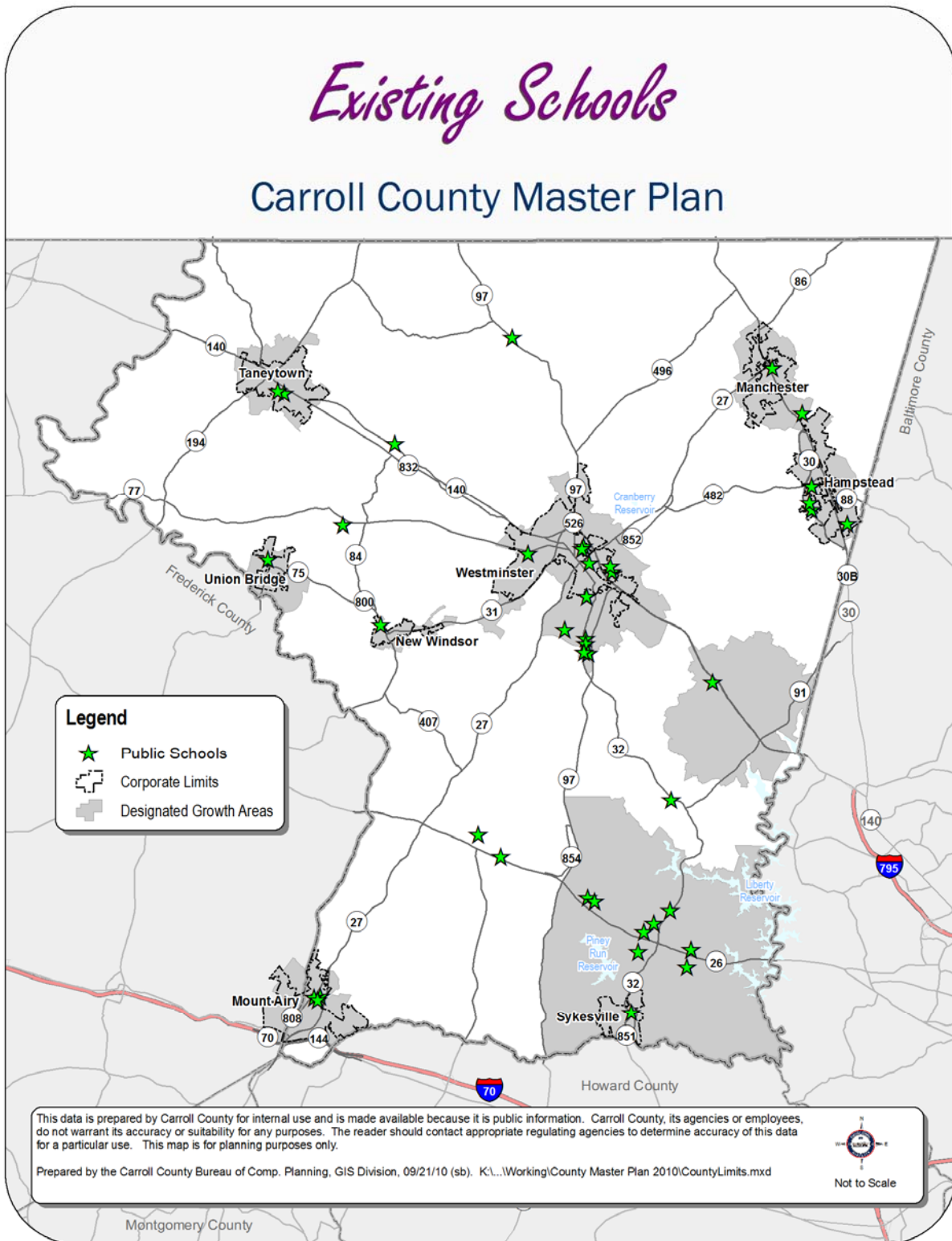
Providing public facilities and services for the safety, health, and welfare of its citizens is a primary function of local government. Public roads, water and sewer systems, schools, community colleges, libraries, parks and recreational sites, and public buildings are all facilities provided by government. Police protection, public education, infrastructure maintenance, emergency response, recreational programs, and snow removal are some of the services provided. Providing and maintaining these facilities and services at the levels the public desires and demands is essential to a healthy community and a high quality of life.

Systemwide, there are 27,732 total students in the school system, which has an overall capacity of 30,766. Most areas in the county are under capacity, with a few over capacity. As of November 2009, enrollment at 9 of the 42 public schools in Carroll County exceeded 100 percent capacity. Relocatable classrooms, 125 throughout the county, were initially constructed in response to the capacity issues at specific schools. The Board of Commissioners addressed these overcapacity issues through the construction of several new schools and additions. As a result, the need for relocatables is now more for programmatic reasons rather than capacity reasons.

An impact fee for schools and parks has been assessed on new residential development since 1989. The County Commissioners have forward-funded new schools in advance of State participation in order to provide needed classrooms. A portion of the piggyback tax is used to provide additional funds for needed school facilities.

The Carroll County Board of Education annually prepares an *Educational Facilities Master Plan*, which analyzes and identifies school systems' projected facility needs. These needs include: additional square footage required for increasing student enrollment, state-rated capacity changes for elementary schools, instructional program changes, and the capital renewal of the physical plant assets. The current plan can be viewed at

<http://www.carrollk12.org/admin/schoolfacilities/masterplan/default.asp>. Future schools sites are not identified. The “Existing Schools” map identifies locations of current schools.



Note: This map can also be viewed at:

<http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/compplan/masterplan2010/default.asp>

While the County provides and maintains roadway facilities, many of its 1,609 roads (totaling 973 miles) and 139 bridges are developer-financed subdivision roads. The County long has had a policy of requiring developers to pay for or provide the facilities their developments will require, including roads. This has not always resulted in cohesive, connected roadway networks. The major roadways in the County are State roads, over which the County has very little control but on which the most congestion occurs.

The County has an adopted *Master Plan for Water & Sewerage* which identifies and projects facility needs as well as timing for improvements. Under State law, development cannot proceed unless water and sewer capacity is available in water and sewer service areas. This plan, which requires Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) approval, is a tool to implement the Carroll County Master Plan; it is not an element of the comprehensive plan document itself.

Carroll County owns and operates the Hampstead Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Sykesville-Freedom public water system, and two landfills. Maryland Environmental Service (MES) operates the Sykesville-Freedom Wastewater Treatment plant, which serves the Freedom DGA. The capacity of each of these systems is a definable amount which is allocated as new users are added to the system. The water and sewer systems are self-funding systems paid for through a separate “enterprise” fund.

The County’s Solid Waste Management Plan is similar to the *Master Plan for Water & Sewerage*. It also implements the comprehensive plan, requires State approval, and must be updated every three years.

Several other facilities and services are partially or fully funded by the County, including six libraries, a community college, two nature centers, Hashawha Environmental Center, the Carroll County Cooperative Extension Service, senior centers, and the Farm Museum.

The Challenge to Carroll County

Every community desires and expects to have facilities and services provided at a certain level, but there is a cost associated with each level of service. Carroll County’s Master Plan was originally adopted to better direct the growth and development that was projected. Some of the development that has occurred has been consistent with the Plan. However, other areas have developed in a manner inconsistent with plan goals and visions. This inconsistent growth pattern has created spots stressed by excess demand even when overall facilities and infrastructure systems are adequate to meet community needs.

Whether population increase is due to net natural increase or immigration, all public facilities and services provided by local government are impacted by population growth. While impact fees can be charged to new growth to ensure that the current level of service for a facility is maintained, an increase in the level of service would result in a cost to both existing and new development.

The surging growth rate that the County began experiencing in the 1970s increased again in the 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Many of Carroll County's facilities and infrastructure systems were significantly stressed attempting to meet increased demands. The search for solutions resulted in a series of code and policy revisions governing the subdivision and development of land. These were aimed at ensuring that all manner of needed infrastructure, facilities, and services were reviewed and confirmed as sufficient to meet demands of the added development. This process evolved over several years as various testing standards and methodologies were considered. Ultimately, the Carroll County Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances was revised three separate times; the most recent revision dates to 2004. The most significant changes related to planning and development were made to the following chapters:

- ▶ Chapter 71, Adequate Public Facilities and Concurrency Management
- ▶ Chapter 97, Construction Codes
- ▶ Chapter 103, Development and Subdivision of Land
- ▶ Chapter 105, Storm Sewer Systems
- ▶ Chapter 112, Floodplain Management
- ▶ Chapter 121, Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control
- ▶ Chapter 134, Landscape Enhancement of Development
- ▶ Chapter 191, Stormwater Management
- ▶ Chapter 218, Water Resource Management
- ▶ Chapter 223, Zoning

In terms of facilities, Chapter 71 now requires the Planning Commission "to ensure that proposed or planned residential growth proceeds at a rate that will not unduly strain public facilities, including schools, roads, water and sewer facilities, and police, fire, and emergency medical services." Further the code "establishes minimum adequacy standards or thresholds for these facilities and services and mandates that the cumulative impacts of proposed or planned residential growth, within the incorporated municipalities and the County, be considered in testing for adequacy under these standards." The revisions established a reporting system that provides ongoing monitoring of the function and success of the code in meeting its purpose. Further, the adopted code mandates an annual report and re-assessment of the ordinance and standards. This establishes a regular program for ongoing revisions to ensure that the most effective standards, implementation rules, and submittal requirements are being incorporated on an as-needed basis. This also permits the County to maintain a single regulatory document while eliminating redundant or contradictory standards or requirements.

Steady residential growth in Carroll County since the 1970s has consistently placed additional demands on public school facilities. In the past, students have not always been evenly distributed within the County or within the grade levels. The areas of the County that had experienced the most rapid growth generally had schools at or over capacity. In the

summer of 2010, with Concurrency Management in place, only one school – Mount Airy Middle School - was considered inadequate.

Other portions of the county may find that simultaneous municipal projects may cause localized inadequacies, even though the system-wide student population remains within Carroll County Public Schools' (CCPS) projections. CCPS projections anticipate a pupil population of 27,665 for the year 2010-11 school year. As the population of the county ages and the birth rate declines, the growth in the school age population is expected to level off. November 6, 2009 CCPS projections anticipate a grand total student population of 26,712 students for the 2019-20 academic year.

Safety is a concern among Carroll County citizens. An increase in level of service for police would result in an increased cost to existing development as well as that portion borne by new development. Recent discussions and work by a specially convened task force have focused on the benefits, risks, and costs of consolidating law enforcement services in the county.

The volunteer emergency services system has been able to keep up with the demands created by a growing population. However, the recruitment of new volunteers is increasingly difficult, partially as a result of increasing training requirements. Volunteers often cannot respond during certain times of the day. Currently, fire and rescue companies across the county utilize paid fire and EMS personnel on an as-needed basis to cover times when volunteers are not generally available. The challenge to the County in the future is to determine how to continue to provide a high level of emergency services at a reasonable cost.

The Choice: Policies & Recommendations

Policies

- The Carroll County Planning Commission's recommendations on the CIP will consider the annual concurrency report and be based on the goals, policies, and recommendations of the adopted Master Plan.
- The County will give funding priority to the public facilities included in Chapter 71 of the Carroll County Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances entitled "Adequate Public Facilities and Concurrency Management."
- Public educational facilities will be encouraged to be located within the DGAs, municipalities, and/or planned public water and sewer service areas to make them accessible to the populations they serve and to encourage the creation of mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented communities.
- Access controls and corridor preservation studies/provisions along major and minor arterials, as defined in the Carroll County functional classification system, will be implemented to maintain a high level of service and to promote the movement of freight and people. This includes use-in-common accesses near property or lot lines, cross easements, access to minor rather than major roads, and implementation of

parallel frontage roads. These and other techniques can be utilized to minimize and concentrate access points to the maximum extent feasible.

- Needed improvements will be a funding priority in the Carroll County Community Investment Plan budget, especially for critical roadway segments, local street extensions, and intersections.

Recommendations

- A. Work closely with the incorporated municipalities to encourage a coordinated reporting and analysis when considering new development plans and annexations.
- B. Evaluate the proposed CIP for consistency with the adopted Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances and the Master Plan.
- C. Coordinate interjurisdictional CIP projects, such as roads, water and sewer, etc., to ensure they occur concurrently.
- D. Re-evaluate the fiscal cost of new development on the CIP to determine if the impact fee should be adjusted and/or new fees added to reflect the actual cost of facilities and services.
- E. Design new schools, with the ability to be expanded in the future, to accommodate additional pupil population in areas where a complete new facility is not necessary.
- F. Give CIP review priority to expanding existing schools where core facilities and site conditions allow it.
- G. Coordinate closely with the Board of Education and the local municipalities as appropriate, in determining where and when new schools are built (including identifying and preserving future school sites), ensuring consistency with the goals and policies of the Master Plan, and timely funding.
- H. Support the Board of Education to ensure implementation of redistricting of schools as a method of accommodating pupils when overpopulation is evident in any specific school district.
- I. Explore other ways to fund or reduce school construction costs.
- J. Evaluate new revenue sources, such as special taxing districts, to fund police, fire, and emergency medical services.
- K. Continue to support the volunteer-based organizations as the basic provider of emergency services.
- L. Periodically review and update all relevant emergency services plans including the Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Emergency Services Master Plan. The police element of this plan would address all existing and future agencies providing police services in the county.
- M. Develop potential mitigation methods that will reduce vehicle trips generated, such as additional Park and Ride lots, trail systems, etc.
- N. Forward build planned roads, which are currently primarily developer funded, to avoid fragmented infrastructure development.
- O. Investigate a greater role and responsibility for construction of State arterial and collector roads with the Community Investment Plan funding in partnership with the State.
- P. Investigate a transportation improvement fund to permit needed transportation improvements on a timelier basis. This fund could be from an excise tax on new construction, with proper State implementation legislation.

- Q. Maintain and/or improve the level of service along State arterial roads with corridor preservation and other measures. This will ensure safety and promote the efficient movement of goods for “on-time demand” and “just-in-time” deliveries. Studies will be conducted to review future needed rights-of-way to enhance access to interstate highways, especially I-70 and I-795.
- R. Investigate alternative ways to fund State Highway construction costs.
- S. Develop and implement policies to encourage the conservation of water and wastewater resources, thereby preserving as much water and sewer capacity as possible and reducing the cost of providing additional capacity.
- T. Seek to incorporate innovative and cost-effective design into water and sewer systems to make the most efficient use of capacity.
- U. Use the *Water Resources Element* and the *Carroll County Master Plan for Water & Sewerage* to plan for projected needs and facilities.
- V. Investigate funding sources, such as loans and grants, and other funding mechanisms to address special problems in small communities and to make assistance with these problems more affordable.

Fiscal Impact to the County

If levels of service are increased, in most instances, additional revenue sources will be needed to fund the increase for the existing population of the County.

Operating costs for public safety and corrections are projected to increase with population and employment growth. Revenues from new growth are sufficient to cover these increases. An increase from the existing service level will require an increase in revenue currently dedicated to police and emergency medical services. An increase in the sworn police officers from the current target of 1.3 police officers per 1,000 population to 1.4 police officers will result in an increased cost of approximately \$1,400,000 to serve the existing population. This represents about \$0.0078 on the property tax rate. New development will pay its own way through the tax rate. As police service is not a one-time cost, it is considered an operating cost and cannot be funded through impact fees. Currently, the County spends approximately \$3.7 million annually for paid emergency medical services at 13 of the 14 local fire companies.

Per the Concurrency Management Program, development projects are deemed to have inadequate roadways if a Traffic Impact Study indicates a level of service E or F. The existing policy of having developers build planned major streets and mitigate impacts on existing County roadways should help the County to meet the goal without significant additional costs to the County. The recommendation to fund roads and to participate in building state highways would require an undetermined amount of additional revenues.

During the decade of 1990-2000, and through the housing boom of the early 2000s, Carroll County saw significant residential growth throughout the county. With this influx of new residents, the school system saw a 30 percent increase in enrollment from 21,033 in FY 90

to 27,239 in FY 00. As the enrollment began to reach capacity in several parts of the county, it became clear that more schools were needed. The Board of County Commissioners began an aggressive Community Investment Plan (CIP) of constructing schools. This approach led to the construction of 10 schools at a cost of \$250 million. The following list includes projects that addressed this need:

- Oklahoma Road Middle was built to alleviate capacity concerns in the South Carroll area (1998)
- Linton Springs Elementary was built to alleviate capacity concerns in the South Carroll area (1998)
- Elmer Wolfe Elementary was built to alleviate capacity concerns in the South Carroll area (1998)
- Cranberry Station Elementary was built to alleviate capacity concerns in the Westminster area (1999)
- Shiloh Middle was built to alleviate capacity concerns in the North Carroll area (2000)
- Century High was built to alleviate capacity concerns in the South Carroll area (2001)
- Winters Mill High was built to alleviate capacity concerns in the Westminster area (2002)
- Parr's Ridge Elementary was built to alleviate capacity concerns in the South Carroll area (2005)
- Ebb Valley Elementary was built to alleviate capacity concerns in the North Carroll area (2008)
- Manchester Valley High was built to alleviate capacity concerns in the North Carroll area (2009)

As school construction continued into the early 2000s, enrollment flattened out. The rate of growth was 3 percent from FY 00 to FY 09, down significantly from the prior decade. Actual enrollment increased from 27,239 to 27,902. Projections for the next decade show a decrease in enrollment of 34 students, dropping down to 27,868. By the end of the FY 10-15 CIP, the County will have addressed school capacity issues. The last two projects to address overcrowding are included in the FY 10 CIP. An addition and modernization for Mount Airy Middle School is planned along with design funding for a new elementary school in the southeastern part of the county with the balance of the funding to be outside the six-year plan.

Education, including public schools, libraries, and the community college, continues to be the highest funding priority. At \$195 million, well over half of the FY 10 Operating Budget is dedicated to education. Though the Board of Education, Community College, and Public Libraries receive funding from both the County and the State, the State does not provide any additional funding when a new facility is opened.

In addition to capacity projects, the County continues to make progress in building additions to the elementary schools to accommodate the State requirement for full-day kindergarten. This effort is expected to continue over the course of the next decade. The County is also

continuing its efforts to maintain existing facilities with funding every year for roofs, HVAC systems, and paving.

Improvements to the Sykesville-Freedom public water and wastewater systems and the Hampstead wastewater system are funded through an Enterprise fund. The users of the system totally support the installation and operation of the system through various methods, such as front-foot assessment fees, user rates, and area connection fees. No general tax revenues support these systems. Because there is no fiscal impact to the County's operating or capital improvement budget, the cost to the County for these services is not further addressed here.