

Chapter 1: Concepts & Intentions

Quality of Life

The 2000 Master Plan for Carroll County, *Challenges & Choices*, represented the first review and revision of the direction set forth by the original 1964 Carroll County Master Plan. It also was the first time the master plan had a plan document to accompany the land use plan map and goals. The ~~2010-2012~~ update of this document is the ~~second~~^{third} review and revision to the original 1964 plan. While no one would argue that much has changed in Carroll County since 1964, the fundamental elements of quality communities that were present then continue to invite new residents to the county today. People move to the county because they believe it offers the quality of life ~~for which they are looking~~^{they desire}. They find safe neighborhoods, good schools, and relatively uncongested streets. Many people also move to Carroll County because they can afford a nicer home due to comparatively lower housing and living costs. Unlike 1964, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to balance the community desire to maintain, and even increase, the quality of life ~~residents have come to expect without increasing the costs to the general citizen~~.

Challenges & Choices

The planning process used to develop this plan focused on identifying the challenges that the County is facing and making choices of how to address these challenges. The Goals for how those challenges were and are addressed are contained in Chapter ~~5-4~~ “Vision Statement and Goals.” Policies and recommendations for implementation chosen by the citizens and officials of the County are also presented. They are not simple choices, based solely on the cost of implementing the plan or what would be nice in an ideal world. Rather, the significance of the quality of life enjoyed by residents of Carroll County was recognized as a major factor in development of the plan.

Recognizing the traditional challenges posed by residential and commercial development and their respective demands on a variety of public services, the ~~2010~~²⁰¹² edition of the Carroll County Master Plan essentially reaffirmed support for the basic premises, concepts, and development patterns charted in the 1964 and 2000 plans. Carroll’s Designated Growth Areas (DGAs), which are centered on or contain municipalities, ~~are expected to~~^{will} continue to receive priority to accommodate the majority of the new growth projected to take place in the county. The locally successful and nationally-recognized Agricultural Land Preservation Program will be maintained to continue to encourage farmland preservation, thereby preserving the rural, scenic, and cultural character of the county.

Among ~~the~~ principal concerns raised by county citizens during an open ~~and~~^{inclusive} planning process, and subsequently addressed by the plan, was the timely provision of

facilities that serve new development. In April of 2004, the Board of County Commissioners significantly amended the Concurrency Management Ordinance. Capital improvement projects are prioritized and appropriately programmed to reflect the public improvements that are necessary to maintain minimum levels of service for communities. These minimum service levels apply to most public facilities, such as: roads; schools; police; fire and emergency services; and water and sewer services. Because Concurrency ties development approval to the County's ability to fund infrastructure improvements and services, the Community Investment Plan (CIP) will have an impact on the amount and rate of growth in different areas of the county.

In addition to the demands ~~that~~ development places on facilities, the impacts of development on environmental resources can vary greatly in terms of physical and financial effect. This plan recognizes the far-reaching impacts of development on the environment and presents methods for maintaining the quality and quantity of those resources present. Environmental concerns, especially water quality, will have an increasing impact on how development occurs. The Water Resources Element begins to address these issues as they relate to water supply and water quality.

The ~~2010-2012~~ plan addresses the types of challenges typical of a community at a crossroads in its history. The 2000 plan reflected the choices of the citizens to reaffirm support for the direction dictated by the original Carroll County Master Plan. The core planning principles of facilitating and encouraging ~~higher density~~ growth in the DGAs, the vigorous pursuit of agricultural land preservation, the protection of natural resources, and the timing and phasing of development, at a rate the County can afford to fund the new and improved facilities, are all contained in this plan. Specific methods to improve on the level of success achieved by the 1964 and 2000 plans are also included in ~~the 2010~~ [this plan version](#).

Through the successful implementation of the recommendations contained herein, this plan will assist Carroll County in achieving the vision and goals developed during the drafting of the plan and as set forth in the following chapters. While it is the role of Carroll County Government to adopt and implement the plan, the citizens of the county have a responsibility to monitor the commitment to, and continued support for, the directions contained in the ~~2010~~ [2012](#) Carroll County Master Plan and subsequent revisions.

The Definitions

Vision or Vision Statement – A vision is a statement that defines a community's preferred future. To choose a direction, a community first must have developed a mental image of a possible and desirable future state. This vision should [respect the rights and wishes of individual property owners while simultaneously](#) articulating a feasible, achievable, realistic, and attractive future for the community, which should be a future that is better than that of existing conditions. The process of developing a vision not only helps to define the community's preferences and desires for the future but also helps to empower members of the community. A *shared* vision builds community, [cooperation, and coordination](#) between the public and private, the leaders and the residents. ~~It encourages cooperation~~

~~and coordination among the stakeholders.~~ It is also easier to establish priorities when community leaders know toward what end they are working. The defined vision must become an integral part of the management and operation of the County and the activities in which residents participate. The purpose of this vision statement is to serve as a guide that community leaders and decision makers use as a basis for the decisions made and activities undertaken.

Goals – A goal identifies the purpose toward which an endeavor is directed. Goals are broad statements of intended accomplishments which, if accomplished as a whole, would bring the community closer to meeting its overall vision of the future. They do not identify specific activities that will be undertaken. Rather, a set of objectives or recommendations that are more specific actions are developed to guide the community toward meeting its goals.

Policies – A policy identifies the course of action to be taken when presented with a decision to be made on a given issue. To fulfill its role as a guidance tool, policy statements are included in the plan. These policy statements express the community's desires for future decisions and help to guide the achievement of the goals they have developed. The policies indicate the direction that decision-makers would take when decisions are to be made regarding County services and land use development. The policy statements are based on an overall set of goals for the community and its future and should remain sensitive to the rights of all property owners and citizens.

Recommendations – Optional courses of action which assist in the achievement of goals. Goals help to identify where a community wants to be and toward what they are striving. However, they do not identify specific things that can be done to help the community get there. Recommendations are planning, land use, and general government-related activities that can be pursued, ideally as a whole, to help the community meet its goals.

Recommendations can also be described as implementation measures. The presence of a recommendation shall in no way be construed as a mandate, requirement, or otherwise be considered an indicator that action to the contrary of any recommendation is prohibited.

Maryland Planning Legislation & Authority

■ Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland

Article 66B, added to the Maryland Code in 1927 and now entitled “Land Use,” delegates basic planning and land use regulatory powers to the state's municipalities, Baltimore City, and non-charter counties. Important sections of Article 66B apply to charter counties as well.

Under Article 66B, it is the function and duty of the Planning Commission to develop and approve a plan which will be recommended to the local legislative body for adoption. This required plan serves as a guide to all public and private planning-related actions ~~actions~~ and decisions ~~to ensure that development of public and private property occurs in appropriate relation to each other.~~ This plan document satisfies the requirement to provide a statement

of goals and objectives, principles, policies, and standards which shall serve as a guide for the development and economic and social well being of the jurisdiction.

■ **Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992**

On October 1, 1992, the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 (the Planning Act) was passed with the intent of encouraging economic growth, limiting sprawl development, and protecting the state's natural resources. The Planning Act amended Article 66B. Most local jurisdictions in the state have established priority areas for resource protection. The Planning Act encourages these jurisdictions to build on that base with consistent development regulations and targeted infrastructure investment by the state.

A premise of the Act is that the comprehensive plans prepared by counties and cities are the best place for local governments to establish priorities for growth and resource conservation. Once those priorities are established, it is the State's responsibility to back them up.

The Planning Act was based on eight "Visions," which were revised and expanded in 2009 as part of the Smart, Green, and Growing legislation (see below). County and municipal plans are required to be amended so that the plans implement and establish a set of policies based on the Visions.

Making the Visions part of Maryland's planning and zoning enabling legislation gives local jurisdictions a concise statement of Maryland's priorities for their plans. Local Planning Commissions must review, and if necessary, amend their plans at regular six-year intervals. Until the adoption of the Planning Act, there had been no statewide requirement that local jurisdictions review their plans on a regular basis. This provision ensures that plans are frequently reconsidered in light of new needs.

■ **Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act of 1997**

The 1997 General Assembly adopted several specific programs, which together form the Smart Growth initiatives. Under these initiatives, counties may designate areas as Priority Funding Areas if they meet guidelines for intended use, availability of plans for sewer and water systems, and permitted residential density. Existing communities and areas where industrial or other economic development is desired are the areas that are eligible for county designation. Counties may also designate areas planned for new residential communities which will be served by water and sewer systems and meet density standards. As of October 1, 1998, the State is prohibited from funding growth-related projects not located in a Priority Funding Area (PFA). The State will not put their funds where development is low in density; there must be an average density of 3.5 dwelling units per acre to qualify for state funds.

Smart Growth also established a Rural Legacy program to preserve sensitive rural areas and to help jurisdictions purchase agricultural land easements, a brownfields program to encourage redevelopment, a Job Creation Tax Credit to promote revitalization, and a Live

Near Your Work program to promote settling in older urban areas.

■ **House Bill 1141 - Land Use - Local Government Planning; House Bill 2 - Agricultural Stewardship Act of 2006; and, House Bill 1160 - Workforce Housing Grant Program - Establishment**

The 2006 session of the Maryland General Assembly produced three notable bills related to land use planning and the comprehensive plan: HB 1141, HB 2, and HB 1160. The new legislation requires four new plan elements, though some may only apply to the County and others may only apply to municipalities. These elements are: a Water Resources Element, a Municipal Growth Element, a Priority Preservation Area Element, and a Workforce Housing Element.

Water Resources Element

The Water Resources Element is designed to express the relationship between planned growth, as identified in the plan, and the water resources that will serve and be affected by it. The Water Resources Element must:

- Identify drinking water and other water resources adequate for the needs of existing and future development proposed in the land use element of the comprehensive plan; and,
- Identify suitable receiving waters for both wastewater and stormwater to meet the needs of existing and projected development proposed in the land use element of the comprehensive plan.

Municipal Growth Element

The Municipal Growth Element requires municipalities to identify future growth areas that will implement their long-range vision for the future. These areas are to be based upon population projections, an assessment of land capacity and needs, and an assessment of infrastructure and sensitive areas, among other things. The element should be done in conjunction with the County, since it will guide future annexations, a process involving both jurisdictions.

Priority Preservation Area Element

The Priority Preservation Area Element, addressed in HB 2, is required of the County to maintain certification of its agricultural land preservation program. This element requires the County to identify priority preservation areas based upon the productivity of and/or profitability of agricultural and forestry enterprises, and that policies be in place in these areas to prevent them from being converted to or compromised by development. The acreage goal for land in a priority preservation area to be preserved through easements and zoning must equal at least 80 percent of the undeveloped land within the area. Counties also must demonstrate in future plan updates how they are contributing towards the statewide preservation goals of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and what they can do to address any shortcomings.

Workforce Housing Element

The Workforce Housing Element is required of local governments only if they wish to be eligible for participation in the Workforce Housing Grant Program, which was established in

2006 by HB 1160. The Workforce Housing Element should assess workforce housing needs and contain goals, objectives, and policies to preserve or develop workforce housing. “Workforce housing” is defined in the bill as rental housing that is affordable to households with an annual income between 50 percent and 100 percent of the area median income, or homeownership housing that is affordable to households with an annual income between 60 percent and 120 percent of the median income. Measures that could be included in the element to address workforce housing include:

- Preservation and renovation of existing housing stock
- Redevelopment of existing residential areas
- Streamlined regulatory processes and reduced regulatory fees for construction or renovation
- Financial incentives for construction and renovation including local property tax credits
- Special zoning regulations for construction and renovation including inclusionary zoning
- Efforts to preserve workforce housing stock for subsequent first-time homebuyers and renters
- Coordination with neighboring jurisdictions
- Coordination with private sector employers
- Leveraging of federal financial assistance
- No date for inclusion of this element in the local plan has been established.

Other Changes

Annexation and rezoning procedures also were altered by the adoption of HB 1141. The legislation requires that annexations be consistent with the municipal growth element. Additionally, all annexation proposals must contain an “annexation plan” outlining the extension of services and public facilities. The annexation plan must be provided to the County 60 days prior and to the State (Maryland Department of Planning (MDP)) 30 days prior to the public hearing for their review and comment.

Another change that applies to annexations relates to the “five-year rule.” Previously under this rule, unless a zoning waiver was obtained from the County, the zoning on an annexed property could not be changed for five years if the desired zoning was substantially different from that envisioned in the master plan (comprehensive plan). This requirement no longer applies, unless the proposed zoning is more dense than the current County zoning by 50 percent or more. A municipality still may request a waiver of zoning from the County to avoid waiting five years.

Changes also were made to the PFA criteria. Now, municipalities must base their PFAs on an analysis of the capacity of land available for development, infill, or redevelopment and an analysis of the land area needed to satisfy demand for development at densities consistent with the master plan.

If all of the elements required are not in place on or before October 1, 2009, the affected jurisdiction (County or City) “may not change the zoning classification of a property until that county or municipal corporation” is in compliance.

■ **Smart, Green, and Growing Legislation: SB 273/HB 294 – The Planning Visions; SB 280/HB 297 – The Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009; SB 276/HB 295 – Smart Growth Goals, Measures, and Indicators and Implementation of Planning Visions**

The Smart, Green, and Growing Legislation passed in 2009 includes three significant planning bills designed to update prior planning legislation and further enhance State and local implementation.

The *Planning Visions* bill (SB 273/HB 294) replaced the eight visions established in the 1992 Planning Act with twelve new visions (see below). These visions relate to:

- quality of life and sustainability;
- public participation;
- growth areas;
- community design;
- infrastructure;
- transportation;
- housing;
- economic development;
- environmental protection;
- resource conservation;
- stewardship; and,
- implementation of the visions.

The visions establish a State policy towards land use, and they are to be reflected in local comprehensive plans and implemented through local regulations. The Planning Visions bill also contains reporting requirements for local jurisdictions and MDP related to the effect of Adequate Public Facility Ordinances on PFAs. Lastly, the bill permits local jurisdictions to develop Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs in PFAs that will offset the cost to acquire land and construct public facilities in PFAs with proceeds from the sale of transferred development rights.

The Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009 (SB 280/HB 297) attempts to strengthen comprehensive plans by requiring implementation measures and decisions to be consistent with the plan. In addition to explicitly indicating the legislative intent to overturn the Court of Appeals ruling in *David Trail, et al. v. Terrapin Run, LLC et al.*, 403 Md. 523 (2008), the bill defined actions that are “consistent with” or have “consistency with” a comprehensive plan as those that further, and are not contrary to, the plan with respect to:

- policies;
- timing of implementation of the plan;
- timing of development;
- timing of rezoning;
- development patterns;

- land uses; and,
- densities or intensities.

Actions that would fall under this definition include local ordinances and regulations, variances or special exceptions, annexations, and water and sewer plan amendments. An exception to the definition was made for PFAs to exclude the need for consistency with land uses and densities or intensities expressed in the plan. This exception provides flexibility in permitting mixed-use development and density bonuses in areas where development is meant to be focused. The bill also requires Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals members to complete an education course.

The Smart Growth Goals, Measures, and Indicators and Implementation of Planning Visions bill (SB 276/HB 295) identifies a statewide land use goal to increase the percentage of growth within PFAs and decrease the percentage of growth outside PFAs. Towards this end, the bill requires that a local jurisdiction issuing more than 50 building permits per year submit an annual report that indicates how well it is achieving smart growth measures and indicators. Each jurisdiction must establish its own local goal towards achieving the statewide land use goal. This is to be identified in the annual report along with a time frame for achieving the goal, the resources that will be necessary for providing infrastructure inside the PFA and land preservation outside the PFA, and any progress that has been made since the last report in achieving the goal. The report also must describe the following in terms of what is inside and outside the PFAs: amount and share of growth; net density of growth; and creation of new lots and residential and commercial building permits issued. Also to be included is a report on the jurisdiction's development capacity analysis, which should be updated every three years or when there is a significant change in zoning or land use. Additionally, the report should identify the number of acres preserved using local agricultural land preservation funds.

Local land use goals established and reported to MDP not only will be used in the County's annual report, but also will be used to set policy as it is related to the location, timing, and funding for growth, infrastructure, land preservation, and resource protection. When the Master Plan is reviewed at the six-year review period, the progress indicated in the annual reports can be used to make adjustments to the goal and/or the mechanism put in place to achieve it.

Maryland's Twelve Visions

■ The Visions

The 1992 Planning Act was based on eight visions. These visions were replaced with twelve new visions in 2009 as part of the Smart, Green, and Growing legislation. The new visions are as follows:

- (1) Quality of life and sustainability: a high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment;
- (2) Public participation: citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals;
- (3) Growth areas: growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers;
- (4) Community design: compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources;
- (5) Infrastructure: growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner;
- (6) Transportation: a well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers;
- (7) Housing: a range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes;
- (8) Economic development: economic development and natural resource-based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State's natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged;
- (9) Environmental protection: land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources;
- (10) Resource conservation: waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved;
- (11) Stewardship: government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection; and
- (12) Implementation: strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, state, and interstate levels to achieve these Visions.

■ Meeting the Twelve Visions

The ~~2010~~2012 Carroll County Master Plan implements the vision for *quality of life and sustainability* by striking a balance between directing growth to designated growth areas and preserving the balance of the county as a rural working landscape. The plan's recommendations include strategies to provide the facilities necessary for growth that is compatible with the master plan and an attractive asset for the community.

A variety of options for enhancing *public participation* are laid out in the plan's Community Involvement Chapter. The plan recognizes the importance of involving the community not just in the development of plans, but also in their ongoing implementation. Enhancing community awareness of planning efforts and providing them with timely information on how they can become involved and stay involved are recognized as essential.

Carroll County's designated *growth areas* have been identified as the most suitable areas for development in the county. The growth areas are designated to accept new development. Public water and sewer service are generally provided here, along with other services. Most of the growth areas also are centered on an incorporated municipality. Most of these cities and towns have been in existence since the 19th century and historically have been the places where densities tend to be higher and public services more plentiful.

Preserving and enhancing places like the county's cities and towns helps achieve the vision for *community design*. The plan encourages thoughtful, sustainable community design through recommendations that "promote development and design that preserves the fabric or our towns and villages is in harmony with the surrounding built and natural environments, encourages community interaction, and, in rural areas, preserves the county's rural character." ~~(Land Use & Growth Management Chapter) Through its housing and transportation chapters, the plan encourages the creation of mixed-use, walkable communities. The plan encourages preservation of the existing rural and suburban fabric of our communities, with extension of mixed-use zoning only where it is appropriate. It also supports efforts to create more opportunities for safe bicycle paths and walkways -in the DGAs. Recommendations to c~~Cluster development will be encouraged to help and protect sensitive environmental features, particularly during the development process, help to ensure that community design reflects an ethic of sustainability.

Ensuring that the proper *infrastructure* is in place to support the County's designated growth areas is a major objective of the plan. The new Water Resources Element (WRE) of the plan provides the information necessary to evaluate the sustainability of our land use policies compared to the ability to provide adequate water/wastewater systems and to restore and maintain water quality. The Concurrency Management program requires the preparation of an annual Concurrency Management Report that analyzes the residential development activity of the past year, assesses the available capacity of public facilities and services, and recommends ways to better achieve the stated purpose of the Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances, Chapter 71 Adequate Public Facilities and Concurrency Management.

The plan's chapter on *transportation* contains recommendations for improvements that will maintain the viability and efficiency of the county's transportation network. Based on an analysis of the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of various transportation solutions, this chapter establishes a foundation for future transportation improvements that reflects the demands that will be placed on the network over time as the land use plan is realized. While the planned major streets include two bypasses and several significant collector roadways, much of the plan is grounded in fiscal responsibility and the need to focus on system preservation and connectivity. Subway stations and/or government sponsored or subsidized intercounty bus service is not considered a priority or a need.

The need to provide adequate and varied *housing* for the residents of Carroll County is expressed in the plan in several ways. By directing the majority of growth to the county's DGAs, the likelihood of creating housing diversity is increased. It is in the DGAs that public facilities are available, and, therefore, greater flexibility in design and density can be realized. Additionally, the plan contains recommendations for enhancing housing options through various incentives, the creation of accessory dwelling units, and opportunities to create mixed-use developments.

Economic development is a vital part of Carroll's economy and tax base. Therefore, the plan also addresses measures to ensure that economic development consistent with the State's vision is encouraged. The plan goal is for commercial and industrial uses to increase from ___ percent represent to a minimum of 12 percent of the tax base as new development occurs. A better balance of the County's tax base will help the County provide needed services and the economic development will bring jobs to the county without residents shouldering an undue share of the tax burden. A study conducted in 2007 assessed commercial and industrial land available and projected job growth, and estimated the need for additional commercial and industrial land. This plan considers the results of that study in its recommendations. Additionally, the plan contains recommendations to support the agribusiness industry and the viability of agriculture as a livelihood. It also contains recommendations for maintaining the viability of resource industries, such as mineral extraction and forestry, through the Mineral Resources Element and the Priority Preservation Area Element.

The vision to safeguard and manage natural resources through *environmental protection* and *resource conservation* is expressed in the plan in several ways. At the broadest level, the practice of directing growth to DGAs may reduce pressure for and discouraging development in rural areas and helps to protect sensitive environmental features by limiting the geographic extent of the impacts of development. Goals contained within the plan seek to preserve the fabric of our rural and suburban neighborhoods, create built environments that are in harmony with the natural environment, even in the DGAs. Additionally, the plan's Environment chapter defines and addresses the sensitive areas required by Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland and as modified by 2006 legislation. Additional sensitive areas representing important environmental resources to Carroll County are addressed as well. The Water Resources Element of the plan explores ways to achieve a sustainable balance between planned growth and the ability to provide water supply to serve it. The WRE also identifies wastewater limitations and measures to address those limitations. The WRE further addresses water quality issues through strategies to address nonpoint sources.

This element is the result of exhaustive research and analysis, and provides a level of information never before available to the County. However, there are concerns and unknowns that attempt to mitigate non-point sources have not been thoroughly weighed against alternatives, and need to be evaluated via rigorous cost-benefit analysis, prior to use as a ~~It will be a significant~~ factor in guiding future land use decisions. The Priority Preservation Areas Element contains recommendations for conserving a part of the county that is rich in farmland, forest land, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty. It is to this area that land preservation efforts are to be focused so that resource conservation goals can be most effectively and cost-efficiently achieved.

The responsibility of local government to provide *stewardship* of the land and resources under its purview is paramount in the plan. The longstanding commitment of the County and the eight municipalities that lie within its borders to direct growth to the towns and their surrounding growth areas, and to maintain the rural landscape beyond these areas, is reinforced with this plan. The chapter on interjurisdictional coordination recommends ways to continue and enhance efforts to manage an approach to development and conservation that is mutually sustainable and beneficial. Additionally, the combined recommendations related to land use, environmental protection, resource management, concurrency management, and public facilities result in a balanced and efficient plan for the county's future.

The plan addresses the vision for plan *implementation* that is multifaceted. The Interjurisdictional Coordination and Community Involvement chapters identify ways in which all property owners and citizens of the stakeholders in the plan can be involved in its ongoing implementation. Existing structures such as the Town/County Agreements and State agency guidance provide effective methods for ensuring that communication continues throughout the life of the plan. Numerous recommendations also are contained in the plan that are aimed at improving the policies, programs, and funding necessary for the plan to be implemented as envisioned.

Relationship to Community Comprehensive Plans

Carroll's eight municipalities and the Freedom area serve as the county's Designated Growth Areas (DGAs). These are the areas in which the majority of planned growth is focused and the majority of public facilities and services are concentrated. The County Master Plan is a countywide comprehensive plan that addresses the unincorporated areas outside of the DGAs. Each municipality develops a comprehensive plan to address future growth and planning-related issues within its DGA.

Municipalities are mandated, and given the authority under Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, to develop a Municipal Growth Element. The Municipal Growth Element must identify municipal annexation areas, which are those areas, not currently within the corporate limits, that the municipality intends to annex at some point in the future. The purpose of identifying these areas is to ensure the municipality is able to adequately plan for future growth and facilities. While counties have no approval authority over annexations, the incorporated areas within the DGAs are shown on the County Master Plan map (also known

as the land use map) to indicate support to the municipalities for the intended future zoning of these municipal annexation areas.

While the policies and recommendations included in the County Master Plan generally apply to all incorporated areas, deference is usually given to the more detailed community comprehensive plan that covers each DGA.