

Mount Airy Environs Community Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 10: Historic/Cultural Resources Goal

Goals

- To protect historical sites and resources within the community
- To promote activities and events that symbolize the atmosphere of the community and are unique to the area
- To protect the historic character of the community through adaptive reuse
- To support infill development that blends with and respects the surrounding built environment

Current Conditions

1 Historic Context

The Town of Mount Airy gained identity and significance due to the western movement of the B&O Railroad and because of its close proximity to the National Pike. The hilly topography of the area is responsible for the name of the town. A railroad foreman who commented, “this is an airish mountain” christened it with its name. The name of the town became Mount Airy and remained so from that point forward. The town was divided between two counties, Carroll and Frederick in 1837, when Carroll County defined its permanent boundaries, and Mount Airy has remained in two counties ever since that year. Just over one mile south of the town is the junction of Carroll, Frederick, Howard, and Montgomery Counties located at the headwaters of the south branch of the Patapsco River.

The town was originally settled in the early 1830’s by a core group of six families. Dorsey, Davis, and Bussard were the most prominent names in that first settlement, which was followed closely by the construction of the B&O railroad lines in 1831. Due to the fact that Mount Airy sits at an elevation of 830 feet, a series of inclined planes were constructed in order for the trains to climb the steep hills. These planes were constructed from June to October in 1831. Passengers had to disembark during this process. Plane #4, several miles west of the town at the intersection of Woodville Road and Maryland Route 144, is still a recognized location today.

This railroad system was updated in 1839 when more powerful locomotives were put into use. When that occurred, a detour around Ridgeville, located directly west of the town center, was created and a spur line went through what is now the Town of Mount Airy. The first resident, Henry Bussard, was named the station agent for the new train station.

More significantly, Mr. Bussard was the first major landowner of Mount Airy. By 1846, the town was sparsely settled with several houses, a store, barbershop, and shoemaker shop. Pine Grove Chapel, now a historic monument, was constructed around 1846 to fill the need for a community church. From the time it was constructed, the chapel basement functioned as a private school. The chapel remained open during the early part of the Civil War despite soldier encampments in close proximity. The school and church were closed later because of distracting

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soldier activity around the vicinity of the school. After the war ended, the church reopened in 1867 after undergoing a renovation. By 1894, Pine Grove Chapel officially formed a seven-member board that presided over the church until the 1930's.

In 1893, the Carroll County Board of Education funded the construction of a three-room schoolhouse. The school was not actually funded until the next year and was completed in September 1894. The building, approximately 1,700 square feet in size, was located on the east side of Main Street, ¼ of a mile south of the railroad tracks. It is now part of the Calvary United Methodist Church property. The school operated from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., much like today's schools.

With the incorporation of the town in 1894 came the establishment of the town government structure, including a mayor and council. The first Mount Airy mayor was Byron S. Dorsey, who served four two-year terms in that office between 1894 and 1904.

In 1900, the town population had grown to 332 residents. By 1910, the town population was 428, and it was determined that the town had enough student population to justify a state accredited high school. A high school with classes was organized but an official high school "building" to house all eleven grades was not built at this time.

Three disastrous fires took place in the town during the first quarter of the 20th century. The first fire occurred in 1902 and destroyed the business section of the southern side of downtown area. The second fire was in 1914 and consumed the north side of the downtown business section. The third fire took place almost twenty years later in 1925 and again the northern side of the downtown business district was destroyed. As a result of the 1925 fire, the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company was organized in 1926.

During the late 1920's and early 1930's, the town continued to grow and provide services despite the onset of the Great Depression. Expanded town services included necessary public utilities such as electric service, an ice factory, and the establishment of the Mount Airy Canning Company. The canning company provided about 250 jobs for the town residents.

During the Great Depression, the town maintained its population due to the existence of the railroad activity. The 1930 census tallied the town population at 845 persons, an increase of 91 people since 1920. The Depression may have affected the national economy, but the town economy was able to expand to include more service-related businesses during that time. The first motion picture theater opened in Mount Airy in 1932. During the 1930's, several large businesses were initiated, such as a large poultry operation, Potomac Edison (providing electric service), and two automobile garages opened establishing a core business district in Mount Airy.

During this time the town also saw the purchase of land for a town park, the opening of a grocery store and a lumberyard, and the dedication of Pine Grove Chapel for use as a nonsectarian chapel.

The start of World War II established the pattern of residents traveling to work in defense plants located within the City of Baltimore. In 1946, the first planned subdivision came into existence in town and included 13 single-family homes. Many service organizations, such as

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Lions, Kiwanis, and the American Legion, were established at the end of the war. In 1949, the local movie theater began to offer Sunday show times for the entertainment of the town residents.

In 1951, the town government purchased the building located at the intersection of Main Street and Park Avenue, originally in order to widen Main Street, but the structure was instead used as the Town Hall for over forty years. The decade of the 50's saw the beginning of a residential and commercial building boom in the town of Mount Airy. In 1953, the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company purchased what is now the carnival grounds located at the intersection of Route 27 and Twin Arch Road.

The decade of the 1960's saw Mount Airy continue to grow into a medium size community, and several important physical changes happened in town. In 1966, the MD 27 bypass was proposed. The Ridgeville area at the south end of the town totaling 263 acres was annexed in 1966 and was considered at that time to be a major addition to the Town boundaries. The town high school was officially closed in 1967.

In the 1970's the Town of Mount Airy built a sewerage system for the town. The annexation of 419 acres in three different tracts occurred, adding a significant area to the town boundaries, and the first shopping center was built. This shopping center is now known as the Mount Airy Shopping Center. A new 66-acre subdivision known as Mount Airy Village West and East was constructed in 1976. The northern end of the town started to experience more residential development due to the construction of the Mount Airy Bypass or MD 27.

During the decade of the 1980's, new residents that were employed outside the two counties began to populate the town and created a need for essential services such as retail centers, restaurants, and recreational opportunities. The local economy had always been in a healthy state, but during the next ten years, a commercial and industrial boom occurred in Mount Airy due to meeting the needs of the growing town population.

Several new institutional buildings were also constructed during the 1980's and 1990's. These were a new library, a senior center, a fire station, and a post office. This increase in the development of public services was a direct response to not only the growth of the town but also the region. ¹

¹ *Town of Mount Airy Master Plan, pp. 5-10.*

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2 Inventory of Identified Historic Structures, Sites, and Districts

Inventory of Historic Structures, Sites, and Districts Mount Airy & Environs 2003

ID Number	Site	ID Number	Site
CARR 37	Parr's Spring / Parr's Ridge	CARR 550*	Unidentified
CARR 78*	Pine Grove Church	CARR 662*	Old National Pike Milestones
CARR 79	Seven Springs Farm	CARR 964*	Mount Airy Historic District
CARR 80	Spring House at Seven Springs	CARR 1087*	Robert Garrett Sanitarium
CARR 81	Watersville Road House	CARR 1100	Mount Olive United Methodist Church
CARR 82	Primitive Baptist Church	CARR 1105*	Warren United Methodist Church
CARR 549*	Ridgeville United Methodist Church	CARR 1106	Watersville United Methodist Church

* within the Mount Airy corporate limits

3 Description of Regional Historical Architectural Styles

At the time of the 1798 Federal Tax List, most original log “cabins” built by the settlers in the region had already been replaced by more sophisticated second-generation log houses. As was typical for the area, floor plans for these structures remained simplistic and functional in nature. However, many of these surviving second-generation structures, and their various additions over time, remain excellent illustrations of the area’s architectural progression. This progress can be shown either in cosmetic enhancement/replacement to existing materials or in later additions to already existing structure.²

The emergence of the popular “T” and “L” plan houses became common in the region from the late 18th Century into the 19th Century. These common floor plans were examples of “national” trends that the Piedmont region was sometimes slow to incorporate into its architecture. Railway expansion in the region throughout the 19th Century had a significant impact on the direction of future architectural design.³

Types of Structures Carroll County 1798				
Building Material	Log	Stone	Brick	Frame
Number Recorded	257	15	10	2

Source: Getty, *Carroll's Heritage*, p. 42.

In addition to affecting the business climate of the area, the railroad ushered in changes to the residential climate by creating greater access to materials outside of the immediate region. This influence was not only seen in urban areas, but in rural as well. As a result of this, greater flexibility occurred in the later half of the 19th Century as trends during this time period departed from the functional architectural traditions of the past and moved toward a more ornate “Victorian” style.⁴

² Getty: *Carroll's Heritage*, pp. 45,47.

³ Getty: *Carroll's Heritage*, p. 97.

⁴ Weeks: *The Building of Westminster in Maryland*, p. 62.

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The changing times were also noticeable in non-residential structures. Sighting the dominant agrarian culture of the region, the various architecture of early outbuildings and barns also help to illustrate the historical characteristics of the region. Nearly all of the barns in early farm settlements were of log construction. With the industrial revolution in the mid-nineteenth century, better equipment, materials, and designs became available. As a result of this, much larger structures with brick, stone, and frame end construction became more prevalent. The most common style of barn in the County was the bank barn, which derived its origins from the Pennsylvania German settlers in the area. Building into the side of a hill was generally done to provide ground level access to the main floor of the barn. Single pen and double pen configurations were common in both the earlier log structures and in later construction.⁵

4 *Description of Historic Preservation Resources*

Many tools exist for the property owner interested in historic building or landscape preservation. Organizations and programs dedicated to providing technical and financial assistance for historic preservation exist at both the state and local level, in the public and private sector. Organizations and programs that can assist property owners in Carroll County are listed below. Additional information on each can be found in the appendix.

Historic Preservation Resources		
Resource Type	Name	Description
<i>Organizations</i>	National Park Service	Chief administrator of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 in concert with the states. Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places and lead agency for Section 106 review. Oversees National Historic Landmark program. Provides some funding to state preservation offices for operating expenses, some of which is passed on to local governments through the Certified Local Government program.
	National Trust for Historic Preservation	National, private non-profit organization. Sponsors the National Main Street Center and a Heritage Tourism program, provides loan and grant programs for historic preservation efforts, and co-sponsors the Barn Again! program to encourage the preservation of barns.
	Maryland Historical Trust	Branch of the Division of Historical and Cultural Programs in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Acts as the State Historic Preservation Office by: conducting historic and archaeological resource surveys and acting as the central repository for these records for all counties in the state; nominating properties to the National Register; carrying out Section 106 review; administering Federal and State preservation grants; reviewing Federal and State tax incentive projects; and, assisting with preservation planning statewide.
	Maryland Environmental Trust	Organization created by the Maryland General Assembly to conserve and protect the state's open space and natural environment. Core program is the conservation easement program. Also administers the Local Land Trust Assistance Program, the "Keep Maryland Beautiful" program, and Rural Historic Village Protection Program.
	Preservation Maryland	Private, non-profit preservation organization that works statewide to preserve historic buildings, districts, and archaeological sites. Provides grants and loans for preservation projects.
	Maryland Historical Society	Private, non-profit organization dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting the state's history. Houses a library and research center as well as permanent and rotating exhibits.
	Historical Society of Carroll County	Private, non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and interpreting the county's past.

⁵ Getty. *Carroll's Heritage*, p. 79.

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Historic Preservation Resources		
Resource Type	Name	Description
Programs	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	Independent Federal agency that advises the President and Congress on historic preservation matters, particularly Federal or Federally-assisted projects that impact National Register properties.
	National Register of Historic Places	A listing of properties and districts significant in American history and culture. Significance is determined by a set of eligibility criteria. Nominations are made through the completion of a standard form submitted to MHT then NPS. Listing is voluntary and non-regulatory, and enables property owners to apply for Federal and State tax benefits, loans and grants for certain preservation work.
	National Historic Landmarks	Program administered by the National Park Service that designates structures of national historical significance. Landmarks are subject to Section 106 Review and may be preserved through Congressional legislation if threatened. Landmarks are automatically entered on the National Register as well.
	Local Historic Districts	One local historic district exists in Carroll County: Uniontown. An Historical Preservation Commission has been established by the County government to establish and enforce design guidelines for this and any future local historic districts in the County so that the historical and architectural qualities of the district are preserved. Standards apply to alterations or demolitions that affect the exterior of the property.
	Section 106 Review	Section of the National Historic Preservation Act that requires Federal agencies to take into consideration the impact of Federal projects on historic properties and to allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation the opportunity to review the projects as well.
	Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit	Allows owners of income-producing property to receive a Federal tax credit equal to 20% of the costs of rehabilitation if it is certified as complying with the Secretary of the Interior's <i>Standards for Rehabilitation</i> . Administered by MHT and NPS.
	Maryland Rehabilitation Tax Credit	Provides tax credits equal to 20% of capital costs for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied or income-producing properties. Work must conform with the Secretary of the Interior's <i>Standards for Rehabilitation</i> and must be certified by MHT, which administers the program.
	Easements	A mechanism by which limitations are placed on development potential or structural alterations through a legal document that remains with the property regardless of ownership. Easements can be held by Federal, state, and local government agencies and private organizations that are tax-exempt, charitable, educational non-profits. The value of the donated easement is tax deductible and some tax benefits also may be realized through a reduced property value due to development restrictions.
	Rural Historic Village Protection Program	A program of the Maryland Environmental Trust. Seeks to protect the historic context of rural villages through the preservation of surrounding landscapes. Utilizes a combination of conservation easement, historic preservation easements, state agricultural easements, and county agricultural districts.
	Certified Local Government	Provides competitive grants for historic sites survey, preservation planning, and heritage education to local governments that have legislation in place to designate and protect historic properties. Certified Local Governments also must have a qualified historic preservation review commission, must create and update an inventory of historic properties, and must allow public participation in local preservation programs.
Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program	Provides matching grants and loans and tax credits to historic or contributing non-historic properties within a Certified Heritage Area. Certification is obtained through MHT and the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. Parts of the Maryland Civil War Heritage Area lie within Carroll County.	
Rural Legacy	Land preservation program administered by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources that seeks to preserve areas rich in agricultural, natural, and cultural resources that will promote resource-based economies, protect green belts and greenways, and maintain the fabric of rural life.	

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Historic Preservation Resources		
Resource Type	Name	Description
	Main Street Program	Downtown revitalization program administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Competitively selected communities receive assistance in improving the economy, appearance and image of their traditional downtown business districts. Based upon the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Approach, which applies a four-point approach to revitalization: organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring.

5 Heritage Tourism

The term heritage tourism refers to tourist activity that is oriented around the visitation of historic and cultural attractions, natural resources, and local dining and lodging establishments that impart a unique, regional experience not duplicated anywhere else. Heritage tourists are in search of the “real” and “authentic” qualities of a place. The heritage tourism market is a lucrative one to pursue since studies have shown that tourists who fit the heritage tourist profile often are more highly educated, older, and wealthier and, as a result tend to spend more per trip, than the average tourist. However, to attract the heritage tourist, a locality must be able to offer them the type of unique and authentic experience they seek. Carroll County is fortunate to have many of the requisite qualities for heritage tourism – quaint and attractive downtowns that have been preserved to a large extent, an array of unique local dining and shopping opportunities, a calendar of events that reflect the region, and beautiful rural scenery. But in order to capitalize upon the potential that exists, a conscious effort must be put forth to retain and attract unique businesses and cultural facilities, preserve the historic fabric of the towns, and protect the rural countryside and way of life.

One effort that currently is underway to do just this is the designation of the Maryland Civil War Heritage Area. This effort seeks to gain certification as a State Heritage Area for portions of Carroll, Frederick, and Washington counties that contain significant Civil War battlefields and other sites related to the conflict. In Carroll County, these sites primarily relate to troop movement through the area prior to and just after the Battle of Gettysburg. The County’s portion of the heritage area includes the corridors (defined as 500 feet from the centerline) of most of the major roadways. All of the incorporated municipalities contain at least one of these routes and, therefore, lie partially within the heritage area. Properties within certified heritage areas are eligible for grants for planning, design, interpretation, marketing, and programming in support of the Heritage Area Management Plan objectives. Additionally, Target Investment Zones (TIZs) have been identified as part of this process. TIZs are areas towards which substantial amounts of funding are to be directed as a result of their having concentrations of heritage resources and visitor services. In Carroll County, three TIZs have been identified: Taneytown, Westminster, and Sykesville. Properties within the TIZs are eligible for additional grants and loans for capital projects and economic development projects, as well as state income tax credits for the rehabilitation of certified heritage structures.

Presently, the Maryland Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan is in the final stages of completion. It is expected that the plan will be presented to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority for approval in Summer 2004.

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Analysis of Community Needs

1 Historically Sensitive Design

A number of local historians have spent a great deal of time identifying past uses of properties and various historic structures throughout the county. The general consensus from the community is to preserve these structures through appropriate reuse and preservation; however, resources and community preservation activities have not been established. A portion of the downtown in Mount Airy is designated as a Historic District at both the county and state level. The Town itself has debated preservation goals and preservation-oriented visions in the past, but has yet to enact any local legislation in order to regulate the defined area.

Many, if not all of the designated local sites have no protection or encouragement for preservation of the history and heritage they represent. Some of these structures may eventually disappear without preservation activities within the community. Additionally, not all members of the community are aware of the importance of preserving historic resources or the availability of funds and programs to assist with these efforts.

New development demonstrates very little sensitivity to the existing landscape and its architecture. In the past, County regulations have placed little emphasis on the protection of existing structures, natural topography, and local scenery at the time of development, thus allowing larger footprints on properties than may actually be necessary.

2 Promoting Historical Heritage

Heritage tourism is a perfect fit with Carroll County. The County's charming yet vibrant Main Street towns and its relatively unspoiled rural areas make it a natural destination for tourists seeking the "authentic" small-town America experience. However, the resources needed to truly promote the County and to develop quality visitor services and cultural attractions are not directed to this effort. The County's participation in the Maryland Civil War Heritage Area is a good opportunity to begin building a heritage tourism effort, and presents a gateway to tap into the additional funding sources and cooperative marketing and development opportunities that heritage tourism can offer.

Recommended Actions

Based on Town Plan recommendations with additional County recommendations in bold.

- Employ all available tools to protect and enhance the Town's cultural and historic resources and structures.
- **Incorporate existing farmhouses, barns, and other significant structures into future development wherever possible.**

Many older homes and structures exist throughout the County in undeveloped rural and suburban areas. Often times, when a property develops, these structures are razed. The County should take steps throughout the development process to preserve historically

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significant structures, either as a functional part of new development or as an amenity, wherever possible.

- **Consider additional social/cultural events within the immediate area.**

Many participants throughout the plan update process stressed a desire to maintain the rural atmosphere or small town flavor of the area. One of the ways to help create a sense of community is through local social or cultural events. The Town of Mount Airy already has festivals in the spring and the fall. The area should seek other opportunities for community building either through recreational leagues or homeowners associations, etc.

Fiscal Implications

The recommendations contained in this plan may be policy-oriented or action-oriented, and their implications may be the responsibility of the County, other public agencies, private landowners and developers, or a combination of these. This section is designed to identify the potential fiscal impacts to the County of each of the recommendations. There could be “No Fiscal Impact” meaning the County would not incur direct or predictable expenses as a result of implementing the recommendation, an “Undetermined Impact”. Meaning there likely would be a cost associated with implementing the recommendations, but that cost can not be determined at this time for various reasons, or a “Fiscal Impact,” which likely would be incurred by the County if the recommendation were implemented. For recommendations that have an identified fiscal impact, the cost of implementing that recommendation is estimated to the best degree possible.

- **Employ all available tools to protect and enhance the Town’s cultural and historic resources and structures.**

No Fiscal Impact

- **Incorporate existing farmhouses, barns, and other significant structures into future development wherever possible.**

No Fiscal Impact

- **Consider additional social/cultural events within the immediate area.**

Undetermined Fiscal Impact

Anticipated CIP Projects

No CIP projects are anticipated.

Maps

Historic & Cultural Resources