

Rural Villages:

Boundaries & Villages Designated as Priority Funding Areas

Background

Historically, Carroll County was primarily an agricultural area in the Piedmont region of Maryland. Over time, villages, towns and cities were established as centers for trade, educational and cultural activities. Many were located along major transportation routes, primarily roads and railroad lines. To date, eight towns in Carroll County have incorporated under the provisions of state law. These towns have an elected Mayor and Council and are a local level of government providing numerous municipal services such as police protection, public water and sewer, parks and recreation facilities, trash removal, etc. The incorporated towns range in population from 1,003 people in the Town of Union Bridge to 15,770 people in the City of Westminster.

Since the adoption of the first Carroll County Master Plan in 1964, these eight incorporated towns have been recognized as being at the heart of existing and planned growth in the County. A community planning area surrounds each of the eight towns to form the planned growth area. The remainder of the



County is planned to remain rural in nature, where agriculture will continue to be the primary use of land. However, numerous villages had formed since the 1700's to also serve the agricultural community on a smaller scale. These villages generally were a concentration of residences and local businesses located on relatively small lots, grouped close together, surrounded by farms. Some villages flourished in the past and then disappeared such as Tannery and Medford. Others have continued relatively unchanged, and others have slowly grown and expanded.

Smart Growth

The 1997 General Assembly adopted several specific programs, which together form the Smart Growth initiatives. The Act designates specific Priority Funding Areas throughout Maryland, including municipalities, land inside the Baltimore Beltway, the Maryland portion of land within the Capital Beltway, and enterprise zones. Counties may also 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. 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. In addition, areas eligible for county designation are existing communities and are areas where industrial or other economic

development is desired. Counties may also designate areas planned for new residential communities which will be served by water and sewer systems and meet density standards, and Rural Villages that are designated in the County Comprehensive Plan as of July 1, 1998. As of October 1, 1998, the State will direct funding for growth-related projects to Priority Funding Areas.

Smart Growth also establishes a Rural Legacy program to preserve sensitive rural areas and to help jurisdictions purchase agricultural land easements, a brown-fields 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.

Carroll County Master Plan

In 1996, Carroll County began a major effort to develop the first comprehensive update to the 1964 Carroll County Master Plan. One of the Goals of the updated Master Plan is

To preserve the County's historic, cultural, scenic, and architectural heritage.

One of the strategies to accomplish this goal is

E. Designate, and adopt as part of the County Master Plan by July 1, 1998, Rural Villages to be recognized as Priority Funding Areas to meet requirements of Smart Growth.

Methodology for Review and Nomination

The review of the County to identify potential rural villages began in the summer of 1997. A student intern began the process by studying maps of the County and gathering information from planners and other sources such as the Health Department. Based on the guidelines established in the State law, the list of names was narrowed down. A field visit was then made to each potential village. A description of the village was made, and extensive photographs were taken.

The project was then turned over to a comprehensive planner to define the boundaries of each village. Using aerial photographs and tax records available in the office, a preliminary boundary was determined for each village. Consideration was given to the present County zoning, the presence of Agricultural Land Preservation easements and districts, roads, railroads, existing uses of land, and

known planned uses. Another visit was made to each village to further refine the boundary line and to confirm the land use description. The boundary of each village reflects the conditions that contribute to the make-up of the village in 1998.

The factors used to identify Rural Villages for designation includes:

- The village is unincorporated.
- The village is primarily residential.
- The village may include historic structures.
- The village is an older community with a high potential for water/sewer problems.
- The village is in a rural or agricultural area.
- The village is not within a designated growth area.
- The village boundary only recognizes new growth that would come primarily from in-fill development or limited peripheral expansion.

Designation of Rural Villages

The Carroll County Master Plan recognizes the existence and importance of rural villages in the history and future of the County. In order to plan for and meet the future needs of these existing

communities, the first step of formal recognition must be taken. The following Villages meet the above-referenced criteria and are designated as a Rural Village on the Carroll County Master Plan.

Rural Villages

