

02 Planning Framework and Background

This Plan presents a new structure and organization of the Comprehensive Plan document to provide a clearer framework for its implementation. This chapter provides an overview of the Plan's structure, including vision statements, themes, goals, policies, and action items. The framework of the Plan introduces General Plan Components and mapping that will illustrate community growth areas, green infrastructure, and the agricultural lands.

Further supporting the framework for planning in the County is a description of the County's context in the larger metropolitan region and a summary of the background trends that will influence growth and development in the County over the next 25 years. This chapter concludes with a vision for the County that sets the stage for the story of how Frederick County will meet the future challenges.

	Amendment Status
Goals, Policies, Action Items	04/08/2010
Maps and Graphics	04/08/2010
Background Information	04/08/2010

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

The organization of this Plan departs from the traditional list of comprehensive plan elements (environmental features, community facilities, transportation, and land use) that typically define the individual chapters of a plan. Both the format of this Plan as well as the injection of new and revised planning concepts has established this Plan as a new benchmark rather than merely updating the previous 1998 Countywide Plan.

The format of this Plan is organized around nine themes that serve several purposes. The nine themes provide an opportunity to focus on significant aspects of the County that have, in previous plans, been given very little attention and have been buried within traditional plan elements. A second purpose of the themes is to create a more dynamic Plan document where the individual themes can stand alone in terms of page numbering to facilitate periodic amendments. The first page of each theme includes an Amendment Status block that will be used to document subsequent amendments to the goals/policies/action items, maps, and/or background information for that theme. This will also facilitate the insertion of new theme/chapters in response to either new state requirements or as otherwise identified by the County.

Each theme has a list of goals, policies, and action items that have a numbering reference using letters (G – goal, P – policy, A – action item) and numbers preceded by an abbreviation for each theme. In this way each goal, policy, and action item will have a unique reference that will

facilitate their implementation and allow for subsequent amendments to a theme. The following references for each theme will be used:

- NR – Conserving our Natural Resources and Green Infrastructure
- HP – Protecting and Preserving our Heritage
- AG – Preserving our Agricultural and Rural Communities
- TR – Providing Transportation Choices
- SC – Serving our Citizens
- PU – Public Utilities
- HO – Housing
- ED – Supporting a Diversified Economy
- WR – Assessing our Water Resources
- DW – Drinking Water
- WW – Wastewater
- SW – Stormwater
- MG – Managing our Growth
- CP – Community and Corridor Plans

Another departure from the organization of previous County comprehensive plans is the elimination of the reference to a Volume I (Countywide Comprehensive Plan) and a Volume II (Region Plans), which has been used by the County since its 1984 Plan update. For the detailed land use plan mapping, this Plan includes a countywide land use plan map that consolidates what has been previously identified within eight separate region plans. This update further proposes a Community and Corridors Planning process that will allow subsequent updates to the land use plan to be focused on individual community growth areas or corridors within a community growth area. In addition, as each municipality updates their respective comprehensive plans the County would update and amend this Plan to maintain consistency.

PLAN STRUCTURE

This Plan includes several components that define the structure of the Plan starting at a broad, general perspective and leading to the specific. The following components are organized in a way to provide more defined guidance for elected officials, the County's appointed boards and commissions, and staff in their review and decision making processes. This structure should also aid in illustrating to the general public the direction and focus of the County for the next 20 years.

Vision Statement

The purpose of the Vision statement for this Plan will focus not so much on the desired end state for the County but on how we can achieve the desired end state. Following the description of the County's regional context and background is a very broad vision statement that sets the stage for the more detailed vision statements within each theme.

Themes

While providing for the structure of the Plan as chapter headings, the themes also serve as very broad goal statements. Generally, these themes incorporate the goals from the 1998 Plan that have been carried forward since the County's 1972 Plan.

Goals

Each theme will have a list of supporting goals. While some of these goals are derived from the objectives and policies in the 1998 Plan, many are new. A goal can be defined, as a broad desired result, a general direction for action, or a desired future state or condition.

Policies

Also organized for each theme are policies. The 1998 Plan had an extensive list of policies, some of which are included in this Plan and some have been listed more appropriately either as goals or action items. A policy may be defined as a strategy or a means for achieving the goal.

Action Items

The final and most specific part of the Plan are Action Items that can also be described as an objective in that they identify a specific key result that is measurable or achievable. The responsibility and accountability for achieving an Action Items can also be assigned to a particular agency or division of the County. The Action Items will be the primary means for implementing the Plan and will define specific projects and work program tasks to be carried out following adoption of the Plan.

GENERAL PLAN COMPONENTS

A new mapping component of this Plan illustrates three general plan components as a way to provide a general version of the traditional land use plan map. This map clearly defines the community growth areas and in particular differentiates the municipal growth areas from the unincorporated growth areas controlled by the County. Also illustrated is the relationship between Community Growth Areas, Priority Preservation Areas and the Green Infrastructure.

AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES PLAN

This component seeks to emphasize the importance of agriculture and the general rural character of the County that is not necessarily in agricultural use. Too often comprehensive plans identify agricultural areas as whatever is left over after the growth areas have been designated. The features of this component include:

- Agricultural/Rural Areas – This encompasses a broad area of the County including active agricultural uses, fallow lands, and scattered residences that have been developed from larger farm parcels.
- Priority Preservation Areas – There are five (5) areas delineated in the County. The focus of these areas is to create larger contiguous areas of preservation easements that also protect the significant prime agricultural soils.
- Rural Communities – These are cross road communities located throughout the Agricultural/Rural area and have historically supported the surrounding agricultural community. Where appropriate some of these communities may experience limited growth in the context of supporting the local agricultural community.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

This component focuses on the County's network of natural resources and protected lands. It focuses on both natural resource protection including the identification of gaps in the network or hubs and corridors and as a way to identify linkages within and connecting the community growth areas. These linkages may accommodate opportunities for recreational use including pathways.

- Natural Resource Areas – Delineates the primary environmental features including the mountain areas (encompasses forestland and steep slopes) and major stream corridors.
- Parks and Protected Lands – Highlights the state and federal parks and the County's regional parks. Other protected lands include municipal watershed properties and Sugarloaf Mountain, which is privately owned.

COMMUNITY PLAN

This component continues to implement the basic structure of the County's Community Concept first described in the County's 1972 Comprehensive Plan. The Community Concept described a hierarchy of communities, regional, district, and rural that was defined by a number of parameters including population, residential density, intensity of commercial and employment uses, and level of community facilities. The Community Concept also supports the following:

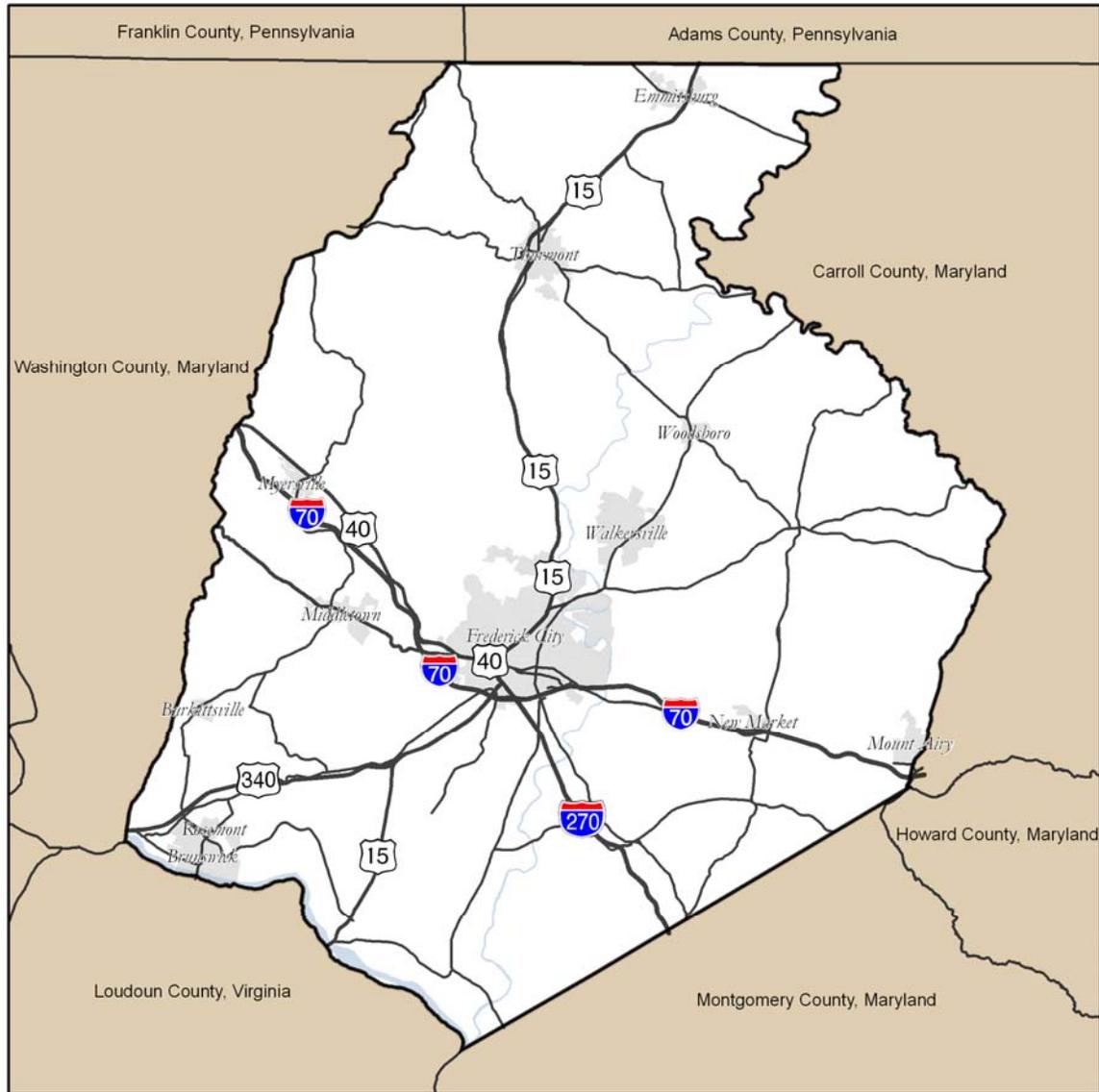
- Encourages compact growth areas to preserve agricultural lands and allow for more efficient provision of community facilities.
- Support the ability to maintain distinct and identifiable communities.

The new Community Concept that supports a framework for this Plan will continue to carry on the strategies of encouraging compact growth areas and supporting identifiable communities. The primary change from the original Community Concept is the focus on a broader definition of Community Growth Areas (CGA's) rather than a strict hierarchical structure.

- Municipal Growth Areas – Most of the County's municipalities continue to provide a logical location for managed growth both within their existing municipal borders and in surrounding lands for future annexation. The General Plan highlights the existing municipal boundary and the future growth area that would be controlled by the municipality through the annexation process. The limits of a Municipal Growth Area (MGA) on the County Plan may be different from a growth area identified on a respective municipal plan. The MGA's in the County Plan represent those areas the County has recognized as appropriate for future growth given the limitations and constraints on County public facilities and services during the timeframe of the comprehensive plan.
- Unincorporated Growth Area – There are several existing communities under the County's jurisdiction that have served as a foundation for growth. These communities have a historic "downtown" core, schools, and water/sewer infrastructure to support additional growth. Several of the unincorporated growth areas delineate newer communities, which are focused on an older historic core.

FREDERICK COUNTY AT A GLANCE

Map 02-1: Frederick County at a Glance



<i>Land Area</i> 424,960 acres or 664 sq. mi.	<i>Population Density</i> 354 persons per square mile	<i>Av. Household Size</i> 2.72 persons per household	<i>Municipalities</i> 2 Cities, 9 towns, 1 village
<i>Population</i> 235,364 (Jan. 2010)	<i>Existing Dwellings</i> Approx. 88,006 (Jan. 2010)	<i>Existing Jobs</i> 122,162 (2005)	<i>Municipal Population</i> 95,497 (Jan. 2010)

REGIONAL CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

An example of the transitions taking place in Frederick County is the incorporation of the County into the Washington metropolitan region's economic and cultural community. Frederick County, once securely located in the agricultural economy and political alliances of Western Maryland, is now more closely linked than ever before to the employment centers and housing markets of the Washington metropolitan region.

These linkages have also contributed to Frederick County's establishment as an employment center in its own right. Understanding the future of Frederick County can only occur with understanding the direction and magnitude of growth taking place in the Washington metropolitan region. With Frederick's location just 50 miles from downtown Washington D.C. the employment and population growth occurring within the region has and will continue to directly influence growth and development within the County.

The following background information provides historical, current, and projected data for some of the significant growth indicators for the County. This information will also help to illustrate the affects of the Washington region on Frederick County.

EMPLOYMENT

The Washington metropolitan region has been one of the most dynamic regions in the country in terms of job growth. The continuing influence of the federal government and the spinoff of consultants and contractors that prefer to locate in proximity to the federal agencies will result in continued job growth for the region and Frederick County.

- Frederick County continues to maintain strong job growth, which is influenced by its proximity to the Washington metropolitan area.
- Since 2003 Frederick County's job growth has increased an average of 3% per year or about 2,522 new jobs per year.
- Fort Detrick with approximately 7,900 jobs (includes military and civilian agencies/jobs) is the County's largest employer. With Base Realignment and Consolidation (BRAC) and the biodefense campus Fort Detrick is expected to add approximately 1,400 jobs.
- In the private sector, the industries that experienced the greatest job growth since 2003 were: Professional and Business Services (31%), Leisure and Hospitality (17%), and Education and Health Services (17%).
- The County's current policy is to maintain a minimum jobs-to-housing ratio of 1.2:1. Even with a projected decline in this ratio through 2030 it will still exceed the current policy ratio.

Figure 02-1: Employment and Jobs to Housing Ratio

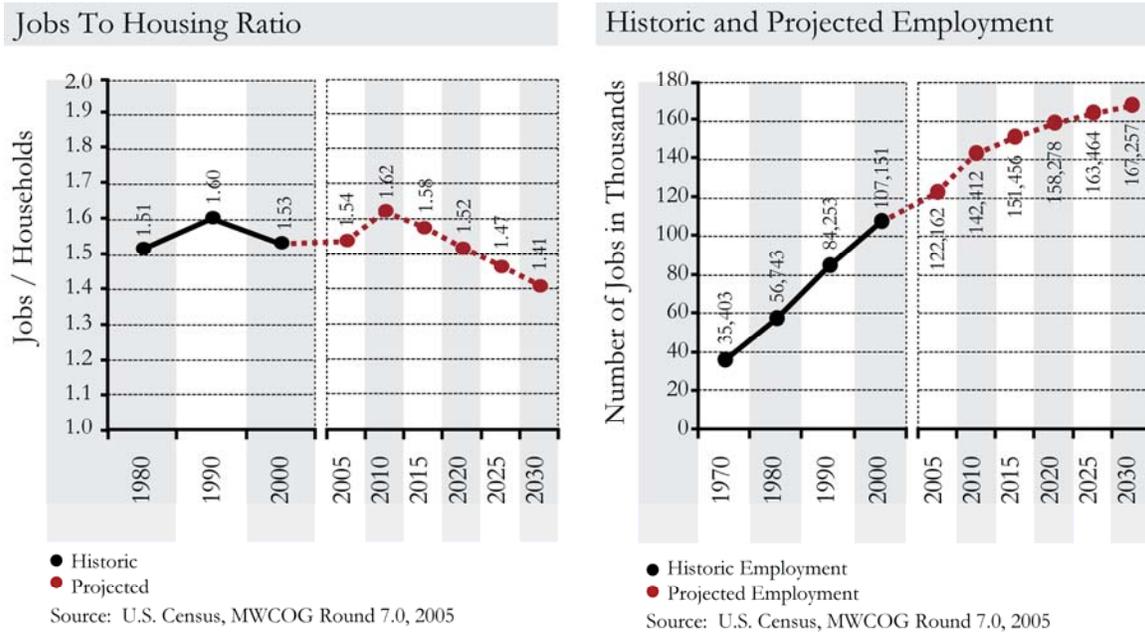
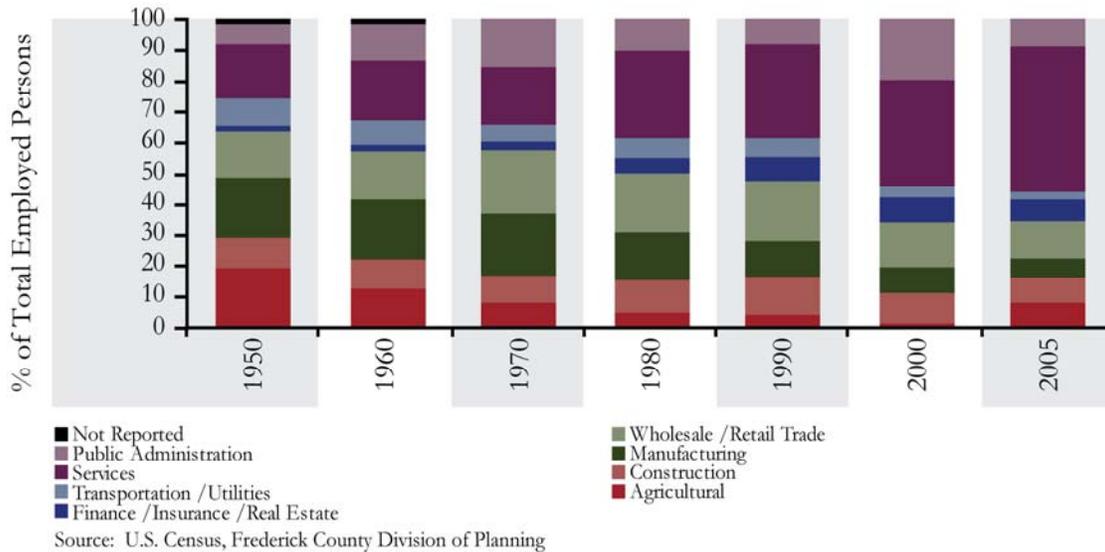


Figure 02-2: Employment by Sector



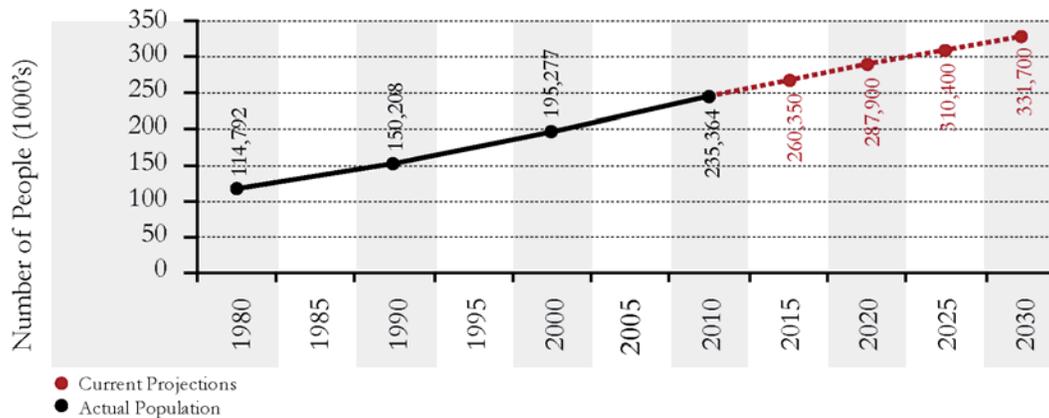
POPULATION

Fueled by the region's economic growth will be continued population and housing construction growth especially in the region's outer suburbs, which includes Frederick County. On a percentage basis the outer suburbs will experience higher rates of population growth than the central and inner jurisdictions.

Actual and Projected Population

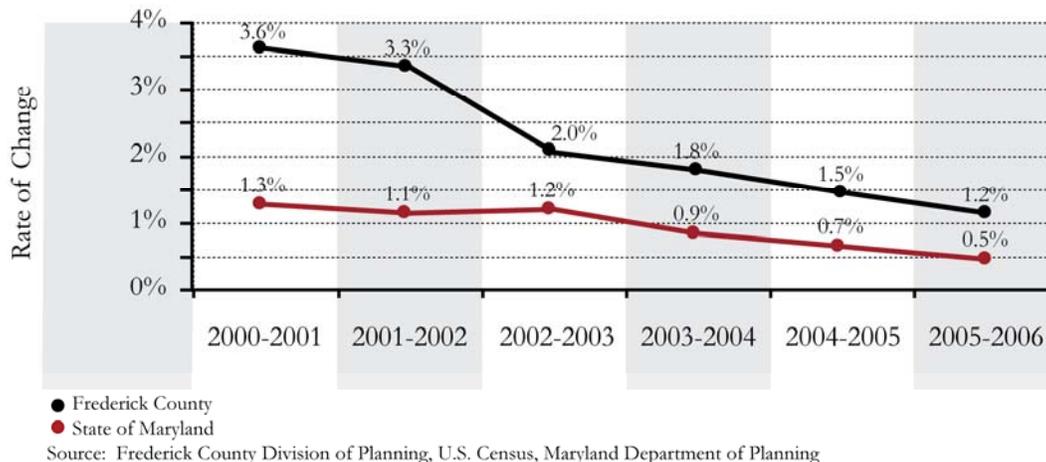
- Since 2000 the County's population has increased an average of 4,240 people/year.
- For the 25-year period from 1980-2005 the population increased by 106,084 and for the next 25 years to 2030 is projected to grow by approximately 93,500 people.
- In 1990, the population projection for 2010 was 243,600 people. This is on track with current trends. However, the projected rate of population growth in the current population projections has increased, resulting in a higher population number in 2020 of 287,900 than was projected in 1990, which were 267,100.

Figure 02-3: Historic and Projected Population



Source: U.S. Census, Frederick County Planning, Maryland Department of Planning, January 2010

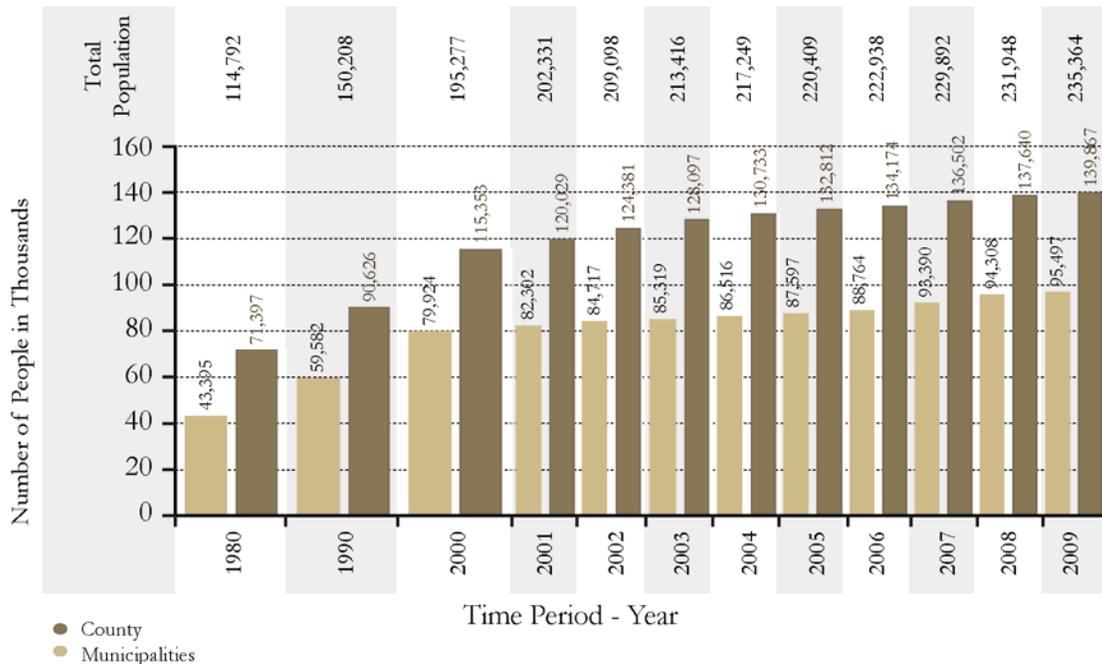
Figure 02-4: Annual Rate of Population Change



Municipal/County Distribution of Population

The percentage of the County’s population within all of the municipalities increased from 38% in 1980 to almost 42% in 2000. However, since 2000 the proportion of the population within the municipalities decreased slightly to 40% by 2009.

Figure 02-5: County Versus Municipal Population

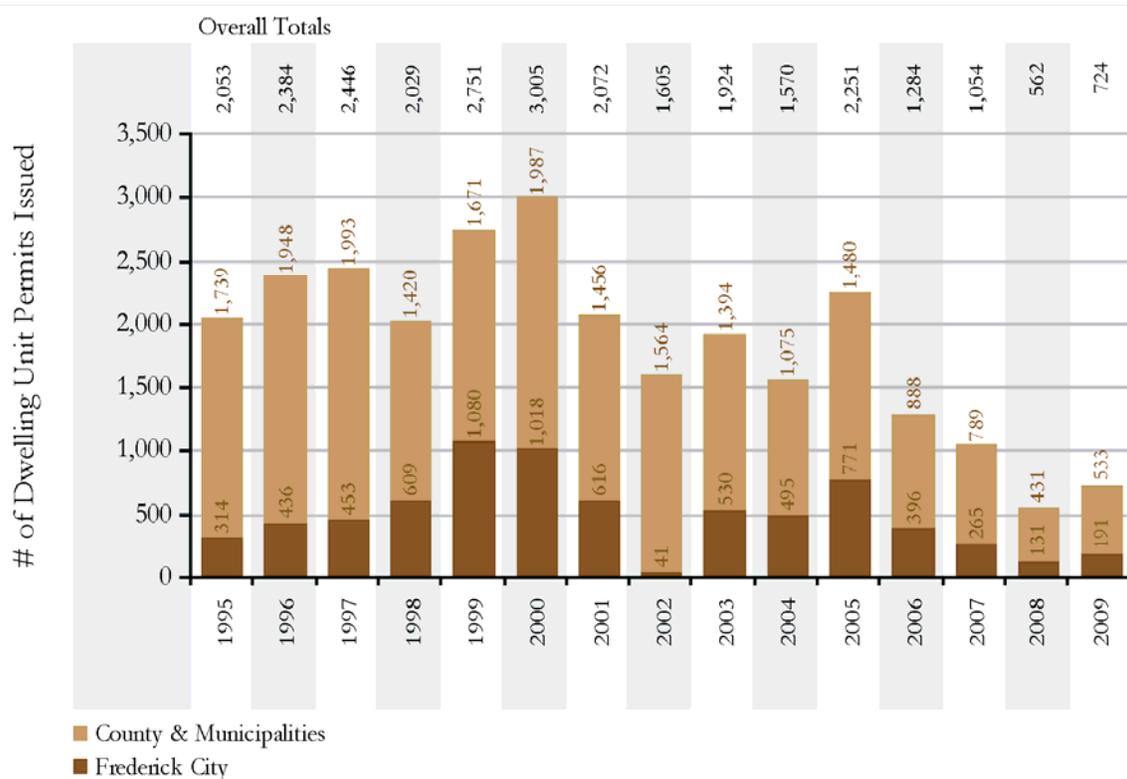


Source: Frederick County Planning, Jan. 2010

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

- Since 2000 the County has averaged approximately 1,700 new dwellings per year. This is a decline from an annual average of 2,000 dwellings/year during the 1990’s.
- Since 2005, housing construction has further declined significantly, averaging 970 dwellings/year. In 2008 the 562 permits is the lowest number of permits issued since the 1960’s. In 2009, the 724 dwelling units maintained a trend that continues to be significantly below historical averages, although higher than 2008 totals.
- Some of the continuing decline in housing construction since 2005 is attributable to residential market conditions that are expected to continue perhaps through 2010.
- The predominant housing type constructed in the County continues to be single-family detached. Historically, 60% of all new dwellings constructed were single-family detached.
- The projected trend for the near future reveals that the relative amount of single family detached dwellings will decline, resulting in an estimated housing mix of 50% single family detached dwellings, 30% townhouse and duplex dwellings, and 20% multi-family dwellings for new construction.

Figure 02-6: Total Dwellings Permitted



Source: Frederick County Division of Planning - Dwelling Unit Breakdown Permit Reports

Residential Development Pipeline

The following information describes how many residential lots/dwelling units have already received some level of development approval but are not yet built. These lots/dwellings units are commonly referred to as the “pipeline”. The pipeline data captures residential developments approved under the County’s jurisdiction as well as by the municipalities.

- Under the County’s jurisdiction the pipeline includes any lot created for residential use including those zoned Agricultural and Resource Conservation in addition to developments zoned residential, Planned Unit Development (PUD), or Mixed Use Development (MXD).
- Pipeline data is also provided for the municipalities with a breakdown between the portions of the pipeline just within the City of Frederick compared to the other eleven municipalities.
- The 17,550 lots/dwellings in the traditional pipeline could accommodate the County’s residential growth for approximately 12 - 15 years based on a construction rate of 1,200 - 1,500 dwellings/year. The pipeline figures in Table 02-1 are based changes to community growth areas from this Plan.
- Municipalities account for nearly 43% of the County's total residential pipeline.

Table 02-1: Residential Development Pipeline Summary – December 2009

Jurisdiction	Traditional Pipeline	Recorded Lots / Dwellings Available	Unrecorded Pass APFO	Pending APFO ¹
City of Frederick	5,296	1,078	4,218	0
Other Municipalities	2,245	274	1,880	91
Subtotal Municipalities	7,541	1,352	6,098	91
Subtotal County	10,009	2,756	4,274	2,979
Total	17,550	4,108	10,372	3,070

Source: Frederick County Planning, City of Frederick Planning as of December 2009.
 Municipalities with APFO's include: Frederick, Thurmont, Brunswick, Walkersville, Mt. Airy, and Myersville
 Note: Frederick City data not available for detailed breakdown, County data based on BOCC 2009 Draft Zoning which may affect current development status for certain properties in any prior pipeline development list.

TRANSPORTATION

Frederick County’s location at the junction of four primary highways, US 340, US 15, I-70, and I-270 has facilitated commuting to jobs in the inner jurisdictions and has also burdened the County with the increasing commuting from Pennsylvania and points west of Frederick.

Commuting to Work

Of Frederick’s 102,318 resident workforce (as of 2000), 42,046 (41%) worked outside of the County. This is a slight increase from 40% in 1990. Of these 42,046 out-commuters over half (22,867) worked in Montgomery County.

For the approximately 84,731 jobs in Frederick County 29% (24,459) are filled by in-commuters who reside outside of the County. The greatest source of in-commuters is Washington County with 7,150 followed by Montgomery County with 4,104, and Pennsylvania with 3,978.

With Frederick County’s location at the junction of two interstates, I-70 and I-270 and two primary highways, US 15 and US 340 it bears the brunt of the increasing amount of commuting between the western and northern jurisdictions and points east of Frederick. The following table and maps highlight the level of commuting specifically from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Washington County, Maryland.

The predominant mode of travel to work continues to be the automobile with a lone driver. The percentage of Frederick’s workers driving alone increased from 73% in 1990 to 79% in 2006. Workers using alternative means of commuting including carpooling, transit, walking, and bicycling continues to decline from 23% to 17%.

Table 02-2: Frederick County Transportation Characteristics

Working Population	1990	2000	2006
Total Population	150,208	195,277	228,364
Total Population 16 or Older	114,419	147,144	173,622
Total Commuters ¹	80,850	102,318	118,660

Means of Transportation to Work	Percent of Total Working Population		
Car, Truck, or Van (drove alone)	72.9%	79.3%	79.1%
Car, Truck, or Van (carpooled)	17.1%	12.4%	12.6%
Worked at Home	3.6%	4.0%	3.5%
Walked	3.6%	2.4%	1.9%
Public Transportation ²	2.0%	1.4%	1.6%
Other Means (inc. bicycle)	0.8%	0.6%	1.2%

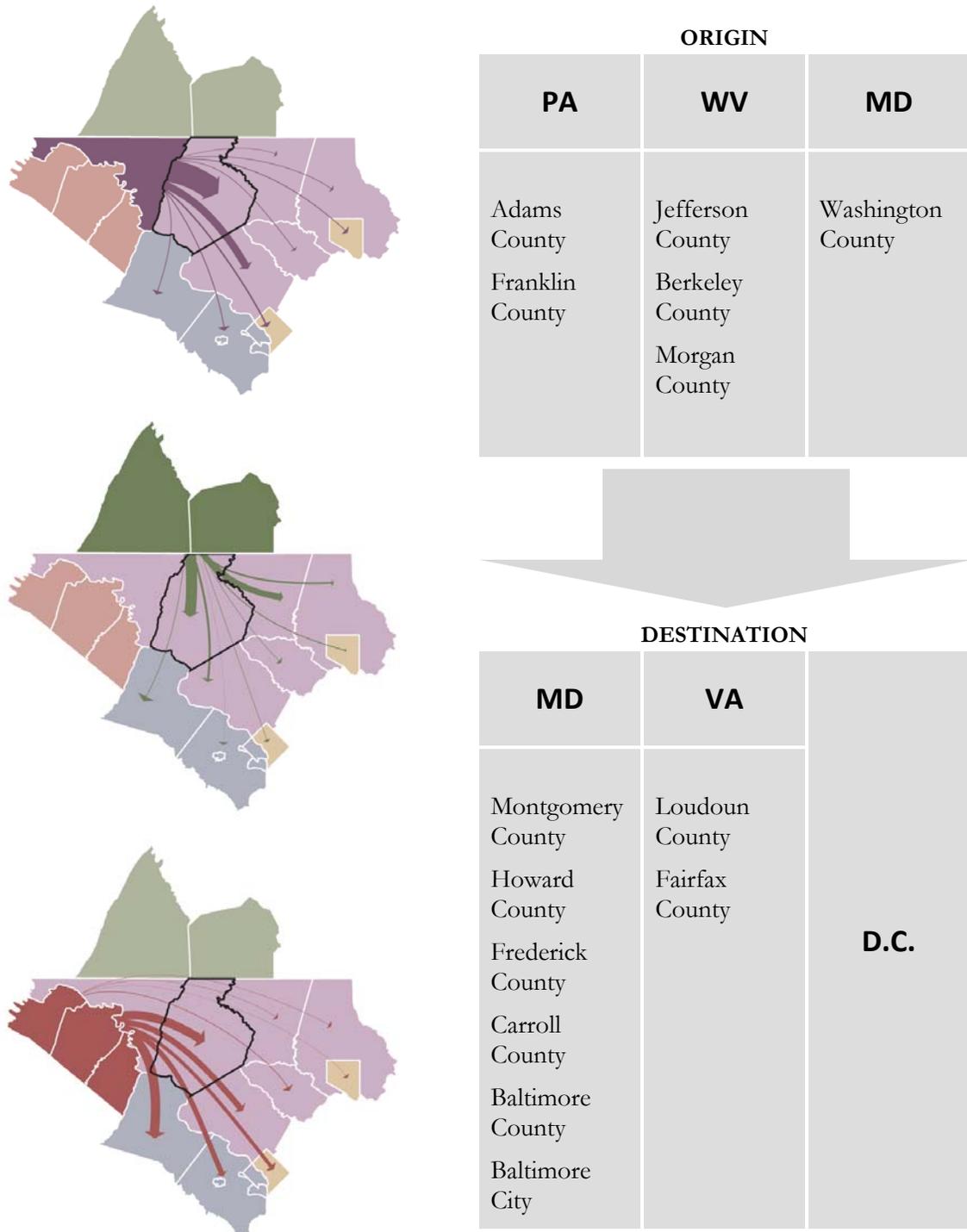
Number of Vehicles Per Household	Percent of Total Households		
No Vehicle	5.7%	5.0%	4.3%
1 Vehicle	24.5%	25.2%	26.6%
2 Vehicles	42.6%	43.5%	41.1%
3 or more Vehicles	27.2%	26.4%	28.0%

Mean Travel Time to Work (minutes)	27.3	31.9	33.8
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Source: US Census 1990 & 2000, American Community Survey 2006

(1) Workers greater than 16 years old (2) Excluding taxicab

Figure 02-7: Commuting Patterns Through Frederick from Surrounding Counties



A VISION FOR FREDERICK COUNTY

The Frederick County that will greet the citizens and leaders of this community in twenty or fifty years is being shaped *today*. In the decades to follow, our community will continue to adapt itself to the ever-changing forces of nature, culture, and commerce, much as it has in decades past. The spirit of Frederick County – influenced by its own history and by the dynamic forces from its proximity to Washington – remains firmly seated in this unique place, unspoiled by outside influences, but always willing to embrace and incorporate change that serves the greater community. Above all, tomorrow's Frederick County will be a recognizable and distinct *place* in a nation of indistinct communities. Returning from a lengthy voyage, a workday commute, or a walk around the neighborhood, tomorrow's Frederick County citizen will never doubt that they have arrived *home*.

ONE COMMUNITY, MANY PLACES

In a world of communities united by heritage, profession, economic status, or knowledge, Frederick County residents share a common interest through the oldest of these community bonds – geography. The Frederick community is defined by its physical location and in this way its residents share common advantages, common interests, and common challenges. The County's many places - rural villages and towns, historic neighborhoods, farms, mountains and rivers, and institutions – each contribute to the vitality and identity of this community and provide structure and value in our lives. This vision of Frederick County sees these many places not as *escapes* from the challenges that face us, but as potential *solutions* as we grapple with maintaining our heritage, natural resources, and foremost our identity as a community.