

Thurmont Master Plan

A Community Vision for 2010 and Beyond

Adopted by the Thurmont Board of Commissioners – December 20, 2010

Prepared by the Thurmont Planning & Zoning Commission

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Planning Framework

Introduction

The purpose of a master plan is twofold. First, a plan is an *articulation of community values* as identified by its citizens and elected officials. These values are expressed through the goals and policies identified under each of the elements of the plan. Secondly, the plan provides *guidance for decision-making* by Town officials when reviewing development plans, rezoning requests, annexations, and the planning for community facilities.

Although the Thurmont Master Plan looks at a time frame of approximately 20 years in considering the location, type, and amount of development planned for the community, the document is by no means limited in its approach to defining and guiding longer term goals or policies. This Master Plan addresses several elements including municipal growth and land use, the environment, transportation, water resources, community facilities and infrastructure, and, finally, plan implementation. A second component of the Master planning process – a comprehensive rezoning of Thurmont that allows individual property owners and the Town to initiate changes to the existing zoning designations – provides the opportunity for the community to update the ordinance that serves as its primary land use tool. By establishing consistency between the policies, goals and strategies of the Master Plan and the lines drawn upon the zoning map, Thurmont can most effectively realize its long range land use vision.

County and State Plans

The Town of Thurmont does not undertake its long range planning in a vacuum. Frederick County exercises its planning function by adopting a countywide Comprehensive Plan that establishes the framework for long-range land use planning. Additionally, the County conducts periodic comprehensive land use plan updates for each of its eight planning regions. An update of the northernmost county planning region – the Thurmont Region – began in the Fall of 2006 and was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in July 2008. In 2009, the County finalized an update of its Countywide Comprehensive Plan which included a review of the areas surrounding Thurmont.

The State of Maryland has taken an active and progressive role in land use planning beginning with the *Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992* that provides statewide guidance for development in an effort to curb sprawling development patterns, protect Maryland's natural resources, and encourage economic growth. *The Planning Act* requires local governments to incorporate and implement Twelve Visions through the Master Plan:

- ◆ 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;
- ◆ Public Participation: citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals;

- ◆ Growth areas: growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers;
- ◆ 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;
- ◆ Infrastructure: growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner;
- ◆ 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;
- ◆ Housing: a range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes;
- ◆ 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;
- ◆ 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;
- ◆ Resource conservation: waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved;
- ◆ Stewardship: government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection; and,
- ◆ 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.

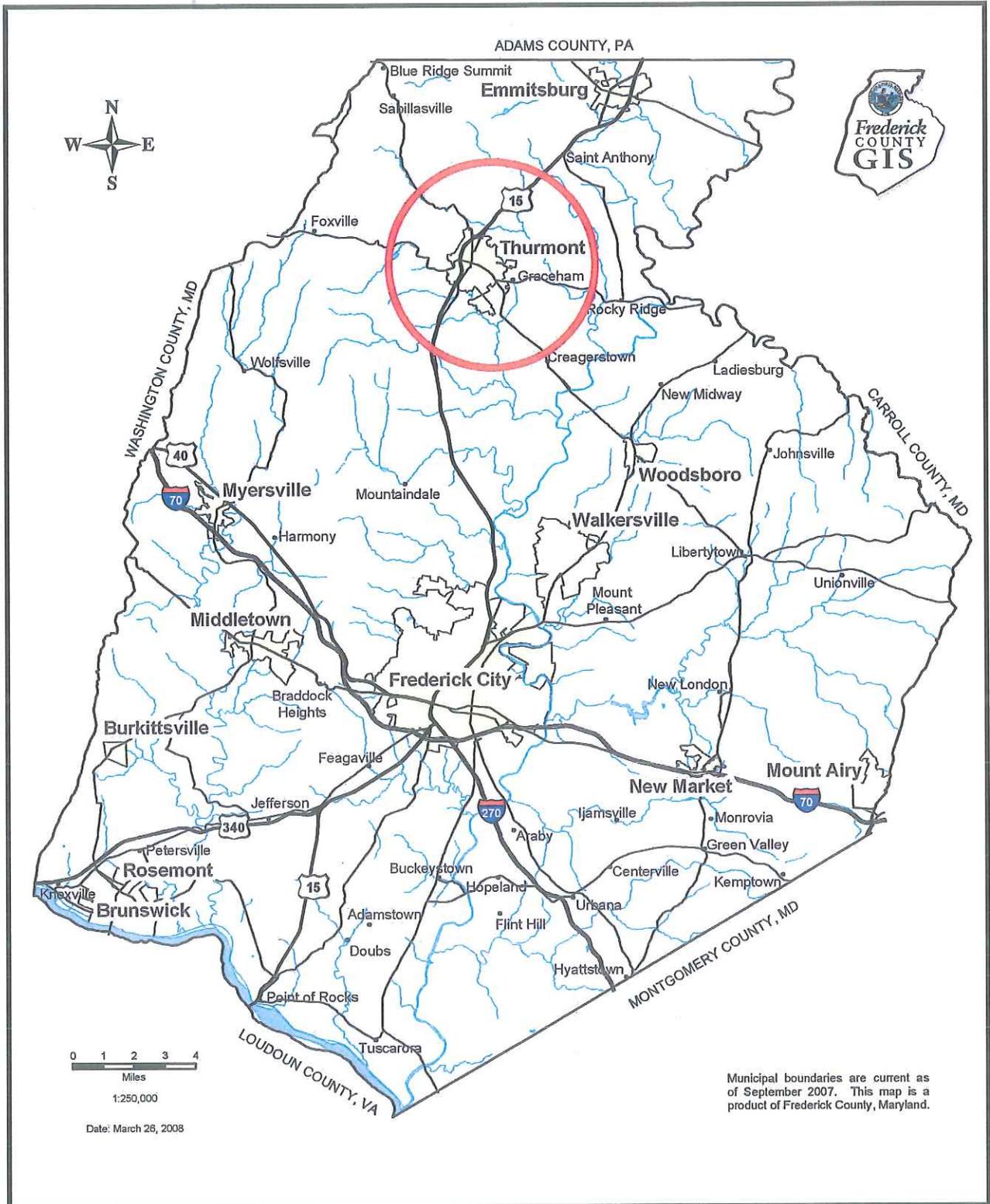
In addition, the Planning Act requires that jurisdictions update their master plans every six years and that those plans include a Sensitive Areas Element that documents the location of floodplains, steep slopes, and the habitat of endangered plants and animals.

In 1997, Maryland adopted the Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth legislation that included initiatives to focus new development into Priority Funding Areas (PFA's). Primary goals of this legislation were to preserve rural lands and maximize the use of public funds for infrastructure improvements. By focusing its funding for schools, roads, and water and sewer infrastructure in PFA's – areas designated in each county and municipality - the State of Maryland created a fiscal 'carrot and stick' approach to applying Smart Growth principles to land planning at the local level.

The most recent effort by the State to manage growth and development resulted in substantial

changes to planning and zoning enabling laws including:

- ◆ Changes to procedures for municipal annexation of land (changes to the “5-year rule”)
- ◆ Requirement for the submission of an ‘annexation plan’ with annexation requests – and the requirement that this plan be consistent with the jurisdiction’s “Municipal Growth Element”
- ◆ Municipalities such as Thurmont will be required to adopt two new elements (chapters) to their Comprehensive Plans including the previously mentioned “Municipal Growth Element” and a “Water Resources Plan Element”
- ◆ Planning for “streams, wetlands and their buffers” and "agricultural and forest lands intended for resource protection or conservation" must be included in the Sensitive Areas Element of Comprehensive Plans.



Regional Context Thurmont, Maryland

Countywide Comprehensive Plan

In the 1972 countywide *Frederick County Comprehensive Plan*, the Community Concept was introduced as a way to identify appropriate growth areas throughout the County. The Community Concept results in the identification of a hierarchy of communities that are defined by the planned population size, the scope of community infrastructure, and the type and density of residential, commercial, and industrial development. This idea was refined in the 1984, 1990, and 1998 countywide *Comprehensive Plan* updates. The Community Concept provides a method for focusing residential, commercial, and industrial development into compact growth areas in an effort to minimize suburban sprawl. These growth areas include most of the municipalities in Frederick County. Through the use of this planning device, existing communities will be able to continue to function as focal points for social, cultural, and commercial activity in the County strengthening their senses of place for both old and new residents. In addition to receiving most of the new growth and development in the County, the communities identified as growth areas will also receive much of the investment needed to create or improve community facilities and infrastructure.

Other Plans and Designations

Since the 1998 Thurmont Master Plan, several plans have been adopted - and various designations received and supported - which could influence the character of the town and provide guidelines for development, redevelopment, preservation, land use, and transportation as well as providing mechanisms for obtaining grants and enhancing tourism. These include:

- ◆ Designation of Thurmont as a Maryland Main Street community
- ◆ Designation of the Maryland section of US 15 by the state and federal government as the US 15 Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway and adoption by the county in April, 2004 of the US 15 *Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*.
- ◆ Certification by the state of certain areas of Carroll, Frederick, and Washington Counties, including Thurmont as the *Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area* and including adoption by the Town and County of the *Management Plan* for this Heritage Area.
- ◆ County and Town support of *The Journey Through Hallowed Ground* Project developed by the National Trust, National Register of Historic Places, etc. to promote preservation and tourism for the US 15 corridor from Gettysburg, PA to Monticello, VA.

Maryland Main Street Community Designation

The designation in 2006 of Thurmont as a Maryland Main Street Community enables the community to take advantage of state Community Development Block Grants, Community Legacy Funding, Local Government Infrastructure Financing Program, and other grant programs for community revitalization, infrastructure improvement and economic development. The Main Street designation applies to the downtown area of Thurmont and is expected to be key to coordinating the revitalization of this central area of the town. To support and facilitate this

effort, the Town encourages the use of the Maryland Building Rehabilitation Code for the restoration and rehabilitation of existing structures in this area in lieu of the building codes typically utilized for new construction.

Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway Plan

The Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway Plan was adopted by the County on May 18, 2004 to encourage and coordinate tourism along US 15 including a Thurmont loop and promote an awareness of the value of preserving those features of the byway that support this tourism. The plan contains no regulations (other than a prohibition against additional billboards) or land use requirements, but rather encourages the sensitive application of existing land use and zoning laws in concert with programs of incentives and conservation mechanisms to preserve the intrinsic qualities of the byway. These include utilization of existing agricultural preservation programs, rural legacy programs, forest conservation programs, the county register of historic places, Frederick County's Community Design Guidelines and Development principles, and establishment of conservation easement programs. The plan proposes giving lands adjacent to the byway priority in the implementation of these programs. The plan contains specific suggestions concerning development along the byway and these will be considered in future Thurmont land use decisions that could affect the byway.

Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan

In March of 2006, the Thurmont Board of Commissioners resolved to amend the Thurmont Master Plan to incorporate the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan (HCWHA plan). The HCWHA plan's primary emphasis is the coordination and development of the region's resources to encourage and support heritage tourism throughout the area. In addition, it encourages preservation of those very heritage resources on which the success of attracting tourism depends. While the emphasis is on preservation of the Civil War battlefields in the area, the plan also promotes preservation of view-sheds from scenic byways including US 15 and MD 77 as well as preservation of the historic fabric of the towns in the HCWHA through suggestions for assuring that development is sensitive to the character of the landscape and encouraging historic preservation and re-use/rehabilitation of historic structures. This update of the Town's long-range plan, when adopted by the Mayor and Board of Commissioners, incorporates by reference those portions of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan that are applicable to the Town of Thurmont as part of the Thurmont Master Plan. Furthermore, adoption of this Master Plan update indicates the continuing support of the HCWHA by the residents and business owners in the Town of Thurmont.

Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership

Through their support of the Byway and Heritage Area programs described above, the Thurmont Board of Commissioners demonstrated their participation in the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership. The Partnership was created to raise the national awareness of the unparalleled history of the Old Carolina Road corridor along US15/231 from Gettysburg, PA to Monticello, VA to celebrate and preserve the natural, historical, and scenic beauty of the region. The Partnership is working with the governmental jurisdictions in the corridor to develop a common vision for the conservation and enhancement of these resources, facilitating the creation

of National Scenic Byway and National Heritage Area designations for the corridor, and creating a heritage tourism program. This vision will be promoted through the Byway and Heritage Area designations and plans described above.

Maryland's Main Streets Scenic Byway

The Maryland's Main Streets Scenic Byway passes through Thurmont via MD 77 (Main Street). Given the amount of potential infill and new development along this corridor, this Scenic Byway should continue to provide a regional context for any design guidelines and community character standards the Town might wish to implement. Thurmont's eastern and western gateways are located along this corridor. As such, future development within the Town at these gateway locations should be reviewed within the context of this Byway, considering recommendations during the site plan or subdivision approval process that bolster both the Byway and the 'front doors' to our community.



Thurmont History

The Thurmont area was first settled in the late eighteenth century by German immigrants who found the forests, fertile soils, and plentiful water ideal characteristics for establishing a new community. The village center was laid out sometime around 1803 by the Creager family centered around the intersection of the main north-south and east-west routes (MD 806 and MD 77 respectively). The Wellers, a family of German immigrants, were also influential in the early development of the village which soon became known as Mechanicstown due to the number of blacksmiths and mechanics who worked in the area. Mechanicstown supported a number of industries including an edge tool factory, a woolen mill, tanneries, and a match factory – America’s first to produce friction matches. Mechanicstown was incorporated as a municipality in 1832.

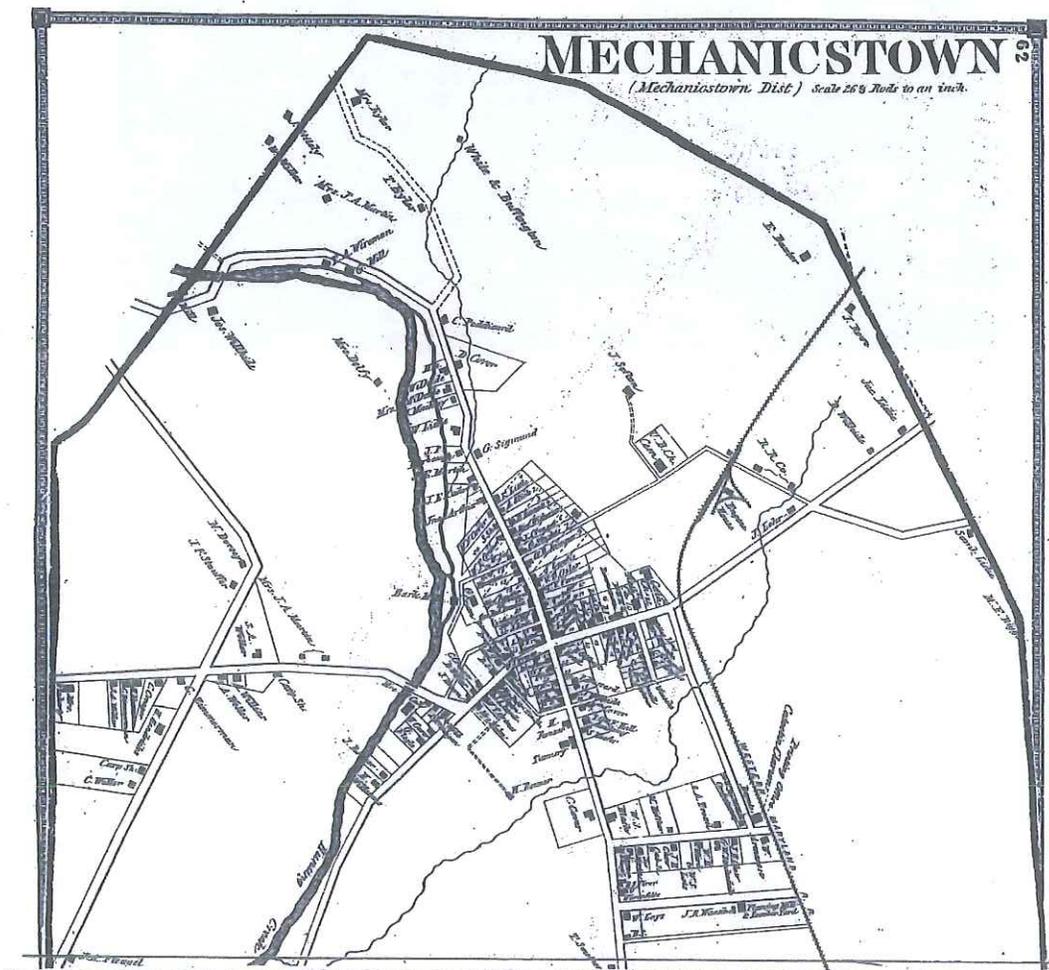


Figure 1- 1873 Map of Mechanicstown, soon to be renamed, 'Thurmont'

In 1871, the Western Maryland Railroad came to town and with it came an infusion of industries

and associated development. These new industries included a cannery, a weaving factory, and manufacturer of cigars. The railroad also brought summer visitors from Baltimore who stayed at the several hotels and inns built in town.



Figure 2 Thurmont's last trolley...and America's last interurban service

In 1894, the name Mechanicstown was officially changed to Thurmont – a combination of French and Germanic word fragments roughly translated as “through the mountains”. This name change came about as the result of confusion between several places in America called Mechanicstown, Mechanicsville, and Mechanicsburg. Although the moniker ‘Blue Mountain City’ was the first choice among residents at the time, the local postmaster vetoed the choice due to its length. Another major influence on Thurmont’s growth and development was the construction of the Hagerstown and Frederick (H&F) Railroad – an electric trolley line providing freight and passenger service to Hagerstown, Frederick, Myersville, and Middletown. The line operated its last train in 1954. Although neither railroad station remains standing, the right-of-way for the H&F railroad forms the basis of a new and developing transportation asset in Thurmont. The Thurmont Trolley Trail – a multi-use facility – connects the downtown area with the new regional library on Moser Road.



Figure 3 The Western Maryland Railroad served Thurmont into the 1970's

Since the end of the Second World War, Thurmont has become less of an agricultural center and more of a commercial and residential center within northern Frederick County. Although Thurmont's role as an agricultural center has declined since the late 1940's, the Town maintains a strong link to the farming community as evidenced by the growth and popularity of the annual Thurmont/Emmitsburg Community Show, the seasonal Farmer's Market, and a strong Future Farmers of America (FFA) program in the local schools. The Town continues to support several mid-sized industries situated along the railroad and, due to its proximity to State and Federal parklands, also supports tourism activity linked to outdoor recreation. As the closest full-service community to the nearby presidential retreat known as Camp David, the Town of Thurmont also occasionally finds itself serving as the staging point for national or international events - as well as for the media outlets that follow such activities closely.





Existing Conditions & Trends

Population Growth

Over the past four decades, the rate of population growth has increased steadily in Thurmont, though not at all evenly or consistently during that time period. Looking at the entire period from 1970 to 2010, the total population of Thurmont increased by 172%. If growth over the next several years continues to occur at an annual rate of 1.8% - a rate consistent with growth since 2000 – Thurmont’s population will be three times what it was in 1970 within six years. Table 1 illustrates Thurmont’s population growth since 1970 and offers a projection of future growth using a simple measuring stick – that is, starting in 1970, *how long did it take for Thurmont’s population to increase by 50%?*

Table 1

Population Growth and Projections Thurmont's Projected Rate of Growth			
Town of Thurmont			
Year	Population	Total Percent Increase	Number of Years Needed for a 50% Increase in Population
1970	2,359	50%	21 years
1991	3,539		
1991	3,539	50%	8 years
1999	5,308		
1999	5,308	50%	21 years (with population growth rate of 1.8%/yr.)
2020	7,953		
1999	5,308	50%	27 years (with a residential development rate of 35 homes/yr.)
2026	7,962		

Sources: Census 2000, Thurmont Master Plans (1998, 1988, 1974), Thurmont Region Plan (July 2008), and Frederick County Division of Planning

It wasn't until 1991 that the Town's population numbered 3,539 – an increase of 1,180 people or 50% in twenty-one years. Table 1 further shows that in the eight years between 1991 and 1999, the Town's population once again increased by 50% - this time an increase of 1,769 people. The growth rate experienced in the 1990's - the result of a significant peak in housing construction during 1992 and 1993 - did not continue into the 2000's and indeed slowed to a rate more consistent with that of the 1970's and 1980's. Although new residential development in Thurmont has nearly come to a halt over the past three years (2007 - 2010), since 1999, the Town's annual growth rate has averaged approximately 2.1%. This translated into approximately 120 new residents – or 44 new dwelling units – over that same period.

Table 1 also provides an indication of how the current growth rate may affect Thurmont's population in future years. Having grown by fifty percent in only eight years during the 1990's, a logical question arises over the length of time that it would take to once again grow by fifty percent. If Thurmont continues the trend of fairly modest growth that it has experienced in three of the last four decades (1.8%), it will have taken approximately 21 years, 1999 to 2020, to reach a population of 7,953. Successful implementation of the growth management policies described later in this plan would allow a growth rate of about 25 to 35 dwelling units per year – a rate consistent with the responses of citizens in the 2006 Thurmont Master Plan survey. Using the higher number in that range – 35 new homes per year – Table 1 demonstrates that it will have taken 27 years - 1999 to 2026 - for the Town's population to increase again by fifty percent.

Table 2

Population Growth and Projections					
Town of Thurmont					
Years	Population Increase (persons)	Total Percent Increase	Average Annual Percent Increase	Number of Households (at end of time period)	Population (at end of time period)
1970-1980	575	24%	2.2%	1,100	2,934
1980-1990	464	16%	1.5%	1,328	3,398
1990-2000	2,190	64%	4.9%	2,119	5,588
2000-2010	831	15%	1.8%	2,386	6,437
<i>2010-2030 (Projected by Trend Analysis)</i>	<i>2,754</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>1.8%</i>	<i>3,410</i>	<i>9,173</i>
<i>2010-2030 (Buildout of 35 DU's/year)</i>	<i>1,882</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>1.3%</i>	<i>3,086</i>	<i>8,301</i>

Sources: Census 2000, Thurmont Master Plans (1998, 1988, 1974), Thurmont Region Plan (July 2008), Frederick County Division of Planning

Table 2 illustrates population growth in Thurmont over the past four decades showing the growth both in terms of the number of people and the number of households. Two projections in the table demonstrate possible growth scenarios over the life of this Master Plan. Using the average annual growth rate of 1.8% that has prevailed in the past nine years, the Town’s population would increase 43% by the year 2028. Applying the maximum growth rate discussed in this plan’s *Growth Strategy* of 35 dwelling units per year, Thurmont’s population would increase by 29% during that same time period to 8,301 residents – an increase not unlike that experienced during the late 1960’s and 1970’s. (see “Municipal Growth and Land Use”)

Development Activity

From 1988 to 2007, there was an average of 61 new dwellings/year constructed in Thurmont. However, a spike in building activity in 1992 and 1993 skews the annual average significantly and is not indicative of a long-term trend. With those two years taken out of the equation, Thurmont’s annual average settles to approximately 54 new dwellings per year. Considering only the years after 1998 - the year the Master Plan was last updated - the average drops to 48 dwellings/year. (see Table 3). The dearth of residential construction activity since the emergence of this latest economic recession in 2007-2008 reflects county, state and national trends and is largely ignored for the purposes of developing future residential growth trends.

Table 3

Housing Units Constructed 1988 - 2007																					
Town of Thurmont																					
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Housing Units Built	43	45	83	58	102	142	65	48	73	80	57	72	53	48	53	96	19	55	10	23	1,225
Residential Lots Recorded	32	18	105	47	99	68	39	54	89	44	81	47	33	27	62	15	15	15	5	5	900

Sources: Town of Thurmont Zoning Inspector Reports, Thurmont Master Plans (1998, 1988), Thurmont Region Plan (FcPc Draft 2008), Frederick Co. Planning Division

The building activity data indicate that:

- ◆ At the rate of 54 new dwellings per year – a rate considered too high by two-thirds of the respondents in the 2006 planning survey - Thurmont’s population would double its current size in 45 years
- ◆ Given the relatively small size of Thurmont, large scale development or redevelopment of residential subdivisions will provide sharp statistical spikes in the Town’s building activity as has happened previously in 1992, 1993 and 2003

- ◆ Likewise, the statistical effect of the years 2008-2010 on residential building activity would result in a statistical ‘void’ that would skew the predicted level of activity once economic conditions improve

- ◆ Setting a goal of developing no more than 35 new dwellings per year, as outlined in the Town’s *Growth Strategy*, would reduce the current annual growth rate by one third

Residential

Since 1999, most of the building activity in Thurmont has centered around completing construction on the remaining recorded lots in subdivisions approved in the 1990’s and early 2000’s. The Jermae Estates subdivision on Moser Road on the Town’s southern edge, constituted the majority of new development activity in the past 5 years. This age-restricted community, adjacent to the Maple Run Golf Course, remained the last significant source of recorded and buildable lots in Thurmont. The potential number of lots/dwelling units in all currently approved subdivisions is referred to as the ‘pipeline development’. By the Summer of 2009, the Town’s pipeline development numbered less than a half dozen lots/dwellings. The overall trend in recent years – including the period from 2000-2007 prior to the current general economic downturn - has been a gradual decline in the pipeline development as a result of fewer new subdivisions being proposed or approved. While the adoption of Thurmont’s Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) in 1995 (with subsequent revisions through 2003), has kept new residential subdivision development from being approved until adequate infrastructure is in place, the most significant limiting factor on residential development in the town has been the Maryland Department of the Environment’s Consent Order by which Thurmont is severely limited in its ability to issue new housing permits.

While the housing composition in Thurmont changed slightly beginning in 1988 with an increase in the construction of townhouse and multi-family units, the dominant new dwelling unit type remains the single family detached home. Citizens responding to the planning survey in 2006 indicated preferences for future housing types in Thurmont:

- ◆ Three-quarters of respondents indicated a need for affordable starter homes
- ◆ 62% expressed the need for ‘step-up’ homes for growing families
- ◆ 70% indicated the need for homes for ‘empty-nesters’ and independent seniors
- ◆ Three-quarters expressed a need for assisted living or long-term care residences in Town

With the economic vitality of the metropolitan Washington region continuing to apply pressure on the housing supply in Montgomery County and lower Frederick County, it is very likely that future residential development proposals will include a mix of unit types beyond the single-family detached home that has been the mainstay of housing development in Thurmont and in much of the County. The costs to develop and market homes will most certainly increase as growth management controls and environmental regulations make it increasingly difficult to develop residential dwellings in outlying areas that are dependent upon private well and septic systems. Thurmont’s continuing interest in attracting high-quality mixed-use development will also make it more likely that the next residential developments will include at least some attached or multi-family dwellings.

Commercial

While a majority of the new development in Thurmont has been residential there have also been a number of commercial and industrial projects developed since 1998. Much of the commercial activity has taken place around the US 15/MD 806 interchange at the southern end of town. Construction has included a small shopping center, a bank, a supermarket, and the expansion of several existing businesses. The former bowling alley on Frederick Road has recently been converted to office/laboratory space. The downtown area has remained relatively unchanged with the exception of a new drug store/pharmacy and the redevelopment of the former Jubilee building – both located on North Church Street. The establishment of the Mixed Use Village (MXV) zoning districts in 2009 – and the mapping of those districts with the adoption of the new Town Zoning Map – will allow for some additional commercial services and small scale retail uses to develop outside of the highway-oriented General Business district thus opening up new opportunities for home-grown employment.

Institutional

Within the past five years, Thurmont has seen the re-construction of its fire and ambulance companies, an expansion of its primary school, and the development of a new police station and regional library.

Industrial

Industrial activity since 1998 has been limited to expansions of existing uses including NVR Homes and Structural Systems (former Claire Frock building and site), both located adjacent to the railroad on the eastern side of the rail corridor as it crosses the municipal boundary. In 2009, Structural Systems vacated its site and the buildings remain vacant.

Annexations and Rezoning

Since 1998, 250 acres have been annexed into the Town of Thurmont. A majority of the annexations, 72.6 acres, were zoned to residential categories. The remaining lands were annexed as industrial land for: the expansion of NVR Homes; the expansion of East End Park, Jermae Estates/Maple Run Golf Course, and the Thurmont Boulevard (extended) area north of the Town's wastewater treatment plant.

Three applications for annexation were received by Thurmont in September 2006. Of those three applications, one – the HKB Myers lands – has been acted upon by the Town and has been denied. That proposal called for 400,000 square feet of commercial/retail/office space and nearly 400 homes located north of the current town boundary and straddling US 15. The remaining annexation applicants proposed residential-only developments which, combined, would have added over 700 new homes on 245 acres in Thurmont on the town's eastern and southern edges. Neither proposal has moved forward due to general economic conditions.

In 2009, Thurmont annexed the land that is home to its wastewater treatment plant adjacent to the former H&F rail right-of-way south of its intersection with Moser Road. That small parcel is zoned A-1, Agriculture.

Since 1998, only one application for re-zoning has been approved by the Town – a two acre site rezoned from Agricultural to General Business for an Allegheny Power facility at Moser Road and Thurmont Boulevard.



Community Character

Thurmont Residents Speak....

"Keep the small town atmosphere."

"Keep it a small town."

"I love the hometown atmosphere of Thurmont and each year that feeling goes away a little more."

"I have always held the small country town of Thurmont near and dear to my heart...that is why I chose to move back here to raise my son.....Let's keep the small town charm so our children can share it with their children..."

"It's important to keep the small town atmosphere but also not to abandon growth – growth should be selective and reasonable."

"Let's build up and refurbish downtown..."

"I would work on town beautification...Get back to the architectural details and the classic looks of a time before..."

"Keep the town the size it is now and work on enhancing and improving what is here already."

"Thurmont needs to expand in new directions and bring new and different types of businesses into the town."

"I'd like to change the perception that things need to change. Thurmont's greatest value is that it is still a small town in an area with fewer and fewer small towns."

"Thurmont may not be perfect, but to me and my family, it's the next place to heaven on earth."

- A selection of quotes from Thurmont's Master Plan Citizen Survey (January 2006)

Public Outreach

The Thurmont Planning and Zoning Commission began the Master Plan process by reaching out to the citizens of Thurmont in November 2005 with the distribution of citizen questionnaires to every household. The community response was excellent – nearly one-third of the households (just under 700) responded to the survey. While the survey responses provide a simple ‘snapshot’ of community opinion on a variety of issues facing the town, the true value of the survey emerges as the plan is developed. Citizen comments, both in the survey and in later planning workshops conducted in the Spring of 2006, helped not only to shape the answers articulated in the Master Plan, but the questions as well.

A brief summary of survey results:

- Most respondents considered Thurmont’s small town atmosphere (86%) and natural surroundings (63%) its most important characteristics
- Residents were split regarding how the Town should encourage the rehabilitation or redevelopment of buildings, feeling that regulations, tax benefits, and grant/loan assistance were equally important to pursue
- Two-thirds of respondents indicated that Thurmont should adopt *modest* historic preservation guidelines while 84% were in favor of a ‘demolition by neglect’ ordinance
- Over 60% of respondents felt that the average rate of residential building – about 54 homes per year – was too high. One-third felt that it was “just right”
- Affordable starter homes, ‘step-up’ family homes, and homes for empty nesters all ranked high on the list of housing types respondents felt should be constructed in Thurmont. Assisted living and long-term care housing also ranked highly in the survey
- Nearly 80% of respondents indicated that the Town should encourage mixed land use development
- Two-thirds of respondents indicated support for a growth boundary line beyond which new Town growth should not be allowed to occur
- Citizens felt strongly that the Town should encourage economic development efforts such as medical services, small independently owned shops, nurseries & farmstands, artisan and craftsman businesses, and restaurants. Heavy industry, warehousing, taverns, and shopping malls/plazas were not highly regarded in the survey
- Two-thirds of respondents felt that the Zoning Ordinance should hold developers to a higher standard than is currently required, yet less than one-third felt it necessary to broaden the scope of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance
- 82% of respondents supported completion of the Hagerstown & Frederick (H&F) Trolley Trail. Most agreed that new development should include sidewalks and trails and that gaps in the current system should be filled
- Respondents were evenly split on whether existing town roads and streets were sufficient to handle existing traffic however 36% felt it appropriate to expand the road network to accommodate and support economic development efforts
- The three highest priority recreational facilities in need of improvement or expansion

were the trolley trail, a swimming pool, and the existing playing fields.

- Of the citizens who responded to the survey, most had lived in Thurmont for over ten years (57%), most worked outside of Thurmont (53%), and a clear majority (83%) rated Thurmont as a good place to live

Please see the *Background* section of this plan for a more detailed analysis of survey results.

Community Workshops

In addition to the Citizen Survey, the Planning & Zoning Commission sponsored three Community Planning Workshops to solicit input on the Master Plan update.

Brainstorming Workshop

This exercise provided an opportunity for residents to identify key issues facing the Town. Attendees identified twenty-three issues of import:

1. Lack of Town Vision
2. Major Retail – Conflicts
3. Traffic – Truck Activity
4. Environmental Impact of Development
5. Annexation
6. Municipal Growth Boundary
7. Establishing Greenbelt – Ultimate Municipal Growth Boundary
8. Downtown Revitalization, including historic preservation
9. Downtown redevelopment first
10. Infrastructure
 - a. maintenance and improvement
 - b. water and sewer
11. Damage from commercial traffic
12. US 15 – Needs more focus
 - a. Local use
 - b. Corridor impacts
13. Town Character – impacts of change
14. Tourism -
 - a. Local events
 - b. History
 - c. Agricultural
15. Development impacts on water supply

16. Traffic Safety
17. How to maintain balance
 - a. town character / natural environment
 - b. growth / change
18. On-going citizen participation
19. Local business – health and viability
20. Does change and growth require physical expansion
21. Town Identity
22. Housing density
23. Open space preservation within Thurmont

Four smaller, breakout groups assembled during the workshop and deliberated on their vision for the future of Thurmont. The results in summary:

Group 1 – Thurmont should remain a small town with controlled residential growth, a full and active downtown, greater historic preservation, and improved traffic controls.

Group 2 – Thurmont should emerge as a healthy, safe, and thriving village set in a rural landscape which has maintained its historic and family-friendly qualities. Important aspects would include common sense mixed use zoning, a vital downtown with emphasis on historic preservation, a strong sense of community, preserving its natural surroundings, and having safe roads and traffic patterns.

Group 3 – Thurmont should be a well-planned, scenic, historic, environmentally-sound bedroom community.

Group 4 - Thurmont should emerge as the Gateway to the Catoctins and as a preeminent Maryland tourist destination with a revitalized town center, a clear vision for development, and with architecture/design in harmony with nature and the town plan.

Goal Setting Workshop

The exercises conducted at this workshop provided an opportunity for groups of residents to set specific goals for the town in the areas of Economic Character, Growth and Land Use, and Town Services and Infrastructure. A summary of key goals identified:

Economic Character

- encourage the development of Thurmont’s downtown area for local and sub-regional shops and services while encouraging appropriate specialty shops that cater to visitors and do not detract from Thurmont’s small town character
- focus town energies and resources on developing office, research, and light industrial employment uses
- develop an economic strategy built upon Thurmont’s position as a cultural, natural, and historical heritage epicenter of the region
- seek to retain and attract employers providing sustainable jobs to residents

Growth and Land Use

- develop and enhance Thurmont as a regional cultural heritage center
- concentrate new development and redevelop within the town boundaries
- re-evaluate existing land use plan and municipal growth boundary to have greater control over new development and concentrate growth within the town

Town Services and Infrastructure

- all town facilities should support the level of existing needs prior to any expansion of the town's boundaries
- upgrade existing roads and traffic patterns
- improve stormwater management systems
- maintain, expand, and improve Thurmont's water and sewer systems
- maintain and improve existing systems serving existing development base. expand only those areas that provide for the efficient expansion of Thurmont's infrastructure
- use regional library as a base to build Thurmont as a regional cultural center

Mapping Workshop

This exercise provided an opportunity for residents to outline a proposed Growth Boundary for the Town of Thurmont as well as to determine appropriate land uses if desired. The map on the following page (*Figure 4*) is a composite image illustrating the ideas of several groups participating in the workshop. Each colored line on the map represents the growth boundary as drawn by a small group (3-6 attendees). Land use notes on the map are generalized and represent a rough approximation of the multitude of individual notes and comments made on the group maps.

While there was general consensus on the eastern and western boundaries of the Town, the northern and southern boundaries drawn by participants illustrated the debate over Thurmont's expansion into the Myer's Farm area on the north, and into the Pryor's Orchard & Drees Homes Annexation areas on the south. Considerable discussion at the workshop revolved around any expansion west of US 15, north or south of the Town.

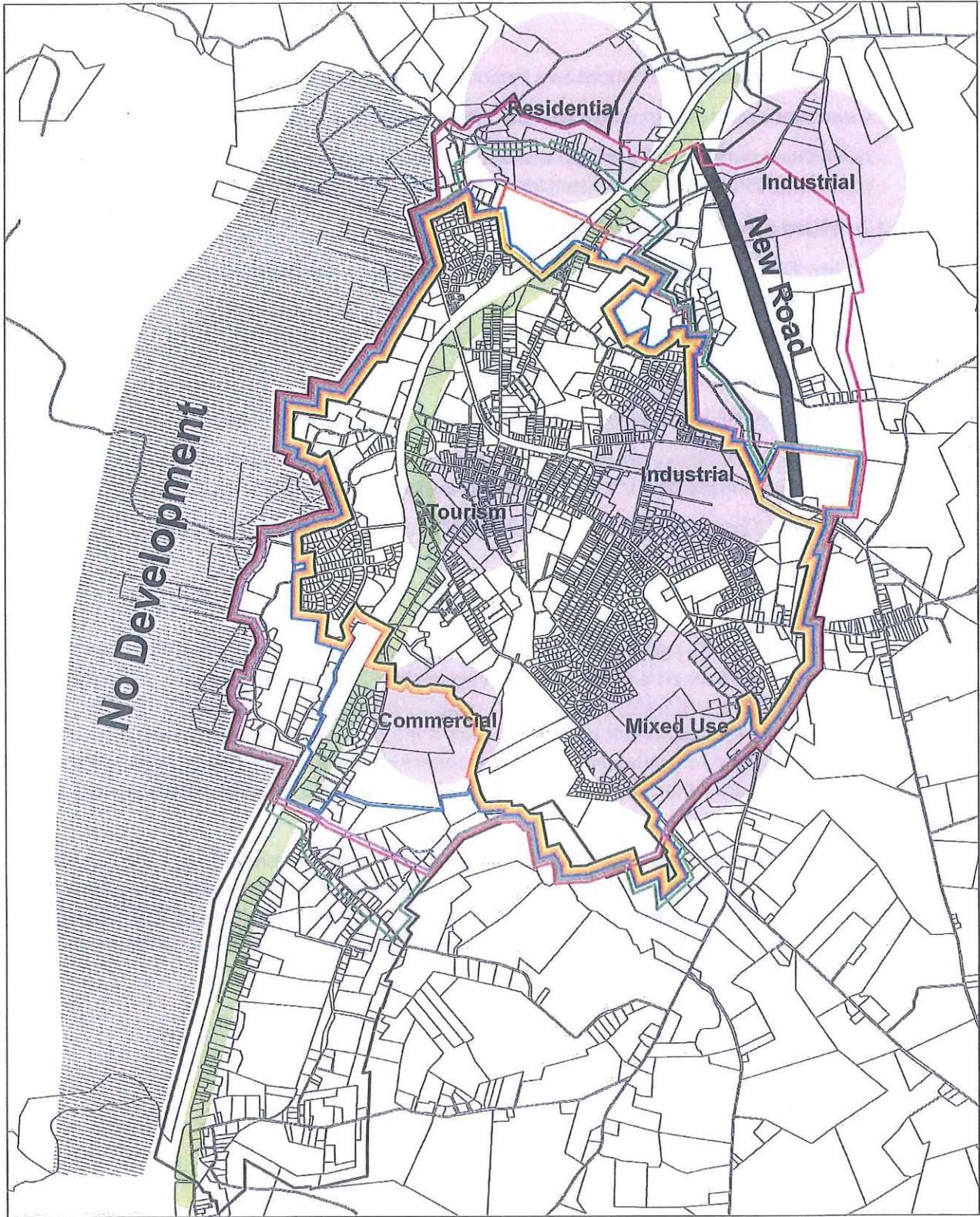


Figure 1 Thurmont future growth boundary as envisioned by residents

Design Guidelines

In addition to the following guidelines, the design guidelines and development principles described in the Frederick County Community Design Guidelines and Development Principles, (adopted July 16, 2006) should be applied where appropriate by the developers of property within the town and the Planning and Zoning Commission in the design and review of these projects.

Downtown Development

- New buildings should be located at the back of the sidewalk in line with buildings on adjoining properties. The front door should be oriented to the street and not to any parking lots to the side or rear of the building
- If parking is provided it should be located on the side or the rear of the building
- While an exact replication of 19th century architecture is not necessary, new structures should be consistent in scale, materials, and with some architectural detail similar to the existing 19th century structures in the downtown
- Signage should be in proper proportion with the building. Internal illuminated signs should be discouraged

Residential Development

- If several different dwelling types are proposed they should be integrated throughout the property and not have all of the townhouses or duplexes concentrated in one corner apart from the single-family dwellings
- The street layout should follow a grid pattern where topography allows. Multiple connections should be provided to existing streets to better integrate existing neighborhoods with the new development and to help spread the traffic among several streets. Cul-de-sacs should be discouraged
- The streets should be divided into blocks no longer than 300-400 feet. This would help encourage more pedestrian activity by keeping the blocks at a human scale, which reduces the perceived distance along a particular length of street
- A neighborhood park should be provided to serve 150-200 houses. The parks should be placed in central locations to provide easy walk access to the entire neighborhood. They should be 20,000 – 40,000 sq. ft. in size to accommodate a playground area and an informal playing field. The developer should be required to provide the vegetation/facilities/fencing, etc. for these parks and the homeowners association would be responsible for their maintenance. These parks would provide an important physical focal point for the neighborhood that would also promote more social interaction.
- Front yard setbacks should be kept to a minimum in order to provide larger, more usable rear yards and to better define the street corridor. A ‘build-to’ line, that establishes a maximum setback, could be used
- The backyards of townhouses should not face directly onto a public street. The parking should be located in the rear. Apartments should also be placed along the street with

parking on the side or in the rear of the property

- On-street parking – which helps reduce excessive paving for parking lots and also helps to slow traffic on the streets - should be encouraged for apartments and townhouses. For townhouses and apartment developments, only the minimum required parking should be off-street while visitor parking should be provided by on-street spaces

Commercial Development

- Parking should be located to the side and/or rear of the building. The building should be placed as close to the street as possible with the front door facing the street
- Pedestrian access from the sidewalk to the building, that is both safe and comfortable, should be provided
- Where permitted, on-street parking should be encouraged
- Signage should be appropriate to the scale of the building and compatible with the character of the Town. Low monument signs and signs attached to the building shall be encouraged
- Consideration should be given to having residential uses on the second floor of commercial/office buildings

Development Within the US 15 Viewshed

- For development of property within the view-shed of US-15, the design principles described in the “Community Design” part of Section 4.1 of the “US 15 Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan” apply.

Community Character – Policies and Objectives

Policies

- Promote new development and reuse of existing structures which help in achieving the vision of Thurmont as a small town
- Maintain and enhance the architectural character, scale, and streetscape of the downtown.
- Recognize and protect the historic sites in Thurmont
- Recognize the historic and continued connections between the Town of Thurmont and the agricultural operations, rural villages, and natural landscapes surrounding the community and encourage development that respects the integrity of these surroundings.
- Support and nurture the development and growth of small, independently-owned businesses.

Objectives

- When making determinations on land use proposals before the Town, favorable consideration should be given to new development that incorporates elements of Thurmont's historic residential and commercial development patterns.
- Encourage developers to follow the design guidelines described in this plan
- Encourage the protection and restoration of existing structures in order to maintain the character of the downtown
- Encourage the rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing buildings through a combination of regulation, tax credits, and grant/loan assistance.
- Consider adopting modest historic preservation guidelines that address buildings and sites with the greatest local significance.
- Study the viability and cost of placing electric, cable, and other overhead wires underground in the downtown area.



Thurmont's Historic Character

A significant part of Thurmont's charm lies in its historic setting nestled at the base of Catoclin Mountain. For a soldier, it is a short march to Gettysburg to the north. For a merchant, it is mere hours to the Port of Baltimore. And for the Commander-in-Chief, Thurmont is but a 25-minute helicopter commute from the White House. Like many small towns in America, Thurmont has been a witness to this nation's history. Large events, and small, have impacted – and been impacted by – the residents of Thurmont.

And while the national historical threads that have defined our country can be found woven into the fabric of Thurmont, perhaps the most interesting, and most relevant, of those threads are those that do not involve world leaders, wealthy industrialists, or mighty armies. The most interesting stories are those that are told by and about the people who have lived and worked in this community, and it is those stories that have as their setting, the homes, neighborhoods, factories, parks, stores, and farms of Thurmont. For that reason alone, it is a worthwhile effort to consider how today's - and tomorrow's - land use decisions affect our built and natural environment.

The policies and objectives outlined below are straightforward and practical. The maintenance, and occasional restoration, of buildings and structures that are of local, regional, or national importance is a pragmatic goal that pays off, not only in heritage or aesthetic terms, but in economic ones as well. Stated simply and bluntly, the careful handling of those characteristics that make Thurmont a unique place within which to live and work, also makes Thurmont a pleasant place to visit and spend money. While tourism should not be the primary source of economic activity in Thurmont, it can become an element of the local economy that allows the Town to develop a well-rounded portfolio of fiscal security.

A range of options for helping Thurmont maintain the important elements of its physical heritage is presented on the following page and in the plan as a whole. While some of the recommendations include regulatory strategies, the majority does not. When regulatory strategies are deployed, the Town should insure that incentives, in the form of technical and funding resources, are available as readily as the words in a local ordinance. At the same time, the community must understand the necessity for laws such as the proposed 'demolition by neglect' in a world where the value of real estate is often considered in terms of its short-term potential. Most will agree that the historic fabric of Thurmont – those places where our family and national stories are written - demands a more rigorous consideration as we determine the true value of these places.

Historic Character – Policies and Objectives

Policies

- Preserve and re-use existing structures and assure that new development is in character with the traditional forms, massing, and architectural articulation exhibited by buildings constructed prior to the Second World War.
- Demand that infill development in the traditional core area of Thurmont be laid out and designed in such a way as to maintain the gridded street network, continue the use of alleyways and narrow streets, and reflect the general density of residential and commercial uses.
- Maintain and enhance the architectural character of the downtown
- Recognize and protect historic sites in Thurmont
- Promote the preservation of the intrinsic scenic qualities of the US-15 corridor which has been designated as the Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway

Objectives

- Facilitate the protection of, and encourage the restoration and continued maintenance of, existing structures through the enactment of a demolition by neglect ordinance.
- Insure that the planning and design of new developments is consistent with the traditional pattern of the Town's older core residential and commercial areas.
- Encourage developers to follow the design guidelines and development principles described in this plan and in the Frederick County Community Design Guidelines and Development Principles, adopted July 16, 2002.
- When reviewing plans for development, encourage the use of the design guidelines and development principles described in this plan and in the Frederick County Community Design Guidelines and Development Principles, adopted July 16, 2002.
- The design principles described in the "Community Design" part of Section 4.1 of the "US 15 Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan" should be considered by developers in the design of projects within the view-shed of US-15 and will be considered (*as non-regulatory guidelines*) by the Town in the review of these projects.
- Discuss the application of historic preservation guidelines as a means of maintaining the historic character of the downtown
- Use Thurmont's participation in the Maryland Main Streets program to enhance the historic character of the downtown area.
- Provide adequate standards in the new Mixed Use Village zoning district to protect the small town character of Thurmont by providing an opportunity for a traditional mix of land uses, establishing limitations on building mass and height, and by allowing adaptive re-use of older structures.



Environment & Sensitive Areas

Sensitive Areas

While there are not vast areas of open space within the town limits to consider for resource protection, there are a number of individual features that warrant protection from proposed development. The basis for identifying these features and the means to protect them comes from the Sensitive Areas element requirement of Maryland's Planning Act of 1992. The following six resources will be addressed:

- Streams, wetlands and their buffers
- 100-year floodplains
- Habitats of threatened and endangered species
- Steep slopes
- Agricultural lands
- Forestlands intended for resource protection and conservation

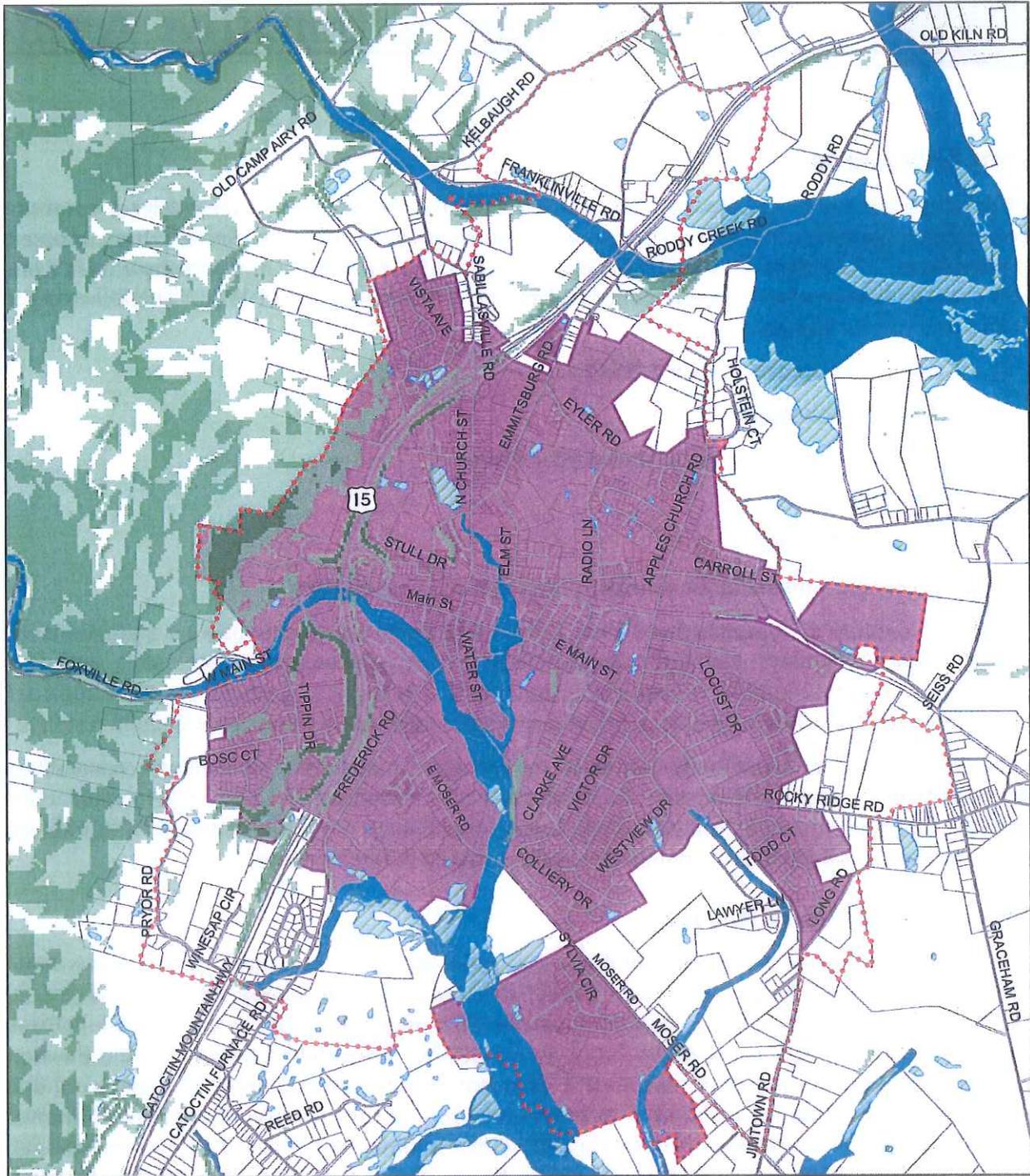
Frederick County's Comprehensive Plan (2010) addresses the protection of an additional six sensitive area resources including: the Monocacy River; prime agricultural soils outside of planned community growth boundaries; groundwater resources, particularly with regard to wellhead protection areas; wetlands; mineral resources; and historic and archeological resources.

In addition to the conventional regulatory approach to managing the natural resources in Thurmont, the Town seeks also to encourage new development and redevelopment that minimizes its environmental impact through careful planning, compact arrangement of buildings and structures, and the deployment of low impact design (LID) techniques.

Streams and their Buffers

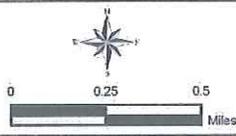
Protecting the buffer of a stream provides numerous benefits. The buffers themselves -which may include forested areas - provide habitat for many plant and animal species. Trees that provide shade over the water also help to moderate the temperature of the water which helps the aquatic life in the stream especially brook trout. Buffers also protect the stream and the water quality. Adjacent forest areas filter runoff from nearby development, provide shade to cool the water, and help to stabilize the bank to prevent erosion. All of these elements help to improve water quality well downstream ultimately including the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Buffers should include adjoining forest areas, wetlands, and steep slopes to provide maximum protection of the stream.

The management of stream buffers could involve the placement of protective easements when lands that include buffer areas are subject to either a subdivision or site plan review. With an easement that land would still be under private ownership. Another option would involve the transfer of land within the buffer to the Town where the buffer could be incorporated into the larger open space network.



Sensitive Areas

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Wetlands |  Slopes Greater Than 25% |
|  Floodplain |  Town of Thurmont |
|  Slopes 15 - 24.99% |  Community Growth Boundary |



While efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map, Frederick County accepts no responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional inaccuracies in the content of this map. Reliance on this map is at the risk of the user.

Prepared by Frederick County Division of Planning
December 8, 2010

The overall goal of these strategies is to protect the buffers in a natural state or improve those buffers that have been impacted by inappropriate development activity.

There are four streams within or adjacent to the Town that would warrant protection from proposed development. The largest is Hunting Creek which originates in the Catoctin Mountains and maintains stretches of existing forest along its banks in addition to vacant land and moderate amounts of development. Rouzer Run has its headwaters within the town limits and is a tributary of Hunting Creek. While most of the land adjoining the creek is developed there may still be opportunities to establish protective measures. The third stream is High Run, which originates in the Catoctin Mountains, is a tributary of Hunting Creek, and is located just south of town. The last stream is an unnamed tributary of Hunting Creek that originates in the vicinity of the East End Park. All of these streams are classified as Class IV streams which are designated as Recreational Trout Waters by the State of Maryland.

No surface waters are used for public drinking water supply or storage in Thurmont.

The Town should actively encourage voluntary efforts by private citizens, institutions, and businesses to nurture Thurmont's natural resources. While the municipality is predominantly a developed landscape, even its built environment has the capacity to provide ecological function and support wildlife and their habitats.

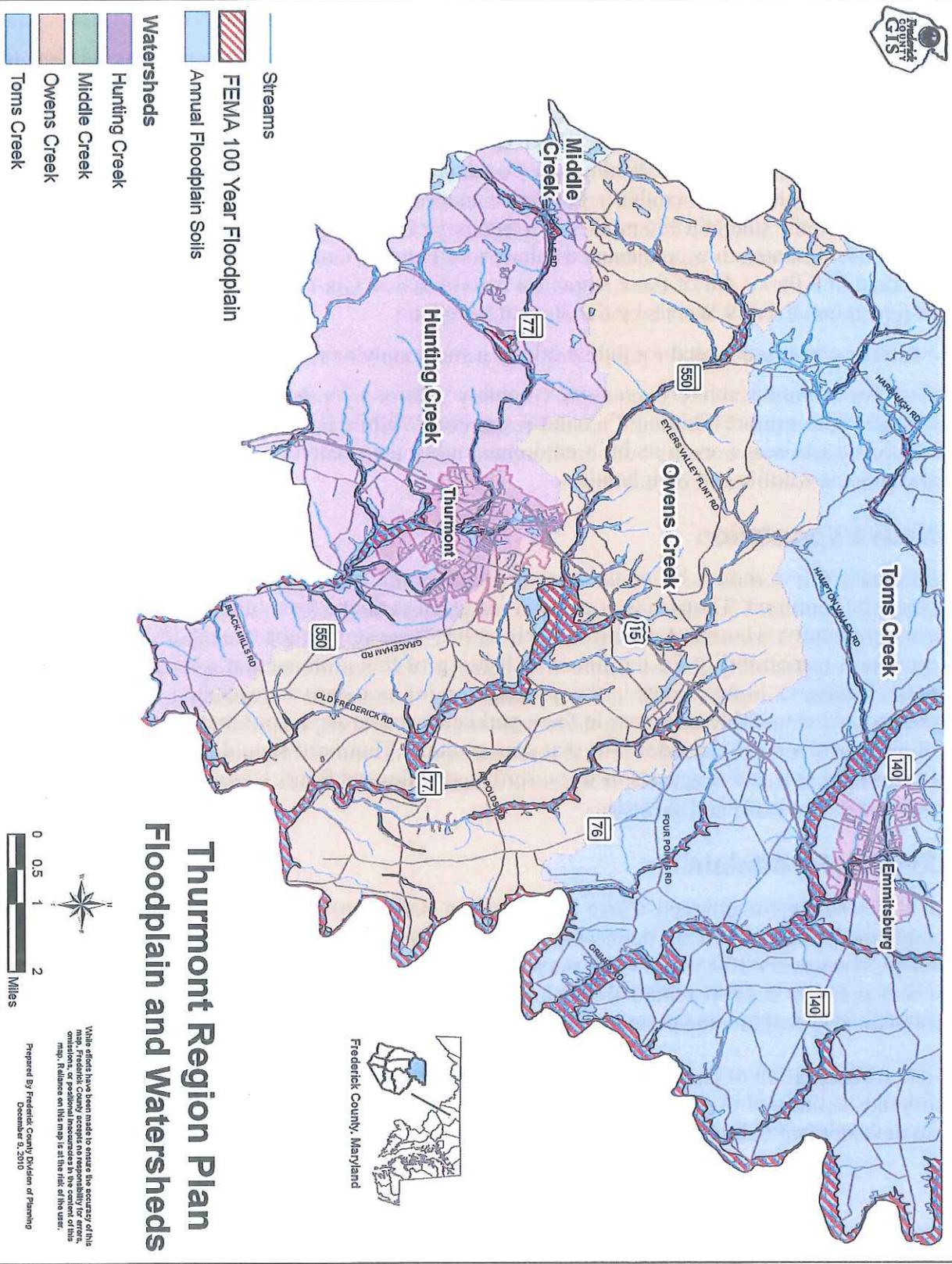
Native Vegetation

Particular effort should be focused toward discouraging the planting of non-native trees and plants in Thurmont. Thousands of acres of managed parkland west of town form the backdrop to our community. Thurmont describes itself as the "Gateway to the Mountains" and in so doing must take responsibility for the future well-being of this prominent and spectacularly beautiful natural feature. Simply stated, the propagation of non-native vegetation contributes to the destruction of valuable resources in these parklands and as such, contributes to the gradual decay of Thurmont's rural character. For that reason alone, Thurmont should establish a bold strategy for insuring that native species of trees, shrubs, and flowers flourish along our streets, across our parks, and in our yards and gardens.

100 Year Floodplain

All of the streams mentioned above have all or a portion of their length within the 100-year floodplain delineation. This delineation shows the area that would expect to be flooded, on average, once every 100 years. The purpose of identifying these floodplain areas is to protect life and property from potential flood damage. Prohibiting development within the 100-year floodplain also supports the protection of the stream buffers.

The northern portion of Rouzer Run and the western portion of High Run do not have a 100-year floodplain delineated on the FEMA maps. In Thurmont the 100-year floodplain is protected from development through the application of Open Space zoning or the floodplain regulations.



Habitats of Threatened and Endangered Species

Since Thurmont was first settled there have remained few undisturbed areas within the town limits. The most likely area that would provide habitats for threatened plant or animal species is the land along Hunting Creek which still retains much of the forest buffer along the stream bank. The other potential area would be in the western portion of town along the border with Catoctin Mountain Park. The State's Natural Heritage Program would be responsible for identifying any habitat areas in Thurmont that should be protected.

Steep Slopes and Soils

The development of steep slopes, which will be defined as 25% or greater, can have a number of adverse impacts that should be avoided. The obvious impact is the increase in soil erosion from the removal of vegetation. This problem is even more serious when the slope is adjacent to a stream. Areas with steep slopes of 25% or greater are primarily located on the west side of US 15 along the foothills of the Catoctin Mountains. This area, between MD 77 and the railroad tracks, is composed of Highfield and Rough stony land soils which are characterized by moderate to severe erosion due primarily to the steep slopes. These soils also have severe restrictions for building site development.

Wetlands

There has been some identification of wetlands in the area behind the Mountain Gate truck stop/shops and along the proposed extension of Thurmont Boulevard. Due to this delineation the area has been partially designated as a sensitive area. This is not an indication that these are the only wetlands in Thurmont. Other areas may be delineated as part of proposals for site plans or subdivisions. In most areas in and around Thurmont, wetlands would be located along streams within the 100-year floodplain and would be protected through the floodplain regulations.

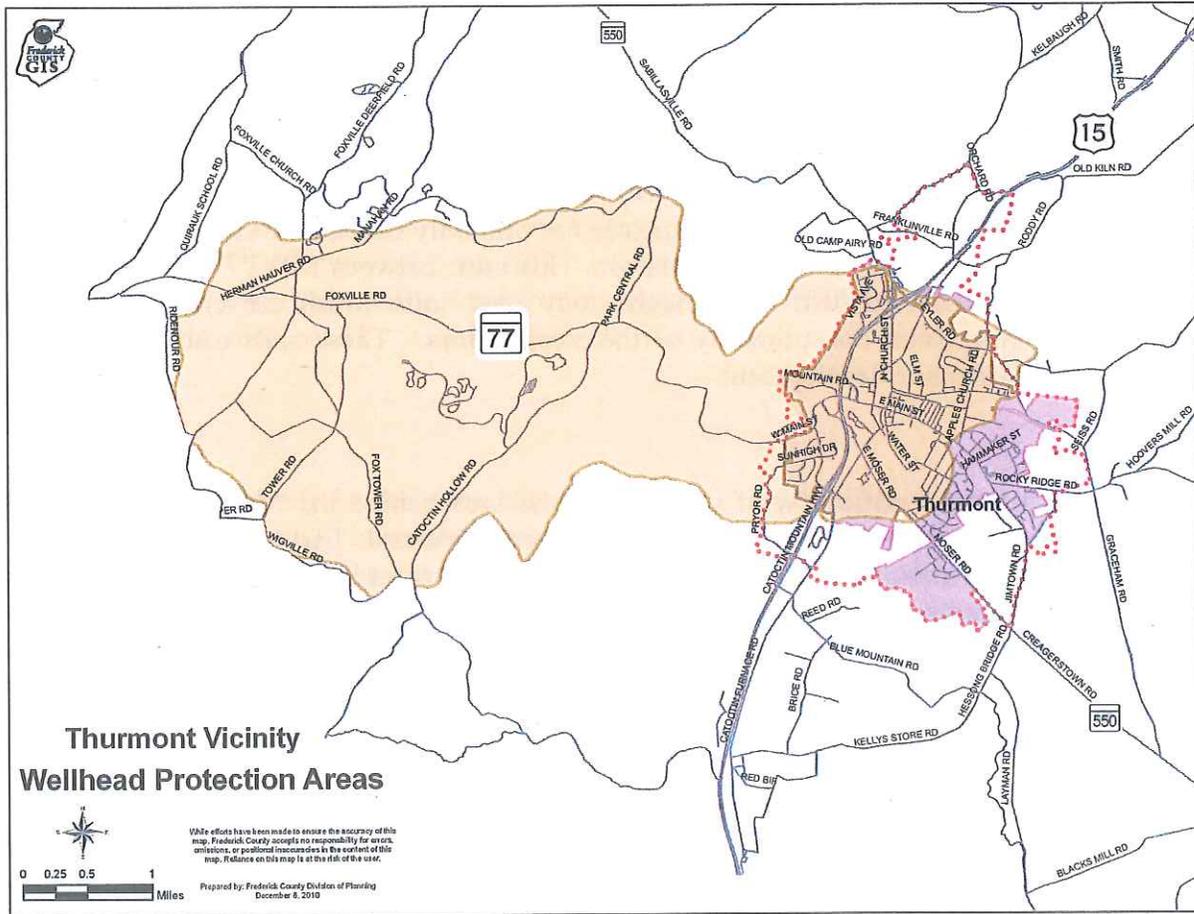
Groundwater Resources

Groundwater is found below the surface of the land, moving through rocks and soil toward discharge in a stream, spring, or other water body. The quality and quantity of groundwater are of significant concern in areas where surface water is not available for public supply. In these areas, the potential for development may be limited, given the availability of groundwater resources.

Thurmont derives all of its drinking water from five (5) wells. Four of the wells are located within the current town limits and a fifth is located just outside the town limits at the corner of Roddy Rd. and Apples Church Rd. A sixth well under town ownership – located in the recently developed Jermae Estates community – remains undeveloped. Water appropriation permits for the five wells are current through September/October 2012. All of the wells are located in the Hydrologic Unit I which describe the most productive aquifers with a range of one to about 580 gallons per minute (gpm). The wells range in depth from 105 ft to 294 ft. and have yields from 160 to 830 gpm drawing from two distinct, unconfined, fractured-rock aquifers - the Frederick Limestone region in the western part of the Town and the Gettysburg shale region to the east.

In May 1995 the Maryland Department of the Environment performed a source water assessment and developed a wellhead protection plan for Thurmont. The plan provided mapping of wellhead protection areas; identified potential contaminant sources within the areas; and made

recommendations for management of the wellhead areas. A Wellhead Protection Area (WPA) is the area surrounding a well within which any contaminant present could ultimately reach, and foul, the supply of water. In 2001, the Town coordinated with MDE to develop a Wellhead Protection Ordinance that was not adopted. Thurmont should take steps to protect its own water supply by investigating the regulatory and non-regulatory options available and pursuing those that provide adequate safeguards for drinking water.



Stormwater Management Planning

Conversion of land for development activity alters the hydrologic cycle and impacts watershed health. After trees are cut and land is cleared for the construction process, buildings and infrastructure are developed. Rooftops, sidewalks, roads, driveways, and even turf-covered yards are considered impervious surfaces when compared to the vegetated, undeveloped landscapes they have replaced. In an urban or suburban environment, when rain falls it runs off of impervious surfaces, gaining heat and picking up oils, fertilizers, herbicides, road salt, sediments, and other pollutants that are transported to local waterways via curb and gutter systems, enclosed storm sewers, and lined channels. This polluted discharge affects water quality and the health of aquatic life downstream.

The Town of Thurmont takes seriously the effects of stormwater on the natural environment both

inside and outside of the municipal boundaries. While it is Frederick County that generally regulates and enforces stormwater activity in Thurmont, in 2005 the Town enacted additional local stormwater management controls to insure that development and redevelopment is undertaken in a way that respects the hydrologic cycle and acknowledges its role in maintaining a livable community. It is clear that in future years the ways in which land is developed and redeveloped in Maryland must accommodate the need to reduce non-point source pollutants in our streams and in the Chesapeake Bay.

Protection of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay

The Town of Thurmont acknowledges its responsibility to help protect and restore the vitality and health of the Chesapeake Bay. The degradation of this precious and defining natural resource has been a collective effort by citizens and communities in six states (and the District of Columbia), across a watershed approaching 64,000 square miles in size, and over a period of many decades.

Bringing the Chesapeake Bay back from the brink, and establishing patterns of behavior and stewardship for this resource is an equally distributable effort that requires dedicated and focused attention to both the seemingly insignificant daily actions of our lives as well as to the more dramatic and easily recognized efforts carried out by organizations, institutions, and governments.

The Town of Thurmont has moved – and will continue to move – on both fronts:

- ◆ Point source discharges of harmful nutrients into the watershed via the Town’s wastewater treatment facility were reduced sharply beginning in 1996 with the implementation of Biological Nutrient Removal technologies at the plant. Implementation of Enhanced Nutrient Removal at the plant is on track for 2011.
- ◆ The municipality – as the primary growth area in northern Frederick County – has absorbed, and will continue to absorb, much of the growth that otherwise would have sprawled into surrounding agricultural lands and areas adjacent to streams and waterways feeding the Monocacy (and Potomac) Rivers.
- ◆ This planning document seeks to continue the Smart Growth approach adopted by the Town in the 1990’s by promoting development and redevelopment in and around its mixed use town center, encouraging the maturation of existing planning strategies such as Thurmont’s Main Street program, and by nurturing the sense of community cohesiveness that absolutely must be present in order to create a place that Marylanders want to call home.
- ◆ The Town adopts with this plan an effort to create public and private landscapes reliant not on exotic, non-native or invasive plant and tree species, but on native, drought-tolerant, disease-resistant, wildlife-inviting, *Chesapeake Bay Tributary-friendly* street trees, landscape buffers, and park landscapes.
- ◆ The Town adopted updated stormwater management regulations to require on-site handling thus avoiding the migration of considerable particulate matter into local waterways and to diminish the reliance on heavily engineered, centralized, stormwater facilities.
- ◆ The Town commits to preparing an analysis of current and future non-point source pollutant loadings as they relate to specific land uses in the municipality. This information will enhance the County WRE data and allow for future land use decisions to incorporate this

knowledge into any standards, requirements, or conditions.

- ◆ The Town adopts in this plan an effort to increase residential and mixed use density in its neighborhoods providing for the same number of new homes and businesses on fewer acres of raw land.

- ◆ Thurmont has maintained a Town Business zoning district with a requirement for *zero* parking spaces applying to new and redeveloped uses thus minimizing the expansion of paved, minimally landscaped, impervious, heat-sinks so prevalent in communities throughout the State. Thurmont's newest zoning districts – the Mixed Use Village I and II – will take a similar approach, and will at the same time, allow for more Thurmont residents to live where they work.

- ◆ A comprehensive update to the Town's site plan review and subdivision standards will seek to minimize impacts on streams and wetlands by adopting and utilizing Low Impact Design (LID) standards and strategies.

- ◆ Thurmont – owner and operator of its own electrical utility – is considering the development of a biomass power plant facility to provide electricity during times of peak usage. This environmentally-sound, locally-controlled, and decentralized approach to power generation is one that can serve as a model for other small to mid-sized communities throughout the State and lead to continued economic development in Maryland with a decreased reliance on power generated in mega-plants situated in close proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and its major tributaries.

Thurmont will continue to take steps to improve Bay health in conventional ways as well by including the objective of encouraging naturalized waterways throughout the Town, by upgrading its own municipal facilities sitting in close proximity to streams, and by continuing to serve as a gateway to the national and state park lands on the Town's western doorstep.

Mineral Resources

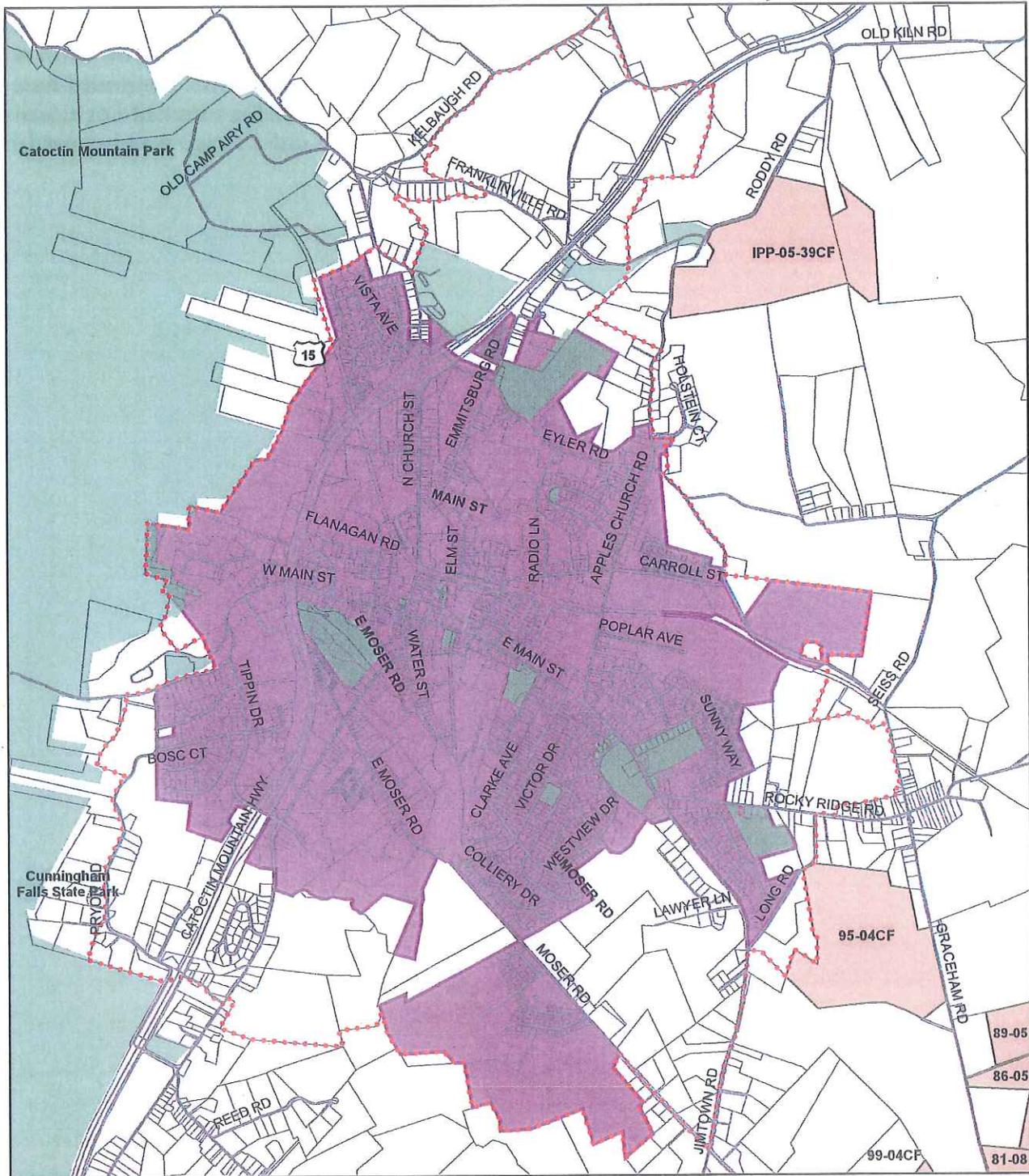
The eastern part of Thurmont is underlain by the Gettysburg Shale geologic formation which is composed of soft red shale and sandstone. This area includes some alluvial mountain wash which is a gravel material that would have washed down along the streams and ravines from the Catoctin Mountains. Through the middle and western parts of Thurmont the geology includes Frederick Limestone and Harpers Phyllite. Portions of this area also include the alluvial mountain wash.

There is no mining activity nor is there any known commercial mineral resource in the vicinity of Thurmont.

Land Preservation

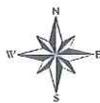
While the Town of Thurmont does not seek to establish or maintain vast areas of naturalized open space or working agricultural operations, the community is certainly surrounded by such lands in nearly all directions. The national and state parklands to the west of town form a natural backdrop to the Town and are valued for the natural, recreational, and economic benefits they provide the community. These parklands also form a natural western limit to Thurmont's future expansion. Two permanently protected agricultural preservation properties further constrain

municipal growth on the Town's northeast end and on its southeast corner as well. The Town is not likely to seek expansion around these protected areas and in fact will likely benefit from the existence of protected farms in both economic and aesthetic terms. Likewise, the Town will not support the permanent protection of agricultural land parcels within the Town's projected future growth area so that municipal services are most efficiently utilized and not stretched or strained unnecessarily by the need to 'leapfrog' protected open areas in order to grow and expand in future decades.



Protected or Controlled Areas

- Parklands
- Agricultural Preservation Areas
- Community Growth Boundary
- Thurmont Town Boundary



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Prepared by Frederick County Division of Planning
December 8, 2010

Environment & Sensitive Areas – Policies and Objectives

Policies

- Protect the Town’s natural and environmentally-sensitive resources
- Protect the quality of the air, water, and land from the adverse effects of development and growth
- Support municipal policies and regulations that insure the health and well-being of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
- Encourage the development and adoption of alternative energy technologies – at both the community and the individual scale - to serve residents and businesses in Thurmont.

Objectives

- Development should not adversely affect sensitive areas
- Natural features should be considered when establishing the ultimate expansion limits for the Town
- Streams within the Town limit, which do not have any 100-year floodplain, should have a 50-foot buffer on each side of the stream within which structures, parking, and other improvements would be prohibited
- Disturbance to natural vegetation within stream buffers including tree removal, shrub removal, clearing, burning, or grubbing shall not be permitted
- The development or disturbance of streams or stream buffers for stormwater management shall not be permitted
- Reforestation, required by the Forest Resource Ordinance (FRO), which cannot be handled on-site, should be located along streams in the Town
- Promote development that minimizes its environmental impact through careful and compact design, use of alternative energy sources, utilizes native vegetation in its landscaping, and promotes activities which minimize the use of motor vehicles.
- Support and promote the use of native species landscaping in all subdivisions and site plans in the Town in order diminish the negative impacts of drought-intolerant or invasive plant and tree varieties.
- Take steps to protect the municipal water supply by investigating the regulatory and non-regulatory options available and pursuing those that provide adequate safeguards for drinking water.
- Encourage voluntary stewardship of the Town’s precious natural resources by public, private, and institutional landowners.
- Provide for the adequate shading of paved surfaces such as streets and parking areas by requiring a minimum ‘shading footprint’.

- Adopt standards and regulations which serve to minimize impacts on wetlands and their buffers.
- Prepare an analysis of current and future nutrient pollution as it relates to current and planned land use cover.
- Any further development along the proposed Thurmont Boulevard shall be reviewed with the intent of protecting wetland areas, minimizing the amount of off-site mitigation, and preserving contiguous wetland and stream corridors.
- Consider adopting – either as regulations or guidelines - standards for design and development that minimize the environmental impact of new neighborhoods in the Town. The *LEED-Neighborhood Design* standards would provide a basis for these discussions.
- Promote Low Impact Design (LID) techniques for all new development and review municipal regulations to remove any obstacles to their use in the Town.



Economic Character

Thurmont's diverse business community provides a small town economic hub that includes retail establishments, service providers, manufacturers, and the complement of activities and business services needed to sustain local employment. Two of Frederick County's Top 20 employers are located in Thurmont accounting for nearly 850 jobs. Artisans, wholesalers, agri-businesses, and a variety of small offices and light industries provide a range of job opportunities for Town and county residents as well as for those neighbors from Pennsylvania and surrounding Maryland Counties who commute into Thurmont.

US 15 and the Maryland Midland Railway provide major transportation advantages to employers in Thurmont by making it possible to quickly and efficiently move raw materials, finished goods, customers, and employees as well, into and out of the Town. An extant, traditional downtown area provides a retail and personal service core to the community while the commercial neighborhoods located closer to US 15 provide retail services to travelers on that corridor as well as to local citizens. The expansion of retail stores and services along MD 806 at Thurmont Boulevard and on Tippin Drive have provided the town with local shopping choices as well as a fair number of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Adaptive re-use of older structures should continue to be a solid strategy for helping home-grown businesses expand and mature as well as for attracting new business activity to Thurmont. The broad range of size, type and location of the existing structures in the community provides a level of flexibility for those planning to re-use a vacant or underused building. Zoning regulations should be equally flexible in this regard. Identifying a potential user of the former Structural Systems industrial site situated in the Town's rail-industrial corridor will be an important short term goal that will pay long term dividends in terms of both revenue and jobs.

Older Thurmont businesses continue to find new ways to maintain or expand markets and remain competitive in a rapidly changing economic environment. The Town's efforts to promote local businesses and give local residents a compelling reason to spend their dollars in the community will continue to pay dividends. An active local Economic Development Committee as well as a growing, successful, and State-recognized Main Street program with professional staff support work to create new opportunities for Thurmont businesses. Land use decisions that demonstrate respect for local business needs will become increasingly important in the coming years as the regional, global, and internet economies apply pressure on community businesses. If Thurmont intends to capture some significant portion of the 50,000 new jobs projected for Frederick County in the next two decades, elected and appointed officials in the Town must maintain close communications and work toward the common goal of strengthening Thurmont's local economy.

While this document does not purport to be a detailed economic development plan for Thurmont, the following policies and objectives may provide needed guidance for land use and planning decisions affecting the economic character of the community.

Economic Character - Policies and Objectives

Policies

- When not in conflict with other provisions of this document, encourage the development of businesses in Thurmont that provide employment opportunities, tax revenue, and a wider variety of needed goods and services for local residents.
- Strive to make Thurmont a community that is friendly to small, independently-owned businesses.
- Maintain elements and characteristics of the community that are unique to Thurmont.
- Consider revisions to local land use regulations that will encourage the following types of business: home-based business, general retail, artisan and craftsman businesses, restaurants, professional services, medical services, light industries, specialized agriculture, and tourism-related businesses.
- Support the town center as a hub for local retail and commercial activity
- Support zoning changes that will increase the likelihood of reinvestment in underdeveloped or dilapidated properties.

Objectives

- Develop appropriate zoning districts and regulations to implement the Mixed Use Village land use designation.
- Review regulations governing land uses in Thurmont's core economic development areas including the town center, industrial area, Frederick Road corridor (southern gateway), and northern Mixed Use Village area (northern gateway).
- Maintain flexible land use regulations in the town center to provide options for small, independently-owned businesses wishing to expand or locate in Thurmont's traditional retail and service core.
- Provide zoning incentives to encourage the redevelopment of older structures and underdeveloped parcels in the Town's key economic development areas.
- Support efforts of Thurmont's Main Street to create a Thurmont "brand" through physical rehabilitation of individual structures, investments in public physical improvements such as coordinated signage, street furniture, and neighborhood amenities, and local event programming.
- Utilize the Town's historic context – *and build upon it* – in order to bolster brand identity for businesses in the town....consider the town's historic buildings and structures as vital business assets as well as cultural assets.
- Take an active role in identifying a user for the former Structural Systems industrial site located along the Town's industrial-rail corridor.



Transportation and Access

Since its initial settlement, the Town of Thurmont has been influenced by various aspects of the transportation network. Trails, waterways, highways, and railroads have left their mark on our modern patterns of land use and continue to influence our planning decisions today. The original settlement of the Town emerged at the crossroads of MD 77 and MD 806. In the late 19th century the Western Maryland Railroad established its rail line through Thurmont connecting the rich coal fields of Appalachia with the industry and commerce at the Port of Baltimore. The Hagerstown & Frederick (H&F) Railroad provided an electric interurban connection to Frederick and other points in central and western Maryland. The most recent major transportation improvement was the construction of US 15 in the early 1960's – between Emmitsburg and Frederick – which bypassed downtown Thurmont. The dualization of US 15 was completed in 1985.

Street Network

The street network in Thurmont has developed in a fairly irregular pattern influenced by features such as the railroad lines, Hunting Creek, and US 15. The older parts of town, particularly along East Main Street, have developed with a traditional grid network extending one block on either side of Thurmont's historic, primary commercial corridor. Newer areas of town developed since the 1960's are defined generally by an irregular network of streets with fewer interconnections and many cul-de-sac, dead end streets.

The key to maintaining uncongested local streets lies in providing multiple connections to and from any given point which will distribute traffic across numerous routes. This type of street pattern can keep individual intersections from being overloaded. While there are many routes to move through and across Thurmont, there remain a few problem areas. The most often mentioned location is the Square Corner in downtown Thurmont at the intersections of Main and Water Streets. A large proportion of through-traffic must pass through this intersection. Turning movements are particularly difficult since this intersection is not sized to support dedicated turning lanes. A second downtown trouble spot has been identified at the intersection of Frederick Road, Water Street, and Park Lane. Post Office traffic, residential traffic via Woodland Avenue, and cut-through traffic from East Main Street all makes its way to this 4-way intersection -controlled in only two directions by stop signs. Congestion at this point can be heavy enough at some times during the day to back vehicles up onto the bridge spanning Hunting Creek (in front of the Town Offices).

Truck traffic, generated by activities in Thurmont's successful industrial area along the freight rail line, continues to cause consternation among residents and businesses in the downtown area, particularly along those streets bearing the brunt of this traffic – Main Street, Carroll Street, Woodside Avenue, Church Street, and Apples Church Road.

Although the State Highway Administration has worked with the Town of Thurmont in an attempt to improve the situation through signage and the re-engineering of curb radii at a key intersection (Woodside Avenue and Church Street), the only viable solutions remain those of changing the use of land in the industrial area to minimize the reliance on trucks or creating an alternative route either through or around existing developed areas in Thurmont.

Most of the congestion problems cited above are difficult to mitigate through conventional road-widening projects since the smaller streets are in many cases constrained by historic development patterns – buildings with no setbacks along roadways now serving as major collector or minor arterial routes.

Hierarchy of Streets

In conventional transportation planning practice, the network of streets, roads, and highways is described by a hierarchical system known as the functional classification system. A road's functional class can reveal both how it is used and how it is designed and constructed. The function of a street or road refers to the amount and speed of traffic that it carries or is designed to carry. While functional class is not determined by the origin or destination of traffic – whether vehicles are passing through Thurmont or moving from one place in town to another – the class designation can be a relative measure within the area described. For instance, a major collector road in a highly developed area may function and appear as an arterial roadway in a smaller, less developed community.

The following descriptions identify Thurmont's functional classification for its streets and roads:

Local

These streets provide the direct access from residential and commercial uses to the collector streets. While local streets cater to low levels of traffic at slow speeds, they can also provide through-access between neighborhoods and the network of collector roads.

Collectors

As the name implies, these types of roadways collect traffic generated within neighborhoods via local streets and provide access to an arterial road or freeway.

Arterials

These roads primarily provide intra-county access in addition to providing access to the freeway system. The Thurmont Region Plan classifies MD 77 (Main Street) as a minor arterial road since it provide access to US 15 from points east and west of Thurmont. Also classified as minor arterials are MD 550 (from US 15 west to Sabillasville) and Moser Road with its potential connection to US 15 via a completed Thurmont Boulevard. The classification of Main Street (MD 77) as an arterial roadway does not indicate that it would eventually be widened. The classification, in this case, merely indicates that Main Street functions as an arterial roadway by carrying through-traffic heading to and from US 15 in addition to its duties as a corridor for local in-town traffic.

Freeway

Freeways provide access on a regional level – travel between counties or states. US 15 is classified as a freeway in Frederick County's Thurmont Region Plan. Access is generally, but not always, provided by grade-separated interchanges. US 15, as a freeway, provides a critical social and economic link to areas beyond Thurmont.

Traditional Neighborhood Development

New street sub-classifications are being developed in Thurmont to provide a street hierarchy that complements traditional gridded street patterns and robust pedestrian networks. A "Neighborhood Boulevard" classification will allow for a split between Major Collectors and

Minor Collectors allowing for a more nuanced approach to the development of new streets as well as the retro-fitting and re-configuration of some existing Town roadways.

Traffic Volume

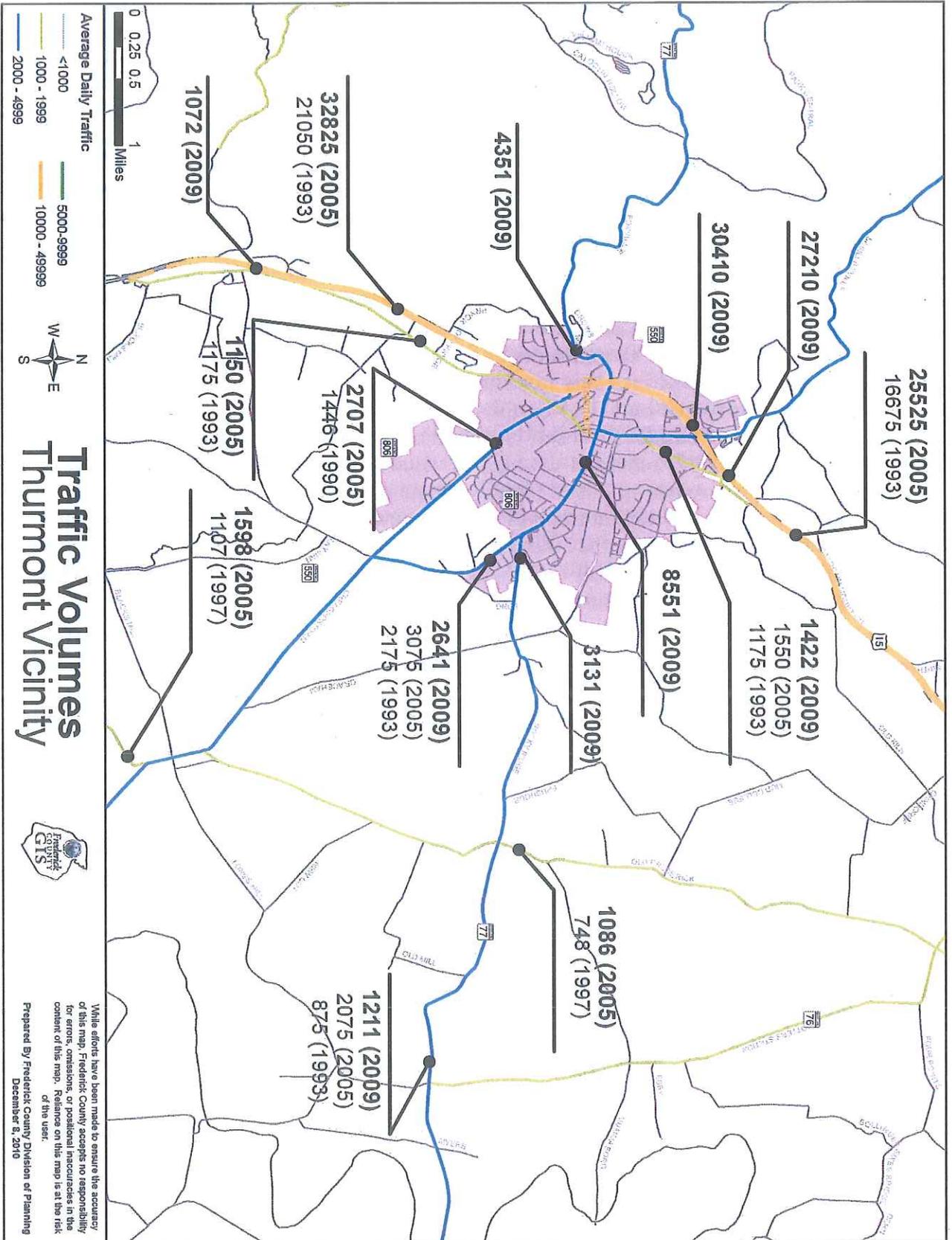
Traffic levels throughout Thurmont, and in areas surrounding the Town, have increased at varying rates in the past two decades. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) collects traffic count data known as Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) for several state roads passing through Thurmont. The traffic data is acquired over a 24-hour period counting vehicles traveling in both directions. A review of the AADT comparing volumes for the years 1998, 2000, and 2006, on four roadways is provided in Table 4. One roadway segment, MD 806 one tenth of a mile north of Kelly's Store Road (south of Thurmont) had a slight decrease in volume in the past decade. The remainder of the roads for which traffic volume data has been collected have experienced increases in volume, some of which have been dramatic. Marked increases were experienced on US 15 on the northern edge of Thurmont just past the MD 550 interchange (51%) and on MD 550 itself just north of the same interchange (65%). As in 1998, Church Street (at MD 77) remained the highest volume point in Thurmont with nearly 9,000 vehicles per day on average in 2006. Traffic volume on MD 806 remained stable. The more recent traffic counts conducted on some of the Thurmont area roads in 2009 demonstrate very slight decreases in volume since the 2005/2006 timeframe. However, the 2009 data continues to support the trend upward in overall traffic volume for these roads (See the 'Traffic Volumes' map on Page 9-4 for 2009 traffic count data).

Despite increasing traffic volume on arterial roadways (and US 15) in and around Thurmont since the 1998 Master Plan, it is clear from a study of several of the most recent site specific traffic impact studies completed since 2001 that pure volume is not a major factor in the functional adequacy of the Town's roadway network. However, there is one key issue regarding truck traffic that continues to place stress on Thurmont's local streets and the drivers who use them:

Industrial Truck Traffic

Continued reliance on trucks to ship products into and out of the industrial area has placed a burden on the older local street network in Thurmont. The majority of this traffic is generated by a single employer – NVR Homes - located adjacent to the Maryland Midland Railway in the east central edge of Thurmont's current boundaries. Although NVR brings in raw material via the freight rail spur constructed for this purpose when the home manufacturer located in Thurmont, the finished components are shipped out of town on large trucks which are forced to negotiate the narrow streets and tight radius turns of the community. While the town can exercise some control over truck access in the future through its zoning regulations and Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, the community is forced to consider other solutions to the truck routing problem.

An alternative route - for use primarily by industrial truck traffic - is proposed in this plan. This "Industrial Parkway" would serve to channel these larger vehicles out of the downtown area and onto US 15 - the ultimate destination of nearly all of the vehicles leaving NVR and (until 2009) Structural Systems. The conceptual route identified for this minor arterial roadway currently follows a path from the industrial area on Carroll Street extended headed east and north outside



of both the current town boundary and the planned Municipal Growth Area. This alignment is necessary to avoid both existing homes and the permanently protected farm located northeast of Thurmont below Owens Creek. The Industrial Parkway would intersect with US 15 north of the Town at the planned future interchange near North Franklinville Road. Although an alignment for the Industrial Parkway is illustrated in this planning document, the Town remains open to alternative alignments and other creative solutions to the problem.

Table 4

Traffic Volumes (Selected Station Points) Town of Thurmont and Vicinity					
Route Number	Location	AADT (2006)	AADT (2000)	AADT (1998)	Percent Increase 1998-2006
US 15	0.5 miles south of Blue Mountain Rd	32,320	29,575	27,825	16%
US 15	0.1 miles south of MD 550	31,400	25,675	24,425	29%
US 15	0.3 miles south of Roddy Creek Rd	28,500	23,475	18,850	51%
MD 550	0.3 miles south of MD 77	3,041	2,950	2,425	25%
MD 550	0.1 miles south of US 15	10,071	11,150	9,725	4%
MD 550	0.1 miles north of US 15	9,281	9,150	5,625	65%
MD 806	0.3 miles north of MD 550	1,542	1,950	1,325	16%
MD 806	0.1 miles north of Kellys Store Road	1,142	1,650	1,225	-7%
MD 77	0.5 miles west of US 15	5,221	4,150	3,325	57%
MD 77	0.2 miles east of MD 550 (Church St)	8,981	8,350	7,225	24%
MD 77	0.2 miles east of MD 550 (Jimtown Rd)	3,741	2,950	2,525	48%

Source: MDOT-SHA AADTS Reports, 1998-2009 (Online Report)
AADT: Average Annual Daily Traffic

It is ultimately the hope of the Town that both Frederick County and the State Highway Administration would support such a project to alleviate the impact of this truck traffic on downtown Thurmont - a mixed use neighborhood participating in Maryland's Main Street Program. Funding for the project could not likely be borne solely by the Town. Private developer funding (or actual improvements), as well as modest contributions from both County and State coffers, would be necessary to plan, engineer, and build such a roadway.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The compact nature of Thurmont makes for easy pedestrian access between residential areas and in-town destinations such as schools, parks, and shopping areas. There is a real opportunity in Thurmont to provide alternatives – such as walking, bicycling, and the use of smaller personal vehicles such as motorized scooters – to the automobile for short trips within the community. Several strategies can be deployed to encourage residents to consider walking or bicycling, not just as exercise or recreation, but as a viable transportation option for some of the local trips to school, to the homes of friends and family, and to the store.

Strategies may include:

- New development, especially commercial buildings, should be oriented to 'face' the street in order to provide shorter walking distances to retail entrances. Land uses should be mixed to provide greater opportunities for walking or bicycling between destinations
- All new streets should have sidewalks on both sides and existing streets without adequate pedestrian access should be retrofitted with walks or paths to provide network continuity
- Develop safe pedestrian crossing at all intersections
- Integrate pedestrian facilities and development to shorten perceived distances
- Revise current design standards to increase sidewalk widths to 5 feet – at a minimum, collector roads should provide 5 ft. wide sidewalks while local streets should provide a minimum of 4 ft. wide sidewalks

Bicycling is currently – and can be in the future - accommodated through the sharing of travel lanes with vehicular traffic. This typically does not pose a threat to cyclists since Town roadways have low to moderate traffic volume at relatively low travel speeds.

H&F Multi-Use Trail

Recent development of the first phases of the Town's H&F Trail connecting Main Street (at Memorial Park & the Carnival Grounds) with Moser Road near the site of the Thurmont Regional Library has created a critical off-road pedestrian/bicycle link that will not only serve the Town's citizens, but may eventually provide a key segment in what could become a 17-mile trail connecting Thurmont with the City of Frederick along the right-of-way of the former Hagerstown and Frederick Railroad. Thurmont should encourage connections to this trail 'spine' as future development is approved adjacent to the facility. Any annexation activity south of the Town's current boundaries should necessarily include extension of the H&F Trail along its historical right-of-way and should be expected to tie newly developed internal pedestrian systems into the trail as well. Until such time as the Town develops its own trail development design standards, Thurmont should utilize those standards developed by Frederick County (as deployed in the Ballenger Creek Trail project).

Freight/Passenger Rail

The existence, and current economic viability, of the Maryland Midland Railway (operating on the former Western Maryland Railroad trackage) is of long-term economic benefit to Thurmont. As a corridor for continued economic activity, the railroad offers transport options that do not utilize existing roadways and that could in the future provide passenger transport as well. Managing the land uses adjoining the rail line carefully will be of prime importance in future years and should be accomplished with both a short- and long-term vision for these areas in mind. The Town should encourage maximum use of the freight rail line for existing and future industries along the railroad. Consideration should be given to the concept of a shared rail/highway interchange that would allow rail-to-truck freight transfers at a site beyond the downtown area and with easy access to US 15.

The Town of Thurmont should coordinate with the County freight study to be undertaken in 2011 so that local concerns and knowledge are communicated in any document or plan that emerges from the County effort.

Frederick County TransIT

The County's own transit system provides commuter shuttle service between Thurmont, Emmitsburg, and Frederick in the morning and afternoon on weekdays. This shuttle service is scheduled to coordinate with other TransIT service emanating from the MARC/Greyhound/TransIT hub in downtown Frederick at East Street and Carroll Creek. Connections to points south are possible utilizing the shuttle and MARC service but are not optimized to allow for flexibility in arrival and departure times for those using the train. The shuttle makes three stops in Thurmont including Thurmont Plaza, American Legion (Park Lane), and Mountaingate Plaza. Additional or alternative stops should be considered in future years to best serve the Thurmont commuters utilizing the service.

In addition to daily commuter shuttle service, TransIT also provides countywide paratransit service to citizens in Thurmont.

Access Plan

The Access Plan map identifies new street connections that should be planned for and constructed in order to develop a fully interconnected street network in Thurmont. The alignments illustrated are generalized and are not meant to represent precisely engineered alignments for future streets and roads. The Access Plan map also identifies key pedestrian corridors and trail alignments. These improvements would require the construction of new facilities where none exist or reconstructing failing (or failed) segments as necessary to provide an adequate pedestrian network.

The following street and pedestrian connections are illustrated on the Access Plan Map:

(1) Pryor Road/Sunhigh Drive/Tippin Drive Collector: This network of existing streets currently serves a collector function by linking residences and retail businesses to US 15 and West Main Street. With future high density residential development potential on the west side of US 15, and with the eventual disconnection of Pryor Road and US 15 south, these roads will serve as a vital link to both the freeway and the rest of Thurmont.

(2) Catoctin Furnace Road/Thurmont Boulevard/Moser Road Collector: This roadway would link future high density residential growth south of the current town boundary with Moser Road (to points north), and Catoctin Furnace Road (to points south). This collector would cross

an extended Thurmont Boulevard to provide convenient access to the interchange with US 15 as well to areas in the town center.

(3) Thurmont Boulevard Extended (Collector): The extension of this roadway would provide access to US 15 and the surrounding retail services to potential high density and medium density residential development in the southern growth areas of Thurmont. The extension of this route would also allow visitors to the Thurmont Regional Library to access that site directly from US 15 without having to utilize the intersection of Frederick Road and Moser Road.

(4) Moser Road/Lawyers Lane/Woodland Avenue/Jimtown Road Collectors: With an existing road connection to Woodland Avenue, this network of minor collectors would provide dual access to potential medium density residential development on the Town's southeastern side as well as provide alternative access to US 15 to existing residents who currently rely on West Main Street. An improvement to the existing Lawyers Lane (or an alternative alignment) would be required for the connection to Jimtown Road.

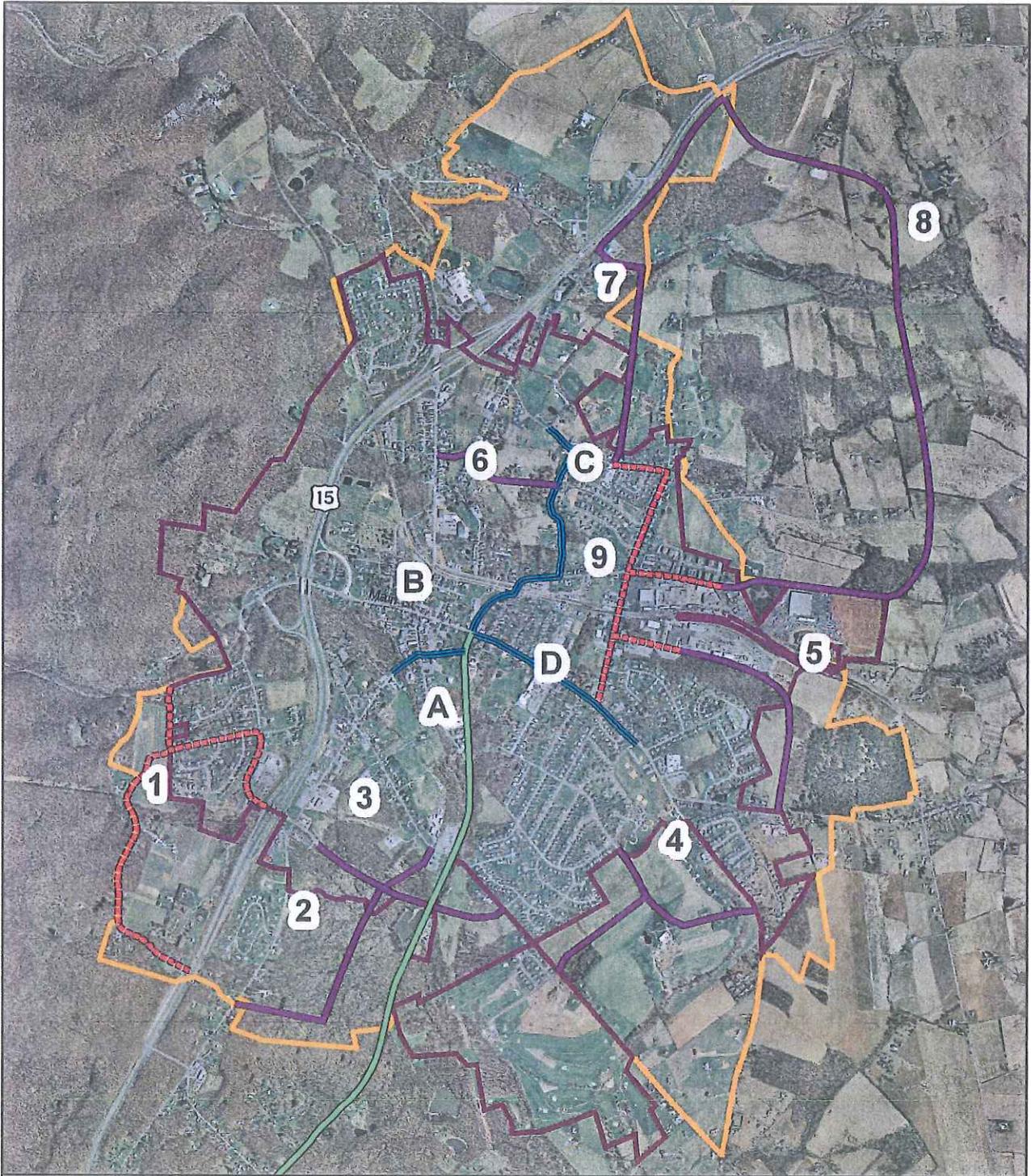
(5) Apples Church Road/Poplar Street/Rocky Ridge Road Collector: The remaining undeveloped acreage shown within the Town's future growth area to the east is designated for medium density residential development. A collector road extended northward and westward from Rocky Ridge Road to an extended Poplar Street would create the opportunity for a long term connection to the town's industrial area, provide potential pedestrian routes for students traveling to Thurmont Primary School, and allow for an alternative to West Main Street for those traveling to destinations on the northern side of Thurmont. Annexation on the Town's eastern edge should be conceptualized, designed and engineered for this ultimate connection.

(6) Pleasant Acres/Emmitsburg Road/North Church Street Connector: Potential development of land currently within the Town's boundaries requires careful consideration of the street and pedestrian network. A local street connection between Apples Church Road and North Church Street via Pleasant Acres Drive would provide multiple interconnections to Thurmont's transportation network and decrease the likelihood that Emmitsburg Road would be used extensively as a conduit to US 15. This conceptual alignment utilizes the existing right of way on the west end of Pleasant Acres Drive that has been reserved for such a connection. This connector also crosses a segment of Thurmont's proposed Mid-Town Parks Connector pedestrian route.

(7) North Village Collector-Connector: This roadway would provide the dual benefit of serving as a collector for the northern Mixed Use Village area identified within Thurmont's future growth area as well as providing a possible connection to a future US 15 interchange north of the Town.

(8) Thurmont Industrial Boulevard: This 2-mile proposed industrial access route would provide a much needed connection between the Town's industrial activity areas and US 15. Current truck traffic is routed through downtown Thurmont forcing a 19th century street network to absorb the impacts of 21st century freight carriers.

(9) Apples Church Road Collector-Connector: The existing Apples Church Road corridor would take on added importance as areas eastern and southeastern areas of Thurmont's municipal growth area are annexed and developed in the future. This single corridor is the common denominator for several other linkages illustrated on the Access Plan and could ultimately serve as a critical segment in an alternate industrial parkway alignment.



Access Plan

Access Plan

- Existing Alignment to Improve and Maintain
- H&F Trail
- Proposed Conceptual Alignment
- Pedestrian Parks Connector
- Town Boundary
- Community Growth Boundary



While efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map, Frederick County accepts no responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional inaccuracies in the content of this map. Reliance on this map is at the risk of the user. The parcels are a draft product that may not be current and may contain positional inaccuracies.

Prepared by Frederick County Division of Planning
December 8, 2010

(A) Hagerstown and Frederick (H&F) Trolley Trail: The Town of Thurmont hosts the northernmost leg of the H&F Trolley Trail – a 17-mile multi-use corridor that could one day reach the City of Frederick via the old rail right-of-way. Thurmont’s segment of the trail between Main Street and Moser Road has been completed and will serve as a vital pedestrian link between the new Regional Library and the downtown. The H&F Trail also forms the trunk of the Mid-Town Parks Connector.

(B) Mid-Town Parks Connector (Community Park Link): A convenient connection between the H&F Trail and Thurmont’s Community Park is perhaps most visible during the annual Colorfest event when thousands of visitors move between the Carnival Grounds/Memorial Park and Community Park. This connection can serve town residents well as a link between existing northern and eastern neighborhoods – as well as planned development south of town – and Community Park.

(C) Mid-Town Parks Connector (Eyler Park Link): The opportunity to move pedestrians and bicyclists safely northward to Eyler Park exists now, but could improved greatly in the future with targeted improvements including new short trail segment development, directory signage, and safe road crossings. This route would take advantage of existing sidewalks as feeder routes into the Connector. A side benefit would be the northern extension of the H&F Trail to the site of its terminus at the Western Maryland Railroad.

(D) Mid-Town Parks Connector (East End Park Link): The connection to the facilities at East End Park exists in the sidewalk network on East Main Street, connecting the downtown neighborhoods to the park, the Senior Center, the Police Station, and Thurmont Elementary School. A safe pedestrian link to Thurmont Primary School should be established as development occurs on the eastern side of Thurmont.

Transportation and Access – Policies and Objectives

Policies

- Coordinate street, bicycle and pedestrian improvements with land use proposals
- Provide a pedestrian environment that is safe, comfortable, and convenient
- Improve pedestrian access along the existing street network to provide convenient connections between residential areas and schools, parks, and businesses
- Provide new street connections to improve vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian mobility throughout the town
- Develop and maintain the H&F Trolley Trail through the town to improve pedestrian access to the new regional library
- Attempt to gain county and state support for an industrial parkway to provide direct access between the industrial area east of the town with US 15.

Objectives

- Require through-streets - in new development and significant redevelopment - that provide connections between new and existing roadways
- New development will provide new sidewalks along all new or existing streets that have frontages along the development and within any right-of-way the Planning Commission deems advantageous to the pedestrian network in Thurmont
- Encourage the use of traditional neighborhood design that could improve pedestrian accessibility
- Pursue grants and other funding sources to repair degraded sidewalks and install new sidewalks where they are missing to provide a continuous pedestrian network.
- Promote the demarcation of pedestrian crossings and the installation of sidewalks to provide pedestrian access to the Thurmont Regional Library.
- Define a preferred alignment for an industrial parkway to service the industrial areas on the east side of town, pursue rights of way where possible, and develop state and county support for the project
- Encourage development densities that support transit usage
- Conduct an inventory of all sidewalks and pedestrian ways to determine which portions of the network should be prioritized for improvement, replacement, or design and construction.
- The highest priority should be given to developing and maintaining safe routes to schools serving the student population of Thurmont.
- Develop roadway sub-classifications that complement traditional neighborhood development.



Community Facilities

The provision of public services and facilities in conjunction with new development is an important part of growth management. The growth management strategy described earlier in this document should permit the orderly and adequate maintenance and expansion of town facilities to accommodate growth without the need to unnecessarily burden existing residents. In addition, Thurmont has provided a mechanism to assure that future development does not overtax critical infrastructure through the adoption of an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO), which went into effect on October 25, 1995. The APFO requires new residential, commercial, and industrial developments to be tested against the adequacy of streets, schools and water and sewer. If any of the facilities exceed the threshold identified in the ordinance, then the proposed development would be denied preliminary subdivision or site plan approval.

Implementation of a land use concept that concentrates growth in vacant areas already within Town as opposed to allowing development to spread out around the perimeter of Town reduces the need for extensive expansion of community facilities. The length of new water and sewer lines, streets and other utilities can be minimized by concentrating development. This can reduce the Town's maintenance costs substantially.

Schools

None of the public schools in or around Thurmont are currently experiencing capacity problems. In fact, much of the future development planned for Thurmont over the next decades can be accommodated in these existing facilities. With the recent expansion of Thurmont Primary School in 2007, that school – which had previously hovered at 103% of its state-rated capacity - dropped back to a current measure of 64% capacity. Should Thurmont area schools approach 100% of their state-rated capacity in future years, the APFO will arguably have the greatest impact on the timing and viability of new residential developments in the Town.

The future development of homes in Thurmont – particularly in areas planned for eventual annexation – will require the construction of additional elementary/primary school capacity either in the form of expansions at current facilities or through the construction of a new school. This plan designates a conceptual site location for a new elementary school south of the current municipality so that any future development occurring in that vicinity can be planned around the development of a neighborhood school.

The table on the following page (10-2), lists the current enrollment and building capacity of the four local schools serving students in the Town of Thurmont.

Parks and Recreation

Thurmont has over 100 acres of public park land, much of which is developed or planned for active recreational use. Several small neighborhood parks provide access to play equipment and convenient 'pocket-size' open spaces. Two of these neighborhood parks – in the Orchard Hill and Pleasant Acres developments - have not yet been fully developed by the Town. Several ball fields, now part of the East End Park, are available for use by Thurmont's organized teams. Community Park, across from the Town Office on Frederick Road, also provides playing fields,

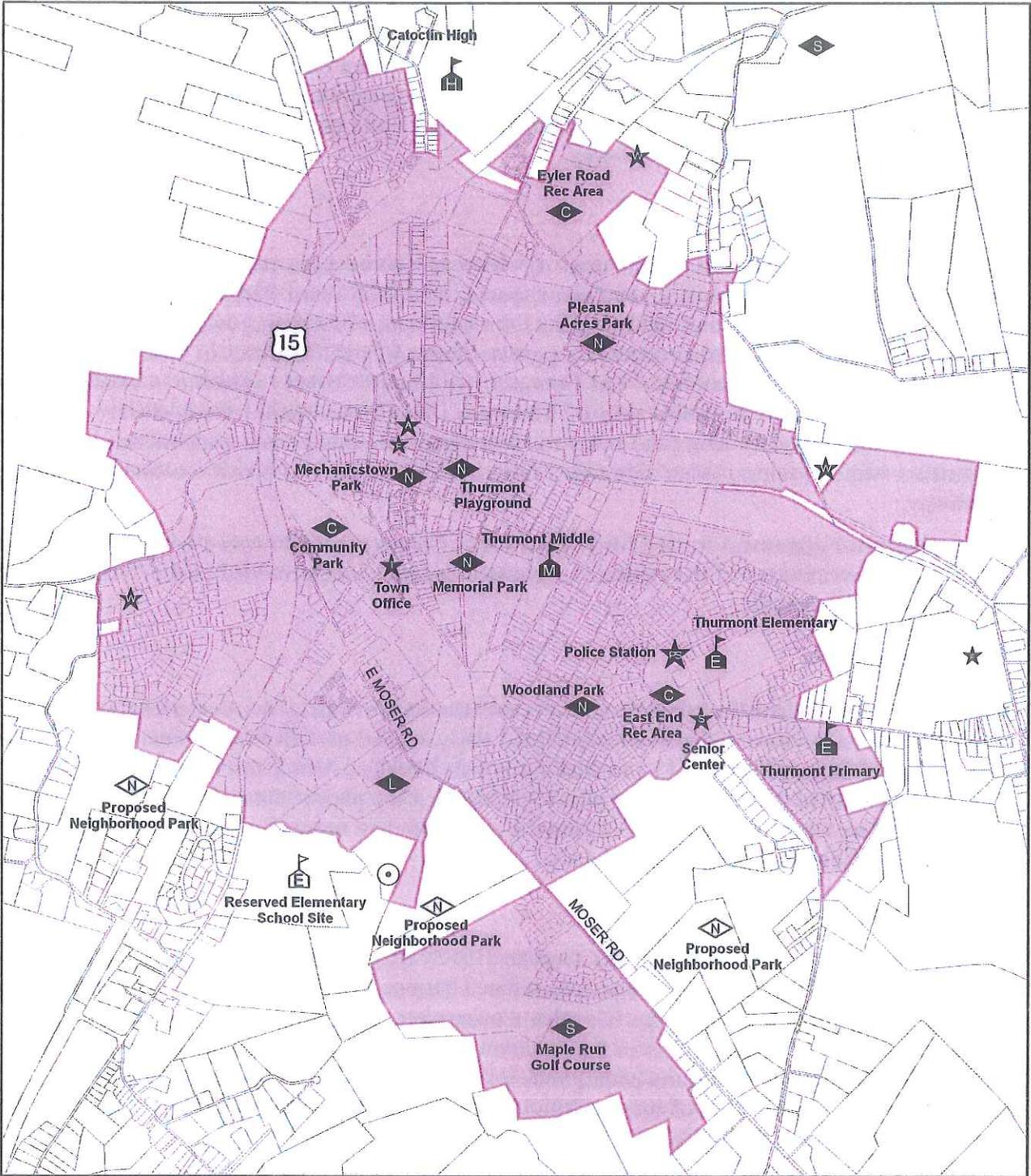
Current School Enrollments and Capacities Thurmont Vicinity			
School	Equated Enrollment (1)	State Rated Building Capacity	Percent of Capacity
Thurmont Primary	376	592	64%
Thurmont Elementary	375	483	78%
Thurmont Middle	680	900	76%
Catoctin High	963	1,135	85%

Source: Frederick County Public Schools; September 2010

(1) Equated enrollments count Special-Ed Pre-K, Pre-K, and K students as 1/2 a full time student. Thurmont Primary has full-day Kindergarten classes and therefore enrollees are counted as full time students. Thurmont Elementary is grades 3, 4, and 5 only. Thurmont Primary is Pre-K, K, 1, and 2 only.

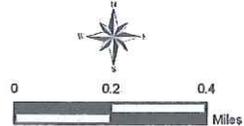
basketball courts, and tennis courts as well as picnic facilities and the necessary infrastructure for events such as the annual Colorfest celebration. In addition to the Town-owned facilities are playing fields located at the four public schools. The schools provide an additional 46 acres which accommodate softball, baseball, lacrosse, soccer, and football fields as well as tennis and basketball courts. The County's Catoctin Recreation Center – a facility constructed as an addition to the Thurmont Middle School structure – provides additional indoor recreation space including a gymnasium and multi-purpose rooms for various activities. Thurmont's Senior Center provides space for recreational activities geared toward the community's senior residents and also serves as a flexible meeting space for other groups in town. The Town's Eyler Park – currently developed for organized sports activities such as soccer and football – will soon have a concession stand structure with public rest rooms (Summer 2011).

The greatest need for parks in future years will likely be for neighborhood parks that are ½ to 1 acre in size and are located amidst new and redeveloped residential and mixed use neighborhoods. These parks would provide informal playing fields, playgrounds for small children, nature observation trails, and compact open areas for residents and employees living within walking distance of these facilities and would also serve as focal points in the neighborhoods. Generally, these parks should be fully developed - including playground facilities - by the entity developing the community and maintained over time by the development's home-owner's association. The need for additional ballfields should be met by making greater use of the fields at the local school sites, thus increasing the number of fields available in the community and making use of underutilized lands.



Existing and Proposed Community Facilities

<p>Existing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ (C) Community Park ◆ (N) Neighborhood Park ◆ (S) Special Park ◆ (L) Library ◆ (E) Elementary School ◆ (M) Middle School ◆ (H) High School 	<p>Proposed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ (C) Community Park ◇ (N) Neighborhood Park ◇ (S) Special Park ◇ (L) Library ◇ (E) Elementary School ◇ (M) Middle School ◇ (H) High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ (F) Fire Station ★ (PS) Police Station ★ (A) Ambulance ★ (T) Town Office ★ (S) Senior Center ★ (W) Water Tower
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While efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map, Frederick County accepts no responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional inaccuracies in the content of this map. Reliance on this map is at the risk of the user. The parcels shown are a product of Frederick County Government. This product is in a preliminary stage and is not a final product. The Parcels may not be current and may contain positional inaccuracies.

Prepared by Frederick County Division of Planning
December 8, 2010

Thurmont's newest recreational asset is the H&F Trolley Trail of which the first phase was recently completed and dedicated. This multi-use trail is located along the old H&F railroad right-of-way between East Main Street and Moser Road. The trail will accommodate walkers, runners, bicyclists - and during the winter months - cross-country skiers. This trail has the potential to extend beyond the Town to Catoctin Furnace and perhaps eventually all the way to Frederick via the former rail right-of-way.

Mid-Town Parks Connector

The H&F Trail provides the main trunk of what can serve as a pedestrian connector route between the Town's major parks and open spaces. The Mid-Town Parks Connector should be viewed, not as a separate trail facility, but as the confluence of existing and planned pedestrian routes that will provide citizen access to a greater range of park facilities in Thurmont with the necessary reliance on automobiles. The Connector will be particularly valuable in creating a safe link to Eyler Park on the north side of Thurmont. The Town should work closely with any developers of properties along the route to insure adequate design and construction of unbuilt segments while requiring other sidewalks, trails and bike routes to provide connections to the pathway.

The conceptual alignment for the Mid-Town Parks Connector is illustrated on the Access Plan Map. Brief descriptions of the existing or planned segments are provided in the Transportation section of this document.

County Facilities

In addition to the Catoctin Recreation Center mentioned previously, the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Division maintains Roddy Road Park, a small park that hosts picnic tables, grills, access to fishing areas, as well as an historic covered bridge. A task force is currently working with the County to develop a master plan for improving the park in future years. A re-alignment of Roddy Creek and Roddy Roads is planned in an effort to maximize use of the existing park land and provide adequate access to the site.

Public Safety

Recent building additions to both the Guardian Hose Company (firehouse) and the Thurmont Community Ambulance Service help to insure that Thurmont residents and business owners will be adequately protected during the life of this master plan. The facilities are located in adjacent buildings on North Church Street in the downtown district but have ready access to any location in their service area via state and county roads, local streets, and US 15. In addition to the public safety benefits, the location of these institutional facilities in the downtown area provides a 24-hour presence that is a tangible trait of Thurmont's small town character.

The Thurmont Police Department headquarters – constructed in 2008 - is located on East Main Street across from Thurmont Elementary School and provides a modern facility that will serve the community for many years and provides an additional institutional presence in the newer eastern end of the municipality.

To support the construction and refurbishment of these primary public safety facilities, Thurmont should review its development standards so that future residential and business growth occurs

within a sound framework for public safety access. This review should consider the following issues related to the provision of critical emergency services specifically and public safety in general:

- Emergency Access: An interconnected system of streets, roads, and alleyways provides for multiple routes to and from residential and business structures. To the extent possible, development standards in Thurmont should provide for multiple access routes by avoiding dead-end and cul-de-sac streets. Major and minor developments shall be designed to allow for future interconnection opportunities through the provision of dedicated rights-of-way, right-of-way reservations, and, when appropriate, the construction of street and alley 'stubs'.
- Distance/Response Time: Standards or guidelines should be considered that set benchmarks for the anticipated travel distance and response times of emergency personnel to a destination in any new residential or business development. Input regarding such standards should be sought from fire/rescue/police agencies serving Thurmont.
- Road Standards: Standards should be reviewed and updated appropriately to address any design or construction characteristics that may increase access to emergency responders.
- Pedestrian Access: New development, as well as infill development, should provide for a viable network of sidewalks, trails, and pedestrian/multi-use paths. In addition to providing safe routes to schools, homes, parks, and businesses, this pedestrian network encourages a low-impact, healthy, activity for a majority of Thurmont's residents. Development standards in Thurmont need to reflect this policy and should be reviewed and updated accordingly.
- Emergency Services Review: Thurmont's development standards should provide for the review of new development (site plans, subdivisions, annexations, etc.) by all public safety agencies serving the Town.

Library

The Frederick County Public Library system is developing a system of regional facilities designed to serve the media needs of residents throughout the County. While the core mission of community libraries has changed little in past decades, the way in which individuals and communities access and share information has continued to evolve. The opening of the new Thurmont Regional Library, located on the corner of Moser Road and Thurmont Boulevard, in the Summer of 2008 provides Thurmont residents with a state-of-the-art facility, upgraded and enhanced collections, and a new institutional epicenter located at a critical junction point in the local and regional transportation network. An eventual expansion of Thurmont Boulevard, linking the existing roadway segments into a key collector road for the southwestern quadrant of the municipality, will provide convenient vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access to the Town's highway service area and commercial corridor. The existence of the recently dedicated H&F Trolley Trail provides nearly direct access to the downtown and points north. Future annexations on the southern end of the community can also be easily linked to the library via southern extensions of the Trolley Trail.

Future Needs

As the Town continues to grow in future years, many of the most critical community facility needs will be addressed through enforcement of the municipal Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance and through the development of annexation agreements. Schools, public safety facilities, libraries, and mid-sized parks seem poised to accept significant future growth, while the transportation network, neighborhood parks, and drinking water/wastewater treatment will require expansion before significant additional growth is feasible (see Transportation and Water Resources chapters for additional information). Other facilities and systems will be improved over time in such a way as to increase overall efficiency and performance without any additional capacity to handle increased demands of a growing population. The Town of Thurmont must demonstrate the collective wisdom to understand when improvements must be made to the community infrastructure – not for sheer capacity upgrades – but simply to maintain the *existing* capacity and elemental functionality of systems and structures that represent significant investment by the community.....in itself.

Community Facilities – Policies and Objectives

Policies

- Maintain and expand community facilities to assure adequate services for the community and accommodate a reasonable rate of residential growth (*25-35 dwelling units per year*).
- Insure that additional neighborhood park sites are dedicated and developed to serve new development.
- Protect the groundwater recharge areas around the Town's wells.
- Maximize the efficient use of the Town's existing facilities.
- Continue to provide for an excellent public safety infrastructure in Thurmont.

Objectives

- When consistent with the Town's land use policies and regulations, the Town should seek to focus new development onto vacant and underdeveloped land already within the municipal limits.
- Enforce and refine as necessary, the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) to assure that development does not proceed if community facilities are inadequate to accommodate it.
- Consider requiring the dedication, development, and maintenance of a greater variety of neighborhood parks as part of the conditions for approval of new residential developments.
- Develop and implement plans to resolve the problem of inadequate space in the Town's administrative, public safety, and public works facilities.
- Develop and implement a policy to require new development to fund enough sewer and water system repair, maintenance, and upgrading to free up the sewer plant capacity needed to accommodate an equivalent amount of new development.
- Impact fees should be reviewed on a regular basis and indexed appropriately to keep pace with the needs of the Town's infrastructure
- The Town should make every effort to vigorously maintain its existing and future infrastructure in order to protect its considerable investment in tangible systems and the quality of life in the community
- Seek establishment of a Mid-Town Parks Connector – a pedestrian network to link existing and planned parks and open spaces in Thurmont.
- Review development standards to insure fast response times and multiple routing options for emergency service providers.



Water Resources

Introduction

The new Water Resources Element (WRE) requirement for comprehensive plans in Maryland mandates that local jurisdictions link their land use plan with plans for the provision of drinking water supplies (and their quality), wastewater discharge and treatment capacity, and stormwater management. The Frederick County Division of Planning recently completed its countywide Water Resources Element as part of its Comprehensive Plan update. The County plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in April 2010. The Town of Thurmont will continue to work closely with the County to provide current data on growth plans and infrastructure capacity and may adopt amendments to this Master Plan in future years to integrate additional analyses or significant policy revisions as needed to best protect both municipal and regional water resources.

The County's Water and Sewerage Master Plan provides a detailed description of the County's water and sewer systems for both the County's systems and those maintained by the individual municipalities, including the Town of Thurmont. The Plan includes background on the physical geography of the County (i.e. geology, climate, and hydrology) and provides detail on vulnerabilities and limitations to water and sewer service based on environmental factors. As with the County's WRE, the Town of Thurmont will continue to support the development of the county Water and Sewerage Plan by providing timely and accurate information regarding the municipal water and wastewater systems.

This section describes the drinking water resources, waste water system, and storm water management policies in the Town of Thurmont and the ability of the Town to support the development described in this plan without adverse impacts to its surface or groundwater resources. Currently, the capacity of the waste water system is the primary constraint on future development in the Town as a result of significant problems of inflow and infiltration (I&I) of surface water into the waste water collection system. These problems are currently being addressed, however the full extent to which correction of the I&I problems will liberate additional capacity at the sewage treatment plant has not yet been precisely determined.

Drinking Water Resources

The Town of Thurmont lies primarily within the Hunting Creek sub-basin of the Monocacy River Basin. The Town derives all of its drinking water from six wells located in the Hydrologic Unit I which describe the most productive aquifers with a range of 1 to 580 gallons per minute (gpm). These wells draw from two distinct, unconfined, fractured-rock aquifers - the Frederick Limestone region in the western part of the Town and the Gettysburg shale region to the east.

Regional Water Resource Planning

With an additional 1.1 million people expected to reside in the State of Maryland over the next 25 years, population growth and its associated water resources challenges are anticipated in

Frederick County and its municipal communities. In addition to addressing the competing needs of residential, agricultural, and commercial/industrial development, local governments will need to review their land use plans to ensure delivery of water and sewer service to a larger customer base. Alternative supplies and additional storage may be needed to augment smaller community systems and wastewater treatment facilities may require upgrades to reduce the concentration of pollutants in their discharge. There will be additional well and septic development on rural lands, which will affect groundwater levels and transport additional nutrients to local streams. The conversion of forests and agricultural land for development will impact watershed health and new rooftops, roads, and driveways will increase our total impervious surface area, inhibiting natural recharge of water.

Frederick County's location within the Chesapeake Bay watershed offers its other major challenge. The County's major water bodies, the Monocacy River and Catoctin Creek, meander south through the County directly into the Potomac River, which then flows into the Chesapeake Bay. These water bodies carry runoff from the land and discharge from point sources such as wastewater treatment plants to the Bay. Sediment and topsoil, fertilizers and pesticides, oil, pet waste and emerging contaminants (pharmaceuticals and endocrine disruptors) are examples of pollutants that enter local water bodies. Once in the Bay, these pollutants disrupt the natural balance of the estuary, depleting fish, crab and oyster populations and posing serious health risks for bathers, fish and related species.

The challenges associated with growth are not new or unique to Frederick County; in fact, communities across the country and region are dealing with many of them and have found reasonable solutions. The County's water resources plan takes in to account the diversity of water resources issues, limitations and vulnerabilities that Frederick County and its twelve municipalities are facing and offers recommendations for potential solutions. Subsequent updates to the County water resources plan will benefit from new sources of data and technical experience that will expand upon the initial efforts of the County and its municipalities.

Source Water Protection

The quality of drinking water varies by source. Different issues exist for ground and surface water sources. With the exception of ground water in karst aquifers, which is under the influence of surface water, surface water is more vulnerable to contamination from land use practices. Therefore, water quality concerns like sedimentation, potential spills, and fecal contamination are more prevalent. Ground water quality can be negatively impacted by naturally occurring radon or iron, but can also be contaminated by fecal coliform, particularly when septic systems are nearby.

Water quality standards are in place for community systems using ground and surface water. Regular testing of drinking water is a requirement. The federal Safe Drinking Water Act amendments of 1996 require that public systems conduct a Source Water Assessment to better understand the vulnerabilities of their source. The State of Maryland has prepared Source Water Assessments for all public systems in the state, including the Town of Thurmont. These plans

Common water quality concerns:	
•	Sedimentation
•	Human pathogens
•	Fecal contamination (<i>Cryptosporidium</i> and <i>Giardia</i>)
•	Potential spills
•	Fecal coliforms
•	Nitrates
•	Natural organic matter
•	Algae
•	Taste and odor compounds
•	Gasoline-related compounds

list in detail the vulnerabilities of the supply and offer recommendations for continued protection.

When surveyed, several municipalities in Frederick County reported an interest in increased source water protection through wellhead, springhead or headwater protection ordinances. With ground water wells, springs, and streams often located outside of municipal boundaries, County regulations and ordinances are needed for adequate source water protection of municipal water systems. The Town of Thurmont supports such actions by the County.

Drinking Water Supply

In Frederick County, drinking water is obtained from both surface water and ground water sources. Although Thurmont’s drinking water derives solely from groundwater sources, it is important to comprehend how the two supplies are intimately related; ground water is stored in aquifers and crevices beneath the ground that are recharged by precipitation. In an unconfined aquifer, the most common in Frederick County, ground water moves horizontally before it is discharged into a stream or other surface water body, such as a seep, spring, or wetland. Stream flow directly correlates with the rise and fall of the water table; both are impacted by climatic and drought conditions.

Disruptions to the natural hydrologic cycle caused by land use changes, affect the availability of both supplies. The steady increase in the County’s population that is expected over the next twenty years will impose limitations on our water resources. Increased land development reduces water recharge areas and has the potential for introducing new pollutants and contaminants to watersheds. This section assesses the regional availability of ground water and surface water and presents the limitations of each.

Sub-basin Supply/Demand

A pilot study of the Monocacy River watershed was conducted as part of the Advisory Committee on the Management and Protection of the State’s Water Resources and reported upon in Appendix D of the Committee’s final report dated May 28, 2004. The watershed was divided into fifteen sub-watersheds including the Hunting Creek sub-watershed. The groundwater demand for the Hunting Creek sub-basin was determined to be 1.00 million gallons per day

(mgd) in 2000 and was projected to be 1.41 mgd by 2020 and 1.65 mgd by 2030. The groundwater availability in each sub-basin was calculated using the predicted recharge rate for the area, taking into consideration drought conditions. The predicted demand, and the minimum stream flow requirements, were then subtracted from this number to determine net groundwater availability. For the Hunting Creek sub-basin, the net available groundwater was calculated to be 6.46 mgd in 2000, 6.05 mgd in 2020, and 5.81 mgd in 2030.

Although no development beyond this basin is projected during the 20 year time-frame of this plan, expansion of the town to the north could occur in the future into the Owens Creek sub-basin. The prediction of net available groundwater for this basin in 2030 is 6.22 mgd.

Municipal Water System

Thurmont's water system consists of 34 miles of distribution pipes supplied by five (5) active wells. The five wells can produce an average of 1,020,000 gallons per day while average daily consumption has been approximately 625,000 gallons per day. Water Appropriation Permits from the State of Maryland allow for up to 1,185,000 gallons per day. The development of the sixth well at Jermae Estates could add an additional 200,000 gallons per day to the overall water supply available to the Town. The water system also includes 3 elevated storage tanks and a covered concrete storage basin which have a combined total capacity of 580,000 gallons.

Because of elevation differences - and well and storage tank locations - the system is operated as two separate zones. The higher elevation parts of the Town (a relatively small area in the north and west part of the town) are operated as a high pressure zone (775 ft. water elevation) and the remainder (main area) of the Town is operated as a lower pressure zone (695 ft. water elevation). The high pressure zone is supplied water from a pumping station having a capacity of 150 gallons per minute (gpm) drawing from the lower pressure zone as well as one of the six active wells (well # 7) having a capacity of 120,000 gallons per day. The water storage capability for this zone consists of two elevated storage tanks with a total storage capacity of 200,000 gallons. The water supply for this zone is nearing capacity, therefore substantial additional development in this region would require an increase in capacity of the pumping station and/or development of an additional well in the area.

The lower pressure zone has significant excess water supply capacity as it is supplied from 5 wells capable of producing 900,000 gallons per day, however the water storage for this zone is limited to one elevated storage tank with a capacity of 200,000 gallons and one ground level tank of 180,000 gallon capacity. These tanks are approaching capacity relative to meeting fire flow requirements. Thus, substantial additional development in this region would require the addition of water storage capability to meet fire flow requirements.

Overall capacity, current demand, and potential future demand from infill development and annexations expected over the 20-year life of the plan for the water system is shown in Table 6a. Two sets of demand figures are shown for the infill development and potential annexations. The expected demand based on the growth strategy defined in the plan (averaging 35 du/year overall) and a maximum demand based on full infill development and development out to the Municipal Growth Boundary. As can be seen sufficient capacity is available to support the expected development from infill within the Town limits and potential annexations if the growth strategy is implemented. However, if full infill development and development out to the Municipal Growth Boundary were allowed, a deficit of 308,000 gallons per day or 1,232 EDU's would

occur, resulting in the need for additional water supply capacity. The table is based on the overall capacity for the system recognizing that specific capacity and storage requirements necessitated by the zoned nature of the distribution system will require individual analyses as development proposals are provided to the Town.

A simple study of Table 6a demonstrates the Town’s water constraints – *or more correctly, its buildout capacity with the existing system* - in terms of development years. In other words, if the Town were to grow at its preferred rate of 35 DU’s per year (including both infill and annexation development), Thurmont’s ability to provide sufficient water to this additional development would expire in just under twenty-two (22) years.

Table 6a
Water Supply System Capacity and Demand
(thousands of gallons/day)

Existing Capacity	Current Daily Usage	Current Available Capacity	Expected Development Potential ³	Net Excess (Deficit)	Maximum Development Potential ⁴	Net Excess (Deficit)
1,020	625	191 ¹ 746 EDU’s ²	175 700 EDU’s	16 64 EDU’s	499 1,997 EDU’s	-308 -1,232 EDU’s

¹ Difference between 80% of existing capacity (to account for drought years) and current daily usage

² Equivalent dwelling units (250 gallons per day per dwelling unit)

³ Assumes a constrained build out of 35 du’s per year for 20 years

⁴ Assumes unconstrained total buildout of all available developable vacant land in current town boundary and within planned future growth area.

As a means of determining other possible constraints on the ability of Thurmont to supply water to areas of future growth, the following issues are relevant:

- Thurmont’s historical peak day of water usage occurred on May 2, 2009. On that day, the demand for 859,000 gallons of water was met by the existing system without any apparent impacts on the operation of the system or in its ability to recover in the days following that high point.
- In the event of an emergency order to provide water to the adjoining Village of Graceham, the Town’s water supply is more than sufficient to provide the necessary resource to the several dozen homes in the area.
- Expansion in the area north of Catoctin High School is not planned within the 25-year time horizon of this Master Plan. Though the overall supply currently generated by the five active wells – and perhaps the sixth undeveloped well at Jermae – might conceivably provide for the water needs of future land uses in the north, the practical means of pumping water into this high pressure zone would likely result in the requirement of any annexed land to provide for its own source of water to add to the Town’s current system.

Water Resource Protection

Two instances of groundwater contamination are known to exist within the Town, contaminating three existing wells, two of which are currently active. Remediation efforts have been underway to clean up petroleum contaminated groundwater caused by a leaking underground storage tank which contaminated well #5 which is no longer in service. Trichloroethylene contamination of groundwater in the area of wells #7 and #8 is removed to purify the water from these wells to drinking water standards through the use of air strippers at each well.

In May, 1995, the Maryland Department of the Environment developed a wellhead protection plan for Thurmont. The plan provided mapping of wellhead protection areas, identified potential contaminant sources within the areas, and made recommendations for management of the areas. A Source Water Assessment was prepared for Thurmont by the Maryland Department of the Environment in February, 2000 delineating areas that contribute water to the source, an inventory of potential sources of contamination, determining the susceptibility of the water supply to contamination, and providing recommendations for managing the assessment area. Prior to enacting a wellhead protection ordinance specific to Thurmont based on these recommendations, Frederick County initiated development of a County-wide well-head protection plan including the municipalities. Thurmont welcomed this cooperative effort since several of the wellhead protection areas for Thurmont's wells fall outside the Town boundaries. The Town is working with the County to finalize the plan and secure its approval.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

Thurmont adopted an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance in 1995 including a section on Public Water Supply and this section was modified in 2003 after drought conditions forced the Town to impose serious water use restrictions. The requirements of the ordinance are applied during the review and approval process for preliminary plats or site plans. The ordinance states: "The Municipal water system shall be considered adequate if, given existing connections, future connections from buildings under construction, and any developments with preliminary subdivision or site plan approval: (1) the source facilities, storage tanks, and pumping stations have sufficient available capacity to serve the proposed development in addition to fire flow; and (2) the distribution system is capable of providing normal required pressure as well as minimal residual pressure to the proposed development. Available capacity shall be determined, as being 80% of the town's rated well capacity minus the town's current maximum day demand." The developer has the option to offer the public facility improvements necessary to support the proposed development and to ensure adequacy of the public facilities set forth in the ordinance.

Waste Water

The Town provides for the collection and treatment of sewage generated by residents and businesses in the Town, discharging the treated effluent to Hunting Creek. The Town utilizes a single waste water treatment plant regulated by the State of Maryland and located near the southern border of the Town adjacent to Hunting Creek.

Municipal Wastewater System

The sewage treatment plant treats the municipal wastewater from Thurmont using an oxidation ditch with two parallel Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) reactors. The system also includes a grit collection system, 3 primary clarifiers prior to the BNR reactors, 2 secondary clarifiers, an ultraviolet disinfectant system, and a tertiary sand filter. The plant completed an upgrade of the BNR reactor system resulting in the current plant capacity of 1.0 million gallons per day (MGD). The collection system consists of approximately 120,000 feet of sanitary sewer main, some of which was constructed using terra cotta piping dating from the original sewer system completed in 1938. The collection system includes four small pumping stations, one each located in low elevations in the northeast, southeast, and southwest regions of the Town and one located adjacent to the main supply pipe to the treatment plant.

The Town's wastewater collection and treatment system is currently the main constraint on growth within the Town. The sewage system has suffered from a serious inflow and infiltration (I&I) problem that has caused capacity problems at the sewage treatment plant during excessive rainfall conditions. This problem is caused by water that leaks into the system through cracks in the pipes and through manhole covers in the street.

The problem has resulted in some sewage backups into residences and compromised treatment of the waste water. As a result, the State of Maryland and the Town entered into a Consent Agreement in May of 2005 severely limiting the annual number of additional connections to the system until major improvements to the collection system are implemented to substantially reduce the I&I problem.

Peak cumulative flow to the wastewater plant reached a recent zenith in March 2010 with over 1.7 million gallons of material going to the plant. Previous peak months occurred in December 2009 (1.54 mgd), March 2007 (1.37 mgd). In addition to the improvements to the collection system, the Town is pursuing construction of a holding tank which will hold wastewater (and combined stormwater) until it can be safely and effectively treated at the plant. This facility will become more critical as the Town completes the ENR improvements which may increase the amount of time needed to treat effluent.

The Town undertook a major project starting in 2003 to inspect the collection system and identify specific components of the system that could be contributing to the I&I problem and commenced to repair the most serious sources of I&I in the system identified during the inspections. The repairs included a major project to replace or repair sections of collection system piping as well as repairing manholes, installing inflow protectors, and pumping station repairs. Additional corrective actions to further reduce the I&I problem were completed by the Town in 2010. Also, the State of Maryland has enacted a Watershed Based Permitting System that will go into effect in 2011 imposing strict Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) limits (nitrogen and phosphorus) on the effluent leaving the treatment plant and requiring upgrades to the plant under the State's Enhanced Nutrient Removal program.

Thus, the growth of the Town continues to be constrained by the waste water system to a very limited number of additional connections until the repairs are completed, the performance of the system under maximum demand situations can be assessed, the Consent Agreement lifted, and new connection allocations from the State received. As shown in the table on the following page (Table 6b), a very rough estimate of potential excess capacity after the repairs is approximately 195,000 gallons/day which translates to 780 equivalent dwelling units (EDU's). If the treatment

plant capacity remains limited after the repairs are completed, expansion of the plant may be required to support future growth, however it is expected that physical expansion at its current site would be limited to a 30% to 50% increase due to the size of the available property. The impact of any expansion on the TMDL limits would have to be evaluated. In addition, it is expected that significant portions of the collection system are nearing their flow capacity so that, depending upon the location of future development relative to the sewage treatment plant, significant upgrades of existing lines and/or development of new collection system lines to the sewage treatment plant may be required.

Table 6b
Waste Water System Capacity and Demand
(thousands of gallons/day)

	Existing Permitted Capacity	Current Average Flow	Current Available Capacity	Projected Development (20yrs)	Net Excess (Deficit)	Maximum Develop. Potential (at buildout)	Net Excess (Deficit)
Current	1,000	1,095	(95)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Estimate: after repairs	1,000	805	195 780 EDU's	175 700 EDU's	20 80 EDU's	499 1,996 EDU's	-304 -1,216 EDU's

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

Thurmont adopted an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance in 1995 including a section on Sewage Facilities and this section was modified in 2003 to clarify the requirements. The requirements of the ordinance are applied during the review and approval process for preliminary plats or site plans. The ordinance states: “The municipal sewage system shall be considered adequate if, given existing connections, future connections from buildings under construction, and developments with preliminary subdivision or site plan approval the systems designed to serve the proposed development are sufficient based on the annual MDE Rated Capacity of the Waste Water Treatment Plant to accommodate ultimate peak flows.” The developer has the option to offer the public facility improvements necessary to support the proposed development and to ensure adequacy of the public facilities set forth in the ordinance.

Storm Water Management

The setting of storm water management and sediment control requirements within the municipal boundaries as well as permitting, inspection, and approval of construction or grading impacting these is performed for the Town by Frederick County. The County storm water management and sediment control requirements are updated and maintained in accordance with State and Federal regulations. In the review and approval of development plans, site plans, and plats, the Town is sensitive to minimizing the impacts of the proposed activities and construction on the water quality of nearby streams and on the recharge of the aquifers underlying the Town through minimizing the extent of impervious areas and the use of best management practices for storm water management.

After experiencing erosion, pooling, and water in-leakage problems in and adjacent to recently constructed developments, the Town modified its Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision regulations which will apply to new developments. These modifications impose performance based surface water control requirements on the developer/builder to prevent damage to property within the developments and to the adjoining properties.

Non-point Source Pollution

Non-point source pollution is transported to surface and ground water as a result of run off from lawns, parking lots, roofs, and fields during rain storms. Stormwater transports sediment, nutrients, fertilizers, bacteria, heat, salt, oil, grease and other contaminants across the land to local streams and water bodies. On naturally vegetated (forests, meadows) and agricultural lands, stormwater permeates the soil and many pollutants are captured and filtered. Healthy streamside buffers and forest stands are particularly effective in this function. In developed areas, where much of the landscape is impervious (rooftops, driveways, parking lots, compacted or clay soils, and roads) direct ground water recharge is impeded and the volume of stormwater runoff into streams increases.

Non-point source pollution is detrimental to water quality and wildlife habitat and in our region and its cumulative impacts are degrading the Chesapeake Bay. Since land use conditions affect the amount and extent of non-point source pollution, future development patterns should take into account their potential impact in order to protect the County's streams and the Chesapeake Bay. The following section includes two analyses aimed at connecting land use planning with non-point source pollution. The first is an assessment of Frederick County's current levels of imperviousness; the second presents the potential nutrient pollution (a form of non-point source pollution) that could result from build-out of the County's land use plan.

Impervious Cover

Overall watershed imperviousness has been linked to a wide range of negative impacts to stream hydrology, stream morphology, biological habitat, and water quality. Research reveals that when impervious cover within a watershed exceeds about 10 percent, sensitive stream elements are lost. In cold-water regions supporting native brook trout reproduction, imperviousness of greater than 1 percent results in the loss of brook trout population. Once imperviousness reaches 25 to 30 percent, studies show that most indicators of stream quality shift to a poor condition as a result of severe impacts from erosion, channel instability, severe habitat degradation and decreasing biological integrity.

Estimated Percent Impervious Cover, by watershed (2008)			
<i>Watershed</i>	<i>% impervious</i>	<i>Watershed</i>	<i>% impervious</i>
Ballenger Creek	18.3	Lower Bush	9.4
Bennett Creek	6	Lower Linganore	7.1
Carroll Creek	26.5	Middle Creek	2
Catoctin Creek	3.7	Monocacy Direct	4.2
Fishing Creek	3.6	Potomac Direct	6
Glade Creek	4.7	Owens Creek	2
Hunting Creek	3.8	Toms Creek	3.6
Israel Creek	4.1	Tuscarora Creek	9.1
Little Catoctin	6	Upper Bush Creek	11.2
Little Pipe	1.1	Upper Linganore Creek	2.3

Nutrient pollution

Excessive amounts of nutrients, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, are the main cause of the Chesapeake Bay's poor health.² Nutrient pollution leads to algal growth and oxygen depletion, which create an uninhabitable environment for most aquatic life. Similar to the impervious cover analysis, the County's current land use plan was evaluated to determine its impact of land use on nitrogen and phosphorus pollution.

Table: Nitrogen Loading Summary			
Land Use/Cover	Current (lbs/year)	Future (lbs/year)	Change (lbs/year)
Development	428,918	1,055,798	626,880
Agriculture	2,520,798	2,088,181	-432,616
Forest	292,832	176,298	-116,534
Water	23,433	18,802	-4,631
Other	70,286	188,985	118,699
Total Terrestrial Load	3,336,267	3,528,065	191,798
Residential Septic (edus)	485,802	615,231	129,428
Non-residential Septic (edus)	18,439	21,395	2,956
Total Septic Load	504,242	636,626	132,384
Total NPS Nitrogen Load	3,840,509	4,164,691	324,182

The methodology was provided by MDE and incorporated loading rates by very generalized land use/cover categories derived from the Chesapeake Bay Program Watershed Model (Phase 4.3) for the Potomac River basin. Estimated septic system loads for residential and non-residential development are included in the data. For the current conditions the land use/cover is derived from high altitude photography and satellite imagery as of 2002. Generally, only land uses greater than 10 acres in size are identified. The Tables below compare the nitrogen and

² 2008. Chesapeake Bay Program web site. <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/nutrients>. "Nutrients".

phosphorus loads based on the current land use/cover conditions and with the build out conditions of the County’s land use plan.

Table: Phosphorus Loading Summary			
Land Use/Cover	Current (lbs/year)	Future (lbs/year)	Change (lbs/year)
Development	38,062	96,618	58,556
Agriculture	260,301	211,802	-48,499
Forest	3,211	1,933	-1,278
Water	1,625	1,304	-321
Other	6,407	17,319	10,912
Total NPS Phosphorus Load	309,606	328,976	19,370

In future long range plans, the Town of Thurmont hopes to have at its disposal more specific watershed and sub-watershed data in order to better understand and mitigate stormwater impacts on water resources. In the meantime, it is the general assumption that any impacts from development occurring on undeveloped land within the Thurmont’s Community Growth Area would likely be off-set by the conversion of those currently farmed parcels out of agricultural use.

House Bill 786 – Stormwater Management Act of 2007

Currently, developers are subject to stormwater management laws that require sediment fencing, construction of stormwater management ponds, and other best management practices. In 2007, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation (House Bill 786), which will ensure developers control runoff from construction sites and use low impact development design to better manage stormwater. Enhancements will continue to be made as the manual is updated to comply with the Stormwater Management Act of 2007.

Frederick County adopted new interim stormwater regulations in May 2010 to address the new legislation. These new rules will utilized on all new, previously unapproved projects in the County, including within the Town of Thurmont.

Water Resources – Policies and Objectives

Policies

- Maintain and expand wastewater treatment facilities to accommodate a reasonable rate of residential growth while minimizing detrimental impact to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
- Work to naturalize as many of the Town's waterways as is feasible while maintaining the character of the built environment in this growth area.
- Protect the groundwater recharge areas around the Town's wells.
- Seek out the best and most current information available regarding water resources in and around Thurmont and use this information to further the goal of planning adequately to protect and responsibly use these resources.

Objectives

- Pursue implementation of ENR (Enhanced Nutrient Removal) at the wastewater treatment plant.
- Adopt LID (Low Impact Design) strategies during the updating of the Subdivision Regulations and Site Plan Review standards.
- Coordinate stormwater management facilities and strategies to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and that performance is enhanced.
- Work closely with Frederick County as it develops its Countywide Water Resources Element, particularly in regard to sub-basin supply and demand and stream quality (TMDL) issues.
- Adopt necessary updates to this Water Resources Element to ensure concurrence with appropriate County policies outlined in its own Water Resources Element and to meet the statutory requirements of Maryland's HB 1141.



Municipal Growth & Land Use

Historically, Thurmont has been an appealing location for economic and residential development in the northern part of Frederick County. The Town's central location and its proximity to major transportation routes such as US 15 and the Maryland Midland Railway have contributed to Thurmont's identification in Frederick County's 2010 *Comprehensive Plan* as a Community Growth Area.

As a Community Growth Area with public water and sewer services, as well as other community facilities, Thurmont is in a position to progress in a manner that is consistent with being a regional growth center. With careful planning – and adequate resources to improve and maintain its community infrastructure - Thurmont can also retain its small town character.

Since its colonial settlement in the 1700's Thurmont has developed with a diversity of land uses including industrial and manufacturing businesses, community-oriented commercial uses, highway-oriented commercial uses, and a range of residential dwellings from apartments and condominiums, to townhouses and single family homes. As is characteristic of most small towns, these land uses developed in close proximity to the town center with ready access to transportation routes, sources of power, and buildable real estate. The vitality and character of Thurmont owes much to this initial kernel of settlement activity.

Historic Development Patterns

When Thurmont was first settled, it developed in a very compact manner centered around the intersection of MD 77 and MD 806. For most of its history the Town continued to grow out from the center as roads, water lines and sewer service were extended. Through the 1950's the location of new development occurred primarily around the edges of the Town Center leaving significant areas of vacant land in the middle. This process accelerated in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's when most of the new development that occurred was located in newly annexed land forming a ring around the Town Center and various vacant properties that had been left undeveloped. Historically, land costs and conventional development patterns have exerted little pressure on underdeveloped (or undeveloped) lands within the town. It has remained much easier to develop vacant land on the outskirts of the municipality – typically already cleared of forest and brush due to agricultural activities – than to develop or redevelop within.

The implications of this scenario continuing into the future are as follows:

- Requires extension of roads and water and sewer lines – facilities that will require long-term maintenance by generations of future Thurmont residents.
- Community-provided support services such as fire and rescue, police protection, and solid waste removal are spread over a larger physical area without sufficient revenue (density) to sustain them.
- Water and sewer capacity is used up by outlying development thus requiring expansion or substantial improvement of the systems when infill areas do begin developing.
- The compact character of the Town is replaced by a sprawling, decentralized pattern of development.

Growth Management Strategies

This Plan proposes a combination of strategies to manage the amount and rate of growth in Thurmont to conform to the desires articulated throughout this planning process by the residents of the Town. Implemented together these strategies should provide Thurmont with a *comprehensive* approach that will help to maintain Thurmont's small town character and provide adequate community facilities.

Based on the results of the Citizen Planning Survey conducted at the beginning of the Master Plan update process, 60% of the town residents responding to the survey believe that the current residential growth rate (54 new homes per year) is too high while just under one-third thought the growth rate to be 'just right'. When asked what they would do given the power to change anything about Thurmont, one in ten respondents identified their desire to stop or reduce residential growth as their primary task. Most telling was the fact that 85% of the survey respondents considered Thurmont's small town atmosphere as its most important characteristic. From this basis, and from the results of the community workshops and the experience of the Town's citizen planners, the Planning and Zoning Commission developed a four-point approach to managing future growth in Thurmont.

The determination of what local residents might consider a reasonable rate of growth for Thurmont relies on two factors: first, that it be something less than the 54 dwellings per year rate that a majority of survey respondents felt to be unacceptable; and, second, that the rate maintain a reasonable connection to historical development regulation in the Town. The current policy and practice of the Planning and Zoning Commission is to limit residential buildout to annual phases of 25 dwellings in each approved subdivision. A study of residential construction activity in Thurmont outside of major subdivisions reveals that in most years, this type of residential construction occurs at a rate of less than 10 dwellings per year. Thus, an average residential growth rate target of 25-35 du/year or less would appear to satisfy most residents, and a desire to preserve the small town atmosphere would indicate that we should, among other things, try to focus development within or close to the current town limits rather than favoring outward expansion of the municipal boundaries.

To achieve this goal of 25 – 35 dwellings per year will require a coordinated approach – the *Four C's Strategy* - by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Commissioners involving:

- Constraints on the build-out rate for subdivisions through continuing the policy used historically and consideration of incorporating same into the Town's land use regulations where possible,
- Control of rezonings to residential classifications within the Town Limits,
- Careful management of timing of annexations for residential development, and
- Consistency with the Municipal Growth Boundary including careful control of the geographic location and physical size of these annexations.

Residential Growth Strategies

A build-out rate limit for each subdivision of 25 DU's per year has been used historically and is reasonable and defensible based on prudent management of the integration of these housing units into the infrastructure of the Town. This, combined with the objective of never allowing the backlog of large properties annexed and/or rezoned for residential development to exceed that which would result in the build-out of more than one large development at a time should result in the limiting of residential growth to an average of about 30 DU's/year.

It also needs to be recognized that factors unique to the development of a planned subdivision may allow for variation in the annual build-out rate. Such factors may include: the inclusion of a mix of housing types; proximity to major transportation routes; or provisions reducing the impact upon Town infrastructure. As long as there remains a consistency with the average rate of growth over time, consideration of these factors in determining limited short-term variations in the policy are fair and reasonable.

Development of a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) floating zone - allowing the town to control the rate at which property becomes available for development *within the existing town boundaries* and place appropriate conditions on its development – moved forward beginning in late 2009 and culminated in the adoption of the ordinance in November 2010. The Town cannot easily control the build-out of individual lots or small subdivisions already zoned for residential uses within the Town limits, however the rate of build-out for these infill lots has historically remained low. Thus, the adoption of the locally-inspired Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) floating zoning district should be effective in managing new modestly sized developments on vacant or underused lands within the municipal borders.

An important aspect of maintaining the small town character of Thurmont will be to keep the community, as much as possible given the past development patterns, a cohesive geographical unit and limit sprawl development. In addition, to minimize the expense and difficulty in building and maintaining the infrastructure and providing the services to residences, development should be physically proximate to existing infrastructure, utilize existing capabilities and favorable topography, conform to natural boundaries, and preserve sensitive and natural heritage areas. In short, *priority should be given to development within the Town limits before additional property is annexed.*

Commercial/Industrial Growth Strategies

The 1998 plan encouraged development of vacant land already zoned commercial or industrial within the Town limits and proposed that a parcel of land on the south side of Thurmont Boulevard. be designated as Commercial/Office. The results of the recent survey indicated that the respondents favored retail, home-based businesses, artisan/craftsmen, restaurants, professional services, nonprofits, light industry, specialized agricultural, banks, and tourism related businesses. Opposed were warehousing/distribution, heavy industry, taverns/lounges, and shopping plazas/malls. Most current industrial areas are on the east side of town where access requires traversing residential neighborhoods so expansion of these areas are not feasible unless or until an industrial bypass/parkway is built. The Town may wish to study the viability of lands in and around Thurmont for the purpose of facilitating office and employment development.

Municipal Growth Boundary

The Thurmont Master Plan includes an adopted Municipal Growth Area which delineates the maximum geographical expansion of the Town during the 20-year horizon of this document. However, expansion by the Town to this maximum extent would most likely not take place during the life of the master plan. Some reasons for establishing a growth boundary are as follows:

- To control sprawl.
- To create a rational municipal growth limit that is within the community's ability to maintain with adequate infrastructure.
- To control utility extensions and the need for new facilities such as sewage treatment plants, pumping stations, etc.
- To protect agricultural land and provide a clear demarcation line between the rural areas and the developed areas.
- To concentrate growth into appropriate areas.
- To nurture the compact neighborhood development pattern that defines Thurmont's small town character.

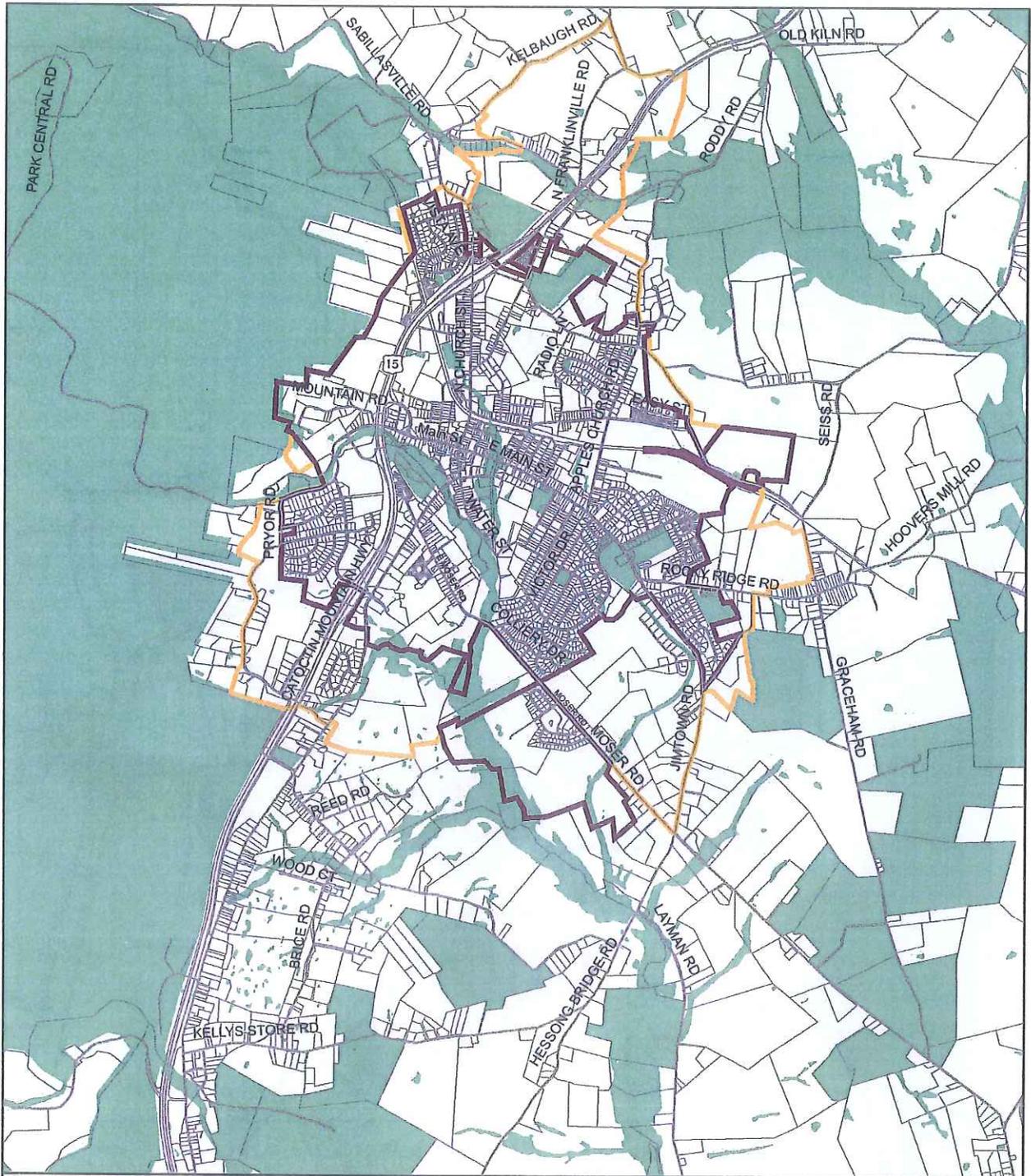
A number of features have been used to aid in the delineation of the growth boundary. Many of these features are shown on the Environmental Constraints map on the following page and are described below.

Parkland

The western Town boundary adjoins the boundary of Catoclin Mountain Park and is close to the boundary of Cunningham Falls State Park. Also west of Pryor Road is the Thurmont watershed property which adjoins the Cunningham Falls State Park. Combined, these public parklands create a formidable, yet natural, limit to Thurmont's westward expansion.

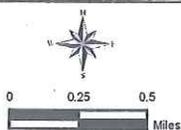
Graceham

Graceham has existed as a small rural community throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. This community maintains a distinctive physical and historical character that should be respected and nurtured. During the functional life of this planning document, Thurmont's eastward growth should stop prior to reaching the western edges of this crossroads village. In future decades, the Town should consider the annexation of the land that makes up the northwest quadrant of Graceham in order to exercise control over its eventual disposition. This plan designates the Edenrae property – the land comprising this quadrant – as Agricultural/Rural but does so with the knowledge that any agricultural use of the land is likely to be temporary in nature. Should the Town of Thurmont be ordered by the State of Maryland to provide water and/or sewer service to the rural community of Graceham, the Town should consider development proposals for the Edenrae property and seek annexation of that property.



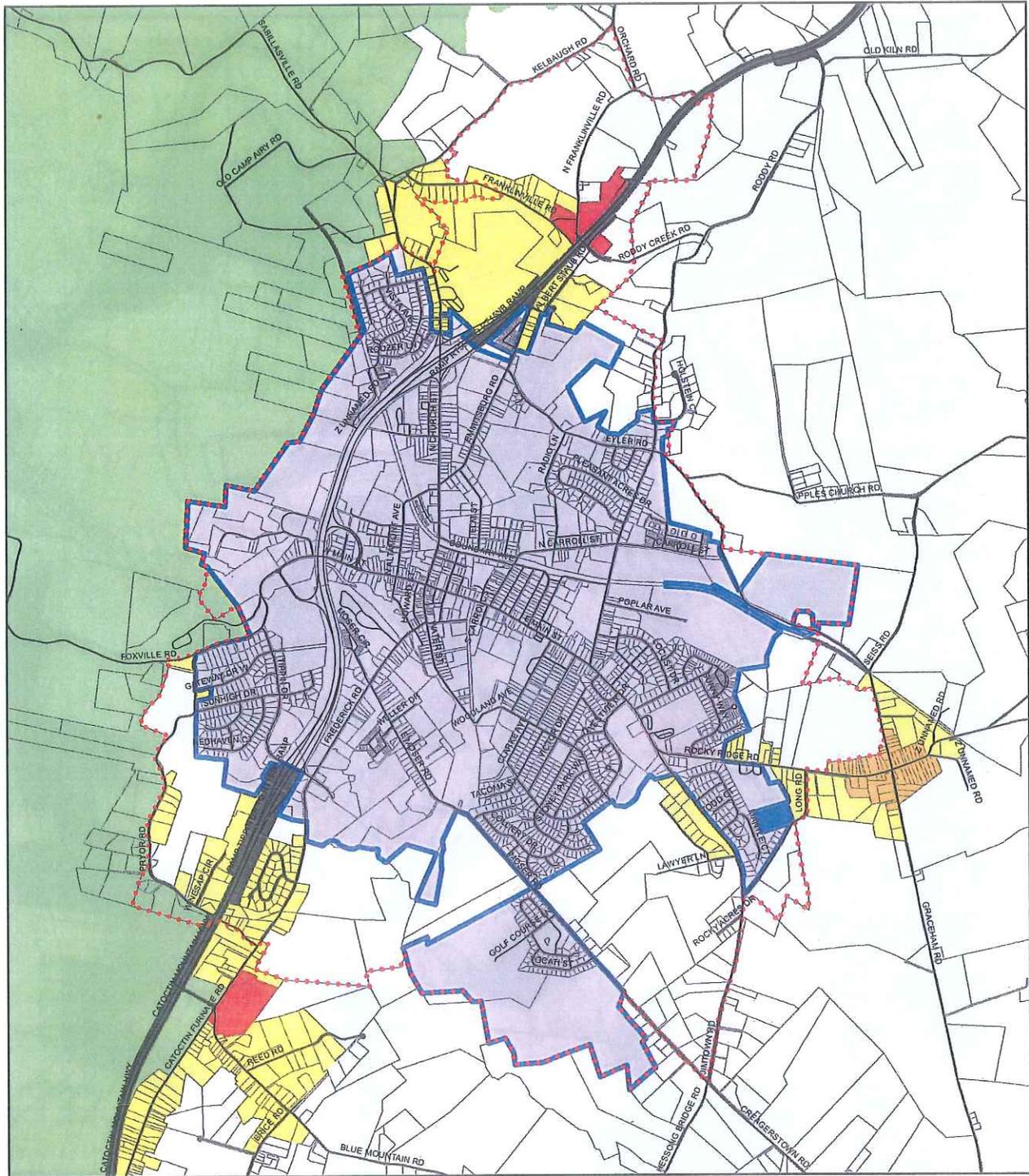
Environmental Constraints of Thurmont

-  Current Municipal Boundary
-  Community Growth Boundary
-  Environmental Constraints: Floodplain, Wetlands, Agricultural Preservation, Parks, and Steep Slopes



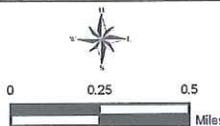
While efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map, Frederick County accepts no responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional inaccuracies in the content of this map. The parcels are a draft product that may not be current and may contain positional inaccuracies.

Prepared by Frederick County Division of Planning
December 8, 2010



Current County Zoning

- | | |
|---|--|
| R1 (Residential) | Agricultural |
| R3 (Residential) | Resource Conservation |
| General Commercial | Institutional |



While efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map, Frederick County accepts no responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional inaccuracies in the content of this map. Reliance on this map is at the risk of the user.

Prepared by Frederick County Division of Planning
December 9, 2010

Agricultural Land

To the north and east of Thurmont are productive farming operations that should be protected from the encroachment of development. Of particular interest are two Agricultural Preservation Districts (created in 1995 and 1999) that have since sold their development rights to the State under the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation program thus keeping these farms protected from development and hopefully in active agricultural use *in perpetuity*.

Drainage Basin Boundary

This feature defines the area that would flow by gravity into the Town's sewage treatment plant. Development outside of the drainage basin requires the use of pumping stations or a second sewage treatment plant which would necessarily add to the long term operation and maintenance costs of the Town. To maximize the efficiency of the infrastructure, as much development as possible should be concentrated within the drainage basin boundary.

Natural Features

Features such as streams, woodlands, and ridges should be used to define community boundaries. Particularly when trying to maintain a clear demarcation between development in the Town and the surrounding agricultural area having a buffer such as a stream with its floodplain and adjoining woodlands can act as a very effective buffer.

Municipal Growth Area and Boundary

An important aspect of municipal growth areas (MGA's) and their associated municipal growth boundaries is to allow for some growth to take place and not constrain development to the point where pressure will be created to expand the boundary on a regular basis. Other communities that have established growth boundaries have typically located them far enough beyond their current boundary to accommodate at least 20 years of growth. While for some communities a growth boundary is flexible and subject to change, for others it can be regarded as an ultimate limit that should never be expanded. Based on Thurmont's *current* building rate (approximately 44 dwelling units/year since 1999) the recommended MGA in this plan – including lands within the existing municipal boundary - could accommodate up to forty five years of growth.

The planning horizon for this Master Plan update is approximately 20 years. If we assume an average of 25-35 du/year, the resultant development yield is 500 to 700 units over that period. This amount of residential development corresponds with the expected ability to provide adequate drinking water and wastewater treatment services to these new homes without the need to expand gross capacity. The land area required for these units will be significantly influenced by the type of residential zoning expected for the annexed and rezoned areas. However, the Planning and Zoning Commission has specifically noted that the provision of additional land within the municipal growth area is provided *to allow for flexibility in the marketplace, shifts in residential needs, and local competition to prevent a land monopoly in future growth areas*. The response to the community survey indicated a preference for affordable starter homes, "step up" family homes, and senior/assisted living/nursing facilities.

It should be emphasized that the Municipal Growth Area represents the ultimate limits of the Town of Thurmont assuming that the infrastructure and community facilities are adequate to handle the development. There would be no obligation by the Town to annex land in this area if

facilities were not adequate or if sufficient developable land within the town limits existed. Under these conditions the Town may never wish to expand to fill the entirety of the Municipal Growth Area.

The table below describes the residential development potential of land within the Municipal Growth Area (Additional information and analysis is provided under “Chapter 15 - Supporting Material”). The acreage shown is only for land with some development potential and does not reflect the total amount of land that could ultimately be annexed.

Table 7

Residential Buildout Potential Thurmont - Municipal Growth Area				
Land Use Designation	Vacant Acres Designated in Town (Current Municipal Boundary)	Vacant Acres Designated in MGB (Beyond Town Boundary)	Potential Dwelling Units (2)	Population Potential (1)
Low Density Residential	19	18	80	211
Medium Density Residential	71	487	1,808	4,773
High Density Residential	6	0	31	83
Mixed Use Village	9	82	78	207
TOTAL	105	587	1,997	5,273

Source: Frederick County Division of Planning, Spring 2008

(1) Based on per household population of 2.64 persons

(2) Assumes land utilization rate of 60%

Beyond the Municipal Growth Boundary

While the Municipal Growth Boundary serves its function as a guide to any future expansion of the Town, it is ultimately the elected and appointed officials who make the day-to-day decisions regarding Thurmont’s growth. As such, there may be instances when the Town finds it necessary to alter the Growth Boundary or supersede its limits in order to protect the interests of the community. Examples include:

- Natural Resource/Agricultural protection efforts (including public and private easement

programs) that create legal or physical obstacles to growth within the Municipal Growth Area;

- Growth or development on the edges of the Town that impedes orderly expansion of Thurmont into its Municipal Growth Area;
- Other Federal, State, or County policies that prevent or impede the Town's natural growth patterns.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

In 1996 Thurmont adopted an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) which went into effect on October 25, 1995 and has been refined since that time. The APFO establishes capacity limits for water, sewer, roads, and schools which, if exceeded, would severely overtax these services. If a proposed development would cause any one of the thresholds to be exceeded then the development could not be approved. Continued enforcement of the APFO will ensure that if the above growth management strategy is unsuccessful or if the infrastructure develops unanticipated problems or cannot be enhanced at a reasonable rate, development will cease until the infrastructure problems are rectified.

Land Use Designations

There have been a few changes in the types of designations identified on the land use plan. Several new categories have been included such as institutional and sensitive areas, to better reflect the existing land uses.

Resource Conservation (Sensitive Areas)

As required by the Maryland Planning Act a Sensitive Areas Element must be included within a jurisdiction's master plan. The sensitive areas as defined in the Thurmont Master Plan include 100-year floodplain, stream buffers, and wetlands. This plan designates these areas as 'Resource Conservation'.

The zoning of sensitive areas will vary according to the existing zoning on the properties as well as an assessment of future land use. Since these features are generally regulated through other means, it is not necessary that they be specifically zoned as Open Space.

Public Parkland/Open Space

This is a renamed land use designation that was previously included known as the Public Parkland designation in the 1998 Master Plan. Privately-owned parklands are also included in this category. All of the Town parks – developed or not - are zoned Open Space.

Institutional

This is a new designation that encompasses government uses, utilities, schools, and large quasi public uses such as churches and the carnival grounds. These uses are significant enough in size to necessitate being recognized on the land use plan. Uses such as electric substations need to be identified to avoid planning incompatible land uses next to them.

These uses are typically allowed in any zoning district and will not warrant any rezoning as part of the comprehensive rezoning process.

Residential

The first residential development in Thurmont consisted of mostly single-family dwellings on small lots which were mixed with commercial and business uses in the downtown area. Beyond the downtown area residential development occurred along the main streets - MD 77, MD 806 (then, US 15) and MD 550 - and along side streets. Since the 1950's residential growth occurred in an irregular pattern with subdivisions being developed along the outskirts of Town and in small clusters with parcels of vacant land remaining.

The densities of the older residential areas range from 5.8 dwellings/acre along West Main Street to 3.3 dwellings/acre for the area between Carroll Street and Maple Drive. This latter density is fairly representative of single-family development in Thurmont. More recent developments which include townhouses and apartments have densities ranging from 9.4 to 11.8 dwellings/acre. These figures represent the gross densities which include roads, parking, and open space areas.

The type of housing that has been constructed in Thurmont has been predominantly single-family detached. In 1980 the existing housing stock was 68% single-family, 26% apartments, and 6% townhouses/duplexes. Within the 13 subdivisions currently under construction there is a total of 611 units proposed which consist of 67% single-family; 17% townhouses, and 16% apartments/condominiums. The citizen survey conducted as part of the Master Plan update indicated a preference for affordable starter homes, "step up" family homes, and senior/assisted living/nursing facilities and opposition to rental units and "up-scale/estate homes".

As part of the implementation of this Master Plan, the Town will re-categorize its existing residential zoning districts into three new districts: Town Center Residential (TCR), Village Center Residential (VCR), and Rural Residential (RUR). While this reconfiguration may not occur prior to the Comprehensive Rezoning process, the following land use designations – based primarily on unit density - will continue to apply to the newly configured districts.

Low Density Residential – The R-1 zoning district corresponds to this designation which only allows single-family dwellings with a minimum 12,000 sq. ft. lots. The maximum density would be approximately 3.6 dwellings/acre. The Low Density Residential areas are located primarily around the periphery of Thurmont including the area west of US 15 and north of Eyler Road. The purpose of the Low Density Residential designations in these areas is to provide a transition between the higher density development further within Town and the agricultural and rural residential development adjoining the existing and future town limits. Generally, this designation is used sparingly in future growth areas.

Reconfigured zoning district: Rural Residential

Medium Density Residential – There are three zoning districts under the medium density designation. The R-2 zone only allows single-family dwellings with a minimum lot size of 8,000 sq. ft. The R-3 zone permits single-family, duplex, and townhouses. A property must have a minimum 50% single-family and a maximum of 25% of the property developed with either duplexes or townhouses. The R-4 zone permits all of these dwelling types with no restrictions on the breakdown of dwelling types. The average density under this designation would 5.4 dwellings/acre. The Medium Density Residential designation includes the largest area of vacant land, 71 acres, within the existing town limits with by far the greatest amount of development potential at 487 dwellings. The MDR designation is also the primary land use identified in the future growth area with 487 acres and a potential for 1,800 dwellings.

Reconfigured zoning district: Village Center Residential

High Density Residential – The R-5 zoning district corresponds to this designation and allows all types of residential dwellings including apartments and condominiums. The maximum density allowed would be 8.7 dwellings/acre. All of the existing R-5 zoned properties have either been developed or approved for development. The Master Plan identifies two new areas for high density development. These areas are located along the proposed extension of Thurmont Boulevard and adjacent to the high density development north of the NVR site, which is outside the current Town limits. The area between Moser Road and the Thurmont Boulevard extension should be developed only when access to Thurmont Boulevard is provided.

Reconfigured zoning district: Town Center Residential

Commercial

The first commercial businesses were developed in the downtown area. As the Town grew, new commercial areas were built beyond the Square Corner along East Main Street, Church Street, and Frederick Road. Most of the businesses in these areas were oriented to the community and the surrounding region. Once U.S. 15 was relocated and widened highway oriented uses were developed at the MD 550/US 15 interchange at the northern end of Town and at the MD 806/US 15 interchange in the southern part of Town.

The resident survey indicated that the most desired types of businesses are retail, home based businesses, artisan/craftsmen, restaurants, professional services, nonprofits, light industry, specialized agricultural, banks, and tourism-related businesses. Types of businesses generally opposed by respondents to the survey were warehousing/distribution, heavy industry, taverns/lounges, and shopping plazas/malls.

The 1988 Master Plan only included one land use plan designation that encompassed all three commercial zones. In the 1998 Master Plan – and in this update - the land use plan will identify a land use plan designation to match each of the conventional zoning districts. Currently the Town has three commercial zoning districts: Town Business; General Business; and Office Commercial. A Mixed Use Village District is currently under development and will be available for the Comprehensive Rezoning process in 2009.

Village Center Designation (Town Business Zoning) – This zone was established primarily for the downtown area centered around the Square Corner. The TB Town Business zone permits a mix of commercial and residential uses often within the same building which is how many of the buildings were first used. There are no setbacks which would allow any new buildings to be constructed up to the sidewalk in keeping with the existing patterns.

General Business Designation (General Business Zoning) – The GB designation, and associated zoning district, is the broadest and most intensive of the commercial zones in terms of the number and type of uses permitted. The general uses permitted include retail, offices, service commercial, contractor uses, wholesaling, auto related services, and entertainment uses. The commercial area along North Church Street, north of Boundary Avenue is zoned GB. The Frederick Road corridor is also zoned for GB uses.

General Business/Environmentally-Constrained Designation – This designation allows for a limited number of acres in and around existing developed lands in the Town, to develop carefully

in concert with appropriate zoning and other regulations necessary to protect the sensitive natural resource. Conventional 'GB' zoning may be applied to significant areas under this designation, however the Town maintains the option of selecting less intensive zoning for portions of these properties for the purpose of maintaining the health of sensitive areas.

Industrial

Thurmont has had a long history of industrial uses including having the first match factory in the United States and other uses such as tanneries, a woolen mill, a furniture manufacturer, a shoe factory, and an edge tool factory. While these businesses are no longer operating, others have taken their place. The construction of the Western Maryland Railroad to Thurmont in 1872 helped in establishing this corridor along the tracks as the Town's industrial area. For a Town of its size and location Thurmont is fortunate to have several large employers including NVR Homes, and RR Donnelly. Together these two firms employ nearly 800 people.

One issue that has been identified with regards to the industrial uses is their location on the eastern side of Town which requires the traffic generated by them to travel through Town in order to access US 15. While there is little that can be done to improve the street network to minimize the impacts of this traffic, it is recommended that any new office/light industrial uses be developed in a newly designated area along Thurmont Boulevard, which would have direct access to US 15. The Town is currently exploring the possibility of an industrial parkway to the north of the town linking the main industrial area of the town with US 15.

Industrial – The I-1 industrial zone permits office uses, research and development, light manufacturing, warehousing, and all uses permitted in the GB General Business zone. This designation would still be focused in the existing areas along the railroad tracks.

Mixed Use Village

This designation has been created to accommodate and encourage two types of mixed use development in Thurmont:

- Low impact, small scale development in existing structures primarily along Main Street and at the junction of Moser Road and Frederick Road
- New mixed use development on vacant or under-developed parcels north of the existing town boundary between US 15 and Apples Church Road.

Two new zoning districts – the Mixed Use Village I and Mixed Use Village II Districts - were developed for these areas to provide appropriate regulations for the implementation of mixed use land uses in Thurmont.

Master Plan Development Potential

For the three major land use categories, residential, commercial, and industrial, the development potential for the build out of the Master Plan is described. The build out would include land within the current town limits and land in the proposed annexation area.

Residential Development Potential

The Town has designated approximately **600 acres** of vacant land primarily for residential development. The development potential for this residential land is approximately **2,000 dwellings** which at an average building rate of 35 dwellings per year would represent a **57-year supply**.

There is still a significant amount of residential development potential within the current Town limits. The proposed land use plan identifies over 100 acres of vacant and under-developed land suitable for low-, medium-, and high-density residential uses. Some of this acreage resides in the Mixed Use Village area. For the purposes of determining build out potential in the MXV, this plan assumes that roughly ten percent of the potential residential density would be developed. Most of the undeveloped residential areas within the Town boundary – over 70 acres - are designated for Medium Density Residential uses.

The total build out potential of the Master Plan would also include land within the annexation areas designated on the Future Growth Area/Land Use Plan Map. A summary of the development potential is provided in Table 7. This table does not include vacant commercial and industrial land, however the Mixed Use Village areas are assumed to accommodate some residential growth.

Pipeline Development

The current pipeline has diminished to less than six (6) potential lots/dwellings.

Vacant Land

Thurmont still has some number of properties that are zoned Agriculture and that would need to go through the rezoning process before having any development plans reviewed and approved. Table 7 shows the amount of vacant land by land use designation and the development potential for this residential acreage.

Commercial

Commercial development catering to highway users will continue to occur in the GB district while the less auto-dependent commercial activities will likely flourish in the TB district. The proposed Mixed Use Village districts will offer new options for commercial development that can be integrated into a compact and well-designed environment. With a variety of uses, the MXV districts can take advantage of the synergy between permanent residents, temporary visitors, office and institutional uses, and commercial activity. Although most commercial activity should take place in areas designated for General Business and Village Center uses, the MXV designation (and associated zoning regulations) should provide the opportunity for annexed areas to include small areas of neighborhood-oriented business activity.

Industrial

This plan focuses future industrial development in Thurmont onto existing industrial lands. The

Town should continue to maintain industrial activity on areas previously designated for such uses while encouraging new activity on underdeveloped parcels with Industrial zoning in order to make best use of the land within the current municipal boundary. Bio-tech and digital technology uses can clearly be located in the Town's industrial areas, however, the opportunity remains for these users to locate in commercial and mixed use village areas as well dependent upon the general nature of the activities to occur on a specific site. Future modifications to the zoning ordinance should reflect the fact that technology uses are often difficult to categorize based simply on use and may be best handled through 'performance standards'.

Development Timing and Town Priorities

The rate of development in future years forms the basis for Thurmont's growth management strategy in this plan. However, in an effort to provide some flexibility as to where future expansion occurs, the Town has provided four primary opportunity areas for future residential growth. To provide some guidance to current or future municipal officials facing multiple requests for new residential development, this plan establishes the following preferred sequence of physical development for the Town:

First Priority Area for Development – Lands Within the Current Municipal Boundary

Just under 100 acres of vacant land currently remain in the Town of Thurmont. Though not much of this acreage is contiguous or easily reached by current streets, the Town nonetheless sees the development –or redevelopment – of these lands for residential uses as a first tier supply that should be utilized before considering substantial new areas outside of Town. Utilization of the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) floating zoning district should provide opportunities for developers seeking to develop new neighborhoods in Thurmont.

Second Priority Area for Development – Lands Contiguous on the Southeast and Southwest

Hundreds of acres of land, currently contiguous to the Town and readily served by existing streets and State roads could support residential expansion over the next ten to fifteen years. The two sites for which annexation requests were submitted in September 2006 and subsequently withdrawn – the Drees Homes property (south of the Weis Market along MD 806) and the Beazer Homes Property (southeast of the East End Park between Moser Road and MD 550) – are logical growth areas for the Town each providing pragmatic benefits such as clear access to the transportation network or proximity to the wastewater treatment plant and other community facilities. Either of these expansion areas would offer realistic and functional connections to the existing Town and its neighborhoods without 'leap-frogging' other developable lands.

Third Priority Areas for Development – Lands Located Along Rocky Ridge Road

These lands, located along Rocky Ridge Road between Thurmont corporate limits and the community of Graceham, are in close proximity to the Town and two of its schools, but are limited by the current parcelization, existing low density residential uses, and an acknowledged hesitancy by the Town to impose itself on Graceham. Annexation of this area would allow the town to grow modestly without assuming control of a large physical land area. If the need arises

to serve households in Graceham with community water and sewer service, it may be in the best interest of Thurmont to work with landowners to annex these lands for the purpose of its eventual development for Medium Density Residential uses.

Fourth Priority Areas for Development – Lands Located West of US 15 and North of Town

Land areas situated on the southwestern corner of Thurmont, beyond the municipal boundaries, but adjacent to existing development are designated for Medium Density Residential uses in future years. The area that is contiguous to the Town on its northern edge is designated for Mixed Use Village development indicating the possible inclusion of some residential uses. Neither area is an immediate priority for residential growth in Thurmont with neither likely to develop in this way during the 20-year planning horizon sketched out in this document. Access issues as well as infrastructure challenges provide obstacles to short or mid-term development of these properties for new homes.

Special or Conditional Growth Areas

Thurmont's 25-year Annexation Plan identifies two areas of special concern regarding future growth at the edges of the Town.

The first is an area east of the current municipal limits that encompasses the small rural village of Graceham and is identified as the "Graceham Conditional Annexation Area". This relatively dense, rural community draws its potable water from individual wells. Residents are not served by a public wastewater treatment system but rather utilize on-site septic disposal systems. The proximity of these many wells to individually-maintained septic systems creates the very real possibility of a public health emergency due to well contamination. In this event, The State of Maryland would likely require that the approximately 75 homes in Graceham be served with public water and sewer from the Town of Thurmont. The Town would likely seek annexation of the area to be served in order to control land use (long-range planning, subdivision potential, and zoning) in Graceham. While the Town has no current plans to move forward with an annexation of the village, this option is illustrated on Thurmont's long range planning maps to allow for this possibility in future years.

The second area of special concern is the "Franklinville-Roddy Creek Economic Opportunity Area". This area is conceptually illustrated immediately north of the Municipal Growth Boundary on both the eastern and western sides of US 15 extending northward approximately one-half mile. This area is intended as a potential location for a non-residential, office/research or other employment center development that would be annexed by the Town in the event that a viable and complementary proposal was presented to the municipality. Proximity to US 15 would likely increase the value of this area for employment uses, however any development occurring at this location would likely be subject to conditions regarding highway access improvements. General development of this area is not planned to occur within the 20-year time horizon of this Master Plan, though the Town reserves the right to consider potential employment development of lands located primarily on the eastern side of US 15.

Summary

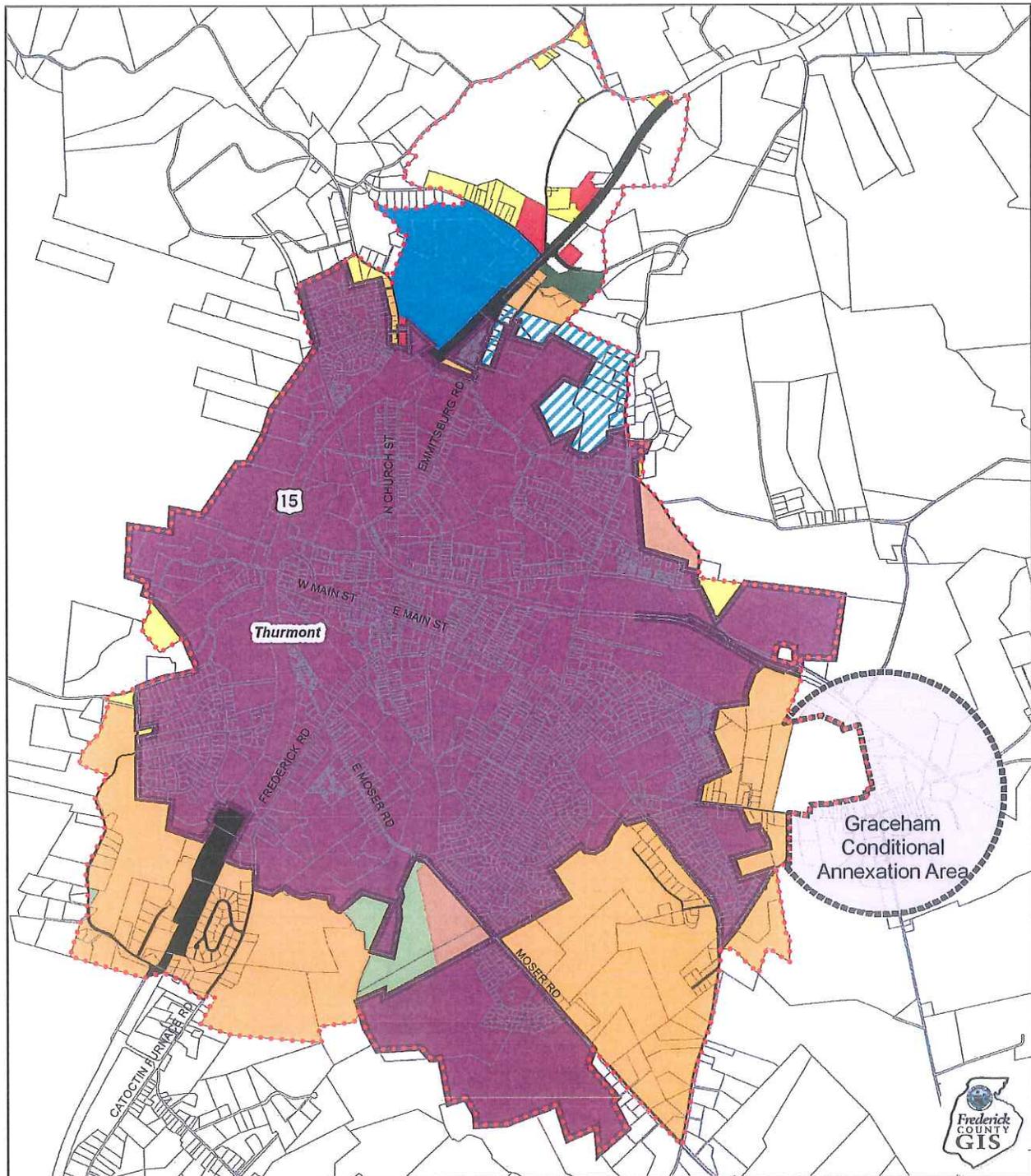
This plan's proposed Growth Management Strategy would seek to limit residential development to an annual rate of 35 dwellings. Additional land area – in excess of the acreage needed to provide 20 years of residential growth – is included in the Municipal Growth Area to provide geographical and market-driven options for both land developers and the Town in future years. ***This plan does not anticipate – nor does it advocate – the complete buildout and development of the entire growth area during the next twenty years.*** In fact, this plan seeks to establish Town policies that will – in a coordinated manner – allow Thurmont to grow at a modest and comfortable rate that does not threaten the fiscal, social, or functional health of the community.

It is the firm belief of the Town that a geographical constraint on the Municipal Growth Area intended to artificially limit the natural and market-driven expansion of a designated *Smart Growth* community, will serve only to encourage elected officials to consider violating their own growth boundary policy as they respond to annexation and development proposals. Thurmont's is a realistic and pragmatic approach to *truly* managing its own growth and achieving its own vision by: arresting sprawl development; encouraging current and future Marylanders to choose small town neighborhoods as their homes; maintaining, improving and expanding infrastructure without the use of significant State or Federal resources; providing for choice in the residential marketplace; maintaining flexibility for future decision-makers faced with increasingly complex environmental challenges; and by minimizing the reliance on population projections as a means of establishing controls on municipal growth and development and instead using the basic building block of a community – *the home* – as a tool for measuring the relative effectiveness of these growth management strategies.

Past trends, and future projections, indicate that Thurmont may stand to grow by 104 people – or 39 households – per year as we move into the later years of this decade and the early years of the next. If this is the case, then it appears that Thurmont's self-determined level of comfort, established as a rate of approximately thirty-five new dwellings per year, would be only slightly below that of the projected level of growth. An inspection of the Future Growth Area and Land Use Map will indicate that the Town may be geographically able to absorb this slightly elevated rate by either expanding into its determined Municipal Growth Area at a faster pace, or by increasing the density and intensity of land development on lands closer to, or within, the current municipal boundaries. In either scenario, the most limiting factors will be the provision of an adequate supply (with adequate pressure) of drinking water and the ability to effectively treat wastewater effluent in a way that meets new environmental standards established by the State of Maryland and the federal government..

While Thurmont's chosen approach to growth management established by this land use plan is not conventional, it is sound, reasoned, and locally-appropriate. Municipalities in Maryland are faced with the often conflicting statewide goals of accepting a large portion of future residential and commercial growth that is projected for Maryland while at the same time demonstrating how they may do so – often with limited local resources and increasingly strained infrastructure – in a way that acknowledges the sensitivity and very real limitations of our shared water and other natural resources. In this plan, Thurmont has chosen to demonstrate how its vision – primarily the maintenance of its small town character – can be fulfilled as it grows and develops in future years, by growing within its *existing means* to do so. By constraining its subdivision buildout rate, controlling the rate and location of residential rezonings, carefully managing the timing of any annexations, and consistently upholding the validity of its chosen physical growth

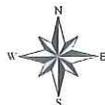
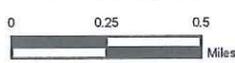
boundaries, the Town will be able to effectively utilize its existing water resources and wastewater treatment infrastructure. If the Town of Thurmont instead relies on projections of population growth as a means of establishing its growth management policies, it will forever find itself tied inextricably to past growth trends and rates of development that it has found to be uncomfortable, expensive, and simply not sustainable.



Town of Thurmont 25-Year Annexation Plan

- Resource Conservation
- General Industrial
- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Mixed Use Village
- Institutional
- Open Space/Parkland
- Annexation Plan Boundary

BoC Draft Plan
December 13, 2010



While efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map, Frederick County accepts no responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional inaccuracies in the content of this map. Reliance on this map is at the risk of the user. The parcels shown are a product of Frederick County Government. This product is in a preliminary stage and is not a final product. The Parcels may not be current and may contain positional inaccuracies.
Prepared by Frederick County Division of Planning
December 2010

Municipal Growth and Land Use - Policies and Objectives

Policies

- Provide for an adequate amount of land to accommodate residential growth that is consistent in quantity, location, and design with the goal of maintaining Thurmont's small town character.
- Provide an adequate amount of land to accommodate viable commercial and industrial growth that is consistent in quantity, location, and design with the policy of maintaining the small town character of Thurmont and that does not degrade the quality of life of Town residents.
- Encourage the integration of compatible land uses in desirable and convenient physical relationships
- The Board of Commissioners shall assure that the rate of growth is consistent with the desires of Thurmont residents and does not adversely impact the provision of public services and facilities.
- While observing land use designations and other factors germane to such decisions, encourage the development of vacant or underdeveloped land already within town limits.
- Create an environment for planning in Thurmont that encourages the Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and functional departments to coordinate efforts, communicate regularly, and cooperate to the greatest extent possible on issues related to the long term well-being of the community.

Objectives

- The Municipal Growth Boundary shall represent the intended long-term expansion limits of the Town. This growth boundary is not intended to encourage growth that subsumes all available vacant land within the timeframe of this planning document, but rather to provide various options for future development.
- Absent of significant reasons to act otherwise, annexation requests located beyond the MGB should not be approved by the Town Board of Commissioners except for properties with existing dwellings that are experiencing well or septic problems or other emergency health conditions.
- The historical (25 du/year) limit on the build-out rate for each subdivision should be maintained.
- Annexation, as well as the rezoning to residential classifications of lands within the Town Limits, should be carefully controlled to assure that no more than one large development is being built out at any one time.
- A mix of various housing types should continue to be provided to accommodate all income levels.
- Multi-family dwellings (duplexes, townhouses, apartments) should be distributed in small

- concentration and be integrated with single-family dwellings.
- Compact residential development should be encouraged to maximize the efficient use of the available vacant land which would reduce the need to annex.
 - Frontages along the railroad should be reserved for existing and proposed industrial uses.
 - The design and aesthetic quality of new development should follow traditional neighborhood design characteristics that would maintain and enhance the small town character of Thurmont.
 - A land use designation – Mixed Use Village – shall be created in order to provide opportunities for neighborhood-scaled, mixed-use development in areas beyond the downtown. A new zoning district or floating zone designation shall also be created in order to develop an appropriate regulatory framework for the Mixed Use Village area. (The Mixed Use Village Zoning Districts were adopted in 2008 and applied to the zoning map with the adoption of the Comprehensive Zoning Map on December 20, 2010).
 - Consider adopting land use regulations that allow compact, clustered development in areas of the town where conventional development patterns might result in degradation of the landscape and poor use of the land resource available for future growth.
 - Provide for a Planned Neighborhood Development (PND) floating zone that can be applied on some of the remaining open or agricultural lands in Thurmont as a way to provide for controlled residential or mixed use development within the Town’s existing municipal boundaries. (The TND Floating Zoning District was adopted in November 2010)
 - See “Growth Management Strategy” (p. 12-2)



Policies and Objectives

Summary of Plan Strategies

Strategies from each of this plan's topical sections are compiled on the following pages. These Policies and Objectives form the foundation of Thurmont's updated Master Plan.

The first strategy summarized below is perhaps the *most critical element* in this planning document. Without a sincere effort by town officials to respect an overall growth and annexation strategy, Thurmont will grow and develop in ways that severely hinder the ability of future leaders to provide services and facilities in an efficient and affordable manner.

Growth and Annexation Strategy

The Town should strive to maintain an average residential growth rate target of no more than 25-35 dwelling units per year. New residential subdivisions should be allotted 25 of those new dwelling units while the remaining 10 should remain available for infill development on a smaller scale.

A desire by citizens to preserve Thurmont's small town atmosphere indicates that we should, among other things, attempt to focus development within, or within close proximity to, the current town limits. The Town should avoid, whenever practical, allowing new development to occur in a pattern that adversely challenges the physical, social, and financial infrastructure of the community.

To achieve this will require a coordinated approach by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Commissioners involving:

- **Constraints** on the build-out rate for subdivisions through continuation of the policy used historically (and consideration of incorporating same into local regulations)
- **Control** of rezonings to residential classifications within the Town Limits
- **Careful management** of the timing of annexations for residential development, and
- **Consistency** with the Municipal Growth Boundary including careful control of the geographic location and physical size of these annexations.

Community Character – Policies and Objectives

Policies

CH1) Promote new development and reuse of existing structures which help in achieving the vision of Thurmont as a small town

CH2) Maintain and enhance the architectural character, scale, and streetscape of the downtown.

CH3) Recognize and protect the historic sites in Thurmont

CH4) Recognize the historic and continued connections between the Town of Thurmont and the agricultural operations, rural villages, and natural landscapes surrounding the community.

CH5) Support and nurture the development and growth of small, independently-owned businesses.

Objectives

ch1) When making determinations on land use proposals before the Town, favorable consideration should be given to new development that incorporates elements of Thurmont's historic residential and commercial development patterns.

ch2) Encourage developers to follow the design guidelines described in this plan

ch3) Encourage the protection and restoration of existing structures in order to maintain the character of the downtown

ch4) Encourage the rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing buildings through a combination of regulation, tax credits, and grant/loan assistance.

ch5) Consider adopting modest historic preservation guidelines that address buildings and sites with the greatest local significance.

ch6) Study the viability and cost of placing electric, cable, and other overhead wires underground in the downtown area.

Environment & Sensitive Areas – Policies and Objectives

Policies

- EN1) Protect the Town’s natural and environmentally sensitive resources
- EN2) Protect the quality of the air, water, and land from the adverse effects of development and growth
- EN3) Support municipal policies and regulations that insure the health and well-being of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
- EN4) Encourage the development and adoption of alternative energy technologies – at both the community and the individual scale - to serve residents and businesses in Thurmont.

Objectives

- en1) Development should not adversely affect sensitive areas
- en2) Natural features should be considered when establishing the ultimate expansion limits for the Town
- en3) Streams within the Town limit, which do not have any 100-year floodplain, should have a 50-foot buffer on each side of the stream within which structures, parking, and other improvements would be prohibited
- en4) Disturbance to natural vegetation within stream buffers including tree removal, shrub removal, clearing, burning, or grubbing shall not be permitted
- en5) The development or disturbance of streams or stream buffers for stormwater management shall not be permitted
- en6) Reforestation, required by the Forest Resource Ordinance (FRO), which cannot be handled on-site, should be located along streams in the Town
- en7) Promote development that minimizes its environmental impact through careful and compact design, use of alternative energy sources, use of native species vegetation in its landscaping, and promotes activities which minimize the use of motor vehicles.
- en8) Support and promote the use of native species landscaping in all subdivisions and site plans in the Town in order diminish the negative impacts of drought-intolerant or invasive plant and tree varieties.
- en9) Take steps to protect the municipal water supply by investigating the regulatory and non-regulatory options available and pursuing those that provide

adequate safeguards for drinking water.

en10) Encourage voluntary stewardship of the Town's precious natural resources by public, private, and institutional landowners.

en11) Consider adopting – either as regulations or guidelines - standards for design and development that minimize the environmental impact of new neighborhoods in the Town. The *LEED –Neighborhood Design* standards would provide a basis for these discussions.

en12) Promote Low Impact Design (LID) techniques for all new development and review municipal regulations to remove any obstacles to their use in the Town.

en13) Prepare an analysis of current and future nutrient pollution as it relates to current and planned land use cover.

Municipal Growth and Land Use – Policies and Objectives

Policies

LU1) Provide for an adequate amount of land to accommodate residential growth that is consistent in quantity, location, and design with the goal of maintaining Thurmont's small town character.

LU2) Provide an adequate amount of land to accommodate viable commercial and industrial growth that is consistent in quantity, location, and design with the policy of maintaining the small town character of Thurmont and that does not degrade the quality of life of Town residents.

LU3) Encourage the integration of compatible land uses in desirable and convenient physical relationships

LU4) The Board of Commissioners shall assure that the rate of growth is consistent with the desires of Thurmont residents and does not adversely impact the provision of public services and facilities.

LU5) Observing land use designations and other factors germane to such decisions, encourage the development of vacant or underdeveloped land already within town limits.

LU6) Create an environment for planning in Thurmont that encourages the Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and functional departments to coordinate efforts, communicate regularly, and cooperate to the greatest extent possible on issues related to the long term well-being of the community.

Objectives

lu1) The Municipal Growth Boundary shall represent the intended long-term expansion limits of the Town. This growth boundary is not intended to encourage growth that subsumes all available vacant land within the timeframe of this planning document, but rather to provide various options for future development.

lu2) Absent of significant reasons to act otherwise, annexation requests located beyond the MGB should not be approved by the Town Board of Commissioners except for properties with existing dwellings that are experiencing well or septic problems or other emergency health conditions.

lu3) The historical (25 du/year) limit on the build-out rate for each subdivision should be maintained.

lu4) Annexation, as well as the rezoning to residential classifications of lands

within the Town Limits, should be carefully controlled to assure that no more than one large development is being built out at any one time.

lu5) A mix of various housing types should continue to be provided to accommodate all income levels.

lu6) Multi-family dwellings (duplexes, townhouses, apartments) should be distributed in small concentration and be integrated with single-family dwellings.

lu7) Compact residential development should be encouraged to maximize the efficient use of the available vacant land which would reduce the need to annex.

lu8) Frontages along the railroad should be reserved for existing and proposed industrial uses.

lu9) The design and aesthetic quality of new development should follow traditional neighborhood design characteristics that would maintain and enhance the small town character of Thurmont.

lu10) A land use designation – Mixed Use Village – shall be created in order to provide opportunities for neighborhood-scaled, mixed use development in areas beyond the downtown. A new zoning district or floating zone designation shall also be created in order to develop an appropriate regulatory framework for the Mixed Use Village area.

lu11) Consider adopting land use regulations that allow compact, clustered development in areas of the town where conventional development patterns might result in degradation of the landscape and poor use of the land resource available for future growth.

lu12) Provide for a Planned Neighborhood Development (PND) floating zone that can be applied on some of the remaining open or agricultural lands in Thurmont as a way to provide for controlled residential or mixed use development within the Town's existing municipal boundaries.

lu13) See “Growth and Annexation Strategy”

Water Resources – Policies and Objectives

Policies

WR1) Maintain and expand wastewater treatment facilities to accommodate a reasonable rate of residential growth while minimizing detrimental impact to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

WR2) Work to naturalize as many of the Town's waterways as is feasible while maintaining the character of the built environment in this growth area.

WR3) Protect the groundwater recharge areas around the Town's wells.

WR4) Seek out the best and most current information available regarding water resources in and around Thurmont and use this information to further the goal of planning adequately to protect and responsibly use these resources.

Objectives

wr1) Pursue implementation of ENR (Enhanced Nutrient Removal) at the wastewater treatment plant.

wr2) Adopt LID (Low Impact Design) strategies during the updating of the Subdivision Regulations and Site Plan Review standards.

wr3) Coordinate stormwater management facilities and strategies to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and that performance is enhanced.

wr4) Work closely with Frederick County as it develops its Countywide Water Resources Element, particularly in regard to sub-basin supply and demand and stream quality (TMDL) issues.

wr5) Adopt necessary updates to this Water Resources Element to ensure concurrence with appropriate County policies outlined in its own Water Resources Element and to meet the statutory requirements of Maryland's HB 1141.

wr6) Discourage development that may have adverse impacts on groundwater, using as a basis for this determination, a wellhead protection plan.

Transportation and Access – Policies and Objectives

Policies

- T1) Coordinate street and pedestrian improvements with land use proposals
- T2) Provide a pedestrian environment that is safe, comfortable, and convenient
- T3) Improve pedestrian access along the existing street network to provide connections between residential areas and schools, parks, and businesses
- T4) Provide new street connections to improve vehicular and pedestrian mobility throughout the town
- T5) Develop and maintain the H&F Trolley Trail through the town to improve pedestrian access to the new regional library
- T6) Attempt to gain county and state support for an industrial parkway to provide direct access between the industrial area east of the town with US 15.

Objectives

- t1) Require through-streets in new development – and significant redevelopment - that provide connections between new and existing streets
- t2) New development will provide new sidewalks along all new or existing streets that have frontages along the development and within any right-of-way the Planning Commission deems advantageous to the pedestrian network in Thurmont
- t3) Encourage the use of traditional neighborhood design that could improve pedestrian accessibility
- t4) Pursue grants and other funding sources to repair degraded sidewalks and install new sidewalks in areas where they are missing to provide a continuous network for pedestrians.
- t5) Promote the demarcation of pedestrian crossings and the installation of sidewalks to provide pedestrian access to the Thurmont Regional Library.
- t6) Define a preferred alignment for an industrial parkway to service the industrial areas on the east side of town, pursue rights of way where possible, and develop state and county support for the project
- t7) Encourage development densities that support transit usage
- t8) Conduct an inventory of all sidewalks and pedestrian ways to determine which portions of the network should be prioritized for improvement, replacement, or design and construction.

t9) The highest priority should be given to developing and maintaining safe routes to schools serving the student population of Thurmont.

t10) Develop roadway sub-classifications that complement traditional neighborhood development.

Community Facilities – Policies and Objectives

Policies

CF1) Maintain and expand community facilities to assure adequate services for the community and accommodate a reasonable rate of residential growth (*25-35 dwelling units per year*).

CF2) Insure that additional neighborhood park sites are dedicated and developed to serve new development.

CF3) Protect the groundwater recharge areas around the Town's wells.

CF4) Maximize the efficient use of the Town's existing facilities.

CF5) Continue to provide for an excellent public safety infrastructure in Thurmont.

Objectives

cf1) When consistent with the Town's land use policies and regulations, the Town should seek to focus new development onto vacant and underdeveloped land already within the municipal limits.

cf2) Enforce and refine as necessary, the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) to assure that development does not proceed if community facilities are inadequate to accommodate it.

cf3) Consider requiring the dedication, development, and maintenance of a greater variety of neighborhood parks as part of the conditions for approval of new residential developments.

cf4) Develop and implement plans to resolve the problem of inadequate space in the Town's administrative, public safety, and public works facilities.

cf5) Develop and implement a policy to require new development to fund enough sewer and water system repair, maintenance, and upgrading to free up the sewer plant capacity needed to accommodate an equivalent amount of new development.

cf6) Impact fees should be reviewed on a regular basis and indexed appropriately to keep pace with the needs of the Town's infrastructure.

cf7) The Town should make every effort to vigorously maintain its existing and future infrastructure in order to protect its considerable investment in tangible systems and the quality of life in the community.

cf8) Seek establishment of a Mid-Town Parks Connector – a pedestrian network

to link existing and planned parks and open spaces in Thurmont.

cf9) Review development standards to insure fast response times and multiple routing options for emergency service providers.

Historic Preservation – Policies and Objectives

Policies

- H1) Preserve and re-use existing structures and assure that new development is in character with the historic pattern of the town.
- H2) Maintain and enhance the architectural character of the downtown
- H3) Recognize and protect the historic sites in Thurmont
- H4) Promote the preservation of the intrinsic scenic qualities of the US-15 corridor which has been designated as the Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway

Objectives

- h1) Encourage the protection and restoration of existing structures through the enactment of a demolition by neglect ordinance.
- h2) Insure that the planning and design of new developments is consistent with the traditional pattern of the Town's older core residential and commercial areas.
- h3) Encourage developers to follow the design guidelines and development principles described in this plan and in the Frederick County Community Design Guidelines and Development Principles, adopted July 16, 2002.
- h4) When reviewing plans for development, encourage the use of the design guidelines and development principles described in this plan and in the Frederick County Community Design Guidelines and Development Principles, adopted July 16, 2002.
- h5) The design principles described in the "Community Design" part of Section 4.1 of the "US 15 Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan" should be considered by developers in the design of projects within the view-shed of US-15 and will be considered (as non-regulatory guidelines) by the Town in the review of these projects.
- h6) Discuss the application of historic preservation guidelines as a means of maintaining the historic character of the downtown

Economic Character – Policies and Objectives

Policies

- EC1) When not in conflict with other provisions of this document, encourage the development of businesses in Thurmont that provide employment opportunities, tax revenue, and needed goods and services for local residents.
- EC2) Strive to make Thurmont a community that is friendly to small, independently-owned businesses.
- EC3) Consider revisions to local land use regulations that will encourage the following types of business: home-based business, general retail, artisan and craftsman businesses, restaurants, professional services, medical services, light industries, specialized agriculture, and tourism-related businesses.
- EC4) Support the town center as a hub for local retail and commercial activity
- EC5) Support zoning changes that will increase the likelihood of reinvestment in underdeveloped or dilapidated properties.

Objectives

- ec1) Develop appropriate zoning districts and regulations to implement the Mixed Use Village land use designation.
- ec2) Review regulations governing land uses in Thurmont's core economic development areas including the town center, industrial area, Frederick Road corridor (southern gateway), and northern Mixed Use Village area (northern gateway).
- ec3) Maintain flexible land use regulations in the town center to provide options for small, independently-owned businesses wishing to expand or locate in Thurmont's traditional retail and service core.
- ec4) Provide zoning incentives to encourage the redevelopment of older structures and underdeveloped parcels in the Town's key economic development areas.
- ec5) Take an active role in identifying a user for the former Structural Systems industrial site located along the Town's industrial-rail corridor.

Design Guidelines

In addition to the following guidelines, the design guidelines and development principles described in the Frederick County Community Design Guidelines and Development Principles, adopted July 16, 2006 should be applied where appropriate by the developers of property within the town and the Planning and Zoning Commission in the design and review of these projects.

Downtown Development

- New buildings should be located at the back of the sidewalk in line with buildings on adjoining properties. The front door should be oriented to the street and not to any parking lots to the side or rear of the building
- If parking is provided it should be located on the side or the rear of the building
- While an exact replication of 19th century architecture is not necessary, new structures should be consistent in scale, materials, and with some architectural detail similar to the existing 19th century structures in the downtown
- Signage should be in proper proportion with the building. Internal illuminated signs should be discouraged

Residential Development

- If several different dwelling types are proposed they should be integrated throughout the property and not have all of the townhouses or duplexes concentrated in one corner apart from the single-family dwellings
- The street layout should follow a grid pattern where topography allows. Multiple connections should be provided to existing streets to better integrate existing neighborhoods with the new development and to help spread the traffic among several streets. Cul-de-sacs should be discouraged
- The streets should be divided into blocks no longer than 300-400 feet. This would help encourage more pedestrian activity by keeping the blocks at a human scale, which reduces the perceived distance along a particular length of street
- A neighborhood park should be provided to serve 150-200 houses. The parks should be placed in central locations to provide easy pedestrian access to the entire neighborhood. They should be 20,000 – 40,000 sq. ft. in size to accommodate a playground area and an informal, multi-use playing field. The developer should be required to provide the

vegetation/facilities/fencing, etc. for these parks and the homeowners association should be responsible for maintenance of the park. These parks should be designed to provide an important physical focal point for the neighborhood that would also promote more social interaction.

- Front yard setbacks should be kept to a minimum in order to provide larger, more usable rear yards and to better define the street corridor. A 'build-to' line, that establishes a maximum setback, could be used
- The backyards of townhouses should not face directly onto a public street. The parking should be located in the rear. Apartments should also be placed along the street with parking on the side or in the rear of the property
- On-street parking – which helps reduce excessive paving for parking lots and also helps to slow traffic on the streets - should be encouraged for apartments and townhouses. For townhouses and apartment developments, only the minimum required parking should be off-street while visitor parking should be provided by on-street spaces

Commercial Development

- Parking should be located to the side and/or rear of the building. The building should be placed as close to the street as possible with the front door facing the street
- Pedestrian access from the sidewalk to the building, that is both safe and comfortable, should be provided
- Where permitted, on-street parking should be encouraged
- Signage should be appropriate to the scale of the building and compatible with the character of the Town. Low monument signs and signs attached to the building shall be encouraged
- Consideration should be given to having residential uses on the second floor of commercial/office buildings

Developments within the view-shed of US-15

- For development of property in Thurmont that is within the view-shed of US-15, the design principles described in the "Community Design" portion of Section 4.1 of the "US 15 Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan" shall be used as non-regulatory guidelines by the Planning and Zoning Commission in its review of site plans and subdivision applications.



Implementation: Getting Things Done

Implementation – Action Steps

Keeping a planning document from gathering dust on a shelf is an on-going effort that requires dedication, focus, and a straightforward method for reviewing – on a regular basis - the progress made by the Town over the life of the Master Plan.

Zoning Ordinance & Map - Recommendations

IPz1) The Commercial/Office zoning district should be modified to more closely match the ORI land use designation shown on the Land Use Plan Map. Use 2.4 (Hotels and Motels) should be modified to allow these uses only in conjunction with a conference center. Uses 2.5 – 2.9 (restaurants, cafés, delis, banks, dry cleaners, barber shops, beauty salons, and day care centers should be allowed only as part of mixed use developments including at least one of the uses described in 2.1-2.3.

IPz2) A residential zone or overlay should be established to promote and encourage the use of traditional town design standards including a mix of dwelling types and reduced setbacks from the street. The application of these standards could either be accomplished with a new zoning district that would require rezoning or with an overlay zone that could be applied over existing residential zoning districts

IPz3) A floating zone should be established – the Planned Neighborhood Development (PND) zone - which would encompass all the agricultural zoned land within the town limits and which would permit rezoning of the land to residential or other designation in a controlled and paced manner without the need to prove mistake or change in character of the neighborhood.

IPz4) *[eliminated, not replaced]*

IPz5) Re-organize Thurmont's residential zoning districts to reflect a non-pyramidal structure. Residential zoning districts should be able to accurately and regularly mirror the densities proscribed in the land use plan map.

IPz6) Provide incentives for developers, such as density bonuses, to use traditional neighborhood design elements in their projects

IPz7) One or more new zoning districts or floating zone designations shall be created in order to develop an appropriate regulatory framework for the new Mixed Use Village land use designation.

IPz8) Consider the adoption of 'form-based codes' when appropriate to allow development to occur that is closer in form and physical character to the traditional core neighborhoods of Thurmont.

IPz9) Adopt updated sign regulations that are consistent with other efforts and goals of the Town such as the Maryland Main Street program, downtown revitalization, and enhancement of the US 15 corridor.

IPz10) Create a new Site Plan Review section of the zoning ordinance that includes updated standards, improved application procedures, and formalized post-approval review procedures.

IPz11) Consolidate the Table of Uses into a more user-friendly format that allows easy access to necessary information and allows for quick and reliable comparison between zoning districts.

Subdivision Regulations – Recommendations

IPs1) Revise the street design standards to reflect the move toward narrower streets which follows traditional neighborhood design characteristics. The standards should provide for a range of widths depending on the expected level of traffic and the need for on-street parking

IPs2) Update the ordinance to reflect current procedures and to streamline the process as necessary

IPs3) Review the Subdivision regulations to assure that they are consistent with the design guidelines and development principles defined in this plan and in the *Frederick County Community Design Guidelines and Development Principles*, adopted July 16, 2002 and revise as necessary.

IPs4) Reference the non-regulatory guidelines and development principles described in the “Community Design” part of Section 4.1 of the “US 15 Catoclin Mountain Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan” for properties within the view-shed of US 15.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

IPa1) The APFO should be enforced and revised as necessary to assure that new development will not overburden the Town's infrastructure.

IPa2) The Planning & Zoning Commission should regularly review the benchmarks and standards that serve as trigger mechanisms in the APFO to ensure that the efforts of applicants striving to meet the standards of the APFO are not wasted and are instead directed toward providing mitigation for critical development impacts

Planning Procedures

IPp1) Create application forms for all regular planning processes occurring in Thurmont. A modest and fair fee schedule should be adopted to cover the costs of the applications submitted to the Town.

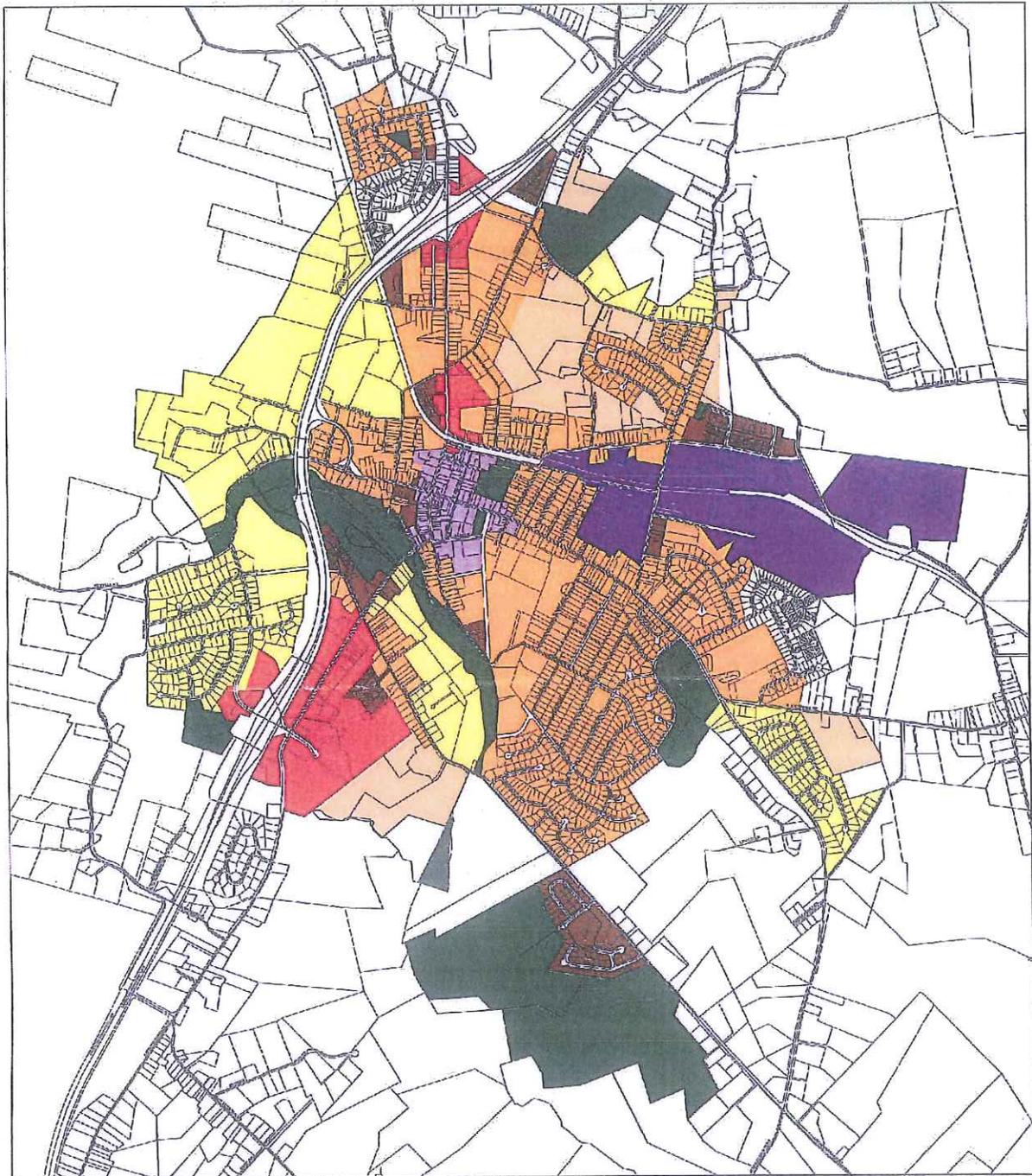
IPp2) Create a checklist review form and administrative process for the final review of developments once they have been completed to check against all Planning Commission documentation including subdivision plats, site plans, and other requirements and conditions of project approval.

IPp3) The Planning and Zoning Commission should commit to reviewing – on an annual basis – progress toward meeting the goals set forth in the Master Plan. A modest work program should be developed each year to insure that steady progress is made in completing tasks identified in the plan.



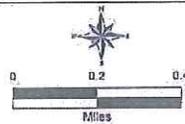
Supporting Material

- 1- **Previous (“Current”) Town Zoning Map** (Adopted 1998 and amended during ensuing years)
2. **Town Zoning Map** (as Adopted December 20, 2010)
3. **Water Resources Element: Additional Supporting Information**



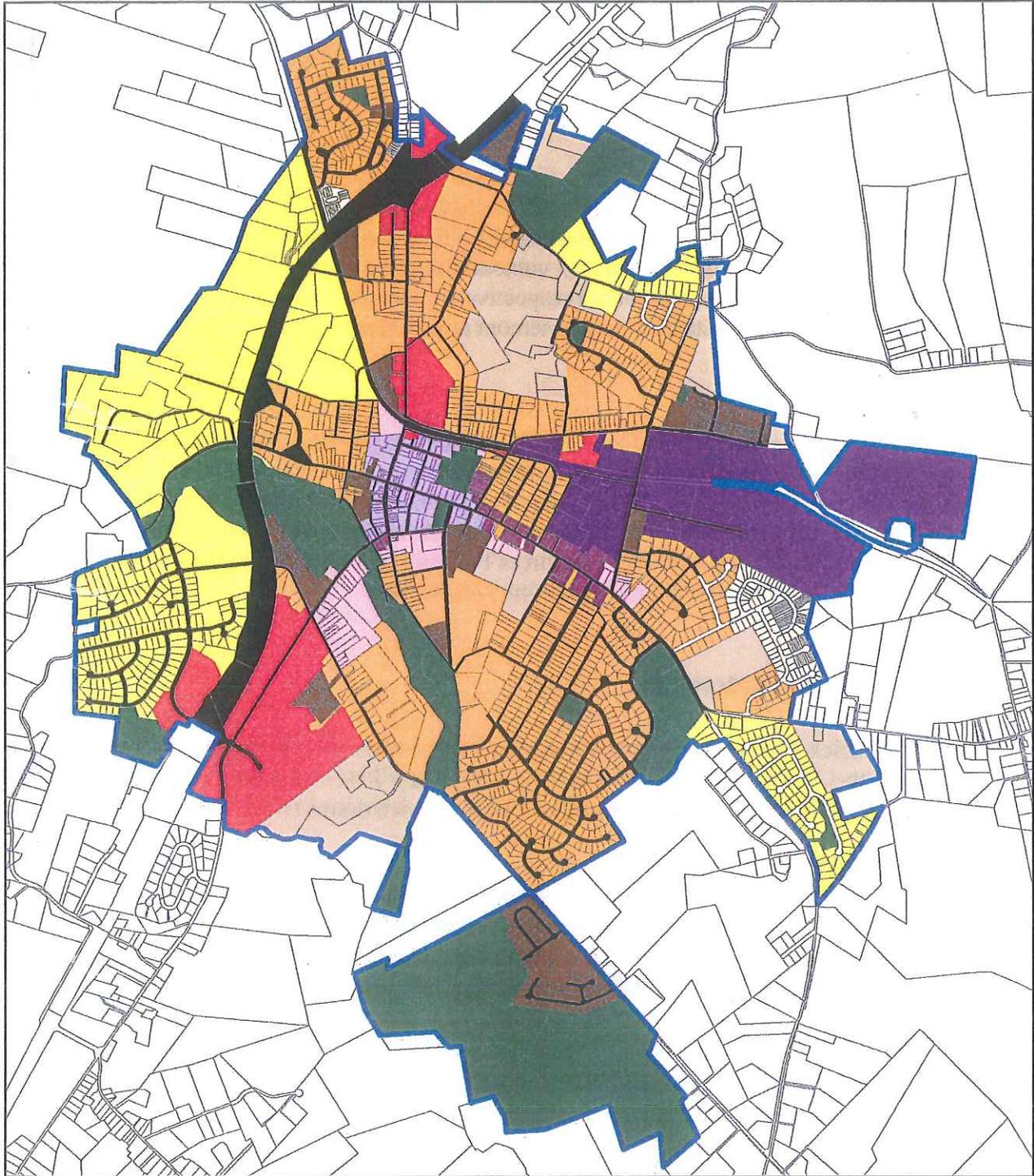
Current Town Zoning

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Municipalities | A1 (Agriculture) |
| R1 (Residential) | OS (Open Space) |
| R2 (Residential) | TB (Town Business) |
| R3 (Residential) | GB (General Business) |
| R5 (Residential) | I1 (Industrial) |



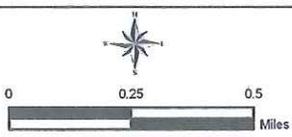
While efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map, Frederick County accepts no responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional inaccuracies in the content of this map. Balance on the map is at the risk of the user.

Prepared by Frederick County Division of Planning
June 2009



Town Zoning

- | | |
|---|---|
|  R1 (Residential) |  A1 (Agriculture) |
|  R2 (Residential) |  OS (Open Space) |
|  R3 (Residential) |  TB (Town Business) |
|  R5 (Residential) |  GB (General Business) |
|  MXV-I (Mixed Use Village I) |  I1 (Industrial) |
|  MXV-II (Mixed Use Village II) |  Municipal Boundary |



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Prepared by Frederick County Division of Planning
December 8, 2010

Water Resources Element – Supporting Information *Frederick County Water Resources Element (2009)*

Coordination with Municipalities

Twelve municipalities lie within the borders of Frederick County and nine provide public water and sewer service to the households and businesses within their municipal boundaries. Each is required to identify its own water resources vulnerabilities, limitations, and opportunities and include a water resources element in their respective comprehensive plans. Two of the County's smaller municipality's, Burkittsville and Rosemont are addressed as part of the County's Water Resource Plan.

To the extent possible, this plan includes qualitative and quantitative data from the municipalities on their drinking water, wastewater and storm water systems. A municipal survey and water resource data templates were distributed in an attempt to gather information from the municipalities. Policy statements and implementation strategies specific to the municipality will be independent of the County's Water Resources Plan and will be addressed within the respective municipal water resources and comprehensive plans.

Frederick County Watersheds

Water in Frederick County flows across two major watersheds – the Catoctin Creek watershed to the west of the Catoctin Mountains and the Monocacy River watershed to the east. Both watersheds lie within the larger Potomac River Basin, which drains to the Chesapeake Bay.

Monocacy River Watershed

The headwaters of the Monocacy River are in the Gettysburg, PA vicinity; the free flowing river meanders 58 miles south to its confluence with the Potomac near the Montgomery County line. Approximately 75% of Frederick County's land area drains to the Monocacy River. There are seven municipalities within the watershed including Emmitsburg, Frederick, Mount Airy, New Market, Thurmont, Walkersville and Woodsboro. In addition, ten unincorporated community growth areas are located in the watershed, including: Adamstown, Ballenger Creek, Buckeystown, Holly Hills, Libertytown, Linganore, Monrovia, Point of Rocks, Spring Ridge/Bartonsville, and Urbana.

The Monocacy River is an impaired stream and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) have been issued by MDE for fecal coliform bacteria in the upper and lower reaches of its watershed. Other Draft TMDL's are under review/comment for biological impairment (fish and stream insects), nutrients, and sediment. Two sub-watersheds, Linganore Creek and Double Pipe Creek, have been issued TMDL's for sediment and phosphorus as well as sediment and fecal coliform bacteria, respectively.

Improvements to the health of the Monocacy River and Catoctin Creek watersheds are needed to meet regulatory requirements and support a diverse ecological environment. Watersheds provide natural functions to communities such as flood control, reduction of carbon dioxide, sources of food and water, and recreational opportunities. Some of the watershed management issues that citizens, farmers, schools, governments, and businesses are tackling in Frederick County include:

- Reducing urban and storm water runoff;
- Restoring stream corridors;
- Controlling sediment and erosion during the land conversion process;
- Reducing impervious surfaces in new developments;
- Protecting habitat for birds, mammals, and aquatic life;
- Conserving water; and
- Planting trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants that are native to the area.

Ground Water

The available supply of ground water in Frederick County is dependent upon the underlying geologic conditions. In most areas, the water bearing characteristics of the geology offer low storage capacity and low transmissibility. An extensive stream network and the nature of fine particle soils contribute to these characteristics. The United States Geologic Survey (USGS) and Maryland Geological Survey have generalized the water yielding character of the County's aquifers and organized them by hydrogeomorphic region. The four regions located in Frederick County are Blue Ridge, Piedmont Crystalline, Piedmont Carbonate, and Mesozoic Lowlands (see Figure ___).

Each region is further defined by its Hydrologic Unit, which is numbered I – III. The most productive aquifers, Hydrologic Unit I, include the karst aquifers of the Frederick and Glade Valley (Piedmont Carbonate). The poorest aquifers, in terms of yield and capacity, include fractured rock aquifers in the Mount Airy, Ijamsville, and Jefferson areas (Piedmont Crystalline). Table __ presents the estimated yield and availability by acreage for the four regions during both average and dry years.

While karst aquifers provide the highest storage and capacity, they are more vulnerable to surface water contamination than most other aquifers. As a result, ground water in these areas can be contaminated with pathogenic organisms from septic systems and animal waste. Public water systems served by these relatively unprotected ground water sources are required to meet certain treatment requirements; however private wells serving homes and small businesses are less able to meet the complex treatment requirements.

In addition to geology, climatic conditions impact the county's supply of ground water. With water

Figure: Hydrogeomorphic Regions

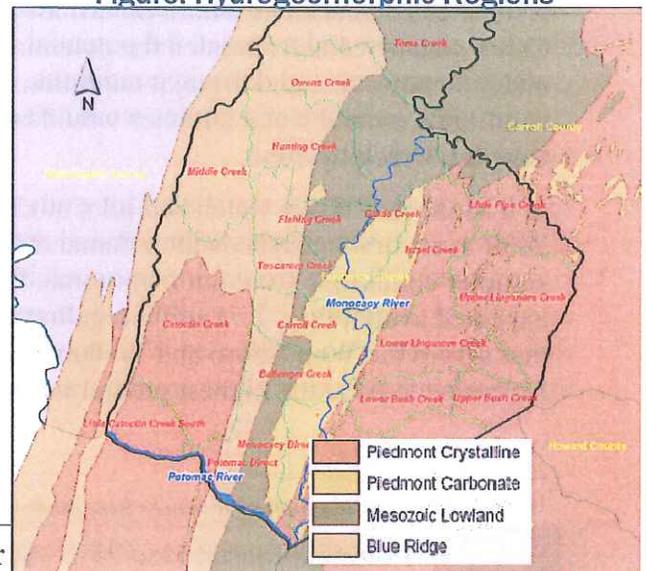


table conditions being most prevalent, seasonal variation in groundwater is a limitation to its use as a reliable supply. In a recent evaluation of the Catoctin Creek watershed, it was concluded that groundwater may be an adequate source during average precipitation years, but under drought conditions, groundwater supplies are not adequate to meet existing demand and support the biological and natural resources of the watershed¹. Ground water limitations are accentuated during the summer months. Mid-June through mid-September is the driest time of the year and ground water supply declines significantly during the summer quarter.

Table: Annual water budget predictions of annual recharge, by hydrogeomorphic region				
	<i>Piedmont Crystalline (PCR)</i>	<i>Mesozoic Lowland (ML)</i>	<i>Blue Ridge (BR)</i>	<i>Piedmont Carbonate (PCA)</i>
Average Year				
Yield (gpd/acre)	630	390	910	1,000
Total Acres	179,514	81,284	111,747	54,851
Total Availability (gpd)	113,093,801	31,700,861	101,690,198	54,850,650
Dry Year - 20 Yr Drought				
Yield (gpd/acre)	390	180	510	1,000
Total Acres	179,514	81,284	111,747	54,851
Total Availability (gpd)	70,010,448	14,631,167	56,991,210	54,850,650

Water Balance Methodology

Ground water availability is difficult to predict; aquifers are not confined to topographic, political or watershed boundaries. Availability is based on the amount of recharge (in the form of precipitation and septic system discharge) to the aquifer minus the amount of water required to provide base flow to streams. This method provides an estimate, usually on a watershed scale, and is not used to guarantee availability at a particular well.

The water balance method has been utilized in the Catoctin Creek and Monocacy River watersheds. Korsak and Smith (2006) investigated ground water availability in the Catoctin Creek watershed and revealed the potential for major variations in ground water availability under summertime and drought conditions. Under combined summertime and 20-year drought conditions ground water supplies would be over-allocated in 50% of the sub-watersheds of Catoctin Creek by 2030.

In a Monocacy River watershed pilot study (2004), ground water was projected to be available in 2030 in all sub-watersheds after demand and reserve flows were accounted for; however, summer conditions were not incorporated into the findings. The sub-watershed with the lowest expected availability, 2.71 million gallons per day (mgd) in 2030, was the Israel Creek watershed that serves the Woodsboro and Walkersville areas. The Linganore Creek sub-watershed was estimated to have the highest ground water availability at 13.38 mgd.

¹ 2006. MDE. *An Evaluation of Water Resources in the Catoctin Creek Watershed, Frederick County, Maryland.*

The water balance method is used by MDE for distribution of ground water appropriation permits for community water systems. To apply for a permit, a community must own sufficient undeveloped land resources to allow for recharge of the aquifer they intend to withdrawal from. This policy primarily affects municipalities who are constrained by a municipal boundary with respect to where their wells are located. These communities must develop under state Smart Growth policy, which prescribes higher densities for growth areas, while also identifying land resources to keep in permanent open space for their groundwater appropriations.

In sum, ground water supplies in Frederick County have diverse limitations affecting a broad range of users. The most limiting factor in the near future will be the difficulty in locating sufficiently high yielding well sites for public water supplies necessary to meet the projected population demands. The County has already moved towards providing public drinking water from more reliable surface water supplies and reducing its reliance on ground water. With the transition to using the Potomac River the County is using its existing well sites as a back-up supply.

Drinking Water Demand - Community Water Systems

In Frederick County, community drinking water is provided or planned within all of the community growth areas (CGA). The following tables and descriptions reference current capacities and demands for the individual municipal systems and the County maintained systems. The County water system descriptions focus on those serving the community growth areas. The County also maintains several small systems that serve single subdivisions outside of the designated community growth areas.

The following table provides a listing of the County and municipal water systems with the current capacities, usage, and available capacity. This table includes the residential development potential for a complete build out of each community growth area based on the Draft Plan. This development potential reflects only the residential development and does not include the potential for commercial and industrial/office development, which varies significantly from community to community. It is important to note that the residential development potential reflects a 20+ year build out timeframe and is compared with the current water system capacities.

County Water Systems Serving Community Growth Areas

- Fountaindale/Braddock Heights
- Jefferson
- Libertytown
- New Design

Municipal Water Systems

- Brunswick (serves portion of Rosemont)
- Emmitsburg
- Frederick
- Middletown
- Mount Airy
- Myersville

- Thurmont
- Walkersville
- Woodsboro

Table 09-1: Current Drinking Water Capacity and Demand

Water Systems (community growth area)	Design Treatment Capacity gpd	Permitted Capacity gpd	Current Demand gpd(1)	Current Available Capacity gpd(2)	Current Available Capacity EDU(3)
County Systems					
Cambridge Farms (Jefferson)		62,000	56,900	5,100	20
Copperfield (Jefferson)		28,300	28,669	-369	-2
Woodspring (New Market)		137,600	62,300	75,300	301
Fountaindale/Braddock		280,000	208,600	57,000	284
Lake Linganore (Linganore)		1,200,000	468,500	585,000	7,304
Libertytown Apts. (Libertytown)		5,000	3,600	1,400	5
Liberty East (Libertytown)		15,700	7,600	8,100	32
New Design System					
(Adamstown, Ballenger Creek, Buckeystown, Eastalco, Frederick (4), Frederick Southeast, Holly Hills, Linganore, Monrovia, New Market, Point of Rocks, Spring Ridge/Bartonsville, Urbana)		16,000,000	3,602,000	9,998,000	26,991
Municipal Systems					
Brunswick	1,500,000	1,350,000	500,000	850,000	3,400
Emmitsburg	463,000	463,000	315,000	148,000	592
Frederick (4)	10,700,000	11,200,000	6,300,000	4,900,000	19,600
Middletown	1,782,000	402,400	370,000	32,400	130
Myersville	412,000	269,000	128,800	140,200	561
Mount Airy		855,000	766,000	89,000	356
Thurmont	1,200,000	1,020,000	454,000	566,000	2,264
Walkersville	1,400,000	1,000,000	600,000	400,000	1,600
Woodsboro		120,000	70,000	50,000	200

Notes:

(1) Takes annual water production and divides by 365 days to get gpd.

(2) Permitted Capacity – Current Demand

(3) Assumes 250 gallons/day/dwelling. Available capacity shown is for general planning purposes only. EDU – equivalent dwelling unit.

(4) New Design WTP current capacity is 8.8 MGD (max day) of which 1.5 MGD is allocated to the City of Frederick per the Potomac River Water Supply Agreement (PRWSA). Ongoing improvements (scheduled for completion in Fall 2010) will result in capacity of 25 mgd Max Day (16 mgd Avg Day) of which the City is allocated 8.0 MGD Max Day (5.0 MGD Avg Day). Net Capacity is shared between Frederick City and County service areas in accordance with the PRWSA.

Town of Thurmont Service Area

The Town of Thurmont provides drinking water service to 6,200 people or 2,100 households (2007). The source of the drinking water is groundwater in the Frederick Limestone and Gettysburg Shale aquifers; there are five active wells in service and a sixth well that remains undeveloped. The wells can produce an average of 1.02 mgd; service in Thurmont is primarily for residential use (75%) while commercial use accounts for 21% and industrial, 4%. The existing demand for water service is 0.342 mgd residential, 0.095 mgd commercial and 0.017 mgd industrial. The total public water service demand in 2007 was 0.454 mgd.

The projected 2030 population of 7,700 people or 2,600 households will demand 0.392 mgd residential (72%), 0.115 mgd commercial (21%), and 0.037 (7%) industrial for a total estimated 2030 demand of 0.544 mgd. According to the town, the existing treatment capacity of their plant is 1.2 mgd and the ultimate demand on the system will be 1.3 mgd at build-out of their land use plan.

Thurmont has experienced groundwater contamination of Well 5 (not in service) from underground storage tanks containing petroleum and trichloroethylene. in Wells 7 and 8. Air strippers purify water from these two wells to meet drinking water standards.

The Town's primary drinking water limitation is providing supply to meet demand. The town's water resources element estimates that if the town continues a growth rate of 35 dwelling units per year, they will consume all of the town's supplies in less than 22 years. Additionally, the Town is impacted by elevation differences between their well sites and storage areas; five of the Town's wells are located in an area without adequate storage.

Implementation - Drinking Water Assessment (Relevant Excerpts)

To achieve water resources goals related to the drinking water assessment, the following policies and action items have been identified. Completion of the action items and adherence to the policy statements will be monitored regularly by the County through review and update of the Water Resources Plan, and the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Drinking Water (DW) Policies (Selected)

- DW -P-03 Protect community groundwater based systems and individual wells in karst (limestone) areas.
- DW-P-04 Support compatible land uses within designated wellhead protection areas.

Drinking Water (DW) Action Items (Selected)

- DW -A-01 Explore the application of water recharge easements as a complement to existing agricultural and land preservation easement programs.
- DW -A-06 Develop a water conservation education program for residents and businesses of Frederick County.
- DW -A-07 Develop a water-resources-based GIS database for staff to review in regard to development plans and proposals.
- DW -A-08 Implement and if necessary revise the County's Wellhead Protection Ordinance to identify appropriate protection measures for municipal water system wellheads, springheads, and headwater areas that lie outside of their boundaries.
- DW -A-10 Conduct an assessment of the availability and reliability of groundwater resources in the County.
- DW -A-11 Coordinate the development of GIS mapping and drinking water data with the municipalities.
- DW-A-12 Identify means to keep pharmaceuticals and endocrine disruptors out of the County's waste stream and wastewater treatment systems.

