

CHAPTER 2 GROW WITH PURPOSE



A Master Plan for the Next Generation





GROW WITH PURPOSE

Harford County boasts an enviable combination of quality schools, safe neighborhoods, parks, libraries, and charming Main Street communities making it an ideal place for families to live, work, and play. Those who choose Harford County, do so because it affords them a great quality of life with low crime rates, varied housing options, suburban and rural comforts, and a thriving economy. The importance of maintaining and enhancing this quality of life is fundamental to HarfordNEXT. Recognizing that quality of life is based on multiple factors, HarfordNEXT is grounded in a sustainable approach to land use planning that supports and promotes healthy, vibrant communities. As the County continues to mature, it will be increasingly important for the land use plan to support the ideals that will maintain a high quality of life for current and future residents. The Grow With Purpose theme outlines a framework of policies and implementations that are organized through the development of five principles: Livable Communities, Public Facilities and Infrastructure, Strengthening Communities, Housing, and Government Accountability.

State Visions:

*Environmental Protection
Resource Conservation
Stewardship
Public Participation
Quality of Life and
Sustainability
Community Design
Infrastructure
Growth Areas
Economic Development
Housing
Implementation*

Overlapping Themes:

*Economic Vitality
Environmental Stewardship
Preserving Our Heritage
Mobility and Connectivity*

Demographic Profile

A look at
JOBS

141,926
Labor force in 2013

\$80,622
Median Income



HOME Matters



\$281,800
Median Home Value

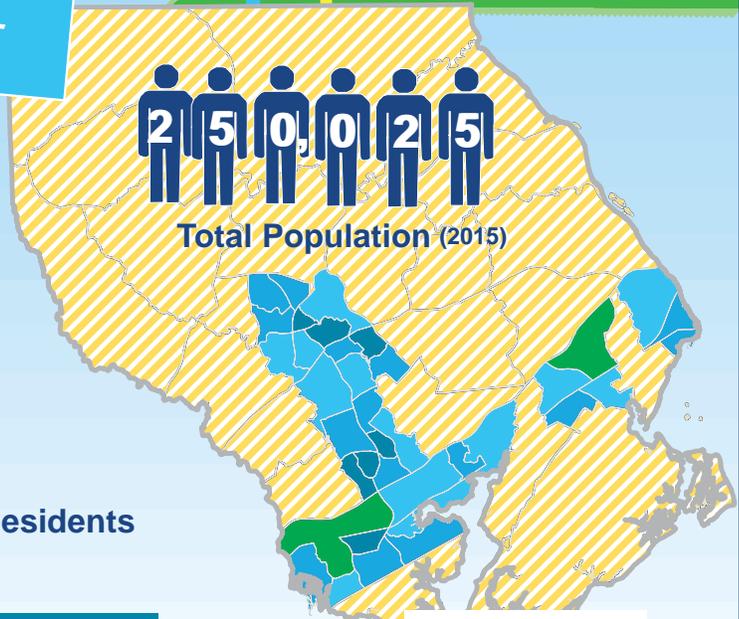
93,358
Number of Households (2015)



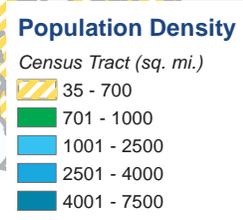
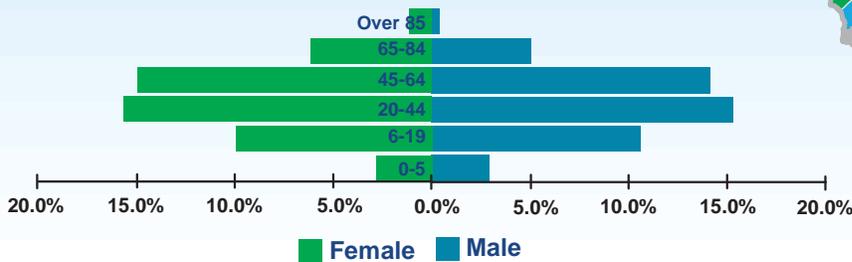
Counting
PEOPLE



Growing Young Population
LARGEST AGE SEGMENT IN HARFORD IS 20-44 YEARS OLD



Population by Age of Residents



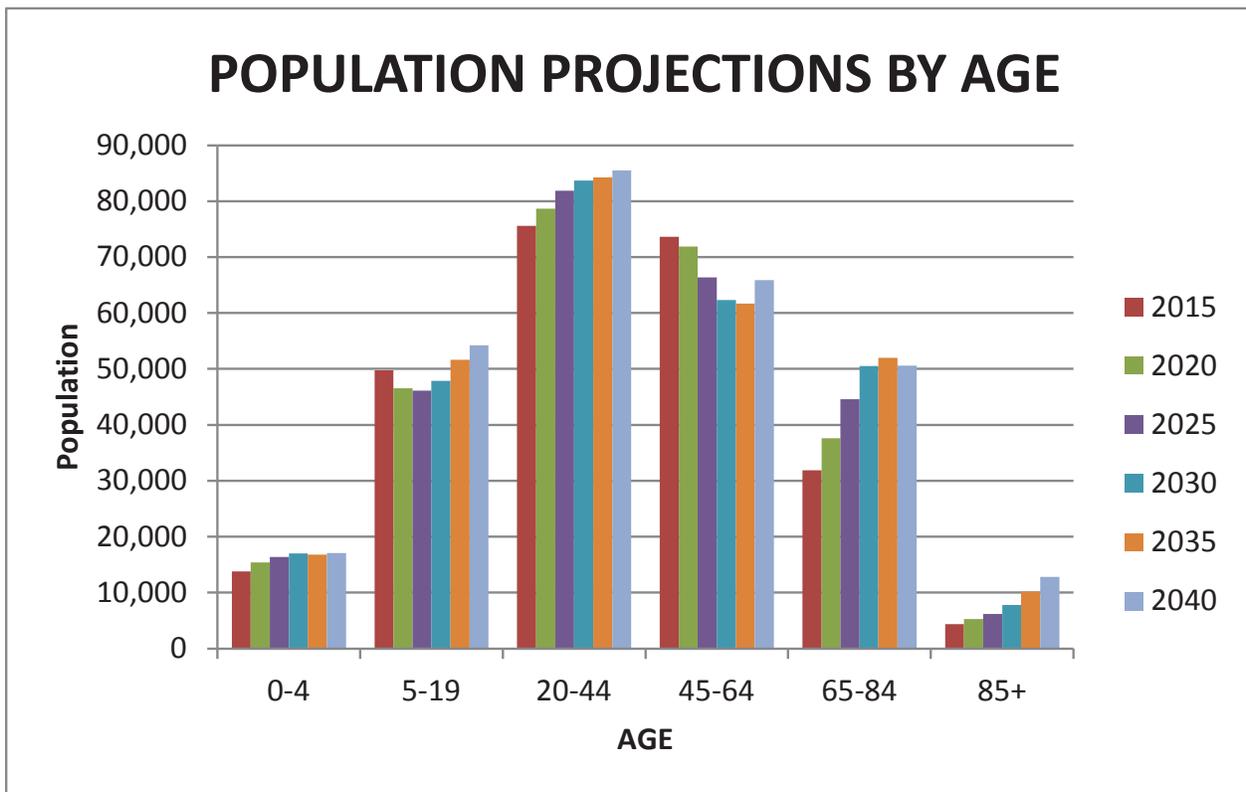
Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey, Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning, U.S. Census Bureau.

Population

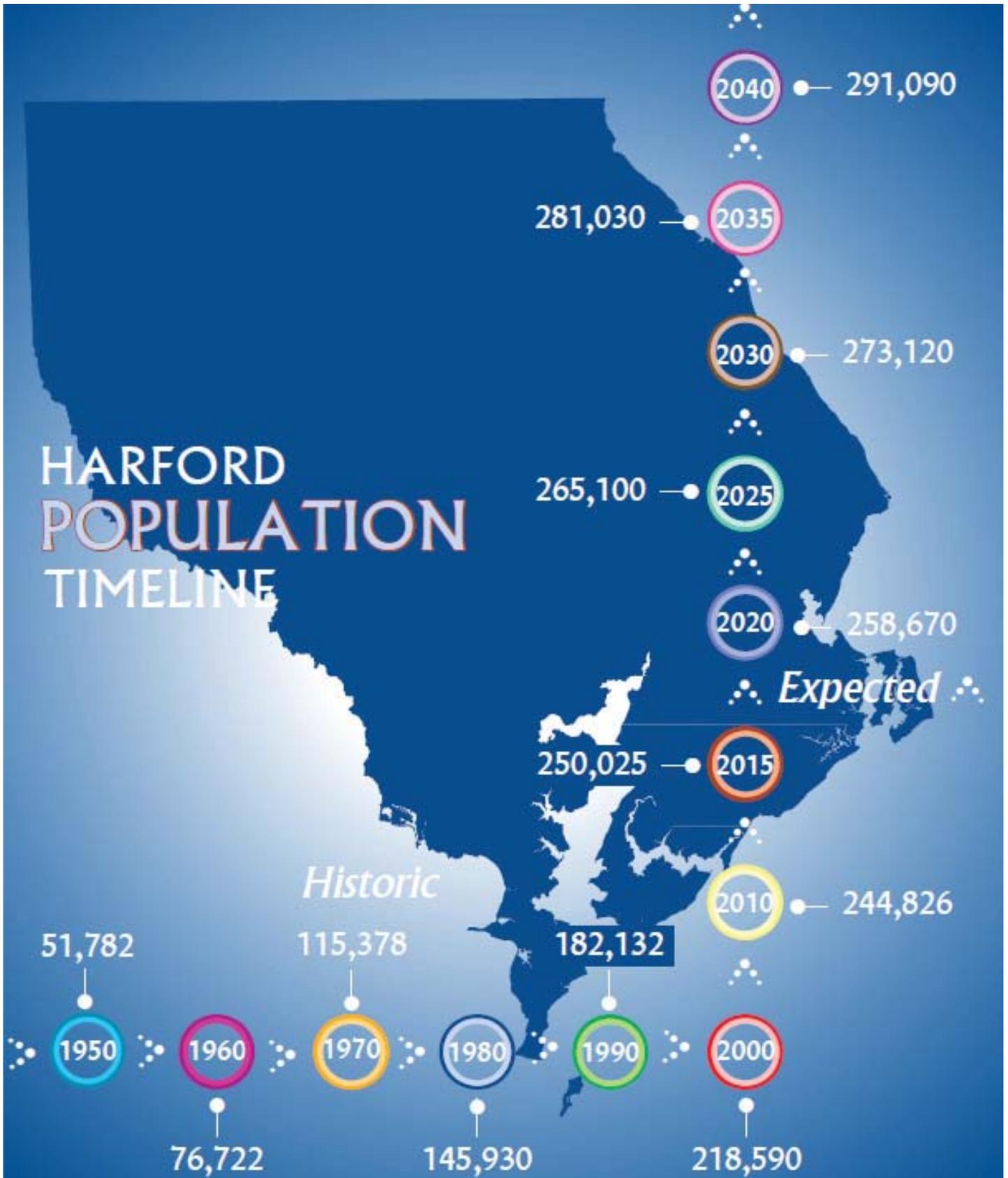
Harford County’s population has grown by 70% since 1980 to an estimated 250,025 people in 2015. During the three decades following World War II, Harford’s population growth reached historic highs, growing at an average annual rate of 5% between 1950 and 1970; the population more than doubled during the same period. Harford County continued to grow at a lower, though steady rate of 2.5% from 1980 to 2000. Approximately half of the growth during the 1980 to 2000 period was fueled by in-migration from Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

During the latter half of the last decade, the national economic downturn slowed the demand for new housing significantly. Population growth slowed to 0.6% annually between 2005 and 2010. As Harford County emerges from the downturn, the housing market is showing signs of recovery. After a historic low of 511 new housing units in 2008, the number of new housing starts in 2015 rebounded to 705 units.

Though the rate of population growth is unlikely to reach previous highs, population projections for the County reflect an expected increase of over 41,000 new residents (births, in-migration, etc) by 2040. To properly account for the needs of a growing population, it is important to understand the implications of anticipated demographic changes. Perhaps most important among those changes is the aging nature of Harford County’s population. By 2040, the population of residents aged 65 and older is projected to grow by 75%, increasing from 36,194 to 63,435 persons. Most notably, the number of people aged 85 and over is projected to triple, increasing from 4,348 to 12,819 persons. The aging of our population is a demographic change that will have significant planning and policy implications for Harford County.

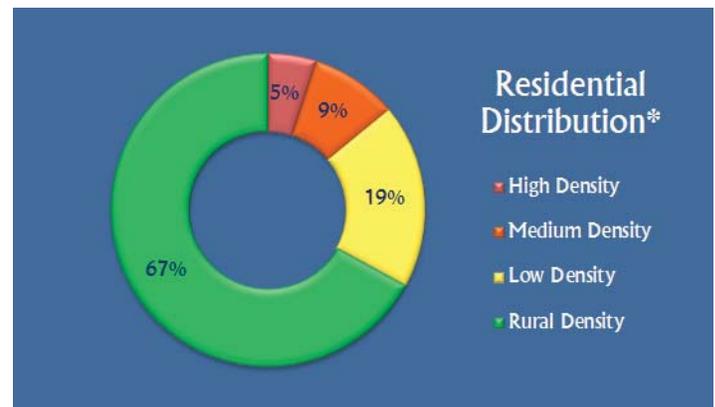
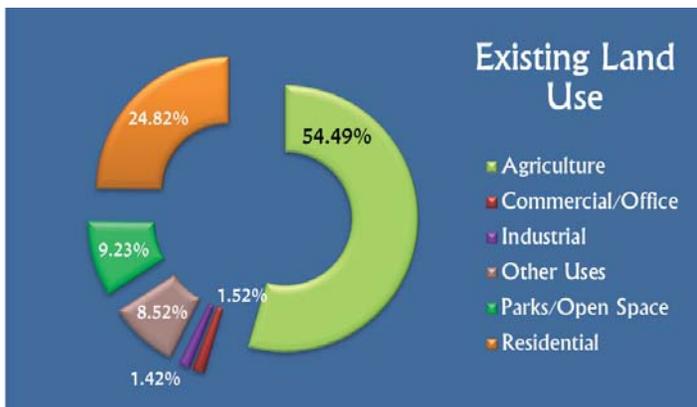


Source: Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning



Existing Land Use

In 2015, the Department of Planning and Zoning analyzed the distribution of land uses within the County to guide the development of HarfordNEXT. The predominant use of a given property was determined through analysis of aerial photography, information from the State Department of Assessments and Taxation, and field verification. Results show a diverse mix of land uses throughout the County. It is important to note that agriculture continues to be the predominant land use, comprising 126,362 acres or approximately 55% of the total land area within the County. The second largest category is residential with approximately 25%, or 57,572 acres, of the County’s land area devoted to that use.



Source: Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning

*Residential land use densities are determined by the parcel size. Residential densities are approximated by the following categories: High Density – 6 dwelling units per acre and greater; Medium Density – 3 to 6 dwelling units/acre; Low Density Residential – 1 to 3 dwelling units/acre; Rural Density Residential – 1 dwelling for parcels between 1 and 9.99 acres.

Land Capacity Analysis

Development Envelope Residential Land Capability

In December 2014, the Department of Planning and Zoning analyzed properties inside the Development Envelope in order to assess the County’s residential potential. An inventory of residential land was compiled that comprised both vacant and underutilized parcels and accounted for factors such as parcel size, environmental constraints, zoning type, and permitted densities. The resulting inventory includes four categories: approved preliminary plans with unbuilt units, potential dwelling units from residential zoned vacant/underutilized land, municipal undeveloped land capacity, and potential residential mixed-use dwelling unit capacity. Based on this assessment, there is an existing estimated capacity for 18,883 housing units within the Development Envelope with the potential for an additional 2,652 within the three municipalities.

| <i>Residential Land Inventory Category</i> | Units |
|---|--------|
| Plan Approved Un-built Dwelling Units - An inventory of all approved residential preliminary plans, less new construction permits issued for these plans. | 4,827 |
| Potential Dwelling Units from Residential Zoned Vacant/Underutilized Land - An inventory of developable land accounting for factors such as parcel size, environmental constraints, zoning type, and permitted density. | 11,739 |
| Potential Dwelling Units From Mixed-Use Development - Based on an inventory of parcels five acres or larger with zoning classification B1, B2, B3, CI, GI, and LI that have the potential to include a residential component if developed under Mixed-Use development standards. | 2,317 |
| Total Unincorporated County Development Envelope Capacity | 18,883 |

| | |
|--|--------|
| Potential Dwelling Units From Municipalities: Aberdeen, Bel Air, and Havre de Grace - An inventory of all approved municipal residential preliminary plans, less new construction permits issued for these plans. | 2,652 |
| Total Development Envelope Capacity | 21,535 |

Source: Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning

Rural Area Land Residential Capability

While the majority of development has been directed toward the Development Envelope, it is acknowledged that a limited amount of development will occur in rural areas. Based on an analysis of the residential potential in the rural areas of the County, the estimated residential capacity available outside the Development Envelope is 7,286 units. This figure includes 5,351 potential development rights available on Agricultural zoned parcels with the remaining capacity of 1,935 units tied to Rural Residential or Village Residential zoned parcels. Potential exists for up to 1,037 additional units through the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's).

Commercial / Industrial Land Capability

Harford County is committed to ensuring zoning and land use decisions are compatible and accommodate economic growth opportunities. To ensure there is sufficient capacity to accommodate commercial and industrial uses, the Department completed a comprehensive inventory of all property currently zoned B1, B2, B3, VB, CI, MO, GI, and LI. The resulting inventory included vacant and underutilized parcels in order to estimate the amount of developable acreage available for future development.

| Vacant / Underutilized Land By Zoning Type | B1 | B2 | B3 | VB | CI | MO | GI | LI | Total Acreage |
|--|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-------|-----|---------------|
| Developable Acreage | 90 | 214 | 661 | 108 | 936 | 60 | 1,546 | 947 | 4,562 |

Source: Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning

The inventory identified 2,069 acres of developable land zoned for commercial use (B1, B2, B3, VB, CI, and MO) with an additional 333 acres of similarly zoned land within the County's three municipalities. The inventory identified 2,493 developable acres zoned for industrial use (GI, LI). An additional 155 acres of industrially zoned land is located within the municipalities.

Developable area refers to the total area of land available for development; excluding open space, protected environmentally sensitive areas, and land used for other public facilities.

Infrastructure

It is anticipated that the need for publicly managed services and facilities will rise as the County's population continues to grow and mature. The maintenance of services and facilities will be an ongoing priority for the County to uphold service quality. Upgrades to facilities will require significant capital investment, and the expansion of services will likewise necessitate considerable outlay by the County or its partners that should be considered as part of a broader capital planning process to ensure they are provided in a timely and cost effective way. A method for prioritizing projects should be used to ensure that the Capital Improvement Program is consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in HarfordNEXT.

Public Facilities

To ensure that an acceptable quality of life is maintained, public facilities throughout Harford County must meet the needs of current and future residents. Many County departments and agencies maintain strategic plans to ensure service delivery standards are met.

Plans include:

- 2009 Fire and EMS Services Master Plan
- 2013 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- 2014 Educational Facilities Master Plan
- 2015 Lead, Engage, Exceed, A Strategic Plan for Harford County Public Library
- 2015 Facilities Master Plan

Water and Sewer

The County's public water and wastewater service area generally conforms to the Development Envelope. However, not all properties within the Development Envelope are served by public water and sewer, and services may be extended to properties beyond the boundary to protect human health and safety.

The Water Resources Element (WRE) is an important component of HarfordNEXT, required by the state to ensure the coordination of growth management and water resources planning between the County and the municipalities (Bel Air, Havre de Grace and Aberdeen) as well as

Aberdeen Proving Ground and private providers. The WRE also requires that there be suitable receiving water and land areas to meet the stormwater management needs of existing and future development as identified in this plan. The County's efforts to provide sustainable water resources will be a prominent focus in the coming decade. Protection of its existing surface water supplies, as well as its groundwater resources, is essential to meeting the drinking water needs of the citizens of Harford County. An updated WRE can be found in Appendix II.

The Fallston Commercial Corridor and its associated Sanitary Sewer Service Area has been experiencing planned growth and redevelopment since public sewer service was provided to the region. In 2015, the County received petition requests from two existing groups of residential properties adjacent to the Service Area to obtain sewer service by expanding the Service Area. The sewer system in the Fallston Sanitary Sewer Service Area was originally designed to provide limited capacity to a select group of properties in the Fallston Commercial Corridor. As a result of requests by some of the property owners in the area to expand the Sanitary Sewer Service Area, Harford County will be hiring a consultant to prepare a detailed comprehensive study of the Fallston Sanitary Sewer Service Area. The study will determine what improvements to the sewer system may be required to serve an expanded service area.

Information Technology

In 2014, Harford County unveiled its high-speed fiber optics network, known as the Harford Metro Area Network (HMAN). Once complete, HMAN will provide high-speed connectivity to government buildings, schools, libraries, and economic development zones. Harford County is currently developing a Broadband Strategic Plan. This plan is intended to supplement and provide support for the significant efforts already undertaken by the Harford County Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT) to develop communications infrastructure for economic development, unserved residential areas and government service purposes. The Plan offers analysis and strategic guidance for steps the County can take, by itself or in partnership with the business community and private communications carriers, to fill existing gaps in the broadband market, to maximize the broadband opportunity in Harford County and, over time to attract and catalyze new investment in broadband infrastructure and services, including a goal of providing all County residents access to reliable high-speed internet and communication infrastructure. It is important to note that Harford County's ongoing efforts to create a formal interagency structure for planning and collaboration in broadband is the first of its kind in Maryland.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

Harford County has Adequate Public Facilities (APF) standards that tie the approval of development to the availability of existing public services such as schools, water and sewer, and roads, to accommodate new users. These standards offer a mechanism for managing the pace of development and ensure adequate service levels are in place. In July of each year, the Annual Growth Report is provided to the County Council in accordance with the APF provisions. The Annual Growth Report provides an ongoing analysis of growth trends, facility capacity, and service performance and identifies facilities below the adopted minimum standards. Public officials and County agencies use the report to assess system adequacy and identify crucial deficiencies, which helps in the evaluation of projects in the Capital Improvement Program.

Future Growth

The Development Envelope was established in 1977 to focus growth along the US 40 and MD 924/24 corridors, and it has been largely successful in channeling growth to those areas. Between 1970 and 2012, 86% of residential growth occurred within the Development Envelope. However, in part due to the County's commitment to maintaining that boundary, property outside the Development Envelope continued to fragment as large lot residential development expanded on well and septic systems. It was not until 2012 that residential development outside the Development Envelope started to shrink as a proportion of overall growth. This coincided with passage of the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012, often referred to as Senate Bill 236. The bill set limitations on the use of septic systems, which further concentrated growth inside the Development Envelope. Since 2013, 91% of residential development has occurred on properties inside the Development Envelope.

The appeal of Harford County's exceptional communities, quality schools and parks, abundant rural spaces, and a healthy environment propelled much of the County's growth over the last 30 years, and the Development Envelope served as a safeguard against the rampant expansion of development that might have compromised the very qualities that make Harford County special. HarfordNEXT recognizes that these things remain important to existing residents as well as potential new inhabitants and that any enlargement of the Development Envelope could have significant ramifications with regard to the style and intensity of development. Because the Development Envelope generally corresponds to the County's designated Priority Funding Area, any expansion could also impact the delivery of crucial services.

HarfordNEXT proposes minor adjustments to the Development Envelope, including Fallston (40.8 acres at the SW intersection of MD 152 and MD 147), Forest Hill (35.16 acres at the NW intersection of MD 23 and MD 24), and parcels 398 and 341 on Tax Map 0055 (1.87 acres northeast of the intersection of US 1 and MD 152) which are designated as high intensity on the land use map, parcel 180 on Tax Map 0055 (3.81 acres northeast of the intersection of US 1 and MD 152) which is designated as high intensity on the land use map, the developments commonly known as Joppa Hills, Woodbridge Manor, and Woodsyde and lots located on the odd numbered side of Whitaker Mill Road from 405 to 415, inclusive. These areas constitute an expansion of approximately 0.36%. Due to their location adjacent to or surrounded by existing development, the properties should be zoned such that resulting development is compatible with surrounding communities.

The perpetuation of development outside of the Development Envelope can exacerbate conditions that detract from our quality of life and impede economic growth. The distribution of residential areas relative to those with a higher concentration of jobs funnels commuters onto a handful of roadways that are regularly congested. While high volumes of traffic may be anticipated along primary corridors within the Development Envelope, roadways outside of the Development Envelope are frequently the most congested according to the State Highway Administration. In particular, MD 22, MD 543, and MD 152 measure heavy congestion during morning and evening commuting hours.

