
CHAPTER FOUR: LAND USE AND ZONING

Land use planning constitutes the “fabric” that makes a Town viable and unique. Development patterns established early on in a Town can be a strong determinate in future growth patterns. Land use over the past two decades described in previous comprehensive plans supported the expansion of the Town’s residential inventory. Today, the Town is faced with a constraint on its water supply that threatens the opportunity for sufficient economic development to serve the expanded residential base. As a result, the 2013 Town Master Plan will alter the existing development direction in order to promote land use patterns that reflect the community’s vision as revealed in the 2008 Town Survey and affirmed in the 2012 needs assessment, and will guide the prioritization of existing and future water capacity to achieve this vision. The ultimate desire expressed across both studies is to protect and improve the area’s natural resources and quality of life for the Town’s residents.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, The Town of Mount Airy experienced a population increase of 44% between 2000 and 2010.

Zoning and subdivision regulations are essential in directing future development and growth as they not only prescribe how land may be used, but affect the appearance or “character” of new development, standardize site design and govern the connections between new and existing development. Existing zoning regulations and land-use definitions, particularly as they affect commercial and industrial development, can significantly impact the success of the Town’s economic base.

The first section of this chapter analyzes the existing zoning and current land-use patterns. These evaluations lead to newly created zoning districts, proposed changes to allowable uses in existing zoning districts and recommendations for rezoning of property as identified in the Municipal Growth Element (MGE) that will follow this chapter.

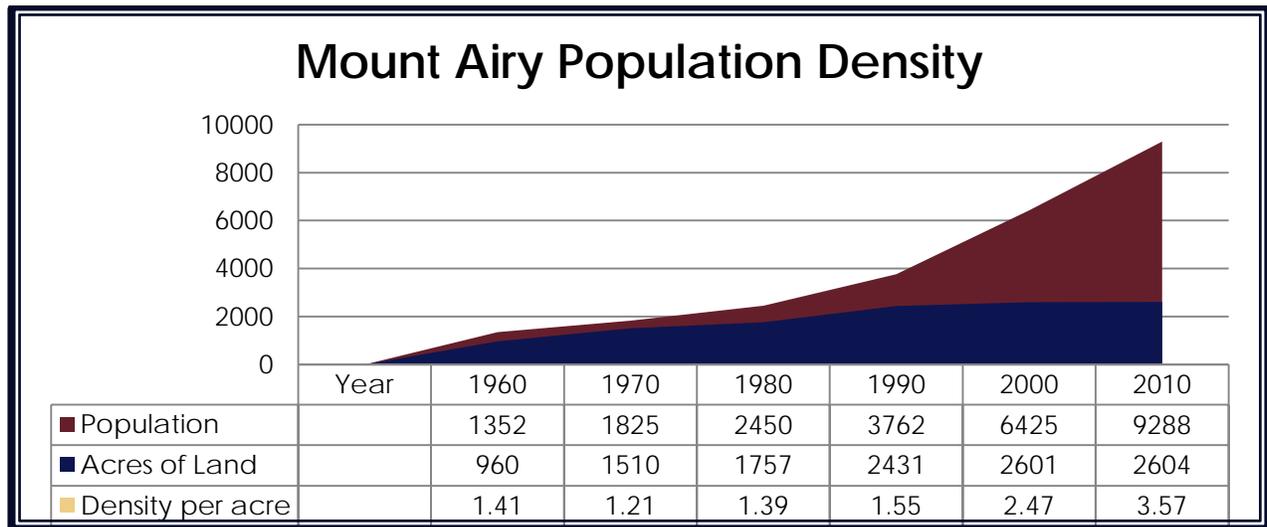
The second section of this chapter examines how zoning and subdivision regulations impact the physical characteristics of the Town and establish goals for new land use and zoning policies.

REVIEW OF EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING

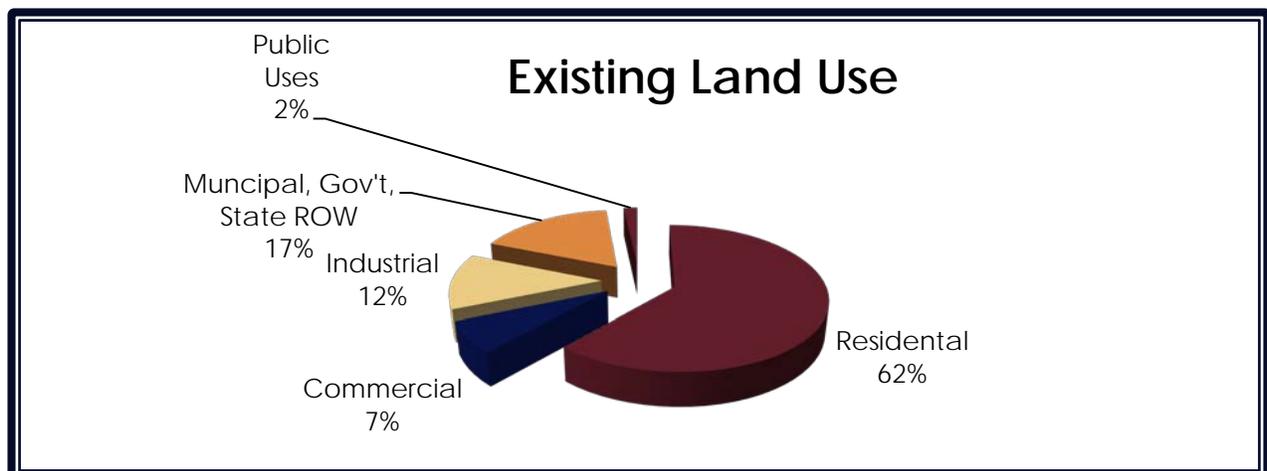
As reflected in the previous chapters, the Town of Mount Airy has experienced a significant amount of residential land development in the past two decades. During the late 1980’s to 1990’s, such development occurred primarily in Frederick County; while, the most recent decade brought the majority of the development activity to the Carroll County portion of the Town. From 1990 to present, approximately 850 acres were annexed into the Town’s incorporated

limits. These annexations, along with the development of existing residential land inventory, contributed to the residential development of nearly 950 acres. In fact, the vast increase of residential land inventory and subsequent development contributed to substantial population growth in the past 15 years. According to 2010 Census data, the Town’s population grew by forty-four percent. As a result, the Town’s population density more than doubled from 1.5 to 3.6 persons per acre. These combined factors have increased traffic congestion, park usage, and demand on Town infrastructure and services.

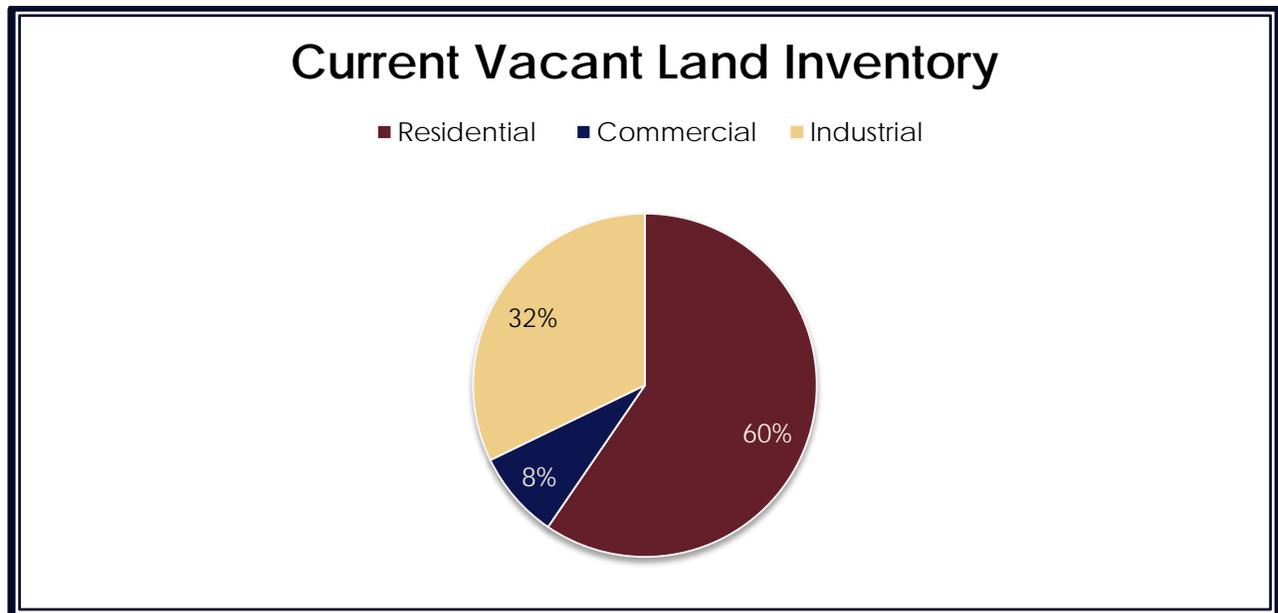
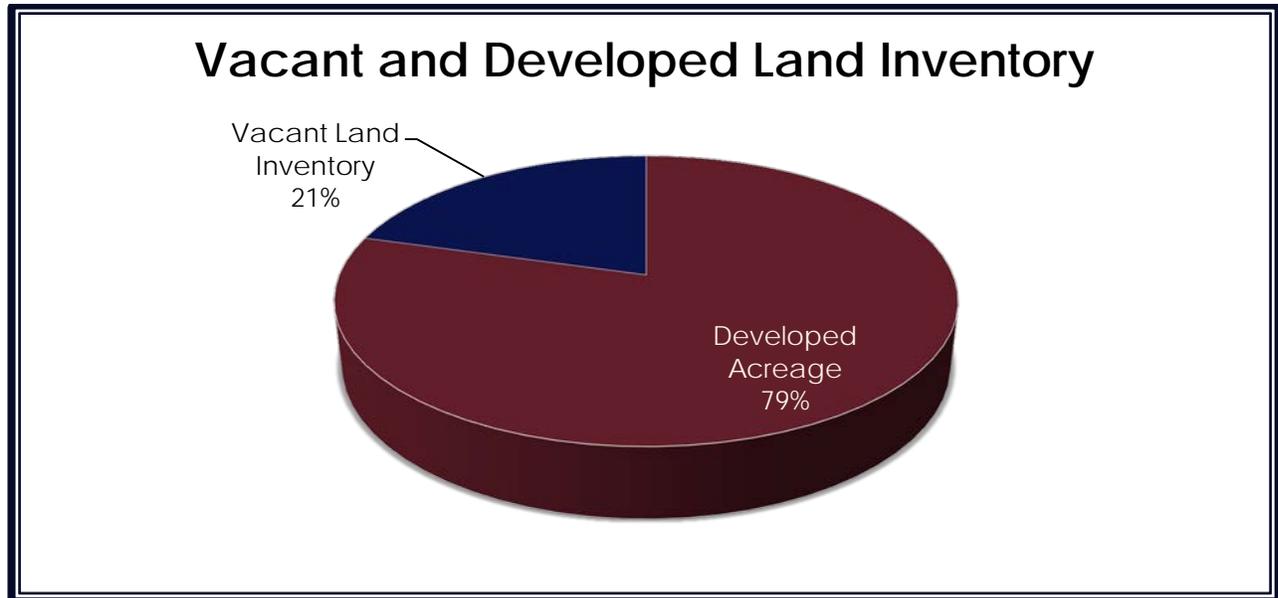
As the tables below will demonstrate, the Town’s population density has risen steadily over the past 20 years with comparatively modest increases in land inventory.



Over the last twenty years, the Town has developed more than half of the vacant land inventory that was present in 1994. Residential is the largest land use with 62% of the total of 2,604 acres now within the Town boundaries. Municipal, government and road rights-of-way represent 17%, industrial land use totals 12%, commercial use totals 7%, and public uses such as the library, carnival grounds and post office constitute 2% of the land uses.



Currently, only 21% of the zoned land inside the Town boundaries is vacant. Of this inventory, 12% is located within industrial zoning, 62% is in residential zoning and 7% is in commercial zoning. Taken as a whole, only a small percentage of the Town’s vacant land has an approved development plan, and 90% of all land use, including residential, mirrors the zoning category and comprehensive plan designation presented on the Mount Airy Existing Land Use Map. The large percentage of land use devoted to residential development is not unexpected in a “bedroom community” such as Mount Airy, where a significant number of the local residents continue to commute to work locations outside of the Town.



Historically, commercial activity, and larger retail establishments, has primarily been centered near at the interchange of I-70 and MD Route 27 (MD 27), and extending north along MD 27. However, several commercial development projects have occurred along the Main Street and Center Street corridors since the last master plan update in 2003, the majority of which have consisted of either infill development or redevelopment of existing commercial centers. The Town's "flex space" use inventory has expanded in the industrially zoned districts located along the periphery of the Town's borders. While the supply of large parcels of commercially zoned land is limited, numerous opportunities for commercial growth as infill development and redevelopment projects do exist. Newly created zoning classifications, modification of existing classifications, and the rezoning of property altogether serve as tools to maximize the potential of existing vacant land inventory to achieve quality development projects to the benefit of the community.

For example, during the 2003 Master Plan update, several properties were rezoned resulting in a slight increase of commercially zoned land inventory. In an effort to allow for appropriate future commercial development with respect to adjacent land uses, the Center Street corridor underwent a zoning district classification change from Industrial to Commercial. This resulted in a net increase of approximately 13 additional acres of commercially zoned land. In 2009, Center Street Professional Center, which serves predominately as a medical complex, was constructed along the Center Street Corridor. Additional properties were rezoned along South Main Street and resulted in the commercial redevelopment of existing residences that were adjacent to or confronting large commercial centers. As a result, a multi-tenant commercial building was constructed. The "Main Street Illiano Plaza" provides 30,000 square feet of commercial tenant space, and has added over 20 new businesses to the Town. To encourage the appropriate development of the Main Street corridor, the 2003 Master Plan update incorporated the use of two newly adopted zoning district classifications, Neighborhood Professional and Limited Commercial, to transition the existing land use pattern from residential to commercial uses.

In addition, a newly defined "Downtown Zone" boundary and Zoning District was implemented shortly after the Plan was updated in 2003. The standards adopted for the historic downtown area were designed to preserve the historic nature of the area, protect the surrounding residential community, and allow for redevelopment and adaptive reuse of historic properties. Consequently, in the past several years, there has been quality redevelopment in the downtown area.

The 2013 Town of Mount Airy Comprehensive Master Plan will focus on the redevelopment of existing commercial areas, as well as the development of infill areas, to increase the concentration of desired commercial amenities in the downtown corridor while promoting pedestrian friendly commercial development along the larger commercially zoned corridors of the Town.

TOWN SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY

Since 2000, six major subdivisions have been constructed, resulting in a large number of residential permits during the early part of the decade. Five of the subdivisions; Summit Ridge, Fields of Nottingham, Woodlands of Nottingham, Sterling Glen and Twin Arch Crossing were single-family or multi-family developments, while one subdivision, Wildwood Park, was strictly senior housing. The last major subdivision plan approved by the Town was Sterling Glen, circa 2003.

Mount Airy’s MGE identifies land areas available for future residential development within the existing Town boundaries. As adopted under the 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan, these properties, collectively, have the potential to provide over 500 additional dwelling units to the Town’s residential inventory based on their current zoning. Recommended changes to existing zoning classifications are also addressed in the MGE and have the potential to reduce the unit yield of these properties. As of August 2013, no subdivision plans have been approved for these identified parcels. Therefore, the projected yield from such potential development is not reflected in the current approved pipeline development.

By the start of 2003, there were 811 homes in the residential pipeline, of which only 34% had permits issued. The volume of issued residential building permits declined slightly in 2006, with a drastic reduction by the beginning of 2007. Towards the end of 2012, the real estate market showed signs of improvement yielding a modest increase in the issuance of residential permits. As of April 2014, only a total of 149 permits remain unissued for the complete build-out of this pipeline from approved residential subdivisions.

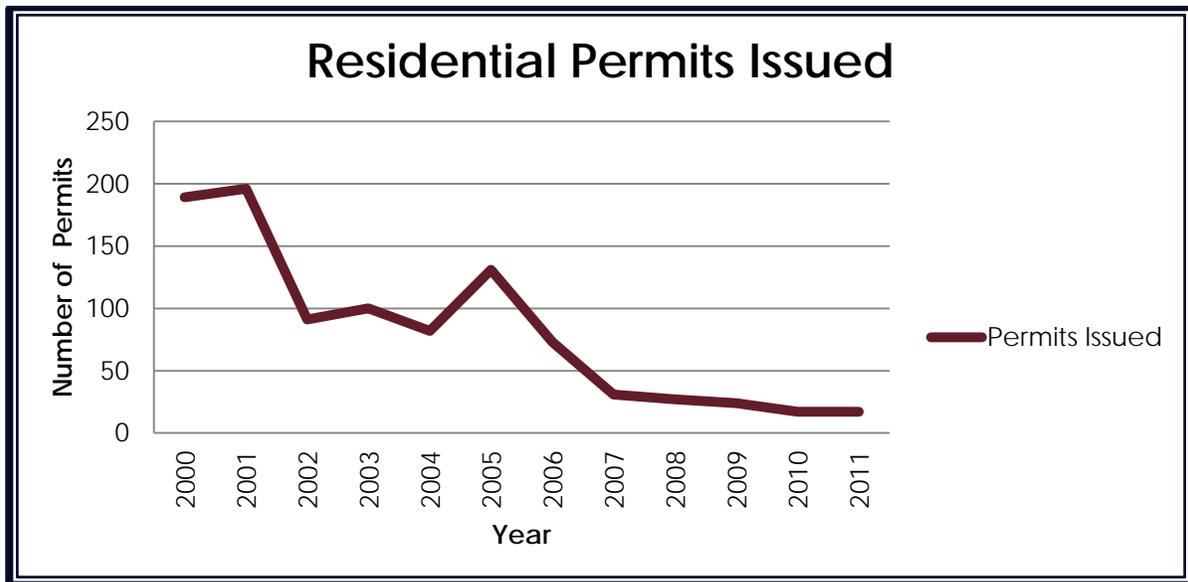
Subdivision Name	Total Proposed Residential Lots	Total Number of Residential Permits Issued as of April 2014	Remaining permits to be issued
Twin Arch Crossing	250	250	0
The Woodlands at Nottingham	184	163	21
Sterling Glen	141	137	4
Ridgeville Heights	37	37	0
Wildwood Park VI	61	49	12
Greentree Senior Village	112	0	112
Totals	785	636	149

The remaining development identified above from the 149 residential permits to be issued will generate close to 447 people, assuming a household size of three persons. This is slightly less than a 5% percent increase to the current estimated Town population of 9,668.

RESIDENTIAL PERMIT ACTIVITY

In order to control the amount of housing activity in any one calendar year, Mount Airy passed an ordinance in the late 1980's limiting each development to 40 residential permits per year. This worked well in allowing adequate facilities to keep pace with development until in the later 1990's when, three to five residential subdivisions were built simultaneously, causing a sharp increase in the issued permits for new residential construction. Consequently, in 2006, the Town passed a subsequent ordinance and the annual limit on issued residential permits was further reduced from 40 down to 24 per year.

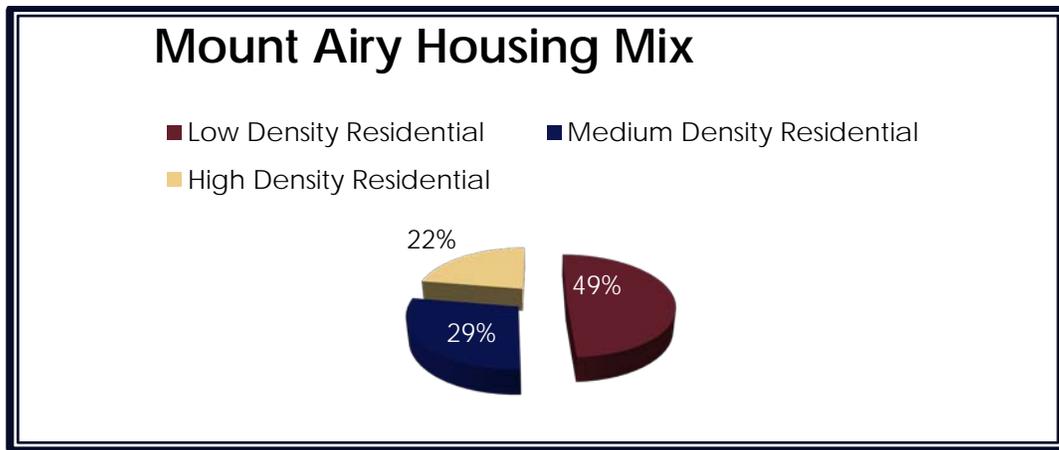
As illustrated below, this control measure was necessary during the rampant residential growth in the earliest part of the decade. The steady and strong continued residential growth that the Town experienced during the late 1990's motivated the reduction in annual allowed permits. However, shortly after the turn of the new century, the number of new residential housing permits drastically declined with the start of the economic downturn.



HOUSING INVENTORY

Well-designed, attractive, and safe housing choices are essential to the overall character of the Town. While connectivity among residential neighborhoods are important to the vitality of a community and supports the “sense of place” often desired by families, the housing mix is an important component to maintain the charm often associated with historical small towns. The predominant housing inventory in the Town consists of Low Density, Single-Family, situated on larger lots. The remaining inventory is closely divided between Single-Family situated on smaller lots and Townhouses and Multi-family units. A breakdown is reflected in the table below:

Low Density Residential	Medium Density Residential	High Density Residential
49% - All Single Family Larger Lots - 1/3 to 1/2 acre	29% - All Single Family Smaller Lots 1/4 - 1/8 Acre	22% - Townhouses and Mutli-family



HOUSING STOCK

The core housing stock in the older sections of Town ranges from large Victorians, to smaller brick cape cods along with several other styles in between. There is also an assortment of lot sizes adding to the fabric of residential development composing the older sections of Town. The peripheral areas of the Town consist of new housing developments, some townhouse subdivisions, but predominately single-family detached houses. The Town has only one apartment complex that has been in existence for over thirty years. The adoption of the Downtown Zone, discussed above, allowed for the incorporation of apartment units on the upper floors of commercial buildings in the Town’s historic district, thereby increasing the opportunity for alternative housing options for Town residents.

Future residential development will be concentrated on infill areas and should be designed for compatibility with a mixed-use development. This may be accomplished by creating a mixed-use zoning category to allow a percentage of residential development, extending boundaries of the existing Downtown Zone, or establishing an overlay district of varying density within one “master planned” subdivision. The incorporation of a mixed-use zoning district will allow an expanded opportunity for housing choices. Given the rise in the Town’s larger single-family dwelling inventory over the past decade, careful consideration should be given as to the need for housing variety beyond traditional single-family dwellings. This type of variety is most often utilized by younger individuals new to the workforce and in transition from owner-occupied housing or older residents seeking to downsize after raising their families, and not yet have the desire or meet eligibility requirements to reside in senior housing communities. Moreover, any future development of residentially zoned vacant parcels, or mixed use developments, within the Town limits should be consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood. In consideration of the existing pipeline of proposed additional residential units and the Town’s uncertain future with regard to water capacity, there are no plans for sizable new single-family residential subdivisions in the master plan cycle at this time.

HOUSING VS. EMPLOYMENT

The land use balance between commercial and residential development has remained largely the same since the last plan update took place in 2003. The Town continues to benefit from a variety of service-related businesses as a result of commercial and industrial development. However, it has neither the size nor economic base to become a “regional employment center,” that would provide a range of professional and technical job opportunities for the resident population. Now that the rate of residential growth appears to be slowing, the Town’s focus will shift to appropriate commercial development in support of ultimately increasing the employment base within the Town. Regardless, for the foreseeable future, the majority of resident Mount Airy residents will continue to commute out of the immediate area for work.

DOWNTOWN LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

One of the most significant changes that has occurred in the Downtown Area since the last plan update is its zoning classification. Shortly after the adoption of the 2003 plan, the downtown area was rezoned from “Community Commercial” to the newly adopted “Downtown Zone” or “DTZ”. The DTZ enumerates specific permitted uses and calls for orderly development to enhance and preserve an atmosphere of small-town charm. This new zone also promotes the adaptive re-use of existing structures in the Town’s Historic District and reduces redevelopment constraints often encountered with non-conforming structures and setbacks.

The last several years have yielded a transformation of the Downtown Area, in part due to the newly adopted zoning district. More so, as a result of the tragic fire of September 2007, several buildings underwent substantial renovations. The Old Bohn Building has been rebuilt and expanded into a large multi-tenant commercial development, adding several service-related and professional businesses to the Main Street Corridor. The Watkins' building, also destroyed by the fire, was rebuilt adding two retail business store fronts and residential apartments. The Town will emphasize and prioritize the continued revitalization and redevelopment of the Downtown area in an effort to improve local retail options, livability and quality of life and to create a sense of place for all the Town residents.

REVIEW OF EXISTING ZONING CATEGORIES

Residential zoning classifications have been established for Mount Airy with the intent of controlling congestion in the streets, securing public safety, promoting health and general welfare, providing adequate light and air, promoting the conservation of natural resources, preventing environmental pollution, avoiding undue concentration of population, conserving the value of buildings, encouraging the orderly development and the most appropriate use of land throughout the town, promote compatibility of site configuration and design with surrounding areas and to promote protection of the architectural character of neighborhoods and business districts within the community. Continued updating of zoning classifications are necessary to recognize current and future emphasis and are reflected below.

CON-Conservation Zone: This zoning designation provides a minimum lot size of 24,000 square feet with an average of 40,000 square feet. It was adopted to allow for a very low-density district (minimum of 3 acres per home site overall) and strictly limited in use to certain environmentally sensitive areas. This zone is meant to provide maximum protection to the outlying residential areas surrounding the Town. It will not be used as a "stand alone" zone except where recommended to address specific environmental concerns.

RE-Residential Existing: This zoning classification provides a minimum lot size of 14,000 square feet, with an average of 18,000 square feet. It was designed to and encompasses the majority of the Town's existing low- and medium- density development. The zone is designated in the core areas of Town along Main Street, North Main Street, Park Ave and Ridge Ave. It also includes the western portion of Mount Airy: Twin Ridge, Village Gate, Mount Airy Village East and West and the Westridge Subdivision.

R1-Low Density Residential: This zoning classification establishes a minimum area of 18,000 square feet with an average of 24,000 square feet. It was recently adopted to allow for the provision of low-density development with concentration on good land management and harmony with the physical environment. This classification has not yet been assigned to any land areas within the municipal limits, but may be used alone or in conjunction with other

residential densities on larger tracts of land. It is typically assigned to newly annexed land in the peripheral areas of the Town where new residential use is designated to be located.

R2-Low Density Residential: This zoning designation provides for a minimum lot size of 11,000 square feet, with an average of 14,000 square feet. The East Ridgeville Boulevard area, northern developments of Summit Ridge and Twin Ridge III, and the residential zoning along the eastern portion of Watersville Road also fall within this zoning designation. The Fireman's Carnival grounds and Watkins Park are also zoned R-2, low density residential. The majority of newly designated low-density residential development is assigned an R-2 classification.

R3-Medium Density Residential: Within the Town limits, this zoning classification represents smaller single-family lot sizes of 6,000 - 10,000 square feet and is centered in a rather limited area. The primary area of R-3 Residential zoning is located between Park and Ridge Avenues before entering the downtown area. The designation is also currently being used for The Senior Housing complex and residential areas north of Park Avenue.

R5-Medium Density Residential: This zoning designation provides for a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet, with an average of 6,000 to 8,000 square feet. The zone was created in the 1998 Master Plan update in an effort to create "Neighborhood Centers" and targets specific areas of Town. The zone allows for medium density detached and attached housing units, encouraging flexibility of design to engender a variety of uses. The zone was intended to accommodate "community" based uses, compatible with residential development, such as daycare centers, recreational centers, non-profit organizational centers or churches. One such neighborhood center houses a nursing home/assisted living facility, while the other is dedicated to a recreational use, a community pool nestled among single-family homes.

R7-High Density Residential: This zoning designation provides maximum flexibility to design high-density residential neighborhoods in a safe, attractive and environmentally responsible manner. There are five areas of existing high-density housing located in the Town. Three of these areas reflect existing townhouse developments and the other two are vacant and undeveloped parcels. Otherwise, there is an intermingling of townhouses in small amounts in other scattered areas around the Town.

NP-Neighborhood Professional (newly adopted zone): The purpose of this district is to encourage a transition in-between existing residences and more intensive commercial zoning. It will allow the redevelopment of existing homes and structures for professional offices while protecting the lower intensity residential uses that adjoin the district. In the future, this zoning will be used in peripheral commercial areas around Town.

LC -Limited Commercial (newly adopted zone): This zone is intended to provide areas for a limited number of used retail and service establishments in close proximity to the residential areas around them. This district is also intended to be a transitional zone while protecting less intensive residential areas and the lower level neighborhood professional office areas.

CC-Community Commercial: This zone allows a wide variety of commercial uses, including shopping centers and special uses within the commercial zone such as gas stations, hospitals, institutions and nursing home facilities. This zone is concentrated along Rt. 27 and on Ridgeville Boulevard. There are several areas of commercial zoning which abut existing residential development and cause conflicts as well as basic compatibility problems. This zone does not prevent the construction of big box retail if they have adequate land area, however, retail and commercial uses over 65,000 square feet require special exception approval.

DTZ – Downtown Zone: Adopted in 2003, the Downtown Zone is intended to promote preservation and appreciation of the historic Town center, to strengthen the local economy and to enhance and preserve an atmosphere of small-town charm while combining business and residential uses. This zone will encourage a pedestrian oriented environment consistent with the overall development concept for the Downtown Zone. Unlike other commercial zoning categories within the Town, this zone permits only uses that have been specifically enumerated.

I-Industrial: The Town has one industrial classification that accommodates a wide variety of industrial uses. The main areas of industrial zoning are located in the five designated industrial parks located within the Town limits. Four of these parks are situated in the eastern portion of the Town in Carroll County and one is located in the Frederick County portion of Mount Airy. Commercial zoning is in short supply and some of the industrial parks have attracted commercial retail business. There have been some professional offices and "flex-space" type of buildings established in these parks that are compatible with other allowable uses within the zone.

REVIEW OF NEW/PROPOSED ZONING CATEGORIES

As the Downtown Zone District was implemented to promote the appreciation of the existing historic Town center and to preserve an atmosphere of small-town charm, the intent of implementing a Mixed Use Zoning Classification is to incorporate the general characteristics of existing historic centers into new development.

Mixed Use Zoning Classification – The primary purposes of this zoning classification is to create walkable, livable, and attractive development centers while promoting more diverse commercial and residential development options with a strong emphasis on pedestrian connectivity with existing and planned Town amenities such as parks, trail networks, and Town centers.

Office Park/Employment - The Office Park and Employment (OPE) Zoning Classification is currently under development by the Planning Commission. The purpose of this draft zoning is to provide the opportunity for comprehensively planned employment centers combining research and development, office, flex-space, light manufacturing and assembly, limited commercial and other enumerated uses. It is intended that this district provide higher

standards of development and a more flexible approach to design and development than could be achieved under conventional zoning districts.

Both the Mixed Use Zoning and Office Park and Employment Zoning Classifications have been discussed at the Planning Commission level and are essential components to the future growth pattern guided by the 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan Update.

FUTURE ZONING OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Mount Airy continues to be considered a "bedroom" community consistent with the percentage of land in existing and proposed residential development. In spite of the rate of growth of the Town over the past 10 years there are at least 175 acres of residentially zoned land that has development potential inside the Town boundaries. This does not account for any Town owned land that is residentially zoned. During the 1994 Master Plan update, an additional 250 acres of land were given industrial zoning in order to help balance out the deficit of opportunities for "employment" zones to promote future job creation and opportunity for local business expansion. As a result, there continues to be adequate vacant land for both residential expansion and industrial expansion.

Despite the land inventory available for balanced residential and industrial expansion, major episodes of residential growth tend to cause an imbalance with other types of land use growth and development. The percentage of residential growth that has occurred in Mount Airy in the last 20 years has greatly surpassed the amount of commercial and industrial development in that same period. Whenever there is a shortage of services in relation to population, the job to housing ratio is lower than a healthy mix should allow. Therefore, the Town should strive towards providing enough alternative zoning categories that assist in providing adequate employment opportunities. These zoning categories, where appropriate, should promote a degree of housing diversity and require that public amenities such as open space be integrated into commercial site design.

In addition, the commercial land opportunities within the Town should be examined closely in support of the Town being able to provide for continued business growth of a retail/service nature. This is an area of continuing concern and one goal of the 2013 Plan will be to utilize commercial land opportunities for new or expanding local businesses without overburdening the current infrastructure improvements to handle such expansions. As such, commercial zoning locations should be closely evaluated.

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

The categories of comprehensive land use will remain the same in the continued effort to establish desirable land use activity as designated in the last Master Plan. A concise description of the existing comprehensive plan classifications is as follows:

Conservation: This category was designed to help protect sensitive environmental areas and to provide maximum outlying residential areas. Limited low density residential is permitted. The maximum permitted density is one dwelling unit per every 3 acres. For this master plan cycle, Conservation has been applied for the majority of future annexation areas. A percentage of these areas do not meet the true intent of a Conservation Land Use designation with regard to environmental features. In these cases, these land areas are desired for development patterns that retain the “rural feel” that the Town seeks to retain. As part of the implementation of this Master Plan, an appropriate land use designation and zoning classification will be formulated to identify these areas for very low density clustered development to retain the agricultural character of the Town’s physical boundary.

Open Space and Public Use: This category is applied to land currently used for open space and public use, but includes school grounds and Town parks. It has also been applied to the greenway and linear park proposed for the South Branch of the Patapsco River. Where land is identified as Open Space or Public Use but not currently developed, the dedication can be achieved through application of the residential zones in place.

Low-Density Residential: This category corresponds to the RE-Residential Existing, R-1, or the R-2 zone. Approximately 121 acres of low-density residential zoning not yet developed fits into this category. This acreage could potentially yield 250 homes.

Medium-Density Residential: This category corresponds to the R-3 and R-5 neighborhood center zoning that is assigned in various locations in Town. Eighteen acres in this zone are undeveloped. The undeveloped land has a potential of yielding approximately 100 homes if developed under an approved special exception use for age-restricted housing.

High-Density Residential: This category corresponds to the existing R-7 zone. Only one site is vacant and does not have any current development plans. The remaining R-7 zoning classifications reflect existing developments or high-density subdivisions under development. The amount of R-7 zoning still represents a small amount of the total housing inventory in Town. Thirty-six acres remain in undeveloped R-7 land located on the east side of MD 27, north of the Twin Arch Shopping Center. This property could yield approximately 250 housing units within the zone.

General Commercial: This category corresponds to the existing Community Commercial Zone where more land intensive commercial operations are permitted. These existing areas exist along the corridor of Route 27 and intersecting collector roads such as Ridgeville Boulevard.

Assignment of General Commercial land use designations should be assigned to land areas that can appropriately minimize external effects to adjoining land uses.

Transitional Commercial: This category corresponds to parcels of land that abut more intense General Commercial land uses meeting the zoning requirements of both the Limited Commercial and Neighborhood Professional zoning categories. Transitional Commercial land uses are intended to provide a level of flexibility to those properties in close proximity to more intense land uses in such a manner not to disrupt surrounding residential areas.

Office Park/Employment: The Office Park/Employment (OPE) Zoning is not yet adopted, however this land use category corresponds to land areas considered to be well suited for comprehensively planned employment centers combining limited commercial uses, research and development, offices, and other specifically enumerated uses governed by the adopted zoning regulations. This land use designation is intended to provide higher standards of development and a more flexible approach to design. Pedestrian compatibility and the incorporation of open space components are highly desired for this land uses. Land areas with direct access to major corridors are preferred. The Harrison Property and the South Main Street properties are designated with this land use classification in this plan.

Light Industry/Research and Development: This land use category corresponds to the existing Industrial zoned areas of the Town. The vast majority of the Industrial land uses in the Town operate as Industrial Parks with flex space opportunities for office, medical, skilled trade services, and other enumerated uses. Heavier commercial uses not appropriate for commercial corridors are also prevalent in the Town's Industrial zoned areas. Areas designated for Light Industry/Research and Development should be located away from residential land uses whenever possible. Uses adjacent to non-industrial areas should be required to provide abundant screening and incorporate design standards. The Twin Arch Business Park is an example of this land use category.

ESTIMATED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Under the 2013 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, residential development on vacant land within the Town limits is anticipated to yield the following number of housing units. These yield estimates represent the gross acreage of vacant land inventory if developed under the recommended zoning classifications in this plan.

BUILDABLE LAND INVENTORY AND POTENTIAL POPULATION

Category	Zoning	Approximate Vacant Land (Acres)	Allowable Density	Density Yield (Allowable Density x 0.75 x acreage)	Potential Population Based on 3.0 Persons Per Household
Conservation	CON	88*	1 du/3ac	0	0
Low Density Residential	RE		1.75du/ac		0
	R1		1 du/ac		0
	R2	121	2 du/ac	181	543
Med. Density Residential	R-3	18	3 du/ac	40	120
	R-5				
High Density Residential	R7	36	7du/ac	189	567
Totals:		263		410	1,230

*Windy Ridge Park – Assumes no residential capacity

Extreme physical or environmental constraints may decrease the density yield beyond the assumed yield factor of 75% on certain parcels of land. It is also possible that certain special exception allowances result in a higher density yield. Where these conditions are known to exist, unit yield adjustments have been made and are reflected in the inventory of potential infill development and related capacity within the Municipal Growth Element Chapter.

DIVERSITY OF ZONING AND THE TOWN CHARACTER PATTERNS AND DIVERSITY OF LAND USES

Current zoning categories tend to define a narrow range of permitted building types or land uses. These categories are typically applied to an entire property such that a 200 acre parcel may be designated as one zone only. This practice results in residential sprawl or lengthy commercial strips.

The contrast between the old and new areas of Town is exaggerated by this different “pattern” of development. The older areas of Mt. Airy were developed over a long period of time and were generally not regulated by restrictive zoning categories. Within the older areas, a great variety of residential building types and the mix of small and large commercial types and uses has greatly contributed to the character of the Town. Older areas of Town are sources of pride to the community. Much of their attraction is derived from the unique mix and diversity of land uses. The use of transitional zones, along with creative site design, can help to blend these areas to minimize the disparity in patterns.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

As mentioned previously, a single zoning category is typically applied to large tracts of land. Because the Town previously had relatively few zoning categories, the incompatibility of development in adjacent zones had become more noticeable. To address this disparity, the two new transitional commercial zones were created. The careful placement of these transitional zones will assist in buffering established residential areas from heavy commercial activity. The specific requirements of zones, special requirements for buffer landscaping and special lighting requirements assist in the creation of a good relationship between office uses and residential uses.

The connections that are sometimes provided between adjacent developments are sidewalks, but special lighting and buffering requirements can make those connections safer and more aesthetically pleasing. Higher speed collector or arterial roads especially need this buffer to protect adjoining residential areas. Through the subdivision design process, the Town has worked to foster more pedestrian and bikeway connections through newer neighborhoods.

The overriding goal of good design and infill development should be to complement the surrounding existing development. Zoning regulations should encourage this complement instead of creating isolated and disconnected uses.

SITE DESIGN, LOT DESIGN AND ZONING

The type and intensity of land use is not always compatible with the site features of the parcel it was designated for. Properties with slopes of over 15% are difficult to develop, given any land use without significant grading that destroys the existing topographical features, forests and other vegetation. Similarly, developments in older areas of Town are forced to conform to regulations for new development, rather than being forced to conform to the established character. The Town has recently adopted additional residential and commercial zoning classifications that will assist in providing development with good site design in appropriate locations.

Zoning criteria including lot size, setbacks, minimum lot width and parking requirements have a significant effect on the design of a building site.

Rather than provide minimum guidelines, the current zoning regulations tend to be very demanding, and most of the lots developed under the same zone are almost identical. The impact of this inflexibility on new residential lot design can be compared to the character of older residential development. On Main Street, lot sizes range from 2 acres to 12,000 square feet or less. The average lot size in newer subdivisions is about 18,000 square feet and has the tendency to create uniformity in both the lot design and subdivision layout. In comparison, longer established residential areas reflect diversity and the unique characteristics of each specific building lot. The preservation of existing topographical or environmental features during site and lot design review should be emphasized in future site development to achieve a balance between maintaining the aesthetic and environmental value of raw land and the benefits of completed site development.

LAND USE, ZONING, AND COMMUNITY VISION

During each comprehensive plan update, recent growth patterns within the Town should be evaluated and compared to the community's for future growth and development. In order to balance changes in existing land use patterns and provide opportunities that will support the community's shared vision it can be necessary to reclassify the zoning of land.

To facilitate the continued orderly development of land within The Town of Mount Airy, the following rezoning recommendations are being made for this update of the comprehensive plan:

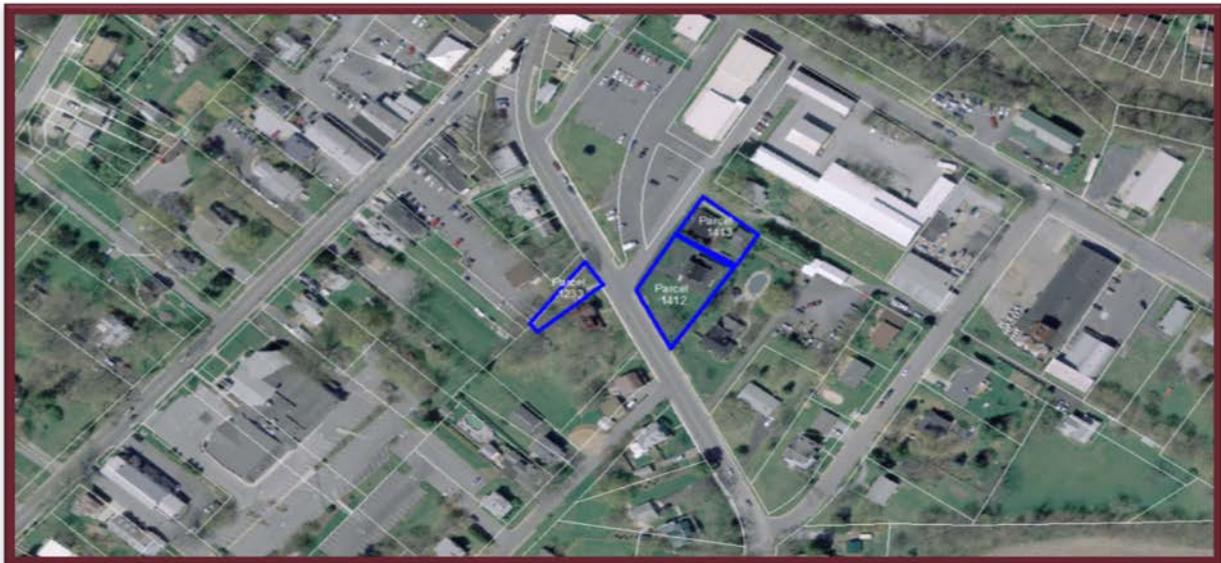
1. EAST RIDGEVILLE/RIDGE COURT PROPERTIES

Description	Parcel	Address	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning
Holmes Property	0497	1401 Ridge Court		RE – Residential Existing	NP – Neighborhood Professional
Haddad Property	0496	1403 Ridge Court		RE – Residential Existing	NP – Neighborhood Professional
Chiropractic First	0494	603 E. Ridgeville Blvd.		RE – Residential Existing	NP – Neighborhood Professional
Mackenzie Kantruss Property	0499	604 E. Ridgeville Blvd.		RE – Residential Existing	NP – Neighborhood Professional
Haddad Property	0493	605 E. Ridgeville Blvd		RE – Residential Existing	NP – Neighborhood Professional



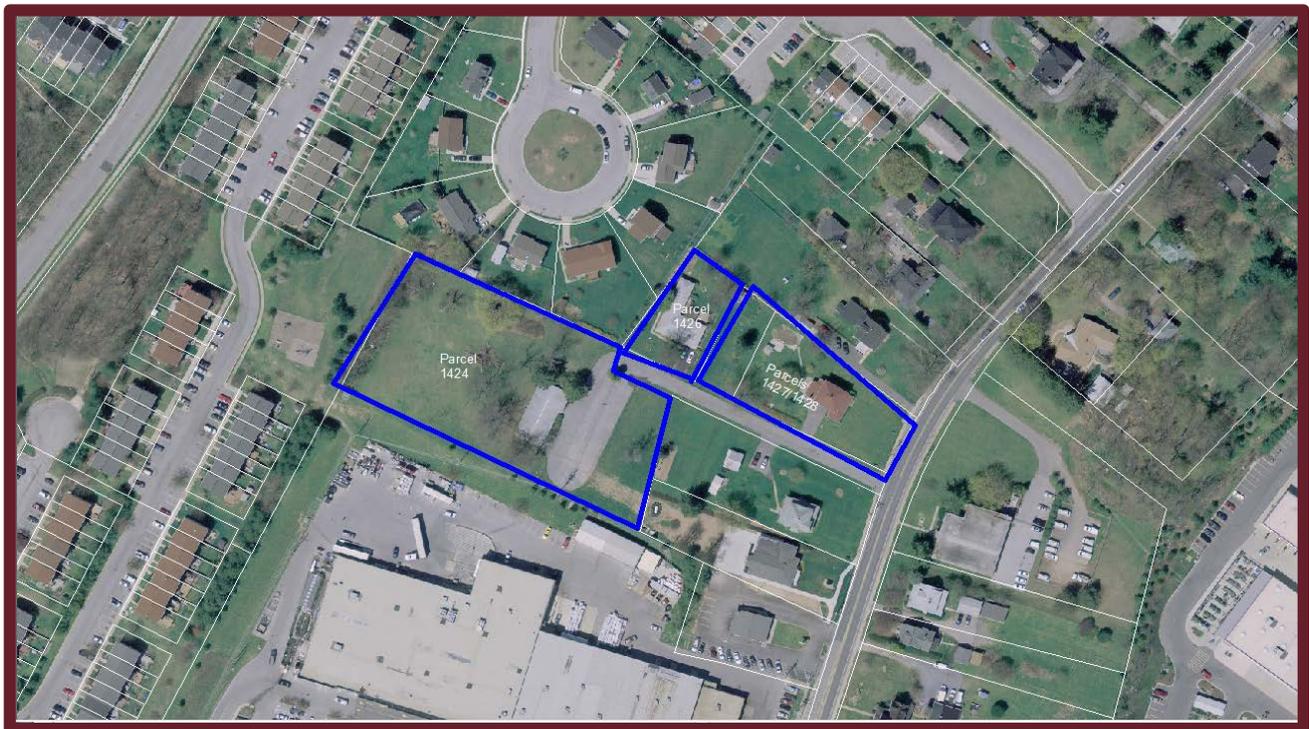
2. PARK AVENUE/MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT PROPERTIES

Description	Parcel	Address	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning
Raymond Law Center	1233	18 Park Avenue		RE – Residential Existing	NP – Neighborhood Professional
Baker Property	1412	207 Cross Street		RE – Residential Existing	DTZ – Downtown Zone
Henley Property	1413	203-205 Cross Street		RE – Residential Existing	DTZ – Downtown Zone



3. CULWELL AVENUE/SOUTH MAIN STREET PROPERTIES

Description	Parcel	Address	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning
1304 South Main Street (LaBella MediSpa)	1427/ 1428	1304 South Main Street		RE – Residential Existing	NP – Neighborhood Professional
Dr. Miller’s Property	1424	4 Culwell Drive		RE – Residential Existing	NP – Neighborhood Professional
Gosnell Property	1426	3 Culwell Drive		RE – Residential Existing	NP – Neighborhood Professional



4. WILDWOOD PARK VII

Description	Parcel	Address	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning
WWPK VII	0514	E/S of Ridge Avenue		R2 – Low Density Residential	R3 – Medium Density
WWPK VII	0515	E/S of Ridge Avenue		R2 – Low Density Residential	R3 – Medium Density



5. TWIN ARCH BUSINESS PARK

Description	Parcel	Address	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning
Back Acre Circle (Portion)	0310	Back Acre Circle off of Century Dr.	1.93 of 50.84	R2 – Low Density Residential	I - Industrial



6. BAKER AVENUE

Description	Parcel	Address	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning
Forman Property	1205	1 Baker Ave	0.234	CC – Community Commercial and DTZ – Downtown Zone	DTZ – Downtown Zone
Altomare Property	1206	7 Baker Ave	0.522	CC- Community Commercial and DTZ – Downtown Zone	RE – Residential Existing

7. PROSPECT ROAD PROPERTIES

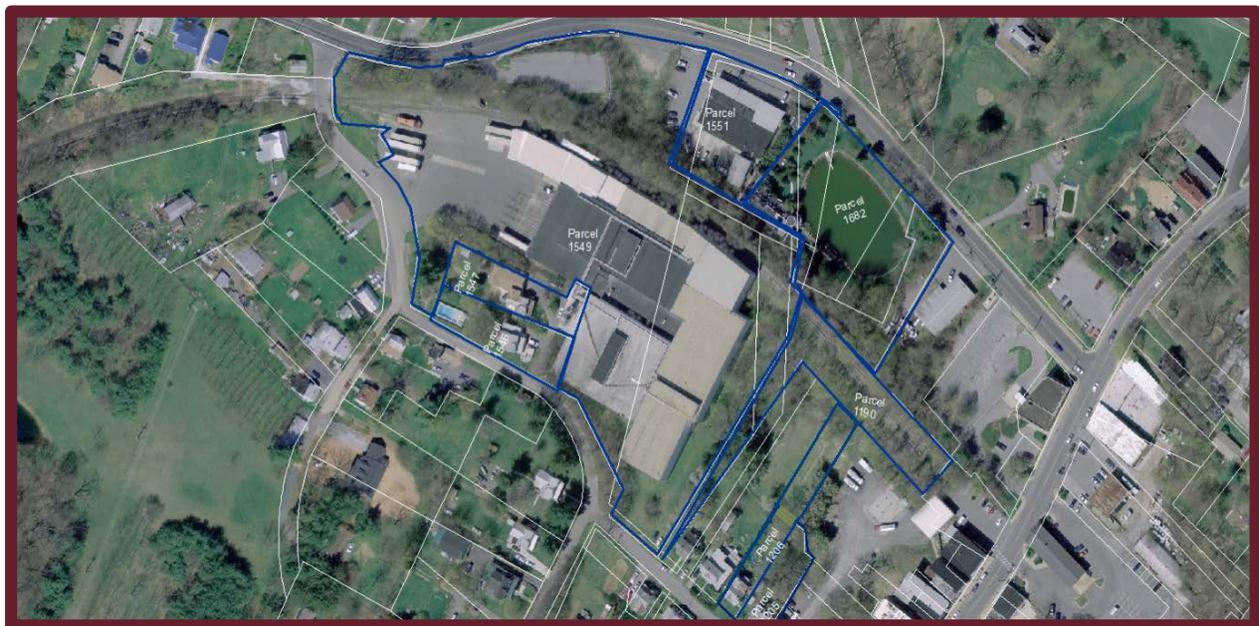
Description	Parcel	Address	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning
Castle Center	1551	106 (6) Prospect Road	0.87	CC – Community Commercial	DTZ – Downtown Zone
Brown Property (Castle)	1682	104 Prospect Road	1.05	CC – Community Commercial	DTZ – Downtown Zone
Brown Property	1550	104 Prospect Road	0.45	CC – Community Commercial RE- Residential Existing	DTZ – Downtown Zone

8. COLD STORAGE

Description	Parcel	Address	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning
Cold Storage Property	1549	3 Hill Street	6.8	I – Industrial	DTZ – Downtown Zone
Cold Storage Property	1190	Main Street	1.03	CC – Community Commercial	DTZ – Downtown Zone

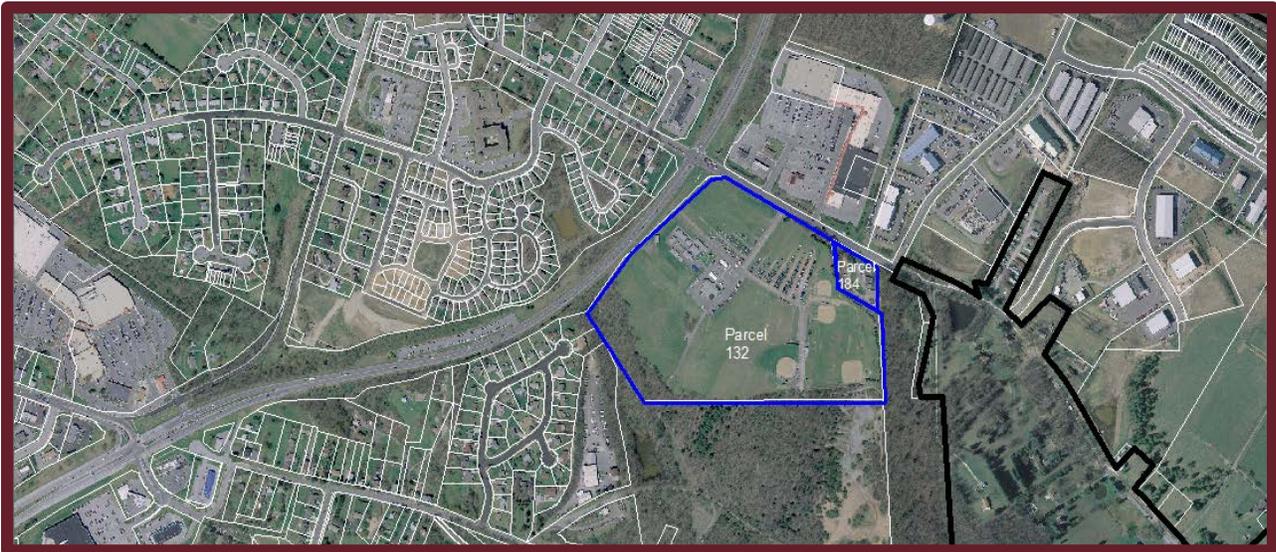
9. HILL STREET

Description	Parcel	Address	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning
Warthen Property	1546	103 Hill Street	.32	I - Industrial	DTZ – Downtown Zone
Palovich Property	1547	105 Hill Street	.2815	I – Industrial	DTZ – Downtown Zone



10. TWIN ARCH ROAD

Description	Parcel	Address	Acreage	Existing Zoning	Recommended Zoning
MAVFC Carnival Grounds	132	1008 Twin Arch Road	36	R2 – Low Density Residential	CC – Community Commercial
Buckman Property	184	4127 Twin Arch Road	1.48	R2 – Low Density Residential	CC – Community Commercial



REZONING REQUESTS NOT SUPPORTED
 DURING 2013 MASTER PLAN CYCLE

Property	Existing Zoning	Requested Zoning
Beck Property	R-7 (High Density Residential)	CC (Community Commercial)
20 Park Avenue	RE - (Residential Existing)	DTZ (Downtown Zone)
1010 South Main Street	RE (Residential Existing)	CC (Community Commercial)
806 Park Avenue	R-3 (Medium Density Residential)	CC (Community Commercial)
302 Waterville Road - Hauptman Property	R-2 (Low Density Residential)	CC (Community Commercial)

MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT (MGE)

Legislation passed in 2006 under HB 1141, entitled “Land Use-Local Government Planning”, requires that all municipal comprehensive plans now include a MGE. This planning element requires an examination of past growth trends and patterns, and includes a projection of future growth in population and resulting land needs based on a capacity analysis of the effects of growth on infrastructure and natural features both within in and adjacent to the present municipality and on future growth areas. The 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan Update is the first master plan cycle to include the MGE. This element serves as a separate chapter in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and includes the Future Annexation Areas along with the proposed land use designation for each parcel. The accompanying maps and charts provided in the MGE reflect the land use designations described in Land Use and Zoning Chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAJOR GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: Prioritize and concentrate near-term (8-10 years) development on in-fill rather than annexations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:

- a) Concentrate on vacant land within the Town boundary and existing approved plans (approved pipeline projects) for near-term development.
- b) Prioritize the Town's near-term development and re-development emphasis and priorities by designating Development Zones.

GOAL 2: Emphasize more balance between Commercial, Industrial and Residential Development in support of creating more near-term Commercial and Industrial utilization and tax revenue growth from those sectors.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:

- a) Prioritize water allocation for approved Commercial/Mixed Use and Industrial projects.
- b) Identify potential opportunities for re-zoning consideration.
- c) Encourage Economic Development Commission and Town Staff to design and implement marketing efforts to prospective land owners and developers.

GOAL 3: Lead the Town's development priorities with an emphasis on Downtown revitalization.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:

- a) Prioritize water allocation to support development in the Downtown Zone Area.
- b) Maintain Downtown Zoning requirements and historic building design standards.
- c) Focus efforts toward accessibility, parking considerations, and pedestrian oriented development.

GOAL 4: Provide more opportunity, capability and balance for near term development and redevelopment effort by introducing and utilizing new zoning districts, as well as utilizing existing classifications in more flexible fashion.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- a) Introduce Mixed Use Development as a new zoning classification, which provides more flexibility in design and utilization and supports an integrative approach to the Town's infill efforts.
- b) Introduce and pursue the application of "overlays" to the Town's existing zoning categories that will provide more flexibility and responsiveness to the Town's development and design objectives.
- c) Introduce OPE – Office Park/Employment Campus as a new zoning classification in anticipation of creating and utilizing this new land use for the benefit of the Town.
- d) Fully utilize the newly designated Development Zones of the Town.

GOAL 5: Ensure that green space for recreation, groundwater recharge, and wellhead protection is strategically placed to optimize for these purposes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:

- a) Annexations and subsequent rezonings should promote this goal.

GOAL 6: Ensure quality development within zoning categories.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- a) Maintain and require good zoning standards and a thorough and consistent site plan and subdivision process.
- b) Continue to utilize the principals of the design guidelines.

GOAL 7: Fully consider existing zoning and re-zoning requests within context of overall Master Plan and the land use objectives for which this Plan is intended.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- a) Evaluate zoning considerations on the basis of the long term developmental visions identified in this plan.