

### III. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

Over the past two decades, the amount of residential development in Frederick County increased at a relatively consistent rate of approximately three (3) percent a year. Supporting this growth was a period of significant expansion in the County's commercial and industrial base. According to the 2010 Census and more recent studies performed by the Economic Development Authority (EDA), Frederick County remains primarily an in-commute location. However, this Plan acknowledges Frederick County is also home to a large population of residents that commute out of the County for employment. The main contributor to the population growth was the migration of people inside the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area (WMSA) to Frederick County for a higher quality of life including lower housing costs and a lower tax rate. Frederick County, because of its location and excellent access to Northern Virginia and Washington, DC, has become a place of choice to live for those commuters. Frederick County has also become an attractive place to live for retirees.

Residential opportunities exist in both the County's Urban and Rural Areas. In recent years Frederick County has seen approximately two thirds of its new residential growth constructed in the Urban Development Area (UDA) and one third in the Rural Areas, including the Residential Recreational Communities (such as Lake Holiday, Lake Frederick, and Shawneeland).

The Rural Areas are home to the agricultural, forestal and open spaces of the County. Within the rural areas, the predominant types of residential unit are single family dwellings with a density of one house per five acres. In addition to the traditional five acres lots seen in the past, dwellings at the same density can be clustered using a two acre lot size with the remainder being preserved through a 60% preservation tract. Older rural communities exist throughout the rural areas and are typically found within one of the County's Rural Community Centers. These community centers typically have smaller lot sizes, higher densities and some commercial uses. Residential developments located in the Rural Areas, including Rural Community Centers are typically on private individual water and sewer systems.

The Urban Development Area (UDA) is the portion of the County which has been identified as the area where more intensive forms of residential development will occur and to accommodate the anticipated residential growth within the Community. While the UDA currently consists of primarily suburban residential types of development, with some multifamily and retirement units, it is planned to accommodate a more intensive mix of land uses and residential housing opportunities. The UDA is designed to accommodate increased residential densities because it is adjacent to or in the near proximity to the necessary infrastructure and public facilities, such as public water and sewer, schools, emergency services and a transportation network. To further encourage residential development in the Urban rather than Rural Areas, the County adopted a Transfer of Development Rights Program

(TDR) in the spring of 2010. More information on the County's TDR Program can be found in the Rural Areas chapter.

### **FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE**

Future residential growth in Frederick County is anticipated to continue and expand. The County must ensure that land use policies are established to adequately direct and shape that growth. While new residential growth is expected in both the Rural and the Urban Areas, new residential growth should be focused primarily within the Urban Development Area (UDA).

The County should continue to establish policies which result in attractive and welcoming residential neighborhoods which are able to accommodate a growing population and expanding workforce. Such residential development should be comprised of a mixture of housing types and lot sizes to provide options for a range of lifestyles and incomes, such as retiree's, millennials and younger families. The land use policies of the Urban Areas will further guide this residential development and community growth.

### **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

Proactive planning efforts are essential in both the Urban and Rural Areas to ensure that the County is able to deal with its future residential growth in a cost-effective and attractive manner.

Proper planning and land use policies enable the County to identify where future residential growth should be accommodated. It enables the County to plan for and provide infrastructure and services in defined areas where they can reach the majority of the population. By directing growth and services to the urban areas, the County can develop community facilities that become focal points to the residential areas.

### **GOALS/STRATEGIES**

**GOAL:** NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE FOCUSED WITHIN THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREA (UDA).

**STRATEGIES:**

- The Urban Development Area should allow for housing that will meet the needs of first time buyers, retiree's, move-up residences, and seniors.
- Higher density residential development is encouraged in close proximity to or mixed with commercial areas to enhance walkable access to employment, shopping, and entertainment. The County's strategic growth areas, the Urban

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Centers and Neighborhood Villages, are the most desirable locations for this type of development.

- Residential housing types and design guidelines should be flexible to accommodate evolving demographic trends, and to ensure that housing choices are maximized.

**GOAL:**      **NATURAL SYSTEMS AND OPEN SPACES SHOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

**STRATEGIES:**

- When new development occurs in the rural areas, the rural preservation option should be encouraged as the preferred subdivision form and design to preserve natural and environmental features should be implemented.
- New residential neighborhoods will include open space amenities, active, passive, and natural, located in close proximity to all dwellings, with an emphasis on the provision of usable open space for resident use and enjoyment.

**GOAL:**      **ENCOURAGE NEW AND INNOVATIVE HOUSING CHOICES THAT ALSO ACCOMMODATE A FULL RANGE OF AFFORDABILITY.**

**STRATEGIES:**

- Ensure that adequate housing options are available to the development community through the Zoning Ordinance.
- Rural Community Centers should be enhanced as viable and desirable places to live, as they can serve an important role as a location with lower development costs, thus reducing the housing costs.
- Promote the completion of land use plans for the Rural Community Centers and provide incentives to increase the viability of these neighborhoods.