

## CHAPTER 1

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND REGIONAL SETTING

#### Historical Background of the Town of Mount Airy

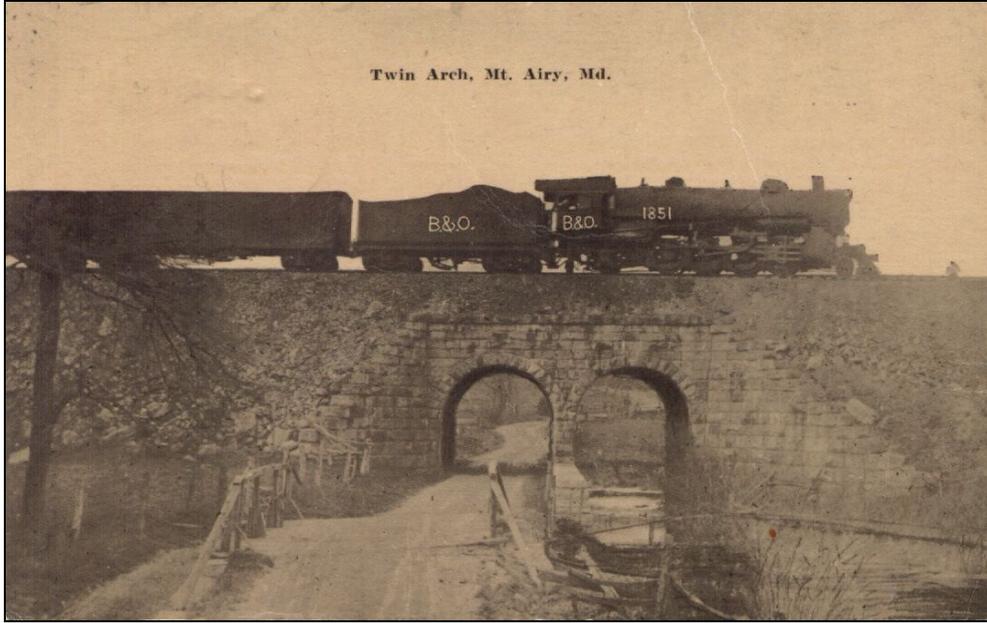
The western movement of the B & O Railroad and close proximity to the National Pike gave identity and significance to the Town of Mount Airy. The hilly topography of the area is responsible for the name of the town. A railroad foreman who commented, “this is an airish mountain” christened it with its name. The name of the town became Mount Airy and remained so from that point forward. The town was divided between two counties, Carroll and Frederick, in 1837, when Carroll County defined its permanent boundaries, and Mount Airy has remained in two counties since that year. About one mile south of the town is the junction of Carroll, Frederick, Howard and Montgomery Counties located at the headwaters of the South Branch of the Patapsco River.



**The Old Mount Airy Hotel and Main Street Looking South – Courtesy of Mount Airy Museum**

The town was originally settled in the early 1830s by a core group of six families. Dorsey, Davis, and Bussard were the most prominent names in that first settlement, which was followed closely by the construction of the B & O railroad line in 1831. Because Mount Airy sits at an elevation of 830 feet, a series of inclined planes were constructed in order for the trains to climb the steep hills. The planes were constructed from June to October

in 1831. Locomotives and cars were moved up the east side by horses and were moved down the other two planes on the western side of the hill. Passengers had to disembark during this process. Plane #4, several miles west of the town at the intersection of Woodville Road and MD. Rt. 144 is still a recognized location today.



**The Twin Bridges – Courtesy of the Mount Airy Museum**

This railroad system was updated in 1839, when more powerful locomotives were put into use. When that occurred, a detour around Ridgeville, located directly west of the town center, was created and a spur line went through what is now the Town of Mount Airy. The first resident, Henry Bussard, was named the station agent for the new train station.



**Druggist Shop in early 1900s – courtesy Mt. Airy Museum**

More significantly, Mr. Bussard was the first major landowner in Mount Airy. By 1846, the town was sparsely settled with several houses, a town store, barber shop and shoemaker shop. Pine Grove Chapel, circa 1846, now a historic monument, was constructed to fill the need for a community church. From the time it was constructed, the chapel basement functioned as a private school. The chapel remained open during the early part of the Civil War despite soldier encampments in close proximity. The school and church were closed later because of distracting soldier activity around the vicinity of the school. After the war ended, the church reopened in 1867, after undergoing a renovation. By 1894, Pine Grove Chapel officially formed a seven-member Board that presided over the church until the 1930s.

In 1893, the Carroll County Board of Education funded the construction of a three-room schoolhouse. The school was not actually funded until the next year and was completed in September 1894. The building, approximately 1,700 sq. ft in size, was located on the east side of Main Street, 1/4 of mile south of the railroad tracks. It is now part of the Calvary United Methodist Church property. The school operated from 9:00 am to 4:00 p.m., much like today's schools.

With the incorporation of the town in 1894, came the establishment of the town government structure, including a Mayor and Council. The first Mount Airy Mayor was Byron S. Dorsey who served eight years in that office between 1894 and 1904.



**Main Street Looking North in 2003 – Town of Mount Airy, Maryland**



**Main Street Looking North, circa 1940s- Courtesy of Mt. Airy Museum**

### **1900-1950s**

In 1900, the town population had grown to 332 residents. By 1910, the town population was 428 and it was determined that the town had enough student population to justify a State accredited high school. A high school with classes was organized but an official high school "building" to house all eleven grades was not built at that time.

Three disastrous fires took place in the town during the first quarter of the 20th century. The first fire occurred in 1902 and destroyed the business section of the southern side of downtown area. The second fire was in 1914 and consumed the north side of the downtown business section. The third fire took place almost twenty years later in 1925 and again, the northern side of the downtown business district was destroyed. As a result of the 1925 fire, the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company was organized in 1926.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, the town continued to grow and provide services despite the onset of the Great Depression. Expanded town services included necessary public utilities such as electric service, an ice factory, and establishment of the Mount Airy Canning Company. The canning company provided about 250 jobs for town residents.

During the Great Depression, the railroad company made it possible for the town to maintain its population. The 1930 census tallied the town population at 845 persons, an increase of 91 people since 1920. The Depression may have affected the national economy, but the town economy was able to expand to include more service-related business during that time. The first motion picture theater opened in Mount Airy in 1932. During the 1930s, several large businesses were initiated, such as a large poultry

operation, and Potomac Edison (providing electric service), and two automobile garages opened, establishing a core business district in Mount Airy.

During that time, the town also saw the purchase of land for a town park, the opening of a grocery store and a lumberyard and the dedication of Pine Grove Chapel for use as a nonsectarian chapel.



**Pine Grove Chapel – Historic Monument, Mt. Airy, MD**

The start of World War II established the pattern of residents traveling to work in defense plants located within the City of Baltimore. In 1946, the first planned subdivision came into existence in town and included 13 single-family homes. Many service organizations such as Lions, Kiwanis, and the American Legion were established at the end of the war. In 1949, the local movie theater began to offer Sunday Show times for the entertainment of the town residents.

In 1951, the town government purchased the building located at the intersection of Main Street and Park Ave, originally in order to widen Main Street, but the structure was instead used as Town Hall for over forty years. The decade of the 1950s saw the beginning of a residential and commercial building boom in the town of Mount Airy. In 1953, the Mount Airy Volunteer Fire Company purchased what came to be known as the carnival grounds, located at the intersection of Route 27 and Twin Arch Road.

### **1960s - Present**

The decade of the 1960s saw Mount Airy continue to grow into a medium size community and several important physical changes happened in town. The town high school was officially closed in 1967. In 1966, the Maryland Route 27 bypass was proposed. The Ridgeville area at the south end of the town, totaling 263 acres, was

annexed in 1966 and was considered at that time to be a major addition to the town boundaries.



**Mount Airy High School- Mount Airy, MD – 1962**

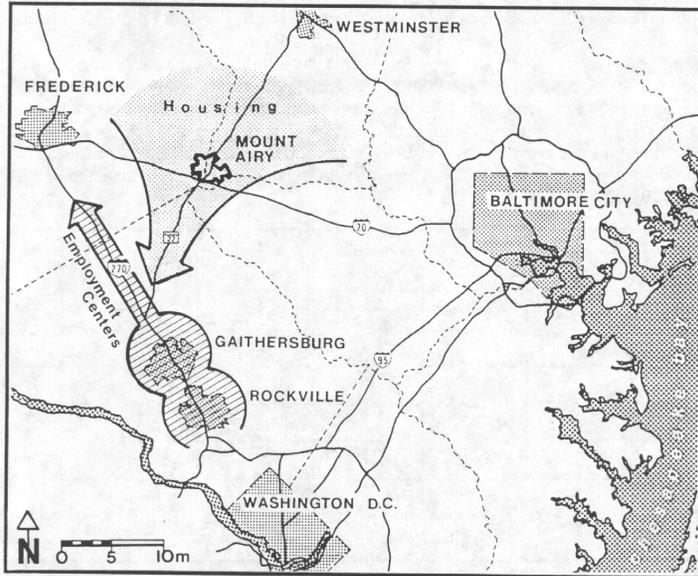
In the 1970s the Town of Mount Airy built a sewerage system for the town. The annexation of 419 acres in three different tracts occurred, adding a significant area to the town boundaries and the first shopping center was built. This shopping center is now known as the Mount Airy Shopping Center. A new 66-acre subdivision known as Mount Airy Village West and East was constructed in 1976. Construction of the Mount Airy Bypass or MD 27, facilitated more residential development at the northern end of town.

During the decade of the 1980s, new residents who were employed outside the two counties began to populate the town and created a need for essential services such as food, restaurants, household items and recreational opportunities. The local economy had always been in a healthy state, but during the next ten years, a commercial and industrial boom occurred in Mount Airy to meet the needs of the growing town population.

Several new institutional buildings were also constructed during the 1980s and 1990s. They were a new elementary school, a new library and a senior center, a fire station, and a post office. This profusion of public buildings was a direct response to not only the growth of the Town, but also of the regional area. This continued to add to the need for new infrastructure, utilities, and road improvements. At the same time, the growth that took place during the last twenty years, began to take its toll on the quality of life that the Town had deemed attractive to existing and new residents.

## **Regional Setting and Related Growth Issues**

Mount Airy's location at a meeting point of the boundaries of four counties and its desirable commuting distance to the major regional employment centers of Baltimore and Washington, D.C. set the stage for its tremendous growth pressure from 1980 - 2000. Other factors that have contributed to development pressure have been the nearness of the intersection of two major highways, I-70 and MD 27, and an affordable and attractive living environment.



**Regional Map of the Baltimore-Washington Suburban Area**

From 1995 to 2003, the Town has been implementing the 1994 Master Plan that addresses the role that the town is destined to play in the regional environment. The plan outlined goals and objectives specifically dealing with various regional growth influences that have a direct effect on the town. Specific policies were established to manage the current and future impacts of regional and local development pressures.

The focus of this Plan Update will be to continue to implement the policies and goals as stated in the 1994 Plan while reassessing the goals to ensure that regional and town growth issues will continue to be addressed.

The interjurisdictional coordination of the Town with Carroll and Frederick Counties is also an important component in monitoring the growth within the immediate vicinity of Mount Airy. It allows the Town to evaluate residential, commercial, and industrial development directly outside its boundaries. The review of land development proposals and land use changes is essential to evaluate whether the changes will affect the town's existing infrastructure such as roads, parks, emergency services, and other public utilities. The Town will continue to monitor development in adjoining counties to assess the long-term impacts for Mount Airy.

## **Regional Growth Patterns**

Growth within the Town limits of Mount Airy closely follows the growth patterns of many of the municipalities located along the I-270 and I-70 corridor outside the metropolitan D.C. area. The northwestward growth of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area was accelerated by the completion of the I-270 highway from the I-495 Beltway to Frederick in 1958. Located along this I-270 corridor, the cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg, and the community of Germantown grew quickly as bedroom communities. During the 1970s and 1980s, these areas were transformed into thriving employment centers.

Mount Airy lies 13 miles from I-270 via MD Route 27, and is similarly affected by the pattern and strength of development along this growth corridor. Mt. Airy and the surrounding rural areas of Frederick, Howard and Carroll counties have seen significant residential development that houses the workforce of the I-270 employment centers.

The regional and town population growth during the last two decades have been significant. Mount Airy grew 33% each decade from 1940 to 1970. From 1970 to 1980, the rate of growth increased to 39% and from 1980 to 1990 the growth surpassed 50%. The State of Maryland indicated in a report published in December of 2001, that Mount Airy was the fastest growing municipality from 1990 to 1997. The Town population increased 44% during that time, 20% more than any other small town in the State.

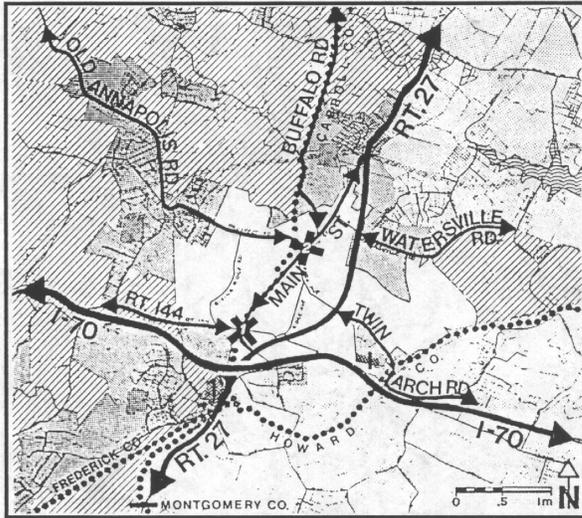
According to a community survey conducted in 1988, more than one-half of the residents who responded worked in Montgomery County and Washington, D. C. The remaining residents were equally distributed between jobs in Howard, Carroll, Baltimore and Frederick Counties.

## **Locational Influences on the Town**

The growth influences of the Washington-Baltimore Region and the job market expansion causing more residential development have been far reaching. The outer suburban development area of the Washington-Baltimore Region now extends well into central/western Maryland, Northern Virginia, the southeastern portion of Pennsylvania and even the eastern region of West Virginia. Maryland Rail Commuter Train (MARC) has provided an alternative to long distance commutes by car into Washington, D.C. from Shepherdstown, West Virginia. A desirable place to live is a valuable commodity in this region. Many families relocated to Mount Airy seeking a quality of life and convenient commuting distance to Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Mount Airy will remain a "bedroom community" with strong growth expected for the foreseeable future.

The Town of Mount Airy is located at the interchange area of I-70 and MD Rt. 27. I-70 is a major east-west connector and provides an essential connection to Baltimore and the

City of Frederick along with access to the I-270 corridor leading to Washington, D.C. Maryland Route 27 provides the north-south connection to the City of Westminster and points northeast.



**Road Network accessing Mount Airy**

While I-270 is a heavily developed employment corridor, I-70 has not been subject to significant development activity and serves primarily as a transportation corridor. In addition, Howard and Frederick Counties are not planning for interstate-related growth in this area. In the 1990 Howard County General Plan, only one area along I-70 is slated for growth as a future employment area and that scenario is dependent on future road improvements as well as available water and sewer service.

Mount Airy is the larger of the two existing municipalities along the Interstate 70 corridor between Frederick and Baltimore. To date, this has resulted in some highway related development, but it is limited to commercial development around the interchange areas of I-70 and its intersecting north-south routes. The Town of New Market, five miles west of Mount Airy, has a population of 486 persons, according to the State of Maryland. The town boundaries of New Market have grown on a limited basis. There is also limited commercial development located at the interchange area of MD Rt. 75 and Interstate 70.

According to the 2000 Census, there were 44,627 persons in the regional area around Mount Airy. With the exception of Damascus, 6 miles to the south, the nearest comparable service area to the west, north or east is located 15 miles away. This indicates that the services available within Mount Airy are sustaining a four-county area with a population more than 5 times the population of the Town. This has several implications, which have been addressed and evaluated in the adopted Master Plan. It indicates that development in all four counties influences the Town and that interjurisdictional coordination with County planning and funding policies is necessary for the balanced growth of the Town.

## **Analysis of Surrounding Counties Growth Policies**

In order to get a perspective on the regional growth pressure that Mount Airy has experienced over the last three decades, it is important to generally summarize the Master Plans of the four Counties, which influence the Town. Following is a brief analysis of each of the Countywide Comprehensive Plans of the four counties on the Town boundaries.

Howard County General Plan: In the 2000 General Plan, Howard County plans to concentrate development around existing community centers. The area of Howard County that lies a short distance southeast of the Town boundaries is considered by Howard County to be the "rural west". Howard County has maintained a policy of preservation for the western half of the County and has applied the Rural-Conservation Zoning District to this area. This designation requires clustering on 1-acre lots at a ratio of 1 unit per 4.25 acres of gross acreage for the overall parcel. Much of the land for which development rights have been purchased through the Howard County Agricultural Preservation program is located west of MD Rt. 94, close to Mount Airy. It has generally been determined that the Town of Mount Airy would continue to serve the commercial needs of the upper part of Howard County because the upper portion of Howard County is not slated for any development of a commercial nature.

Montgomery County Plan: Montgomery County has followed the basic policies adopted in their 1964 "Wedges and Corridors Plan" for the metropolitan region. This plan calls for development of regional centers along planned transportation corridors, and preservation of agricultural land that fills in the remaining "wedges". The Mount Airy Region falls within a wedge. According to the Damascus Master Plan, the current planned water and sewer service areas for the County extend from I-270 to Damascus along Rt. 27. Land between Damascus and Mount Airy is zoned agricultural. A significant amount of residential development has been approved in Frederick County to the west of the Montgomery County line, which will increase development pressure along Rt. 27.

Frederick County Plan: Frederick County just completed the update and adoption of the Countywide Plan in 1998, a policy document covering the overall planning goals and objectives for Frederick County. Frederick County identifies Mount Airy as a *Regional Community* in the newly adopted 1998 Countywide Plan. A significant development that has been initiated in Frederick County between Mount Airy and the I-270 corridor is the Urbana Planned Unit Development. This designated growth area will bring 3,500 new housing units to the southeastern portion of Frederick County potentially generating 10,000 more people for that region. The general intent and emphasis of the Frederick County Comprehensive Plan is to encourage growth in and around existing municipalities, but also in specifically designated "growth" areas such as the Urbana PUD, located southwest of Mount Airy. Major development activity outside the Mount Airy Town limits has occurred in the last several years. The Frederick County Election

District surrounding the west side of Mount Airy alone totaled 5,789 persons in 1990. Of this figure 1,544 persons or 26% lived within the town limits and 4,245 people in the immediate adjacent county area.

Carroll County Comprehensive Plan: Carroll County's Master Plan advocates concentrating development around existing communities and infrastructure. This is reflected in the 1982 Mount Airy and Environs Comprehensive Plan. That plan designates some areas directly adjoining the current Town boundaries for low-density residential development. For the most part, the zoning and comprehensive plan designations reflect existing low-density residential development. Beyond those immediately surrounding zones most property is zoned agricultural or conservation. This development around Mount Airy has been controlled by its proximity to the planned Gillis Falls Reservoir. Carroll County has purchased a majority of the property needed for the reservoir, and has restricted the intensity of development around the reservoir to protect the land as a future water resource. Serious environmental constraints have prevented Federal and State authorities from endorsing the use of the reservoir.

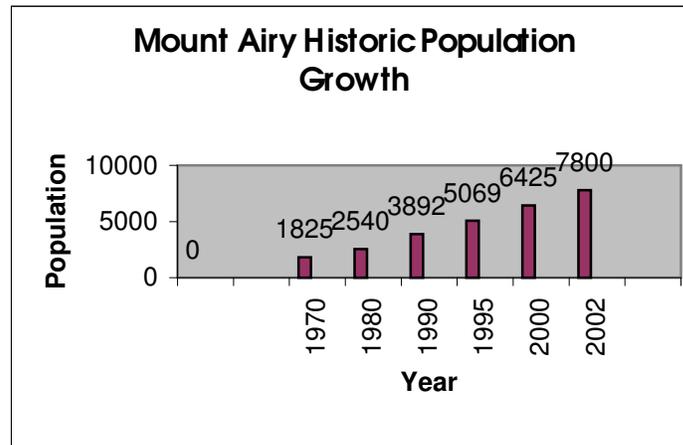
State of Maryland "Smart Growth" Initiative: The State of Maryland has recently adopted a growth management policy that is intended to direct and maintain population growth in and around existing communities. Many counties in the Washington - Baltimore Region, have endorsed the State of Maryland's "Smart Growth Initiative". The initiative basically supports and endorses "Priority Funding Areas". These PFAs reflect the State's policy to support, and where necessary, to revitalize existing communities. These areas are designated where there is already significant financial investment in infrastructure and services to the community. The purpose of establishing the Priority Funding Areas is to

#### **Current zoning adjacent to the Town**

encourage and support for economic development and new growth in areas with infrastructure, thereby reducing the pressure for sprawl into agricultural and other natural resource areas.

## Demographic Analysis of the Town

For various reasons, Mount Airy has experienced a tremendous influx of growth from population in-migration. The majority of new residents have come from the more urbanized areas of Washington suburbs such as the cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg, and the community of Germantown and other more intensely developed areas of Montgomery and Baltimore Counties.



The 2000 Census population for the Town is 6,425 people. The growth from 1990 to 2000 was twenty percent higher than the previous ten years. When the 1990 Census was conducted, the Town of Mount Airy had already experienced two major growth surges during the two previous decades. From 1970 to 1980, the Town population grew by 39%. The decade from 1980 to 1990 yielded a 53% increase. In the five-year period from 1990 to 1995, the population increased an additional 30%. The Town population increased 65% in the last decade. The annual population growth during the last ten-year period has been 6.5% on the average, slightly higher than the overall countywide growth for Frederick and Carroll Counties. In more recent history, the growth in the surrounding counties has outpaced the population growth inside the municipal limits.

Population growth continues to be a factor that directly influences the Town's residential building activity. Concurrently, a steady increase in the regional population has accompanied the increase in town population. The majority of population growth within the Mount Airy election district, both in Frederick and Carroll Counties, has been attributed to the Town. A historic look at the town population growth, along with the growth history of both counties follows:

<b>Mount Airy and Surrounding Counties - Historic Population Growth</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Mount Airy</b>		<b>Frederick County</b>		<b>Carroll County</b>
<b>1970</b>	1,825		84,927		69,006
<b>1980</b>	2,450	+34 %	114,792	+35 %	96,356 + 40 %
<b>1990</b>	3,892	+59 %	150,208	+31 %	123,372 + 28 %
<b>1995</b>	5,069	+30 %	174,200	+16 %	142,154 +15.2 %
<b>2000</b>	6,425	+27 %	195,277	+12 %	150,897 + 6.2 %

Co. Source: Frederick Demographic and Development Data, May 2001 & Carroll Co. Pop. Est. 4/2001.

Although the 2000 Census profile of the Town is now four years old, the majority of the population characteristics are still applicable to today' s town population. Overall, the average age of the residents is between 35 and 44 years, with the majority of those persons in family households with children. Those family households are primarily married family households. Single-parent households make up a very small percentage of the total households, only 8.5%. Half (50%) of the households in Mount Airy are 3-4 person households and those families have been residing in the same house for the last ten years.

### **Population Estimates and Projections**

Population projections are necessary to try to gauge the of population growth taking place in the town over the next twenty years. For the purposes of this plan, the projections are done in a low, middle and high growth scenario to give an idea of the possible level of building activity that may take place in the town. The projections are based on building permit activity, overall vacancy rates of housing units, and constant persons per household figure of 3.10.<sup>1</sup> The residential building permit activity of the town has varied over the years from lows of 50 units per year to a high of 196 units. Over the last six years, an average of 125 residential units per year have been constructed within the Town limits.

Current population of the town is estimated to be 7,811 people. Following are the population projections for Mount Airy for 2003 - 2020 shown with a low, middle, and high growth scenario. Estimates utilize a 3.10 persons per household figure for Mount Airy according to the 2000 census.

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<sup>1</sup> US. 2000 Census/ Mount Airy Town Staff 2002.

<b>Mount Airy Population Projections to 2020</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Low Projections</b>	<b>Middle Projections</b>	<b>High Projections</b>
<b>2003</b>	7,841	7,965	8,089
<b>2004</b>	8,182	8,430	8,678
<b>2005</b>	8,523	8,895	9,267
<b>2010</b>	10,228	11,220	12,212
<b>2015</b>	11,933	13,545	15,157
<b>2020</b>	13,638	15,870	18,102

Source: Town of Mount Airy Dept. of Planning 5/02

Most often, it is the mid-line projections that are believed to be the most accurate, although other economic factors come into play that may affect the population growth through the course of twenty years. Availability of land, the economy, and changes in regulatory conditions can all affect home building levels and the subsequent population growth levels.

Population projections are used as a guide to prepare for the proper planning of needed public facilities and infrastructure. The projections can also be used for setting ultimate population limits for the town and allowing for a specific amount of land development to be able to reach those population growth projections. There are several sophisticated demographic models, which can be used to assist in population forecasting, but these methods are not an exact science. Population projections should be continually checked against semi-annual estimates of the population to see if the population forecasts are providing accurate guidelines for planning and general town land use decisions.

### **Town Employment Trends**

The overwhelming majority of persons residing in the town have jobs outside Frederick and Carroll Counties. The 2000 Census statistics for commuting data show that the majority of these persons commute, for 30-60 minutes, indicating that most of those people are driving to the southern or eastern job markets of Washington, D.C. or Baltimore to work.

Town residents have educational levels equivalent to or slightly above Maryland statewide levels. Ninety percent of the population 25 years and older have obtained a high school diploma or higher level of education.

### **Educational Attainment and Residency - Mount Airy, Maryland**

<b>Educational Attainment</b>		<b>Residence in 1995</b>	
Persons 25 yrs. and older	3,694	Persons 25 yrs. and older	5,681
Less than 9th grade	84	Lived in same house	2,894
9th to 12th grade	275	Lived in different house	2,764
High School graduate	1,292	Same State	1,578
Some College, no degree	801	Same County	799
Associate Degree	171	Different County	1,965
Bachelor' s Degree	730	Different State	387
Graduate or professional degree	341	Lived Elsewhere	23
Percent high school graduate or higher	90.3%		
Percent bachelor' s degree or higher	29.0%		

**Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000**

The resident workforce of Mount Airy is employed in a wide variety of job classifications, but the majority of the town residents fall into two general categories. The first are those persons who are employed in professional, technical, and administrative jobs and the second category is production, craft, and manufacturing jobs. The first classification is 50% of the total employment categories for town residents. The second category represents 27% of the total. The remaining jobs are primarily in service occupations, farming, and general labor (15%) and in miscellaneous categories (8%).

### **Characteristics of the Local Economy**

The local economy is progressing as a primarily service-oriented base with a steady influx of more entrepreneurs deciding to locate or expand within the town boundaries. Currently, there are over 500 businesses located within the Town of Mount Airy and surrounding suburban area. The majority of these small companies are located in the Town of Mount Airy. Because the market is desirable, population growth of the area is healthy, and its proximity to the Baltimore-Washington Regional market is convenient.

The increase in population has contributed to a rise in the general business activity of the town both for service and commercial industries such as grocery store chains, restaurants, convenience stores, daycare facilities, and medical services. The centralized location of the town in relation to both Washington and Baltimore for small businesses such as special craft stores, bookstores, gift shops and local furniture stores has contributed to a rise in the volume of business transactions. The steady increase in population growth and regional population has aided local and new businesses to locate or expand within the designated commercially zoned areas of town.

Overall, the number and type of jobs being created in the community does not serve the resident or surrounding population with employment opportunities. According to the Census Bureau, over 90% of the town's working population still commutes out of Frederick and Carroll Counties to work. The Census data indicates that professional and technical workers increasingly represent the current workforce in the Town. However, the types of jobs offered in Mount Airy are mostly service and trade oriented. This trend dictates that the majority of the workforce living in Mount Airy will continue to commute out of the immediate area for work. Although the town itself will continue to grow with a wider variety of businesses, it does not currently have the size or the economic base to become a "regional employment center", providing a wide range of professional and technical job opportunities for the resident population.

The job opportunities within the immediate area have grown considerably and are located primarily in Frederick City and surrounding area. The City of Westminster and its surrounding area have provided some employment opportunities for local residents. Following is a chart prepared by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in April of 1998, which specifies employment estimates and projections for the counties surrounding the Town of Mount Airy.

<b>Employment Projections 2000- 2020 (Jobs in Thousands)</b>				
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2000- 2020</b>
Frederick Co., MD	99.7	115.7	122.0	+ 22%
Carroll Co., MD	62.7	69.8	73.1	+17%
Howard Co., MD	141.9	164.1	181.7	+28%
Montgomery Co., MD	573.0	664.2	696.4	+21%
Washington Co., MD	71.5	78.1	80.2	+12%
Loudoun Co., VA	72.7	112.7	152.7	+110%

**Source: Maryland Office of Planning, 2/1998.**

As long as a disparity exists in the town and the surrounding region, between the types of jobs provided and the types of jobs needed by the resident workforce, commuting patterns and problems in the area will remain an issue. The majority of out-commuters have also remained high in both Frederick and Carroll Counties, despite the increase in professional and technical jobs in the last ten years in those counties. The greater work place opportunities still remain in the counties surrounding Washington, D.C. and Baltimore.

## **The Consequences of No-Growth Policies**

Throughout the nation, no-growth movements have arisen in an attempt to avoid the negative effects of rampant growth, yet problems can result from no-growth policies. While these policies may prevent future annexations and development within municipal boundaries, pressure for development in surrounding areas is often proportionally increased, resulting in low-density development around the towns. The following impacts of low-density growth outside of municipalities largely negate the possible benefits of a no-growth policy.

- 1. Development outside municipal limits burdens local services without contributing to the Town's tax base.*
- 2. Large sprawling residential developments compete with the Town for construction of county-funded public facilities.*
- 3. Development outside a municipality becomes a barrier to orderly town growth.*
- 4. Development outside a municipality is subject to minimal input from the town planning and zoning authorities.*
- 5. Development outside a municipality makes town boundaries indistinguishable.*
- 6. Building moratoriums prevent developer funded infrastructure improvements.*

## **Summary**

The Town of Mount Airy and the surrounding region will continue to grow. Because of the Town's accessibility to major highways and its proximity to the cities of the "golden triangle," Mount Airy will continue to experience residential development pressure. The Town could benefit from this utilizing its location to attract office and research and development. No-growth movements may temporarily stall development, but in time these practices have been shown to compound the problems associated with uncontrolled growth. The following methods for mitigating the impact of regional growth on the community and its character are proposed.

## **Policy Recommendations**

*To better manage regional growth and its effects on the Town of Mount Airy, the Town will:*

- 1. Take a leading role in discussions with all four Counties regarding growth management in the Mount Airy Region. Adhere to the principles of the State mandated "Smart Growth" legislation.**
- 2. Advocate support for County policies that concentrate growth around existing centers, and therefore plan for growth.**
- 3. Continue to attract commercial and industrial development to provide a tax base necessary for balanced growth as a regional center.**
- 4. Reach agreements with each County regarding the phasing of growth so that the Town is assured of County cooperation with the orderly growth policies of the Town and the provision for adequate facilities and services.**

**(RESERVED)**