

TOWN OF LA PLATA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
2009

Prepared by the La Plata Planning Commission  
for the  
Mayor and Council of the Town of La Plata, Maryland

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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE 2009 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Article 66B was added to the *Maryland Annotated Code* in 1927. It delegated basic land use regulatory powers to Maryland's municipalities. Article 66B authorized municipal corporations to make, adopt, extend, add to and execute a plan. Such plans are to serve as a guide to public and private actions and decisions to ensure the development of public and private property in appropriate relationships and shall include any areas outside of the corporate limits, which the municipality determines to warrant scrutiny and/or exercise of their planning responsibilities.

The La Plata municipal government has enjoyed a long history of effective planning. Over the years, the elected body, the Mayor and Council, and the appointed planning body, the Planning Commission, have taken the process very seriously. The Comprehensive Plans written for La Plata in the past have been the principal means by which the community has set priorities and measured its success. Two other planning documents bear reference here, as they had bearing on the 2002 Comprehensive Plan update and subsequent legislation. These are discussed below:

### **The Vision Plan for Greater La Plata**

In March 2000, the Mayor and Council adopted The Vision Plan for Greater La Plata. The visioning process began as a result of the emergence of several major concerns among the citizens and officials of the Town. These included: 1) the increasing traffic congestion; 2) future utility capabilities; 3) the nature of future development in the Route 301 corridor, in relation to maintaining and revitalizing the historic downtown area; and 4) the character and quality of future residential growth.

A Vision Team was assembled, comprised of citizens, business leaders, as well as state and local agency representatives, and met four times throughout the summer and fall of 1999. The objective of this effort was to bring key “stakeholders” of the community together to define the preferred future for the Town and the surrounding greater La Plata area, and to identify the key initial steps that should be taken to achieve that preferred future. A Technical Advisory Group was established and consulting with Herd Planning & Design, ultimately created and published “The Vision Plan for Greater La Plata”. The Vision Plan sets forth the community’s ideals and core planning principles for future development in Town and its surrounding lands, and provides the framework for a series of immediate as well as long-term actions by the Town, County, State and private sector, to achieve this vision.

### **The Plan for the Future of Downtown La Plata**

The Vision Plan included several recommendations for immediate action, and one of those was to place a priority status on developing a detailed design for the downtown area. The creation of the Plan for the Future of Downtown La Plata (“the Downtown Plan”) was the first step in implementing the Vision Plan.

The Downtown Plan was prepared in 2001 by a Citizen Task Force, again working with a consulting team. The Plan includes a conceptual site plan for the physical development of the downtown. It is more detailed than the general land use plan created during the Vision Plan process, but still allows enough flexibility to implement a variety of aspects of the

Plan during the next decade. The Downtown Plan was the driving force and inspiration behind adoption of the Community Design Guidelines for the Commercial Highway and Central Business Districts.

**Other Factors and Priorities:**

On April 28, 2002, a sizable portion of the Town was damaged or destroyed by a category EF4 tornado. The area of damage within the Town was widespread, extending from the Town's western boundary along Port Tobacco Road (Maryland Route 6), east across Crain Highway (U.S. Route 301) to the Town's eastern boundary in the Clarks Run community. It is estimated that seventy percent (70%) of businesses located within the Town's Central Business District and Commercial Highway District were damaged or destroyed.

With the support of the community and with the Vision and Downtown Plans in place, the Town moved forward with the process of rebuilding, and within the time since the tornado, the entire commercial core of the Town has been completely redeveloped. The 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update incorporated many recommendations from the Vision and Downtown Plans to promote continued revitalization. In March 2009, the Vision Implementation Team ("VIT") was reactivated to reassess, prioritize, and evaluate objectives of the original Vision Plan and the Downtown Plan.

**2009 Comprehensive Plan Update:**

The update process to date has been undertaken by Town Staff with Planning Commission oversight. This process started February 2008 with subsequent review of each Plan Element, including their respective goals, objectives and recommendations. Each Element was discussed with the Planning Commission at open work sessions after completion of the monthly public meeting agenda. Changes that have occurred since the last update in 2002 and related impacts have been reviewed and analyzed. Following this, staff presented draft revised goals, objectives and recommendations for review, discussion and consensus. Each Plan Element has gone through this review cycle, including two new required elements resulting from passage of HB 1141 in 2006 – a Water Resources Element (WRE) and a Municipal Growth Element (MGE).

**Planning Visions:**

This update reflects passage of Senate Bill 273, Smart, Green, and Growing – Local Government Planning – Planning Visions (cross filed HB 294), which amended the Economic Development Resource and Planning Act of 1992 by adding revised visions which are to be reflected in comprehensive plans. The 2008 revised Visions included the following:

- (1) Quality of life and sustainability: A high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water and air, resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment
  
- (2) Public participation: Citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals

(3) Growth areas: Growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers or strategically selected new centers;

(4) Community design: Compact mixed-use walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and the preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open space, recreational areas, and historical, cultural and archeological sites;

(5) Infrastructure: Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient and environmentally sustainable manner

(6) Transportation: A well-maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable and efficient movement of people, goods and services within and between population and business centers

(7) Housing: A range of housing densities types and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes

(8) Economic development: Economic development and natural resource –based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State’s natural resources, public services and public facilities;

(9) Environmental protection: Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays are carefully managed to restore and maintain health air, water, natural systems and living resources

(10) Resource conservation: Waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space and scenic areas are conserved

(11) Stewardship: Government, business entities and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaboration to balance efficient growth with resources

(12) Implementation: Strategies, policies, programs and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, state and interstate levels to achieve these Visions.

**Annexations:**

The Town has grown in land area since the adoption of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan by 161.5 acres or 0.25 sq. miles. An updated chart follows on the next pages, detailing each annexation throughout Town history, including the five that have occurred in the past six-year planning cycle.

## 2.1 SENSITIVE AREAS ELEMENT

2.1A Sensitive Areas Background Information: Since the time the Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2002, the Town has not substantially altered its basic policy toward regulating development in sensitive areas. Our objective then, as now, is to enhance and protect those areas to the fullest extent possible. While the Town has no areas considered habitat for endangered or threatened species, we recognize the importance of preserving habitat for urban-adaptive wildlife, and the benefits to humans when natural areas are protected and available open space is shared. Within the Town limits, the other types of naturally occurring sensitive areas to be found include perennial streams and their associated buffers, 100-year Floodplain, steep slopes, highly erodible soils, and non-tidal wetlands. While improvement to the general water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries is the broad regional goal, a more locally defined Sensitive Areas mission-statement for the Town is **“To promote sustainable community practices which will: 1) protect water quality; 2) conserve, reclaim and reuse water resources to the greatest practical extent; and 3) direct new development to areas where impact to the natural environment is minimized.**

2.1B Sensitive Areas Objectives and Policies: The following items are specific goals for the regulation of activities or development within, or in proximity, to environmentally sensitive areas. These policies are set to ensure that the type and intensity of development is appropriate to the natural capabilities of the land on which the development is to take place.

- Require a site inventory as part of an application for site development or subdivision plan approval, to include soil types, topography, natural vegetation and forest canopy, scenic views, floodplains, streams or drainage courses, or any other natural features of interest.
- Restrict major alterations to natural drainage channels; implement stream restoration practices for road and utility crossings to re-vegetate and re-stabilize disturbed areas as needed. Promote bridges over box culverts to sustain aquatic life in open stream sections.
- Preserve vegetation on steep (>15%) slopes, to prevent erosion and possible sedimentation of watercourses. Utilize these areas restricted from development as means to meet open space reservation requirements in the subdivision process.
- Encourage Low Impact Development through Environmentally Sensitive Design utilizing management practices such as pervious paving, sand filters, infiltration facilities, and vegetated buffers.
- Promote the preservation of wildlife or “green” corridors, which link forested areas within one property (subdivision), and encourage creation of connections to natural areas on adjacent sites. Seek dedication of these “greenways” to the Town Parks inventory, to be preserved and maintained as public recreational amenities.

- Require all new development to be served by Town public water and sewer. Seek connections of a small number of properties in the Town that are not currently served by the Town, removing the non-point source (septic field) of pollution from the watershed.
- Coordinate with the Natural Area Program to determine the possible presence of important habitats or species on any land included in designated Town Future Growth Areas or on any properties considered for annexation.
- Promote an ethic of environmental stewardship in Town, through application and demonstration of “green” land and building management practices on Town-owned sites. Offer workshops on “green” building techniques and opportunities for volunteers to become educated on how to apply these practices at their own homes.
- Educate residents about water quality and the impacts of individual actions on the watershed. Address sediment control, vehicle washing, pet waste, lawn care, and landscaping practices.

2.1C Sensitive Areas Standards and Implementation: In order to realize the goals set for management of environmentally Sensitive Areas within the Town, certain regulatory mechanisms should be in place:

- Include a “greenway” analysis in the review process for all new subdivisions, to determine potential for open space assemblage and linkage on and off-site.
- Require a “drainage basin” analysis for stormwater management facilities in the review process that details both the nature and stability of the natural outfall and the quality of the contributing drainage area.
- Allow Forest Conservation requirements to be met on site through retention of natural wooded areas and wildlife corridors, especially on steep slopes or adjacent to stream channels.
- Allow clustering of development for residential projects. Maintain specific density maximums while reducing lot minimum sizes, and in so doing preserve natural areas in community open space which are not conducive to the construction of homes.
- Prohibit the construction of permanent structures within the 100-year Floodplain, in accordance with Chapter 108 of the Town Code.
- Require vegetated buffers at least 50’ wide from the top of natural bank to the centerline of streams. Buffers along intermittent streams or drainage swales shall be implemented where feasible.
- Require water quality treatment of the first one inch of runoff from the developed site, to capture first-flush pollutants from parking areas, rooftops, and roadways.
- Implement an inspection program and maintain an inventory of stormwater management facilities in Town. Promote retrofits for existing facilities and utilize standards for new development in keeping with low-impact, environmentally

sensitive site design practices as described in the latest version of the Maryland Stormwater Design Manual.

- Continue to work in partnership with Charles county Soil Conservation District to report sediment control violations and strategize remedial action as needed.

## **2.2 COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**

**2.2A Community and Economic Development Background Information:** Since adoption of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, new perspectives and techniques have transformed the process of community and economic development. Economic development is part of a larger process of Community Development – the actualization of people, places, process and results. Traditional economic development is evolving from basic recruitment and business attraction, to the cultivation of local entrepreneurship as the foundation of a diverse business community. This is a bottom-up strategy that is locally based and allows for local control of the economy. It produces homegrown businesses, which tend to be more loyal to the community. Entrepreneurship really is economically sustainable because it draws on local resources. Business owners who reside locally are often more sensitive to the need for a small town to maintain its unique quality-of-life characteristics in a larger metropolitan scene. Preservation of the special character of a place is often as much of a priority to a community as replacement of aging infrastructure or improvement of services, and is just as likely to affect the nature and direction of community development. A last element of latter-day community and fiscal planning is the evolution from a goods-based to an information-based economy. This shift is best described by Richard Florida in his book "The Rise of the Creative Class", whose central premise is that 30% (+/-) of the population is involved in "creative" work, which is the primary source of new jobs and wealth.

Fostering this type of economic growth means implementation of a number of strategies for retaining these “creative” people and their employers. There are a number of elements needed to create a nurturing environment for economic development, not all of which can be provided by public agencies. These include:

\*Information - for a business to survive and thrive in today’s economy there must be timely and dependable availability of critical information

\*Infrastructure – includes physical infrastructure, quality of life infrastructure and intellectual infrastructure. Investment in projects like interchange upgrades, transit systems, walkways and trails, municipal gateways, and civic sites and buildings are physical infrastructure improvements that generally fall to government. Quality of life infrastructure includes preservation of historic sites and structures, enhanced opportunities for recreation, and establishment of a variety of signature community events to promote neighborhood cohesion and “pride in place”. Intellectual infrastructure is the availability of a variety of curriculums, courses and training, in a number of diverse educational settings (colleges, specialty training, artisan trade schools), and the introduction of unique site-specific marketing strategies that help keep companies competitive. Infrastructure work is based on the idea that economic development and community development are two sides of the same coin. In the New Economy, where new wealth and jobs are being created by knowledge firms, creating a community that is attractive to entrepreneurs and the talent they hire is as important as natural resources and heavy rail were to Old Economy companies.

\*Connections - connections to trade associations, think tanks, academic institutions, and other similar companies (industry clusters)

\*Culture of innovation – an intangible factor that if not present, may keep a local economy from improving. This refers to the way that entrepreneurial activity and innovation, diversity and newness, or even investment in community infrastructure, are viewed by local people. If the “culture” favors maintaining the status quo, business innovation may be stymied.

In the time since the last update of the Comprehensive Plan, many new businesses have arrived on the scene in La Plata.

- Two national supermarket chains have opened 50,000+ sq. ft. stores (Safeway, and Giant) along with a national chain pet store (PetCo).
- The new 150,000 sq. ft. Lowe’s home improvement store and 127,000 sq. ft. Target have added substantially to the complement of retail/service stores in Town, as well as becoming major employers.
- There are now more than 35 restaurants in Town, offering a variety of cuisines at a variety of price ranges.
- There is an adequate supply of Class A office space available, and one notable national firm, SAIC, has chosen office space at 113 Howard St. for the headquarters of its new Metro area training facility. SAIC employs over 45,000 people nationwide, and will have an office complement here in La Plata of 50 people, with many more on conference and training session days.
- Expansion of the Charles County Courthouse facility and District Court functions are also expected to infuse more activity and vitality into the local business community.
- A second major hotel chain, Sleep Inn, has opened with 75 guest rooms and on-site conference and meeting facilities.
- Approximately 300 new dwelling units (apartments and condominiums) have been permitted within the new downtown CBT zone created as part of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update. Occupancy rates for rentals have been near to 100% upon completion. Expected population growth over the next 20 years indicates the need for commensurate growth in commercial and industrial sectors.

**Proposed Mission Statement:** “Maintain a diversified economy and increase community and economic development opportunities through revitalization and reinvestment, while preserving the unique character and history of the Town of La Plata.”

#### 2.2B Community and Economic Development Objectives and Policies:

- Diversify the economy by promoting the Town to new businesses that could provide high quality career opportunities, enabling our citizens to live near where they work. Promote development of a broad gamut of housing choices that will appeal to a variety of incomes, tastes and lifestyles.
- Ensure the availability of services that are essential to sustain Town growth and business development. This may be accomplished through improvement of traffic flow, provision of adequate police support/protection, increasing telecommunications capability and maintaining adequate and dependable supplies of water, sewer and electrical power.

- Cooperate with Charles County Government and the State of Maryland to resolve issues of common concern, recognizing the need to work together to promote the economic development of the region.
- Maintain and enhance La Plata's Central Business District as the center of the town. The CB District must remain as the governmental, medical and business center from which the town derives its identity. Such a policy shall not be in conflict with, or minimize the importance of, La Plata's Commercial Highway District or the various other commercial and industrial areas within the town.  
**Implement the Community Design Guidelines.**
- Make downtown La Plata a “pedestrian-friendly” place with adequate and accessible sidewalks, choice of alternative transportation modes, and active, attractive and safe streetscapes.
- Minimize impacts of strip commercial development wherever possible along major streets and highways by use of planning techniques and architectural controls, **using the Community Design Guidelines.**
- Establish economic development strategies which increase employment
  - opportunities and add to the economic vitality of the community. Continue to follow the Four Point Approach for the development of downtowns, as outlined by the National Main Street Center.
- Maintain policies where development costs are paid by those who benefit from such development, especially in extending public facilities (roads and utilities). Continue to assess the validity/accuracy of Town impact fees as they are applied to new development.
- Encourage businesses to participate in the La Plata Business Association to support the community development goals of the town, especially those that foster a sense of community identity (signage, festivals, public events, holidays, community “build” days).
- Encourage the type of downtown development in the Charles Street, Washington Avenue, and Kent Avenue corridors consistent with the requirements of the Plan for the Future of Downtown La Plata.
- Develop strategies to address the critical issue of parking in the Central Business District, such as the implementation joint-use agreements, provision of more municipal parking spaces, and reduction in off-street parking requirements.
- Develop strategies to address the traffic congestion on Charles Street.
- Continue to work with the State Highway Administration to administer an access management program for businesses along Route 301.
- Review the local subdivision, site plan, and building permit regulatory processes, to be sure that each process is as straightforward and streamlined as practical.
- Work to locate those types of industries, which emit smoke, create undue noise and odors, or produce industrial wastes, in designated industrial park settings, away from residences and public areas.
- Enhance the aesthetic quality of development through architectural and landscaping controls **through implementation of the Community Design Guidelines.**
- Preserve and enhance unique buildings and institutions, such as the Charles County courthouse, Christ Church, the Carrico Building, the Mudd, Mudd, and Fitzgerald Building, the Chapman Building, and the Baldus Centre.

- Encourage unique neighborhood design concepts, featuring pedestrian access and safety, reduction of the dominance of the automobile, a varied hierarchy of recreation areas, and unique style themes (Traditional Neighborhood Development).
- Encourage a mixed-use development pattern in commercial and office areas along Route 301 and in the downtown. Place more intensive retail and service uses along the street frontage and gradually less intensive office or residential uses above or behind the commercial occupant.
- Encourage parking behind commercial buildings. Locate auto-oriented commercial uses in a campus pattern along Route 301, to create an attractive and business-friendly boulevard.
- Maintain a running dialogue and relationship with the administrative body at Civista Medical Center, to be better able to plan for and accommodate any future expansion needs.
- Collaborate with the Charles County Board of Education, College of Southern Maryland, and local private schools, to enhance educational opportunities for La Plata residents.

#### 2.2C Community and Economic Development Standards and Implementation:

To meet the goals and objectives identified above, certain standards and procedures should be set in place.

- Develop a parking strategy for both of the commercial districts, which balances parking demands with a desire to reduce or minimize impervious areas wherever possible. Such a strategy should focus on determining the specific parking needs of the Central Business District vs. the Commercial Highway District, and examine the parking requirements described in the Town Zoning Code to see if they adequately serve the interests of public safety, environmental sustainability, customer convenience, and fiscal practicality.
- Continue to enforce Town ordinances, which regulate public health and safety, sanitation, noise, and visual blight.
- Continue to request input from the La Plata Business Association, to advise the Mayor and Council on issues that affect business.
- Assist owners of small “niche” businesses with the permit and Board approval process necessary prior to location in the Central Business District. Create a user-friendly process where applications, regulations, board meeting schedules, and permit application status are available on-line for convenient use by the public.
- Discourage large retailers (+ 10,000 sq. ft.) from developing in the Town’s Central Business District.
- Encourage large national retailers to develop unique architecture for their La Plata store, which has a site-specific non-prototypical approach to implementation of the Commercial Highway Community Design Guidelines.
- Create a Town position and job description, and hire appropriate staff dedicated to the task of community and economic development.
- Refine the Town’s Sign Ordinance and revise as necessary, to enhance street appeal, provide better way finding, improve public safety, reduce traffic congestion and create an attractive street presence for businesses.

## **2.3 LAND USE ELEMENT**

**2.3A. Land Use Background Information:** A Land Use Plan provides a means to achieve balanced integration of growth and development into an existing community. It serves as a guide for the pattern of growth, and graphically delineates, through the Zoning Map, the various zoning districts. The Land Use Plan is the mechanism by which the character of La Plata's existing neighborhoods and the downtown core is maintained, while opportunities for the implementation of Smart Growth strategies in new commercial, mixed use and infill developments are provided. Future growth and development in La Plata should conform to the stated goals and objectives of the Plan. Existing Land Use in La Plata is described in general categories below:

- *Residential Areas – There are a total of five residential districts in La Plata, which comprise 1,142 acres or 23% of the total acreage in Town.*
- *Commercial Areas – There are three commercial zones in La Plata, comprising 132 acres, or 3% of the total acreage in Town. Most of the retail and personal service businesses are located along Charles St. or U.S. Route 301, while the majority of professional and medical office development has occurred on Centennial, La Grange, and St. Mary's Avenues.*
- *Mixed-Use Development (MUD) Areas – There are five classes of mixed use districts permitted within Town Code, each with a specific composition of residential and/or commercial and/or industrial uses. The MUD districts comprise 1,320 acres or 27% of the total acreage in Town. The purpose of these districts is to allow a variety of flexible combinations of uses on large (50 acre min.) tracts of land. The four major MUD developments in Town are Heritage Green, Steeplechase, Stagecoach Crossing, and Agricopia. Construction within Steeplechase began last fall.*
- *Planned Unit Development (PUD) Areas – Today there is a single PUD district in Town, which is comprised of a single neighborhood, Hickory Ridge. The community is complete and fully built-out. The PUD district comprises 36 acres, or 0.70% of the total acreage in Town. The standards for development emphasized preservation of natural features, clustering, and higher densities.*
- *Industrial Areas – Only 20 acres, or 0.40% of the total Town acreage is zoned Industrial. Two categories, Light Industrial and Industrial, exist in the current Code.*
- *Public Lands (PL) – 468 acres contained in the Charles County Government and Courthouse complex, public school sites, the Civista hospital site, the Board of Education site, and the other County facilities on Radio Station Rd. This represents 9.5% of the total acreage in Town.*
- *Flood Plain (FP) – 617 acres, or 12.6% of the land in Town, is contained within the Clarks Run stream valley. No development of any sort is allowed in this district, except as described in Chapter 191-43 of the Code.*

2.3B. Land Use Objectives and Policies: There are two general goals for land use planning that form the Town's **mission statement for this Element: 1) Provide for the most efficient use of land that preserves its best natural features; and 2) Ensure that an appropriate and compatible mix of uses occurs where best situated to be served by existing or planned Town infrastructure.** Our policies are more specifically described below:

- Encourage the implementation of Smart Growth development strategies such as traditional neighborhood development (TND), transit oriented development (TOD), high density mixed residential and commercial development (CBT and MUD), and form-based infill development (PRID).
- Increase densities allowed in TND-designated developments to 15 dwelling units per acre, to remain consistent with those allowed in all other high density residential districts (R-3, CBT, PRID, and senior living communities) and to adequately incentivize undertaking the costs of providing a community characterized by superior architecture, amenities, and land planning.
- Develop and adopt the Planned Redevelopment and Infill District ordinance, in both its floating and overlay zone applications. Utilize these regulations to achieve compatibility between new construction and the surrounding structures and properties. The flexibility allowable under the PRID regulations emphasizes scale, proportion, function and impact, instead of strict dimensional and use limitations. See Exhibits 'A' and 'B' in Section 3.0 of this document for PRID overlay zone mapping. See Exhibits 'C' and 'D' for draft text of PRID overlay and floating zone ordinances.
- Develop and adopt the Planned Business Park and Enterprise District as a classification that may be applied to developments characterized by the concentration of commercial and industrial uses in a planned unit development. Utilize these regulations to allow a more flexible approach and provide incentives for the development of office, business, and employment parks. See Exhibit 'E' in Section 3.0 of this document for draft text of the business park ordinance.
- Revise the Town's Stormwater Management ordinance to incorporate Environmentally Sensitive and Low Impact Design techniques to manage urban runoff as required under the Stormwater Management Act of 2007. Include provisions for the design of on-site water quality features to treat small drainage areas prior to connections to closed drainage systems, and use these methods to protect and preserve sensitive areas and wildlife habitat.
- Wherever possible, utilize existing natural features, topography, borders, and barriers to act as buffers between disparate land uses. Provide transitional land uses between major categories, i.e., locate multi-family or high density housing between commercial uses and low density residential areas.
- Adopt an Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance, to encourage densities consistent with Smart Growth, to provide affordable housing opportunities, and to make the most efficient use of existing transportation and utility infrastructure. In

recognition of the trend away from the single-family detached structure on a large lot as the primary housing choice (by 2040, 75% of American households will not include children), enact regulations that increase the palate of options. See Exhibit 'F' in Section 3.0 of this document for draft text of the Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance.

- Require the submittal of a full analysis of the impacts to traffic and infrastructure with all major development proposals – ensure growth occurs where the facilities are in place to support it.

2.3C. Land Use Standards and Implementation: To meet the goals and objectives identified above, certain standards and procedures should be put in place.

- Re-activate and implement the Vision Team process to establish long-range goals for the future of development in La Plata.
- Focus resources and attention to improvements to the Downtown core; install Town signage (pennants), street furnishings, holiday decorations and plantings to create a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly business district (C-B). Consider designation of a pedestrian-only “market-place” zone in the Downtown, in a specific location or during specific times. Evaluate the benefits of pairing a limited restriction on car activity with the Farmer’s market, weekly events and special festivals and occasions held by the Town. A strategy such as this may reverse or reduce the tendency to over-park the Downtown business district.
- Revise parking regulations specific to on-site, off-street parking and unloading spaces in the Central Business District. To promote revitalization, tourism and economic development, emphasis shall be focused on creating the most attractive, enjoyable, and functional buildings and public spaces for people walking. Consider reduction of the required number of off-street spaces.
- Develop methodologies to encourage the Arts, Entertainment venues, and Recreation businesses in the Town. Consider incentives such as fee reduction, parking waivers, and marketing exposure via Town events or the Town website. Galleries, studios, musical venues, theaters, and family sports facilities are some potential candidates for such an endeavor. Partner with the La Plata Business Association and the Charles County Department of Community and Economic Development to promote La Plata as “the Best Place” to live, work and play.
- Amend Chapter 191 (Zoning) of the Code and the Official Zoning Map of the Town as needed to adopt new ordinances, change certain spatial requirements, and add new zoning districts as described above.

## **2.4 TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

**2.4A. Transportation Background Information:** Using the Town Zoning Map as a base, Exhibit 'G' has been prepared to visually demonstrate current transportation issues and challenges in La Plata. On Exhibit 'G', which can be found in Section 3.0 of this document, the La Plata street network has been broken into five categories and color-coded accordingly. Private roads are shown in "pink". State Highways are shown in "blue". County roads are shown in "yellow". The remaining "uncolored" streets within the Town limits are owned by the Town. The streets shown in "red" are projects that may already be planned but have not yet been constructed, or potential construction projects the Town may wish to consider in the future. As stated in the background analysis provided in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, "The residents of La Plata and the surrounding region can no longer depend on Crain Highway as the sole commuter option. Alternatives will have to be found, not only from the transportation perspective, but from a clean air perspective as well." The same issues and concerns continue to challenge La Plata today. The need to more effectively separate local commuters and residents from through traffic on Route 301 and Route 6 can only be effectively accomplished by providing useful alternate routes outside of the arterial roads. The Town has participated in a joint La Plata Area Transportation Study with Charles County. At this time, the study is expected to be completed in Fall 2009. In consideration of those issues and priorities, the mission statement for this Element is **"To pursue, promote, and implement projects that: a) improve traffic circulation; b) reduce traffic congestion; c) create opportunities to utilize alternate transportation modes; d) increase safety and accessibility for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians; and e) incorporate aesthetic appeal into the travel experience."**

During the past six years, since the Comprehensive Plan was last updated, several transportation projects (new streets) have been implemented:

- The La Plata Parkway will be built in this planning cycle, connecting Route 6 at Willow Lane to Rosewick Road. Final plats have been recorded for the first 293 homes in Heritage Green, and the road construction is one of the elements of the annexation and development agreement. The railroad crossing and connection of the La Plata Parkway to Washington Avenue and Heritage Green Parkway is still unresolved.
- The portion of Talbot St. from Washington Avenue to Route 301 has been constructed. This leaves the portion from Washington Ave. to Kent Ave. still to be done.
- Rosewick Road has been extended from Washington Ave. to Route 301 as four lanes, divided; the four-lane connection of Rosewick to St. Charles Parkway is open to traffic.

- The Park & Ride facility (MTA) is finished and operational on Washington Ave. and serves a commuter bus station, transporting local citizens to Washington DC during peak hours.
- Alleghany Ave. has been connected and incorporated into Oriole Lane.
- Caroline Ave. will be connected to La Plata Parkway per the approved plans for Heritage Green Phase 1.

2.4B. Transportation Objectives and Policies: The following items are specific goals for acquisition, improvement, and development of transportation routes in La Plata.

- Require “complete streets” design for new and retro-fit construction – standards include devices to accommodate car, bike and pedestrian traffic within the same thoroughfare safely, attractively, and smoothly.
- Eliminate “disconnects” between existing communities – remove bollards and other obstacles to efficiency and choice, which will ease movement of local residential traffic.
- Establish an extensive pedestrian and bicycle network that is a safe and attractive option for local trips that connects the Town’s neighborhoods, parks, schools, and employment and retail centers.
- Encourage the provision of transit service to all neighborhoods and employment/retail centers by involving VanGo early in the community design process. Encourage vanpool/carpool participation by providing safe and functional commuter parking areas.
- Promote higher density and intensity of land uses within one-half mile of mass transit stations as a means to establish Transit Oriented Development (e.g. Washington Commons adjacent to the MTA Park & Ride facility).
- Continue to support and function as partners with MSHA on administration of the Route 301 Access Management Program.
- Continue to work with Charles County transportation planning staff to address regional traffic issues as they pertain to Rosewick Rd., Washington Ave, and by-pass strategies. Maintain shared responsibility for operation and maintenance of the MTA Park & Ride facility and participate in any future planning for facilities as needed.
- Improve emergency access and response times to current and future subdivisions in the Town, in order to meet public safety standards such as those cited by NFPA Standards, needed to provide service to a location. This aspect of plan review will be fulfilled by local emergency service providers, such as the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department and the Charles County Rescue Squad.

2.4C. Transportation Standards and Implementation: To meet the needs identified above, certain standards and procedures are recommended:

- Install sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks on existing Town streets in the downtown area, which are compliant with ADA regulations wherever they do not

currently exist to include adding these upgrades to Washington Ave., East Hawthorn Drive, Kent Ave., Oak Ave., Maple Ave., sections of Charles St., and sections of Glen Albin Rd.

- Obtain an additional CSX railroad crossing to provide access and egress for the Heritage Green development.
- Continue funding the Paving Overlay Program as part of the Town's Capital Expansion Plan.
- Implement and promote "green street design" for new construction, incorporating methodologies to reduce impervious areas, provide water quality control, decrease rates of urban storm run-off, and reduce "urban heat island" effect.
- Establish standards for curb cut frequency for different classifications of Town streets.
- Set standards for minimum street horizontal curves, intersection radii, and paving widths that serve to slow neighborhood traffic and protect pedestrians (TND design).
- Discourage cul-de-sacs; encourage alley access.
- Use roundabouts vs. signalized intersections on "parkway" functioning streets like La Plata Parkway, Heritage Green Parkway, and Stagecoach Avenue.
- Develop a palette of traffic-calming devices to be utilized as need arises on neighborhood streets, such as vertical deflection, horizontal shifts, and road narrowing.

## **2.5 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ELEMENT**

**2.5A Open Space and Recreation Background Information:** Since the time the Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2002, the Town has experienced substantial growth and development, both residential and commercial in nature. Our objective in planning for the recreational needs of Town citizens in an environment of high-density development continues to remain focused on the acquisition, development and maintenance of outdoor recreation sites, sufficient to meet the needs of our growing population. In light of this responsibility, the Town park system has been expanded and improved in the past six years. The major existing park facilities at Redwood Lake and Wills Park have been augmented, and other improvements implemented as follows:

- In addition to the small existing play structure at the end of Caroline Drive, the Town developed a new playground in 2004 on a Town-owned parcel near to the main entrance of the Phoenix Run community. This new park facility includes outdoor grills, picnic tables and benches, in addition to several pieces of play equipment. New basketball backboards and goals were installed on the courts nearby.
- A tot lot with age-appropriate play equipment was added in 2004 to community open space on Hemlock Court.
- Silver Linden Park has new play equipment, installed in 2005 to replace the structure that was damaged and removed. Considerable clearing and removal of underbrush and small-caliper trees has improved visibility and security in the park.
- The community building at Wills Park underwent a facelift with a new ceiling, windows, and lighting.
- New benches and trees were installed at the Railroad Museum.
- A new picnic pavilion with tables and grills has been installed at Tilghman Lake. Temporary bathrooms are supplied, and limited improvements to the existing pier have been made.
- New benches and plantings have been installed along an asphalt walking path that winds around the Town Hall.
- All of the playground facilities were re-surfaced with ADA-compliant Wood Carpet safety surfacing.

In addition to these improvements on public lands, Town subdivision regulations require parkland dedication as part of the site approval process, and have generated new playgrounds, community centers, walking trails and/or swimming pools in Jamestowne, Hawthorne Greene, Edelen Station, Washington Square, and Agricopia. The availability of recreation areas and amenities has played a key part in the process of “neighborhood selection” for potential home buyers, and the development community has responded by including these elements in their plans. “Fee-in-lieu” as an alternative to parkland

dedication or reservation has not been utilized as a means to meet subdivision requirements since the construction of Martin's Crossing.

A chart of the inventory of parks, located on page 85, shows the existing Town-owned, County-owned and HOA-owned park facilities which are available and accessible for use by the Town's citizens. The Town currently has 86.85 acres of developed park facilities. 77% of this acreage falls within the Tilghman Lake and Wills Park facilities, with the remaining 11.67 acres divided among the other sites mentioned in the earlier section above. There are no Town park facilities on the west side of Route 301. The State of Maryland standard for gauging adequacy of parkland to serve a population is 80 acres per 1000 persons. Of these 80 acres, 30 acres are to be provided by the Counties. Working off the premise that La Plata represents approximately 7% of Charles County's population, the Town should undertake a goal to provide 7-15% of the 30 acres. Although the Town is +/- 10,000 in population now, expected growth will take that number to +/-25,000 by 2030; hence the need to provide as much as 15%. This translates in acreage from 21 to 45 acres in parkland. While it seems by the numbers that the Town is adequately supplied with parkland, it could be said that not all Town residents are equally supplied. In light of this discrepancy, our mission statement for this Element is **“To develop a high-quality public parks and recreation system with adequate space and facilities, which integrates an appropriate mix of recreation activities that are accessible to all Town residents.”**

2.5B Open Space and Recreation Objectives and Policies: The following items are specific goals for the acquisition, improvement and/or development of parkland and recreational venues:

- Require new residential developments to provide park amenities (improvements) and recreational opportunities adequate to meet the neighborhood's population, as part of meeting Open Space requirements of the Town Subdivision Ordinance (Chapter 173). Encourage the implementation of specific types of recreational features in specific locations, in order to fill gaps in the current Town inventory.
- Promote development of a community center in Town that is accessible and available for youth recreation and after-school programs.
- Pursue acquisition of land on the west side of Route 301 for a neighborhood park.
- Bring all existing playground sites and equipment into ADA compliance and up to ASTM and CPSC standards for safety. Develop any new parkland in accordance with these standards.
- Promote the utilization of required Open Space and Forest Conservation areas in subdivisions to create contiguous natural areas for wildlife habitat and passive recreation pursuits, whenever the presence of environmentally sensitive areas precludes structured improvements.
- Wherever possible in new development, require facilities that serve non-vehicular or mass- transit modes of transportation. Add bike lanes or hiker/biker paths to

- new Town streets. Add sidewalks and/or hiker/biker paths to existing streets where they are not in place currently. Require developers of large commercial sites (planned shopping centers) to provide a VanGo stop and shelter in the center, and to include bike racks in the site furnishings package. Provide inter-parcel pedestrian linkages between major commercial centers and intra-parcel pathways between free-standing and multi-tenant buildings within a center.
- Adopt and implement a Parks Capital Expansion Plan, after a thorough inventory and assessment of existing facilities is complete.
  - Pursue some means of support for the Town’s park system.
  - Review and pursue avenues to improve the usability of Tilghman Park.
  - Amend Town Code to require the review and recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission prior to Town Council’s consideration of the sale of any park land.

#### 2.5C Open Space and Recreation Standards and Implementation:

- In order to realize the objectives detailed above, certain standards for the design, development and operations of the Town’s parkland must be in place:
- Require all new park construction (equipment manufacture and installation) to conform to the applicable ASTM, CPSC, and ADA regulations for accessibility and safety.
- Require greater diversity in parkland project design in order to address the leisure and recreation needs of all segments of the Town population.
- Review and develop funding sources for the Parks Capital Expansion Plan.
- Continue to seek annual funding through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Community Parks and Playgrounds Program to implement the Parks Capital Expansion Plan.
- Utilize volunteers to the fullest extent possible in implementation of Neighborhood Park Improvement projects, to develop the “sweat equity” ethic and pride of accomplishment in our citizenry. Place more emphasis on special projects with Parks & Recreation and Beautification Commission volunteers, in addition to the advisory role currently held. Do a “Community Build” day in one Town Park each summer – involve the media for promotion and publicity.
- Develop recreational trails, particularly along the Clarks Run stream corridor and other scenic natural areas.
- Focus acquisition and development efforts on larger community park locations; use the development process to obtain dedications or reservations of land for smaller subdivision-serving facilities.
- Develop an inspection and maintenance program within the Town’s Department of Public Works for all Town parks, open space areas, and recreational facilities.
- Amend Town Code to eliminate “Fee in Lieu” as an option to parkland reservation or dedication.

## 2.6 HOUSING ELEMENT

2.6A Housing Background Information: Since the time of adoption of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, the predominant type of housing product built and purchased in La Plata has not changed overall. The majority of residential building permits processed in the last six years were issued for construction of single family detached homes. However, we have also seen the successful introduction of additional products for new elements of the housing market. Implementation of the CBT zone created in 2002 has resulted in several fine apartment and condominium communities constructed in the downtown area. Sales in the two senior living communities in Town have been brisk – Washington Square is now built-out, as is the first section of 73 homes in Hawthorne Greene. The first section of duplexes in Agricopia is now complete, as is the first section of 40 townhomes. The effort to make available a variety of housing options to serve all ages and economic segments of our population has produced a physical inventory of housing in La Plata that is quite diverse. This all-inclusive trend will continue in our three major planned communities, Heritage Green, Stagecoach Crossing, and Steeplechase. All of these projects are zoned Mixed-Use District, in order to guarantee provision of that variety and choice.

2.6B Housing Objectives and Policies – The Town of La Plata has established as its overarching goal for the Housing Element a “mission statement” summarized as follows: **“To promote and maintain the availability of a variety of housing choices to meet the needs of the present and future population of La Plata in a way that encourages socio-economic diversity while remaining compatible with the character of La Plata.”** The following items comprise a list of specific goals or policies set to implement this mission:

- Promote development, which combines a variety of residential and commercial interests, as the highest and best use of property. This would include support of mixed-use and Traditional Neighborhood communities and mixed-use Live/Work buildings in the downtown and the TND village centers.
- Support development proposals and programs, which identify and address the needs of the senior and/or physically challenged population. Connect those that qualify with programs that provide assistance to low-income disabled persons in retrofits of existing homes to meet ADA.
- Support community service non-profit organizations in the development of a site for a facility, which would provide shelter to homeless persons, and victims of domestic violence.
- Adopt an ordinance, which will allow for the development of accessory dwelling units in association with single family detached homes, to create a supply of affordable housing for work-force, senior, and youthful segments of our population. See Exhibit ‘F’ in Section 3.0 of this document for text of the draft ADU ordinance.

- Promote residential development constructed in accordance with standards such as the National Association of Home Builders Green Home Guidelines. Facilitate the provision of incentives for home builders to achieve a minimum Bronze-level certification for housing product in La Plata. Implement a “Green Home” building program in La Plata, using the NAHB check list or other tools to assess the environmental impact of a new building or subdivision, on the permit review level.
- Develop methods for implementing new codes and standards in older communities.

2.6C Housing Standards and Implementation – Implementation of the following planning strategies is recommended as a means to maintain the “small town” residential feel of La Plata:

- Promote compact, infill development within the Town, designed to enhance the pedestrian streetscape experience and reduce “sprawl” development outside of planned growth areas.
- Encourage rehabilitation and reuse of existing buildings, which conserves resources.
- Plan for pedestrian friendly streets and incorporate those improvements needed to support universal accessibility.
- Develop and maintain a housing needs assessment. Update through periodic surveys.
- Create an inventory of surplus publicly-owned land suitable for development of parks.
- Encourage preservation and maintenance of existing housing through continued implementation of the rental inspection program, adherence to IBC 2006, as updated by the Town, standards for renovation work, and enforcement of the Town’s Property Maintenance Standards as described in Chapter 152 of the Code.
- Maintain the infrastructure in older existing neighborhoods and preserve structures unique to La Plata. Revitalize older communities with the addition of sidewalks, street furniture, lighting, and plantings, and mass transit stops, where conducive to meeting the needs of the residents and preserving home values and neighborhood pride.
- Create Community Design Guidelines for Residential Projects, for use in plan review for projects outside of our planned communities, in existing neighborhoods without an Architectural Review Board. Continue advisory partnership with existing HOA Architectural Review Boards as part of Town residential building permit process.
- Provide zoning relief to citizens petitioning for rezoning of their property to correct non-conformities, i.e. townhouses in the R-10 zone, and apartment

buildings in the R-8 zone. Support zoning for higher density or by-right mixed-use as much as practical in the specific location.

- Implement a policy to include transit stops (bus/VanGo) in all new planned communities and major commercial developments, and to provide accommodation for bike lanes, paths and racks wherever possible.

## **2.7 REVIEW AND REGULATION ELEMENT**

2.7 A. Background Information: Regulations that define land subdivision and land use are adopted to preserve and protect the public's interest by setting standards for site development. These standards set the basic parameters for site design and the provision of services to properties within Town limits, and are aimed at enabling "Smart Growth" development through implementation of the Smart Growth Principles (Source: MDP *Maryland, Growing Smarter, June 2007*).

### 2.7 B. Review and Regulation Objectives and Policies:

- Mix land uses - allowing stores, offices and residences to be built above or adjacent to each other where appropriate, enabling people to work, shop and enjoy recreation close to where they live.
- Take advantage of compact building design – increase efficient use of energy by allowing for higher densities and compact development patterns. Regulations that encourage these patterns reduce land consumption, minimizing the amount of infrastructure needed to serve the community, lowering municipal costs, keeping tax rates down.
- Establish a range of housing choices for a diverse population of mixed ages and incomes. Provide opportunities for those who do important work for our community (police officers, firefighters, teachers, etc.) to find homes they can afford within the community they serve. An added benefit of providing a variety of choices is that it allows residents to remain close to families and friends even as life-stages (seniors) and needs (empty-nesters, those working from home) change.
- Create walkable neighborhoods characterized by a variety of transportation options and amenities – safe and reliable public transportation, sidewalks, bike paths, and walking trails that reduce dependency on the automobile.
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place. Enhance the community's unique character by providing welcoming public spaces, preserving special vistas, and creating interesting focal points (including civic buildings) that employ appropriate architectural styles and scale.
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and environmentally sensitive areas. Protect the environment by implementation of best management practices for maintaining water and air quality.
- Direct development toward existing communities and established places - maximize community investments in improving existing public infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.) and save tax money by so doing. Strengthen and

revitalize older neighborhoods and the “Old Town” (Central) Business District by encouraging and facilitating infill development, the adaptive reuse of our older structures, and the rehabilitation and redevelopment of underutilized or derelict properties.

2.7C Review and Regulation Standards and Implementation:

- A permit approval process that is fair and cost effective for applicants can also facilitate the efforts of the community to get desirable projects that embody and/or support objectives described in the Vision Plan for La Plata. By removing barriers to restoration and being receptive to designs for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and properties, the community stands to gain something with each new proposal.
- Land use and development regulations shall be updated and revised as necessary, with special emphasis on a detailed assessment during the six-year update of the Comprehensive Plan. A predictable straight-forward permit review and approval process provides clear design and construction standards, reduces review time, and minimizes the uncertainties that create misunderstandings and increase development costs. In this way, an environment for development is created that encourages developers to build attractive sites and distinctive neighborhoods, while engaging the community in the design.
- Place as many of the forms, check-lists, applications, regulations, staff contact information, meeting schedules, and guidelines that pertain to the development process on the Town website as possible, for ease of use and reference by all those with an interest or need – citizens, applicants, Board and Commission members, and consultants.

## **2.8 WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT**

**2.8A. Water Resources Background Information:** The Town of La Plata is in the process of revising its Comprehensive Plan as part of the six year review. House Bill 1141, Land Use – Local Government Planning, requires that each municipality that exercises planning and zoning authority add a Water Resources Element and Growth Element to its Comprehensive Plan prior to 10-1-2009. This Water Resource Element is designed to answer three questions:

1. Is there adequate water supply to meet current and future needs?
2. Is there adequate wastewater supply to meet current and future needs?
3. What, if any, impact will meeting these needs have on water resources?

The Town began this process by preparing a Wastewater Supply Capacity Management Plan (WWCMP) and a Water Supply Capacity Management Plan (WSCMP), according to the “Models and Guidelines” prepared by the Maryland Department of Planning. Those plans evaluated the Town’s ability to produce sufficient water and dispose of enough sewage to meet the needs of the Town over the next ten years. Most of the technical information and maps contained in this document came from one of these plans.

The Town of La Plata is divided between two watersheds, the Port Tobacco River and Zekiah Swamp watersheds. Since the Town covers less than 10% of either watershed, it is participating with Charles County in creating a County Water Resources Element. Information from the County Plan for these watersheds will be added to the portions of the element dealing with non point source pollution and impervious surfaces after that plan has been completed. Changes to the Code of Ordinances needed to comply with the Stormwater Management Act of 2007 will also be made to meet the requirements set by the State of Maryland.

**2.8B. Water Resources Land Use Plan:** The Town has adopted mixed use zoning on all of the major undeveloped tracts in the Town in order to meet smart growth objectives. Population projections are included in the Water Supply Capacity Management Plan and are based on the existing zoning on the undeveloped tracts rather than the history of population growth from the past. Projections anticipate a steady growth in population with as many as 25,000 residents by the year 2030. The existing land use plan may have to be adjusted to meet the needs of the Water Resources Element (WRE).

Since preliminary plats have been approved for all the major undeveloped tracts in the Town, it is possible to determine from these plans how much residential development is likely to take place. The big variable in land use planning is how much commercial, residential and institutional development will take place in the Town. Considering the potential residential growth, a significant amount of retail development will be needed and more employment opportunities will help to reduce traffic and congestion as the

Town continues to grow. The preliminary plats for the TND developments include some commercial areas. The commercial portions of the Steeplechase and Stagecoach Crossing developments will only include neighborhood commercial establishments or live-work buildings. Heritage Green will have employment opportunities as well as commercial buildings to serve the residential development. At this point, there is no way to determine what kind of commercial or light industrial development will take place and what the water resource requirement will be but the size of the major facility fee makes the Town unattractive to non residential users that need a lot of water.

The Town met with Melissa Appler from MDP to discuss a Residential Capacity Analysis Plan for the Town and to update the information MDP has for La Plata. MDP estimates the potential yield from undeveloped residential land at 75% of the maximum zoning. More than 90% of the undeveloped residential land in La Plata is in four large tracts that have been zoned for mixed use rather than Euclidian zoning. Each of these tracts has submitted a Master Site Development Plan and each one has been approved for a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) overlay zone. The overall density for these tracts is 6.5 units per acre, but clustering is permitted with the density in certain areas reaching as high as 20 units per acre. Each of the preliminary plats shows development at the maximum density after 20% has been subtracted for open space and 10% for the road network. For this reason, La Plata’s capacity analysis plan shows significantly more developable lots than MDP’s estimation.

The Town’s Planning Department is working with MDP to bring the data they show more in line with the Town’s projections.

The amount of anticipated growth in population within the current Town Limits can be predicted accurately. The timing of that growth and how much will occur by 2020 is much more difficult to project. The Steeplechase and Agricopia developments are under construction at the present time. Heritage Green has received all the permits and is ready to begin as soon as the market makes it feasible. Stagecoach Crossing recently changed owners. It has an approved TND in place and is in the preliminary planning stage but may be delayed due to market conditions. Table 1.1 shows that the growth in La Plata has been much slower since 2006 than it was in previous years. The reduction was primarily due to market conditions. It is difficult to predict when economic conditions will improve, but there is every reason to believe that when it does, the annual growth rate will increase drastically.

<b>TABLE 1.1 – POPULATION INCREASE FOR LA PLATA</b>							
<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>6 YR AVG</b>
Est. Population	7,676	8,023	8,477	8,707	8,886	8,984	8,459
Annual increase	585	347	454	230	179	98	316
% change	7.6%	4.3%	5.4%	2.6%	2.0%	1.1%	3.7%

There are very few options that are open to the Town that would enable it to make changes in the land use plans for mixed use properties that are currently within the Town Limits. All four of these have an approved TND on record and it would be difficult to make any changes at this time.

The proposed growth area for the Town includes 2,325 acres and would increase the size of the Town by nearly 40% if all of it were to be annexed. Most of the residential areas in the growth area are already subdivided and are occupied by single family residences that are on large lots with septic systems. There are a number of large tracts that offer opportunities for major commercial and industrial development if they are annexed into the Town. One of these is contiguous to the portion of Heritage Green that is designated for industrial development in the Mixed Use plan. All of these options should be carefully considered as part of the annexation process.

#### Recommendations:

1. Make every effort to limit the amount of water consumption and sewage generation as part of development plans, without reducing the overall density.
2. Develop a land use plan and zoning map that will not overload the Town's water resources when an annexation takes place,
3. Base future land use changes on the objectives established in the Town's Vision Plan to obtain a better mix of residential development with employment opportunities.

2.8 Water Resources Land Use Patterns: The zoning map that La Plata has adopted was intended to meet smart growth objectives. The Master Site Development Plan and the preliminary subdivision plat have been approved for more than 95% of the undeveloped property currently within the Town Limits. These plans should be more accurate than MDP'S growth model. This information can be used to create population projections that will be realistic in view of the TND zoning and the growth patterns that can be expected to result from the land use plan.

Based on current zoning, it appears that the Town will eventually have almost 11,000 edu's and the population will reach about 25,000 at 2030 buildout. The rate of growth, and just when the Town will reach its maximum population, is much more difficult to predict. According to Table 1.1, the rate of growth during the last three years has been much less than it was the three years before. There were several things that contributed to the reduced growth rate. For one thing, several active subdivisions have been completed and there were less new homes on the market. The most important factor has been the economic situation and the difficulty many prospective home owners have been experiencing in financing their new homes. Both the Agricopia subdivision and Steeplechase subdivisions are under construction at the present time. These two developments will include 1193 homes at 2020 buildout. Heritage Green, with 3170 residences, has obtained all the needed permits and is ready to begin building. When the

economy improves, the Town needs to be ready to provide the infra-structure these builders will need to begin or continue construction.

One of the conclusions reached by the Rt 301 South task force in 1997 was that much of the traffic congestion is caused by the fact that many of the residents work north of Charles County and commute daily. The Town's Vision Plan that was adopted in 2001 emphasized the need to balance land use between residential and commercial or industrial development to create more job opportunities with less commuting. Much of the undeveloped land in the Town's growth area is currently zoned by the County for Business Park or Industrial use. If any of this land is annexed to the Town, it should be zoned in such a way as to accomplish the goal of achieving a better land use balance within the Town Limits.

Recommendations:

1. Rezone all tracts of land that are more than 50 acres in size as mixed use at the time of annexation.
2. Modify Mixed Use and TND zones to reduce the amount of pollution and water consumption wherever practical.
3. Apply zoning to annexed land that will create a better balance between residential and commercial or industrial development within the Town.

2.8D. Water Demand: Section 6 of the Town's Water Supply Capacity Management Plan (WSCMP) shows the current water demand and estimates the future water requirements of the Town. Table 6.2 of the plan shows the average daily production over the past five years and compares it with the average billing over the same period in an attempt to account for the water that has been used. It also shows the amount of increase compared to the population changes. Table 6.3 shows the amount of water produced over the last five years and how much is unaccounted for. Table 6.4 shows the amount of water used each day during 2008. Appendix 3 to the WSCMP projects future growth and shows that the Town will need as much as 2.1 million gallons per day by the year 2022. If the entire growth area is annexed to the Town and developed in a similar pattern with the same amount of consumption as in the existing Town, the usage at full buildout would approach 3 mgd.

The Town has instituted a system of tiered billing and a water conservation program to reduce consumption and the amount of withdrawal from the Lower Patapsco aquifer. Due to their efforts, the Town's total usage has been reduced by 7 ½% from 2007 to 2008. The Town is also working with MDE to replace some of the water currently being withdrawn from the Town's water system with treated effluent from the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Recommendations:

1. Monitor the tiered billing arrangement for water in the Town and make changes as needed to make it more effective.
2. Continue and expand the water conservation program to reduce consumption.
3. Work with MDE and Charles County to make use of the treated effluent from the Town's WWTP to reduce the amount of usage from the Town's water system.

2.8E Water Supply Capacity: Table 7.1 from the Water Supply Capacity Management Plan (WSCMP) shows the capacity of the Town's existing wells, the daily consumption and the wells' ability to produce it. Well 5 is the oldest production well in Town and draws from the Upper Patapsco Aquifer. It has a capacity of 120 gallons per minute (gpm) and it is used primarily as a reserve supply for use in an emergency. The others all are in the Lower Patapsco Aquifer. Well 6 has never been a very dependable source of water. An effort was made to rehabilitate it in 2008. It was not successful and the pump has been removed from the well.

The amount of water authorized by the Town's Groundwater Appropriation Permit (GAP) is not adequate to supply the population growth that is likely to occur by 2022.

**WSCMP TABLE 7.1 - WATER SYSTEM CAPACITY 2009**

	YIELD	GALLONS PER DAY	
		16 HOURS	24 HOURS
Well 5 – Kent Ave.	120 gpm	115,200	172,800
Well 8 – Box Elder Road	625 gpm	600,000	900,000
Well 9 – Silver Linden Park	425 gpm	408,000	612,000
Well 10 – Washington Ave.	550 gpm	528,000	792,000
TOTAL PRODUCTION	1,720 gpm	1,651,200	2,476,800
TOTAL PRODUCTION WITHOUT WELL 8	1,095 gpm	1,051,200	1,576,800
Well 11 – Rosewick (under construction)	700 gpm	672,000	1,008,000
TOTAL PRODUCTION WITH WELL 11	2,420 gpm	2,323,200	3,484,800
TOTAL PRODUCTION WITHOUT WELL 11	1,720 gpm	1,651,200	2,476,800
PERMITTED DAILY WITHDRAWAL			
Average daily usage on daily basis	1,234,000 gpd		
Average daily usage highest month	1,836,000 gpd		
AVERAGE DAILY CONSUMPTION 2008	916,000 gpd		
AVERAGE CONSUMPTION AUGUST, HIGHEST MONTH	1,215,000 gpd		
Percent of permitted withdrawal on appropriation	74.23%		
Percent of permitted withdrawal during the highest month	66.20%		
AVAILABLE CAPACITY (Average month) 1-1-09	318,000 gpd		
AVAILABLE CAPACITY IN EDU’S 1-1-09	1432		
AVAILABLE CAPACITY (Highest month) 1-1-09	120,000 gpd		
AVAILABLE CAPACITY IN EDU’S 1-1-09	541		

**NOTE:** Flow calculations in Table 7.1 are shown in gallons per minute (gpm) or gallons per day (gpd)

Appendix 3 to the WSCMP shows the water requirements projected to the year 2022, residential, commercial and institutional uses. The Town has applied for an average appropriation of 2.0 mgd with an appropriation of 2.5 mgd in the month of maximum use. That should be adequate to supply the Town for the next 8 to 10 years. It is possible that the water conservation measures the Town has been adopting will reduce the amount the average household uses enough to limit the eventual water consumption to 2.0 mgd. If that is the case, the 2.0 mgd GAP requested in 2009 may be sufficient to supply the Town through the year 2022 or even longer. One factor to be considered in deciding whether to annex portions of the growth area will be the Town’s ability to increase the GAP enough to serve them.

Charles County withdraws about 3 mgd from the Magothy Aquifer and gets another 3 mgd from the Lower Patapsco Aquifer. MDP projections show that the total population of Charles County will grow to 200,000 by 2020, an increase of at least 25%. It is not

likely that the Lower Patapsco aquifer will support the anticipated growth in the County and the Town beyond that point.

As part of the Town's application for an increase in its GAP, Earthdata of Centreville, Md. prepared a hydrogeologic evaluation of the Lower Patapsco aquifer and its ability to support the additional withdrawal. As defined by Maryland Regulations, water levels on a regional basis have to remain above the 80 percent management level. The level of the potentiometric surface in the Lower Patapsco Aquifer has been dropping at a rate of 3.3 feet per year. The new well 11 was tested before being put in service. At that time, the static level measured during the maximum flow test was 386 feet above the 80 percent management level. If the level continues to decline at the same rate, the static level would still be 347 feet above the 80% management level in 2020. MDE has been reluctant to increase the Town's appropriation to 2.0 mgd because the Lower Patapsco Aquifer is at or below the 80% management level in the Indian Head – Bryans Road area. MDE has been shifting some of the usage by the Town of Indian Head and Charles County from the Lower Patapsco Aquifer to the Patuxent in Bryans Road. Charles County has begun to purchase 1.4 mgd from WSSC to reduce the amount of withdrawal from the Lower Patapsco Aquifer. The level in the test well at Mason Springs in the western section of Charles County has already begun to recover due to these changes.

Even with the higher rate of withdrawal by both by the County and the Town due to the anticipated growth, the Lower Patapsco Aquifer should be able to support the growth that La Plata's land use plan envisions over the next 20 years. On the other hand, the current usage exceeds the recharge rate of this aquifer and a long range plan to reduce the withdrawal rate is needed. The Town's Water Supply Capacity Management Plan includes an allocation system that compares the subdivision final plats that are approved and building permits issued with the availability of additional water supply to serve them.

There are plans to extend the Charles County Water System along St. Charles Parkway within a reasonable distance of the Town Limits in the future, but the timeframe will be dependent on development activity within the area. Other Charles County water lines are close to the Indian Head water system. The Charles County Water Resource Advisory Committee in its report to the Charles County Commissioners on November 28, 2006 recommended that the County develop a plan to use surface water to relieve the stress on the Lower Patapsco Aquifer. Charles County has been unable to identify any opportunities for a surface water impoundment within its borders. Charles County is currently using surface water by purchasing 1.4 mgd from the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission and may seek additional appropriations in the future. A long range alternative to buying water from WSSC may be for the County to join with the Towns of La Plata and Indian Head to build a surface water supply treatment plant using either the Potomac or the Patuxent Rivers as a source. It may be more cost effective to interconnect the three systems and deal with any shortage in the Town on a County-wide basis.

Charles County has appointed another Water Resources Advisory Committee to follow up on the 2006 report and continue to explore the alternative ways of providing the water that will be needed in the future. The Town has a representative on that committee and will take an active part in the deliberations and implementation of the report.

Recommendations:

1. Take an active part in the deliberations of the Water Resources Advisory Committee.
2. Carefully monitor usage and strictly apply the approved procedure for allocation of the existing capacity according to the latest issue of the Water Supply Management Plan.
3. Enter into discussions with Charles County to explore the possibility of interconnecting the two water systems through metered connections to provide the ability to exchange water with the other system in case of emergency.
4. Verify that the Town's GAP is adequate before approving any major annexations.

2.8F.Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Demand: Table 5.1 shows that on 1-1-2009, La Plata's WWTP was operating at approximately 73% of its capacity with a three year average flow of 1.134 mgd, 76% of the design and permitted capacity. Approximately 14% of the three year average flow comes from Inflow and Infiltration (I&I). In dry weather, the average flow is only about 64% of the design capacity of the plant.

<b>TABLE 5.1 - LA PLATA WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT</b>		
Design flow 1.5 mgd	Permitted flow 1.5 mgd	
Year	Average flow	Percent of capacity
2006	1.243 mgd	83%
2007	1.045 mgd	70%
2008	1.091 mgd	73%
3 year average	1.134 mgd	76%
Average Oct, Nov, 2008	.954 mgd	64%
Average daily I and I 2008	.137 mgd	14% avg flow
Available 1-1-09	.366 mgd	1647 edu's (222 gpd)
Available 1-1-08 after 14% allowance for I&I	.321 mgd	1445 edu's

The Town is in the midst of an extensive I&I reduction program and the three year average flow should continue to decrease over the next few years. Unless the I&I is significantly reduced, projections shown in appendix 3 to the Wastewater Capacity Management Plan predict that the Town may reach the maximum capacity of its WWTP within four years. The economic downturn has greatly reduced the number of building

permits issued by the Town in 2008. The lower level of activity will probably extend the life of the current plant and postpone the need to expand the facility. The Town is scheduled by MDE to upgrade the WWTP from Biological nutrient reduction (BNR) to Enhanced nutrient reduction (ENR) by the end of 2011.

The Town has adopted a three phase approach to upgrading and expanding this facility.

Phase 1 involves upgrading the level of treatment from BNR to ENR at the existing 1.5 mgd capacity. MDE has agreed to fund this expansion and an engineering firm have been hired to begin designing this upgrade. The Town has set an objective of completing this project no later than 12-31-2011.

Phase 2 will expand the plant to a design capacity of 2.0 mgd. MDE has issued a new NPDES permit specifying the use of ENR technology. It will increase the capacity to 2.0 mgd with surface water discharge after the ENR upgrade is complete. This increase in the NPDES permit will coincide with the GAP increase to 2.0 mgd. The design of this expansion will be done concurrently with construction of Phase 1 and construction of the expansion may begin as soon as 1-1-2010. Timing of this phase of the expansion will be critical and may require some delays in allocating sewage capacity for new construction. The housing market downturn in 2008 and the economic recession should provide the margin the Town needs to obtain the increased WWTP capacity by the time it is needed to meet the increased demand. The start of the expansion project may be delayed for some time until the economy of the Country recovers from the current recession. The increased capacity will not be needed until either Heritage Green or Stage Coach Crossing begins construction. There is enough available capacity in the plant to handle all of the other undeveloped property currently within the Town Limits at the maximum density permitted under existing zoning. As the flow into the WWTP approaches 1.5 MGD, the Town has adopted a process for allocating the remaining capacity in its WWCMP to prevent an overload of the system.

Recommendations:

1. Make every effort to complete the ENR upgrade no later than 12-31-2011.
2. Begin the WWTP expansion to 2.0 MGD as soon as either Heritage Green or Stagecoach Crossing begins construction, when the average three year flow through the WWTP reaches 1.3 mgd or a portion of the growth area is annexed that will drive the average flow above 1.3 mgd.
3. Carefully monitor the flow and assign the remaining capacity in the WWTP according to the allocation process specified in the latest issue of the WWCMP.

2.8G. Wastewater Treatment Plant Limits: Phase 3 will expand the WWTP to at least 2.5 mgd. The projections in the WWCMP do not include commercial, industrial or institutional growth for the most part. They also do not include serving any of the growth area shown in the Growth element of the comprehensive plan that is outside the existing

corporate limits. It is likely that including these areas and some of the potential commercial and industrial growth that may take place as part of the Heritage Green mixed use development will mandate increasing this expansion to 3.0 mgd instead of 2.5 mgd.

The TMDL assigned to La Plata will not support an NPDES surface discharge permit allowing the WWTP to be expanded beyond 2.0 mgd. MDE has assigned a limit of 18,000 lbs of nitrogen to be discharged from the La Plata plant annually. This equates to 2.0 mgd with a limit of 3 parts per million of nitrogen in the effluent. MDE is currently working on a procedure that will increase the TMDL for a particular WWTP by earning credits by eliminating septic systems or trading credits that have been awarded, either to other treatment plants or non point sources. Portions of the proposed growth area are currently served by more than 400 septic systems. If the Town annexes these areas and connects the existing residences to the Town's system, the limit of 2.0 mgd will be raised. Even if these annexations take place, it is likely that some other method of disposing of the excess effluent will have to be adopted by the Town.

The Town is working closely with MDE in an effort to develop a system using treated effluent for irrigation in some of the proposed mixed use developments. The golf course in Heritage Green is one of the proposed uses, but to handle the amount of excess effluent generated when the average flow exceeds 2.0 mgd, a more extensive use of irrigation systems will have to be initiated and encouraged. MDE has a task force working on some options for effluent re-use, but doesn't expect any major changes to the current regulations for at least two years.

MDE is working on an arrangement for trading nutrient allowances by eliminating septic tanks or agricultural uses in the same watershed as the treatment plant. In the case of La Plata, there are a number of septic systems located in the growth area the Town has delineated, some of them failing and creating a significant amount of pollution. If portions of the growth area are annexed into Town and served by the Town's system, additional credits will be added to the Town's permitted TMDL. Before annexing any of these areas, the Town needs to compare the credits that will come with them and the maximum amount of additional sewage that will be generated in the area to be annexed.

Another option may become available if the proposed Charles County Gray Water system becomes a reality. Charles County now supplies treated effluent to the Panda Power Plant in Southern Prince Georges County. Another power plant has been proposed on Piney Church Road that may create an additional market for treated effluent. The County's existing commitments to the Panda plant will make it difficult for the Mattawoman treatment plant to supply both power plants. There is a possibility that the County may include La Plata's treated effluent in their contract with the new Power Plant.

The expansion of La Plata's WWTP to 2.0 mgd should provide enough additional capacity to meet the Town's needs for at least 8 to 10 years. At the present time, there is no affordable method that will reduce the amount of nitrogen in the effluent from a WWTP below 3 ppm. As technology progresses, it is very likely that it may be possible to lower it to 2 ppm or less by the time more than 2.0 mgd is needed in the Town. That would enable the La Plata WWTP to discharge 2.5 mgd or more while still staying within the TMDL limits currently set by the NPDES permit.

The end result will probably be a combination of several of the optional ways to dispose of the effluent that exceeds the limit of the Town's NPDES permit. The ENR upgrade will enable the Town to meet the needs of future growth for at least eight years without exceeding its TMDL. The most cost effective and most efficient means of disposing of the effluent will have to be developed during that interval so that the Town can proceed with the design of the Phase 3 expansion when it is needed.

**TABLE 6.1 – SUMMARY OF SHCEDULED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS – TOWN OF LA PLATA**

DATE	ACTION	CAPACITY		EDU	NUMBER EDU'S			SSO'S
		WATER	SEWER	CHG	TOTAL	USED	AVAIL	
<b>EXISTING AS OF 1-1-09</b>								
1/1/09		1.243 mgd	1.5 mgd		5,559	4,018	1,541	
<b>PHASE 1 IMPROVEMENTS</b>								
1/1/10	Increase GAP to 2 MGD	1.75 mgd	1.5 mgd		5,927	4,567	1,360	MH 13-5
1/1/09	Increase NPDES to 2 MGD	2.0 mgd	1.5 mgd		5,927	4,567	1,360	MH141-2
12/31/09	Add SW quadrant extension				5,927			None
12/31/09	Add new Willows pump station				5,927	4,691	1,183	None
12/31/09	Occupancy permits 2009			109	5,927	4,815	1,112	None
12/31/10	Upgrade WWTP to ENR				5,927	4,815		None
12/31/10	Occupancy permits 2010			285	5,927	5,140	787	None
12/31/10	Add new pump station Buckeye Circle							
12/31/11	Occupancy permits 2011			400	5,927	5,596	331	None
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEDULE OF IMPROVEMENTS – TOWN OF LA PLATA</b>								
DATE	ACTION	CAPACITY		EDU	NUMBER EDU'S			SSO'S
		WATER	SEWER	CHG	TOTAL	USED	AVAIL	
<b>PHASE 2 IMPROVEMENTS</b>								
12/31/12	Expand WWTP to 2.0 MGD	1.75	2.0 mgd	1938	7,865	5,596	2,269	None
12/31/12	Occupancy permits 2012			400	7,865	6,052	1,813	None
12/31/13	Occupancy permits 2013			400	7,865	6,508	1,357	None
12/31/13	Arrange to dispose of effluent when WWTP is expanded							
12/31/14	Increase GAP to 2.2 MGD				7,865	6,508		
12/31/14	Increase NPDES to 2.5 MGD				7,865	6,508		
12/31/14	Occupancy permits 2014			400	7,865	6,964	901	None
12/31/15	Occupancy permits 2015			400	7,865	7,420	445	None
<b>TABLE 6.1 continued...</b>								
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEDULE OF IMPROVEMENTS – TOWN OF LA PLATA</b>								
DATE	ACTION	CAPACITY		EDU	NUMBER OF EDU'S			SSO'S
		WATER	SEWER	CHG	TOTAL	USED	AVAIL	
12/31/16	Expand WWTP to 2.5 mgd	2.2 mgd	2.5 mgd	1938	9,803	7,420	2,383	None
12/31/16	Occupancy permits 2016			400	9,803	7,876	1,927	None
12/31/17	Occupancy permits 2017			400	9,803	8,332	1,471	None
12/31/18	Occupancy permits 2018			400	9,803	8,788	1,015	None
12/31/19	Occupancy permits 2019			400	9,803	9,244	559	None
12/31/20	Occupancy permits 2020			400	9,803	9,700	103	None
<b>IMPROVEMENTS WHEN NEEDED</b>								
NPDES and GAP permits will probably be delayed beyond 2014 depending on economic conditions								
Add elevated storage when needed to maintain adequate pressure or fire flow								
Add well when needed to maintain production								
Expand WWTP above 2.5 MGD if needed to serve growth area								

Table 6.1 is a summary of the balance between available capacity and anticipated demand until 2020. It also includes a schedule for expansion based on the most optimistic forecast. Most of the anticipated growth is concentrated in four large mixed use developments. Two of them are under construction. The other two have not begun building yet, but they account for about 90% of the anticipated growth over the next ten years. Both of them will require a great deal of expensive infra-structure before the first building permit can be issued. For this reason, it is not likely that construction will begin on either of these until the economic situation rebounds to the point that the Market can absorb several hundred expensive dwelling units each year. The schedule will be readjusted accordingly.

In the meantime, the Town has included an allocation system in the Wastewater Capacity Management Plan that will limit the amount of final subdivision plats that can be approved, or building permits that are issued, to prevent overloading the WWTP. At the same time, additional capacity may be available if the I&I reduction efforts of the Town are successful.

Recommendations:

1. Work closely with MDE to work out a method to make use of the treated effluent from the WWTP for irrigation purposes in new subdivisions.
2. Investigate any and all options for disposing of the effluent that exceeds the TMDL limits in the Port Tobacco River to find the most cost effective solution to the problem.
3. Closely monitor the flow through La Plata's WWTP and readjust the schedule for infrastructure improvements to meet the need.
4. Work with MDE to dispose of at least .5 mgd of treated effluent before the expansion to 2.5 mgd takes place.

2.8H. Septic Systems: There are only 19 septic tanks remaining within the current Town limits. Because of financial constraints, 13 existing houses were left out when the original system was put in and never connected to the sewer system. Six of these are on Walnut Hill Road and seven on Port Tobacco Road. Sewer lines have been laid on Walnut Hill Road and the owners are waiting for a grant to be processed to cover the cost of installation. The other 7 houses from the original system will be connected when the new line is laid to serve the LaGrange subdivision. Six new houses were constructed with well and septic in 2007 on Dolly Drive off of Old Stagecoach Road. When the Stagecoach Crossing development takes place they will be connected to the Town's system.

All of the current residences in the growth area outside the Town Limits, as it will be identified in the Growth element of the Comprehensive Plan, are using septic tanks. Many of these septic systems are failing and contributing significantly to the high

bacteria counts in the Port Tobacco sewer shed. There have been discussions with the County about connecting these users to the Town sewer system. The Town is not a public utility and only serves properties located within the Town limits. Past policies would require that these properties be annexed into the Town before they can be connected to the Town system.

Another problem involved in dealing with failing septic systems is the cost of either upgrading them or connecting them to a public sewer. The County is applying for a grant to do this, but the question still remains what system they will become part of and how they will be connected to it.

There are approximately 530 residential septic systems in the proposed growth area at the present time. At least half of these are on large lots and are not likely to want to connect to the Town's system unless they are required to do so. In addition to the residential septic systems, there are several commercial structures on W&W road. None of these are large water users and might be the equivalent of another 5 edu's. If all of these properties are connected to the La Plata sewer system, they would generate 119,000 gpd of sewage.

Just outside the proposed growth area are Kline Drive and the Warrlinda subdivision that have a significant number of failing systems. There are more than 100 septic systems in these areas that may someday have to be included in La Plata's system. If they were annexed, they would generate another 21,000 gpd that La Plata's treatment plant would have to handle. Serving this number of septic systems should yield enough nitrogen credits to increase the TMDL limit to take care of the effluent limitations.

#### Recommendations:

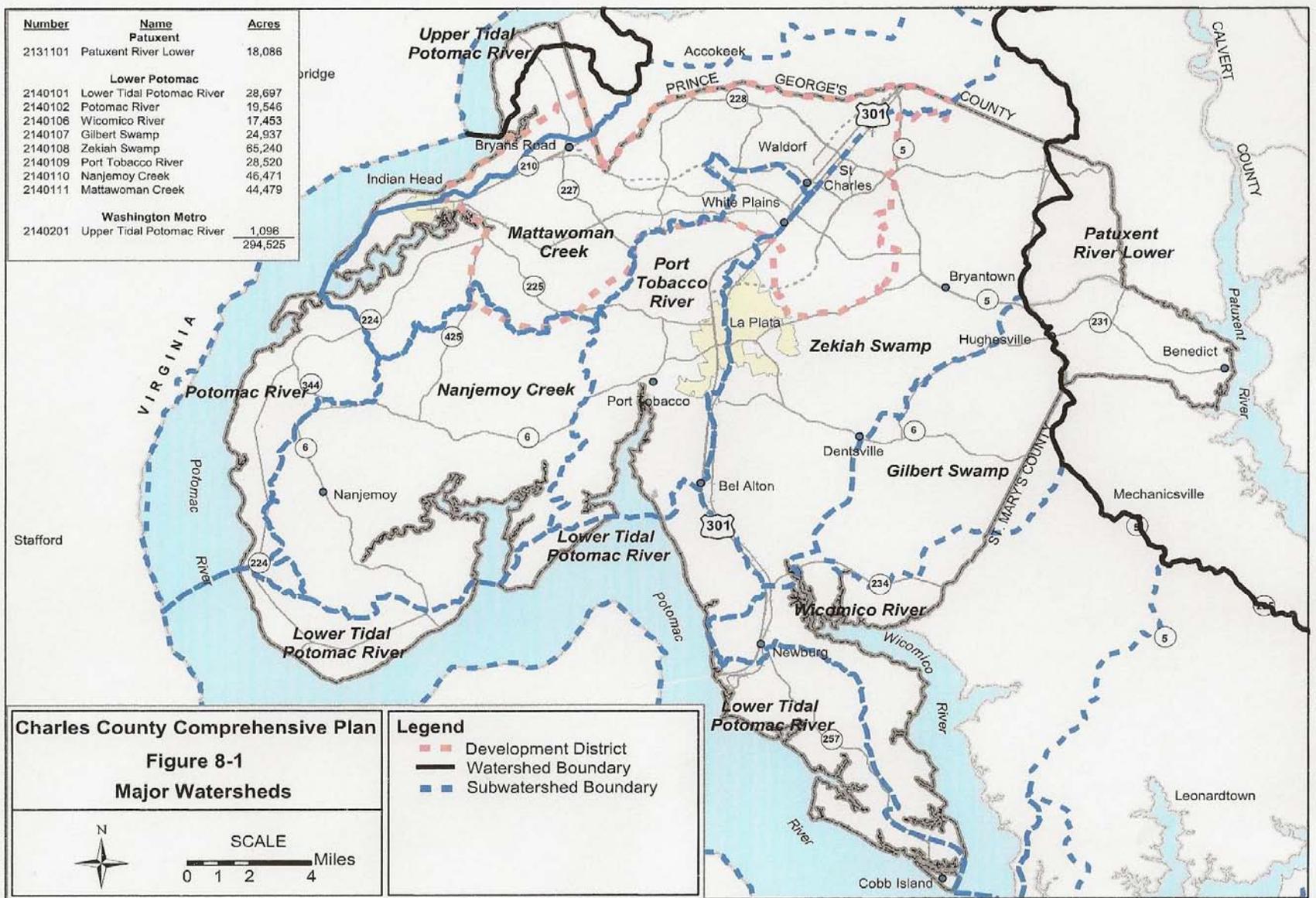
1. Compare the nitrogen credits to be received by eliminating septic systems with the maximum amount of sewage that may be generated before annexing property within the designated growth area.
2. Arrange a method of funding the sewer collection system before annexing properties that will be converted from on site septic systems to the Town's sewer system.
3. Verify that there is sufficient capacity in the Town's sewer system to handle the maximum sewage to be generated in the area to be annexed before approving the annexation.
4. Include 150,000 gpd for septic tank replacement in the proposed growth area when deciding how much capacity will be added as part of Phase III.

2.8I. Stormwater Runoff: Very little of the information required to comply with the Guidance Document on stormwater runoff is readily available. Stormwater runoff from La Plata is split between the Port Tobacco and Zekiah watersheds as shown on the

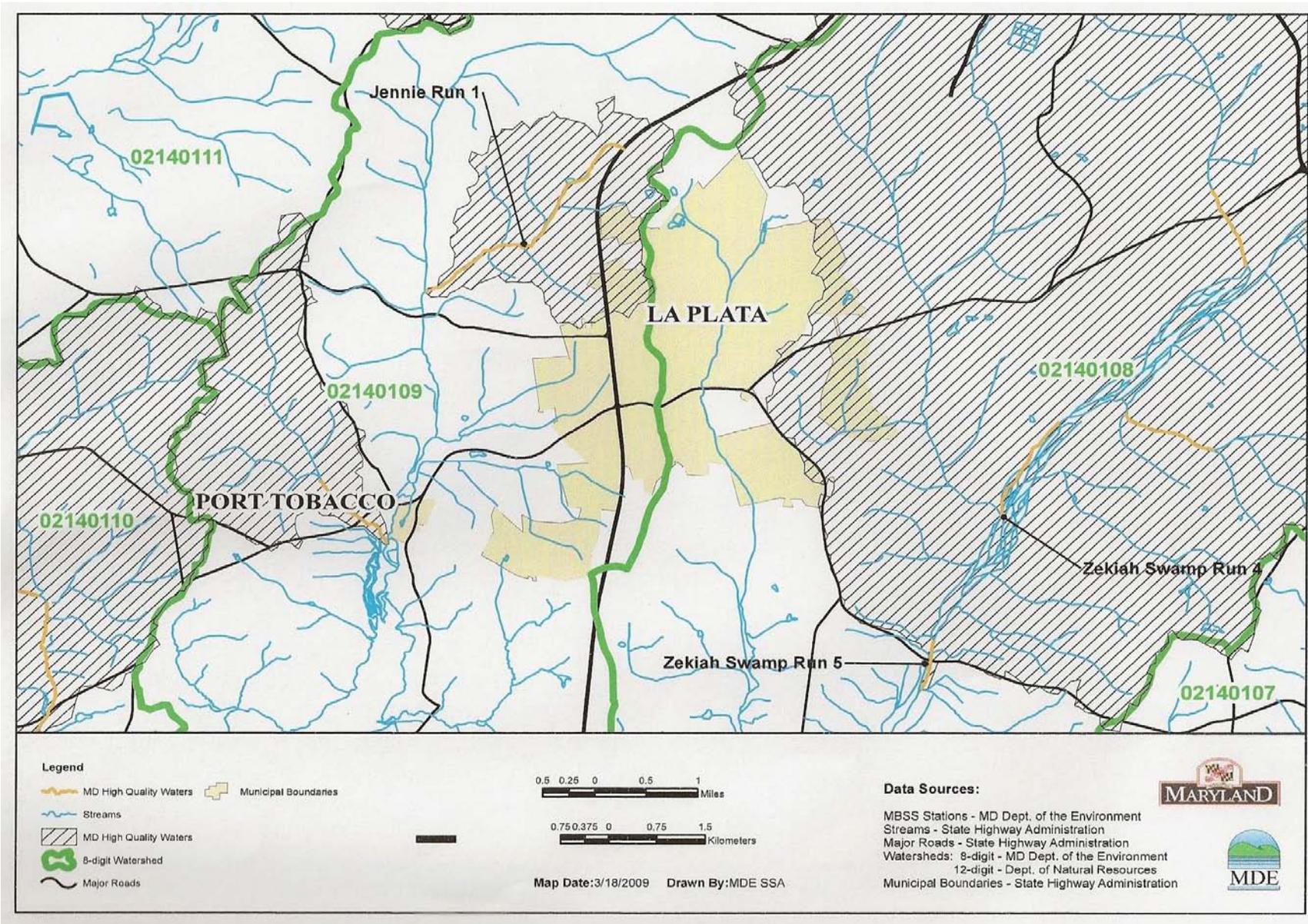
Watershed Map. The Town is only a very small portion of each of these watersheds, less than 10% of each one. Much of the area included in these watersheds is used for agricultural purposes. This type of use probably generates more nutrients from non point sources than the stormwater runoff from the urban areas in the Town.

None of the stormwater runoff from the Town goes directly into the Port Tobacco River or the Zekiah Swamp. All of it discharges into existing streams through stormwater drainpipes or natural surface runoff in the rural area surrounding the Town. Although it originates in the Town, this runoff will have to be included as part of the County's stormwater discharge plan.

# PORT TOBACCO AND ZEKIAH WATERSHEDS



MARYLAND HIGH QUALITY WATERS



The Town will join with Charles County to develop an analysis of the stormwater runoff in both the Port Tobacco and the Zekiah watersheds. Charles County has selected a consultant to prepare a Water Resource Element for their comprehensive plan and the contract includes providing the needed data concerning stormwater loading in the Towns of Indian Head and La Plata. The County has awarded a contract to ERM as described in the "Project Description". It issued a Notice to Proceed the week of March 23<sup>rd</sup> and the initial meeting to prepare a detailed scope of work occurred March 31, 2009.

"A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

*The Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management is seeking proposals from qualified multi-disciplined planning or engineering firms to complete a Water Resources Element for Charles County, the Town of La Plata, and the Town of Indian Head."*

This information will not be available in time to be incorporated into this WRE. It will be used primarily to adopt changes to the Town's codes that will help to meet the goals and objectives that will be set in the Charles County's plan for both watersheds.

Stormwater runoff is a problem area. Much of the Town was developed under stormwater regulations that were less stringent than the current requirements. Stormwater waivers were issued, with the agreement of MDE, for the redevelopment that took place after the tornado destroyed much of the Town's Central Business District in 2002. Some major retrofitting will be needed to deal with the stormwater from these areas.

In July of 2007 the Charles County Commissioners adopted the Port Tobacco River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS). The Town of La Plata participated on the WRAS Steering Committee and also adopted the WRAS for implementation in 2008. The WRAS identifies projects needed to restore the water quality and the watershed. The most beneficial project identified is addressing septic tanks known to be located in areas of high water table and poor soils. Many of these are in the proposed growth area of the Town of La Plata. The second most pollutant removing project is to address stormwater management in areas that were built prior to current codes and stormwater regulations. Many of these are in the Town of La Plata. Both of these projects will be extremely expensive and Charles County has applied for grant money to begin the work.

Section 167 of the Town's code of ordinances contains detailed requirements for new construction. The Town is obligated to make changes to this section of its code to comply with the Stormwater Management Act of 2007. A draft copy of the changes must be submitted to MDE before November 10, 2009 and the new ordinance will be adopted no later than May 10, 2010. During the interim, the draft ordinance will be modified to incorporate any changes that may be required to meet the Charles County WRE for the

Port Tobacco and the Zekiah watersheds. This section also deals with maintenance of the stormwater structures. It doesn't deal with enforcement or who is responsible for maintaining and financing the stormwater system.

Under current regulations, individual property owners, or homeowner's associations (HOAs) are responsible for the maintenance of existing storm water facilities. This creates a major problem where the HOA is weak or in some cases, non-existent. As an example, one subdivision of 20 houses was required to put in 3 storm water retention facilities. This is too small a base to support the type of maintenance 3 separate facilities will require. The Town is working on a plan to finance and provide the staff needed to maintain the existing storm water facilities in such a way that they will be able to do what they were designed to accomplish.

Recommendations:

1. Modify Section 167 of La Plata's code of ordinances to comply with the Stormwater Management Act of 2007 and the goals and objectives included in the Charles County Water Resources Plan prepared by ERM Consultants.
2. Develop a stormwater management program to improve the level of maintenance on stormwater management facilities including identifying a source of funding.
3. Work with Charles County and the Potomac River Conservancy to implement the projects identified in the WRAS.

2.8J. Overall Development Impact: The Town is cognizant of the fact that by 2020, the nutrients in the WWTP discharge will be significantly more than the TMDL limitations that have been set for the NPDES surface discharge permit alone. The Town is actively working with MDE to find a workable alternative to dispose of the excess effluent.

The overall development impact of the growth within the Town may be problematic. The Town has adopted a land use plan that is in compliance with the "Smart Growth" policies established by the Maryland Department of Planning. All of the major undeveloped tracts within the current Town Limits have been zoned for mixed use and each of them has an approved plan on file for a "Traditional Neighborhood Development". The higher densities that result from this type of zoning are well above the minimum set by MDP for priority funding areas. At the same time, this type of development results in a higher impact on water, sewer and stormwater runoff from the Town. On the other hand, the total development impact on the County is much less per dwelling unit than would be the case with the typical "sprawl development" that exists outside the incorporated towns and county priority funding area.

MDE has supplied a map dated 3/18/2008, included in this document, showing the drainage area for the streams designated as MD High Quality Waters in both the Port Tobacco and Zekiah watersheds. According to that map, only the extreme northern section of Town drains into Anti-degradation waters. On the other hand, much of the proposed growth area drains into one of these protected streams. Much of the area in question is currently zoned Business Park or Industrial. Developing this area may become critical to the Town's efforts to create an appropriate balance between jobs and housing while meeting the density requirements established by MDP under Smart Growth standards. If this area is annexed into the Town, land use, zoning and implementation policies that will protect this sensitive area and not impact the water quality should be part of an annexation agreement. It will be much easier to limit the amount of runoff and protect the High Quality Waters if the development of the property is confined to industrial or commercial uses instead of single family residential.

Considering all these factors, the Town is not aware of any way to accurately calculate the total nutrient loading from wastewater effluent and stormwater runoff combined. This information for the entire watershed, including the Town of La Plata, will be part of the Charles County Water Resources Plan and will be used to help determine the Town's overall contribution to nutrient loading. This WRE will be amended to include the pollution forecast and recommendations regarding the forecast when that plan is received.

Recommendations:

1. Identify areas of the Town and the proposed growth area that will drain into anti-degradation waters of the State of Maryland.
2. Develop a plan to limit stormwater runoff into anti-degradation waters at the time of annexation of portions of the proposed growth area.
3. Consider the information contained in the Charles County Water Resources Plan as part of the review process for new subdivisions or site plans.
4. Amend this element when the pollution forecast and recommendations are received.

2.8K. Impervious Cover: According to the WRAS, the Port Tobacco River Watershed consists of 28,064 acres with 6% of in impervious cover in 2002. It also projects that the impervious cover will increase to 14% through future buildout. The Town does not have the required information readily available regarding the amount of impervious cover in the Port Tobacco River watershed that is within the Town limits. The Town represents a very small portion of the Port Tobacco and Zekiah watersheds. As part of its ongoing Water Resources Element, the County will calculate the amount of impervious surface for each of these watersheds. The Town will work with the County to

determine how its proposed land use plan will affect the amount of impervious cover in both watersheds.”

Section 167 of The Town’s Code of Ordinances is based on the State’s Storm water regulations and new development is required to comply with it during and after construction. As part of the Town’s emphasis on “green” construction, more detailed standards for impervious cover in the Central Business and Highway Commercial Zones should be adopted that will reduce the amount of impervious material used in construction. The results of the pollution forecast and related recommendations from the County’s WRE should be incorporated into the Town Code.’

Recommendations:

1. Adopt standards designed to limit the amount of impervious surfaces in new construction.
2. Amend the Town Code of Ordinances to include the results of the pollution forecast and recommendations from ERM consultants.

2.8L. Adjustments to Land Use Plan or Options to Address Limitations: If limits are reached at any of the above steps, options should be identified that will help mitigate the limitations. Ultimately, the land use plan from step 1 may have to be adjusted, but only a very limited amount of changes can be made without exceeding the minimum density guidelines set by MDP. The primary impact of the limitations identified as part of this plan will be when any of the property included in the Town’s Growth Area are annexed into the Town. The land use plan and zoning that are part of any annexation should take into account the limitations in this element and not exceed the capability of the Town’s Water Resources. They should also comply with the pollution forecast and recommendations in the Charles County WRE.

Recommendations:

1. Land use or zoning changes should not exceed the Water Resources of the Town.
2. Make an analysis of the available Water Resources a part of the available facilities analysis in processing annexation requests.

2.8M. Impact of the Land Use Plan: The land use plan the Town has chosen in the past has been primarily driven by the need to meet smart growth objectives. Obviously, the densities smart growth envisions have a much greater impact on water resources than a lower density would have. As the density in the center of Town is increased, the amount of impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff also increases. It also requires additional drinking water and sewage treatment. MDE has been reluctant to issue a GAP that will serve the existing population in the Town, much less provide for planned development.

La Plata's existing and proposed land use plans are designed to comply with MDP's smart growth guidelines. The State will have to make a decision as to which of the conflicting standards they have adopted should be applied in adopting a new land use plan.

2.8N. Inter-jurisdictional Coordination and Cooperation: Due to the inherent physical and geographic nature of water resources, it is imperative that the water resources element be developed through interjurisdictional coordination with a water shed focus. This is true for both Charles County and the Towns of Indian Head and La Plata.

Charles County and the Town of La Plata need to work together to properly complete a WRE for that works best for both of them. Because watersheds, water supply areas and water quality issues often overlap political boundaries, interjurisdictional coordination is the key to a successful WRE. Local watershed-based organizations can assist both governments with this coordination.

The Town's water, sewer and stormwater systems are completely independent of the ones operated by Charles County. Charles County's contract with their consultant contains a requirement to include the Town of La Plata in its stormwater and non point source portions of the element that will be created. Section 8 includes a reference to the scope of work established in that contract. While both the Town and County get their drinking water from the same aquifer, they are independent of each other and not interconnected at the present time. That might change if the two systems are eventually interconnected and some of the water both jurisdictions use comes from WSSC. It could also change at some time in the future if both Towns and the County join in building and operating some type of surface water plant.

Recommendations:

1. Verify that the Water Resources Element of La Plata's Comprehensive Plan agrees with the County's Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan and the Water Resources Plan created by ERM Consultants.
2. Participate in all planning and work groups involving water resources in Charles County.

## **2.9 MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT**

**2.9A. Introduction:** This is the Municipal Growth Element for the Town of La Plata's Comprehensive Plan, as required by HB 1141. It is based on an analysis of past and projected growth and the resultant impact on needed infrastructure. This section is coordinated with the Water Resources Element, the other new required element for comprehensive plans.

Approximately half of the total acreage of the existing Town is undeveloped and consists primarily of four large tracts that have been zoned for mixed use development. The purpose of this element is to attempt to quantify the potential impact of growth that may occur as this land develops and as a result of potential annexations beyond existing municipal boundaries. After completion of this element, an area may not be annexed, unless the impact of that annexation has been analyzed. Inclusion of areas outside the current Town boundary does not commit approval of any annexation. Those decisions will be made by the Town Council on a case by case basis.

**2.9B. Executive Summary:** Development plans that have been approved will provide enough lots to accommodate another 5,000 dwelling units and more than double the current population. This should accommodate the anticipated residential growth over the next twenty years, but doesn't leave enough undeveloped land to create the jobs and residential balance that will be needed to comply with smart growth objectives. The proposed growth area for the Town contains several large undeveloped tracts. The areas are suited to industrial or commercial zoning to fill this need if and when they are annexed into the Town Limits. Much of the proposed growth area has already been developed with single family residences, most of them on large lots with septic tanks that may cause an unacceptable amount of pollution in both the Port Tobacco and Zekiah Swamp watersheds at some time in the future.

Most of the amenities the Town provides are adequate, or could be expanded, to meet the needs of the Town when it is built out. Charles County provides resources for the school system. The County also provides a library in La Plata. There are plans to build a new one within the Town Limits where it will be accessible to the expanding population. There will be a need for additional parks and recreation facilities. The Town has prepared a Capital Expenditures plan for Parks that will meet the needs of Town residents as the population grows.

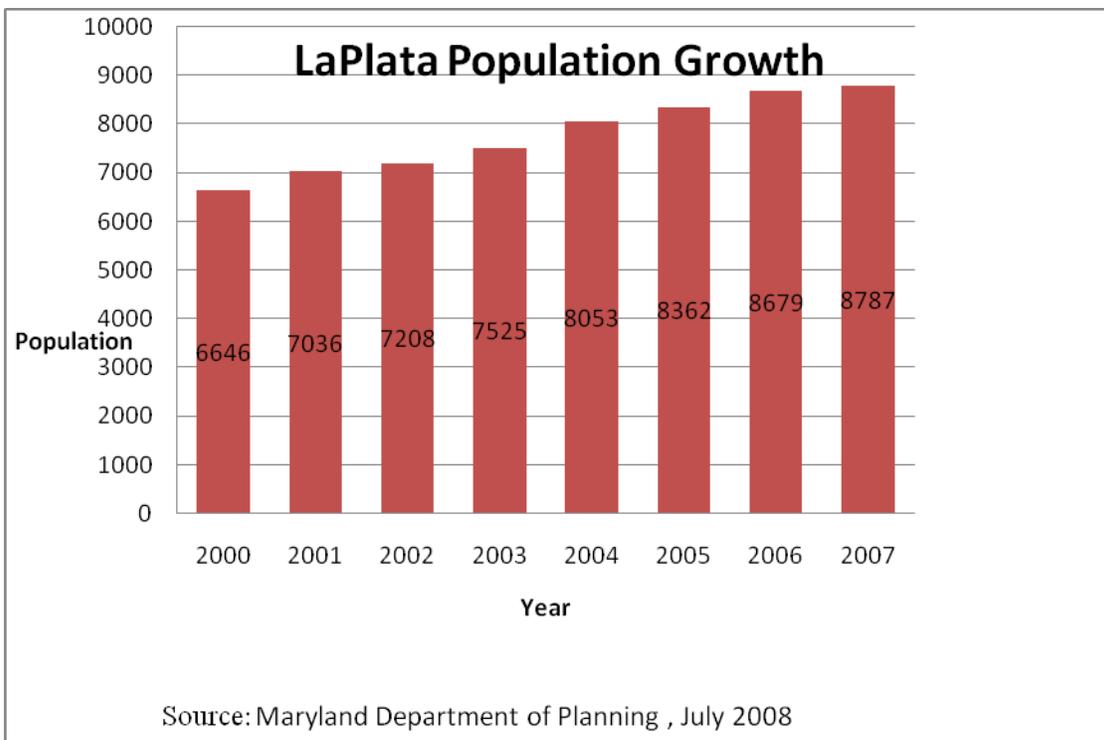
Fire and Emergency Medical services are provided primarily by volunteer organizations funded by a countywide dedicated fire tax. They are well equipped and able to provide the services the expanding population will need. The Civista Medical Center was recently expanded and should be well able to handle the growth the Town will experience in the near future.

The Town has its own Police Department, supplemented by the Charles County Sheriff's Department located within the Town and the Maryland State Police stationed within a mile of the Town Limits. The La Plata Police Department should be expanded as needed to maintain a similar level of service.

The Water Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan covers in detail the schedule for expanding the infrastructure of the Town. There is a need to include the proposed growth area in the long range plans for improvement. One of the primary concerns will be the proximity of much of the growth area to what has been designated at "High Quality Waters" of the state of Maryland. As additional land is annexed to the Town, an annexation agreement will be needed to protect these waters from further pollution.

2.9C. Town Growth: In 1990, La Plata's population was 5,841. According to the 2000 Census, the population was 6,646, an increase of 805 or 14%. Figure 1 indicates population growth in the 2000 to 2007 period, increasing to 8,787 (2,141, 32%).

**Figure 1 La Plata Population Growth**



Estimates of population growth by Town staff indicate an increase from 7,667 in 2003 to 8,984 in 2008 (1,308, 17%). This estimate is based on adding issued building permits, and then multiplying by 2.8 to obtain a "people count. The estimates for this period are not significantly different from MDP's estimates.

By comparison, between the 1990 and 2000, Southern Maryland's population increased from 228,500 to 281,320 (52,820) or 23.1 %, the highest percentage of growth in Maryland. From 2000 to 2007, it is estimated that Southern Maryland population increased by 19,898 or 16.5%.

2.9D. Future Population: This element seeks to analyze potential growth in and adjacent to La Plata based on a build out analysis using existing zoning and development yield (residential). These results are then used to determine impacts on existing and future facilities and services.

MDP estimates the potential yield from undeveloped residential land at 75% of the maximum zoning. More than 90% of the undeveloped residential land in La Plata is zoned for mixed use rather than Euclidian zoning, consistent with Smart Growth principles and the State's Eight Vision. Each of these tracts has submitted a Master Site Development Plan and each one has been approved for Mixed Use Development (MUD) and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) overlay zones. The overall allowable density for these tracts is 6.5 units per acre, but clustering is permitted with the density in certain areas reaching as high as 20 units per acre. Each of the preliminary plats shows development at the maximum net density, subtracting for open space and the road network.

It is possible to estimate residential development and future population. The preliminary plans for the MUD and TND developments include some commercial areas, including neighborhood commercial for the adjacent community as well as larger commercial (retail) to serve larger market areas. More importantly, there will be employment (office, light industrial) opportunities for local residents to live near where they work. This includes residential units above first floor commercial. The jobs-housing balance is a cornerstone principle of Smart Growth. Some retail development will be needed and more employment opportunities will help to reduce traffic and congestion as the Town continues to grow. The general feeling of the Town Council and the goals and objectives of the Vision Plan that was adopted in 2000 indicate that there is enough undeveloped land to accommodate residential growth for at least 20 years. Future annexations should be based on the need for more employment opportunities, commercial growth or elimination of failing septic systems.

Based on current zoning, the Town could have a population of 25,000 within the next 20 years. The rate of growth and when the Town will reach its maximum population is much more difficult to predict. The rate of growth during the last three years has been much less than it was the three years before. There were several things that contributed to the reduced growth rate. First, several active subdivisions have been completed and there are now less new homes on the market. The Second, and the most important factor, has been the economic downturn and the difficulty obtaining credit and mortgages. There

has then been a significant reduction in new home construction and therefore the build out of the approved TND and MUD projects will be over a longer period of time. This delay will provide better opportunities for coordination and implementation of required infrastructure.

2.9E. Analysis of the Proposed Growth Area: The following is a discussion and description of the Town's proposed growth areas, based upon the following factors discussed in the Maryland Department of Planning Report, *Sizing and Shaping Growth Areas*, December 1998. They have been modified to La Plata's conditions and issues.

*Provide a balance between commercial, industrial, institutional use and residential development that will occur as the Town approaches 2020*

Employment opportunities are important in order to maintain a desirable housing to jobs ratio, a key element of Smart Growth. La Plata is the County seat and as such contains County Government facilities. There are also 5 public schools and 3 private schools, a hospital, 2 nursing homes and seven churches. The County Courthouse is being expanded at the present time. These facilities have been the primary employers in the Town. Five class A office buildings and condominiums have been built in the Central Business District in the last five years. There has been a trend toward re-developing some of the commercial properties in recent years, but additional land will be needed to provide employment opportunities for the planned and approved residential growth. Providing more employment opportunities in the Town would be the most effective way to reduce traffic congestion, air pollution and energy consumption.

There is enough vacant residential land in La Plata to accommodate another 5500 dwelling units if it is all developed at the maximum density permitted by the existing zoning. Four large retail stores have been built in La Plata within the last three years, to serve existing population. The commercial area of the Town would have to be at least twice as large as it is to provide the same level of service the residents have come to expect. There are only three tracts of land currently zoned Commercial Highway (CH) that would be able to support another large retail complex. The growth area should include enough additional commercial highway land to meet this need.

*Encourage Smart Growth to reduce the stress on the environment and the available supply of land in Southern Maryland*

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) and the U.S. Census Bureau project that the population in Charles County will increase by approximately 25% by 2030. If this happens, Charles County will have to accommodate another 50,000 people and nearly 20,000 new households. MDP trend analysis has shown that approximately 75% of the growth in recent years has occurred inside PFAs, but the 25% that occurs outside a PFA consumes 75% of the vacant land that is developed. Where developable land is within

the area that the Town would be able to serve with infrastructure, it could become part of the Town's proposed growth area rather than be used for large lot, sprawl development.

*Reduce pollution by providing central water and sewer to existing developments with failing septic systems*

There are a number of single family residential developments within La Plata's proposed growth area that are not connected to public water and sewer systems. Some do not have indoor plumbing. Many of these also have failing septic systems that contribute to the bacteria and nutrients impacting water quality in the Port Tobacco River. Most of the rural residential developments are also on lots that are much larger than typical lots in La Plata. Some are large enough to support additional drain fields that would reduce the pollution being generated by the septic systems. These are not likely to ever be annexed into the Town.

Much of the soil around La Plata is not conducive to the use of septic systems and may not pass Health Department percolation tests. Some development has taken place on, or adjacent to, the 100 year flood plain. These properties should be connected to a public sewer system and therefore could be included in La Plata's growth area. One of the challenges will be to determine where to draw the line and how these failing septic systems can best be eliminated.

*Provide open space to maintain sense of community*

Consistent with the tenants of Smart Growth, the Town has zoned all of its major undeveloped land for traditional and mixed use development with an overall average of 6.5 units per acre. To reach this overall density, some portions will have as much as 20 units per acre. Significant open space and preservation of natural resources and features were required as part of the development approval process, serving future and existing residents of the community.

*Maintain green space in the US 301 corridor between La Plata and Waldorf*

There has been a concern that the US 301 corridor could become a continuous series of strip malls and commercial buildings that would extend from the Nice Bridge on the Potomac River north to the Prince George County line. While there is a need for more highway commercial zoned land in the Town, one of the objectives of establishing a growth map should be to maintain enough green space along the highway to maintain the community character. A design code (signs, building, landscaping and access) for the Commercial Highway Zoning District (the predominant zoning adjacent to US 301) has been in effect since 2004. A re-development overlay zone is also being developed in the Zoning Ordinance as a new implementation tool to the update to the 2002 Comprehensive Plan.

The majority of land surrounding the Town has been developed for residential use, and there is only a limited amount of land still being used for farming. In some cases, an isolated field is used for limited agricultural use, but there is not enough land left for a viable farm. Land being used for agriculture should be identified and analyzed to see if it is appropriate for long term use as a family farm. Consideration should also be given to the potential for spray irrigation or land application of effluent for future expansion of the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant.

*Make use of natural features such as streams and wetlands to mark the borders of the Growth Area and lay out a plan for future growth that can be served by town infrastructure*

The borders of La Plata have grown in an irregular manner through a series of more than 20 annexations. In many cases, little consideration was given as to how the Town would serve the annexed areas with needed infrastructure in a cost effective manner. Recent annexations have been linked to the availability of needed infrastructure and the ability to pay for these services. This growth map will then provide better coordination and planning to maximize existing facilities, while developing long range plans. The existing MUD and TND requirements in the current Zoning Ordinance provide protective measures to identify and protect natural features and sensitive areas.

*Determine the time period*

The growth map in the initial Growth Element that will be adopted in 2009 will extend at least 20 years. It should also be reviewed every time the Comprehensive Plan is updated, generally every six years, and changed as needed.

*Identify geographic features*

The outer boundaries of the growth area will be limited by geographic features that make extension of needed infrastructure impractical. The Port Tobacco river valley on the west and the Zekiah Swamp watershed on the east limit the amount of development that can take place without exceeding TMDL limits due to stormwater runoff and impervious surfaces.

Existing development will impact the growth map. If developments already have water and sewer systems, such as the Mt. Carmel Woods neighborhood, the Town is unlikely to include them or extend service beyond them. On the other hand, some older residential developments have failing septic systems. If these areas could be served economically, they could be considered for inclusion in the growth area and the Town's long range infrastructure plans. When setting the growth boundaries, long term land use will be considered when making the decision whether land should be inside or outside of the growth area.

*Incorporate public policy and growth restraints*

HB1141 requires that the County and the Town meet and confer in establishing growth areas for the municipality. Ultimately, the Town Council, after Planning Commission review, will approve Town's growth area. There have been, and will continue to be, discussions and coordination with both County Staff and the County Commissioners.

*Incorporate population growth and development trends*

Population growth, development trends and projections will be affected by economic conditions and available funding. The four major mixed use developments currently within the Town have all been granted Mixed Use (MUD) and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) zoning. The build out for these developments will depend primarily on market and credit conditions. These potential developments will provide enough residential growth opportunities within the Town to last for twenty years and therefore there will be little need for more residential land in the growth area.

While all of these proposed TND's include commercial areas and some industrial zoning, these are intended primarily to serve their future residents and will not contribute significantly to the need for major retail centers and employment parks in the Town.

*Available land within the Town limits*

Land that can be used for commercial and industrial development is needed to balance the anticipated residential growth with the commercial development and employment opportunities to serve the new residents. Major retailers of the type considered to be "anchor stores" generally demand direct access to a major highway. There are only three tracts of undeveloped land with potential for redevelopment within the existing town limits that meet these criteria and are large enough to accommodate a store with more than 50,000 square feet. Two of them are located on the west side of US 301 south of Rt 6 including the Baldus tract south of Glen Albin and the Montero tract north of Glen Albin each containing approximately 25 acres. Both tracts have difficult terrain, sensitive areas and natural features, limiting full development.

Potential areas for redevelopment or infill include a tract extending from Oriole Lane to the northern boundary of the La Plata Shopping Center at the intersection of RT 6 and US 301. This area includes a 14 acre tract on the west side of US 301 where an old strip shopping center and one free standing building would have to be removed to make full use of this site. It could be extended further to the north of Oriole Lane by redeveloping where the Pepsi-Cola Distribution Center is currently located.

A portion of the Heritage Green Development (annexation) north of Rosewick Road is currently zoned Industrial and contains nearly 200 acres that could be used for additional

employment opportunities. There may be some potential for retail development on this tract with direct access to Rosewick Road, with connection to the St. Charles Parkway. However, this site may be limited by its location some distance from a major highway in its ability to attract most large retail stores.

2.9F. Growth area specifics by quadrant: Exhibit I shows La Plata's the proposed growth areas, based on the previous discussion.

#### *Northwest Quadrant*

This area is northwest of the existing corporate limits, approximately 1040 acres in size. County base zoning consists of General Industrial (IG), Business Park (BP), and Rural Residential (RR). It begins at the railroad track at the northern border of the gravel pit, crosses Washington Avenue and US 301, and then wraps around to the west of the Town to Hawthorne Drive (MD 225).

The parcel north of Rosewick Crossing is the largest single parcel west of US 301. It extends west to Hawthorne Drive. The portion of the tract that borders US 301 would be most appropriate for commercial development to complement the existing development on the other side of the highway. The remainder of this land offers a unique opportunity for development as an employment center for better balanced land uses.

The south end of this tract on the west side of US 301 just north of the Patuxent Inn Motel is anchored by the Garner farm. This property consists of approximately 87 acres with an extensive frontage on US 301 immediately across the highway from an existing shopping center with two anchor tenants. It is currently being used for farming, but the property may not be large enough to sustain a family type farm. The most appropriate long range use for this land would be retail commercial, with possibly some employment opportunities on the western portion of the property.

This proposed growth area also includes several existing developments, including the W & W Industrial Park, on the west side of US 301, south of Rosewick Road. The availability of water and sewer could open new opportunities to expand this park and create additional employment opportunities. Further south, there are several existing commercial properties fronting on US 301.

The southern portion includes the existing Parkway subdivision with a dozen single family residences, all of them on well and septic systems. This area also encompasses about 50 single family residences on Bivens Place and fronting on Hawthorne Drive. Most of these are on well and septic, and some may not have indoor plumbing. There are some vacant lots and others that could be redeveloped if water and sewer were available. This portion of the northwest quadrant also extends along Rt. 225 to Mitchell Road and north to the borders of Mt. Carmel Estates and the College of Southern Maryland. It

includes a number of single family residences, the Hawthorne Club and golf course and several fields currently used for agriculture. All of these areas could be connected to the Town's water and sewer system, if feasible.

Recommendations:

1. This portion of the Town's growth area would be proposed for potential mixed use development to meet the Town's needs for additional employment opportunities, with associated commercial development. This development could provide a better balance between industrial or commercial development and residential uses.
2. There may also be opportunities to provide water and sewer to adjacent properties with failing septic systems.

*Southwest Quadrant*

This Southwest quadrant of the growth area (1274 acres) consists primarily of Morgan's Ridge, a large lot residential development of approximately 125 houses, all on individual wells and septic systems. County base zoning is Rural Conservation (RC). This section also includes the area south of Hawthorne Drive to Valley Road, south to Route 6 and encompasses the residences on Darly Drive. It has been developed primarily with large lot developments on well and septic, but many of them are failing. There are also a number of single family homes between Valley Road and the tributary stream to the Port Tobacco River that are in an area that may be flooded during a major rain event. All told, this section has more than 100 septic systems at the present time.

Recommendations:

1. Because of the size of the lots, these homes will probably remain on well and septic in the future.
2. Within this area, there is a 40 acre portion, with frontage on Hawthorne Drive (MD 225) between Quailwood Parkway and the current Town boundary. The most appropriate potential use would be mixed use (office, with some residential) rather than large lot residential.

*Southeast Quadrant*

This area totals 1062 acres, with two separate areas in this quadrant. County base zoning is primarily Rural Residential (RR). The smallest one is bordered on the south by Old Stagecoach Road and extends to the CSX railroad, then north to the existing Town Limits. It includes approximately 40 existing single family residences that may need water and sewer some time in the future.

There is a 67 acre field currently under cultivation adjacent to the current Town Limits. This tract is probably not large enough to sustain a viable family farm and it has a road frontage on US 301. Potential best use for this property could be to meet the need for additional commercial and industrial land. While commercial development may be the highest and best use of this property, the case could be made that it offers an opportunity to retain open/ green space to define the edges of the Town, while buffering the US 301 corridor.

The other tract is much larger and consists almost entirely of existing single family residential development. It extends from Prospect Hill Road and MD RT 6 to MD RT 488 including La Plata Park, Ellenwood, Normandy Farm and Roosevelt Hills developments. Ellenwood is a large lot development with approximately 80 individual septic systems, but served by a central water system operated by Charles County. If there is a need to connect to the Town's sewer system, it is technically possible, but could be very expensive considering the size of the lots. There are another 160 septic systems scattered throughout this quadrant.

Recommendations:

1. The portion of this sector adjacent to US 301, while currently in limited agricultural use and open space, could be under pressure for commercial/industrial development in the future. If that were to occur, mixed use, including preservation of open space would be encouraged, consistent with current and future zoning ordinance standards.
2. The remaining portion of this sector will likely remain in its current use, as large lot residential development. Annexation of portions of the quadrant should be considered if failing septic systems threaten to pollute portions of the Zekiah Swamp watershed.

*Northeast Quadrant*

The northeast quadrant consists of one large tract of land, extending from the Town Limits on Radio Station Road, crosses Rosewick Road and then to the CSX railroad, containing approximately 720 acres. County base zoning is General Industrial (IG) and Business Park (BP).

Recommendations:

1. This area could be used primarily to satisfy the need for a balanced land use plan. It is immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the Heritage Green annexation that will have industrial/commercial uses. This development would be

a natural extension to the employment center that will develop as Heritage Green progresses.

2. There are a number of areas outside the proposed Growth Area that were not included either because there did not seem to be a need at the present time or they would be too expensive to serve with water and sewer. Some of these may be considered in the future, dependent on the conditions of their septic systems and wells.
3. Warlinda and Kline Drive north along Washington Avenue include approximately 85 single family residences that are not included in the proposed growth area. The Seven Star Aggregate gravel pit creates a natural break and makes it difficult to extend the water and sewer system to serve these properties.
4. Several major subdivisions were left out south of Town along MD RT 6, including Woodhaven Park south of and adjacent to Clarks Run. This creates a separation between the Town and Mariellen Estates. The single family residences in Woodhaven have very large lots and it would not be practical to include them in the Town's water and sewer system. For this reason, it was decided not to extend the growth area beyond the Town Limits south on MD RT 6.

**Note: regarding future revisions,** the municipal growth area map was intended to set a direction for the Town over the next twenty years. It is anticipated that it will be reviewed every six years, and revised to meet the changing needs of the community as the County continues to grow.

2.9G Growth Impact on Public Services and Facilities: Public schools sufficient to accommodate student population, consistent with the State Rated Capacity Standards established by the Interagency Committee on School Construction, should be available when needed.

The Town does not control the public school construction or zoning and does not have any way of determining whether the available schools are able to accommodate additional growth.

The Town collects impact fees for school construction and forwards the money to the County, but does not have any control over how and where the money is spent. In response to concerns expressed by the County Commissioners, the Town has adopted an Adequate Public Facilities ordinance and limits new construction to 100 school seats per year. The Town has an allocation process to distribute these 100 seats to property owners and developers in a fair and equitable manner. Major developers can negotiate a developer's rights agreement with the Charles County Commissioners, the Board of

Education and the Town Council to obtain additional school seats by contributing to the cost of building school buildings to accommodate the extra students. The owners of the Heritage Green development have entered into such an agreement and will be permitted to build as many as 200 residential units per year.

As of 1-1-2009, there are four public schools within the Town Limits that are part of the Charles County School System, two elementary, one middle school and one high school. The students that live west of Rt 301 are assigned to McDonough High School, a school located on Marshall's Corner Road approximately 3 miles west of the Town. In addition to the public schools, there are two private schools within the Town Limits. Archbishop Neale has about 500 students from K to 8 and Grace Lutheran has 250 students from PreK to grade 8.

It is obvious that there are enough schools in La Plata to accommodate the residents of the Town, but they are overloaded by students bussed in from other areas of the County.

Recommendation:

1. The Town Council needs to encourage the Board of Education to re-district as necessary to provide school space for the Town residents.

#### *Libraries*

The Charles County Public Library headquarters is located in La Plata. This facility is approximately 12,000 square feet in size, with 70,900 registered borrowers. The library is evaluating alternatives for a new facility within the Town limits to serve existing and future residents. This is a needed public facility contributing to La Plata's sense of place.

American Library Standards (Source: MDP Writing Municipal Growth Element, May 2007) are 1,000 square feet of library space per 1,000 persons. The Library system currently uses a standard of one square foot for each registered borrower.

Recommendation:

1. The Town should work closely with Charles County in determining where and when to relocate the existing library and attempt to influence the County to keep it within the corporate limits of La Plata.

#### *Public safety including emergency medical services*

##### *Police department*

The only emergency service the Town is directly responsible for is the police department. The La Plata Police Department provides traffic control and routine patrols, crime prevention and investigation services. The department has 14 sworn officers and one

administrative assistant, approximately 1.6 officers per 1000 people. These include a police chief, lieutenant in charge of patrols, and an investigations commander along with 11 other sworn officers. The Association of Police Chiefs recommends 2.5 officers per 1000 residents, but other agencies handle a portion of the police activities within the Town. To supplement the La Plata Police Department, the Charles County Sheriff's Department handles major crimes that occur within the Town. Their headquarters is located on Rt 301 just south of Charles Street. There is also a Maryland State Police Barrack on Rt 301 within a mile of the Town Limits that provides traffic enforcement on the state highways where they go through the Town. Both of these departments share jurisdiction with the La Plata Police Department within the Town Limits and are available when needed.

Each of the La Plata Police Department sworn officers is assigned a "take home" police car equipped with radios on both the Town and County frequencies. Each car also has a computer that can be used to communicate directly with the County communications center.

The Town recently constructed a new police station on La Grange Avenue, in the heart of the Town's Central Business District, two blocks north of the Town Hall. It is fully equipped with offices for the Chief and the supervisors, a day room to provide administrative space for the individual officers, and a secure evidence locker. The police station also has a hardened meeting room, built to withstand winds up to 170 miles per hour that serves as a training room for the police department, a backup emergency operations center and can be used by community groups for meetings. There is a holding cell in the Town Police Station, but the County Detention Center and magistrate is located within the Town and is used by the La Plata Police Department when a prisoner needs to be incarcerated.

As a result of the tornado in 2002, the Town is covered by a network of sirens and early warning devices to warn residents of La Plata and anyone who happens to be in the Town when a tornado warning is issued by the Weather Bureau. The hardened meeting room in the Police Station is intended to provide a shelter until the danger is over, then serve as an Emergency Operations Center in the aftermath of the emergency.

#### Recommendations:

1. The size of the police force is in line with the commonly used standard in Maryland for municipal police departments and this ratio should be maintained as the Town continues to grow.
2. The La Plata Police Department should continue to take advantages of technical innovations to provide the best possible service to the community.

3. The emphasis on crime prevention should be continued to limit the increase in the crime rate as the Town expands into its growth area.
4. The Police Station has an unfinished attic. As the Department continues to grow, the attic can be remodeled to provide additional administrative and storage space when it is needed.
5. The emergency shelter in the police station fills an important need. The Town needs to publicize its availability and provide signage directing motorists to the shelter when the emergency warning sirens sound.
6. The early warning network should be extended into the growth area anytime annexations take place.

#### *Fire department*

Fire protection is provided by the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department and funded primarily by the County Fire Tax levied on all properties in the Town. There are no full time career employees, but a large percentage of the active members are full time career firefighters in other jurisdictions serving as volunteers when they are not on duty at their regular employment. The Fire Department operates out of one fire station, owned by the Department, located on Washington Avenue. Three engine companies and one ladder company are housed in this station.

The insurance Services Office (ISO) completed its evaluation of La Plata's fire protection in July 2009 and the Public Protection Classification remained at Class 4. As a part of this evaluation, the required Basic Fire Flow was increased from 2250 gpm to 3500 gpm. According to the Fire Suppression Rating Guide issued by ISO, La Plata needs three engine companies and one ladder company to provide the basis fire flow of 3500 gpm. The LPFD has three engine companies and one ladder company in service. The Town operates the public water system and none of the buildings within the Town Limits are more than 1000 feet from a fire hydrant. The LPVFD operates a 2,500-gallon fire department tanker to supplement the available fire flow in case of an emergency. During the last evaluation, the Town's water system received 29.35 out of a possible 40 points credit. The Town has replaced two outmoded elevated storage tanks and now has in reserve nearly 10 hours fire flow at the basic flow rate. As the Town continues to grow, long range plans have been made to build two more elevated storage tanks to provide higher fire flows and pressure when they are needed.

The Town's Public Works Department maintains the fire hydrants. Maintenance records have been entered into a computer at the Public Works Office. Hydrants are tested annually and have been marked with the standard National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) color code based on the results of the flow tests.

The Town maintains a close relationship with the volunteer fire department and plans for commercial, industrial and commercial buildings are sent to the fire department for their review before they are approved.

Recommendations:

1. The La Plata Volunteer Fire Department has all the apparatus and equipment it needs to meet current standards and should be able to handle the anticipated growth.
2. As new developments are built, the Fire Department should be an important part of the planning process.
3. Every effort should be made to maintain a “looped distribution system” to insure that the needed fire flow will be available as new construction takes place.
4. Fire hydrants should be provided and become part of the system as water lines are extended into the growth area

#### *Emergency medical services*

The primary provider of emergency medical services in the Town is the Charles County Rescue Squad, housed on Calvert Street in the heart of the Central Business District. The Charles County Rescue Squad is a volunteer organization funded primarily by the Charles County Fire Tax. Due to the difficulty in staffing the ambulances during the normal business day, the County has hired additional full time career EMT’s and CRT’s to supplement the service the volunteers provide. These emergency medical personnel are stationed at the Charles County Rescue Squad building and at various volunteer rescue stations around Charles County. Their headquarters and an advanced life support unit are located on Audie Lane in La Plata.

Recommendations:

1. Between the Charles County Rescue Squad and the County Emergency Medical Response units on Audie Lane, the Emergency Medical Service units that serve La Plata are sufficient to handle the anticipated growth.
2. To supplement the service they provide, the La Plata Police Department is equipped with Automated Defibrillators and all officers are trained to provide CPR until an EMT unit arrives on the scene. Several of the sworn officers are trained and certified EMTs or CRTs. All new police officers should be encouraged to participate in emergency medical training when it becomes available.

#### *Civista medical center*

The Civista medical center is located on Charles Street and its emergency room is in a position to provide service on a timely manner. It is a fully accredited full service hospital with 131 beds. When a situation is beyond the capabilities of Civista Medical Center to handle, there is a helicopter landing pad behind the hospital and several helicopters are available to provide rapid transportation to the appropriate facility. Because the hospital is located in the Town, the average time of response from either a CCRS or Charles County ambulance is very short.

Recommendations:

1. No additional emergency medical services should be required to provide the needed service as the Town continues to grow.

#### *Emergency communications*

All of the emergency services in the Town are dispatched by the County Communications Center located on Audie Lane in La Plata. All emergency vehicles are equipped with communications equipment that enables them to communicate with the Communications Center and with each other. La Plata Police Units are in touch with this Center and the sheriff's office through the computers that are installed in their vehicles. In addition to the County Communications Equipment, all Town vehicles are also equipped with a low band radio set to a local government frequency. All supervisory personnel in the Town also carry cellular phones.

Recommendations:

1. The emergency operations center in the La Plata Police Station provides an important backup to the County Communications Center in case of an overload or equipment malfunction. The equipment in this center should be upgraded as the Town grows and the number of officers in the Police Department increases.

#### *Water/sewer facilities*

A detailed inventory of existing sewer and water usage and anticipated growth is included in the Wastewater Capacity Management Plan and Water Supply Capacity Management Plan, but it doesn't include any of the area included in the Growth Map that is part of this element. The Water Resources Element of this Comprehensive Plan offers a detailed plan for expansion of the Town's water and sewer systems. Table 1 show a schedule for the improvements that will be needed, but it doesn't take into account the economic problems and lack of new construction being experienced in 2009. Unless economic conditions improve rapidly, this schedule for improvement will be delayed, and the rate of buildout may be less than anticipated. Most of the anticipated growth is concentrated in four large mixed use developments. Two hundred of the planned 800

units in Agricopia have been built. Steeplechase is under construction with the first occupancy permits issued in 2008. The other two have not begun actual construction yet, but they will account for about 90% of the anticipated growth over the next ten years. Both of them will require a great deal of expensive infra-structure before the first building permit can be issued. For this reason, it is not likely that construction will begin on either of these until the economic situation rebounds to the point that the Market can absorb several hundred expensive dwelling units each year.

The Town uses 222 gallons per day (gpd) per equivalent dwelling unit (edu) for estimating future water demands. This figure is increased to 253 gpd for sewer requirements to allow for inflow and infiltration (I&I). The inventory that was done in connection with establishing sewer service areas indicates that water and sewer consumption as of 1-1-2009 equates to about 4000 edu's. This figure was arrived at by using actual water meter readings from 2007 and the average usage in previous years. More than 90% of the undeveloped residential property currently within the Town Limits is zoned mixed use and has had a TND overlay zone approved that shows the number of dwelling units at full buildout. If these developments are constructed under present plans, another 5,500 dwelling units will eventually be built in the Town and the population will be approximately 20,000. According to current estimates, the Town will need to be able to produce about 2.1 mgd of water and treat about 2.4 mgd sewage to meet their needs and the three phase schedule for improvements shown in table 1 were based on these numbers.

<b>TABLE 1 -INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEDULE OF IMPROVEMENTS - TOWN OF LA PLATA</b>								
DATE	ACTION	CAPACITY			NUMBER EDU'S			SSO'S
		WATER	SEWER	EDU	TOTAL	USED	AVAIL	
<b>EXISTING AS OF 1-1-08</b>								
1/1/2008		1.234	1.5		5,559	4,622	937	
12/31/2008	Occupancy permits			155	5,559	4,777	782	
<b>PHASE 1 IMPROVEMENTS</b>								
1/1/2010	Increase GAP to 2 MGD	2.0	1.5		5,927	4,567	1,360	MH 13 Centennial -
1/1/2009	Increase NPDES to 2 MGD	2.0	1.5		5,927	4,567	1,360	MH 140 Willow
1/1/2009	Occupancy permits 2008			155	5,927	4,744	1,183	
12/31/2009	Add SW quadrant				5,927			None
12/31/2009	Add new Willows pump				5,927	4,691	1,183	None
12/31/2009	Occupancy permits 2009			109	5,927	4,815	1,112	None
12/31/2010	Upgrade WWTP to ENR				5,927	4,815		None
12/31/2010	Occupancy permits 2010			285	5,927	5,140	787	None
12/31/2010	Add new pump station Buckeye Circle							
12/31/2011	Occupancy permits 2011			400	5,927	5,596	331	None
<b>PHASE 2 IMPROVEMENTS</b>								
12/31/2012	Expand WWTP to 2.0	2.0	2.0	1938	7,865	5,596	2,269	None
12/31/2012	Occupancy permits 2012			400	7,865	6,052	1,813	None
12/31/2013	Occupancy permits 2013			400	7,865	6,508	1,357	None
12/31/2013	Arrange to dispose of effluent when WWTP is							
12/31/2014	Increase GAP to 2.5 MGD							
12/31/2014	Increase NPDES to 2.5							
12/31/2014	Occupancy permits 2014			400	7,865	6,964	901	None
12/31/2015	Occupancy permits 2015			400	7,865	7,420	445	None
<b>PHASE 3 IMPROVEMENTS</b>								
12/31/2016	Expand WWTP to 2.5	2.5	2.5	1938	9,803	7,420	2,383	None
12/31/2016	Occupancy permits 2016			400	9,803	7,876	1,927	None
12/31/2017	Occupancy permits 2017			400	9,803	8,332	1,471	None
12/31/2018	Occupancy permits 2018			400	9,803	8,788	1,015	None
12/31/2019	Occupancy permits 2019			400	9,803	9,244	559	None
12/31/2020	Occupancy permits 2020			400	9,803	9,700	103	None
<b>IMPROVEMENTS WHEN NEEDED</b>								
Add elevated storage and wells when needed to maintain adequate pressure or								

### *Wastewater treatment*

Phase 1 includes upgrading the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to ENR standards, increasing the NPDES to 2 mgd and the Groundwater Appropriation Permit to 2 mgd. A new NPDES permit has been issued that will allow the WWTP to be expanded to 2 mgd after the ENR upgrade is completed. Engineering is under way to upgrade the plant and it should meet ENR standards no later than the end of 2011. Expansion of the plant to 2 mgd shown as part of phase 2 will begin when the average flow through the plant reaches 1.35 mgd. The design portion of the project will begin soon after the ENR upgrade has begun, but the expansion of the plant will not start until at least one of the major developments has begun construction. At the current rate of growth in the Town, this may not happen until 2015 or later. This expansion will handle either Stagecoach Crossing or Heritage Green

Phase 3, expansion of the WWTP to 2.5 mgd, or even higher if portions of the growth area are annexed, will be needed if both of these developments are built. Due to limitations on the amount of nutrients the Town will be able to discharge into the Port Tobacco River, some other method of disposal of the effluent will have to be found before phase 3 can take place. There are several other potential ways to handle this, but the Town should make every effort to develop a system of reusing enough treated effluent to qualify for an increased NPDES permit limit of 2.5 mgd.

### *Sewage collection system*

There has been an average of 5 to 10 sanitary sewer overflows each year due to I&I and insufficient capacity in the collection system. The Town entered into a sewer improvement project in 2005 and the number of overflows has significantly decreased in 2008. A continued emphasis on I&I reduction may reduce the flow enough to delay the start of the expansion of the WWTP.

When the sewer improvement project began, most of the major interceptors and trunk lines were still part of the original collection system designed to handle 350,000 gpd. Six major projects were identified that would be needed to increase the capacity of the system to 2.5 mgd. Three of the six have been completed and two of them will not be needed until either Heritage Green or Stagecoach Crossing begins construction. One of them, the Southwest Quadrant Extension will eliminate the SSO's from MH13 at Centennial Street and Rt 301. The design is completed, all required permits obtained and the project is waiting funding to begin. This extension is needed to accommodate the additional sewage as Steeplechase and Agricopia continue to build out and should be built as soon as possible.

### *Water production*

La Plata has four wells in operation. One of these, Well 5 of Kent Avenue, was drilled into the Upper Patapsco aquifer in 1959. It only has a capacity of 125 gpm and is used as a backup to the three major production wells in the Lower Patapsco Aquifer. Well 11 have been completed and will come on line as soon as the increased GAP is received. It is also in the Lower Patapsco Aquifer. These four wells, with well 11 out of service, will produce 1.6 mgd in 16 hours or nearly 2.5 mgd if they are operated 24 hours per day. The biggest problem with water production is not the wells, but the withdrawal permit. The level in the Lower Patapsco Aquifer has been dropping an average of 3.3 feet per year and the aquifer has reached the 80% management level in the Bryans Road area. The Naval Base, the Town of Indian Head and Charles County have shifted much of their usage on the western side of the County to the Patuxent Aquifer and the Lower Patapsco has already begun to recover. In addition to this shift in production, the County has contracted to use as much as 1.7 mgd from WSSC to supplement their wells. The Town does not have any alternate sources readily available and will have to depend on the County reducing their usage from the Lower Patapsco to make available the increased appropriation that will be needed as both the Town and the County continue to grow.

#### *Water conservation*

Due to the limited supply available from the Lower Patapsco Aquifer, water conservation will become even more important in the future. The Town Council has initiated a concentrated emphasis on water conservation that has shown signs of success. As a result of these efforts, the average daily production from the Town's wells was reduced from 1,012,000 gpd in 2007 to an average of 916,000 gpd in 2008, a saving of 9.5%. 2007 was much drier than 2008, but even with a 1.1% increase in population, the average consumption decreased significantly. With a continued emphasis on water conservation and treated effluent reuse, it should be possible to keep the average daily production below 2 mgd, even when the Town is fully built out. One additional well may be needed when the average consumption exceeds 1.6 mgd.

#### *Water distribution*

The Town has three elevated storage tanks that have the capability of storing 1.3 million gallons, approximately 1.5 times the 2009 average daily usage. A 750,000 gallon ground level storage tank with two booster pumps to maintain pressure in the eastern section of Town was added in 2008. This provides more than twice the daily consumption in reserve. As it builds out, two additional elevated tanks will be needed to maintain the required pressure and flow throughout the Town. One of them should be located in each of the mixed use developments, Heritage Green and Stagecoach Crossing.

#### *Water and sewer for the growth area*

It is difficult to determine how much water and sewer capacity would be required to serve the proposed growth areas. To a large extent, water and sewer needs will depend on the zoning at the time the property is annexed into the Town. For purpose of this analysis, the current zoning in the County will be used to estimate what will be required if it is incorporated into the Town system.

#### *Financing water and sewer improvements*

La Plata's water and sewer systems are operated as "enterprise funds" and are expected to generate enough revenue to cover the cost of supplying this vital service. When the Town began to annex property 40 years ago, the Town Council decided to add a Major Facility Fee (MFF) to all building permits to cover the cost of any capital improvements that would be needed to provide water and sewer to the new structure based on the anticipated occupancy. This fee was set at \$800.00 in 1970 and over the years has been increased to \$8,525 per 222 gpd edu in 2008/2009. Each edu yields \$1,500 for water production and storage, \$1,500 for sewer collection system improvements and \$5,525 for wastewater treatment plant upgrades. Improvements have generally been financed with 20 year bond issues and the MFF used to cover the annual debt service. MFF money has been segregated and there is a balance in the fund that can be used to make up the difference anytime there are not enough permits issued to cover the annual debt service.

#### Recommendations:

1. This schedule of improvements will have to be adjusted to coincide with the growth rate and make sure sufficient capacity is available as construction takes place.
2. Ultimate sizing of the facilities should include the potential for annexation of portions of the Town's growth area and replacing failing septic systems in the area outside the Town with public water and sewer service.

#### *Stormwater Water Management*

Stormwater runoff from La Plata is split between the Port Tobacco and Zekiah watersheds. The Town is only a very small portion of each of these water sheds, less than 10% of each one. Much of the area included in these watersheds is used for agricultural purposes. This type of use probably generates more nutrients from non point sources than the stormwater runoff from the urban areas in the Town. The Water Resources Element deals with stormwater in some detail, but the Charles County Water

Resources Element will provide guidance to the Town that will be needed if portions of the Growth Area are annexed and become part of the Town.

None of the stormwater runoff from the Town goes directly into the Port Tobacco River or the Zekiah Swamp. All of it discharges into existing streams through stormwater drain pipes or natural surface runoff in the rural area surrounding the Town. Although it originates in the Town, this runoff will have to be included as part of the County's stormwater discharge plan.

The Town will join with Charles County to develop an analysis of the stormwater runoff in both the Port Tobacco and the Zekiah watersheds. Charles County has selected a consultant to prepare a Water Resource Element for their comprehensive plan and the contract includes providing the needed data concerning stormwater loading in the Towns of Indian Head and La Plata. The County has awarded a contract to ERM as described in the "Project Description". Charles County Commissioners issued a Notice to Proceed to the consultant the week of March 23<sup>rd</sup> and the initial meeting to prepare a detailed scope of work occurred March 31, 2009.

"A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

*The Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management is seeking proposals from qualified multi-disciplined planning or engineering firms to complete a Water Resources Element for Charles County, the Town of La Plata, and the Town of Indian Head."*

Section 167 of the Town's code of ordinances contains detailed requirements for new construction. This section also deals with maintenance of the stormwater structures. It doesn't deal with enforcement or who is responsible for maintaining and financing the stormwater system.

Under current regulations, individual property owners, or homeowner's associations (HOAs) are responsible for the maintenance of existing storm water facilities. This creates a major problem where the HOA is weak or in some cases, non-existent. As an example, one subdivision of 20 houses was required to put in 3 storm water retention facilities. This is too small a base to support the type of maintenance 3 separate facilities will require.

Recommendations:

1. The Town is working on a plan to finance and provide the staff needed to maintain the existing storm water facilities. This plan should include retrofitting some of the stormwater systems that were originally installed under regulations that were much less stringent than what exists at the present time.

2. An important part of the “Green Building Committee’s” responsibilities will be minimizing the amount of impervious surfaces and using the latest technology to control and reduce stormwater runoff in the Town.

### *Parks and Recreation*

A draft Parks and Recreation Capital Expansion Plan is currently under review. This Plan was prepared pursuant to and consistent with the 2002 Town of La Plata Comprehensive Plan. Upon approval and adoption by the Planning Commission and Mayor and Town Council, it will be an official amendment to and refinement of the Comprehensive Plan. Its purpose is to guide the development and expansion of a system of park and recreational resources in the Town of La Plata. It is a capital expansion plan and toward this end, it sets forth both a plan and funding techniques. The Plan seeks to promote the health and well being of La Plata residents by making available and accessible to all existing and future residents a broad array of recreational opportunities and open spaces.

Developers have been required to provide parks and recreational facilities in proportion to the size of the development as the Town has grown. If they decided not to contribute enough land and facilities to meet the Town’s standards, they were required to pay a fee in lieu. These funds have been used to add or improve parks and recreational facilities and will be instrumental in funding the Capital Improvement Plan currently being developed.

The Town has partnered with Charles County and shared in the cost of improving some of the recreational facilities that are available at the various schools located in the Town. Since La Plata is the County Seat, residents of the areas in the vicinity of La Plata frequently participate in Town recreational activities. The County operates Laurel Springs Park outside the Town Limits, but the property is contiguous with the Town Property surrounding Tilghman Lake. Residents of both the County and Town will benefit if these two facilities can be integrated into an area that offers a wider range of recreational opportunities than either could provide by itself.

The annexation agreement for the Heritage Green Development requires the developer to build a golf course before any residences are constructed. It also obligates the owner of the golf course to make it available to the other residents of the Town on the same terms as the residents of Heritage Green.

### Recommendations:

1. In the past, the residents of some new subdivisions have indicated strongly that they did not want any public parks in their neighborhoods. Rather than developing a park system based on external standards, the La Plata system should be based on the needs and desires of the residents of Town.

2. The Town and the County have developed a plan to connect the area around Tilghman Lake to Laurel Springs Park and create a unique facility to serve residents of both the Town and the County.

### *Protection of Sensitive Areas*

Annexation of portions of the growth area with failing septic systems has the potential to significantly reduce the amount of pollution going into the Port Tobacco and Zekiah watersheds. At least half of the proposed growth area drains into High Quality Waters and development could do more harm than good if it is not well planned. The land use plan for this area should comply with the objectives established in the Sensitive Areas Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The land use plan should be developed before the property is annexed and an annexation agreement signed that will provide the protection for sensitive areas that is needed. Stormwater runoff is the most likely source of unacceptable pollution. Stormwater is likely to run off into Maryland High Quality Waters in both the northwest and northeast quadrants of the growth area.

### Recommendations:

1. When grading permits are issued for new developments, verify that development will not significantly increase the amount of stormwater directed into either the Port Tobacco or Zekiah watersheds.
2. Sign an annexation agreement at the time portions of the Growth Area are annexed that will protect sensitive areas by establishing a land use plan that will limit the amount of impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff after development.
3. Stormwater runoff into High Quality Waters in both the Port Tobacco and Zekiah watersheds should not increase when the property is developed.
4. Development plans in these areas should meet the stormwater regulations established by the State of Maryland at the developer's expense.

### *Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan*

The Town of La Plata serves two primary functions as the County Seat of Charles County. Since it is the County Seat, the courthouse, County office building and the headquarters for most of the County agencies are located in the Town and provide employment opportunities for many of the residents. An expansion to the courthouse is under construction and the Town needs to be ready to accommodate the increased level of activity it will bring. The second role La Plata plays is as a bedroom community for the Metropolitan Washington Area and many of the residents commute to the City daily. The citizens in La Plata are very conscious of the need to reduce pollution and protect the environment. La Plata's Comprehensive Plan is written to enable the Town to provide

the services and amenities needed to improve the quality of life for the residents and protect the environment, regardless of which category they fit in.

Annexation of portions of La Plata's Growth Area has the potential to solve some long standing problems with development that occurred when the standards and regulations were much less restrictive than they are at the present time. It also offers an opportunity to provide some of the amenities that the Comprehensive Plan envisions to improve the quality of life for the residents of the Town. If it is not done properly, the effect could be just the opposite and the quality of life could be adversely affected by increasing pollution, traffic congestion and overloading of the available facilities. This is more likely to happen if the property in question is developed under Charles County regulations without any coordination with the growth that is taking place in the Town.

Recommendations:

1. Future development within the Town should be as environmentally friendly as possible. The Town should continue its emphasis on building green and building an aggressive water conservation program.
2. An annexation agreement should be signed to insure that development of any newly annexed area will be consistent with the goals and objectives of the La Plata Comprehensive Plan before any annexations are approved

**Inventory of significant historical structures within the Town of La Plata's  
corporate limits:**

1. La Plata Train Station, 1873  
Moved to a new location on Kent Avenue in 200
2. Thomas R. Farrall Store and House:  
1<sup>st</sup> store and house – DeAngelis Building, built 1872  
(This is the oldest structure in La Plata's business district.)  
600 Charles Street  
Corner of North Maple Avenue and Charles Street  
(now houses a mix of retail businesses)
3. The Boswell House circa 1884  
(home of Herber Boswell, a Clerk of the Court)  
103 Oak Avenue
4. The Roberts House, circa 1884  
(home of Hubert Roberts, one of La Plata's original merchants)  
603 Wicomico Street
5. The Smoot House, built 1893  
(home of David Smoot, builder of first hotel in La Plata, circa 1892)  
105 Oak Avenue
6. The Owen House, built 1893  
(home of Thomas T. Owen, one of La Plata's original merchants)  
104 Oak Avenue
7. The Horney House, circa 1895  
(home of Robert P. Horney, who opened La Plata's first restaurant, circa 1885)  
5 Oak Avenue
8. Courthouse, originally constructed in 1896 (many additions since then)  
200 Charles Street
9. La Plata Jail, circa 1897  
9 Washington Avenue (corner of Washington Avenue and Baltimore Street)
10. La Grange, circa 1793  
201 Port Tobacco Road
11. Hermitage, circa 1820  
309 Washington Avenue
12. Mitchell Building, circa 1893, now Steffens Building  
317 Charles Street

13. Sydney E. Mudd House, addition to the original built circa 1896  
(now houses Mudd & Mudd law offices)  
106 St. Mary's Avenue
14. Conrad Posey House, circa 1900  
(now Husick Office Building)  
Maple Avenue (moved from Kent Avenue, 1999)
15. Episcopal Rectory from 1904-1959, built circa 1904  
100 Oak Avenue
16. Christ Church, built in Port Tobacco in 1884  
Was dismantled after construction of new courthouse in La Plata, with stones  
numbered and carried by oxcart to La Plata, where reconstruction was completed  
in 1904.  
112 Charles Street
17. Bank of Southern Maryland (now PNC Bank) Building, 1909  
300 Charles Street
18. Judge Henry Robinson House, built 1906-07  
2 Oak Avenue
19. Bowie Ice Cream Parlor, circa 1912, now La Plata Liquors  
503 Charles Street
20. Matthews House, "Haldane", circa 1915  
150 Port Tobacco Road
21. "Nelton" (P.D. Brown House), circa 1915  
120 Port Tobacco Road
22. Mitchell Motor Company Building, circa 1915  
205 Charles Street
23. Matthews-Howard Implement Co., circa 1915; now Davis Building  
313 Charles Street
24. "The Maples" (Adrian Posey House), 1920  
105 Port Tobacco Road

**Inventory of Parks in the La Plata Area  
July 2009**

Town Owned

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
Hemlock Court	Off of Oak Ave.	1.625	Tot lot
Marvin Gardens	Patuxent Court	0.600	Tot lot
Phoenix Run	Caroline Drive	1.798	Tot lot, benches, grills, and picnic tables
Phoenix Run	Caroline Drive end	0.995	Tot lot
Redwood Lake	Clarks Run	1.571	Lake, gazebo, benches, and picnic tables
Silver Linden	Clarks Run	4.791	Tot lot, picnic shelter, tennis courts
Tilghman Lake	Radio Station Rd.	63.51	Lake & picnic shelter
Train Station	Kent Avenue	0.287	Museum, benches, and picnic table
Wills Park	St. Mary's Ave.	11.67	Tot lot, basketball courts, building
	Total Acreage	86.85	

County Owned

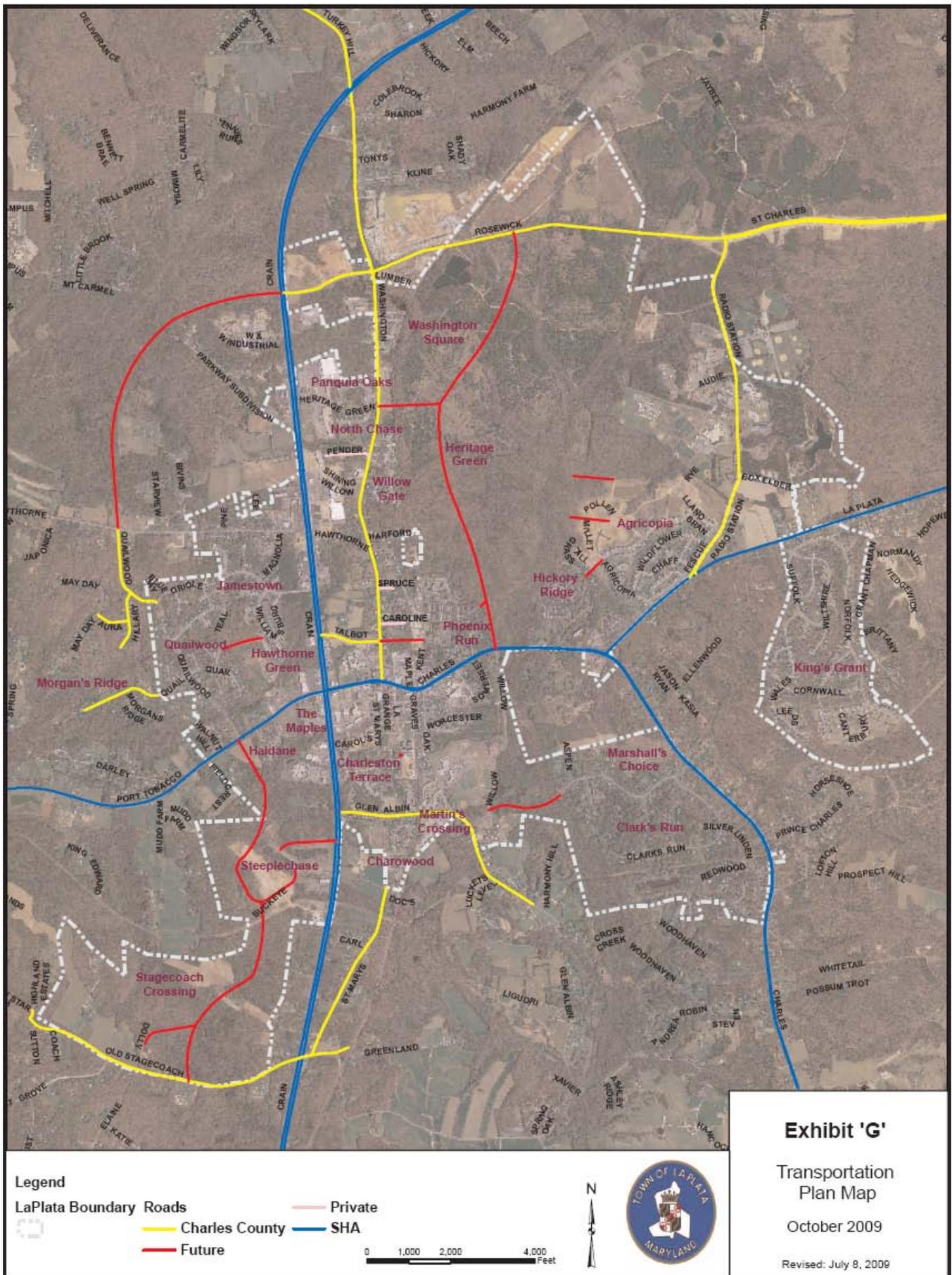
<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
La Plata High School	Radio Station Rd.		Fields, courts, pool
Matula Elementary	Radio Station Rd.		Playgrounds & fields
Mitchell Elementary	Willow Lane		Playgrounds & fields
Milton Somers M.S.	Oak Ave.		Fields & courts
Laurel Springs Park	Radio Station Rd.		Fields, trails, playground, restrooms

HOA Owned

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
Agricopia			Playgrounds, practice field, picnic shelter
Edelen Station			Community center, pool, trail
Hawthorne Greene			Community center, pool, trails
Jamestowne			2 tot lots
Quailwood	Townhouse section		Tot lot
Washington Square			Community center

Future Developments

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
Heritage Green			2 Community centers, golf course, pools, tot lots, trail, greenway/linear park
Steeplechase			Community center, nature trails, pool, playground



**Legend**

- LaPlata Boundary Roads
- Charles County
- Future
- Private
- SHA

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

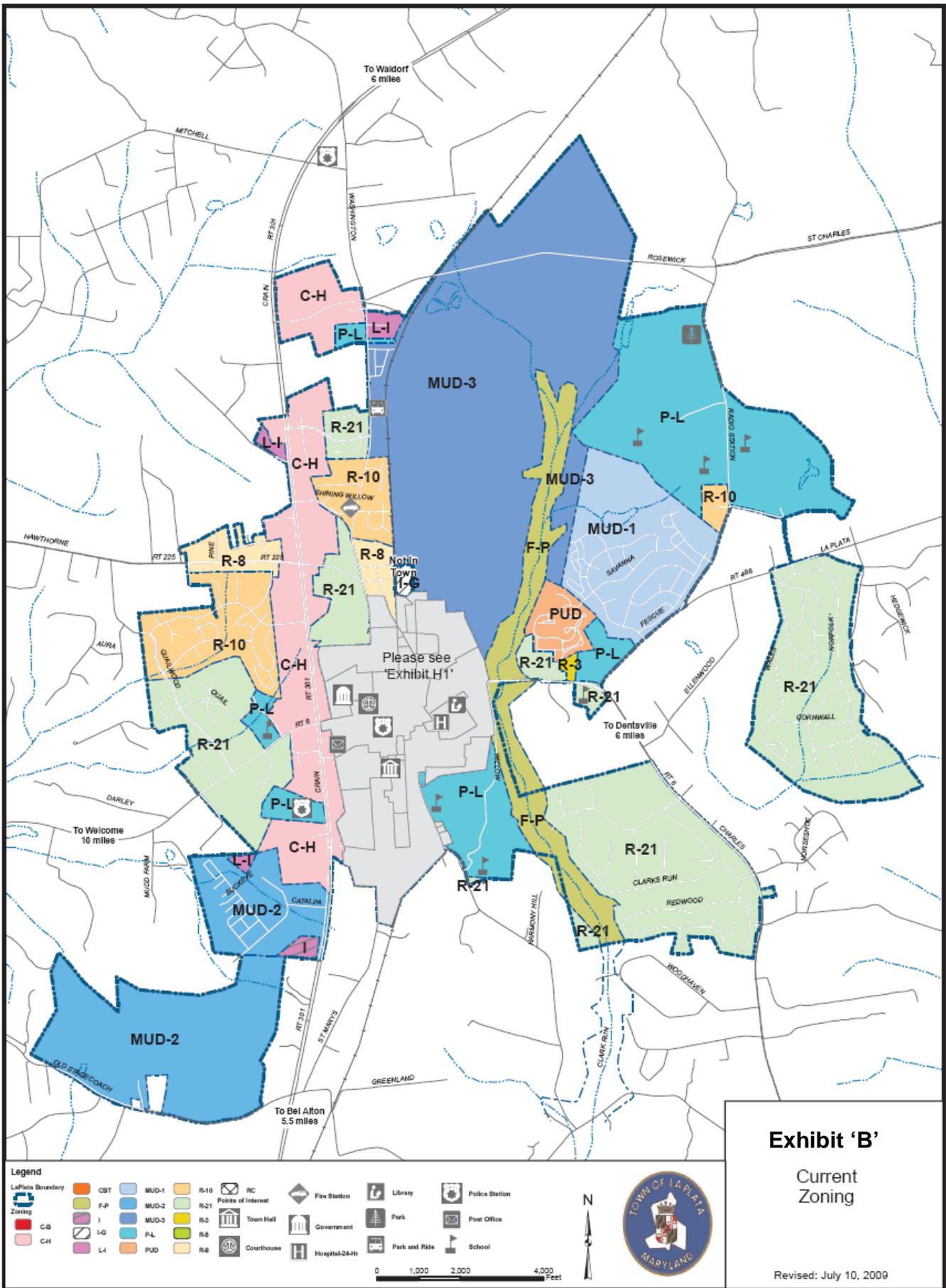


**Exhibit 'G'**

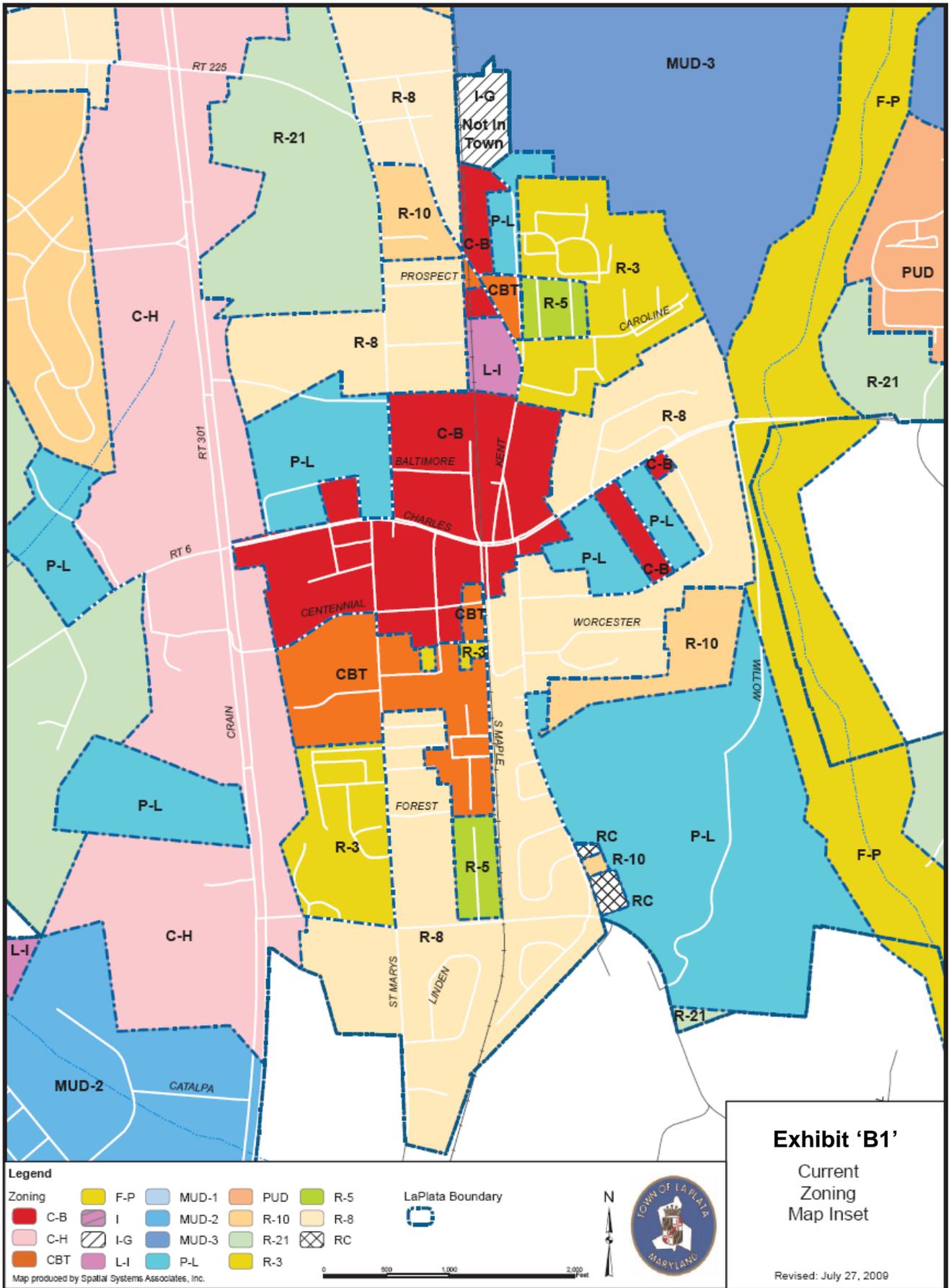
Transportation Plan Map

October 2009

Revised: July 8, 2009

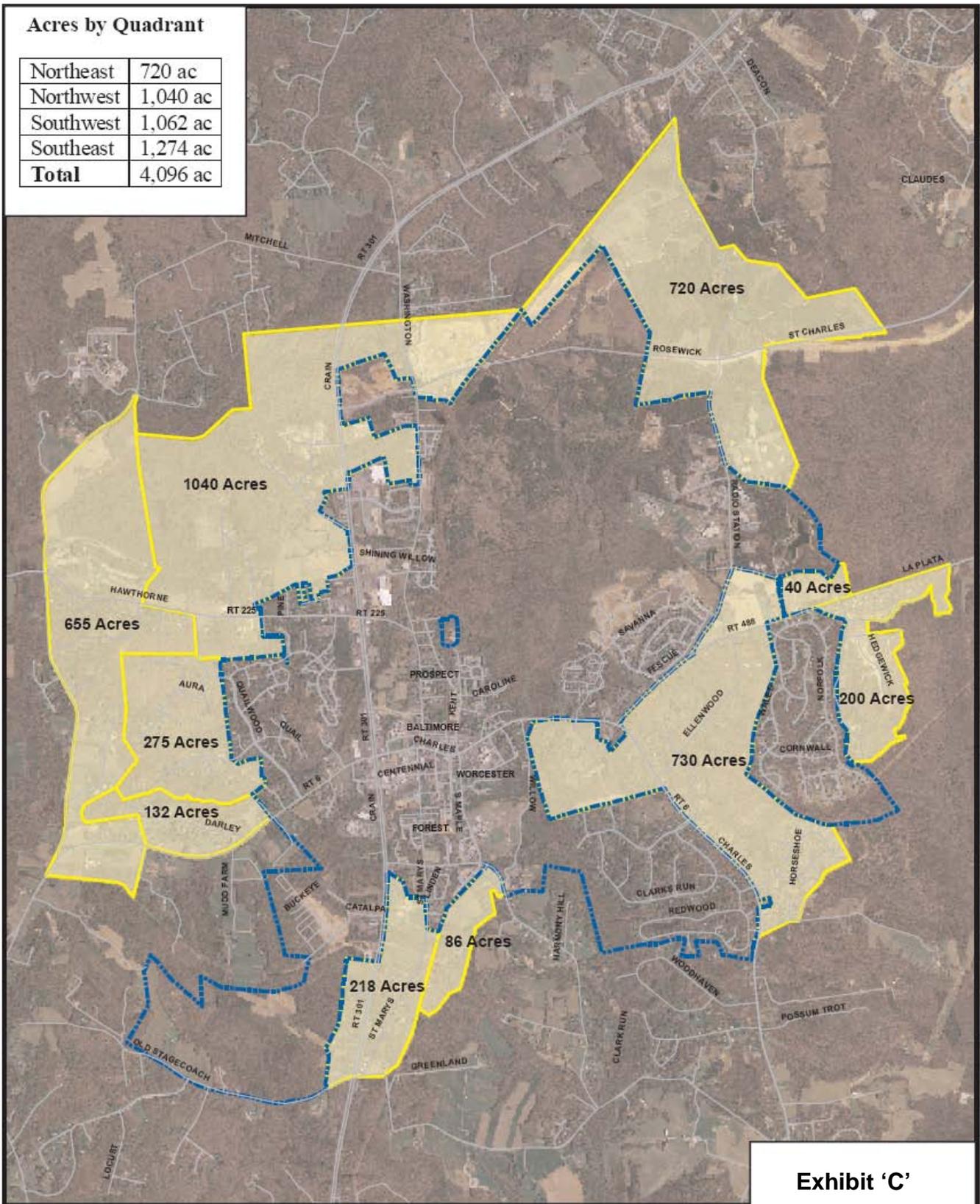


**Exhibit 'B'**  
 Current Zoning  
 Revised: July 10, 2009



**Acres by Quadrant**

Northeast	720 ac
Northwest	1,040 ac
Southwest	1,062 ac
Southeast	1,274 ac
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,096 ac</b>



**Legend**

- Municipal Growth Areas
- Existing LaPlata Boundary
- Municipal Growth Boundary

Map produced by Spatial Systems Associates, Inc.



**Exhibit 'C'**

**Municipal Growth Areas**