

# Municipal Growth

2009

### What is the Municipal Growth Element?

HB 1141, entitled “Land Use-Local Government Planning,” was passed in the 2006 session of the Maryland General Assembly. HB 1141 amends Article 66B. It includes the following requirements for the Municipal Growth Element:

- To create a more detailed and quantitative analysis of the municipality’s anticipated growth than has been required in the past.
- To study past growth trends and patterns.
- To project future growth in population and resulting land needs based on a capacity analysis of areas selected for future municipal annexation and growth.
- To examine of the effects of growth on infrastructure and natural features both within and adjacent to the present municipality and on future growth areas that may be annexed
- To evaluate more deeply into the dynamics of the City’s growth and development

This detailed analysis of population growth, land development and infrastructure impacts gives local elected officials and planners the advance knowledge needed to adequately prepare for future development and its effects.

### Community Vision for Growth

Residents would like to see Westminster follow the “Smart Growth” principles as the City plans for the future. As new developments and businesses become interested in building in Westminster, residents want to make sure that the city’s infrastructure can support the new growth. From utilities to water, schools to roads, residents are concerned that the City not ‘overload’ itself. One resident suggested that a goal for the City should be to maintain infrastructure that preserves the simplicity of life but plans for necessary growth. Historic preservation is important to residents, which is why they want the design and appearance of businesses in Westminster to be compatible with the historic and rural setting that they appreciate today. Residents suggest that the City focus on infill projects and vacant buildings first before considering any new construction projects in the future. The protection of open space and farmland are essential to residents of Westminster. In order to preserve the rural image of Westminster, there is desire to slow down development and consider the creation of smaller green communities that won’t damage the environment or take away from the overall quality of life. There is a consensus among residents that the small town atmosphere and rural environment is what attracted them to move to Westminster originally.

### State Planning Visions found in this Element

**Growth Areas:** Growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to those centers, or strategically selected new centers

**Community Design:** Compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character

**Infrastructure:** Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sound manner



## Part 1: Past Growth Patterns

The purpose of the Municipal Growth Element is to present analyses of land consumption and facilities impacts that can be expected as a result of the projected growth of the City’s population from 18,466 residents in 2009 to 22,720 residents by the year 2030.

### Section 1: Population Change

#### *Population Trends 1970 to 2000*

The total population of Westminster in 2000 was 16,731 people. Since 1990, the City has grown at an average annual growth rate of 2.8%. The average annual increase for the 1990’s was significantly lower than the City’s average annual increase of 4.8% during the 1980’s, due to a slower rate of new construction (Table 4.1)

## CHAPTER 4

**Part 1: Past Growth Patterns**

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**Part 3: Westminster’s Housing Capacity**

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Goals and Objectives**

**Table 4.1 City of Westminster Population Growth 1970 – 2000**

Year	1970	1980	Percent Change	1990	Percent Change	2000	1970 to 2000 Percent Change	1980 to 2000 Percent Change	1990 to 2000 Percent Change
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,207</b>	<b>8,808</b>	<b>22.21%</b>	<b>13,068</b>	<b>48.37%</b>	<b>16,731</b>	<b>132.15%</b>	<b>89.95%</b>	<b>28.03%</b>

Source: U.S. Census, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000

#### *Population Trends 2000 to 2010*

The total population of the City of Westminster in September 2009 was 18,456 people. From 2000 to 2009 the population of the City increased by 1,735 residents. In comparison, the 2004 Comprehensive Plan projected that the population of the City was going to increase by 3,493 from 2000 to 2010. It was projected that the City was going to continue to grow at the rate it experienced in the 1990’s, an average of 2.8% a year, and then slow down to 1% in 2015. However, the City instead experienced a

“slow-down” in growth sooner than expected. Since 2006, the City has grown at an average annual growth rate of 1% a year.

*Population Trends 2010 to 2030*

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan calculated population increases and decreases due to migration and used a high rate for most age groups through 2015. A medium rate was applied to the model for the 2020 and 2025 projections to represent the expected reduction in in-migration as the amount of land available for development in the City of Westminster decreases. Today, the City recognizes that not only will there be a reduction in in-migration as the result of limited land but also limited water for development. If the City of Westminster continues to grow at an average annual growth rate of 1% a year for the next 20 years, the population in 2030 will be 22,720 (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2 City of Westminster Population Growth 1990 to 2030**

Year	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Percent 2010 to 2030	Percent 2000 to 2030
2004 Comp Plan	13,068	16,731	17,974	20,224	21,418	22,232	23,415	25,756	27%	54%
2009 Comp Plan	13,068	16,731	17,974	18,620	19,566	20,565	21,614	22,720	21%	35%

Source: City of Westminster Planning, Zoning and Development Department

**Section 2: Historical Trends & Issues**

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan projected that after 2015 that population growth would slow down because the amount of land available for development in the City of Westminster would decrease. However, the limited amount of water available for development caused development to slow down in 2006, sooner than 2015 and as a result population growth went from the predicted 2% a year to about 1% a year.

### *Water and the Decrease in Growth Pressure*

During the drought of 2002, the City exceeded a condition of one of its water appropriation permits requiring the City to cease withdrawals at certain locations when stream flow is below minimum levels. As a result of the water supply inadequacy, there was a moratorium on the issuance of new building permits and approval of subdivision plats for properties that would be served by the City's water systems.

In July 2006, the Carroll County Bureau of Environmental Health (County)

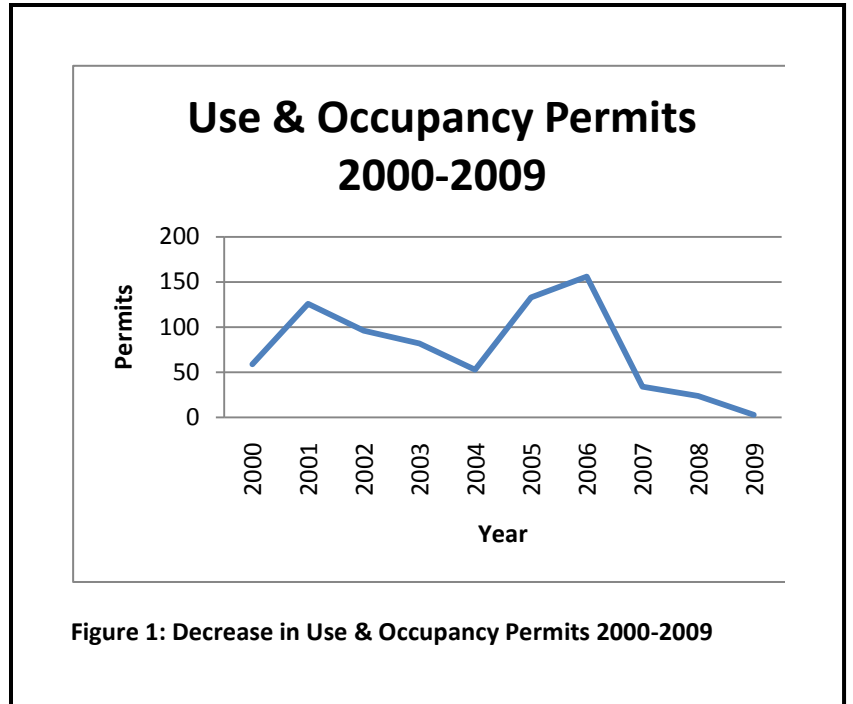
stopped signing recorded plats as the City had not demonstrated that its water system would be adequate to serve additional connections.

In September 2006, after reviewing the City's final Water Supply Capacity Management Plan, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) directed the County to no longer approve building permits that would result in a net increase in water demand on the City's water system.

In April 2007, the City and MDE entered into a Consent Order, which has resulted in the City improving water system capacity. The Consent Order required the City to adopt an Interim Water Allocation Policy for the City to regulate the allocation of water to residential and commercial development. As a condition of the Consent Order, MDE would determine the amount of water that the City would be allowed to allocate. The City adopted an Interim Water Allocation Policy on April 9, 2007.

The 2007 Interim Water Allocation Policy enabled the City to create a water allocation request process to provide water connections to only residential and non-residential development projects that had been approved prior to April 1, 2007. The City required applicants to meet certain standards and requirements in order to be considered for the allocation of the limited supply of water.

On January 28, 2008 the City adopted an Amended Water Allocation Policy for the issuance of water connections. In May 2008, the City completed the Updated Water Capacity Management Plan. The Amended Water Allocation Policy and the Updated Water Capacity Management Plan were the two main requirements that Westminster had to complete in order for MDE to allow an additional allocation of water in 2008.



During the five year period that the City has worked to manage the water capacity issue, the City has adopted several policies to help control the requests for the allocation of water. For example, the City created a policy limiting the number of building permits issued for any project in one year from 50 permits to 40 permits. Also a deferral on annexation and good cause waivers while the City is in Code Red drought status has been adopted.

The limited water supply has placed a strain on the growth of Westminster. Since 2006, the City has experienced a decrease in development pressure due to the limited water supply to allocate to new developments. The lower than average number of use and occupancy permits is an indicator of the decreasing growth for the City. In 2006, 156 permits were issued, in 2007, 34 permits were issued, followed by 2008 when only 24 use and occupancy permits were issued in the City. Westminster's water limitations, and the current economy of the country, have caused the growth of Westminster to slow down significantly (Figure 1).

## **Part 2: Population Projections & Future Land Use**

### **Section 1: Introduction**

The City of Westminster uses the requests for water allocation as a method to analyze proposed developments and plan for the future growth of the City. As of 2010, the City will not be able to allocate future water connections until the City acquires new sources of water. The City is preparing for two growth phases. Phase One will take place when the City acquires a new source of water to meet the needs of the current list of projects that have made requests for water allocation before January 2010. Phase Two will take place when the City acquires a second source of water to meet the needs of future projects that will make requests for water allocation after January 2010.

### **Section 2: Land Needed to Satisfy Future Demand**

Using the growth rate scenario of 1% a year for the next 20 years the population of Westminster would increase by 4,284 people by 2030. In Westminster households have an average of 2.35 people. Using that ratio, the 2009 Comprehensive Plan projects that 1,823 households or dwelling units would be required to sustain a population increase of 4,284 people.

**Table 4.3 Vacant Buildable Residential Land in the City of Westminster, 2009**

Vacant Buildable Land	Acreage	Zoning	# of Units	Persons per Unit	Population Capacity
Humbert Property	1.8	R-7,500	7	2.35	16.45
Alt Property	0.4	R-7,500	1	2.35	2.35
Langdon Property	5	R-7,500	26	2.35	61.1
Horosko Property	6.8	R-7,500	32	2.35	75.2
Koontz Property	7.5	R-10,000	30	2.35	70.5
Rinehart Property	1.8	R-10,000	1	2.35	2.35
Tennant Property	2.1	R-10,000	8	2.35	18.8
Windsor Overlook	1.3	R-10,000	2	2.35	4.7
Scott Property	1.2	R-10,000	3	2.35	7.05
Riley Property	1.5	R-10,000	6	2.35	14.1
Poole Property	1.1	R-20,000	2	2.35	4.7
Bair Property	6.4	R-20,000	12	2.35	28.2
Roth Property	1.8	R-20,000	2	2.35	4.7
Griswold Property	12.1	R-20,000	19	2.35	44.65
Riley Property	0.9	R-20,000	1	2.35	2.35
Hart Property	1.2	R-20,000	2	2.35	4.7
Bodnar Property	0.6	R-20,000	1	2.35	2.35
Leister Property	0.8	R-10,000	3	2.35	7.05
Colonial Heights	1.06	R-7,500	4	2.35	9.4
Kremer Property	1.3	R-10,000	5	2.35	11.75
WMC Development Corp.	1.4	R-10,000	5	2.35	11.75
DASY Property	3.2	R-7,500	14	2.35	32.9
Shaw Property	3.7	R-20,000	7	2.35	16.45
Booth Property	15	R-7,500	15	2.35	35.25
Cornias Property	20	R-20,000	39	2.35	91.65
Other lots	6.1	n/a	21	2.35	49.35

<b>Total Vacant Buildable Land</b>	<b>106.06 Acres</b>
<b>Total Potential Dwelling Units</b>	<b>268 Units</b>
<b>Total Potential Population</b>	<b>630 Residents</b>

\*Unit yield calculated using current zoning classifications

Source: City of Westminster Planning, Zoning and Development, 2009

## Part 3: Westminster’s Housing Capacity

### Section 1: Development Capacity

Table 4.3 shows the total vacant buildable residential land within the City of Westminster. Vacant buildable land means there are no site plans or subdivisions recorded for the property. Using the current zoning designation for each property, Staff calculated an estimate of the total projected population capacity of the total vacant buildable land. (The estimates took into account environmental constraints). There are a total 106.6 acres of vacant buildable residential land (Map 4.1). At the current zoning, the available vacant buildable land can accommodate an additional 268 dwelling units or 630 residents.

Table 4.4 represents the planned developments to be built in the next five years to ten years. Planned developments are projects that have received site plan approval. The table calculates the number of dwelling units that are expected when the developments are complete. Based on these calculations, the planned developments can accommodate an additional 775 dwelling units or 2,327 residents.

**Table 4.4 Unbuilt Planned Developments in the City of Westminster 2009**

Planned Development	Acreage	Zoning	Units per Acre	# of Units	Persons per Unit	Population Capacity
Arnold Property	8	R-10,000	2.8	15*	2.35	38
Bolton Hill	118	R-20,000	1.4	189*	2.35	472
Carroll Lutheran Village	52.8	R-20,000	1.4	73	1.5	110
Fenby Farm	20	R-20,000	1.4	28	2.35	70
Furnace Hills Section 2	2.6	PD-4	n/a	30*	2.35	60
Jandy Property	4.5	R-10,000	2.8	12	2.35	30
Naganna Property	147	R-10,000	1.53	225	2.35	529
Ridge Terrace	10	R-10,000	2.8	17*	2.5	43
RJ Maring Property	1.7	R-10,000	2.8	4*	2.35	10
Roop Mill	89.6	R-10,000	2.8	190*	2.35	475
Royer Terrace	2.6	R-10,000	2.8	4*	2.35	10
Village of Meadow Creek	119.5	R-10,000	2.8	188*	2.5	470
Westminster Housing Inc	1.1	R-7,500	4.2	4	2.5	10

\* Number of Units Proposed by Developer

<b>Total Unbuilt Planned Land</b>	<b>577.4 acres</b>
<b>Total Dwelling Units</b>	<b>775 units</b>
<b>Total Population Capacity</b>	<b>2327 residents</b>

Source: City of Westminster Planning, Zoning and Development, 2009



**Table 4.5: Total Residential Capacity in Westminster 2009**

Buildable Residential Land	Acres	Units	Population Capacity
Vacant Buildable Residential Land	106.6	268	630
Planned Developments	577.4	775	2327

<b>Total Buildable Residential Land</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>1043</b>	<b>2957</b>
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Summary

<b>Total Unbuilt Planned Land</b>	577.4 acres
<b>Total Dwelling Units</b>	775 units
<b>Total Population Capacity</b>	2327 residents

<b>Total Vacant Buildable Land</b>	106.06 Acres
<b>Total Potential Dwelling Units</b>	268 Units
<b>Total Potential Population</b>	630 Residents

Source: City of Westminster Planning, Zoning and Development Department, 2009

Table 4.5 calculates the total number of dwelling units that can be accommodated within the City at build-out, given the current zoning and based on the approved site plans for planned developments. Based on these calculations, Westminster can accommodate a total of 1,043 dwelling units or 2,957 residents at build-out.

## Section 2: Population Projections & Development Capacity

### Summary

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan projected a population increase of 4,284 people by 2030. In order to accommodate the projected population growth, the City of Westminster needs to plan for at least 1,823 dwelling units, beyond the current housing stock.

The 2009 Development Capacity Analysis shows that the City of Westminster has about 684 acres of available buildable residential land. Of the 684 acres of available buildable residential land, 577.4 acres are planned developments with a total capacity of 775 dwelling units. The remaining 106.06 acres, under current zoning, has a total capacity of 268 dwelling units. In total, the 684 acres of available buildable residential land in the City of Westminster has a total capacity of 1,043 dwelling units or 2,957 residents.

<b>Table 4.6 Projected Population &amp; Housing Capacity, Westminster 2010-2030</b>		
	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Dwelling Units</b>
<b>Projected Population Growth</b>	4,284	1,823
<b>Projected Housing Capacity</b>	2,957	1,043
<b>Projected Housing Shortage</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>565</b>

Source: City of Westminster Planning, Zoning and Development Department, 2009

While the City can accommodate 2,957 residents at its current zoning and development scenario, there is a remaining 1,327 potential residents that will be unaccounted for dwelling units (Table 4.6). At the projected population growth and the current land capacity, the City will have to plan to accommodate 565 more dwelling units or about 1,327 more residents. In summary, at the current land capacity, Westminster is unable to accommodate the projected population growth. With the current zoning, and at the projected population growth rate, by 2024 the City of Westminster could have no remaining buildable lots of residential land.

To prevent Westminster from ‘building out’ by 2024, plans must be made to increase dwelling unit capacity. This will require a combination of strategies from expanding the land area of the City to conducting redevelopment and up-zoning to increase dwelling unit capacity. Westminster’s goal for 2030 is to ensure that future development makes efficient use of the remaining developable acreage and limited resources.

## Part 4: Growth Outside of City Boundary

### Section 1: Factors for Future Municipal Growth Areas

In calculating the land area required for the future growth of Westminster, this Municipal Growth Element of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan is based on the following assumptions:

- 80% percent of the buildable residential land within the present municipal boundaries will be consumed, leaving a housing shortage of 565 dwelling units.
- Low-density sprawl could be avoided with all residential development occurring at roughly a Priority Funding Area density of 3.5 dwelling units, or higher, per acre. Currently 30% of the buildable residential lots are zoned R-20,000 with a density of 2 dwelling units per acre.
- Based on current zoning, 85% percent of future development within the present boundaries of Westminster will be in single-family detached homes on residential lots zoned R-10,000 or R-20,000.
- If development occurs beyond the boundaries of the City, such land will require higher density than the current zoning allows. It is currently zoned for single-family residential lots but there needs to be an increase in lots zoned for multi-family units.
- There is not currently enough buildable land contiguous to the City to accommodate the projected 565 units of growth (at the current zoning).
- Any annexed land will need to be zoned in the R-7,500 residential zone, which provides a density of about 6 dwelling units per acre in order to accommodate the projected population growth (or at a higher density).

In accordance with these assumptions, the Westminster Comprehensive Plan's Municipal Growth Element establishes two components of future residential growth, along with the land demand and population that can be expected for each. One component involves land within the City and the other involves land which will one day be annexed into it.

The above assumptions represent the current view of the Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission and the Westminster Growth and Annexation Committee as well as others in the Westminster area development community. Future residential growth on land within Westminster, and on land which will one day be annexed, will require an increase in development of multi-family dwelling units and mixed-use projects that have a Priority Funding density of at least 3.5 units per acre or higher. Map 4.2 shows parcels that have potential for additional development. These parcels will be studied in the future for opportunities for increased density. The City of Westminster should follow a development pattern which efficiently uses land and lends the most protection to natural features and its historic fabric.

## Section 2: Development Beyond Present City Limits

### *Land Needs*

69% of the projected 2030 population increase of 4,284 people can be accommodated within the present corporate limits of the City of Westminster. 54% of the future residents will settle on properties zoned R-10,000. City can accommodate 2,957 residents at its current zoning and development scenario;

however, there is a remaining 1,327 potential residents that will be in unaccounted for dwelling units. The City will need to evaluate the current zoning within the City and study the land that could be annexed in the future in order to find ways to accommodate the remaining population growth.

### *Anticipated Capacity & Zoning of Future Annexation Areas*

The City of Westminster collaborated with Carroll County to adopt the 2007 Westminster Environs Community Comprehensive Plan (Westminster Environs Plan). The Board of County Commissioners of Carroll County adopted the Westminster Environs Plan on November 29, 2007. The Westminster Environs Plan includes the approved 2007 Land Use Designation and Growth Area Boundary Map for the Westminster Environs. The City used this Map to consider development beyond present City corporate limits (Map 4.3). This Map shows the growth areas lying to the southeast of the City of Westminster.

The area within the Growth Area Boundary (GAB), but outside of the City boundary, totals roughly 1,280 acres. City Planning Staff conducted a study of the 1,280 acres to determine priority annexable acres. Staff developed a set of criteria to determine acres that could be annexed within the next 20 years to accommodate future population growth. The criteria required the priority annexable acres to 1) exist within the GAB, 2) listed as unplanned buildable land, 3) have a residential land use designation 4) not have a Conservation land use designation and 5) found contiguous to the City boundary. Following this criteria, Staff determined 160 acres of priority annexable acres that fit the criteria of buildable residential land contiguous to the City boundary (Map 4.4).

Using the current zoning and development scenario, the priority annexable acres are not sufficient enough to accommodate the anticipated growth. The 160 priority annexable acres of buildable residential land, at the current County zoning designation, could provide 311 units of the 565 dwelling units needed to accommodate the remaining 1,327 residents. The benefit of annexing the 160 acres would be the limited relief of development pressure within the City, by reducing the potential housing shortage to 254 units. The disadvantage of annexing the 160 acres would be that the City would have to expand the water service area to provide water in order to develop residential properties in the Westminster Growth Area. In addition to providing water service, the City would have to expand City infrastructure, facilities and services to accommodate the additional acres.

The City of Westminster is unable to consider annexable land as a viable solution to the future City housing shortage, because there are no guarantees that the City will be able to annex all, or any, of the 160 acres within the next 20 years without adding additional water supplies. Westminster needs to look within the City boundaries first to plan for implementing the goals outlined in this Municipal Growth Element to accommodate future population growth in an efficient and orderly manner.

Looking at the County Zoning, Map 4.5, there are some target properties within the Growth Area Boundary that could be re-zoned to allow for residential units. When the County conducts the 2013 Westminster Environs Plan Update in the next couple of years, it should include a study of the land

within the GAB that is not zoned residential but could be re-zoned to meet the needs of future population growth for the Westminster area.

## **Part 5: Impact of Growth on Public Services and Facilities**

This section projects the impacts that the roughly 4,284-person increase will have on public services and facilities in and around the City of Westminster. Important related material also appears in other elements of this comprehensive plan, and that the entire document must be reviewed in order to obtain a clear and complete picture.

### **Performance-Based Growth Management Standards**

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan uses performance-based growth management to prepare for the future growth of the City of Westminster. Performance-based growth management coordinates land use policies, capital improvements, funding mechanisms and monitoring devices to achieve specific environmental and public facility performance standards. Performance-based standards allows for careful analysis by the City of its required public services and infrastructure in relation to future demand.

### **Section 1: Public Schools**

#### *Facility Analysis*

The City of Westminster is served by Carroll County Public Schools. Westminster falls in the districts for six elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools. In addition, there are two private “Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade” institutions and one private “Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade” institution available to Westminster residents.

#### *Performance Objective*

Ensure that new schools will be in locations accessible to school age children and will provide sufficient facilities for education, as well as extra-curricular activities.

#### *Performance Standard*

Require new development to provide the appropriate funding for the Westminster area school system as determined by Carroll County Schools and applicable State law. According to Carroll County Code for Adequate Public Facilities, an elementary school serving a proposed project is inadequate when projected enrollment is equal to or greater than 120% of the state-rated capacity. A middle school serving a proposed project is inadequate when projected enrollment is equal to or greater than 120% of the functional capacity. A high school serving a proposed project is inadequate when projected enrollment is equal to or greater than 120% of the state-rated capacity. Carroll County Public Schools

Facilities Master Plan provides an in depth look at the performance standards of all schools in Carroll County.

### *Relationship to Future Demand*

Based on the system wide breakdown of the projected 2018 total enrollment (12,460 elementary, 6,380 middle, and 8,685 high) and the future school capacities (13,377 elementary, 6,845 middle, and 10,612 high) there is not a countywide need for additional school capacity at any level.

As the population of the Westminster area grows in the future, Charles Carroll Elementary is projected to reach 110% capacity in 2014 and William Winchester Elementary is projected to reach 110% capacity in 2011. The contributing factor to the increase in elementary school attendance is a new State requirement that all elementary schools must provide Full Day Kindergarten. The Carroll County Public Schools Facilities Master Plan is phasing in new kindergarten additions, over the next 10 years, to all elementary schools in order to accommodate the increased kindergarten enrollment. Westminster East Middle School is projected to reach 110% capacity by 2016. The remaining Westminster area middle schools and high schools are projected to remain under capacity through 2017.

## **Section 2: Library Services**

### *Facility Analysis*

The Westminster Branch of the Carroll County Library system is located in Downtown Westminster. The library facility measures 22,000 square feet in size. The service population is 43,635 people in the City of Westminster and the surrounding area. The library facility provides 1,000 square feet of library space for every 1,983 residents in the Westminster area. It contains a circulation of 114,780 volumes with about 41 volumes per square foot or about 2.63 volumes per resident.

The Westminster Branch provides 109 programs a year to the public that are attended by a total of 2,797 residents on average. One of the more popular library services is access to public computers. The library facility provides 17 computers for Internet use, 7 computers for regular use and 2 computers for games. In FY2006 the Westminster Branch had 130,000-computer log-ins and in FY2008 usage had increased to 250,000-computer log-ins. The Westminster Branch employees the equivalent of 22.46 full time employees, which provides 1 employee per 1,943 residents of the Westminster area.

### *Performance Objective*

The City encourages the Westminster Branch to maintain library services that provide informational and recreational reading and research materials in a variety of formats for all ages, and ensure that services and materials for children and adults are available in order to support their needs.

### *Performance Standard*

The City supports the Westminster Branch's effort: to maintain the American Library Association standard of at least 1,000 square feet of library space for each 10,000 increase in population; to provide about 2.5 volumes per resident and 1 computer per 1,500 residents; to support the staffing standard of one additional full-time employee per additional 2,000 residents, a standard based on the current population and staffing levels.

### *Relationship to Future Demand*

The projected population growth of 4,284 people over the next 20 years, in the City of Westminster, would not require an increase in library space. The Westminster Branch of the Carroll County Library System would remain under capacity. The projected population increase would require the Westminster Branch to hire 1.5 new employees to maintain the staffing standard. In addition, the Westminster Branch would need to ensure residents access to 5,017 more volumes to maintain the volume standard. In order to maintain the standard for access to computers, the Westminster Branch would have to purchase at least 6 more computers.

## **Section 3: Public Safety & Police Services**

### *Facility Analysis*

The City of Westminster Police Department consists of 45 sworn officers that maintain an approximate service ratio of 2.43 officers per 1,000 residents. The Westminster Police Department has received an average of 16,748 calls for police service a year over the past 8 years. Since 2000, the police officers encounter an average 843 Part 1 crimes a year and have made an average 1,423 arrests per year for the past 4 years. Part 1 crimes are serious crimes including murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft and auto theft. Due to the hard work and successful efforts of the City of Westminster Police Department, Part 1 crime in Westminster has declined by 8.8% in 2008; down from 856 crimes in 2007 to 781 crimes in 2008.

### *Performance Objective*

Maintain comprehensive police services and timely emergency response in all parts of the City of Westminster. Provide a level of police protection that can serve the projected growth in population and business activity.

### *Performance Standard*

Retain the appropriate number of staff to continue efficient operations of the Administrative Bureau, Criminal Investigations Bureau and the Field Services Bureau. Maintain the current standard of 2.43 officers per 1,000 residents. According to the Unified Crime Reports (UCR) of the FBI's Department of Justice, law enforcement officers are individuals who ordinarily carry a firearm and a badge, have full

arrest powers, and are paid from governmental funds set aside specifically for sworn law enforcement representatives. The UCR determined by population group, there were 2.3 sworn officers for each 1,000 resident population in the Nation's cities collectively in 2004. A national standard used by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and other agencies when calculating needs for police is 2.6 police officers for every 1,000 persons of population. The City of Westminster strives to meet the average of these two standards.

#### *Relationship to Future Demand*

In order to accommodate the projected population growth of 4,284 people, the City of Westminster will need a total of 55 police officers, or an additional 10 officers by 2030. The Police Department considers its current office space to be at capacity as of 2009. An additional 10 officers will push the Department over capacity and require the Police Department to expand its offices or relocate to a larger facility.

### **Section 4: Fire & Emergency Services**

#### *Facility Analysis*

The Westminster Volunteer Fire Company provides fire protection and suppression services for the Westminster area. For fire services, the Company currently staffs 40 responding volunteer firefighters and no full-time firefighters. For basic emergency medical services, the Company currently staffs an Emergency Medical Technician Basic (EMT Basic) unit of 60 individuals of which 48 are volunteer, 8 are full-time and 12 are part-time. For intense emergency medical services, the Company currently staffs an Emergency Medical Technician Paramedic (EMT Paramedic) unit of 22 individuals of which 4 are volunteer, 8 are full-time and 10 are part-time. The Company has 3 engines (of which one is a tower engine), 3 ambulances, 1 special unit and 4 vehicles to transport firefighters. On average, the Westminster Volunteer Fire Company receives 1,439 calls for fire service a year and 3,567 calls for emergency medical service a year. As the population of the City of Westminster grows, the calls for services increase. Over the past 9 years calls for fire service increased on average 3.63% a year and calls for emergency medical service increased on average 3.88% a year.

#### *Performance Objective*

Maintain competent and efficient fire and emergency medical services with first responder medical and ambulance elements, to minimize the risks to lives and property due to fire hazards and emergency medical conditions in all parts of the Westminster area.

#### *Performance Standard*

Maintain a physical environment, including adequate supply of fire hydrants and fire vehicle accessible roads, which will allow for quick response time for the majority of emergency calls. Carroll County Fire Services standard requires minimum 4 personnel should go out on every emergency call. The Insurance



Services Office (ISO) developed a standard that projects the number of in-service fire engines that would be required to properly serve a given area. The standard is based on the following formula: Number of Engines =  $0.85 + [0.12 \times (\text{Population} \times .001)]$ .

### *Relationship to Future Demand*

The provision of emergency services must keep pace with an expanding and growing community. As the population of Westminster grows over the next 20 years, the fire department shall maintain minimum staffing requirements to ensure that a sufficient number of members are available to operate safely and effectively. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has established standards for responding to fire emergencies volunteer departments. The fire department shall have the capability to deploy an initial full alarm assignment within a 9-minute response time to 90 percent of the incidents. Following the ISO standard, to serve the population increase of 4,284 people, the Westminster Fire Company will need to purchase one more engine to increase their total to 4 fire engines.

## **Section 5: Parks & Recreation**

### *Facility Analysis*

The City of Westminster's inventory of parks consists of 14 parks, and a 2.5 mile long walking trail, with a total of 136.5 acres in the parks system. The City also provides residents and visitors with 3 specialized recreation facilities, which include a family recreation center, a skateboard park and a municipal swimming pool. Other parks include four multi-purpose fields, four basketball courts, seven tennis courts, climbing boulders, six pavilions and two plazas. In addition, residents have access to 79 acres of County-owned recreation land within the City and almost 135 acres of County-owned recreation land adjacent to the City within the County. The total amount local jurisdiction park and recreation land is over 350 acres. The City of Westminster also benefits from over 447 acres of private recreation and open space land within the City limits.

### *Performance Objective*

Provide quality active parks and recreation facilities that are accessible to all residents of the City of Westminster.

### *Performance Standard*

The State of Maryland uses a standard of 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, with a minimum of 15 of the 30 acres to be owned by the City of Westminster or Carroll County. The City of Westminster uses this ratio with the goal to have park and recreation facilities within one-half mile of all residences.

## *Relationship to Future Demand*

In order to meet the State of Maryland standard, the City of Westminster needs 681 acres of parkland to accommodate future population growth of 4,284 residents (total 22,720 residents). According to the City Standard, of the 681 acres, 340 acres should be owned by the local jurisdiction. Currently, residents have access to 350 acres of parkland owned by the City of Westminster or Carroll County plus 447 acres of private recreation and open space land, providing residents with 797 acres of recreation or open space land.

## **Section 6: Water Facilities**

### *Facility Analysis*

A detailed inventory of the existing water facilities and available drinking water supply sources, plus various other descriptive materials and information pertaining to each, is contained in the Carroll County Water and Sewerage Plan and this Comprehensive Plan's Water Resources Element.

The City of Westminster water distribution system has over 161 miles of water lines, ranging in size from ¾" to 24". The system also contains 438 fire hydrants as well as four elevated storage tanks, one finished water reservoir with a floating cover, and two water booster stations. In addition, the City maintains a 122 million-gallon reservoir and two concrete dams. The City of Westminster is responsible for the operation of four filter plants, three of which incorporate wells as source water. The City of Westminster owns and operates two community water systems serving the City and areas beyond the corporate limits. The existing and planned service area is located in central Carroll County and covers approximately 8,097 acres.

### *Performance Objective*

Ensure an adequate water capacity system to serve existing and future residents.

### *Performance Standard*

Prior to project approval, the City of Westminster must verify that adequate water quality, quantity, and distribution will be available to serve the project.

### *Relationship to Future Demand*

The City of Westminster is the primary water service area for the Westminster area. The uncertainty of Westminster's water supply suggests that both water needs and service will remain crucial factors in the City's growth. At the time of this plan, the City has received requests for water allocations under its Allocation Plan totaling over 228,000 gpd. Additionally, it is estimated that this demand could increase by approximately 50,000 gpd each year until build-out. It is anticipated that a portion of these requests

may be fulfilled in the next three to four years by development of the Gesell Property well. Additional sources to fulfill the remaining requests are projected for development after 2015.

## Section 7: Sewerage Facilities

### *Facility Analysis*

A detailed inventory of the existing sewerage facilities plus various other descriptive materials and information, is contained in the Carroll County Water and Sewerage Plan and this Comprehensive Plan's Water Resources Element.

The City of Westminster sewer collection system is made up of over 160 miles of sewers, ranging in size from 6" to 48". The system contains 12 Sewer Pump Stations and over 2200 manholes. The Wastewater Treatment Plant is responsible for the operation and maintenance of an advanced level treatment system utilizing Biological Nutrient Removal technology.

### *Performance Objective*

Ensure an adequate water capacity system to serve existing and future residents.

### *Performance Standard*

Prior to project approval, the City of Westminster must verify that adequate water quality, quantity, and distribution will be available to serve the project.

### *Relationship to Future Demand*

The Westminster Wastewater Treatment plant is designed to handle 5.0 MGD. The average wastewater flow into the plant is 4.43 MGD. The existing Infiltration and Inflow amount for the system is 1.7MGD. The projected build-out demand according to calculations by Malcolm Pirnie, Carroll County's WRE consultant, is 5.706 MGD. The City plans to start engineering on upgrades to the plant to include additional treatment capacity and Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) technology. This project is consistent with the Chesapeake Bay Agreement initiatives. Following the ENR upgrade, the City expects to expand the plant capacity to a flow of 6.5 MGD, while meeting the treatment requirements required by state and federal law.

## Section 8: Stormwater Management Facilities

### *Facility Analysis*

This Comprehensive Plan's Water Resources Element, as well as the Environmental Resources and Protection Element, address overall policies and recommendations pertaining to water quality and stormwater management.

### *Performance Objective*

Ensure an adequate stormwater capacity system to serve existing and future residents.

### *Performance Standard*

Prior to project approval, the City of Westminster must verify that adequate stormwater facility quality, quantity, and distribution will be available to serve the project.

### *Relationship to Future Demand*

Each major development presents challenges to the protection of water quality in and around Westminster. As a major growth area in the County, land in the City is used with more intensity than in outlying areas. Refer to the Water Resources Element for the approximate acreage in the City by land use category, along with the impervious rate associated with that use.

## Part 6: Growth Management

### Section 1: Introduction to Growth Management

Growth management involves the location, timing, and rate of growth or development. Municipalities often utilize land use and zoning maps to designate the location and density of development, but these maps do not address the timing of development or the rate at which it occurs. Timing growth to coordinate with the availability of public facilities such as roads, water and sewer, or schools, decreases the likelihood that these facilities will become significantly overburdened or underutilized. Over or underused roads, schools, and pipes reduce efficiency and may eventually decrease the quality of life for those who are served by the facility.

Consideration of the rate of growth is therefore critical to ensure the continued provision of optimal levels of facility service. The intent of growth management is to maintain equilibrium over time between development and the public facilities necessary to support growth. Without growth rate projections, the possibility exists that facilities will be built to address short-term inadequacies resulting from 'booms' in development. However, in several years the extra capacity might become excessive as the previously high rate of growth slows.

## Section 2: Existing Growth Mechanisms

In prior City and County comprehensive plans, the City has been designated as a ‘growth pole’, or a place where development should be concentrated. As a result, it has used a variety of mechanisms to designate the density of development permitted in the City and to coordinate the timing of development with the availability of public facilities.

### *Carroll County Master Plan for Water and Sewerage*

The Carroll County Master Plan for Water and Sewerage was originally developed and is periodically updated by Carroll County in coordination with the municipalities that operate public water or sewer facilities. The City owns and operates the Westminster water and sewer utilities and is the only municipality in Carroll County that has historically extended public water and sewer beyond its corporate boundaries. As a result, both the City and the County update the Master Plan for Water and Sewerage, and the plan addresses the entire City, as well as areas located within the unincorporated lands on the immediate outskirts of the City.

The Carroll County Master Plan for Water and Sewerage divides the Westminster area into four categories for water and sewer service: Existing and Final Planning Service Area, Priority Planning (0 – 6 Year Service Area), Future Planning (7 to 10 Year Service Area), and No Planned Service. These designations address both the location and the timing for the provision of public water and sewer, and in effect create a ten-year growth limit in and around the City of Westminster. In the past, this boundary has been weakened because of the Carroll County Zoning Ordinance and Map, which allowed residential and commercial development outside of the planned public water and sewer area. This action prompted requests by developers to expand the service boundaries, who contended that they should be able to achieve the densities envisioned by the zoning.

### *Good Cause Waiver*

The Mayor and Common Council of Westminster adopted Good Cause Waiver legislation on August 12, 2002 in response to the negative impacts created by this scenario. The legislation promotes the orderly development of properties at appropriate densities by requiring owners of properties that are to be served with water and/or sewer service to file a petition to annex into the corporate limits of the City of Westminster. If a property is unable to annex into the City, the property owners may file for a ‘Good Cause Waiver’ of the annexation requirement. Upon approval by the City, the property owners are required to sign an agreement stating that they will file a petition to annex when annexation becomes legally possible. The agreement is recorded in the Land Records of Carroll County and runs with the property. Only properties located in the Existing/Final Planning and Priority Planning Service Areas may file for a Good Cause Waiver. Through this process the legislation clarifies development expectations while maintaining the integrity and service level of the water and sewer system for current users.

## *Capital Improvements Program*

Another vital mechanism that addresses growth management in the City of Westminster is the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The *Capital Improvements Program* describes those projects to be funded over the next six fiscal years and is updated every year as part of the annual budget. The first year of the CIP is the budget year. Projects scheduled for the budget year are funded by the adoption of the City's annual budget. The CIP describes the capital projects and facilities to be built, repaired, replaced, or purchased; the locations of the projects; and the schedule for completing the projects. The type, scale, timing, rate, and location of new development will affect the public costs of providing these facilities and associated services. The *Capital Improvements Program* reduces City expenditures by coordinating capital projects with forecasted development. The City can budget funds for land acquisition years in advance of an existing facility reaching inadequacy. In addition, the City Code requires that private developers financially assist the City with needed capital projects planned for their property by the CIP.

## *Land Use and Development Ordinance*

The *Land Use and Development Ordinance* is the City's Zoning Ordinance and impacts future growth. The Zoning Ordinance consists of text and a map. The text provides a description of each zoning district and indicates the density of development permitted by establishing requirements for lot sizes and building setbacks and height. The zoning text also designates the types of uses permitted in each zoning district. The zoning map shows the geographic location of each of the zoning districts described in the zoning text. All properties located in the City are shown on the Zoning Map.

## *Building Permits*

The codified method for managing the growth rate of approved residential projects in the City of Westminster involves a restriction on the number of building permits that may be issued for a subdivision in a given year. Section 164-199 (F) of the City's Code limits the number of building permits issued to 40 per calendar year for any residential development plat. This requirement must appear as a written notation on the final plat as a condition of approval to ensure recordation of the restriction in the Land Records of Carroll County.

## *Negotiations*

The City has employed a variety of other strategies to manage growth. Negotiations for public improvements with developers for roads, public utilities, and recreational facilities begin early in the development review process to clarify requirements and better incorporate such improvements in final plans. The City has also negotiated phasing plans with developers to address the rate at which new homes are built. The date of occupancy can be used to allow construction progress in a development, if that construction would coincide with the completion of a public improvement project. In cases of a known facility inadequacy preliminary approvals can be granted to allow the development process to

continue, with the developer aware that further design is at their own risk. If a relief project is scheduled in the CIP, the developer has an idea of when the development would be granted construction approvals. Final approval will not be granted by the City until the inadequacy is resolved.

### **Section 3: Adequate Public Facilities and Public Services**

Consideration of the adequacy of public facilities throughout the development review process is another tool to manage the rate of growth in the City. The Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission (WPZC) make an official determination of adequacy through the review and approval process for preliminary plans, site plans, and final plats. Site Plans also require approval from the Director of Planning, Zoning and Development. The WPZC may deny a plan or require the developer to make improvements based upon a finding of inadequacy. The facilities currently considered for adequacy by municipalities in Maryland include schools, roads, water and sewer systems, stormwater management, emergency response and police protection, and solid waste disposal. The City has not independently developed guidelines or thresholds for the adequacy of public facilities. As a result, the WPZC considers adequacy reports submitted by the various agencies responsible for providing the service. Some facilities, such as schools, are provided exclusively by Carroll County government. Coordination between the City and the County in the development of some adequate facilities guidelines is necessary.

## **Part 7: Resource Lands**

### **Section 1: Rural Buffers & Transition Areas**

The City of Westminster has few features to combine to form a rural buffer extending around its municipal boundary. However, there are several properties that can act as “rural guide-points.” Rural guide-points are properties zoned Conservation within the County and contiguous to the City boundary. These properties could also serve as groundwater recharge areas or future parkland. In addition, there are also several large neighborhoods that have built-up in the County along the City boundary.

Land outside the City boundary falls under one of three categories: built-out large neighborhoods, conservation/agricultural land or vacant buildable land. The vacant land is a precious resource to Westminster, because it is needed to accommodate future population growth. Westminster has only 106 acres of vacant unplanned residential land within the City limits, which means in the next five to ten years, the City will have to consider annexing the vacant buildable land to increase housing capacity. As a result of the built-out neighborhoods and the potential annexable land, the remaining Conservation land serves the City of Westminster with rural guide-points not a rural buffer.

## Section 2: Growth Area Boundary

The City of Westminster has other tools to control sprawl and protect the rural character of the community. The City of Westminster uses its Growth Area Boundary as the line between urban Westminster and rural Carroll County. The Growth Area Boundary is shown on the approved Carroll County 2007 Land Use Designation and Growth Area Boundary for the Westminster Environs. Carroll County has been actively working to preserve agricultural land since the Maryland State Agricultural Land Preservation Program was developed in 1979. Since 1998, Carroll County has had a goal of preserving 100,000 acres of productive farmland. This number represents nearly 70 percent of the total land in the County that is currently used for agriculture. This goal is targeted specifically at maintaining the long-term viability of farming in the County, including the businesses that support that sector of the economy. In order to meet this goal, the County will be directing growth toward or within the City of Westminster Growth Area Boundary and other local municipalities.

## Part 8: Burdens on Services & Infrastructure

The City of Westminster water and sewer service area extends beyond the Growth Area Boundary and into the County. Future development and growth outside of the City boundary, as well as the Growth Area Boundary will place a burden on the City water supply and sewer treatment capacity. The City of Westminster worked with the Carroll County Planning Department to develop the 2009 Westminster Water Resources Element. The County is working with Westminster to develop strategies to promote water conservation and methods to improve the management of stormwater runoff.

Over the past several years; tree plantings, stormwater management pond retrofits, and watershed restoration projects have been the building blocks laid to establish the foundation for the Carroll County Watershed Action Team - Environmental Restoration (WATER). WATER is being organized to help establish a joint effort between Carroll County Government, the City of Westminster, other governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and the citizens of Carroll County. The Carroll County Bureau of Utilities has developed a series of educational materials promoting the benefits of water conservation techniques and has made the materials available to Carroll County and the City of Westminster residents.

Carroll County encourages residents of Carroll County and the City of Westminster to volunteer to help with stream buffer plantings, stream clean-up, stream assessments, adopt a stormwater facility project, and educational outreach. Carroll County is faced with many new challenges relating to protection of the environment; the renewal of our National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit in 2010, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) establishment in watersheds throughout the County, and the pending Chesapeake Bay TMDL. Each of these regulations specifies requirements needed to reach goals established by EPA and the Maryland Department of the Environment; as well as deadlines to reach these goals. Carroll County recognizes that the County staff and officials can't accomplish these goals alone. The County advocates that each and every citizen of the County is affected by the outcome of



these water resource challenges. In order to address the water challenges that face the future of Westminster, the County educates residents how to plant stream buffers on County and privately owned properties, to clean up streams through stream walks, to assess existing watershed conditions, and to monitor streams.

## Part 9: Protection of Sensitive Areas

The City of Westminster recognizes that the natural environment is a vital element of the City and plays a key role in the long-term sustainability of the community. To protect the environment of Westminster and the surrounding areas means identifying and protecting significant natural features, developing land in ways that respects ecosystems, and adapting the ways in which residents live, work, and play to be more environmentally responsible.

The Environmental Resources and Protection Element provides an inventory of the sensitive area sites of the City of Westminster. Throughout the entire 2009 Comprehensive Plan, there are goals and recommended actions that promote the protection of natural resources, the environment and the sensitive areas of Westminster. The protection of these areas is primarily addressed in this comprehensive plan's Environmental Resources and Protection Element, as well as the Water Resources Element. In order to protect these resources, the City and County should both adhere to the recommendations as discussed in those parts of this plan, as well as to other applicable planning and development-related ordinances.

## Part 10: Future Vision of Development

In order to reduce the impact of the growth of the City of Westminster, the City will follow the visions, principles and standards set forth by the community, State and region for all future development. These visions, principles and standards have been incorporated throughout the 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

### Section 1: Land Use Goals

The long-term development policy for the City of Westminster strongly embraces the 12 Visions that comprise the State's Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy.

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>a.</b> Quality of Life and Sustainability | <b>g.</b> Housing                  |
| <b>b.</b> Public Participation               | <b>h.</b> Economic Development     |
| <b>c.</b> Growth Areas                       | <b>i.</b> Environmental Protection |
| <b>d.</b> Community Design                   | <b>j.</b> Resource Conservation    |
| <b>e.</b> Infrastructure                     | <b>k.</b> Stewardship              |
| <b>f.</b> Transportation                     | <b>l.</b> Implementation           |

## Section 2: Development Goals

Future development will be in accordance with the Principles of Smart Growth.

- a. Provide a variety of housing choices and opportunities
- b. Design staged growth in urban fringes with compact development patterns
- c. Promote Mixed Land Use
- d. Revitalize existing urban and rural neighborhoods into safe and livable communities
- e. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- f. Improve environmental quality by conserving open space, farmland, and sensitive land areas
- g. Direct urban development to areas where land is already served by existing infrastructure to avoid costly duplication of services
- h. Facilitate an adequate mix of transportation choices
- i. Ensure an equitable and predictable process in land development decisions
- j. Promote stakeholder collaboration and community participation

## Section 3: Standards for Development

Residential development expected in the future should be consistent with the density requirements of the State's Priority Funding Areas and the principles of Smart Growth in general. This development will be planned in a manner that makes efficient use of the land using green building standards. Runoff and other negative impacts to the environment will be minimized using low impact development standards.

## Section 4: Protecting the Character of Westminster

The 2008 Community Survey found that residents of Westminster enjoy the small town character and rural charm of the City. Residents are concerned that future growth will destroy the community character of Westminster. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan addressed these concerns with the creation of the Community Character and Design Element, which outlines the City of Westminster's goals for protecting the character of Westminster as new development and redevelopment occurs in the future.

## Section 5: Accommodating Future Growth

Before the 2009 Comprehensive Plan update, the City of Westminster had previously approved over 300 acres of low density housing for the next five years that will provide less than a 1,000 housing units. The approved housing units have not been built due to the limited amount of water that the City can allocate from 2009 to 2011. The remaining 106 acres do not have approved planned developments and will be developed according to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan's vision for future growth and development. Westminster's vision, in coming decades, is that future development must be consistent

with at least the density criteria for Priority Funding Areas of 3.5 units per acre. The increase in density is necessary to reduce sprawl, to ensure the City has sufficient infrastructure available to accommodate growth, to protect the environment and to provide a desirable quality of life for residents of the town. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan outlines the types and scale of infrastructure and other impacts that can be expected from the 4,284 persons projected to move into Westminster over the next 20 years. This Municipal Growth Element provides the background against which recommendations for the future development of the City are generated.

## **Part 11: Financing of Infrastructure Expansions**

### **Section 1: Background**

The future growth of the City of Westminster will require significant infrastructure enhancements and improvements. The City utilizes its Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to link the budgetary and planning processes. The City coordinates the CIP with the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations, such as zoning and subdivision rules. This process also insures that projects that require Federal and State funding are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The type, scale, timing and location of new development will affect the public costs of providing facilities and services. To the greatest extent possible, the City has sought to maximize outside financial resources and minimize debt financing. When debt financing was required, the City sought low-interest loans from State agencies including the Department of the Environment and the Department of Housing and Community Development. This approach has allowed the City to take advantage of much lower interest rates than the City could obtain on its own credit rating. The City will continue to utilize these outside funding sources in the future since they are the most cost effective for the community.

Water and sewer projects will be the major focus on the City's infrastructure improvements. The City recently completed two major water projects including the Medford Quarry Emergency Pipeline and the Cranberry Water Treatment Plant. Both projects utilized low-interest loans from the Maryland Department of the Environment. The Roop's Mill Well was also completed with local funding. Future projects include the Gesell Well, Big Pipe Creek Pipeline and Wellfield and the Little Pipe Creek Intake/Hyde's Quarry Pipeline. These three projects are particularly essential to the orderly growth and development of Westminster.

The City has also begun engineering work on the upgrade and expansion of its Wastewater Treatment Plant. This upgrade portion of the project will provide enhanced nutrient removal processes that will ultimately benefit the Chesapeake Bay. The expansion portion of the project will provide additional capacity. State Bay Restoration funds, commonly called the "flush tax," will pay for a portion of the costs of the upgrade.

A significant amount of funding is required to repair and upgrade City streets that were rated levels 3 to 5, with level 1 being a “like new” street. The cost to complete this work was estimated at approximately \$3.5 million, well beyond the City’s ability to fund as “pay-as-you-go.” Debt financing will be required to fund this work, which is not immediately anticipated.

In the area of parks and open space, the City will undertake an improved process to obtain quality open space as part of the development process. Due to the high cost of land in the Westminster community, the City will focus its funds on park updates and improvements. With declining Program Open Space funds, it is anticipated that local funds will be the major funding source for recreational needs.

## Section 2: Financing Responsibilities

The City will utilize a variety of sources of funding to support infrastructure improvements and expansions. The City collects from developers a one-time payment at the building permit stage when new or expanded buildings are constructed. These three separate payments, called benefit assessment fees, are paid into the water, sewer and general funds. The money is used to support the development and expansion of infrastructure. These fees were updated effective January 1, 2009 and may be increased in the future, if the need arises.

The City also anticipates receipt of funds from the State Bay Restoration fund to support the upgrade of our Wastewater Treatment Plant. This source of funding should pay for a significant portion of the upgrade project. However, local funding from the sewer benefit assessment account will be utilized for the expansion project. For its water projects, the City anticipates a variety of Federal, State, local and private sources of funds. The City has targeted Federal funds to pay for the Big Pipe Creek Pipeline and Well-field Development Project, anticipated at approximately \$6.5 million. The remainder of funding for water projects will likely come from loans from the Maryland Department of the Environment, Carroll County Government and the City’s water benefit assessment account. Additionally, the City also anticipates direct private contributions in the amount of approximately \$2 million dollars solely for water source development.

The use of City general funds is also an intended source of funding for non-utility projects. This source of funds will pay for park improvements, roadway enhancements and upgrades and other general funds projects. Additionally, it is also possible the City will utilize infrastructure financing from the State Department of Housing and Community Development in the event a decision is made to utilize debt financing. Finally, the City will utilize a robust development review process to identify critical infrastructure improvements and enhancements that can be logically linked to the development process. This includes developer dedications for open space, roadway upgrades and related improvements. The City anticipates possible expansion of the use of such contributions as it makes and implements changes to its zoning and subdivision rules.

## Municipal Growth Element

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan presents how Westminster can achieve sustainability in order to meet the needs of the present without compromising the future. The City of Westminster encourages the use of growth management programs to determine and regulate the types, locations, and phasing of land uses in order to coordinate community facility and public service improvements with new development and population growth. The Municipal Growth Element is a detailed analysis of population growth, land development, and infrastructure impacts that give local elected officials and planners the advance knowledge needed to adequately prepare for future development and its effects.

### Goals and Objectives

**Goal M1: Accommodate growth without diminishing the quality of public services, community facilities, and quality of life for current residents**

**Objective 1:** Growth should not outpace infrastructure, services or capacity of resources

- a. Conduct, maintain and update City infrastructure and resource inventories
- b. Establish optimal levels of service for the provision of infrastructure throughout the City
- c. Develop a “Community Facility and Public Services Plan” to accommodate future growth responsibly

**Objective 2:** Development projects must comply with all City goals and standards regarding the quality of public services, community facilities and resources

- a. Require that new development does not take place unless the infrastructure is available to support it
- b. Provide clear guidance to developers on when and where development will be allowed based on the availability of resources
- c. Adopt community facility performance standards that represent the City’s commitment to providing quality and sustainable community facilities
- d. Identify and assess development impacts during the development review process to ensure that adopted community facility performance standards are met and maintained

**Objective 3:** Future growth should pay for itself

- a. Review and revise ordinances to ensure that development contributes adequately to the infrastructure and amenities of the community
- b. Consider site specific needs related to each development or annexation application and ensure the collection of fees, development of infrastructure, or other exactions appropriate to those needs
- c. Continue to utilize the Capital Improvement Program to track and monitor the construction and implementation of the City's infrastructure improvements and to ensure funding sources

**Objective 4:** Monitor the development and growth of the City of Westminster

- a. Continue to limit the total number of residential building permits that can be issued on a per project basis
- b. Create an accounting system to keep track of available buildable land and potential dwelling units in relation to community needs and population growth
- c. Establish an active monitoring system to assure that community facility and public service performance standards are being met

**Goal M2: Design communities in a way that permits a more efficient use of land and resources**

**Objective 1:** Support infill development and other redevelopment options on underutilized residential or commercial lots

- a. Identify priority redevelopment areas in order to encourage redevelopment within established areas of the City
- b. Conduct a study of underutilized properties within the City for infill or redevelopment opportunities
- c. Promote the infill of the existing Central Business District and Downtown Business District with business and high density residential uses
- d. Develop and utilize neighborhood compatibility and designs standards to guide infill development and other redevelopment options

**Objective 2:** Plan for increased density to provide high quality projects that will balance the need for accommodating growth and maintaining small town character

- a. Encourage buildings to grow vertically rather than horizontally, and to incorporate structured rather than surface parking, in order to reduce the footprint for new construction
- b. Review and revise the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations for the promotion of development with a mix of uses and densities
- c. Consider density bonuses or other incentives for projects within the City core to achieve desired densities
- d. Develop appropriate standards and guidelines for higher density projects

**Objective 3:** Acquire or secure use of lands for parks, open space and trails, in conjunction with public and private sector development projects

- a. Prioritize existing park needs so that acquisition and development begins in areas of the City with the greatest deficiencies
- b. The City should encourage the dedication of public parkland through land donations, cash contributions or other compensations
- c. Require pathways in developing areas that will connect with other neighborhoods, public spaces or retail areas

**Goal M3: While recognizing infill development is the preferred method of growth, plan for the expansion of City boundaries to accommodate growth in the future**

**Objective 1:** Develop master plans or studies for key properties within the “Growth Area” in order to prepare for future development that meets the vision and needs of the community

- a. Prioritize identified key properties within the “Growth Area” for potential new residential, commercial and industrial development
- b. Coordinate with County Planning Staff and the representatives from the community to create a unified vision for the priority key properties
- c. Review areas for future expansion outside of the City on an annual basis

**Objective 2:** Annexations and extension of full City infrastructure should occur only as infrastructure and city services can be feasibly provided

- a. Carefully analyze for general compliance with this Comprehensive Plan all applications for the expansion of city boundaries
- b. Evaluate the fiscal impact of all proposed annexations

**Objective 3:** Coordinate with the County to implement the Westminster Environs Plan and the Carroll County Comprehensive Plan

- a. Cooperate with Carroll County to establish and implement uniform standards for development within the “Growth Area”

**Goal M4: Guide and direct growth to maintain open space and to preserve identified historic, cultural and other sites of importance**

**Objective 1:** Coordinate efforts to manage and protect open space

- a. Cooperate with Carroll County and other jurisdictions, agencies and organizations to implement open space conservation methods
- b. Explore options including incentives for maintaining open space within and surrounding the City
- c. Require open space within residential developments, and consider similar requirements for future commercial and industrial developments

**Objective 2:** Create interesting, unique development projects which reflect the values and cultures of the people who reside in Westminster

- a. Craft a vision and establish standards for development and construction which respond to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness
- b. Promote and protect historic, architectural or other special cultural characteristics of Westminster
- c. Review all development proposals for human scale elements, decreased dependency on automobiles, historic design, and other elements that help to maintain the small town character of Westminster



## **Goal M5: Coordinate the integrated and sustainable development of the Business and Industrial Districts**

**Objective 1:** Promote economic growth by providing an adequate supply of sites for commercial and industrial uses

- a. Encourage the use of the existing Central Business District and Downtown Business District prior to expanding the Business or Industrial Districts
- b. Initiate an “Industrial and Commercial Land Use Study” to describe the nature and magnitude of demand for industrial and commercial land that should be anticipated and planned for over the next decade

**Objective 2:** Ensure that commercial and industrial activity is consistent with maintaining a high quality built and natural environment

- a. Encourage industrial and commercial development that meets the community’s vision for quality of environment and compatibility with Westminster land uses
- b. Evolve from “strip commercial” linear Business Districts to business areas characterized by enhanced site planning, improved landscaping, efficient parking lot design, coordinated access, amenities and a “Boulevard” treatment
- c. Develop design standards and guidelines for commercial and industrial development projects