

CHAPTER 3 - LAND USE PLAN

BACKGROUND

The Land Use Plan is a key element of a Comprehensive Plan. It describes the preferred land use characteristics for various areas of the Town, including future growth areas. The Comprehensive Plan establishes policies concerning the relationship between the Town's existing patterns of growth and development and the location, distribution, and scale of future development. It directs the location of public facilities and transportation system improvements, and is directly related to community perceptions about such things as quality of life and community character.

The Land Use Plan has been developed keeping in mind the potential impacts of local land use policies on the fiscal and physical resources of the Town and surrounding area. The Land Use Plan is a continuation of the planning and refinement of the projected build-out of our community, which began in 1997 with the adoption of the predecessor Comprehensive Plan. The Land Use Plan directs growth and development to areas with existing or planned infrastructure, and takes into account the need to manage for the impacts of growth and development on environmentally sensitive areas. The Land Use Plan provides a "long-range, big picture" that integrates the various planning goals and objectives contained in the Comprehensive Plan into a "vision" of the future. The Town's objectives for economic development, natural resource protection, mobility, community facilities, housing, and community character are reflected in the Land Use Plan.

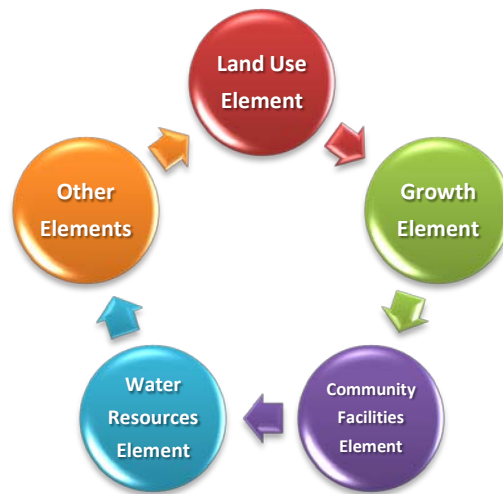
The 2009 Smart, Green, and Growing Legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly, outlined twelve Planning Visions toward a more sustainable, more livable, and less costly future. The Visions address quality of life, public participation, growth areas, community design, infrastructure, transportation, housing, economic development, environmental protection, resource conservation, stewardship, and implementation approaches. These twelve Planning Visions are addressed throughout the Comprehensive Plan:

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 transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources.

5. **Infrastructure:** Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sound 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 provide residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes.
8. **Economic Development:** Economic development that promotes employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State's natural resources, public services, and public facilities is encouraged.
9. **Environmental Protection:** Land and water resources, including the Chesapeake Bay and its coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore, and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources.
10. **Resource Conservation:** Waterways, open space, natural systems, scenic areas, forests, and agricultural areas are conserved.
11. **Stewardship:** Government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection.
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.

The passage of House Bill (HB) 1141 during the 2006 Maryland General Assembly session mandated a change in the content of comprehensive plans. The new bill requires all municipal comprehensive plans to include additional elements or chapters. Two new elements are the “Municipal Growth Element” and “Water Resource Element. The Growth element incorporates information that was previously contained in the 1997 Land Use Chapter plus new, more detailed information of the Town’s anticipated growth. The Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use and Community Facilities Elements now become three: municipal growth, community facilities and land use. Some material that formerly resided exclusively in the land use and community facilities elements may now shift to the municipal growth element. Consequently, the Land Use Plan will have a narrower framework than the 1997 Comprehensive Plan. The links among these three elements are evident, as illustrated by Figure 3-1; all the chapters of a Comprehensive Plan are connected by incorporating a county or municipality’s vision for the future and how to achieve it. Most of the growth projections and discussion will be contained in the Municipal Growth Element. The Water Resource Element addresses the availability and adequacy of water supply sources and the capability of water bodies to incorporate wastewater and stormwater. The ability to support the growth discussed in the municipal growth element will depend on the adequacy of water resources.

Figure 3-1



Along with factors outside the control of local officials, such as regional and national economic trends, local market conditions, and individual land use decisions, the fundamental land use policy framework outlined in this Chapter will help determine the Town's growth and development patterns as well as the quality of life for existing and future residents.

GOALS

Through implementation of various recommendations contained in this Comprehensive Plan related to land use, the Town seeks to achieve the following goals:

- Assure balanced growth between residential, commercial, industrial, and public uses to meet the needs of our residents, and improve their quality of life.
- Achieve a pattern of compatible, effective, and efficient land utilization, preserving the positive features of our community, and conserving the small town character of the downtown.
- Improve the overall quality of the Town by implementing "smart growth" principles to direct development towards existing communities already served by infrastructure, seek to utilize the resources that existing neighborhoods offer, and conserve open space.
- Encourage economic growth with land use policies that retain and expand existing businesses, and promote the emergence of new businesses in locations that provide optimal benefit to the community.
- Provide for a desirable alternative settlement pattern to rural and suburban subdivision occurring in our County, which displaces agriculture and erodes the essential traditional character of our rural countryside. The Town will coordinate with the County and other municipalities concerning future growth outside of the current boundaries.

OBJECTIVES

In order to further its land use goals, the Town will pursue the following land use objectives:

- Ensure that new development does not adversely impact the provision of Town services and facilities. Ensure new residential neighborhoods are fully integrated into the community, reflect the positive characteristics of existing residential neighborhoods, and provide connectivity between new and existing neighborhoods.
- Ensure an appropriate mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses within the Town, including a full array of commercial services that increases employment opportunities while meeting the needs of the community and surrounding market areas.
- Ensure a user friendly and efficient urban transportation network; this should include public transportation (subsidized if necessary); alternative transportation modes such as bike paths, sidewalks, and more extensive pedestrian options; and mechanisms that encourage good traffic flow (fewer cul-de-sacs, more through streets, and more use of planning and street grid systems).
- Encourage a varied residential development that provides for a diverse mix of physical housing types and styles; and efficient arrangement of land uses. Maintain neighborhood stability and property values by avoiding incompatible land uses and encouraging compatible infill and redevelopment where appropriate.
- Create incentives to promote re-investment in the Central Business Commercial District (CBC) and along the waterfront.
- Support development of a viable economic base which encourages further economic investment, business retention, diversification and expansion and which offers a broad range of employment and business opportunities.
- Set aside land for development of employment uses, including small business and light industrial uses to meet the projected needs of residents.
- Support Caroline County's implementation of its Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs.
- Assist with the County's TDR program by exploring the opportunity to create an approved intergovernmental agreement designating in-fill property as a possible receiving area.
- Support efforts of the County to manage growth outside of the municipal growth area so that the County can remain essentially rural.
- Work with the County to address impacts of new development on the provision of County facilities, and services.
- Limit future growth through infill and redevelopment within the Town, and through annexation of the land included in the Town's designated growth area.
- Encourage open space preservation, a smart growth goal that can bolster local economies, preserving critical environmental areas, improving our

community's quality of life, and guiding new growth into existing communities.

- Reinforce the urban growth boundary with a “greenbelt” area, along the perimeter, consisting of forest, open space, very low density rural residential uses and other compatible low-intensity uses.
- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas, and natural resources; and
- Preserve forested lands to help decrease nutrient sediment runoff.

EXISTING LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS

Existing Land Use

An essential first step in preparation of the Comprehensive Plan is a systematic review of how a community is utilizing its land today. A land use survey entails documentation in both graphic and tabular form of the various land uses, ranging in intensity from single-family residences to industrial operations. The many individual parcels of land making up a community can, in this manner, be viewed as an overall picture of development and growth patterns.

In 1999, the Town encompassed approximately 1,382 acres. Today, Denton has more than doubled its land area and currently encompasses approximately 3,272 acres and approximately 2,047 individual parcels of land. Since 1999, the Town has annexed approximately 1,890 acres, a 138 percent increase. Most of the annexations have been properties located in the future growth areas identified in the *1997 Denton Comprehensive Plan*.

Denton's existing land use pattern is shown on Map 3-1 and Table 3-1. In some instances, properties classified in a category may be vacant, refer to Map 3-3 and Table 3-3. Most of the existing agricultural land use parcels are zoned as Rural County (Caroline County zoning at the time of annexation) with an overlay zoning of Planned Neighborhood Eligible. There are currently no projects under review to develop the lands on the west side of the Choptank River.

Table 3-1: Existing Land Use

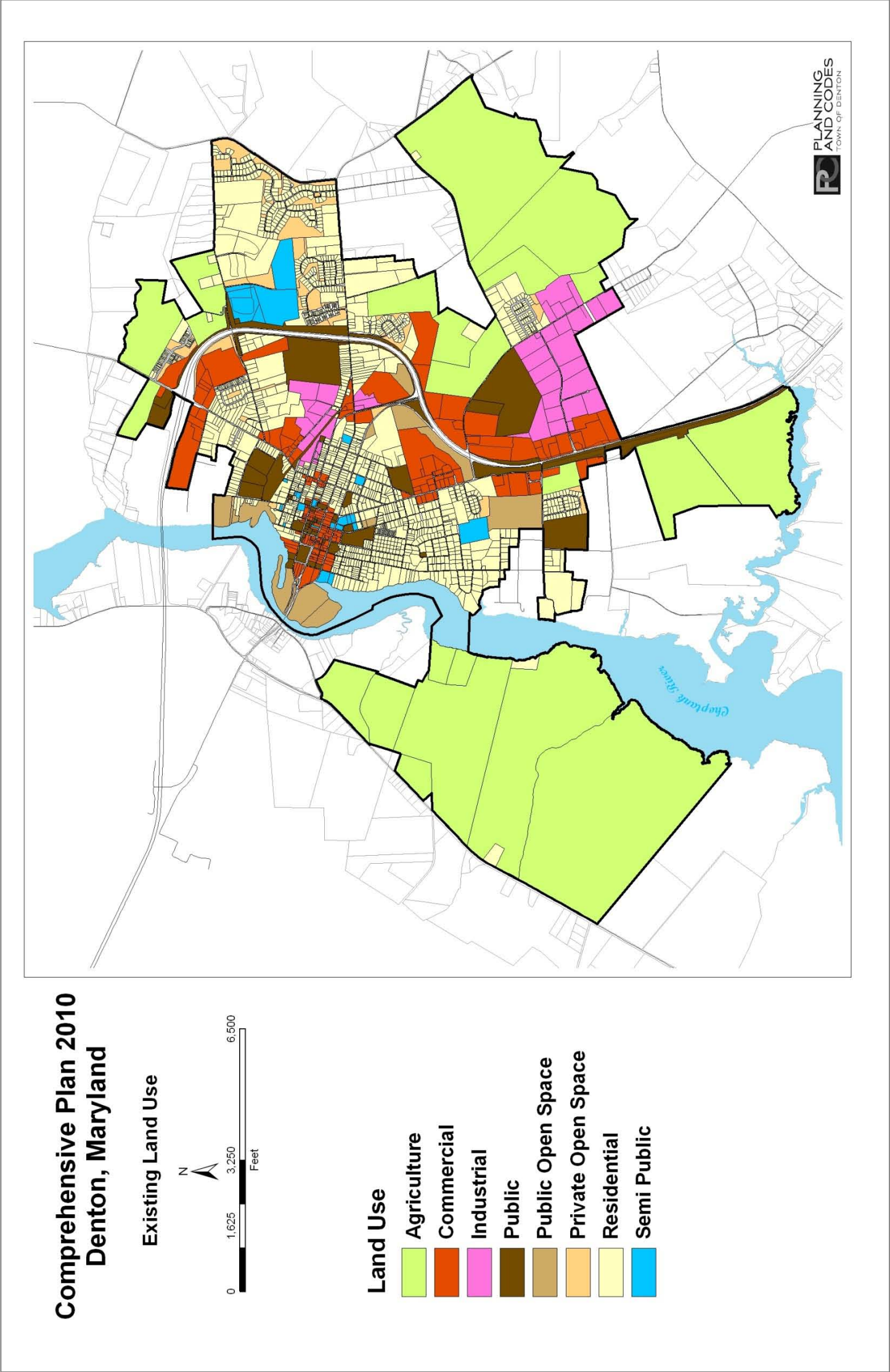
Land Use	Acres	Percentage of Total
Residential	720	22%
Commercial	284	9%
Industrial	160	5%
Public	244	7%
Semi Public	65	2%
Private Open Space	80	2%
Public Open Space	99	3%
Agricultural	1,620	50%
Environmentally Sensitive ^{note}	0	0
Total	3,272	100%

Note: Existing environmentally sensitive land is not identified as separate use

Description of Land Use Categories:

- Residential – Suburban Residential, Town Scale Residential, Mixed Residential Zoning Districts, Planned Neighborhood Eligible or Applied, and Redevelopment Eligible or Applied Floating Zones
- Commercial – Central Business Commercial, Regional Highway Commercial, Commercial Medical, and General Commercial Zoning Districts
- Industrial – Light and Heavy Industrial
- Semi Public – Churches ,and Private Camps (e.g., Wesleyan) or Private Recreation (e.g., Lions Club Park)
- Public – School and Town, County, State, or Federal-owned improved parcels
- Private Open Space – Subdivision-owned Common Open Areas
- Public Open Space – Parks and Town, County, State, or Federal-owned, nearly or all unimproved parcels
- Agriculture – All undeveloped Planned Neighborhood Eligible (PNE) zoned Rural County (R) when annexed, and various large vacant Suburban Residential (SR) parcels
- Environmentally Sensitive – All land constrained by Critical Area Rural Conservation Area (RCA), steep slopes, floodplain, wetlands and habitats of threatened and endangered species
- Growth Areas – Defined specifically by zoning district category later in this chapter

Map 3-1



Map 3-2

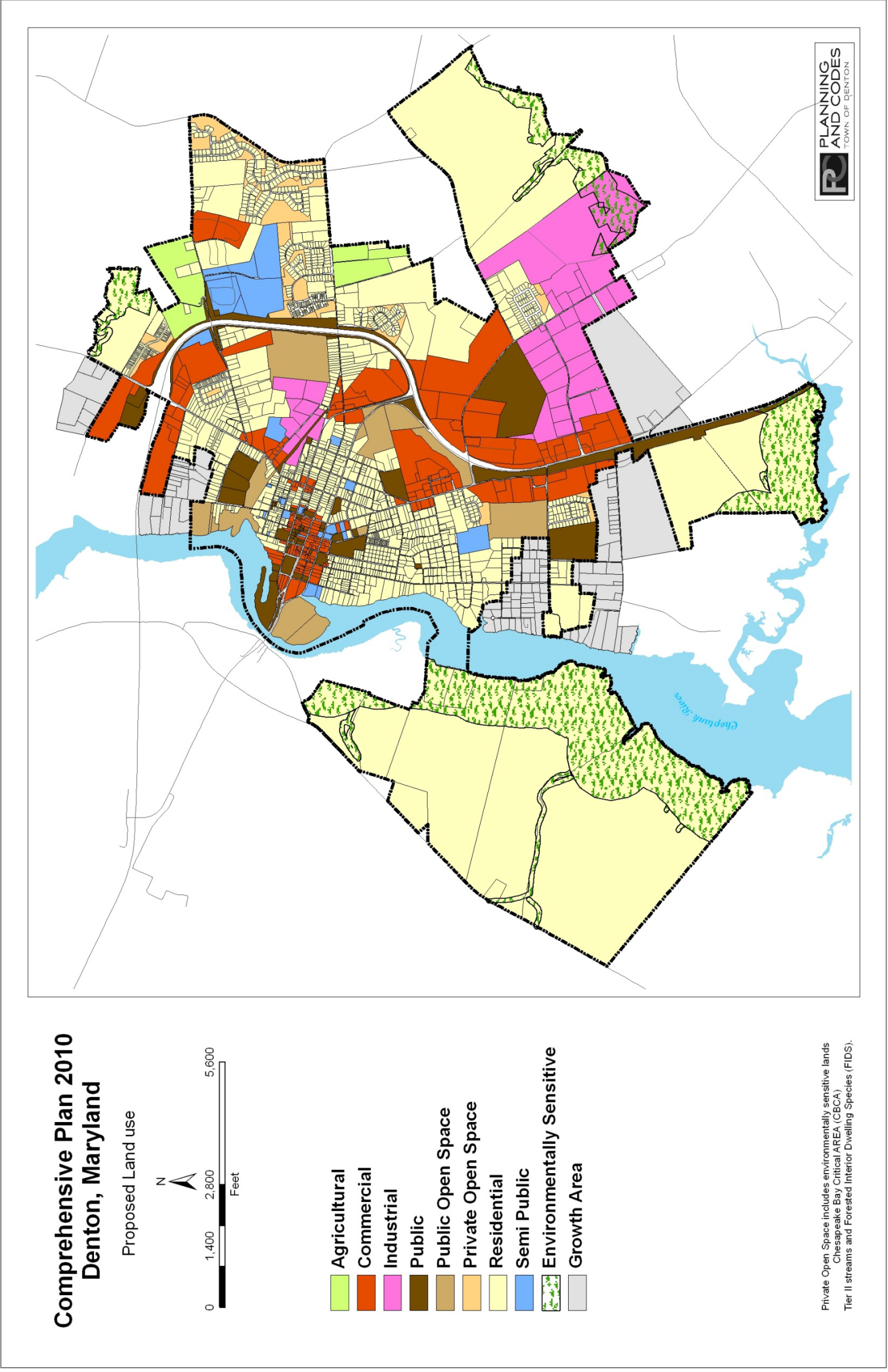


Table 3-2: Existing And Proposed Land Use

LAND USE	EXISTING*		PROPOSED			
			Planned Neighborhood Eligible IF NOT Developed		Planned Neighborhood Eligible IF Developed	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Residential	720	22%	829	25%	2,089	64%
Commercial	284	9%	375	11%	375	11%
Industrial	160	5%	269	8%	269	8%
Public	244	7%	194	6%	194	6%
Semi Public	65	2%	79	3%	79	3%
Private Open Space	80	2%	66	2%	66	2%
Public Open Space	99	3%	139	4%	139	4%
Agricultural	1,620	50%	1,321	41%	61	2%
TOTAL	3,272	100%	3,272	100%	3,272	100%
Environmentally Sensitive			202	6%	482	15%

*Existing Land use does not reflect Planned Neighborhood overlay on 1,325 acres of agriculture land use.

The proposed land use changes reflect two possible scenarios for the growth of Denton (Table 3-2). Much of the agricultural land use is zoned with an overlay of Planned Neighborhood. Land west of the Choptank River has no planned facilities and cannot be connected cost effectively to existing facilities serving the community east of the river. At the present time, there are no plans by the Town of Denton or developers to permit or construct facilities west of the river. The Proposed Land Use calculations with Planned Neighborhood not developed west of the river is the most reflective of the Town's vision for the next two decades. The environmentally sensitive area was added as a land use overlay to establish the lands that are potentially restricted by Critical Area and sensitive areas covered by stream buffers, floodplain, wetlands, steep slopes and habitats of threatened and endangered species.

The proposed land uses also exemplify the Town's vision of increased commercial and industrial properties and the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. Land use is to be distinguished from zoning, the latter being the development regulations of a city or county where areas, or zones, are created, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these zoning districts. Zoning is a key implementation tool of a Comprehensive Plan. Land use is the types of buildings and activities existing in an area or on a specific site. Existing and proposed zoning for the Town is discussed later in the chapter.

Vacant Land

The “vacant lands” shown on Map 3-3 illustrate all vacant parcels in **all land use categories**. The vacant parcels that allow for residential development were used as the preliminary data to calculate the “Residential Capacity” as described in Chapter 4, Municipal Growth Element. Table 3-3 shows acreages for the existing land use classifications.

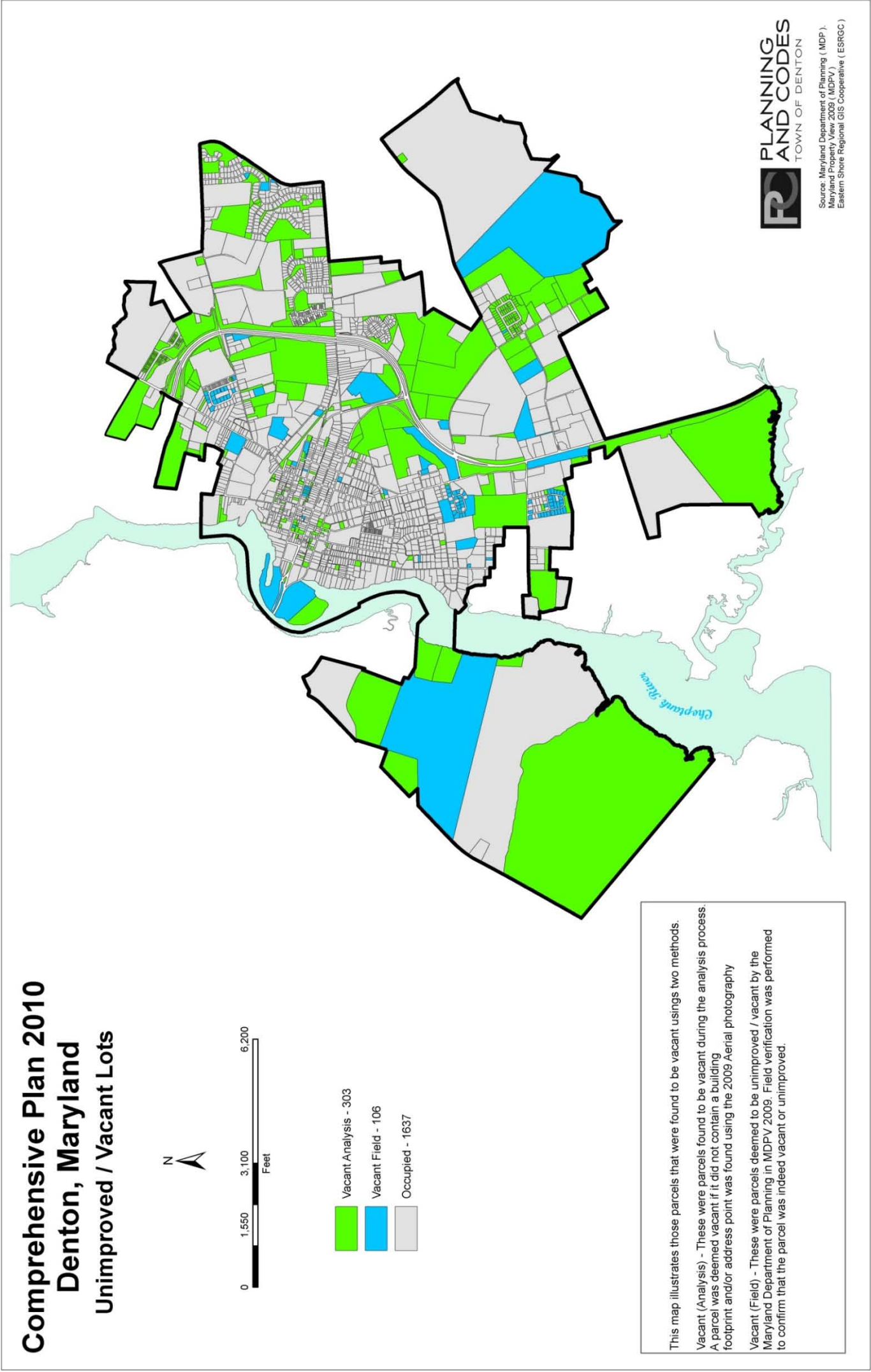
Table 3-3: Vacant Land

LAND USE CATEGORY: [calculated from the comparison of parcels in the existing land use classifications (Map 3-1) and the vacant parcels from Map 3-3]	ACRES	PERCENT
Vacant Residential Land Use	114	7.4%
Vacant Commercial Land Use	101	6.5%
Vacant Industrial Land Use	68	4.4%
Vacant Agricultural (includes Rural with PN overlay)	1,038	67.2%
Other (Private Open Space, Public, Semi Public and Public Open Space)	223	14.4%
TOTAL VACANT LAND	1,544	100%

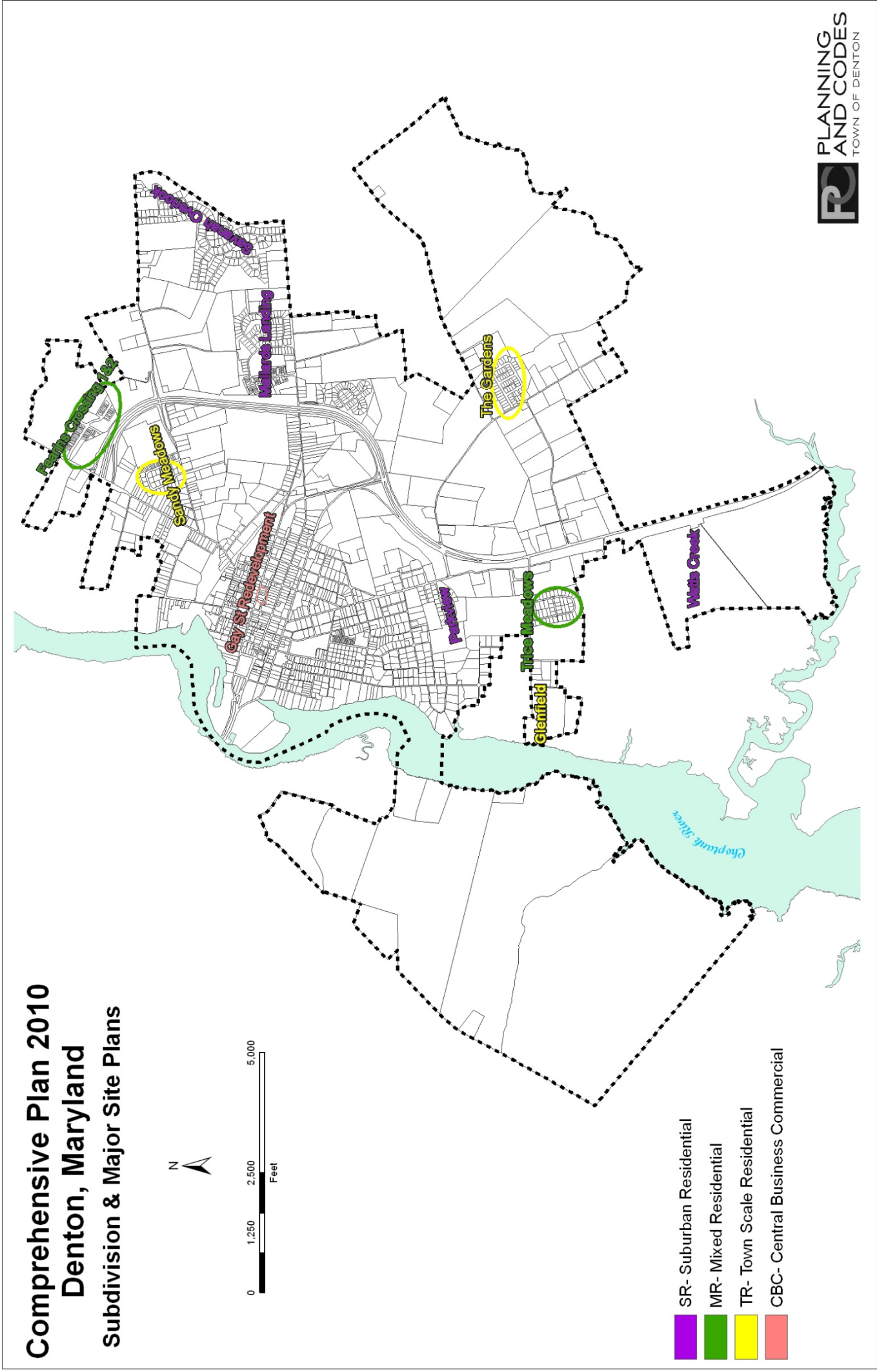
Included in the residential vacant acreage calculations are 519 subdivision lots that are platted or have been given site plan approval and are currently undeveloped (Table 3-4). Map 3-4 shows the location of the major subdivisions in Denton.

Table 3-4: Subdivisions

SUBDIVISION	UNDEVELOPED LOTS
Trice Meadows	29
Sandy Meadows	12
Parkview Estates	19
Mallard Landing	1
Fearins Crossing Phase I	60
The Gardens	62
Fearins Crossing Phase II	12
Savannah Overlook Phase IV	2
Glenfield	41
Village at Watts Creek	257
Gay Street Redevelopment	24
TOTAL	519



Map 3-4



Current Zoning and Proposed Zoning Changes

The Town of Denton Zoning Ordinance currently has nine Euclidean (By-Right) zoning districts, three overlay zones, and four floating zones regulating land use, setbacks, and lot sizes in Town (Map 3-5). Below are the current districts plus proposed changes.

Zoning districts categorized by land use:

Residential:

- Suburban Residential (SR)
- Town Scale Residential (TR)
- Mixed Residential (MR)

Commercial:

- Commercial Business District (CBC) acronym changed from CC
- Commercial Medical (CM)
- Highway Commercial (HC) – name changed to Regional Highway Commercial (RHC)

Industrial:

- Light Industrial (LI) – to be changed to Industrial (I)
- Heavy Industrial (HI) – to be eliminated

County Zoning (holdover from five-year annexation hold):

- Rural County (R) – e.g., agriculture – to be eliminated

Overlay Zones:

- Historic (HD)
- Arts and Entertainment (AE)
- Critical Area (CA)

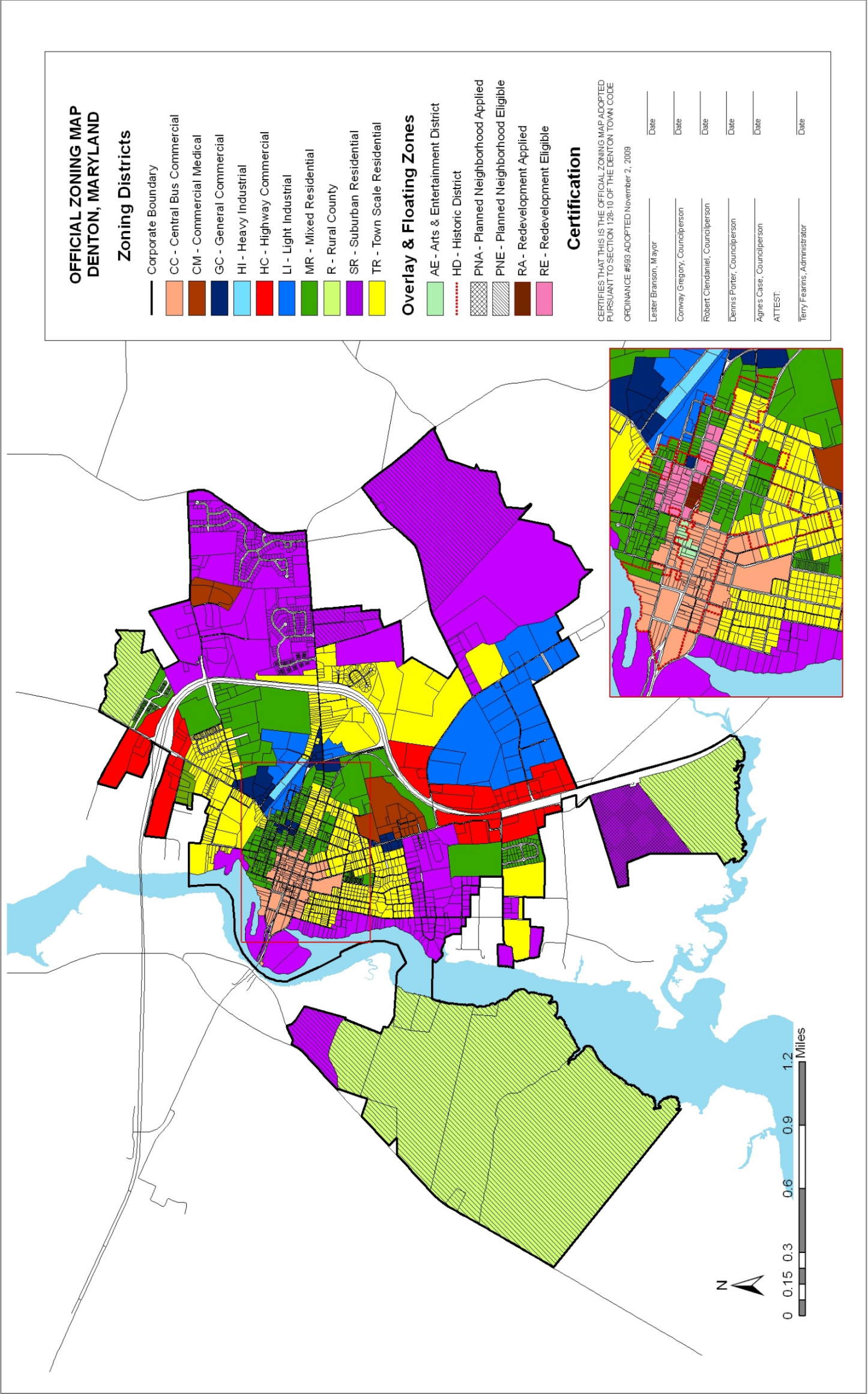
Floating Zones

- Planned Neighborhood Eligible (PNE)
- Planned Neighborhood Applied (PNA)
- Redevelopment Eligible (RE)
- Redevelopment Applied (RA)

Proposed New Districts:

- Recreation and Parks (RP)
- Rural Agriculture (RA)
- Mixed Industrial (MI)
- Rural Conservation (RC) [Overlay Zone]

Map 3-5



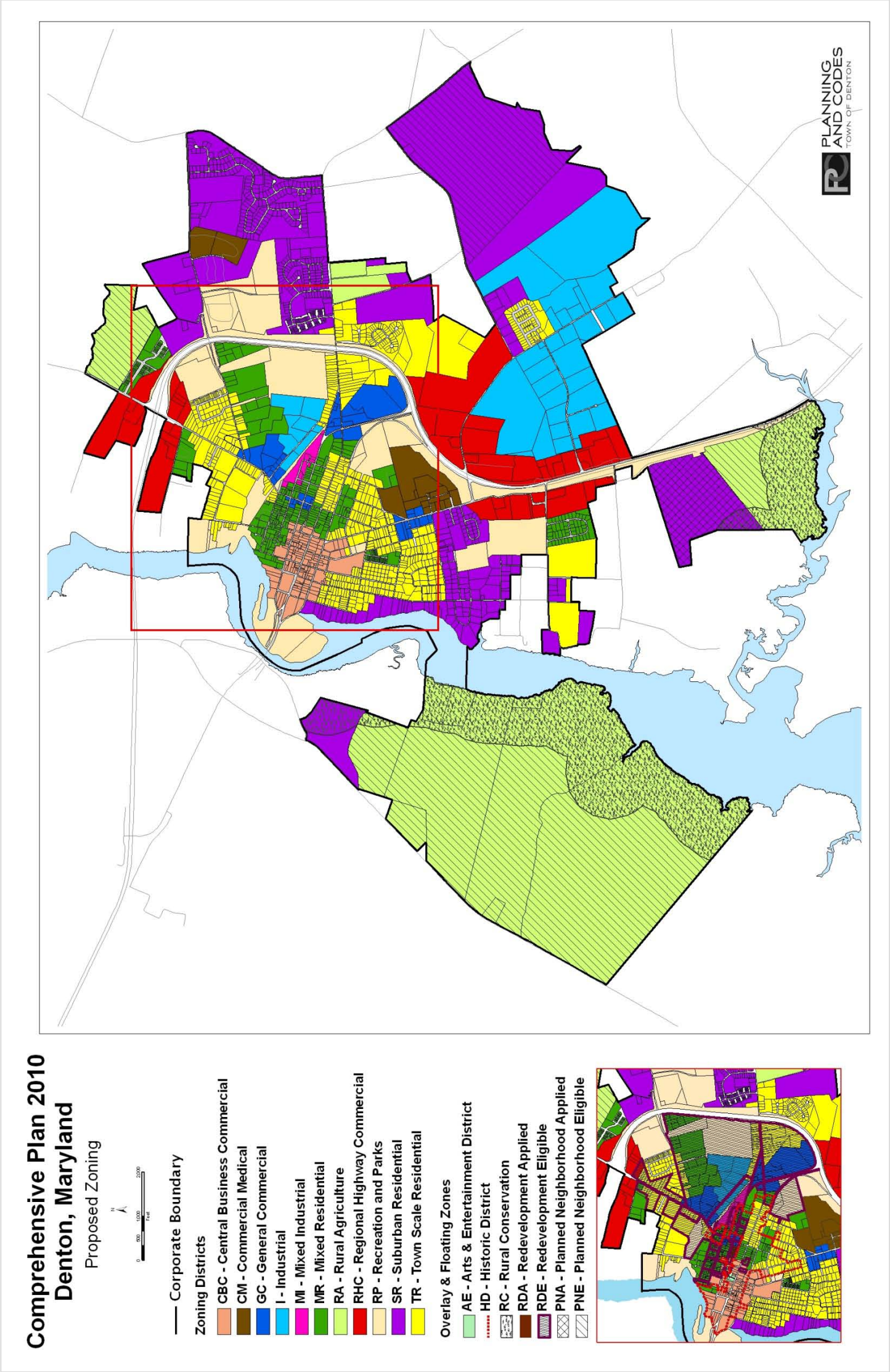


Table 3-5: Comparison of changes in Current and Proposed Zoning

Current Zoning		Proposed Zoning			
	Acres		Acres	Change	% Change
Town Scale Residential (TR)	416	TR	330	-86	-21%
Suburban Residential (SR)	1020	SR	769	-251	-25%
Mixed Residential (MR)	265	MR	137	-128	-48%
Total Residential	1,701	Total Residential	1,236	-465	-27%
Highway Commercial (HC)	179	Regional Highway Commercial (RHC)	237	58	31%
Commercial Medical (CM)	57	CM	57	0	0%
Central Business Commercial (CC)	49	Central Business Commercial (CBC)	49	0	0%
General Commercial (GC)	29	GC	56	27	93%
Total Commercial	314	Total Commercial	399	85	27%
Light Industrial (LI)	232	Industrial (I)	310	73	31%
Heavy Industrial (HI)	5				
		Mixed Industrial (MI)	8	8	-
Total Industrial	237	Total Industrial	318	81	34%
Rural County	990	RA - Rural Agriculture	1,015	25	2.5%
		RP – Recreation & Parks	304	304	-
Subtotal	3,242		3,272	-	-
Right of Way Acreage	33			-	-
TOTAL	3,272		3,272	-	-
FLOATING ZONES					
Planned Neighborhood Eligible	1,249	Planned Neighborhood Eligible	1,190	-59	-5%
Planned Neighborhood Applied	76		76		
Redevelopment Eligible	10		285		
Redevelopment Applied	1.3		1.3		

As shown in Table 3-5, the rezoning plan decreases residentially zoned land from 1,701 acres to 1,241 acres (a 27% reduction). This decrease includes changes in Town Scale Residential, Suburban Residential, and Mixed Residential zones. Commercially zoned land increases from approximately 314 acres to 394 acres (a 25% increase), and industrial area increases to 318 acres from 237 acres (a 34% increase). The increase in industrial zoned land includes 8 acres of a mixed use zone (Mixed Industrial) that allows all the current industrial uses plus an added residential use. These increase acreage in the commercial and industrial zoned properties will give the Town the ability to expand its commercial and private sector employment bases.

Denton's current population is estimated to be 4,022. The Capacity Analysis explained in detail within Chapter 4 "Municipal Growth," of this comprehensive plan, concluded that there is available land, not including proposed growth area, to accommodate a population between 10,044 to 12,168 (4,628 to 5,607) dwelling units). The Town concluded that the population should be limited due to WWTP constraints, as discussed in Chapter 5, the "Water Resource" element. The decrease in residentially zoned lands is one tool that the Town will utilize to manage residential growth.

Residential

The residential neighborhoods, old and new, are the life blood of the community. The Town believes that every effort should be made to ensure that the neighborhoods are places where people want to live because the neighborhoods will meet more of the residents needs than the alternatives located in rural area.

The Town believes that neighborhoods should be compact, pedestrian friendly, and contain an appropriate mix of uses. Many activities of daily life should occur within walking distance of residents. A broad range of housing types and price levels should be available throughout the neighborhoods and the community. Civic, institutional, and neighborhood commercial activity should be embedded in the neighborhoods, and a range of parks, tot lots, commons and greens, and ball fields, should be distributed throughout. To achieve these ends, new neighborhoods should be designed based on sound urban place-making principles and stand in stark contrast to low-density rural and suburban subdivisions that destroy rural character, displace working farms, and fragment natural land forms.

For these reasons, Denton's residential development concept emphasizes two key objectives related to land use development. The first is that the positive features of existing neighborhoods are protected and encouraged to continue. Neighborhood conservation and revitalization are important Town objectives. A key to insuring neighborhood stability is to encourage re-investment in older properties and appropriate infill and re-development. The Town has adopted infill and redevelopment standards and guidelines to achieve this objective. The purposes for these infill and redevelopment standards and guidelines are to:

- Accommodate growth in the Town by encouraging and facilitating new development on vacant, bypassed, and underutilized land where such development is found to be compatible with the existing neighborhood.
- Encourage efficient use of land and public services in the context of existing communities.

- Stimulate economic investment and development in older established neighborhoods.
- Provide developers and property owners flexibility so that they can achieve high quality design and develop infill projects that strengthen existing neighborhoods.
- Create high quality neighborhoods compatible with the community environment. The “Pattern Book for Denton Neighborhoods” serves as a guide for redevelopment, certain Mixed Residential dwellings, and all Planned Neighborhoods. (*Urban Design Associates*)
- Improve approval certainty for infill development by providing clear development standards.
- Encourage compact development that is pedestrian-scaled and, if applicable, transit-oriented.
- Encourage **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)**; which is a building or community that is designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance: energy savings, water efficiency, CO₂ emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts. The LEED Green Building Rating System was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

The second key objective is that new residential neighborhoods reflect the best in local precedents and the positive characteristics of the Town’s older neighborhoods and be fully integrated parts of the Town. In order to achieve this objective, new neighborhoods must conform to basic community design principles:

- accommodate and promote pedestrian travel equally as much as motor vehicle trips;
- design residentially-scaled buildings fronting on, and generally aligned with, streets;
- include a diversity of household types, age groups, and income levels;
- adhere to traditional town building and site development patterns with an interconnected and broadly rectilinear pattern of streets, alleys, and blocks, providing for a balanced mix of pedestrians and automobiles;
- create functionally diverse, but visually unified, communities focused on central squares;
- use neighborhood greens, landscaped streets, boulevards, and "single-loaded" parkways woven into street and block patterns to provide space for social activity, parks, and visual enjoyment;
- plan for buildings for civic or religious assembly or for other common or institutional purposes in prominent locations as landmarks and symbols of identity;

- locate dwellings, shops, and workplaces in close proximity to each other and at a scale that accommodates and promotes pedestrian travel for trips within the community;
- preserve areas of open space, scenic vistas, agricultural lands, and natural areas; and;
- utilize designated growth areas efficiently.

The purpose of each category is to recognize existing development patterns and land use characteristics and establish policies to help ensure neighborhood stability where areas are mostly developed. In areas where vacant or underutilized land remains, the intent is to ensure appropriate infill, redevelopment or new development.

Current Residential Land Use Category as defined by Zoning Districts

Suburban Residential (SR)

The purpose of the Suburban Residential zoning district is to provide for single-family residential development of spacious character, together with such public buildings, schools, churches, public recreational facilities, and accessory uses, as may be necessary or are normally compatible with residential surroundings. This district is situated to protect existing development of high character and contains vacant land considered appropriate for such development in the future.

An additional purpose of this zone is to identify areas where the Town will regulate development so as to protect existing suburban neighborhoods as well as provide limited new areas for single-family residential development of a similar character.

The Suburban Residential zoning district is located along the eastern shore of the Choptank River, large parcels on the east side of Route 404 and one large parcel south of Deep Shore Road on State Road 404 (Gannons Purchase, LLC). A large number of primarily vacant parcels are overlaid with a Planned Neighborhood land use (defined later). The parcels that border the east bank of the Choptank River, mostly improved, are included in the Denton portion of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. The Suburban Residential district encompasses approximately 1,020 acres, consisting of 543 parcels of the Town area and currently includes a mix of land uses, including town parks, school properties, churches, and other non-profit organizations (e.g., the Wesleyan Center). One parcel, 75 acres has an overlay Planned Neighborhood zoning.

Existing development and vacant properties in this category conform to State “smart growth” principles as they relate to density and compact design.

Town Scale Residential (TR)

The purpose of the Town Scale Residential zoning district is to provide for single-family residential development of town-scale character, together with such public buildings, schools, churches, public recreational facilities, and accessory uses, as may be necessary or are normally compatible with residential surroundings. This category is located to accommodate future single-family development in the patterns, forms, and densities which currently exist in established medium-density single-family neighborhoods within the Town. Limited amounts of two-family

and multifamily residences are permitted in this category only in the context of a planned residential development.

The overall intent of this zoning district is to maintain the character of traditional and stable single-family neighborhoods within the Town core. Protecting the character of the existing neighborhoods and allowing appropriate infill and redevelopment should be the primary objectives of the Town within these neighborhoods. This land use area's density is slightly higher than Suburban Residential and, accordingly, conforms to the State's "Smart Growth" principles.

The Town Scale Residential zoning district includes neighborhoods south of the Central Business Commercial (CBC) between Fourth and Eighth streets, east of the CBC along Market and Franklin Streets, north of the old rail road line straddling Sixth Street and along the MD 404 Bypass corridor between Sixth Street and Hobbs Road and Gay Street. There is also an area of Town Scale Residential located on the east side of State Road 404, along Legion and Foy Roads. Currently the district encompasses approximately 715 individual parcels, comprising 416 acres. Over half of the land within Town Residential category is currently developed and consists of detached single-family residential units, with a few scattered townhouse and apartments units in stable neighborhoods. About 104 acres of the land is owned by public or semi-public organizations including the Town of Denton, Caroline County Board Education, the Caroline County Commissioners, the Fire Department, the State of Maryland, and church organizations.

Mixed Residential (MR)

The purpose of the Mixed Residential zoning district is to provide for higher density single-family and multiple-family residences within the Town core, together with such public buildings, schools, churches, public recreational facilities, and accessory uses as may be necessary or are normally compatible with residential surroundings.

The current Mixed Residential district, 408 parcels encompassing approximately 265 acres, accommodates a mix of higher density single-family and multi-family residential development. Land within this category is either currently developed with a mix of higher density (relative to the Suburban and Town Residential categories) single-family and multifamily development or is undeveloped but is considered appropriate for higher density residential neighborhoods. Density within this district also conforms to State "Smart Growth" principles.

This zoning district is often the classification of choice by applicants for annexation because of the higher density and mix of residential types permitted. Where the area is developed, the Mixed Residential land use category is characterized by a mix of detached single family, townhouse, and multi-family units.

Planned Neighborhood (PN)

The *1997 Comprehensive Plan* identified "residential" as the preferred land use for several portions of the future growth area. Since that time, the Town has refined its expectations for new residential neighborhoods, adopting the State's Smart Neighborhood guidance concerning the characteristics the new neighborhoods should exhibit. These characteristics are:

- Integrated mix of uses, including residential, commercial, employment/office, civic, and open space;
- Range of housing types and densities;
- Compact design;
- Interconnected streets designed to balance the needs of all users, with sidewalks and on-street parking;
- Open spaces integral to the community; and
- Location adjacent to and extended fabric of existing development.

Source: Maryland Department of Planning, Models and Guidelines – Smart Neighborhoods, Publication # 2001-04, September 2001

Densities within this land use category ranged from 3.5 to 5.0 dwelling units per acres and, therefore, conform to the State’s “Smart Growth” principles. The State’s guidance is reflected in the Planned Neighborhood Development standards and guidelines that apply to most of the recently annexed properties. The current Planned Neighborhood overlay district encompasses approximately 1,325 acres, comprising 18 individual parcels of land. Approximately 76 acres of the Planned Neighborhood category has a “preliminary plan approval” with an approved development rights and responsibilities agreement. The Planned Neighborhood Applied project, Village at Watts Creek, has been approved for 257 single family lots. Given the conclusions and goals to contain Denton’s growth as set forth in various other sections of the plan, some of the properties originally selected to be developed as Planned Neighborhoods may no longer be appropriate for such development. The Town may choose to amend some of the annexation agreements that provide for development as a Planned Neighborhood to allow development in another form. If, and when that occurs, development would proceed under the underlying zoning for the property.

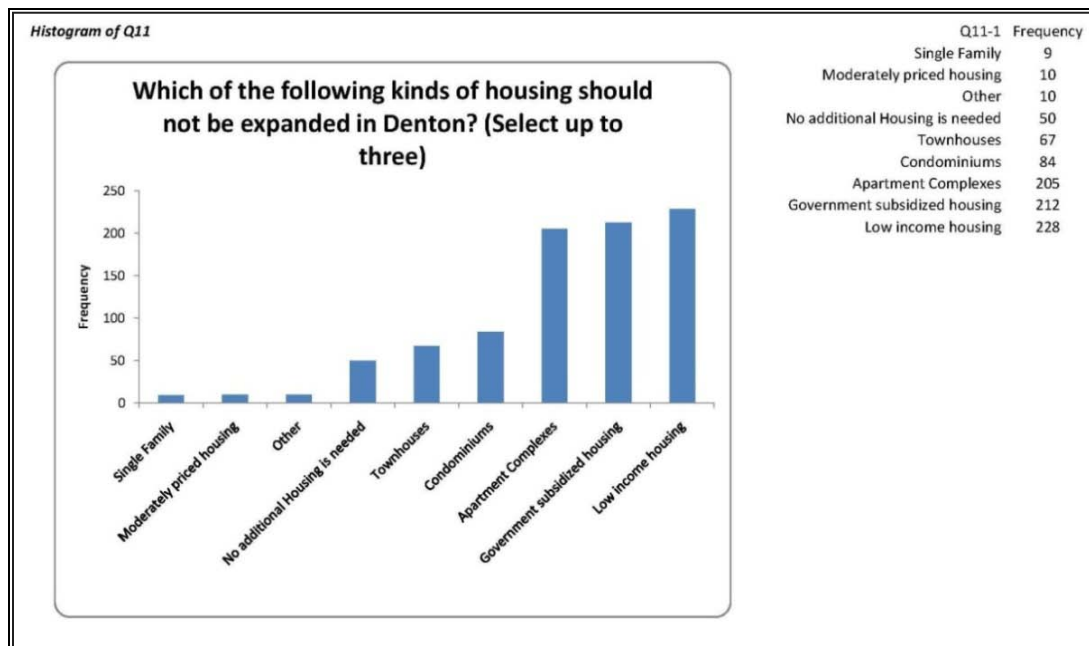
Residential Summary

Differentiating factors among the residential land use areas in the older parts of Denton are density and the mix of unit types.

More multifamily units can be found in the Mixed Residential land use category than the other two but some townhouse and multi-family units may be found in the Suburban Residential and Town Scale Residential land categories as well. Single family units are located in all of the residential categories, as well as most of the commercial land use categories. Chart 3-1 shows responses to the “preferred housing types” question that was presented in the Town of Denton survey completed in September, 2009 (refer to Appendix 1). When residents were asked what type of housing should not be expanded, apartment complexes were ranked among the highest types chosen by respondents, with single family and moderate priced housing among the most desired type for new construction.

The proposed zoning map illustrates a proposed new district in the older part of Town called Mixed Industrial. The purpose of the new zone, which is approximately 7.7 acres, is to allow a transition in use from Industrial to Residential. The change will be directly influenced by market conditions, developers and individual residents, the current industrial uses will remain and continue as a conforming use, with the addition of a residential option.

Chart 3-1



Current Commercial and Industrial Land Use Category as defined by Zoning Districts

As Denton continues to grow, its importance as a commercial center for the region will increase. In addition to the market potential that comes with being located on MD 404, a heavily traveled route to Atlantic beaches, expected population and income growth will reinforce local shopping and create demand for more and a wider variety of commercial goods and services. The Land Use Plan anticipates this need by identifying land areas for a variety of commercial land uses, each appropriate to the scale and intensity of commercial activity anticipated. In addition to the traditional Central Business Commercial (CBC) area, the Land Use Plan provides for regional, larger scale, highway-oriented commercial uses, general commercial uses at in-town locations, limited commercial in transitional areas within reasonable proximity to MD 404, specialized commercial where clustering of related commercial and services uses can occur, and neighborhood commercial in appropriate locations as part of a mixed-use, planned neighborhood development. The following describes the intent of each of these commercial areas and outlines the Town's commercial land policies.

Central Business Commercial (CBC)

This zoning district has a non-substantive name change from its former name, Central Business District (CC), to Central Business Commercial (CBC). The purpose of the Central Business Commercial area is to provide retail and office development and redevelopment within the Central Business Commercial area of the Town. Appropriate uses are generally the same as for the GC area (see below), but with altered yard requirements and altered off-street parking requirements in recognition of the practical difficulty of providing off-street parking in the Central Business District, and in recognition of the collective responsibility to provide off-street parking for smaller establishments. Development/redevelopment in this district shall be

compatible with the existing historic, aesthetic, and pedestrian character of the downtown area in terms of scale and design. Residential uses are also appropriate in this district in order to support commercial uses.

The Central Business Commercial (CBC) zoning district identifies the historic central shopping area where the Town will continue to accommodate a compatible mix of commercial, business, office, institutional, and residential uses. Town programs for the CBC will emphasize public-private partnerships in furtherance of the following policies:

- Future development and/or redevelopment within the CBC will be compatible and harmonious with the desired character of the Town Center in order to promote the development of the Town center as an economically vital and aesthetically pleasing place to live, work, visit and shop.
- The Town will continue to initiate streetscape improvements in the CBC, particularly in the vicinity of Market, Franklin, and Gay Streets and the Courthouse area. Public/private initiatives to improve the physical appearance of the streetscape should include: further development of landscaped, off-street municipal parking areas; incentive programs to encourage facade renovation of commercial and office buildings; and utilization of the “Pattern Book for Denton Neighborhoods” that includes standards for design and maintenance of non-residential structures and signs within the CBC.
- The Town will support and encourage the efforts of the CBC Merchants Association and Main Street Manager to promote the physical and commercial revitalization of the Town center.
- The Town will work with merchants and landowners to address traffic and pedestrian circulation issues and parking demand.

The Central Business Commercial (CBC) area is currently characterized by a mix of general retail, specialty retail, service businesses, restaurants, offices, and institutional facilities. The CBC consists of about 151 individual parcels consisting of about 49 acres, not including public streets and right-of-ways. Of this total, approximately 3.5 acres are unimproved and a total of 4 acres have improvements valued at between \$0 and \$10,000. Over half of the CBC land use category (44 parcels and about 23 acres) consists of tax exempt properties in Town, County, State, or church ownership. Approximately 13.5 acres or about one quarter of the CBC is in commercial or office use. In 2009, the gross floor area in commercial and office use was 266,463 square feet and the ratio of floor area to land (FAR) about 0.45 making the CBC the most intensely used commercial area in the Town.

It is not reasonable to assume that unimproved property could be developed at a FAR of 0.45 under current development standards, even with consideration for such things as available public parking and credit for pedestrian trade. A more realistic FAR would be 0.25. Applying this FAR to the 3.5 acres of unimproved property, the CBC could accommodate approximately 38,115 square feet of addition commercial and/or office use.

Future development and/or redevelopment in the CBC should be compatible with the existing historic and aesthetic character of the downtown area. There should be continued recognition of the practical difficulty of providing off-street parking in the CBC. As such, future

development/redevelopment proposals should be of the type that do not generate excessive traffic and parking volumes and cater to pedestrian traffic.

Public/private initiatives should be undertaken to provide additional off-street parking areas within and on the perimeter of the CBC to serve existing and proposed businesses and offices. New development or redevelopment of the CBC should also be compatible with the pedestrian orientation of the area. Public/Private initiatives to encourage continued streetscape improvements and aesthetic amenities such as landscaping, thematic lighting, street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, and information kiosks), street tree plantings, facade improvements, etc., should continue.

Design codes and sign controls should apply to all new development, including public buildings and sites, to ensure the historic and aesthetic character of the downtown is maintained and improved. The CBC is included in the Denton historic district and efforts should be made to preserve structures and places of historic, cultural, and architectural significance. The overall intent of this district is to maintain and enhance the economic vitality and aesthetic appeal of the downtown area as it continues to transition from a traditional commercial center to an area more oriented towards specialty retail services, offices, and governmental uses.

General Commercial (GC)

The purpose of the General Commercial zoning district is to provide sufficient space in appropriate locations for a wide variety of business, commercial, and service activity, but which uses are not characterized by extensive warehousing, frequent heavy trucking activity, open storage of material, or the nuisance factors of dust, odor, and noise associated with manufacturing. The overall intent of this area is to provide areas for local commercial needs within the core areas of the Town which are compatible with Town character.

The overall purpose for this district is to provide areas for commercial uses primarily catering to local needs within the core areas of Town and that are compatible with Town character. The General Commercial land use category provides sufficient areas in the Town core for a wide variety of business and miscellaneous service activities, particularly along certain major Town streets where a general mixture of commercial and service activity presently exists, but which uses are not characterized by extensive or large-scale warehousing, frequent heavy trucking activity, open storage or related nuisance factors such as noise, smoke, dust, odor, glare, or vibration. The Town's policy concerning land use in this category is:

- Development and/or redevelopment will be compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods and not cause excessive traffic, noise, and glare impacts which would negatively affect the surrounding neighborhood.

The current General Commercial zoning district appears in several clusters throughout the Town including two areas along the Sixth street corridor, on Fifth Street north of Kerr Avenue, and at the intersection of Gay and East Market Street. Land uses include auto repairs and service, personal service establishments, convenience stores, a fast food restaurant, offices, warehousing and apartments. General Commercial includes 41 individual parcels and encompasses over 29 acres. Of this total, approximately 4.38 acres are tax exempt properties including the County and School Board offices and a cemetery.

In 2009, approximately 15.45 acres of the General Commercial category was described as substantially improved. Collectively, these commercial uses consisted of 78,916 square feet of gross floor area, which equates to an FAR of about 0.12. Approximately 4.9 acres were unimproved in 2009. Assuming the FAR of 0.12 that is characteristic of existing developed properties, the potential development capacity remaining in this land use category represents about 25,613 square feet of additional commercial floor area.

The proposed zoning changes for the General Commercial district increases the acreage from 29 acres to 56 acres. Approximately 22 acres are considered improved, excluding the County and School Board offices, a cemetery, and Volunteer Fire Department properties. The commercial uses consist of 105,505 square feet of gross floor area within the 22 acres, this equates to a FAR of 0.11. The development capacity for the unimproved 34 acres, using the FAR of 0.11, is 162,914 square feet of additional commercial floor area.

Regional Highway Commercial (RHC)

This zoning district has a non-substantive name change from its former name, Highway Commercial (HC), to Regional Highway Commercial (RHC).

The purpose of the Highway Commercial zoning district is to provide for a number of retail and office establishments and commercial services for use by the traveling public on or near major roads or streets in the Town and at the same time is intended to maintain the appearance of the highways and their access points by limiting outdoor advertising and establishing high standards for development. Commercial development in this area shall be in the form of well-planned and heavily buffered commercial concentrations as opposed to traditional forms of highway strip commercial. Commercial development in this district shall be subject to high standards for buffering and landscaping, access control, efficient internal auto and pedestrian orientation, screening of loading/unloading and service areas, lot depth-to-width ratios which promote minimal road frontage, service roads and reverse lot frontage concepts and other site design amenities which enhance aesthetic appeal.

This zoning district is intended for more intense, auto-oriented regional commercial and office development at appropriate locations along MD Route 404 where easy and safe access is available or can be provided. While strongly supporting expansion of regional shopping and employment opportunities, the Town insists that development in this land use category is accomplished in a manner consistent with Town policies and objectives related to traffic and safety, aesthetics and efficient use of existing land resources. These objectives include the following:

- Locate future regional commercial development and/or redevelopment in areas designated in the Land Use Plan.
- Encourage infill and redevelopment of regional commercial sites.
- Improve the visual appearance along major highway and street corridors;
- Provide for the continued safe and efficient use of these roadways and improve pedestrian and traffic safety;
- Improve access and circulation to and within commercial and business sites;

- Implement access control standards to minimize intersection and site access points;
- Encourage appropriate design linkages between sites;
- Require context sensitive site planning and building design;
- Provide for reasonable, orderly, and effective display of outdoor advertising compatible with their surroundings;
- Enhance overall property values and the visual environment in the Town by discouraging signs which contribute to the visual clutter of the community;
- Ensure that new larger-scale, commercial development is designed as well-planned commercial parks or plazas with such features as extensive buffering and landscaping, efficient and landscaped internal traffic circulation and parking systems, screening of loading/unloading and service areas, and other site design amenities which improve the aesthetic appeal of the development; and
- Discourage typical strip-commercial forms of development.

The current Regional Highway Commercial zoning district includes land located at the Sixth Street and MD 313/MD 404 interchange and along the MD 404 corridor at the intersection of Fifth Street/Legion Road and MD 404 southward. Current land uses include shopping centers, auto service, fast food restaurant, hotel, offices, and branch banks. This area includes about 46 individual parcels and encompasses about 179 acres, not including state highway properties. In 2009, approximately 69 buildable acres of this district are unimproved. According to the Department of Assessment and Taxation records, the improved land area for commercial uses includes 402,855 square feet of floor area on 113 acres which equates to floor area ratio (FAR) of about 0.08. Assuming that the 69 acres of vacant land is developed at this FAR, the estimated development capacity of this land use category is about 240,451 square feet. If infill and redevelopment could result in an average FAR of 0.20 throughout this land use category, the building capacity is over 601,128 square feet of additional commercial floor area. Within reason and where possible, the Town should encourage infill and redevelopment of existing regional commercial properties with the objective in mind of increased utilization of existing properties. Older existing shopping centers should be encouraged to redevelop the sites to increase utilization, improve access and upgrade appearance. The ideal situation is a large-scale redevelopment project in accordance with a well-conceived master development plan.

The proposed changes to the Regional Highway Commercial district will increase the total acreage of the district to 237 total acres, an increase of 58 RHC zoned acres. According to the 2009 Department of Assessment and Taxation records, the improved land area of the proposed district is 101 acres, which includes approximately 358,635 square feet of floor area; this results in a FAR of 0.08. Unimproved land for the area is approximately 118 acres, developed at a FAR of 0.08 the estimated development capacity is about 411, 206 square feet of additional commercial floor area. As suggested earlier, using a FAR of 0.20, the building capacity would increase to 1, 028, 016 square feet of additional floor space. New regional highway commercial development in this district should be in the form of well-planned and appropriately landscaped commercial parks or centers as opposed to traditional forms of strip-commercial development. Business/Commercial parks in this district are required to address Town development standards for buffering and landscaping, access control, efficient internal auto and pedestrian circulation,

screening of loading/unloading and service areas, lot depth to width ratios which promote minimal road frontage, service roads and reverse lot frontage concepts and other sites amenities to enhance aesthetic appeal.

Commercial Medical (CM)

The purpose of the CM Medical zoning district is to provide an area for the orderly development of medical-related uses including care facilities within the Town. Permitted uses in the district include those uses customarily associated with medical care and assisted living.

The CM Medical district includes 19 individual parcels and encompasses approximately 57 acres. About 61% of the land in this land use category is currently improved with uses including ambulatory assisted living, day care, medical, and nursing home facilities. According to the Department of Assessment and Taxation records, the CM Medical district is currently developed with 205,226 square feet of gross floor area on approximately 35 acres. This equates to an average FAR of about 0.13. Assuming the balance of the district, 22 acres, is developed at this rate, the floor area capacity of the CM Medical district is about 124,581 square feet.

Development in the CM Medical district can generally be described as infill and redevelopment. In this sense, development and design objectives are the same as for any commercial infill and redevelopment project, namely that development:

- Protect the character of existing historic commercial areas;
- Improve the visual appearance along major highway and street corridors;
- Improve access and circulation to and within commercial and business sites;
- Improve sales and property values;
- Encourage appropriate design linkages between sites; and
- Require context sensitive site planning and building design.

Industrial (I)

This zoning district has a non-substantive name change from its former name, Light Industrial (LI), to Industrial (I). Note that Heavy Industrial (HI) will no longer be a land use category.

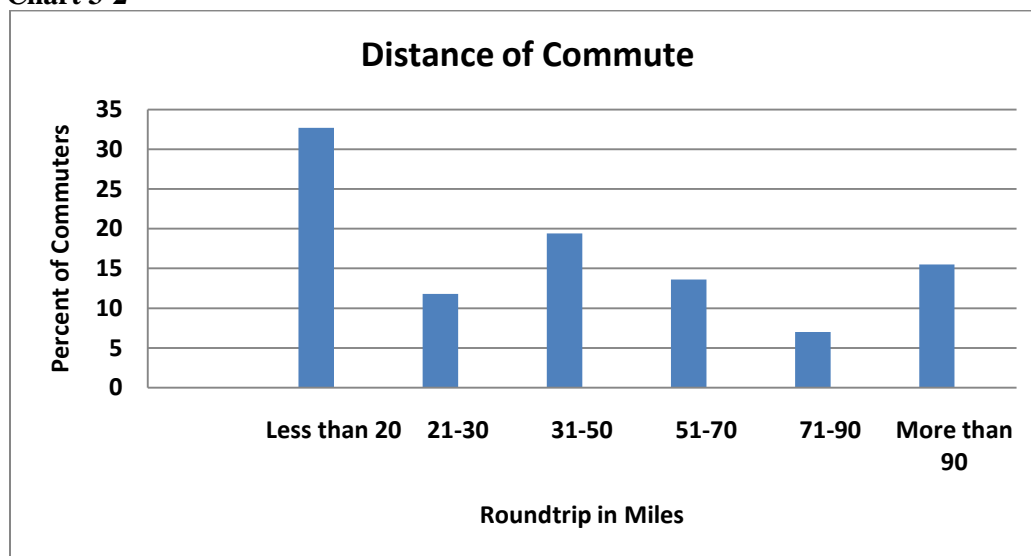
The purpose of the Industrial district is to provide areas in the appropriate locations for light manufacturing, fabricating, warehousing, and wholesale distributing in low buildings with off-street loading and off-street parking for employees, and with access by major thoroughfares. Development standards for this district shall be adequate to control excessive heat, odor, noise, dust, and vibration nuisance impacts which could potentially occur. Extensive bufferyards and screening shall be required to screen industrial development from adjacent residential development. In addition, waste removal businesses and similar uses are not permitted in this area.

Going forward, this category will separate some of existing industrial parcels adjacent to the old railroad spur and create a new zoning district called Mixed Industrial as discussed later in this chapter. The Denton Industrial Park within the Town's southeastern section town will remain and additional 95± acres within the Town's southeastern section will be added.

The Town of Denton has recently adopted an ordinance to regulate adult-oriented businesses. Specific parcels currently zoned Industrial and additional land proposed Industrial, located off of Engerman and Legion Roads, is designated with an adult-oriented business use. The previous zoning regulations in the Town did not define or regulate adult businesses any differently than other commercial establishments. As a result, an adult bookstore could open in a vacant retail store or a topless bar could replace an existing establishment today with little review by the Town. This being the case, the Town determined that there would be a likelihood of negative secondary effects should such businesses open in Denton. Municipalities are legally permitted to regulate Adult Oriented Businesses in order to minimize their accompanying negative secondary effect. After reviewing the studies of other communities, it was identified that the land uses most sensitive to the adverse effects of adult uses are; residential properties, the historic central business district, schools, houses of worship, child care facilities, and parks and playgrounds were identified. Limiting adult businesses to certain areas where they will have the least effect on these most sensitive land uses was recommended.

Providing more jobs closer to residents is important to the overall quality of life for County and Town residents alike. An important objective for any community is to achieve the best possible job/housing balance it can. In simple terms, job/housing balance means having jobs located close (e.g., 3 to 5 miles) to where workers live. Currently, many residents of Denton have to travel much further than five miles to their places of employment. In 2000, nearly 46 percent of workers in Caroline traveled outside of the County to work. The mean travel time was over 30 minutes (source: 2000 Census). Statistics below are showing answers to a Town of Denton survey that was completed in September, 2009. (Appendix 1) When residents were asked if they commuted to work 71% of respondents answered yes. Chart 3-2 shows the distance traveled (round trip); over 67% of respondents who commute traveled more than 20 miles roundtrip to work.

Chart 3-2



The Industrial zoning district is intended primarily for light manufacturing, fabricating, warehousing, and wholesale distributing in low buildings, with off-street parking for employees and with access by major thoroughfares. This district includes land within the Town that contains existing or planned "light" industrial development. It is the Town's intent to ensure that development in these areas is consistent with the following policies:

- Future industrial development and/or redevelopment will be located in those areas designated as appropriate by the Land Use Plan.
- Future industrial development will be encouraged to locate in planned employment parks.
- Industrial development will be required to provide controlled access and adequate bufferyards to screen adjacent non-industrial development from any potential negative visual, traffic, noise, dust, odor, and glare impacts.

The current Industrial zoning district includes 50 individual parcels consisting of 237 acres. Of this total, approximately 151 acres, or 62 percent of the area, is developed as industrial/commercial use. The Town's Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant is located within the Industrial zoning district. The plant is located on a parcel that is approximately 42.8 acres. Currently, the industrial area is developed with establishments related to manufacturing and light industrial, warehousing, auto sales, office and building supply uses, with a total floor area of 622,830 square feet. Excluding the 42.8 acres where the Town Water/Wastewater Treatment plant is located in the calculation of the FAR, which is a more realistic picture, equates to a FAR of 0.13. Table 3-7 illustrates the current Industrial acreage of 108 (minus the WWTP acreage), with a FAR of 0.13.

According to the 2009 Department of Assessment and Taxation data, approximately 95 acres of the current Industrial district are unimproved. Based on current usage patterns, the average FAR in the land use category is 0.13. Assuming this same usage pattern for the remaining 95 acres of vacant industrial land, the floor area capacity remaining in the area is about 537,966 square feet.

The proposed changes to the Industrial district increase the total acreage to approximately 310 acres, an increase of about 76 acres. According to the 2009 Department of Assessment and Taxation records, the improved land area of the proposed district, (not including the area proposed to be rezoned to Mixed Industrial) currently is 123 acres, with approximately 1,304,540 square feet of floor area; this results in a FAR of 0.24. Unimproved land for the area is approximately 172 acres, developed at a FAR of 0.24 the estimated development capacity is about 1,798,156 square feet of additional commercial floor area.

Commercial and Industrial Summary

Although not an exact science, the mix of employment-related land uses (primarily commercial and industrial) in the community must be judged against some criteria that relate to reasonable objectives for economic development and employment. One planning standard for a balanced, jobs-to-housing ratio is 0.65 jobs to every (1) one dwelling unit.

According to the Department of Assessment and Taxation, there is currently approximately 953,460 square feet (Table 3-6) of commercial floor area (includes office space) located in the Town. The Town has approximately 99.4 acres of undeveloped land within all of the

“commercial” land uses, using the appropriate floor to area ration (FAR) for each use, the total gross floor area available is 459,252 square feet.

Table 3-6: Existing and Estimated Commercial Floor Area Capacity

LAND USE CATEGORY	TOTAL ACRES	DEVELOPED ACRES	EXISTING GFA	FAR	UNDEVELOPED ACRES	CAPACITY Sq. Ft. GFA
Central Business Commercial	49	13.5	266,463	0.45	3.5	68,607
General Commercial	29	15.5	78,916	0.12	4.9	25,613
Regional Highway Commercial	179	113	402,855	0.08	69.0	240,451
Commercial Medical	57	35.0	205,226	0.13	22.0	124,581
TOTAL	314	177	953,460		99.4	459,252

Using a planning estimate of one employee per 600 square feet of commercial floor area as an indicator of “reasonable expectation”, there is approximately enough commercial land available for an additional 765 jobs in this employment sector, the current commercial floor area (953,460) would equate to approximately 1,589 jobs, for a total of 2,354 jobs (Table 3-8).

Table 3-7: Existing and Estimated Industrial Area Employment Capacity

	Acres	GFA	FAR	Estimated GFA	Estimated Employment
Existing (Developed)	108	622,830	0.13	622,830	830
Vacant	95	NA	0.13	537,966	717
Total	203	622,830		1,160,796	1,547

Using an average of one employee per 750 square feet of floor area as a measure of “reasonable expectation” for employment based on industrial floor area, the estimated employment capacity in the Industrial land use category, existing and vacant, is 1,547, an increase of 717. Table 3-8 illustrates an employment estimate if all of the vacant commercial and industrial lands when developed. Commercial estimated GFA is the total number calculated in Table 3-6 using the applicable FAR for each zoning district, the total is 459,252 square feet of floor area. Industrial category used the FAR of 0.13; the total estimated GFA is 1,160,796. Estimated total employment that can be accommodated in the commercial and industrial land use categories is about 3,901, employment in establishments that is consistent with the “reasonable expectation” factors

Table 3-8: Existing and Estimated Industrial and Commercial Area Employment

	Acres	Existing GFA	Observed FAR	Estimated GFA	Estimated Employment
INDUSTRIAL					
Existing (developed)	108	622,830	0.13	N/A	830
Vacant	95	NA	0.13	537,966	717
Subtotal	203	622,830		537,966	1,547
COMMERCIAL					
Existing (developed)	177	953,460	Variable (Table 3-6)	N/A	1,589
Vacant	99.4	N/A	Variable (Table 3-6)	459,252	765
Subtotal	276.4	953,460		459,252	2,354
TOTAL	522.4	1,576,290		997,218	3,901

Using the ratio of 0.65 jobs per dwelling unit as a measure of the adequacy of the potential employment that may be accommodated in the industrial and commercial categories, 3,901 jobs equates to 2,536 dwelling units.

The potential job capacity for the commercial and industrial land use equates to 2, 536 dwelling units (DU's) and a population of 5,503. As calculated in the Development Capacity Analysis, as discussed in the Municipal Growth Element, the Town of Denton has enough available land to accommodate a population of 10,044 to 12,168 (4,628 to 5,607 DU's). After analysis of the Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) capacities as discussed in the Water Resource Element of this Comprehensive Plan, Denton has currently opted to not increase the capacities of either the water system or the WWTP systems which would thereby restrict the potential for population growth. The Town has also decided to prioritize the remaining water and WWTP capacities first to commercial and industrial growth, and then to residential. The population projection when limiting the WWTP systems resulted in a population estimate of 6,125 residents for the year 2030. The potential job capacity of 3,901 as shown in Table 3-8, supports a population of 5,503 using the current land use.

Calculations for Industrial and Commercial Employment Opportunity using Proposed Zoning Changes

As shown in the “proposed land uses”, (Table 3-2) the Town has increased commercial land use from 9% to 11% and industrial from 5% to 8 % by rezoning appropriate areas to commercial and industrial use. This increase will supply additional acreage for increased commercial/industrial employment opportunity. Table 3-9 calculates the potential employment capacity that the new zoning proposal would create. The employment capacity could reach 5,557, an increase of 1,656 jobs from the current zoning job potential of 3,901 (Table 3-8). Using the ratio of 0.65 jobs per dwelling unit as a measure of the adequacy of the potential employment that may be accommodated in the industrial and commercial categories, the new capacity of 5,557 jobs equates to 3,612 dwelling units. Using the person per household rate of 2.17, 3,612 dwelling units estimates a population estimate of 7,838 that could be supported by the

employment capacity analysis. Rezoning would give the Town the resources to create opportunities for sufficient employment to support the predicted population up to the year 2030.

Table 3-9: Estimated Industrial and Commercial Area Employment Using Proposed Zoning Changes

	Acres	Existing GFA	Observed FAR	Estimated GFA	Estimated Employment
INDUSTRIAL					
Existing (developed)	86	674,309	0.18	N/A	899
Vacant	174	NA	0.18	1,364,299	1,819
Subtotal	262	674,309		1,364,299	2,718
COMMERCIAL					
Existing (developed)	172	935,829	Variable	N/A	1,560
Vacant	178	N/A	Variable	767,308	1,279
Subtotal	350	935,829		767,308	2,839
TOTAL	612	1,610,138		2,131,607	5,557

New Zoning Districts

Mixed Industrial (MI)

The Mixed Industrial zone is composed of 12 parcels that encompass 7.7 acres. This area is located northeast of Lincoln Street and Gay Street and southwest of the old railroad spur. This area, close to the downtown, offers job opportunities with their current businesses but as the boundary of the Town expanded, the removal of the railroad tracks and the improvements to Highway 404 that has made it the primary transportation route in Denton, the character of this part of the community is slowly beginning to change. These parcels are currently zoned Light Industrial and are occupied with current industrial uses and some residential. The Town would like for this section of Denton to have the opportunity to become a transitional area that could make available a residential use component, while maintaining the current industrial uses. This would allow the properties to change over time, if directed by the market, to a more residential use but allowing current businesses to retain their rights as a conforming use. Evaluation of the Industrial properties north/northeast of the State of Maryland parcel should be considered in future Comprehensive Plans as to their possible incorporation into the proposed Mixed Industrial zoning district. The Town would consider any parcels zoned Industrial that are in the downtown Industrial area (Crystal Avenue) a candidate for inclusion to the Mixed Industrial district if requested.

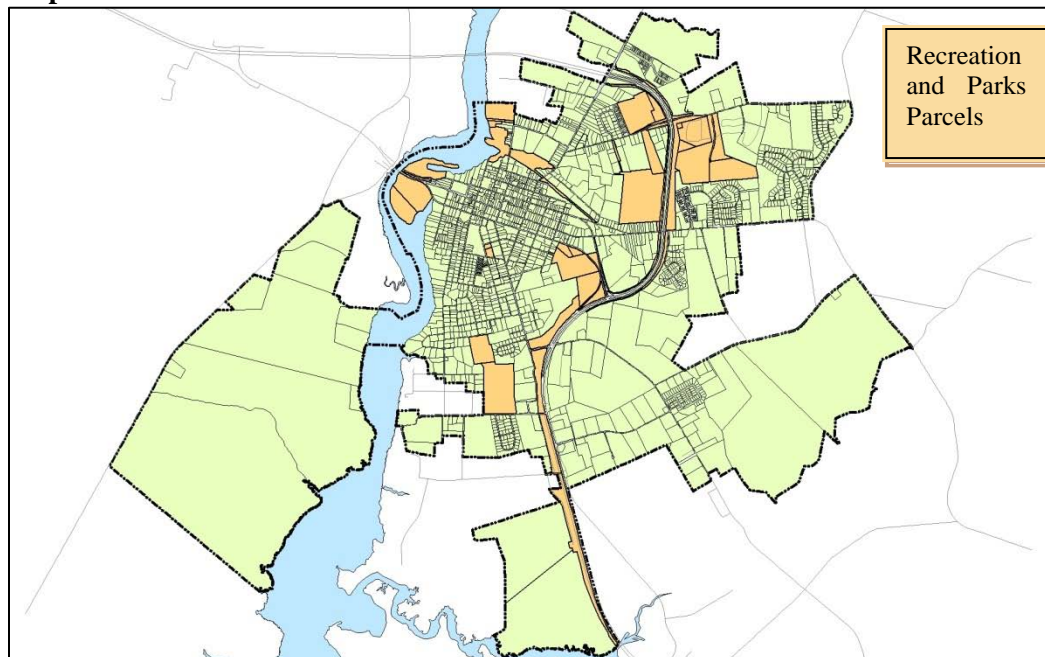
Recreation and Parks (RP)

This primary land use area is intended to include properties that are either currently or proposed to be used as parks, open space, or outdoor recreation facilities. There are approximately 265 acres included in the RP zoning district. Some of the lands included in the new district are described by the following land uses:

- Semi Public – Churches and Private Camps (Wesleyan) or Private Recreation (Lions Club Park)
- Public Open Space – Parks and Town, County, State or Federal-owned, nearly or all unimproved parcels

The floodplain area of the Choptank River, wooded stream valleys and wetlands are environmentally sensitive areas of the Town unsuitable for development due to natural resource constraints. As such they are worthy of preservation as passive open space or for flora and fauna protection. As future residential growth continues within the Town it becomes increasingly important to develop additional community parks, and active and passive recreation areas throughout the Town to serve its residents. Some of the established parks within the district are; Lion's Club Park, Sharp Road Park, Towers Park, and Dan Crouse Park. As discussed within the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town will encourage connectivity between the downtown and the parks, schools and subdivisions. Connectivity could be accomplished not only through improved street systems but a proposed rail trail, greenways and sidewalk improvements to encourage alternate transportation such as walking and cycling.

Map 3-7: Recreation and Park Areas



Rural Agriculture (RA)

This zoning district is intended to protect and preserve areas of the Town which are presently rural or agricultural in character and use.

This zoning district is also intended for purposes of protecting watersheds and water supplies; to provide for development with approved Planned Neighborhood Master Plans; to protect forest, wetland and scenic areas; to conserve fish and wildlife; to promote forestry, the growing of crops and grazing. Land west of the Choptank River will see no development during the next two decades due to water and wastewater constraints. RA-zone parcels east of the Choptank River may see development as Planned Neighborhood if water and wastewater capacities are allocated and facilities provided.

Rural Conservation (RC) (Overlay Zone)

This overlay zone encompasses approximately 362 acres that are included in the Town of Denton's Critical Area District. (Refer to Map 3-8) These particular parcels are defined as a management area classification called Resource Conservation Areas (RCA's). As described in Comar 27.01.02.05, the resource conservation areas are those areas characterized by nature-dominated environments (that is, wetlands, forests, abandoned fields) and resource- utilization activities (that is, agriculture, forestry, fisheries activities, or aquaculture). The Town's policies when addressing resource conservation areas are:

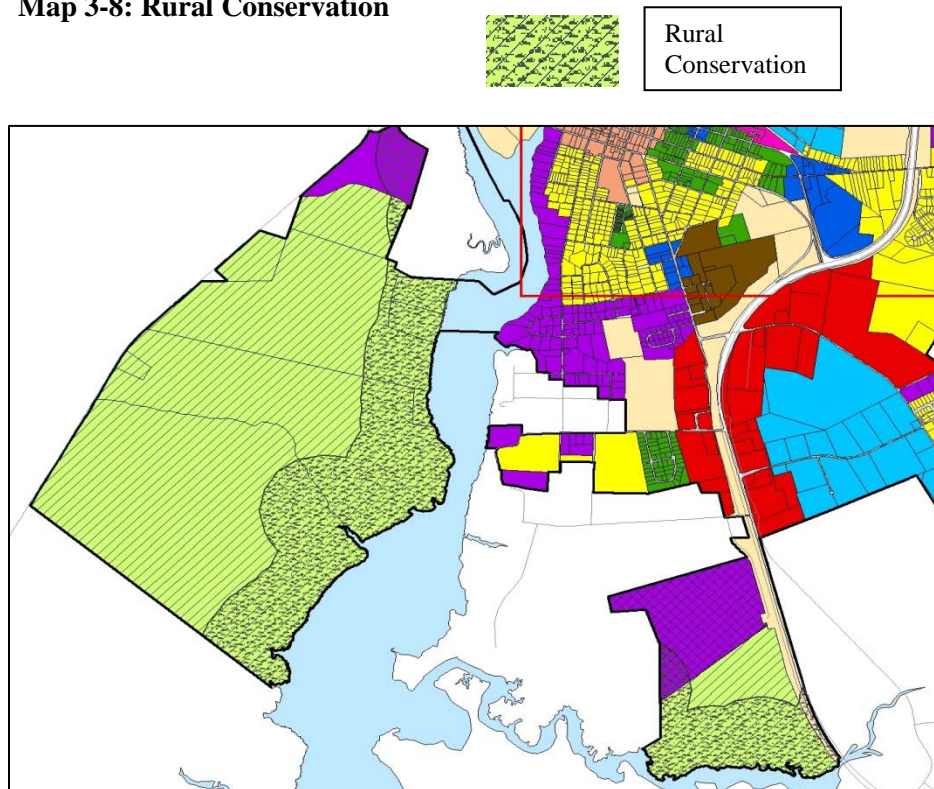
- Conserve, protect, and enhance the overall ecological values of the Critical Area, its biological productivity, and its diversity;

- Provide adequate breeding, feeding, and wintering habitats for those wildlife populations that require the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries, or coastal habitats in order to sustain populations of those species;
- Conserve the land and water resource base that is necessary to maintain and support land uses such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries activities, and aquaculture; and
- Conserve the existing developed woodlands and forests for the water quality benefits that they provide.
- Protect forest interior dwelling birds (FIDS), which require large forest areas to breed successfully and maintain viable populations.

Land use management practices for the RC district shall be consistent with the policies and criteria listed in Comar 27.01.02.05. (Resource Conservation). If developed, density will be limited to one dwelling unit per 20 acres, and if a change of density is requested, growth allocation by Town, County and Critical Area Commission would need to be approved.

Development activity will be consistent with all current requirements (including buffer) that are listed in Comar 27.01.01.01 and any changes to these regulations that are relevant to this district. The new regulations are listed in COMAR 27.01.09.01, and became effective March 8, 2010.

Map 3-8: Rural Conservation



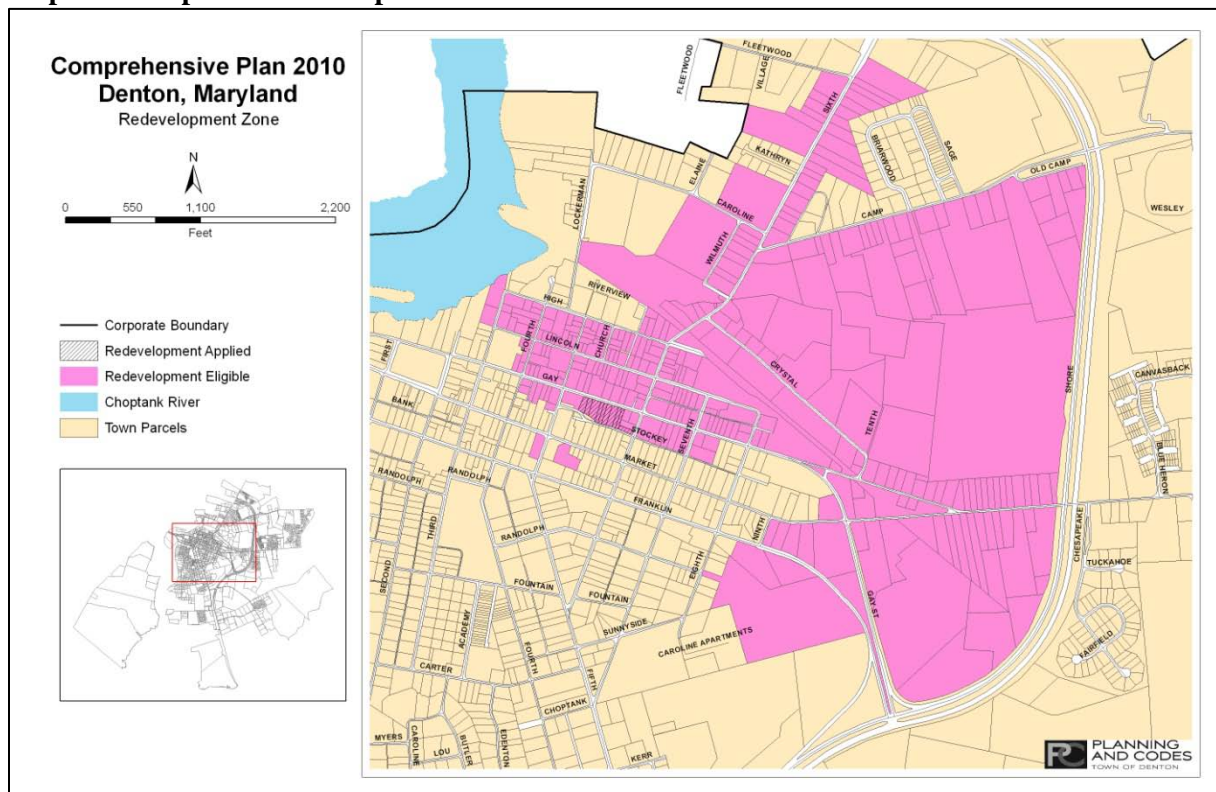
Redevelopment Overlay Districts - Eligible (RDE) and Applied (RDA)

In 2006, the Town adopted an “Eligible Redevelopment District” floating zone, which is proposed to be enlarged by this Comprehensive Plan. The current redevelopment district is 10 acres consisting of approximately 58 lots and lies mainly east of the Central Business District. The proposed expansion of the Redevelopment Eligible District as shown in Map 3-9, will include a much larger area that extends along Gay Street to MD State Highway 404, and then along MD Route 313 nearly to MD State Highway 404. The proposed expansion of the district increases the total acreage for the district to approximately 285 acres.

To date, there is one approved “Applied” Redevelopment District Floating Zone. The properties are located at the 500 block of Gay Street.

This district is intended to permit rehabilitation and redevelopment of properties within the Town that are considered less than an optimal use of the land following the State law and the Town’s ordinances and regulations. This overlay district is further discussed in Chapter 4, Municipal Growth Element in regards to infill and redevelopment policies for the Town.

Map 3-9: Proposed Redevelopment District



Historic District Overlay (HD)

The Denton Historic Overlay Zone (Article IX, “Special District: Historic Overlay Zone,” Denton Town Code § 128-43) was adopted in 1997 and is defined as an area designated by the Denton Town Council that contains significant features, woodlands, vegetation, structures, sites,

- Promote the arts and to achieve public and cultural benefit through flexible and creative land use regulation in return for significant contributions to the arts;
- Utilize cultural and economic development as a tool to encourage the infill and redevelopment in planned redevelopment areas of the Town;
- Encourage public/private projects that make the direct link between art and economic development;
- Serve some of the needs of our arts community and stimulate revitalization by promoting the reuse of underused and vacant properties for artist live/work space, affordable housing, performance venues, galleries, and other creative commercial and retail enterprises;
- Create an arts and entertainment destination point for the region;
- Encourage a scale of development, a mixture of building uses, and other attributes such as safe and efficient conditions for pedestrian and vehicular movement;
- Encourage pedestrian activity, especially retail, entertainment, and residential uses; and
- Expand the Town's housing supply in a variety of rent and price ranges

Map 3-11: Arts and Entertainment District



Proposed Growth Area

Map 3-12, illustrates the Town's total proposed growth area designated for future annexations. Growth for the Town of Denton is discussed in detail within Chapter 4, "Municipal Growth". Proposed zoning is Regional Highway Commercial on 115 acres, Industrial on one 76 acre parcel and Residential on the remaining 183 acres. Of the residential properties, 31 acres will be Mixed Residential, 111 acres Suburban Residential, and 41 acres Town Scale Residential.

The total growth area acreage is approximately 376 acres (an 11% increase). The growth area contains 126 parcels; 58 parcels are less than 1 acre, 63 parcels are between 1 to 10 acres, 3 parcels between 10 to 20 acres, and 2 parcels over 50 acres in size. Some parcels in the growth area are located in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area where subdivision is constrained by State and local regulations.

Aerial of Growth Area

Map: 3-12

— Corporate Boundary
□ Growth Area

