

CHAPTER 5 - MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT

Introduction

The Land Use Article, § 3-112, requires a municipal plan to include a Municipal Growth Element (MGE). An MGE must project population growth in the planning horizon and:

- Assess development capacity (land, infrastructure);
- Evaluate public services and infrastructure needed to accommodate growth;
- Identify future municipal growth areas (Annexation Plan);
- Designate rural buffers and transition areas;
- Identify sensitive areas potentially impacted by development and
- Outline anticipated financing mechanisms to support necessary public services and infrastructure.

The findings of the MGE provide a basis for assessing and updating Town policies, processes, and regulations that affect development and for coordinated growth management policies and strategies with Caroline County and Maryland.

Population and housing growth scenarios are the basic premises examined in the MGE. They provide the platform for assessing the Town's capacity to accommodate population growth within the corporate limits and any proposed annexation areas. In addition to land capacity, the MGE assesses potential impacts on public services and infrastructure needed to accommodate growth. Spatial development patterns are also assessed for their potential to convert resource land (agriculture and forest) to urban use and adversely impact known sensitive environmental areas. To coordinate with Caroline County, the MGE defines the Town's geographic growth expectation by establishing an urban/rural boundary or rural buffer. Along with sensitive areas, the rural buffer reflects current policies concerning an acceptable extent of urban growth and land that should remain largely undeveloped.

Population and Housing Growth Scenarios

Staff "best guess" reported in the 2010 Denton Comprehensive Plan was population growth through 2030 at a compound rate increase of 2 percent. Continuing this assumed average annual growth rate and starting at a population of 4,848, as reported in the 2020 Census, would be a dramatic uptick in the Town's population. At an average annual growth rate of two percent, the projected 2040 population would be 7,210, increasing the Town's population by 2,362. This population increase, translated into dwelling units, would have the Town issuing an average of

forty-six building permits per year, a highly unlikely divergence from 2018 through 2020 averages of about seventeen permits.

Denton's share of Caroline County's population has historically ranged from fewer than nine percent to over fourteen percent (see Table 5-1). However, the share has been slightly more than ten percent in the last eighty years. In the last three census counts, from 2000 to 2020, the percentage has grown to over twelve percent, and according to the 2020 Census, Denton's population was almost fifteen percent of Caroline County.

The Maryland Department of Planning projections show a steady growth trend for Caroline County. It projects Caroline County will capture approximately fourteen percent of the Upper Eastern Shore population growth (see Table 5-2).

Table 5-1: Denton Population as a Percent of Caroline County – 1940 to 2020									
	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Denton	1,572	1,806	1,938	1,561	1,927	2,977	2,960	4,418	4,848
Caroline County	17,549	18,234	19,462	19,781	23,143	27,035	29,772	33,066	33,293
Percent of County	8.96%	9.90%	9.96%	7.89%	8.33%	11.01%	9.94%	13.36%	14.56%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey									

Table 5-2: Caroline County's Share of Projected Regional Population Growth					
	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Upper Eastern Shore Region	244,820	254,230	266,620	280,630	292,490
Caroline County	33,660	35,550	37,700	40,000	42,200
Percent of Upper Eastern Shore Region	13.75%	13.98%	14.14%	14.25%	14.43%
Source: Maryland Department of Planning, Projections and State Data Center, December 2020					

Growth Scenarios

Population Projections

Like all projections, the growth scenarios outlined below are the best guesses that reflect assumptions about future conditions. The assumption that Denton's population will continue to increase as it has with few exceptions over the last seven decades is common to both scenarios. There is also the belief that because population projections are central to assessing land development capacity and community facility and service impacts, it is best to err on the high side.

Both population growth scenarios summarized in Table 5-3 are based on the fact there are no indications that the Upper Shore Region or Denton will experience unprecedented rapid growth during the planning period. Scenario 01 assumes Denton will capture a constant share of the County population growth in the planning period, approximately equal to the County's share of regional population growth as projected by MDP and summarized in Table 5-3.

Scenario 02 reflects a higher average annual growth rate and assumes Denton's population growth at an average annual growth rate roughly equal to Caroline County's during the planning period.

Table 5-3: Growth Scenario Population Projections							
Growth Scenarios	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Chg.	Average Annual Rate
01	4,848	5,030	5,215	5,410	5,615	767	0.73%
02	4,848	5,300	5,445	5,780	6,120	1,272	1.17%

Dwelling Unit Projections

Average household size is a surrogate factor for converting population counts into dwelling units used here. The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) projects that the average household size for Caroline County will decrease by about two percent during the planning period. The Census Bureau estimated the average household size for Denton was 2.63 in 2019. Assuming Denton experiences a commensurate decreasing average household size trend, the average household size during the planning period is expected to decrease from 2.62 in 2020 to 2.58 by 2040. The estimated number of additional dwelling units needed to accommodate projected population growth as applied to the scenarios is derived based on this trend and summarized in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4: Projected Dwelling Units						
Dwelling Units	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Chg.
Scenario 01	1,864	1,920	2,005	2,080	2,175	311
Scenario 02	1,864	2,023	2,094	2,222	2,371	507
Avg HHLD size	2.62	2.62	2.60	2.60	2.58	

Development Capacity Analysis

The residential capacity analysis examines the Town's land capacity to accommodate future population and housing growth based on assumptions about future demand. Nonresidential development capacity analysis estimates the potential need for commercial and industrial land based on current acres per capita. Both are derived from current land-use patterns and account for environmental constraints and development policy factors. Although not directly applicable, assumptions about future land use consider expectations created by the existing zoning.

Residential Capacity – Within the PFA

Assessing residential capacity examines land with potential for more intense use, either through subdivision or site plan processes, based on assumptions. The results are a rough calculation of the Town's land capacity to accommodate the population and dwelling unit increases outlined in the growth scenario summarized in Tables 5-3 and 5-4.

The trend analysis assumes the current average land area per dwelling pattern would continue. An alternative pattern assessed assumes a lower average land area per dwelling, reflecting a different mix of unit types and more efficient use of land resources. This latter scenario may come about because of a combination of forces, including inflation, higher construction costs, increasing need/demand for affordable housing, changes in land-use policies, and consumer preferences. The trend scenario assumes an average land area of 12,000 square feet per dwelling unit. The

alternative scenario assumes an average of 9,000 square feet of land area per dwelling unit, roughly consistent with a "smart growth" objective of at least 3.5 dwelling units per net acre.

The residential capacity analysis examined two types of land within Denton's Priority Funding Area (PFA): vacant or unimproved land and underutilized land (see Map 5-1). Vacant and underutilized land with no or limited development potential, for example, insufficient space to accommodate stormwater management areas, open space set-asides, parking lots, and the like, were culled from the data set. Also, properties with access issues affecting marketability were removed. Land with environmental constraints, e.g., wetlands or sensitive species habitats, or regulatory constraints, e.g., floodplain, Resource Conservation Areas (RCA) in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, were only eliminated if the constraint significantly affected the property's developable space.

Vacant property less than one acre in size was assumed to have the capacity for one dwelling only. One acre or fewer vacant properties were screened to determine if any might be subdivided or support more than one dwelling unit. A vacancy was verified from recent aerial photos and field inspection. Properties eliminated included:

- publicly owned exempt
- utilities
- lots in already platted subdivisions (e.g., Fearins Crossing, Parkview Estates)
- lots less than 8,000 square feet
- properties not zoned residential
- open space set aside
- land-locked properties

Applying these filters, 25 properties, one acre or less, remained. Only four properties have a lot width between 100 and 102 feet. Most were less than 75 feet wide. In this group, lot sizes ranged from 0.98 to 0.187 acres; the average was 0.38 or about 16,000 square feet.

Although some of these properties may be further subdivided, it was assumed that the costs associated with land subdivision would be a disincentive for re-subdivision. Also, in many cases, the entire property was improved with existing structures that would likely preclude further subdivision.

The same reasoning was applied to smaller underutilized parcels, in this case, less than five acres. Again, smaller properties were eliminated from consideration where existing development, configuration, or potential access issues were noted. Potential development capacity for smaller underutilized properties was assessed based on eighty feet of street frontage per lot. The underlying assumption here was lot yield would be insufficient to offset the cost of building internal streets and extending utilities serving small lots.

It was assumed that the remaining vacant parcels greater than one acre and underutilized parcels greater than five acres could be subdivided. The capacity of vacant parcels greater than one acre and underutilized parcels greater than five acres was determined as an average land area per dwelling unit of 12,000 square feet and 9,000 square feet, respectively. In both scenarios, the base parcel area was adjusted to 75 percent of the total, assuming at least a quarter of development sites would be set aside for streets, utilities, stormwater management, and open space. The capacity assigned to the Village at Watts Creek and Fearins Crossing projects is based on previously approved development plans. Residential capacity was assigned to the JPA Venture LLC parcels based on a mixed-used development, with approximately ten percent of the properties set aside for commercial development.

The results of the development capacity analysis for residential properties within Denton's PFA are summarized in Table 5. Residential dwelling unit capacity is between about 1,200 to 1,500. Assuming Denton's average household size remains at 2.58, the Town has an estimated population capacity within its Municipal PFA of 3,200 to 3,800, sufficient to accommodate growth in either scenario outlined in Table 5-5.

Table 5-5: Residential Dwelling Unit and Population Capacity – Priority Funding Area				
			Capacity, units @	
Category	Acres	# of parcels	12,000 sf	9,000 sf
Vacant Land in PFA				
Under one acre	25	11	118	118
Over one acre	201	21	548	731
Village at Watts Creek*	75	3	257	257
Fearins Crossing*	14	1	72	72
Subtotal	315	36	995	1,178
Underutilized Land in PFA				
Underutilized Parcels greater than six acres	71	3	236	315
Underutilized Parcels less than six acres	13	3	12	12
Subtotal	83	6	248	327
Total Dwelling Unit Capacity	399	42	1,243	1,492
Population capacity PFA			3,207	3,850
* Capacity based on prior approved plans				

Residential Capacity – Outside the PFA

When property outside Denton's PFA is added to the calculations, population capacity increases by about 8,400 to over 10,000. Approximately 1,229 acres of vacant or underutilized land are available for residential development within the corporate limits outside the Municipal PFA. Because building coverage was not a limiting factor, all properties were treated as vacant for calculating potential development capacity.

For many properties outside the PFA, development capacity is constrained by the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area land-use designation. Any part of a property within the Critical

area classified as a Resource Conservation Area (RCA) is limited to a density of one dwelling unit per twenty acres. Approximately 361 acres, or about a third of the corporate area outside the Municipal PFA, is designated RCA. However, higher densities may be permitted if the land-use designation is changed through the Growth Allocation process to Limited Development Area (LDA) or Intensely Developed Area (IDA).

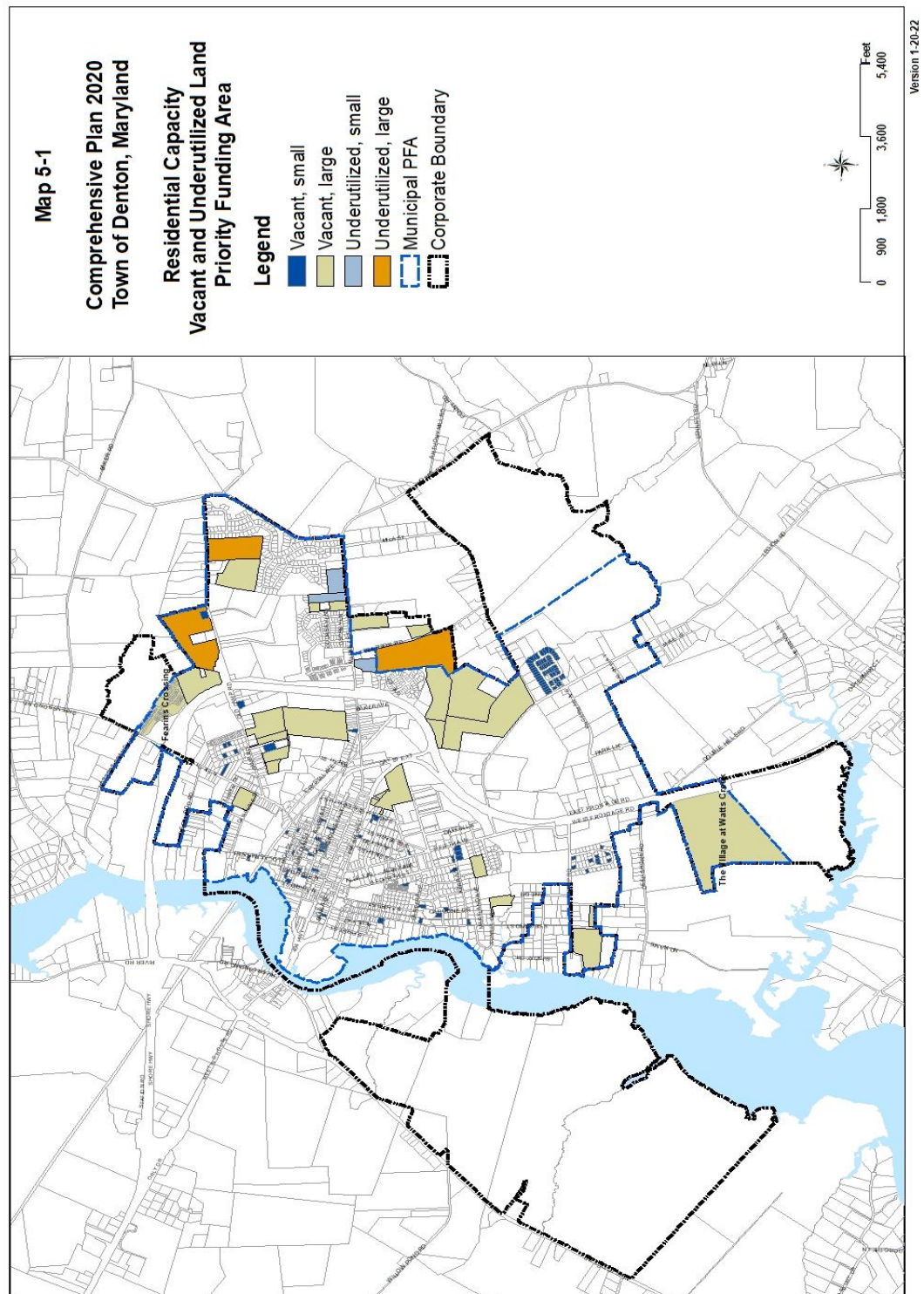
Land development capacity outside the Critical area was estimated using the assumed lot yield factors unit applied in the PFA. The base parcel area was adjusted to 75 percent of the total, assuming at least a quarter of development sites would be set aside for streets, utilities, stormwater management, sensitive area protection, and open space. Residential development capacity is approximately 2,000 to 2,700 units outside the PFA, assuming no Critical Area land designation change. If the Critical Area land designation changes, capacity increases to 3,000 and 4,000 residential units. Applying an average of 2.58 persons per household, the population that could be accommodated on land outside the PFA is between approximately 5,300 and 10,300 (see Table 5-6).

Table 5-6: Residential Development Capacity Outside Municipal PFA						
				Capacity, units @ sf per unit		
	Total	Non-RCA	RCA	12,000	9,000	871,200
Land Area (acres)	1,106	749	361			
No Growth Allocation				2,039	2,719	10
With Growth Allocation				3,011	4,015	
Population Capacity						
No Growth Allocation				5,261	7,015	25
With Growth Allocation				7,769	10,358	

Residential Development Capacity Conclusion

Denton has sufficient land development capacity within the current Municipal PFA to accommodate projected population increases during the planning period. In addition, there is substantial additional capacity outside the Town's PFA. However, providing municipal facilities to properties west of the Choptank River presents significant challenges.

Map 5-1 Residential Development Capacity



Nonresidential Development Capacity

Nonresidential properties assessment classified properties by land use type and intensity based on the Denton Zoning Ordinance and the Official Zoning map (see Map 5-2). Approximately 628 acres are zoned for nonresidential uses, including industrial, neighborhood, regional, and special commercial. Of this total, approximately 355 acres are improved, and the balance, 273 acres, are either vacant or underutilized (see Table 5-7).

Table 5-7: Vacant and Underutilized Nonresidential Land per Capita				
Land Use	Acres	Improved	Vacant & Underutilized	Acres per Capita
Industrial	281	160	121	0.03
Regional Commercial	247	110	136	0.02
Neighborhood	51	50	1	0.01
Special, medical	50	35	15	0.01
Total	628	355	273	

The estimated demand for commercial and industrial land under the two scenarios is shown in Table 5-8, using the per capita acre ratio from Table 5-7. It is based on the current ratio of nonresidential land to population.

Table 5-8: Nonresidential Land Demand by Scenario		
Land Use	Scenario 01 (acres)	Scenario 02 (acres)
Industrial	25	42
Regional Commercial	17	29
Neighborhood	8	13
Special, medical	6	9
Total	56	93

Nonresidential Development Capacity Conclusion

Except for neighborhood commercial, Denton has sufficient land zoned for nonresidential development within the current Municipal PFA to maintain the current land-to-population ratios.

Growth Impacts

This section examines the potential community facility and service implications of population and housing growth outlined in Tables 5-3 and 5-4.

Town Facilities and Services

Assuming current service levels represent total capacity, the population and dwelling units outlined in the growth scenarios will require the Town to increase administrative building space and personnel and public works personnel (see Table 5-9). However, the existing public works building

space is probably sufficient. In addition, the police department will require two to four officers and additional facility space to maintain current ratios.

Administration, Public Works, and Police

Table 5-9: Impacts - Administration, Public Works, and Police			
	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Measure
Demand Factors			
Added Population	767	1,272	
Impacts			
Municipal Administration			
Personnel	2	3	Staff per capita
Building Space	1,562	2,591	Gross floor area per capita
Municipal, Public Works			
Personnel	1	2	Staff per capita
Building Space	371	616	Gross floor area per capita
Police			
Personnel	2	4	Officers per capita
Facilities	767	1,272	Gross floor area per capita

Sewer and Water

Table 5-10 shows that the Town has enough sewer and water capacity to service the projected population and housing growth in the planning period. What is apparent, and need not be explored in-depth, is that a build-out population of 3,000 to 4,000 within the Municipal PFA, plus 7,800 to 10,300 outside the Municipal PFA, would significantly exceed Denton's sewer system capacity.

Table 5-10: Sewer and Water Impacts			
	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Measure
Demand Factors			
New Dwelling Units	311	507	
Added Population	767	1,272	
Added Nonresidential (GFA)	415,911	689,751	
Demand			
Residential (GPD)			gpd
Sewer	70,000	114,016	225 gpd per unit
Water	70,000	114,016	225 gpd per unit
Additional Nonresidential (GPD)			0.0574 gpd per sf gfa
Sewer	23,873	39,592	gpd
Water	23,873	39,592	gpd
Total Demand			
Sewer	93,874	153,607	gpd
Water	93,874	153,607	gpd
Remaining Capacity			

Table 5-10: Sewer and Water Impacts			
	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Measure
Sewer	227,332	167,599	gpd
Water	191,387	131,654	gpd

Parks and Recreation

As discussed in the Community Facilities element, providing park and open space facilities is a shared federal, state, County, and municipal responsibility. According to the 2022 Caroline County Recreation and Park Department's Land Preservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (LPPRP), the park and recreation goal is 30 acres per 1,000 residents. It would be misleading to assume this performance goal is solely the responsibility of the Town, whose population is approximately fourteen percent of that of the County. The 2022 Caroline County LPPRP reports Denton's local resources to include 62.5 acres of recreation and resource land or about 13 acres per thousand population. The State-owned Martinak State Park adds 105 acres to this total, for a total of 171 acres. Considering that Denton currently provides 13 acres per thousand population, the Town is well above the ten-acre per 1,000 population observed in data from 1,053 park and recreation agencies across the United States, published by the National Parks and Recreation Association in their 2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review. Based on a municipal goal of providing parkland at a ratio of ten acres per thousand, there is adequate existing park and recreation land for both projected growth scenarios.

Public Schools

Population and housing growth in the planning period will increase the number of students attending public schools (see Table 5-11). Also, additional teachers will be needed if current student-teacher ratios are maintained.

Table 5-11: School Facility and Personnel Impacts			
Demand Factors	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Measure
New Dwelling Units	311	507	
Impacts			
New students			
High School	72	117	Students per household
Middle School	29	47	Students per household
Elementary School	41	66	Students per household
Additional teachers			
High School	4	7	Teacher/student ratio
Middle School	2	3	Teacher/student ratio
Elementary School	3	4	Teacher/student ratio

According to the Caroline County Board of Education, Denton's projected population growth will most impact Denton Elementary and Lockerman Middle Schools. Table 5-12 shows that both

schools are projected to be at or above State Rated Capacity (SRC) based on the projected household growth outlined in the two scenarios.

Table 5-12: School Capacity Projections					
		2021		2031	
School	SRC	Enrollment	Percent SRC	Projected Enrollment	Percent SRC
Denton Elementary	736	601	82%	691	82%
Lockerman Middle	945	895	94%	928	98%
North Caroline High	1,263	1,180	93%	1,112	88%
Source: Email from Derek L. Simmons, Ed. D., Superintendent of Schools, Caroline County, MD.					

Public Library

American Library Association standard is 1,000 square feet of library space needed per 10,000 residents. Consequently, neither predicted population increase outlined in the two scenarios would facilitate a need for expanding the Denton Branch of the Caroline County Public Library. The library branch in Denton has a service area classification of 30,000 residents.

Fire and Rescue

Both growth scenarios would have minimal effect on the fire and rescue services (see Table 5-13). Neither scenario would significantly impact personnel or buildings. Also, the Insurance Services Office, Inc.'s service standards suggest the need for additional engines is marginal.

Table 5-13: Fire and Rescue Impacts			
Demand Factor	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Measure
Added Population	767	1,272	
Impacts			
Personnel	1	2	Firemen/EMTs per capita
Facilities (GFA)	2,037	3,318	Gross Floor Area per capita
Engines	0.767	1.272	Per capita

Police

Both growth scenarios will require additional police officers to maintain the current level of service per capita. In addition, the current building facilities may need to be expanded (see Table 5-14).

Table 5-14: Police			
Demand Factor	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Measure
Added Population	767	1,272	
Impacts			
Personnel	2	4	Officers per capita
Facilities (GFA)	767	1,272	Gross Floor Area per capita

Budget Impacts and Financing

Public services and infrastructure costs are financed through six mechanisms: 1) property taxes, 2) water and sewer allocation fees, 3) impact fees, 4) developers, 5) negotiated exactions associated with Development Rights and Responsibility Agreements (DRRAs), and 6) State funding.

Sewer and Water

The users bear current sewer and water capital and operation costs. The developers will bear any costs associated with expanding the distribution components of these systems for development projects. Since no substantive system capacity upgrades are required, additional capital costs during the planning period are not anticipated.

Taxes and Fees

The growth scenarios will affect many facilities and services Caroline County provides. Table 5-15 outlines projected County fiscal impacts based on per capita facility and service delivery costs derived from the FY 2021 County budget. In addition, Table 5-16 outlines projected Town fiscal impacts based on per capita facility and service delivery costs derived from Denton's FY 2020 budget.

Table 5-15: County Budget Impacts Estimate			
Demand Factors	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Per Capita costs
Added Population	767	1,272	
Impacts			
County Services & Facilities			
General Government	\$107,128	\$177,663	\$140
Judicial	\$32,560	\$53,999	\$42
Public Safety	\$390,625	\$647,815	\$509
Public Works	\$90,632	\$150,305	\$118
Health	\$11,185	\$18,549	\$15
Social Services	\$6,708	\$11,124	\$9
Education	\$399,635	\$662,759	\$521
Recreation and Parks	\$24,836	\$41,189	\$32
Arts	\$115	\$191	\$0
Library	\$28,860	\$47,862	\$38
Extension Service	\$3,486	\$5,781	\$5
Economic Development	\$2,438	\$4,044	\$3
Total	\$1,098,210	\$1,821,281	\$1,432

Table 5-16: Town Budget Impacts Estimate			
Demand Factors	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Per Capita Costs
Added Population	767	1,272	
Impacts			
General Government	\$89,719	\$148,790	\$117
Public Safety	\$384,338	\$637,389	\$501
Community Development	\$15,158	\$25,138	\$20
Public Works	\$74,505	\$123,560	\$97
Total	\$564,797	\$936,656	\$735

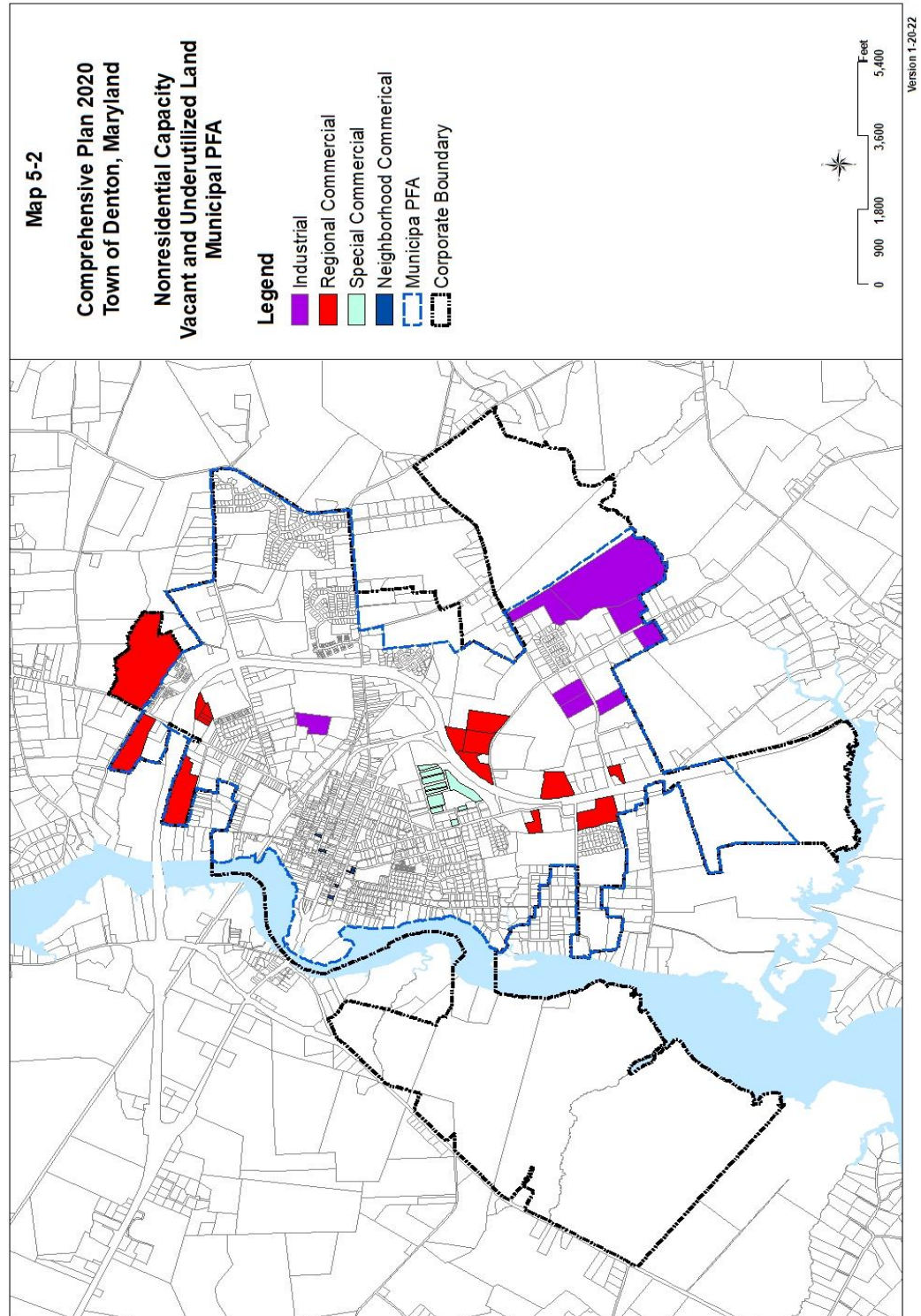
Table 5-17 summarizes County and municipal revenue collection in the same fiscal years. Note Caroline County collects a Development Impact Fee of \$5,000 per single- and multi-family dwelling. The comparisons show that if property assessments, property, income tax rates, and impact fees keep pace with cost-of-living measures, Caroline County will collect sufficient revenues to offset costs, whereas Denton will experience a small deficit.

Table 5-17: County and Municipal Cost and Revenues Comparison		
Factor Multiple	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Added Population	767	1,272
Revenues		
Taxes County	\$1,044,940	\$1,732,939
Impact Fee (\$5,00 per unit)	\$1,555,561	\$2,533,684
Tax Revenues County	\$2,600,502	\$4,266,623
Tax Revenues Town	\$520,323	\$862,908
Costs		
County	\$1,098,210	\$1,821,281
Town	\$563,719	\$934,877
Surplus/Deficit		
County Gain/Loss	\$1,502,292	\$2,445,341
Town Gain/Loss	-\$43,397	-\$71,969
Surplus/Deficit Per Unit		
County	\$3,529.95	\$3,594.14
Town	-\$139.49	-\$142.02

Developer Rights and Responsibility Agreement (DRRA)

Some of Denton's losses may be offset based on the terms of a DRRA in the case of planned developments. DRRA exactions are determined through negotiations with the developer to ensure adequate funding for the provisioning of facilities and other negotiated items. Currently, Denton has only one fully executed DRRA. All future Planned Neighborhoods will require DRRAs.

Map 5-2 Nonresidential Development Capacity



Annexation Plan

Annexation Areas

Denton does not need to annex additional land to accommodate projected population growth. However, as previously discussed, a complete build-out of corporate limits would result in a substantial population increase if it were to occur. In addition, that level of growth would significantly exceed Denton's sewer treatment capacity, which is constrained by the current Total Maximum Daily Load limits in effect for the Choptank River.

The Town will consider annexing several properties (see Map 5-3). Commercial and industrial labeled properties may be annexed to increase the Town's commercial and industrial land inventory. The objective is to expand the tax base with ratables with low fiscal impacts and that support increased employment opportunities. Some of these properties may also be annexed to accommodate public institutional uses serving the community. In addition, the Town will request these properties be added to the municipal PFA at the time of annexation.

Properties on Map 5-3 labeled Suburban Residential and Town Residential may also be considered for annexation. These properties are enclaves of smaller periphery lots served by individual septic systems that are failing or may fail in the future. In this case, Annexation presents an opportunity to address a potential public health issue and improve water quality in the Choptank River.

West Denton Provisional Annexation Area

Although the Town has sufficient land within its corporate area to accommodate population growth in the planning period and beyond, additional land on the west side of the Choptank River is included in the annexation plan. There are several considerations underlying this policy. Considerations include addressing potential health issues associated with failing septic systems and, as a result, reducing nitrogen loading to the Choptank River. In addition, providing urban services will enable value-added infill and redevelopment along the waterfront, strengthening the market area surrounding the central business district.

This annexation area, West Denton, encompasses 65 parcels and approximately 35 acres. The area includes a combination of detached single-family dwellings, commercial properties, and a church. Most properties are within the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Critical Area, with a Limited Development Area (LDA) land use designation. In addition, West Denton is a designated growth area for Caroline County and is included in the Caroline County Priority Funding area. With two exceptions, the Caroline County zoning classifications for these properties are Village Center and Village Neighborhood Zoning Districts.

West Denton is included as a "provisional" annexation area (see Map 5-3) because there is a question concerning the feasibility of providing urban services. Any final determination of its annexation plan status is contingent on demonstrating the feasibility of extending sewer service to

the properties. A Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) commissioned by Caroline County will examine alternative methods of providing sewer service to West Denton. The area will be included in Denton's Annexation Plan if the PER demonstrates the costs of providing sewer service and other Town services and facilities are supportable.

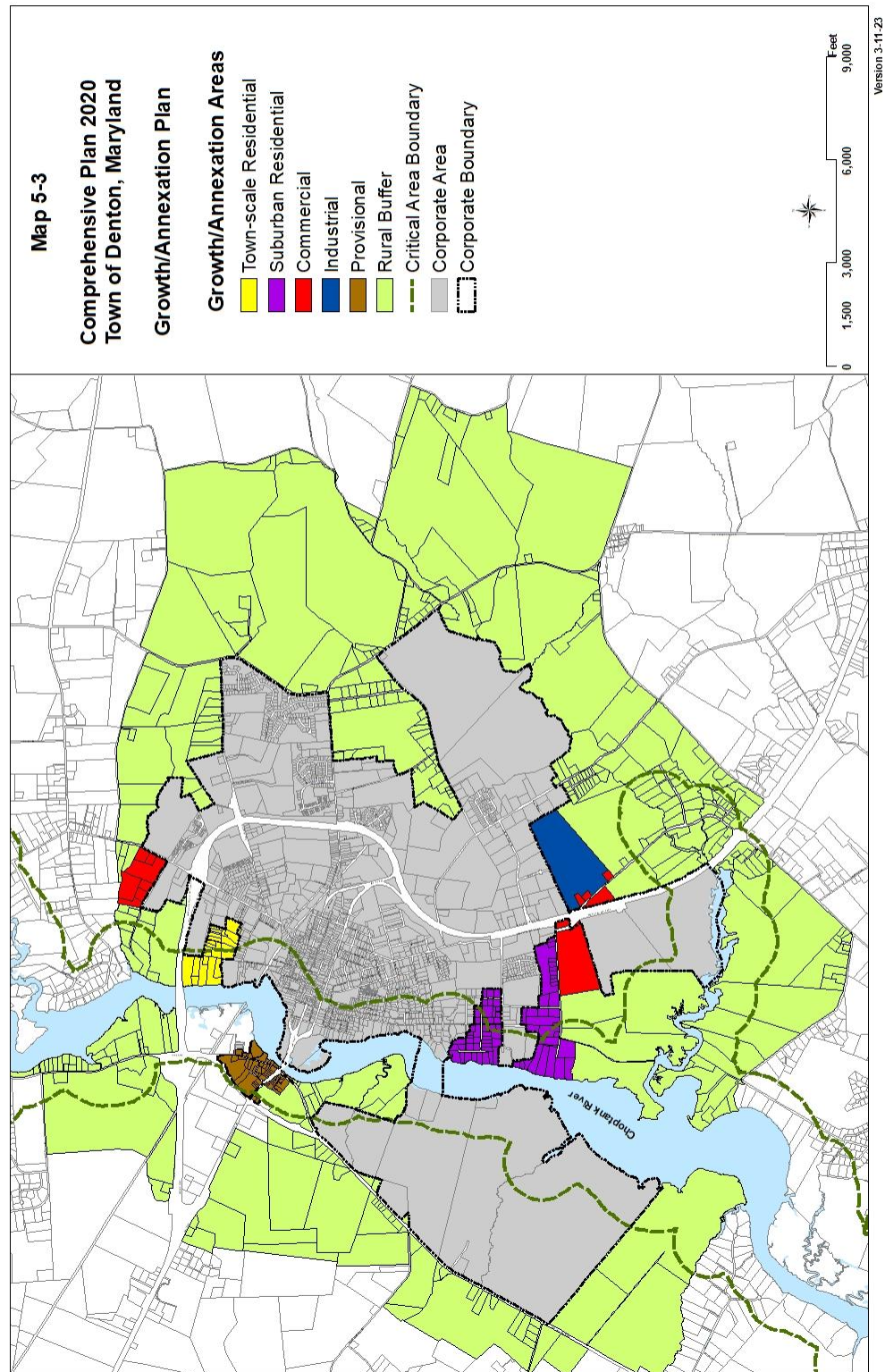
Rural Buffer

"Rural buffer" refers to undeveloped natural land adjacent to urban or developed land regulated to provide open space, offer low-intensity recreational opportunities, and/or contain urban development. Denton's Rural Buffer, outlined on Map 5-3, encompasses approximately 5,255 acres where the Town envisions very low-intensity uses dominated by agriculture, open space, and forestry area surrounding and at its gateways. In addition, about a third of the area is categorized as "green infrastructure," a natural support system that provides ecosystem services for humans, plants, and animals. The Rural Buffer is also a boundary defining current Town policy about the geographic limits of Denton's future growth. The Town will work with Caroline County to enact strategies to protect this Rural Buffer.

TIER Map

Denton's annexation plan modifies the Town's policies concerning the tier designations required under the Sustainable Growth & Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012. Applicable to Denton and the Tier I designations, areas are currently served with public sewer, Tier II areas, future growth areas planned for sewer service, and Tier IV areas planned for conservation and no major subdivisions on septic. The revisions on Map 5-4 include the potential annexation of several West Denton properties and a modified municipal greenbelt, Tier IVA.

Map 5-3 Growth/Annexation Plan



Map 5-4 Tier Map

