



Smart Non-Growth: Planning Issues in Allegheny County

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Smart Growth

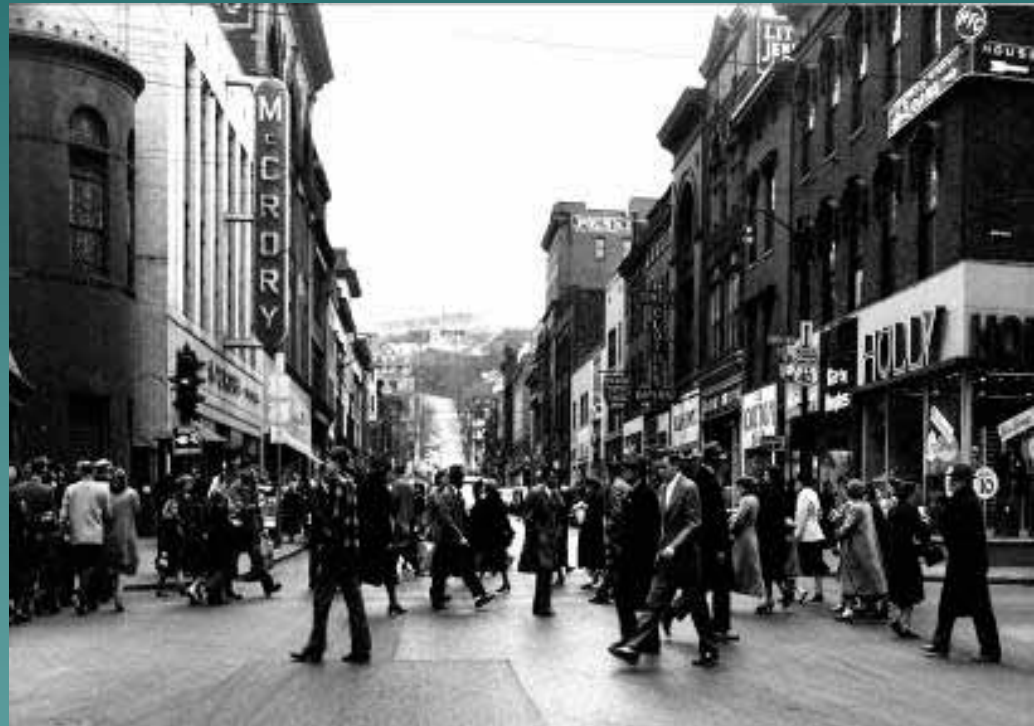
- u Now more than 10 years of Smart Growth in Maryland
 - Now Twelve Visions
- u Smart Growth is designed to:
 - Protect the Environment
 - Limit Sprawl
 - Enhance Existing Communities
 - Manage the Cost of Service Provision

Growth in Maryland

- ↳ Maryland will grow in population
 - Total population
 - ↳ Maryland 2000: 5,296,486
 - ↳ Maryland 2030: 6,684,250
 - ↳ Maryland 2050: ?

Cumberland, Maryland

- ↳ Between 1870 and 1940
 - Maryland's "Queen City"
 - Diverse industrial base
 - Transportation center
 - Regional retail and service center



Post WWII Changes

- Deindustrialization
- Declining population
- Aging population
- Downtown decline
- Suburban retail competition
- I-68



Allegany County

- ↳ Total population

 - ↳ Allegany County 2000: 74,930

 - ↳ Allegany County 2030: 75,900

- ↳ In the 1990s added a state prison and federal prison

 - 2009 census estimate: 7005 residents in group quarters

 - ↳ Most in jail

Population Trends

u Allegany County

- 84,044 in 1970
- 80,548 in 1980
- 74,946 in 1990
- 74,930 in 2000
- 73,100 est 2010
- 75,300 est 2020
- 75,900 est 2030

- Peak Census population: 89,556 in 1950
- MDP projecting a .04% growth rate 2025-30

u City of Cumberland

- 29,724 in 1970
- 25,933 in 1980
- 23,712 in 1990
- 21,518 in 2000
- 20,449 estimate for 2009

- Peak Census population: 39,483 in 1940

Smart Non-Growth



- u Smart growth is fundamentally about handling growth
- u If a community is not growing, what does smart growth mean?
- u But there should still be benefit in:
 - Protecting the environment
 - Limiting sprawl
 - Enhancing existing communities
 - Controlling the cost of service provision

Protecting the Environment

- Local residents value the quality of life and the landscape of Allegany County



BUT:

- ↳ Many residents don't want to live in an urban area
 - Desire for outdoor recreation
 - Desire to get away from "government"
 - Privacy
 - Lower housing costs
 - The battle of acceptance of planning and zoning continues

↳ 2000 Census reported

- 27,624 workers commute by car
- 1,214 walk to work
- 448 work at home
- 165 use public transit

Transit

In 2000, people did get to work faster

AC: 22.6 minutes

MD: 31.2 minutes



Problems Remain

- ↳ But also have the problems from the past to fix
 - Coal mine drainage
 - Combined Sewer Overflow
 - Chesapeake Bay watershed protection and new MDE requirements

Limiting Sprawl

- ↳ Allegany County residents also dislike ugly sprawl, the need to drive to get most services, and the slow traffic it produces
- ↳ They also report a strong desire for economic growth in the area, and the creation of new jobs

BUT

- u Allegany County has low urban densities
 - Single family homes, and falling household size
- u And surprisingly high rural density clusters
 - Small towns, mining sites, and family groups
 - But also wilderness like areas
- u Between 2000-2007, 75% of new residential acreage was outside of PFAs—
with an average size of 4.5 acres

u Why not build on a rural greenfield site?

- Traffic
- Loss of open space
- Cost of services
- And more

- In 2009, permits were issued for 76 new residential buildings (138 units)
 - 24 building in four municipalities
 - 52 in unincorporated areas (53 units)

Enhancing Existing Communities

- ↳ Residents report a desire to preserve the small town lifestyle



BUT

- ↳ Declining communities often find that worker's earnings are spent in other areas where a greater variety of goods and services are available
 - Strong desire to expand retail options, but limited success

Housing

- u Housing stock:
 - 25% units between 1950-1970
 - 50% before 1950
- u Property taxes paid in 2008:
 - Median w/ mort \$1,081
 - Median w/o mort \$ 972
- u 2000 census
 - Median value owner occupied housing
 - Allegany County: \$71,100
 - Maryland: \$146,000



Schools

Declining Enrollment

- 2000 10,172
- 2010 9,152
- 2019 MDP estimate: 8,310

But: high school graduation rate is 89.7%, compared to the state average of 86.6%



Controlling the Cost of Service Provision

- ↳ Allegany residents are also concerned about the cost of government
 - Taxes and provision of police services issues to consider on Tuesday

BUT

- ↳ In 2000, poverty rate was 15.3% in Allegany County, in Maryland: 8.2%
- ↳ Maryland, New Jersey, and Alaska tied for highest median household income in 2009
 - ↳ But Allegany county is the lowest urban county in the state
 - MD \$69,272
 - Howard County: \$101,940
 - Allegany county: \$ 36,491

Tax Rates

- Allegany County's real property tax rate is .9829 (effective July 1, 2010)
 - Seven other counties are higher
- Allegany county's income tax rate is 3.05%
 - Same as Baltimore City and Carroll
 - Six other counties are higher

Impact

- u Many growing communities essentially rely on
 - Tax base growth to expand budgets
 - Impact fees to help with infrastructure costs
- u But declining communities
 - Don't see much tax base growth
 - Can justify impact fees
- u Fewer people to pay the tax bills with weaker tax base—the cycle of decline

Planning Accomplishments

The image features a solid teal background. At the bottom, there is a silhouette of a mountain range in a darker shade of teal. The text "Planning Accomplishments" is centered in the upper half of the image, rendered in a light yellow, sans-serif font with a subtle drop shadow.

Historic Preservation



- u Cumberland is graced with an array of 3, 4 and 5 story, architecturally distinctive buildings
- u Historic Preservation efforts have restored key downtown buildings

Upper Story Reuse




- ↳ A decline in population and a shift in retail trends found the upper floors, vacant or underutilized over the past two decades
- ↳ Community Legacy has been used for Upper story reuse
- ↳ Beginning now in Frostburg as well



Tourism

- ❏ Rocky Gap Park, Lodge, and Casino??
- ❏ C & O towpath National Park (Georgetown to Cumberland)
- ❏ The Great Allegheny Passage (Cumberland to Pittsburgh)
- ❏ Expect over 250,000 bikers a year

Canal Place

- ↳ Cumberland was the upper end of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal (George Washington was one the investors)
 - ↳ Now the Canal is a National Park with hike/bike trail from Washington to Cumberland
 - ↳ Canal Place is a state historic area
- 
- A decorative silhouette of a mountain range in a teal color, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Arts Districts

- ❏ Marketing efforts have been directed at recruiting artists to Cumberland and Frostburg
- ❏ The floor plan of many downtown structures and availability of natural light make the spaces particularly attractive to artists



The Future



Stop and Stay

- u Tourism has the potential to contribute to population growth
- u Visitors discover a new place to live or do business
 - On the way to Deep Creek Lake
 - On the bike/hike trails
 - At a conference

Homecoming

- ↳ Allegany County Homecoming
 - Affordable housing, safety
 - Historic preservation/restoration
 - Bringing the kids back home
 - ↳ With their business

Retirement Center

- ↳ Declining areas tend to have older populations
- ↳ 2000 Census found:
 - Percentage 65 and over in Allegany county is 17.9
 - ↳ Maryland 11.3
 - ↳ US 12.4
 - Median age Allegany County is 39.1
 - ↳ Maryland 36.0
 - ↳ US 35.3

Frostburg State University



- ❏ University can be a cultural and business support center
- ❏ Working to build better campus community links
- ❏ Students that stay

Terrapin Run

- u Allegany County is now famous because of the Terrapin Run proposal
 - Eastern Allegany County
 - A planned community of 4,300 homes
 - Several court cases, one continues
 - Led to change in state law
 - Currently in foreclosure, scaled down to 360 units
 - Smart Growth, or not?

Enjoy your visit
to Cumberland
and Allegany
County

Thank you to my
students in
Regional Planning
for assistance with
this presentation.

