

state and federal aid (when available) to pay for necessary infrastructure improvements. Other financial tools and approaches are discussed in detail in Chapter 11, Implementation.

4.3.3 *Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)*

The Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program is expected to have significant impacts in Cecil County. BRAC is a long-term effort by the Federal government to consolidate facilities for the Armed Forces and make these facilities more efficient. In 2005, the Department of Defense announced the most recent round of realignments and closures, actions that would relocate functions from Fort Monmouth in New Jersey to the Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) in Harford County.

BRAC is expected to bring 8,200 jobs to APG and generate almost 28,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs within 40 miles of the base. In 2007, the County's *BRAC Action Plan* estimated that five percent of these jobs were likely to locate in Cecil County. The growth in jobs will spur population growth as well. As discussed in the BRAC Action Plan, Cecil County would receive about 12 percent of the projected population growth associated with BRAC at APG, or more than 5,000 residents.

The BRAC Advisory Panel, a group of Cecil County officials and residents, developed the recommendations in the BRAC Action Plan and expressed concern that the County does not have sufficient land zoned for office, industrial and commercial uses that is "fully approved and permitted and available for immediate use," in response to the demands of BRAC. The lack of commercial office space was seen particularly acute, given the lack of available office space in the County.

This Comprehensive Plan responds to the needs generated by BRAC by designating employment areas in strategic locations along major transportation routes. The Plan also designates two large mixed-use areas along US 40. The Mixed Use Employment area is envisioned as an attractive location for master planned office parks interspersed with retail and residential uses. This area would be a primary location for multi-story office uses and provide a prime "address" for companies locating in Cecil County.

4.3.4 *Affordable Housing*

The availability of adequate affordable and workforce housing can encourage businesses to expand and locate in Cecil County. The County is more affordable compared to adjacent counties like Harford and New Castle, and it would be well positioned to build upon this advantage by increasing infrastructure availability in the Growth Corridor.

The *BRAC Action Plan* specifically noted that workforce housing is a critical component of the County's business development and growth strategy. The jobs generated by BRAC will help to diversify the local economy and bring higher-wage jobs to the County. However, not all of the jobs locating in Cecil County will be high income, so provisions are needed to assure that a range of housing at various price points are available. The BRAC Advisory Panel envisioned mixed-use development and incentives to develop affordable units within the growth corridor, as well as transportation improvements and amenities that make the growth corridor an attractive place to live, as key to the County's success in maximizing the benefits of BRAC.

Chapter 9, Housing, explores affordable and workforce housing in greater detail.

4.3.5 *Workforce Development*

The 2007 *Cecil County Growth Study (Strategic Plan)* highlighted some of the challenges Cecil County will face as the local economy evolves with BRAC and the development of higher-wage and higher-skilled jobs. The County's labor force participation rate has been declining since 1990, especially among men, and is projected to decline through 2030, according to data from the Maryland Department of Planning. Part of this decline is traced to the aging of the population, but it is also tied to the County's educational attainment. Of the

population aged 25 and older in 2005, 13 percent of County residents had at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 19 percent of Maryland residents, according to the Census Bureau's 2007 American Community Survey.

With jobs demanding a higher skill level, many residents may find it more difficult to get a job locally as the economy evolves. A number of interviewees cited in the *Cecil County Growth Study (Strategic Plan)* noted the lack of availability of technically proficient labor, including workers with specialized skills in engineering, health and information technology. Both the *Growth Study (Strategic Plan)* and *BRAC Action Plan* noted the need for more workforce development programs, to augment the classes provided by Cecil College and the Cecil County Public Schools.

These efforts can focus on vocational offerings at the high school level (carpentry, automotive, HVAC, plumbing, electrical), as well as Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs at all levels from kindergarten through college. Adult and workforce education also can take place through the Small Business Development Center and Business Training Resource Center.

4.3.6 Agriculture

Land in farms in Cecil County has remained fairly stable since 1992 and the number of farms has risen slightly, reflecting a shift from large- and medium-sized farms to smaller farms (Table 4.5). The agriculture industry and agribusiness face a number of challenges.

Much of the most productive agricultural land (and prime soils) are in the northern part of the County, part of a large agricultural region that extends through southern Pennsylvania. This area is also the portion of the County most affected by rural residential development since 1990 (see Chapter 3, Land Use). As large tracts are parcelized and rural areas suburbanize, the County faces the potential of losing the critical agglomeration of rural lands that sustain its agriculture industry.

Directing growth to Growth Areas is one way the Comprehensive Plan addresses this issue. But other measures are needed to support agriculture, especially among smaller farmers whose families have farmed their land for generations. For these farmers, the monetary value of their land for future development can outweigh the benefits of agriculture, creating an incentive to sell their farms for residential uses when this option is available.

Supporting farmland preservation, including through an attractive Transfer of Development Rights program, promoting agribusiness by expanding the types of activities considered to be value-added agricultural related enterprises as permitted uses, and expanding permitted sales so as not to be strictly limited to agricultural products can help to generate more income for farmers and help to support the County's agriculture industry.

4.4 Fisheries

State law requires that all counties located on tidal waters include a Fisheries Element in their Comprehensive Plan, focusing on the designation of areas for loading, unloading, and processing finfish and shellfish, and for docking and mooring commercial fishing boats and vessels.



Scheeler Seeds, LLC, located near Cecilton, has been supplying seed to farmers, landscapers and homeowners in and around Cecil County for 25 years.

Photo Courtesy of Cecil Soil Magazine



Recreational fishing is popular along the County's shores.

Photo Courtesy of Cecil Soil Magazine.

A handful of commercial fishing operations are based in Cecil County. Although more than 200 individuals from the County held state-administered commercial fishing licenses in 2009, a lack of local facilities limits the ability to offload catch in the County. No commercial docks operate in the County, and there are only 13 publicly owned boat ramps, despite the County's 220 miles of shoreline.

According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, fishing in local waters yielded almost 2 million

pounds of catch in 2008 valued at \$1.4 million (Table 4.9). This represented about three percent of the total catch in Maryland and two percent of the total value. These figures account for commercial fishing in the Elk River, Bohemia River, Northeast River, Susquehanna Flats, Susquehanna River, Sassafras River and Upper Chesapeake Bay region. The data do, however, include segments of the rivers not in Cecil County.

Table 4.9: Total Fish Catch in Cecil County and Maryland, 2008

Year	Total Catch in Cecil County-Area Waters		State of Maryland Totals		Share of State Total from County-Area Waters	
	Pounds	Dollars	Pounds	Dollars	Pounds	Dollars
2008	1,953,601	\$1,439,913	59,862,351	\$74,886,212	3%	2%

Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources

In addition to commercial fishing, two wholesalers operate in the County.

A 2003 *Tourism Industry Impact Study* prepared for the Office of Economic Development found that, of 804 people surveyed, 187 or 18.4 percent of visitors came to Cecil County for fishing, creating 96 (29.9%) of 321 overnight stays. They also accounted for 91 (18.8%) of 483 day trips.

Encouraging recreational fishing will remain a key component of the County's tourism strategy.

4.5 Policies and Actions

1. Encourage the development of flex space/office uses along the US 40 corridor, especially in the Mixed Use areas, where they can be integrated with residential and commercial/retail uses.
2. Focus the Mixed Use area between US 40 and MD 7 west of Elkton on employment uses, in campus-like office settings, supporting the County's goal of making US 40 its primary business corridor and center for economic development and providing opportunities for office uses.
3. Make available a listing of all commercially and industrially zoned land that can be developed as office uses in support of BRAC.
4. Provide infrastructure, including water, sewer and roads, to designated employment and mixed use areas.

5. Continue efforts to relocate the tollbooths on Interstate 95 to the Maryland-Delaware state line.
6. Support the economic viability of farming, equine, forestry and related business activities.
 - a. Review the need to expand the types of activities considered to be value-added agricultural related enterprises as permitted uses in the Resource Protection and Rural Conservation areas (see definition of agriculture in the zoning regulations).
 - b. Consider expanding permissible agriculture and forestry support enterprises in the Rural Conservation and Resource Protection areas, for example, add farm implement servicing as an accessory use to farm implement sales, which is currently permitted by special exception.
 - c. Review standards for retail on-site sales on land not zoned for business use (currently addressed in the zoning regulations as farmers markets and roadside stands). Consider expanding permitted sales so as not to be strictly limited to agricultural products produced by the owner or within the immediate neighborhood, though County products should be the preponderance of goods sold, with the balance coming from the local region.
7. Promote tourism by continuing to build upon the County's character, including small towns, rural agricultural enterprises, heritage, scenic byways, water and equine related recreational opportunities including access to the water, and County and State parks. Coordinate with the State, towns, and businesses to attract tourists from nearby major population centers, especially to the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway trail system and other off-road and on-road trails.
8. Take advantage of the freight rail lines that traverse Cecil County by promoting this asset as an economic development opportunity and directing employment uses that rely on fuel-efficient cargo operations to designated employment areas along rail lines.
9. Encourage and support the provision of broadband high-speed internet services / telecommunications to commercial, industrial, governmental, and residential users in the Growth Areas to advance the economic, essential services, and cultural development of the County. Work with service providers to extend broadband to other areas of the County so that all residents can be served.
10. Encourage the training and development of the local labor force to fulfill the future needs of local industry, especially in science, technology, engineering and math. Continue to work with Cecil College, the Cecil County Public Schools and other partners to expand workforce development programs.
11. Explore the potential to develop a commercial fishing dock in Cecil County to provide opportunities for the offloading of seafood.