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Comprehensive Plan 2040
Your County. Your Vision. Your Future.

Chapter 4

Existing Conditions

EXISTING Conditions

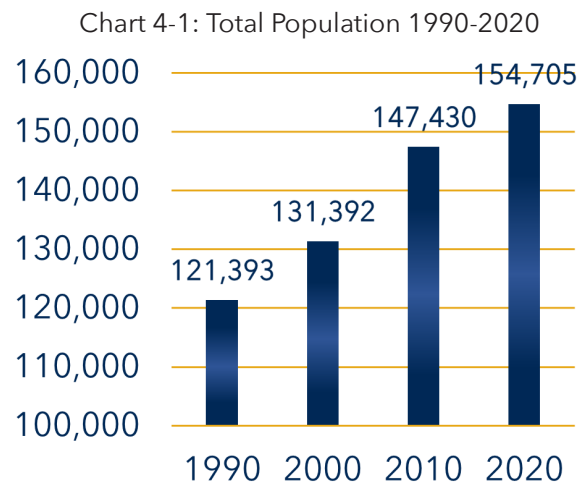
Purpose

In creating policies that will govern land use in Washington County for the next ten to twenty years, it's important to understand baseline demographic and economic conditions within the jurisdiction as they exist today. Below, an overview of select demographic indicators is presented, highlighting trends that have occurred, mostly since 2000. Later chapters of this plan will build upon this baseline data to establish future land use policies applicable to each topic.

Demographic Indicators

Total Population

Population trends, which are an important tool in planning for public investments, have been very difficult to evaluate in recent decades due to numerous factors and events affecting the economy and housing markets. Both the economy and housing market flourished during the end of the 1990's and into the beginning of the 2000's in Washington County, bringing in a much higher number of new citizens than previously predicted. The County's population grew 8.6% from 1990-2000, and 11.7% between 2000-2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

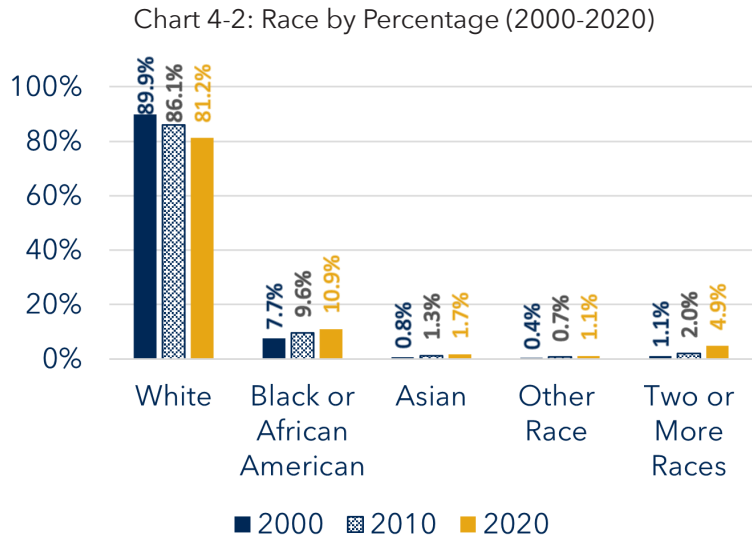


Source: U.S. Census Bureau - P1, 2020 Decennial Census

Obscured by this overall trend of progressively increasing population growth in the previous two decades was the sudden decline in the housing market in the mid to late 2000's, which had a tremendous impact both locally and nationally. The resulting recession significantly reduced previous growth trends and likely was a strong contributor to an increase of only 7,275 people (or 4.9%) since 2010. Washington County's current population stands at 154,705 people, according to the 2020 Census. The current population increase is notably less than was previously predicted by the County and State prior to 2020 (both estimates exceeded 160,000 people by 2020). The effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic bring further uncertainty to forecasting future population growth based upon these continually shifting economic fortunes.

Race

The racial composition of Washington County’s total population between 2000 and 2020 is shown in Chart 4-2. Throughout that time period, the significant majority (80% - 90%) of County residents have identified as white alone. It is notable however that those identifying as belonging to this group have dropped nearly 10% during the last twenty years (from 89.9% in 2000 to 81.2% in 2020). Correspondingly, the share of those identifying as Black or African American alone or belonging to two or more races has increased by the largest percentage during the survey period. The former group rose by 3.2% (7.7% to 10.9%) from 2000 to 2020, while the latter group increased by 3.8% of the total population (1.1% to 4.9%). American Indian and Alaska Native Alone as well as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone populations remained below 1% across all three census.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2000 P006, 2010 and 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate (B02001)

Households

The standard economic definition of a household is the number of persons living together in one housing unit. More simply, a household is equivalent to any occupied housing unit. Households are broken down into family (where residents are related to primary householder through birth, marriage or adoption) and non-family (where residents are unrelated). This statistic is important in understanding the demand for types of living quarters and estimating population fluctuations based on new unit development. Two tables below track changes in County households since 2000.

Table 4-2: Household Composition 2000-2020

Household Composition						
Household Type	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2020	% of Total
Total Households	49,726	100%	54,669	100%	56,367	100%
Non-Family Households	15,634	31.4%	16,026	29.3%	18,428	32.69%
Family Households	34,092	68.6%	38,643	70.7%	37,939	67.3%
Married Couple Family	26,828	54%	29,222	75.6%	27,607	72.8%
Male Householder (no spouse)	N/A	N/A	1,947	5.0%	3,476	9.2%
Female Householder (no spouse)	5,314	10.7%	7,474	19.3%	6,856	18.07%

Source: U.S Census Bureau - 2000 DP1, 2010, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate (S1101)

Table 4-1: Total Household and Household Size 2000-2020

Total Households and Household Size			
	Total Households	% Increase By Decade	Average HH Size
2000	49,726		2.46
2010	54,669	9.90%	2.58
2020	56,367	3.10%	2.51

Source: U.S Census Bureau - 2000 DP1, 2010, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate (S1101)

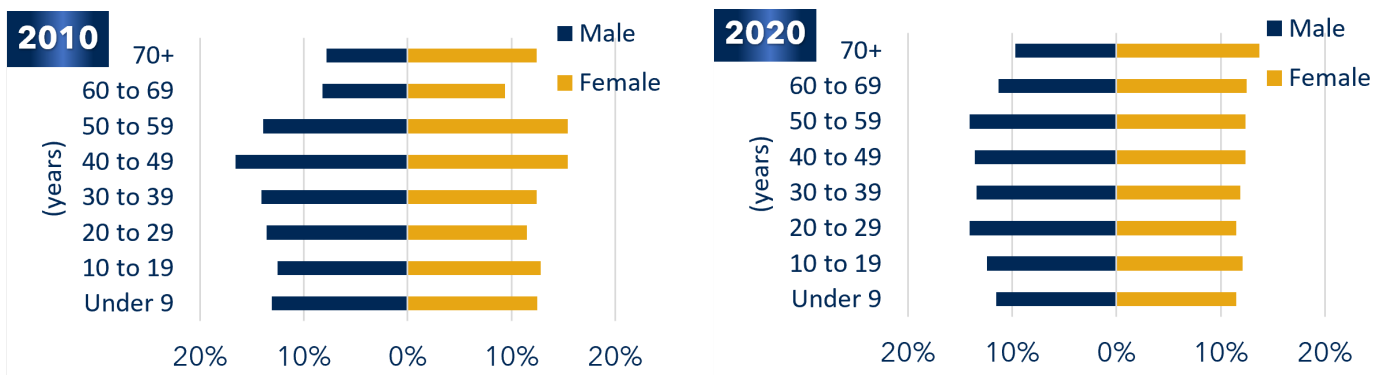
Table 4-2, indicates a number of interesting trends regarding changes in household composition between 2000 and 2020. Married-couple family households grew by more than 20% between 2000 and 2010, rising from 54% of total households in 2000 to 75.6% in 2010. Significant construction of single family detached homes occurred during this period, particularly in the suburban areas of the County’s Urban Growth Area around the City of Hagerstown. Also notable is an increase in non-traditional family households. Family households headed by an unmarried male rose more than 4%, growing from 5% of total family households in 2010 to 9.2% by 2020.

Age Distribution

Charts 4-3 and 4-4, below, shows the age distribution by gender of Washington County’s total population between 2010 and 2020. These charts demonstrate that the County has entered a stationary phase of population growth, where age distribution is nearly equal for most age groups. A stationary pyramid indicates that population growth has been slow and is symptomatic of low birth rates, low mortality rates, and higher life expectancy.

Charts 4-3 and 4-4 also show the growth in age groups which will reach the age of retirement within the scope of this plan. In 2010, the two largest age groups were those that fell between 40 and 49 years of age. Those groups have now aged into the 50-59 age groupings by the 2020 Census. Accordingly, Washington County must begin increasingly considering the needs of the retirement aged population in the provision of community services, a scenario recognizable to many other local jurisdictions throughout the Country.

Charts 4-3 and 4-4: Age of Total Population (2010-2020)



Source: U.S Census Bureau - 2010, 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate (S0101)

Household Income

Table 4-3 shows the distribution of household income over three 10 year periods between 2000 and 2020 as a percentage of total households in Washington County. A two-fold trend can be identified from this table. First, there is the growth in the percentage of total households falling within income classes exceeding \$100,000 annually during the 20 year period. By 2020, the \$100,000 to \$149,999 income class became the second largest in Washington County for the first time. This income bracket made up only 5.3% of total households in 2000 but reached 15.4% of total households in 2020. Additionally, the percentage of total households making \$150,000 or more grew significantly in comparison to other income classes as well.

An opposing trend to that identified above can also be identified in Table 4-3. All household income classes below \$75,000 shrank as a percentage of total households in Washington County from 2000 to 2020. In fact, the only household income classification below \$100,000 that grew during this period were those making just below that figure - \$75,000 to \$99,999. Numerous factors are likely responsible for this trend, such as inflation, in-migration of more affluent residents seeking reduced housing costs, middle-class wage stagnation, changes to labor markets and more. Thus, while the table also notes that median household income grew by 56% (from \$40,617 in 2000 to \$63,510) during the period surveyed, that measure is not necessarily indicative of growth in household prosperity that is uniformly distributed among all income classifications.

Table 4-3: Household Income as a Percentage of Total Households (2000-2020)

	2000	2010	2020
Household Income	% of Total HH	% of Total HH	% of Total HH
Less than \$10,000	9.5%	5.9%	5.4%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6.4%	5.2%	4.1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	13.2%	10.5%	9.0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	13.2%	10.6%	8.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	18.6%	15.0%	13.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	21.6%	19.4%	16.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	10.0%	13.8%	14.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5.3%	12.8%	15.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1.2%	3.9%	7.8%
\$200,000 or more	1.0%	2.8%	5.5%
Median Household Income	\$40,617	\$52,994	\$63,510

Source: U.S Census Bureau - 2000, 2010 and 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate (DP3)

Educational Attainment

Table 4-4 shows the educational attainment of the total population of Washington County residents aged 25 years and older from 2000 to 2020. Evident from the table is the rising levels of education achieved by the local population during this 20-year period. The percentage of the County population aged 25 years and older receiving a bachelor's degree rose 4.4% from 2000 to 2020 and more than 9% of this age group had achieved a graduate or professional degree by that year.

Overall, there was a 10.3% increase in the percentage of the County population aged 25 years and older achieving at least a high school education and a 7.8% increase in those receiving a bachelor's degree or higher, from 2000 to 2020. It should be noted however, that these rates still fell below the rates of educational attainment for Maryland as a whole. In Maryland, the overall percentages of those aged 25 years and older achieving at least a high school education or a bachelor's degree by 2020 was 90.6% and 40.9%, respectively. Table shown on the following page.

Table 4-4: Educational Attainment for Total Population Age 25 Years and Older
(2000-2020)

	2000	2010	2020
Educational Attainment (Age 25+)	% of Total Pop	% of Total Pop	% of Total Pop
Less than 9th Grade	6.3%	5.0%	3.2%
9th to 12th Grade, no diploma	15.9%	11.6%	8.7%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	38.9%	37.5%	36.0%
Some college, no degree	18.7%	19.2%	22.0%
Associate Degree	5.6%	8.0%	7.8%
Bachelor's Degree	8.8%	12.1%	13.2%
Graduate or Professional Degree	5.8%	6.7%	9.1%
Percent High School Graduate or higher	77.7%	83.4%	88.1%
Percent Bachelor's Degree or higher	14.6%	18.7%	22.4%

Source: U.S Census Bureau - 2000, 2010 and 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate (DP3)