



Washington County

M A R Y L A N D



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

# Chapter 5

## Historic Element

# HISTORIC Element

## Introduction and Purpose

Washington County's history and heritage is rich and diverse. Being the first County named in honor of the first President of the United States, George Washington, the area has deep ties to early colonization and its related conflicts. The County continues to embrace this history through preservation of resources such as structures, buildings, sites, districts and objects of importance that are used to interpret the culture and way of life experienced by past citizens.

This element will seek to build on existing efforts to identify, preserve and protect significant pieces of Washington County's history for the benefit of future generations. Whether attempting to rehabilitate a historic resource to maintain its functionality or restore a property to a specific time period, it is important to remember that the value of historic resources is often found first and foremost at an individual level. Resources must be identified, maintained and valued at an individual level or the goals and policies of historic resource protection will not succeed.

## The Evolution of Washington County

### *Early Settlement*

Prior to the 1700s, Washington County was hunting grounds to Indigenous people of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe. Their utilization of the land prior to colonization left the County largely open and full of resources. Other Tribes appear in documents on the State of Maryland Mayis collection by mention in correspondence or mapping. Mostly these mentions document individuals or parties passing through the area. Artifacts, such as stone tools from various periods, have been found. There is also evidence of fishing weirs in County waterways. The County was not home to any large Indigenous settlements from the time of first contact with European settlers. Some geographic names in the County such as Potomac, Conococheague, and Quirauck are derived from Indigenous names.

Conflict occurred between various domestic and foreign powers vying for control of the territory previously occupied by these native Tribes. The French and Indian War erupted in 1754 and pitted the existing British colonies against the forces of New France to the north. These clashes led to the establishment of frontier forts to protect existing colonists. One such fort still exists in Washington County today: Fort Frederick, originally erected in 1756 and later restored in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps, stands as a reminder of the early colonization of Washington County.



Fort Frederick Aerial Image  
MD Dept Natural Resources

### **Early Settlement Continued...**

Colonization and immigration continued through the late 18th Century, including people of Germanic, Irish, and Scotch Irish ethnicities. These settlers arrived via routes from the Eastern Shore, Winchester, Virginia and from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They established formal settlements and the beginnings of our current municipalities. The County seat of Hagerstown (first known as Elizabeth Town) was officially founded in 1762 by Jonathan Hager. Several other small towns were being settled at the same time including Sharpsburg, Funkstown, and Keedysville. Settlements continued to be founded through the early 1800s. Washington County was officially designated as a Maryland County in 1776. The land was taken out of the existing Frederick County and extended to the far western region of the State to what is now known as Garrett County.

### **Agricultural Development and Other Early Economies**

As colonization continued through the early to mid-1700s, land patents, or land grants by colonial proprietors or governors, divided the land of the County. The grantees were people who transported themselves or others to Maryland or were given the rights of others who could not afford the further cost of survey and recordation. Land was also granted as reward for military service. While the large tracts of fertile land were ideal for livestock and grains, the expansive wilderness and limited transportation to more settled areas of the State drove the need for local service industries. Grist mills were the predominant form of industry in the early 18th Century. Operated by local farmers and built along local waterways, these industries became an anchor for rural settlements nearby. Many of the grain and grist mills of this time still exist in varying degrees of repair.

By the late 1800's, a typical farmstead consisted of vernacular stone or log farmhouses surrounded by service buildings such as spring houses, smokehouses, and animal pens. As agriculture began to diversify from crop production to animal husbandry activities, barns and other support buildings such as milk houses began to become part of the typical farmstead. Examples of these historic resources still exist in Washington County today.

As agriculture and trade industries began to evolve and grow, and connection to larger markets continued to improve, other merchant-based industries began to form. However, in Washington County, a different type of industry was beginning to form - the iron industry. Rich deposits of pig iron ore in the southern portion of the County provided a resource and opportunity for this new industry. Iron forges and furnaces began emerging and produced cannons and ammunition for the Revolutionary War through the late 1700s. While true capitalism had not fully materialized in the newly discovered North America, these industries provided the basis for future settlement and industrialization.



Farm land near Smithsburg, MD

## The Civil War

As the country continued to grow through the early and mid-1800s, there became a deep divide over the fundamental ideals and economic principles, especially those related to slavery, guiding the direction of the country. These differences escalated to the outbreak of a national Civil War between Northern and Southern States. The war began in the South in 1861 with Confederate armies attacking union defenses and pushing north into the Union territory during General Robert E. Lee's Maryland Campaign. Several battles raged in the mid-Atlantic region of southern Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Northern Virginia between September 1862 and July 1863. It led to the bloodiest days of the war with battles at Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg.

Washington County bore much of the devastation of this campaign during the Battle of Antietam, the single bloodiest day of fighting in the history of the country. Numerous other battles and skirmishes occurred within Washington County including, but not limited to, the Battle of Williamsport, Battle of Funkstown, Battle of Hancock, and the Battle of South Mountain. There are numerous historic resources in the County that preserve this solemn time.



Antietam National Battlefield, Luminary Ceremony

## Industrialization and Manufacturing

After the Civil War, industry began to resume its dominance in the area. Hagerstown and Williamsport quickly became hubs for industry in the early 20th century because of their access to transportation and trade routes. Early industries included silk and garment factories. Hagerstown housed numerous other industries including Moller Organ Works, Foltz Manufacturing and Supply Company, Antietam Paper Company, and the Pangborn Corporation just to name a few. Williamsport housed the LeFevre Broom Company, Cushwa Brick Company, and a tannery. Many of these early industrial buildings still exist but are largely vacant. The City of Hagerstown has targeted some of these buildings in the Downtown core for redevelopment and revitalization efforts.

Another important industry was developing in the early 20th century, aviation design and manufacturing. Kreider-Reisner began as a sub-contractor to the Maryland Press Steel Company during its contract period for military equipment during World War I. After the closure of the Maryland Press Steel Company, Kreider-Reisner continued to manufacture and mass produce airplanes.

## Industrialization and Manufacturing Continued...

Eventually Kreider-Reisner was absorbed by Fairchild in the late 1920s. Fairchild continued to flourish through the early to mid-20th century eventually becoming the largest employer for the County. Fairchild became such an economic power that they began to build residential neighborhoods throughout Hagerstown to increase the local workforce.



Kreider-Reisner C-4C Challenger

## Transportation Networks

Few things have impacted the settlement of Washington County like that of transportation networks. The movement of goods and people through various forms of transportation have influenced the location and economics of our local communities.

One of the first major routes impacting Washington County was the National Road. It was the first federally funded interstate highway authorized by Congress in 1806. The road was to start in Cumberland, Maryland and stretch to the Ohio River. Inspired by the Federal government investment in this new road, the Maryland General Assembly created a turnpike to connect Baltimore and Cumberland. It was designated as the Baltimore National Pike and was financed by local banks thus gaining the nickname of "The Bank Road".<sup>1</sup> Installation of the road gave rise to thriving Main Streets and ultimately led to clusters of richly historic building resources and many of the County's National Register Districts. Other historical products of this new road included mile markers and stone arch bridges. The Wilson Bridge, which spans the Conococheague Creek near the rural village of Wilson, was the first stone arch bridge built in Washington County. It was built as part of the original Bank Road.



Historic American Engineering Record, C. (1968) National Road, Wilson Bridge, Spanning Conococheague Creek at Route 40 Old, Hagerstown, Washington County, MD. Maryland Washington County Hagerstown, 1968.

As the country continued to grow and the Industrial Revolution continued to develop new technologies and expand economies, the need for movement of commodities into new markets became increasingly important. Railroads became the answer to these needs since they could traverse longer distances and carry more cargo than horse drawn wagons. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, one of the oldest railroads in the United States, began construction in Baltimore in 1828 and reached the southern tip of Washington County by 1834. While the B&O Railroad was the first company to establish lines in Washington County, many other companies followed suit. The City of Hagerstown became a prime location for several railroad companies, and thereby earned the nickname of the "Hub City". Some historic resources related to this mode of transportation, such as roundhouses, have been lost but some bridges remain. The railways are vital today as some are still active while others have been transformed into public parks.

### *Transportation Networks Continued...*

These railways served to provide for the movement of people around the County, however the commerce railways provided helped to shape the County's history to an even greater degree.

Around the same time period that railroad companies had begun to develop, another mode of transportation gained popularity. Construction of The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal started in 1828. The Canal was not completed until 1850, years after railways had reached similar markets. Initially intended to span from Georgetown, Maryland to the Ohio River, construction of the Canal became too costly and could not compete with the railroad companies in the movement of goods and services. While not reaching its destination, the canal still served as yet another link to commerce centers supporting growth specifically in the towns of Hancock and Williamsport along its route. The 184-mile-long canal ceased operation in 1924 but was revitalized in 1971 when it was designated as a National Historic Park. This designation has helped to preserve an abundance of historic resources along its corridor and provide context for historic resources outside of the park.

One final notable contribution of transportation to County historic resources came with the automobile. This caused a resurgence in the popularity of the National Road as well as eventually leading to the construction of the three (3) interstates that cross the County. Interstates 68, 70 and 81 all impacted the history of the County starting in the mid 1960's. As main arteries for commerce and travel, their effect was like railways. They changed the landscape of the County as well by bisecting rural tracts and heralding the beginning of larger residential subdivisions. The growth in automotive travel and expanded road capacity made it possible to live distant to one's place of employment. The result was a greater freedom of movement for individuals, but also a growing threat to the preservation of Washington County's historic resources as result of urban sprawl.

In summary, each of the themes in history discussed led to the creation of Washington County and its historic resources as we know them today. The County is an excellent example of resources which display an evolving culture across many periods of time. Since many of the historic resources are intact it is important to plan for their preservation into the future.



Conococheague Aqueduct, National Park Service



Valentina, MIHP: WA-I-231, National Register of Historic Places, listed 1974

## Defining Preservation

The word preservation is often associated with the act of “saving” something however, that only describes the result. It does not explain what action has been taken to ensure the conservation of a historic resource. In the case of historic structures, preservation is often thought of in terms of saving the structure from some form of demolition or alteration. However, citizens should be educated that preservation is more than just saving an old structure; it is about saving the contextual history of the structure. Typically, this means making improvements to the structure to restore the historical context. Examples of these methods include:

- **ADAPTIVE REUSE.** This is the process of reusing a site or building for something other than for what it was designed. While it may not preserve the historic context and all of the unique characteristics, it is still a wise use of historic resources to encourage environmental stewardship. For example, a historic farmhouse converted into offices or a restaurant, it may lose some of its historic characteristics to make way for the new use.
- **REHABILITATION.** This is probably what people think of when they consider resource protection. It is the repair, alteration, and addition in preparation for a new use while retaining features which convey historical, cultural or architectural significance. There are many examples of this throughout the County as this is typically the most common practice when updating a historic property.
- **RESTORATION.** This method aims to return a building to a specific period, acknowledging the need to remove alterations and recreate previous aspects that have been removed. An example of this might be the National Trust for Historic Preservation properties like Montpelier, located in Virginia.

- **PRESERVATION.** This is the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials or preserving of the structure in its current form with little or no replacement or new addition. Another form of this is stabilization where a property is given the minimum treatment to prevent further deterioration. Adding a roof to a barn to either keep it in working order or to prevent further collapse is an example of this type of treatment.

## Historic Resource Inventories

To begin the preservation of resources, identification and location of potential resources is foremost. There are four main inventories that cover resources found in Washington County:

- ★ National Register of Historic Places; and
- ★ National Historic Landmarks
- ★ Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
- ★ Washington County Historical Sites Inventory

The County has its own definition within the Zoning Ordinance stating a historic resource is “a district, landmark, site, building, structure, space or object, including its appurtenances and environmental setting, which can be linked historically through location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and/or association, and which is significant in national, state or local history, architecture, archaeology or culture.” Regardless of the entity maintaining the historic resource inventory, they are generally evaluated based on criteria used for the National Register.

## National Register of Historic Places

Inclusion on the National Register is voluntary and provides opportunities for grant funding to restore and or rehabilitate a resource. The National Register is maintained by the National Park Service. Properties listed or determined eligible for the National Register are referred to as “historic properties” and are typically treated the same way by Federal and State regulatory reviews and financial incentive programs. A National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 review occurs when any federal funding or permitting is involved in a project, and it requires the federal government to determine if the project will negatively effect any historic properties. The Section 106 review includes consultations with Federal, State and local government, federally recognized Native American Tribes and the public to discuss and consider their views and concerns about project impacts on historic properties. The review usually results in the development of an agreement document that describes how the Federal government will avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts on historic properties

**Significance** is the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of a community. To be included on the National Register a property must display some form of significance which is achieved by association with one or many criteria:



<b>CRITERIA A</b>	That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
<b>CRITERIA B</b>	That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
<b>CRITERIA C</b>	That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
<b>CRITERIA D</b>	That have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or pre-history.

Another important factor in eligibility for the National Register is integrity. **Integrity** relates to the ability of the resource to convey its historical associations or attributes. Integrity is measured by how intact the following characteristics remain for the resource.

<b>LOCATION</b>	Location is the place where historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
<b>SETTING</b>	Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. It refers to the historic character of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves how, not just where, the property is situated and its historical relationship to surrounding features and open space.
<b>DESIGN</b>	Design is the combination of elements that create the historic form, plan, space, structure and style of a property. This includes such elements as: organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials.
<b>MATERIALS</b>	Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form an historic property.
<b>WORKMANSHIP</b>	Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history.
<b>FEELING</b>	Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

It is important to note that these criteria and associated integrity are also very important when considering the value of resources to citizens and the treatments undertaken to preserve a resource. Nationwide, the National Register has more than 90,000 properties housing 1.4 million individual resources. Washington County has approximately 120 historic resources and districts that are included on the National Register. Boonsboro, Funkstown, Hagerstown, Keedysville, Sharpsburg and Williamsport are all municipalities within the County that have at least one, if not more, National Register districts containing multiple individual resources.

Table 5-1: National Register of Historic Places in Washington County

National Register of Historic Places			
Resource Type	Count of Resources	Example Resource	Significance
Building	74	Rufus Wilson Complex	Architecture & Social History
District	17	Lehman's Mill	Economics & Architecture
Site	4	Maryland Heights, Spur Battery	Military
Structures	5	Washington Monument	Military & Architecture

Source: Maryland Historical Trust, County GIS Data



Wilson, Rufus Complex MIHP WA-V-074, National Register of Historic Places, Listed in 1996

## National Historic Landmarks

As a smaller subset, the National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) illustrate the heritage of the United States and their localities. The list is maintained by the National Park Service. These are considered outstanding representations of American history and culture. National Historic Landmarks are treated as historic properties under Section 106 reviews of the National Historic Preservation Act. However, Section 110(f) of the Act sets a higher standard of care for NHLs, mandating that the Federal government, to the greatest extent possible, consider all reasonable alternatives and take extra planning measures to minimize harm to these landmarks. Washington County is fortunate to have three of these landmarks: Fort Frederick State Park and John Brown's Headquarters (Kennedy Farm), listed in 1973 and Tolson's Chapel and School, listed in 2021.



Tolson's Chapel, Sharpsburg, MD, MIHP WA-II-702, National Register of Historic Places 2008, National Historic Landmark 2021

# Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties

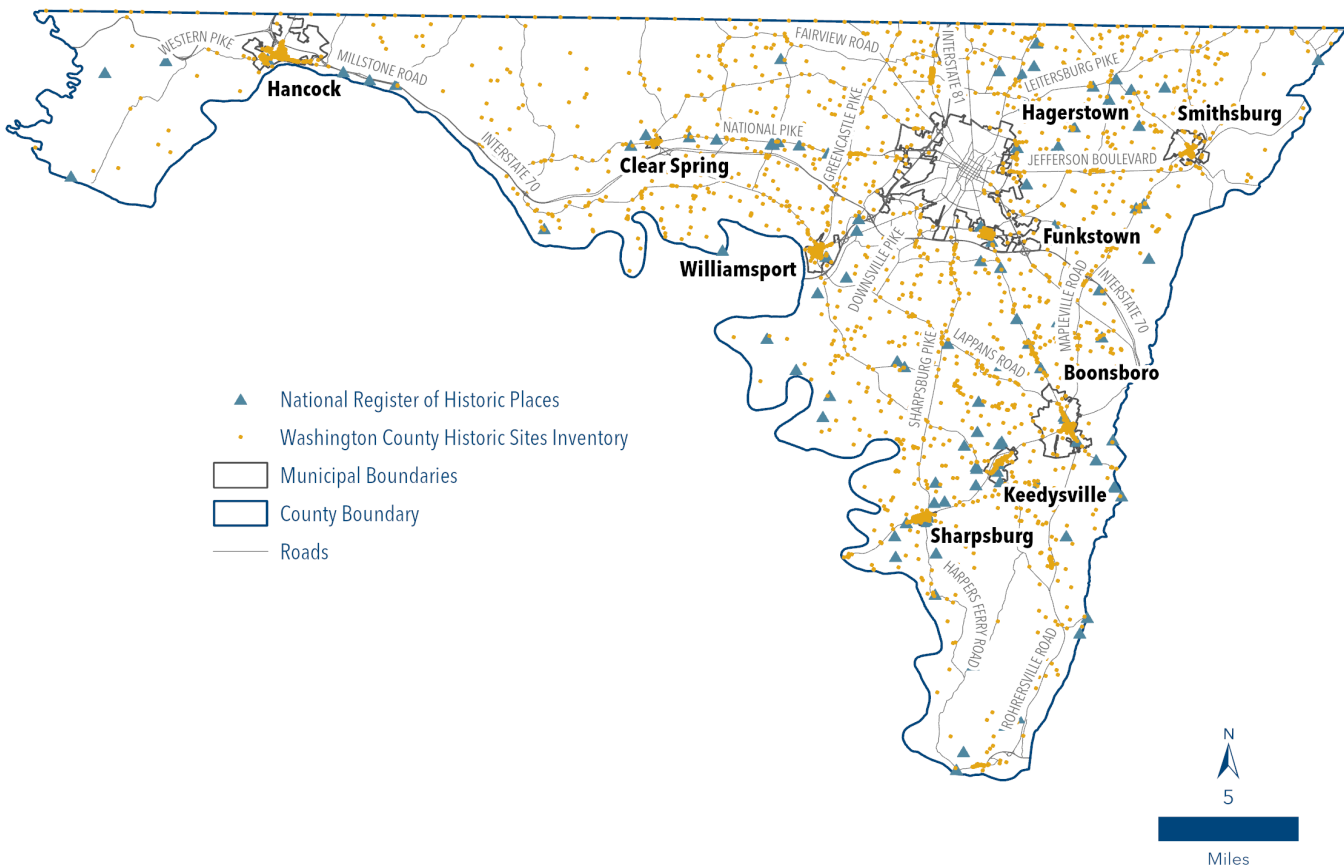
The primary repository for resource identification and documentation in the State is the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP). The MIHP was created by the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) shortly after its creation in 1961 and is still maintained by MHT. The MIHP includes the nationally listed resources mentioned previously as well as those added by State and local efforts. Inclusion on the MIHP is simply for informational and planning purposes and has no bearing on regulation or financial incentives.

# Washington County Historic Sites Inventory

The County originally prepared a historic sites survey between 1973 and 1978 which included more than 1300 sites. The adopted County’s Historic Sites Inventory, as outlined in previous adopted Comprehensive Plans in 1981 and 2002, is comprised of the additions made to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties after these surveys were completed. This County Inventory includes individual sites, contributing resources to Historic Rural Villages, and properties which have had the Historic Preservation zoning overlay applied.

Surveys for the resources include details such as the period of significance, narratives, location information, and photographs. Generally speaking, historic resources must be at least 50 years old to be inventoried and to coincide with the eligibility requirements for the National Register. The main themes of the County’s historic resources include industry, transportation, vernacular architecture, and social history. The properties fall into the categories of Buildings, Districts, Objects, Sites or Structures as highlighted next.

Map 5-1: Historic Sites





## OBJECTS

The County's northern border is known as the Mason-Dixon line. As part of the effort to survey this historic border between the Confederate and Union states, milestone markers were placed. The Old National Pike, a historic travel corridor in the County, also has milestones included in this category which are on the National Register. Because of the frequency of the milestones, this category contains over 70 resources in the County.



## DISTRICTS

The County has additional historic districts not included on the National Register which cover towns, rural villages and landscapes previously surveyed through joint efforts with the State. Including the National Register districts, the County has more than 50 districts.



## BUILDINGS

More than 90% of the County's inventoried historic resources are buildings. The majority of the inventoried structures were built in the 19th century. Frame and brick are the most common exterior materials for structures. The majority of residential buildings are vernacular, meaning they are not planned by an architect but based upon regional traditions, materials at hand and functionality. Washington County has more than 3,400 buildings documented.



## SITES

Many of the historic sites in the County are cemeteries, either church related or small family cemeteries. There are also a limited number of State and local parks included in this category. Some sites related to prominent industries, including mining furnace complexes and mills, also fall into this category. Washington County has less than 70 sites.



## STRUCTURES

One of the most recognized historic resources to fall under this category of the MIHP are the County's more than 20 stone arch bridges. Not surprisingly, stone culverts and walls are also prominent in this category. This category also includes other bridge construction types. Bridges are, by far, the dominant resource in this category. The category has more than 140 resources.

In 1983, the Getty Survey (named for Mr. Joe Getty who performed the research) included an additional 82 properties in the County's Historic Sites Inventory that were primarily early 20th century resources. Several years later in 1989, the County and Towns began working together to evaluate resources within Town limits. This resulted in documentation of potential historic districts, their contributing resources and a contextual history of each of the Towns describing factors that led to Town development. A summary of these surveys is below in Table 5-2. The City of Hagerstown, which completed its own inventory, has 1,653 contributing resources located within six National Register Districts.

Table 5-2: Summary of Town Historic Resource Surveys

Town	Year of Survey	# of Resources Identified
Hancock	1989	348
Williamsport	1990	381
Smithsburg	1991	161
Sharpsburg	1991	218
Clear Spring	1992	142
Boonsboro	1992	249
Keedysville	1993	124
Funkstown	1996	162

Between 1991 and 2002, further surveys were completed in smaller, unincorporated communities including Maugansville (101 resources), Rohrersville (42 resources), Pen Mar (53 resources), Fairplay (23 resources) and Tilghmanton (72 resources) which again were added to the County's Historic Sites Inventory and subsequently the MIHP. Since the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, additional work has been completed resulting in updates to existing surveys and new documentation of resources. A list of the surveys conducted are included in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3: Historic Resource Surveys Completed Since 2002 Comprehensive Plan

Survey Name	Year of Survey	# of Contributing Resources
Park Hall/Locust Grove	2003	43
Leitersburg	2003	155
Downsville	2008	36
Mount Lena	2008	42
Bakersville	2010	6
Brownsville	2010	24
Crampton's Gap*	2008/2010	37
Turner's Gap*	2008/2010	115
Fairview	2010	8
Gapland	2010	16
Sandy Hook	2010	31
Highfield/Cascad	2001/2012	50
*Also including Fox's Gap		

According to Heritage2031, the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties currently has more than 4,000 historic resources for Washington County, however, when examining structures more than 50 years of age, a key National Register qualifier, there may be over 22,000 that have not been evaluated. The original large survey efforts in the County completed in the 1970's did not consider resources after the 1920's so there is a significant lack of 20th century structures on the MIHP and therefore the County's Historic Sites Inventory. The 20th century resources need to be researched, adopted locally and included on the MIHP when and where appropriate.

The County also has not explored the area of thematic inventory updates. Examples of thematic updates include resources which are associated with specific populations, industries or events. Many of the resources currently on the County's Inventory of Historic Sites are associated with architecture themes rather than thematic categories. It is important that inventory updates consider thematic surveys because these focused surveys are opportunities to engage citizens while improving documentation for resources.

The current status of resource documentation for properties in Washington County's Historic Sites Survey (and subsequently the MIHP) is variable. Some resources have no pictures or descriptions and do not meet the current MHT Standards and Guidelines for Architectural and Historical Investigations in Maryland because of changes in these guidelines since the bulk of survey in the 1970's. The variation in documentation often inhibits the review by both citizens and County staff when changes to resources are proposed. It should be a priority to update the existing documentation to include photographs, descriptions and documentation to the current standards whenever possible.

Prioritizing County resources by updates to the local inventory may lead to easier implementation of local land use regulations protecting historic resources. It would also enable outreach regarding resources to be targeted more effectively. The ability to provide updated and complete documentation would also be a benefit of a County based inventory. This inventory prioritization would potentially start with the properties already identified through the Historic Preservation Zoning Overlay, National Register of Historic Places or State historic preservation easements processes and expand to other properties as they participate in local incentive programs such as historic tax credits.

If surveys are completed by the County they should continue to be to MHT's Standards and Guidelines for Architectural and Historical Investigations in Maryland and forwarded for inclusion or update to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.



Williamsport, MD C&O Canal and Cushwa's Building

## Policies, Programs and Regulations

### FEDERAL

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The Federal Government plays a large supporting role to State and local governments in historic resource preservation and planning. The most significant law passed regarding historic resource protection in the United States is the National Preservation Act of 1966. This one Act is responsible for creating most historic resource protections many people automatically associate with preservation. The main components of the Act include the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO), National Register of Historic Places and Section 106 Review.

### STATE

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#### Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)

The State of Maryland has several mechanisms in place to aid in the protection of historic resources. Established in 1966, the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) acts as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for the State of Maryland pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The main goals of MHT are to research, conserve and educate, as well as assist the citizens of Maryland in preserving and interpreting the State's history. As mentioned previously, they both assist the County with historic resource inventory updates as well as serving as a repository for documentation. They are also involved in providing guidance to the County and citizens regarding historic resources. As the SHPO, they are responsible for reviewing projects using State or federal funding to determine if there are impacts to historic resources.

#### Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA)

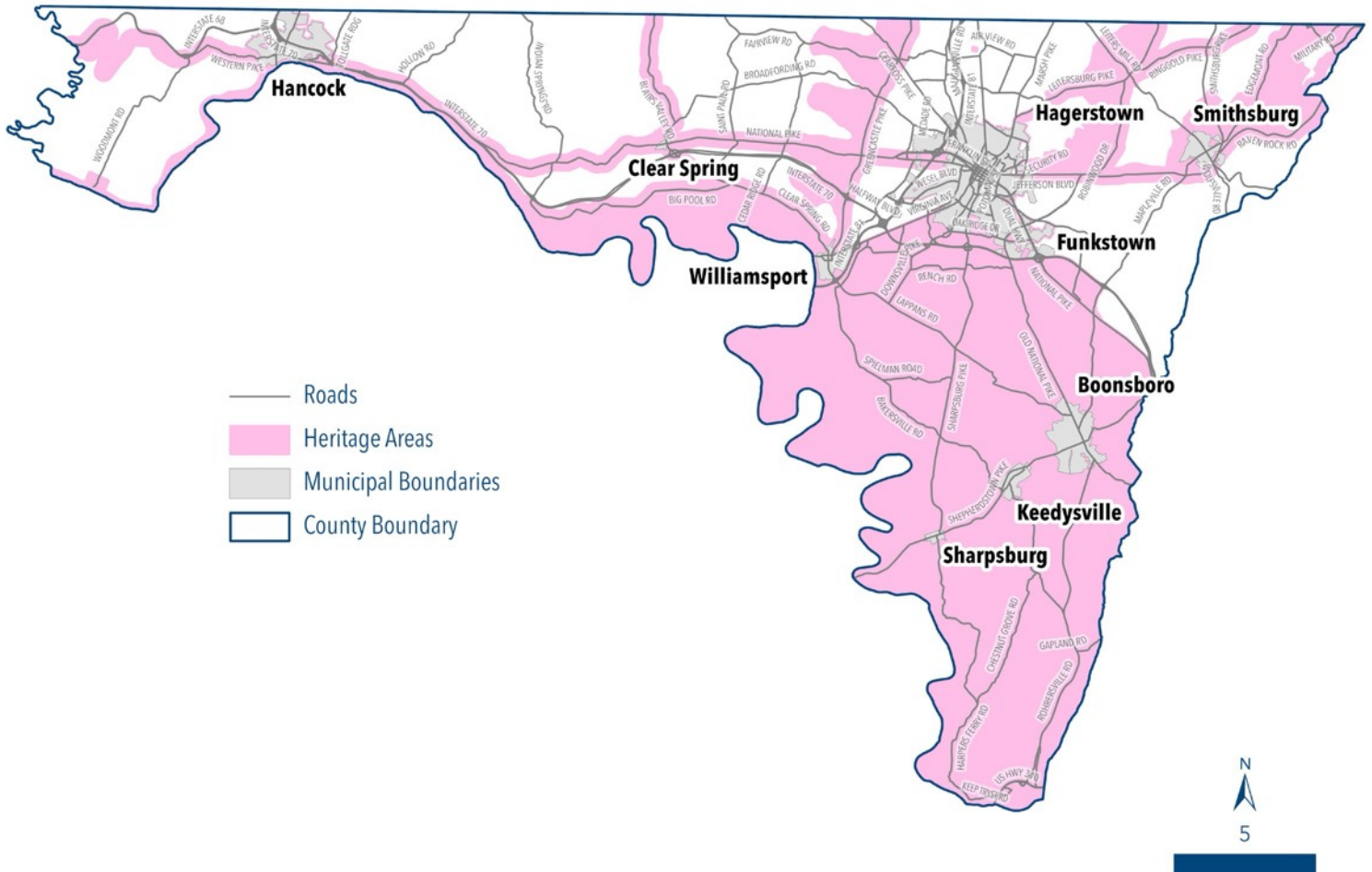


Photo: Antietam Battlefield, credit: Oley Griffith

The Maryland Heritage Areas Program, currently encompassing 13 certified Heritage Areas located in every County in the State as well as the City of Baltimore, helps assist and promote heritage tourism throughout the State. MHAA is an entity distinct from MHT but administered by MHT staff.

Washington County is one of three counties included in the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA) which was created in July of 2006. The extent of the HCWHA in the County can be seen in map 5-2 on the following page.

Map 5-2: Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area in Washington County



**HCWHA Mission:**

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*“To promote the stewardship of [the] historic, cultural, and natural Civil War resources; encourage superior visitor experiences; and stimulate tourism, economic prosperity, and educational development, thereby improving the quality of life in [the] community for the benefit of both residents and visitors”*

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The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan was adopted and made a part of the comprehensive plans of Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties in 2007. This update of the Comprehensive Plan incorporates by reference, all portions of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan except those portions solely relating to other jurisdictions within the Heritage Area. The Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan provides an overview of resources and opportunities in the heritage area, as well as goals and priorities to advance the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area mission.

Heritage tourism is defined as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present” and “heritage tourism can include cultural, historic and natural resources.”<sup>1</sup>

Promoting this form of tourism has benefits for both the residents of the County as well as visitors. The programs, which encourage and promote the importance of historic resources, enhance the quality of life for residents and provide unique experiences for tourists.

Tourism associated with the many National Park Service Sites in Washington County provide a large economic opportunity. According to the Maryland Heritage Area Program Impact Report 2020, the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA), across 3 counties, had nearly 4 million tourists in 2019. The Heritage area supported and sustained more than 6,000 jobs and had a \$450.2 million impact. The HCWHA generated \$60.3 million in tax revenues.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the Maryland Historic Trust, there are several other State agencies that assist with programs designed to protect and revitalize historic and culturally significant properties. The State of Maryland offers many programs which correlate with national and local policies to enable the preservation of historic resources and maintain historic context. All of these require the public as partners and as active participants in preserving.

## Main Street Maryland

The Main Street Maryland Program was created in 1998 and is administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The program coincides with the Main Street Project at the national level which was launched in 1977 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. There is a 5-point approach to keep the downtown thriving that includes: Organization, Promotion, Design, Business Relations and “Clean, Safe, & Green” (Maryland Specific Point). Washington County has two Main Street communities: Williamsport and Hagerstown. The City’s involvement allows access to tools and partnerships as well as funding opportunities for the downtown.



1 National Trust for Historic Preservation. {Preservation Glossary} Today's Word: Heritage Tourism. <https://savingplaces.org/stories/preservation-glossary-todays-word-heritage-tourism#.V-viUSgrLRY>. 28 Sept 2016.

2 Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Makes an Impact, December 2020 <https://www.heartofthecivilwar.org/media/media/download/3309>

## Maryland Scenic Byways Program

The Maryland Scenic Byways Program, part of a national network of scenic byways, offers 18 planned routes for citizens to follow the history and culture of Maryland. Maryland's Scenic Byways Program is a partnership of six agencies including the Maryland Heritage Areas, National Park Service, Office of Tourism Development, Department of Planning, Department of Natural Resources, and Maryland Main Street Program. Six state designated Scenic Byways are also recognized as National Scenic Byways. Four of these six pass through Washington County including the Historic National Road, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, Antietam Campaign, and the Catoclin Mountain byways. The State utilizes funding to help protect, promote, and complete enhancements along routes each year.



The broader goals of the program include: maintaining and promoting the statewide system, sustaining the corridors over time through corridor management, facilitating a visitor experience, working to further associate the economic benefits of the routes, increasing the connection of the byways and improving livability in communities.

## Maryland Resident Curatorship Program

While not a well-known program, the Maryland Resident Curatorship Program is an incentive-based program used to maintain historic resources on State lands. The program, established in 1982, provides the curator of the property with a lifetime tenancy to restore, maintain in good condition and periodically share the property with the public. There are nearly 50 curatorship's across the State. This program requires the investment of your own money and time into the restoration process.

## Other State Programs

The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Rural Legacy Program (RL) are other programs that can have a historical component in the easements. The Rural Legacy boundary encompasses much of the southern portion of the County with about half of the properties having a historically or culturally significant resources listed on the MIHP. These programs are detailed further in the Agriculture and Forestry Chapter of the Plan.

## COUNTY

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The County does encounter many challenges to the retention of resources, there have been many successful collaborative efforts and mechanisms employed to support, educate and enable the stewardship of historic and cultural resources.

### Historic District Commission

The Historic District Commission (HDC) was created in 1986 and its duties and powers are largely housed in the Zoning Ordinance for Washington County. The HDC does have regulatory and review authority locally. They are responsible for reviewing applications within adopted and pending historic Rural Villages in the County, as shown in Map 5-3, the Antietam Overlay 1 or Antietam Overlay 2 (AO) zoning districts, and the Historic Preservation (HP) zoning overlay. In addition, applications affecting properties on the Washington County Historic Sites Inventory are also reviewed. The HDC makes recommendations regarding legislation, applications for zoning text or map amendments, special exceptions, variances, site plans, subdivisions or other proposals affecting historic preservation or historic resources. One of the important roles of the HDC is to work closely with the MHT to promote State preservation efforts.

Other duties of the HDC include:

- Recommend programs and legislation to the Board of County Commissioners and Planning Commission to encourage historic preservation
- Serve as a clearing house for information, provide educational materials and information to the public and undertake activities that advance the goals of historic preservation
- Development of additional duties and standards. For example, criteria to be used in the review of building permit applications
- Prepare, adopt, publish and amend additional guidelines to provide adequate review materials for applications including HP and building permits
- Oversee maintenance and updating of the inventory of Washington County Historic Sites

### Certified Local Government

The State of Maryland has a total of 24 counties. 11 of these Counties have been designated as Certified Local Governments (CLG) which denotes that they have made a special commitment to historic preservation. Washington County is one of the few western jurisdictions designated as a CLG. The County obtained the designation in August of 1991. The Historic District Commission (HDC) acts as the required qualified historic preservation commission for the program.

Benefits of becoming a CLG include:

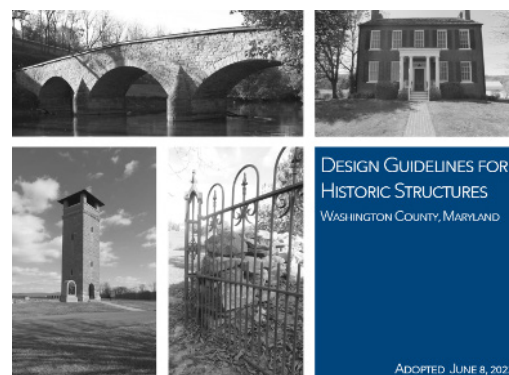
- Eligibility to compete for funds to conduct projects that promote preservation
- Eligibility to receive funds annually for commission training and education

- Formal participation in the National Register nomination process
- Annual performance evaluations
- Priority technical assistance

Being designated as a CLG means that the County is recognized by the National Park Service as being able to participate in the national policy of preservation.

## Design Guidelines

In June of 2022, the Historic District Commission (HDC) adopted "Design Guidelines for Historic Structures – Washington County, Maryland". These Guidelines are a set of guiding principles that establish a basis for the HDC's recommendations, approval, or denial of applications. The HDC uses the Guidelines and the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties to determine if proposed work is appropriate for properties that fall under its review. The Guidelines are made available to assist owners of historic buildings in understanding how historic preservation policies affect their plans to maintain, preserve, or enhance their properties. The information provided is intended to assist with planning and implementing projects in a way that is mindful of the historic nature of both the property being reviewed and its surroundings.



## Building Codes

Stakeholder meetings held prior to the development of this Plan identified building code flexibility with historic properties as one challenge in the preservation of historic structures. The County has adopted Chapter 12: Historic Buildings of the 2018 International Existing Building Code (IEBC). To apply this section of the code, the building must have historic value. It must be accredited as being of historic significance by a State or local authority. Structures in the County's Historic Preservation Overlay, contributing to Historic Rural Villages or contributing to Antietam Overlay 1 or 2 areas will qualify as well as National Register of Historic Places properties. Inclusion in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties does not automatically allow application of this section. This section of the IEBC allows for accommodations in the Flood Hazard Areas, repairs or replacements using like materials, accommodations for fire safety that still ensure safety of occupants, and provides direction for code officials regarding other facets of building code enforcement that protect the historic features. For properties falling outside of this portion of the Code, the only current option is to work with Code Officials at the County on an individual project basis.



## Demolition

Washington County strongly encourages the retention and preservation of historic buildings, structures, sites and objects.

In 2020 the HDC adopted the Design Guidelines which outline demolition alternatives and demolition mitigation. Demolition alternatives from preferred to less preferred include: Redesign to avoid impacts to the historic structure or its setting, incorporating the structure into the overall site design, converting the structure to another use (adaptive reuse), relocating the structure on site or relocating the structure off site. Demolition mitigation involves documenting the structure and updating the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties before attempting salvage of any reusable materials.

On average, between 2000 and 2022, Washington County issued sixty-five (65) demolition permits per year. Since not all demolitions involve historic structures, there were an average of only 3 demolition permits reviewed by the Historic District Commission each year during that same period. Permit review is enabled by the 1990 historic structures demolition policy which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. The



Staff photo of historic property demolition in Washington County

The Policy encourages collaboration between property owners, the Historic District Commission (HDC) and Planning Commission (PC) ensuring demolition alternatives and mitigation have been explored. Any demolition permits in Washington County that involve a property on the County's Historic Property Inventory, that is more than 50 years old, or that is in the Antietam Overlay (AO) or Rural Village (RV) zoning districts will require HDC review for support of the permit. Properties in the Historic Preservation Zoning Overlay are the only demolition permits reviewed for approval while the others are reviewed for support by the HDC and PC regarding alternatives and mitigation. The Policy does not have any penalty for demolition without a permit, nor does it include definitions or accommodations for economic hardship or demolition by neglect. There is little mitigation that can be done once demolition without a permit occurs on historic structures. Therefore, the County should continue to incentivize retention through programs including tax credits and grants as well as exploring policies such as waived or lowered fees, improved Subdivision Ordinance inclusion and incentives, fully incorporating salvage in the permitting process and promotion of Building Code alternatives for historic structures. Additional penalties other than a standard double permit fee in cases of demolition without a permit, such as freezing future permits or subdivision on the property for a set period of time, may be a viable deterrent but should not be a sole solution. A clear policy regarding economic hardship and demolition by neglect should be well defined and policies for each should be incorporated into any demolition policy updates as well.

Demolition by neglect is described as a situation in which a property owner intentionally allows a historic property to suffer severe deterioration, potentially beyond the point of repair. Property owners may use this kind of long-term neglect to circumvent historic preservation regulations. The Historic District Commission sends targeted mailings regarding incentive programs to properties threatened by demolition by neglect. The building code has also been amended locally for demolition by neglect situations to ensure it is clear that the building inspector may pursue actions to stabilize the building resulting in a lien on the property.

In addition to positive economic impacts, there are also positive environmental and land use impacts that occur by encouraging renovation of existing structures rather than demolition or new development. From an environmental perspective, renovation of a historic structure rather than demolition causes a reduction in waste thereby saving landfill space. Rehabilitation in Maryland generates up to 2,500 tons less debris relative to total demolition and new construction for every \$1 million invested in historic tax credit programs.<sup>1</sup>

Retaining historic structures can also provide a return on investment through energy efficiency. Often, historic structures are incorrectly described as energy inefficient simply because of their age. In fact, many historic homes have been sited and renovated through passive measures such as window replacements or added insulation to make them more efficient than some modern homes.

The National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services "Preservation Brief 3: Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings" discusses both inherent energy efficient features in historic buildings as well as providing guidance on improvements. Renovation of existing structures also promotes more sustainable growth and land use patterns. Reuse of buildings help protect greenfields and limit sprawl. It also provides an opportunity for saving related to infrastructure costs.

In order to confront the issues of demolition and demolition by neglect, the County should avoid assigning future land uses which conflict with the continued use of a historic resource. The protection of historic landscapes to retain resource context should continue to be a priority. Education regarding ordinary maintenance, adaptive reuse and improved incentive mechanisms available to individuals will also continue to be priorities for the County to combat these issues.

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The Abell Report, Heritage Tax Credits: Maryland's own stimulus to renovate buildings for productive use and create jobs, an \$8.53 return on every state dollar invested. P.3 Vol 22 No 1 March 2009

Map 5-3: Historic Rural Villages and Antietam Overlays



## Historic Rural Villages (Historic Communities)

Many of the updates to the Washington County Historic Sites Inventory, which the County and State have worked on collaboratively, involved surveys within the County’s unincorporated Rural Villages. They are often strongly related to industry, transportation or migration. The County has a Rural Village zoning classification, but it is important to note that Historic Rural Village survey areas do not always coincide with this zoning designation.

Once a Historic Rural Village is surveyed and adopted, the individual resources identified then must undergo review by the HDC for approval to exterior changes requiring a building permit or applications for local tax credit purposes. Those surveyed but not yet adopted are reviewed for comment only. In addition, properties which are not contributing to the historic rural village survey, but individually documented on the Washington County Historic Sites Inventory or any new construction within a surveyed Historic Rural Village would be reviewed by the HDC to ensure compatibility as defined in the Washington County Zoning Ordinance Section 5D.5. A map of rural villages surveyed is displayed in Map 5-3 above and a list is also in Table 5-4.

Additional survey areas such as Park Hall are not rural villages but are significant clusters of identified resources through survey. The County needs to continue to seek funding and research the remaining rural villages. Incorporation into the Washington County Historic Sites Inventory of the resulting surveys will enable the Historic District Commission to continue review of changes to identified contributing resources and new construction which may adversely affect those resources.



Table 5-4: Rural Villages with Historic Survey Status

Rural Village Name	Adoption Status   Design Review	Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Reference	Year of Survey
Antietam Heights*	Proposed	I904	2017
Antietam+	Adopted   Design Review	II031, II032, II033	2001
Bakersville	Proposed	II276	2010
Brownsville	Proposed	III009	2010
Cavetown**	Adopted   Design Review	IV014	1978   2001
Crampton's Gap**	Proposed	III176	2010
Downsville	Proposed	II273	2008
Fairplay	Adopted   Design Review	II277	1999
Fort Ritchie*	Proposed	IV262	1997
Gapland	Proposed	III039	2010
Highfield	Adopted   Design Review	IV057	1999   2001   2012
Leitersburg+	Adopted   Design Review	I146	1976   1980   2002
Maugansville**	Proposed	I248	1977   1997   2004
Mount Lena	Proposed	II166	1978   2008
Park Hall*	Proposed	III179	2003
Pen Mar	Adopted   Design Review	IV019	1999
Ravenswood Heights*	Proposed	I887	2011
Ringgold	Adopted   Design Review	IV007	1978   2001
Rohrersville	Adopted   Design Review	III025	1978   1997
Sandy Hook	Adopted   Design Review	III032	1978   1993   2004
Tilghmanton	Adopted   Design Review	II152	1978   1999   2009
Turner's Gap/Fox's Gap**	Proposed	II1174	2010
Weverton/Garret's Mill*	Proposed	III031	2010
Williamsport Station	Proposed	I399	1975   2004
Wilson/Conococheague	Proposed	V074	1995



Table 5-4: Rural Villages Historic Survey Status (cont.)

Rural Villages Remaining for Survey			
Bagtown	Charlton	Huyett**	Mount Briar
Beaver Creek	Chewsville	Indian Springs	Pecktonville
Big Pool	Dargan	Jugtown	Pinesburg
Big Spring	Eakles Mill	Kemps**	Pondsville
Bostetter**	Edgemont	Kemps Mill	Reid
Breathedsville	Ernstville	Lappans	St. James (Lydia)
Bridgeport**	Fairview	Mapleville	Trego/Rohrersville Station
Cascade	Fiddlersburg/Security**	Mercersville	Yarrowsburg
Cearfoss	Garretts Mill	Middleburg**	
Cedar Lawn**	Greensburg	Mount Aetna	

\*Not Rural Village zoning, however, individual contributing resources to a survey area are included and those resources are now incorporated into the Washington County Historic Sites Inventory by this plan

\*\*Urban Rural Villages of which their contributing resources only are reviewed for Design Review or demolition, not new construction

+ National Register of Historic Places status

## Antietam Overlay

The protection of scenic vistas, especially those associated with small towns and villages, is integral to historic resource protection. Vistas dramatically altered from their historic context reduce the goal of visitor immersion in the resource that heritage tourism strives to achieve. Washington County has numerous examples of historic and cultural landscapes that offer scenic vistas, particularly within or approaching its Rural Villages.



Photo of View from Antietam National Battlefield Observation Tower

The Antietam Overlay zoning districts (AO) are a primary tool by which the County protects scenic vistas. The AO protects viewsheds around the Antietam National Battlefield and its approaches through additional levels of regulatory review.

As shown on Map 5-3, there are three distinct subareas that are defined in the Antietam Overlay zoning district.

- AO-1 encompasses the Battlefield proper and a buffer surrounding the Federally owned land. In this area, any exterior changes to existing structures are required to have additional review provided by the HDC.
- AO-2 consists of the approach areas to the Battlefield along major transportation corridors. This area also requires additional review of changes to the exterior of any existing structures by the HDC.
- AO-3, pertains to the Red Hill middle ground viewshed from the Battlefield. This area was designated with assistance from the National Park Service via a technical study entitled "Analysis of the Visible Landscape: Antietam" published in April 1988. Regulations in this area limit the amount of tree cutting allowed on specific areas of Red Hill.

As mentioned, there are many other areas in the County that have clusters of valuable resources which could benefit from similar overlay protections. These include areas along historic roadways, Historic Rural Village approaches, and properties on the National Register of Historic Places. Studies to determine areas and roadways where historic context would benefit from expanded land use protections, such as screening, setbacks and other design standards should be completed. These could be combined with environmental resource protections to serve multiple purposes.

## Historic Preservation Overlay

The purpose of the Historic Preservation district is to provide a mechanism for the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of historic and cultural resources. It is established as an overlay zone which adds additional land use controls to the base zoning district. The presence of the overlay on a property indicates there is a historic or cultural resource that has significance to the heritage of Washington County.

An HP Overlay must be in place on a property to be eligible for County tax credits. Once in place, the HP Overlay provides continued opportunities for County tax credits as well as providing review authority for new construction or modification of existing structures' exteriors on the property. There are currently more than 40 HP Overlay areas within the County as seen in Map 5-4. The intention of the Overlay as listed in the Zoning Ordinance is as follows:

- Safeguard the heritage of Washington County as embodied and reflected in such structures, sites and districts;
- Stabilize and improve property values of such structures, sites, and districts and in Washington County generally;
- Foster civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past;
- Strengthen the economy of the County; and
- Promote the preservation and appreciation of historic structures, sites and districts for the education and welfare of the residents of Washington County.



Farmstead, Wheeler Road, MIHP WA-II-286, Washington County Tax Credit and HP Overlay - Williamson

## Local Ordinance Review Areas Summary

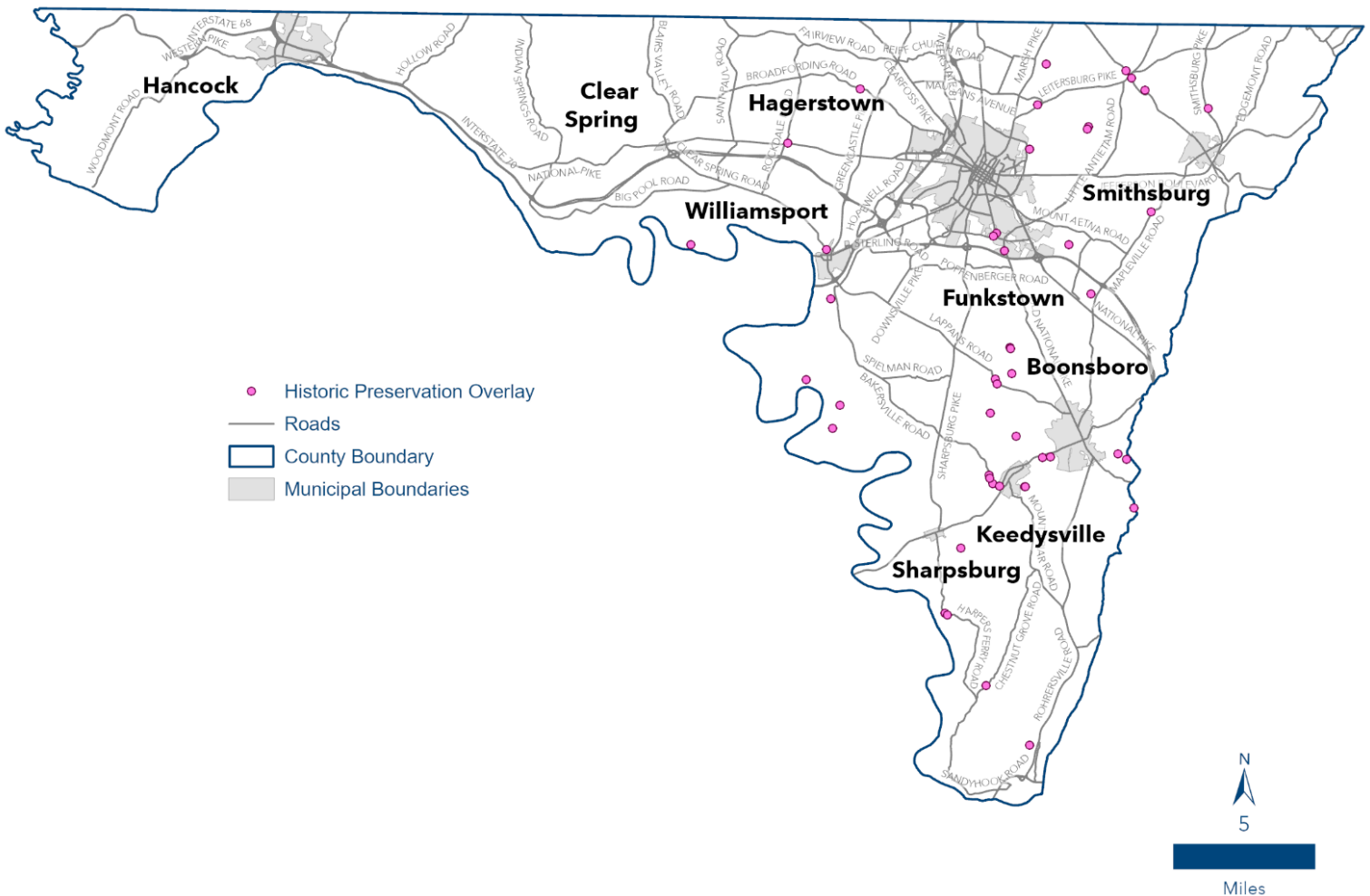
As discussed, historic resource regulations within the County are found in the Zoning Ordinance. The inclusion of the Historic Preservation Overlay and enabling language for the Historic District Commission in that ordinance were a requirement of the Certified Local Government application in the 1990's. At the time, the Zoning Ordinance was an appropriate mechanism, however, historic resource protection has evolved at the State and County level. Multiple ordinances, policies and programs with varying language and terminology must be referenced to determine impacts on resources on a specific property. Confusion also occurs between naming conventions such as the Rural Village zoning designation and the Historic Rural Villages, which require Historic District Commission review.

Modernization of historic preservation efforts through a dedicated ordinance would enable the County to tailor land use policies such as, historic context and scenic vistas, as well as update language and terms for consistency. A dedicated ordinance would also allow for a more proactive and elaborative approach to issues affecting historic resources which can be hindered by the structure of the Zoning Ordinance. Other stand-alone ordinances such as the Subdivision Ordinance, which have specific provisions for historic resources should be examined to ensure that they provide adequate tools for resource protection. It is also important for citizens to understand the policies, programs, and regulations in place and their role within them to make sure there is less confusion on the federal, State, county and individual property owner's authority.

## Tax Credits & Other Local Incentive Opportunities

One of Washington County’s main tools used to promote historic preservation is offering tax credits for the restoration and rehabilitation of exteriors on historic structures. Applicants apply for these credits prior to work starting to determine if the property is in the HP Overlay, surveyed Historic Rural Villages or Antietam Overlay 1 or 2 zoning areas. If the property is not in an existing area, the HP Overlay must be applied prior to application for the tax credit. This overlay is added through the rezoning process at no charge to the applicant. Once the property is in an eligible area, credits of 25% of the total amount spent on preservation are available from the County if the owner follows the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. If the owner completes a compatible addition attached to the historic structure, that new construction is also eligible for a credit of 5%. The County recently updated its percentage for credit and qualifying areas to increase participation in this program. The owner can also apply for State and Federal income tax credits up to 20% each through the Maryland Historical Trust, which is a separate application process. These local, State and Federal programs are designed to work together to enable projects to stack the credits to maximize their project benefit.

Map 5-4: Historic Preservation Overlay Locations



Tax credits and other financial incentives are used as a tool by each level of government to promote historic resource protection. Tax credits provide a positive impact on the economy at the State and local level and should be considered an investment rather than a burden. They are an important tool specifically for revitalization of blighted properties and maintenance for ongoing resource preservation efforts.

In 2020, the estimated qualified rehabilitation expenditures for Federal Tax credits in Maryland totaled over \$200 million dollars in private investment. To date, the federal program has had over \$100 billion in estimated rehabilitation investment nationwide<sup>1</sup>. The use of tax credits also spurs other positive economic benefits such as:

- Raising local and state tax assessment. Property owner investments generate more revenue for the future. For every dollar of commercial tax credits, it is estimated that there this is an \$8.53 return on that investment.
- Increase improvement feasibility. An estimated three-fifths of residential property owners stated that they would not have attempted renovations without the credits.
- They generate jobs. For every \$1 million spent on renovations, there is an estimated 72.5 jobs created during the construction period.<sup>2</sup>

## Other Incentive Opportunities

The tax credit program requires an owner to have the funds to complete the project, which is often a hurdle to using appropriate treatments in rehabilitation due to a higher cost of materials and craftsmanship. To assist with the upfront costs of the rehabilitation of historic resources, the County should also examine adjacent jurisdictions programs, such as Frederick County, MD's Rural Preservation Grant. A grant would enable owners to have funding up front for costs associated with the rehabilitation. Funding for this program should be through a budgeted item rather than a temporary or one time funding source to ensure the program has consistent funding. Property owners of historic resources also have higher burdens on insurance replacement costs and while all houses require maintenance, the qualified professionals needed for historic resource repairs can sometimes be more costly and limited in availability. The County should also consider mimicking other successful programs such as the yearly tax credit afforded to agricultural properties through the Agricultural District Program. This may help to offset some of these factors that serve as deterrents in historic resource ownership. Whatever methods are pursued by the County, there should be a continued emphasis on the ability to create an individualized combination of incentives that allow for projects to be successful.

1 Federal Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2020. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/upload/report-2020-annual.pdf>

2 The Abell Report, Heritage Tax Credits: Maryland's own stimulus to renovate buildings for productive use and create jobs, an \$8.53 return on every state dollar invested. P.3 Vol 22 No 1 March 2009

## Local Preservation Organizations

While not regulatory, private preservation organizations serve an important role in protecting historic resources. Washington County is fortunate to have an abundance of active organizations that not only serve as local repositories for historic resources but are also stewards of many of the important resources in the County. These organizations serve to provide guidance for individual property owners as well. It is important for Washington County to continue to foster established relationships and encourage new connections with these organizations to continue to save historic resources. Some of these resources are included on Table 5-5.

Table 5-5: Local Preservation Organizations

Washington County Historical Society	Smithsburg Historical Society
Washington County Historical Trust	Keedysville Historical Society
Hancock Historical Society	Save Historic Antietam Foundation
Sharpsburg Historical Society	Civil War Trust
Clear Spring Historical Association	Boonsboro Historical Society
Washington County Historic Advisory Committee	
Washington County Association of Museums and Historic Sites	

## Historic Advisory Committee

This Committee was originally tasked with generating the report about historic resources in the County during the late 1960's. This report fueled historic resources additions to the County's Historic Sites Inventory and the MIHP in the following years as well as highlighting potential policies which might promote the preservation and protection of resources. The HAC is still active today and focuses on identifying potential impacts to historic resources and answering questions by the Board of County Commissioners regarding resources. The Committee also recommends properties, places and people for the annual John Frye Historic Preservation Award, which is presented on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners at an annual banquet. The HAC does not have any regulatory or review authority locally but acts as another entity promoting historic resources. They do participate in the Section 106 process as an interested party



## Washington County Historical Society

Founded in 1911, the Washington County Historical Society (WCHS) is an organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the County's history and culture. The WCHS is housed in the historic Miller House on West Washington Street in downtown Hagerstown. Tours are given of the property throughout the year, which also houses exhibits and special collections focusing on County history and offers resources for genealogical research. WCHS also leads walking tours to historic sites around downtown Hagerstown on a periodic basis, and provides other special programs throughout the year. The Historical Society has been involved in the preservation of many historically significant properties around the County over time, including Fort Frederick, the Washington Monument, Burnside Bridge at Antietam Battlefield as well as many others.

## Washington County Historical Trust

The Washington County Historical Trust, Inc. (WCHT), is headquartered in Hagerstown and has an eight-member volunteer board. Its mission is to preserve historic structures and cultural resources through education and public awareness. The Trust monitors the county for historic properties threatened or endangered by demolition or neglect, then works with property owners to present alternative preservation and restoration solutions.

The Trust produces educational materials related to historic preservation, offers historic building skills workshops and sometimes assists in restoring properties. Currently, the Trust has partnered with the City of Hagerstown to restore the 1800s stone Saylor House in Kiwanis Park, with a goal to serve the area as a 3-season educational and event center with a focus on Washington County Building history; historic building trades; environmental education and outdoor recreation on the banks of Antietam Creek.

## Museums

Often related to local preservation organizations are museums used for public outreach and research. Washington County has nearly 25 museums ranging from the Rural Heritage museum to the Museum of Fine Arts. Many of the towns have their own museums and historical societies which also host collections for the public to enjoy. Washington County will continue to collaborate with these entities.



Washington County Museum of Fine Arts - City Park, Hagerstown

## The Role of the Individual in Historic Preservation

### Stewardship

The activity or job of protecting and being responsible for something; careful and responsible.

Up to this point, this element has discussed federal, State, local and even private entities and their impact on historic resources in Washington County. However, it is important to point out that most historic resources in the County are under private ownership. This means that to preserve and maintain the County's historic resources for the future, efforts must start at the individual level.

By choosing to preserve historic resources, property owners are providing a service to the community. Environmental sustainability is positively impacted as the continued use of a property greatly reduces the consumption of new materials, thereby reducing landfill waste. Above all, present and future generations are able to connect to a shared heritage through a collective immersion in historic resources that still exist for people to enjoy today.

If preservation of historic resources is to succeed, adults and children must be educated about the stewardship of historic and cultural resources and their importance to Washington County. In addition to individual property owners, groups such as realtor's and developers also need to be educated in the advantages and opportunities in preserving existing structures. Therefore, although the historic preservation groups and organizations previously mentioned have a role in educating the public, it is ultimately up to the individual to learn about the history and benefits available to them regarding their specific resource.



Rural Heritage Museum and Village, Washington County, MD





## HISTORIC ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- ★ Expand and update the Washington County Historic Sites Inventory by continuing to support updates to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties and evaluating existing inventory documentation for updates. The County may also pursue prioritization of the local inventory.
- ★ Improve the framework for historic resource preservation by ensuring that existing incentive mechanisms are robust and new alternatives are explored.
- ★ Minimize factors which negatively impact historic and cultural resources by balancing growth and providing education opportunities which promote historic resource appreciation.
- ★ Identify and protect additional scenic corridors or areas with a high integrity of historic context through land use policies.
- ★ Modernize and create a separate Historic Preservation Ordinance that consolidates terminology for review areas to reduce confusion and also addresses topics specific to Historic Preservation such as demolition and demolition by neglect of historic resources.
- ★ Collaborate with historic resource interest groups and connect with new audiences by promoting historic resources and improving cooperative relationships with historic resource interested parties.
- ★ Pursue updates to the existing demolition policy while pursuing an incentive-based program for historic resources.