

MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT

Introduction

The purpose of the Municipal Growth Element (MGE), as specified in House Bill 1141, is to develop a plan for future territorial growth, integrate it into the Land Use Plan Element, and address its impacts on water resources and public facilities and services. The information discussed in this MGE is the first time many of these issues have been addressed by the Town.

Historic Growth Patterns

Historically, Mardela Springs has experienced little growth. In 1903, the population of Mardela Springs was 370 people. The Town grew to its highest population of 428 in 1950. Thereafter, the population remained less than 400. Mardela Springs experienced very low population growth between 1970 and 2000. In this thirty-year period, the Town's population grew from 356 to 364 persons, an increase of only 2.2 percent. The Maryland Department of Planning's 2008 population estimate for the Town is 357, a 2% decrease from the Town's 2000 population.

Most of the growth experienced by the Town has been in the form of single-family residential growth accompanied by some small institutional growth. Map #3, which is based upon the Maryland Department of Planning's 2007 Land Use / Land Cover data set, indicates existing land uses within the Town boundary.

Mardela Springs is the least populated of the eight municipalities in Wicomico County. The most likely reason is that the Town does not have a municipal sewerage system. Since public sewer is a major impetus in municipal growth and annexation requests, it is highly unlikely that Mardela Springs will experience any significant future population growth absent a centralized public sewerage system.

Development Capacity Analysis

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) performed the development capacity analysis with the Town of Mardela Springs. This involved collecting, integrating, and interpreting data to make it "fit" MDP's growth simulation model. MDP ran the growth model with default assumptions and current Town zoning to obtain preliminary

results and continued to work with the Town to build the base set of information and assumptions that shaped the final analysis and subsequent results.

Maryland's local governments committed to performing the Development Capacity Analysis as part of their comprehensive plan updates via the Development Capacity Analysis Local Government Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (signed by the Maryland Municipal League and Maryland Association of Counties in August, 2004) and the Development Capacity Analysis Executive Order (signed by Governor Ehrlich in August, 2004).

These agreements were commitments to implement the recommendations made by the Development Capacity Task Force, which are outlined in their July 2004 report (the full report is available at: http://www.mdp.state.md.us/develop_cap.htm).

MDP's analysis, while not perfect, was endorsed by the Development Capacity Task Force and many local governments. This analysis produces estimates of the number of dwelling units built at build-out based on existing zoning, land use, parcel data, sewer service, and information about un-buildable lands. This analysis does not account for school, road, or sewer capacity. The estimates are focused on the capacity of the land to accommodate future growth.

Background and Trend Data

According to the United States Census Bureau, the Town of Mardela Springs had an estimated 357 persons in 2008 comprising 0.4 percent of the total County population. In 2000, Mardela Springs had a total of 142 households, 159 housing units, and an average household size of 2.56.

Wicomico County is expected to grow from 84,644 in 2000 to 117,550 by 2030, an increase of 32,906 persons. Based on the County's projected growth, the Town of Mardela Springs stands to add an additional 96 persons by 2030 for a total population of 460.

Capacity Analysis / Existing Corporate Boundary

The final results of the growth model use the default MDP assumptions of the model as well as the current zoning of Mardela Springs. (See Appendix A-1) The results of the analysis indicate that there is not sufficient capacity within the current corporate boundary for the Town

of Mardela Springs projected growth through 2030. The projections indicate an additional 96 people or 37 households by 2030 (based on a 2000 average household size of 2.56) and the Town has capacity for 38 people or 15 households within the current corporate boundary.

Mardela Springs will consider annexations of adjacent properties within the designated growth area (See Map #5) where residential land uses will be considered for future development conditioned upon the existence of or assurance of funding for adequate infrastructure improvements.

The capacities for each zoning category are shown in Table 11 below. The capacity is distributed between three zoning districts: Rural Residential, Village Center, and Village Residential. All three zoning districts allow for single family residences on a minimum lot of 22,000 square feet and are considered to be low-density residential zoning districts.

**TABLE 11
DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY ANALYSIS
CAPACITY BY ZONING CATEGORY
TOWN OF MARDELA SPRINGS**

<u>Zoning District</u>	<u>Capacity (Potential Households)</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Highway Commercial	0	38.10
Rural Residential	2	6.70
Village Center	9	60.70
Village Residential	4	84.50
Total	15	190.00

Appendix A-2 contains a map which indicates those residential parcels within the existing corporate boundary that have potential residential capacity. The development capacity analysis model does not take into account undeveloped or underdeveloped parcels that may not be developed for various reasons, such as the property owner's unwillingness to develop, lack of access to the property, and changes in future land use. Future growth areas take into consideration the possibility that all residential growth may not occur as infill development for the reasons previously stated.

Land Supply to Support the Growth Policy

For the current planning period, the Town will adopt a moderate growth plan, accompanied by an effort to prioritize infill development. Considering both infill capacity and future growth, the Town needs to provide for 96 people or 37 households in order to accommodate the projected 2030 population of 460. Infill capacity at build-out provides for 38 people or 15 households. Assuming all infill development was to occur, the Town still needs to provide land capacity in its growth area for another 58 people or 22 households based upon 2030 projections. The Growth Area Map (Map#5) depicts 261 acres of residentially zoned land. Although, at first glance, the acreage amount may appear large, it is important to note that the growth area is severely limited by environmental constraints (Critical Area) and well and septic requirements (minimum 22,000 square foot lot size). MDP performed a development capacity analysis for the proposed growth area and, considering current zoning as well as environmental constraints, determined that the growth area could accommodate 54 additional households or 138 people. (See Appendix A-3) Therefore, in-fill and growth area capacity combined could result in a potential total of 69 households or 176 people.

Although the 2030 projections call for a needed capacity of just 37 households or 96 people, it is important to note that the Town cannot force infill development to occur. Many of the infill lots have been vacant for several years or are owned in conjunction with an adjacent house lot where the vacant lot is considered part of the house lot's yard. It is unlikely that the infill lots will be developed absent the implementation of a community sewerage system. Given these additional considerations, the total infill and growth area capacity seems reasonable given the 2030 population projections.

The Growth Area Map also depicts a moderate level of commercial land use. Both Highway and Village Center Commercial land uses are recommended in the Plan (See Map #5) in order to attract and accommodate future residential growth. Commercial growth will ultimately be guided by market forces, yet the Town's direct access to U.S Route 50 provides a high visibility opportunity for the location of highway commercial uses. However, as previously mentioned, the Town's single greatest disadvantage to both commercial and residential growth is the lack of a community water and sewerage system.

Proposed Land Use Plan

Proposed land uses (See Map #4) are developed to assist the Town in fostering a future vision for the community. The Town's Proposed Land Use Plan will provide for increased commercial and medium-density residential land, protection of historic and natural resources, and the continuation of the existing rural village nature of Mardela Springs.

Mardela Springs' Proposed Land Use Plan (Map #4) and Growth Area Map (Map #5) provide for two residential density categories: Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential. It is assumed that high density residential development is not attainable absent community sewer service. The Proposed Land Use Plan also makes the distinction between Highway and Village Center Commercial uses. The Plan encourages the continuation of institutional uses and recommends an expansion of Mardela Springs' Town Hall and Park Recreation Area.

Medium Density Residential

The predominant residential category proposed for future in-fill development in Mardela Springs is medium density residential. Medium density residential areas are designated primarily for single-family detached homes determined to be in character with surrounding neighborhood densities.

Such areas may be developed in a density range of 2.1 to 8 dwelling units per acre, or roughly 5 to 20 people per acre. There are several un-subdivided and undeveloped parcels within the corporate boundary that have been recommended for medium density development. (See Map #4)

Low Density Residential

The low-density residential land use category is intended to recognize the need for less intense residential development in cases where there may be historic or sensitive areas issues to consider, or in cases where low-density development is more appropriate and compatible with an abutting established neighborhood.

These areas may be developed at a density of up to 2 dwelling units per acre, or roughly up to 5 people per acre. Although most all of the future residential infill is designated for medium density residential

development, all of the future residential development within the growth area is designated for low density residential land uses. (See Map #5) This is due to the fact that the majority of the future residential growth area lies within a Resource Conservation Area (RCA) of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Overlay District. The base density allowed in an RCA is one dwelling unit per twenty acres.

Village Center Commercial

The purpose of the Village Center Commercial land use district is to provide areas along collector roads or at intersections in residential neighborhoods for clustering of limited business and service uses, within the existing corporate boundary. The uses permitted in such areas are intended to provide services, light retailing, and groceries as a convenience to the neighborhoods within walking or short driving distance. This category recognizes that residential and commercial uses in Mardela Springs are in close proximity to one another and often located on small lots. This district allows for the continuance and reasonable expansion of existing, less intense commercial establishments that are deemed compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The designated Village Center Commercial areas are depicted on Map #4.

Highway Commercial

The purpose of the Highway Commercial land use district is to provide areas for more intense commercial activity that also depends upon highway traffic for business. These areas are generally retail and service establishments located along high volume highways for increased accessibility and visibility. Highway Commercial uses may include, but are not limited to, restaurants, grocery stores, service stations, convenience stores, produce markets, farm equipment suppliers, and building suppliers.

The recommended location for highway commercial activity in Mardela Springs is along strategic portions of U.S. Route 50. (See Maps #4 and #5) These locations were selected due to their size and proximity to U.S. Route 50. It is anticipated that commercial uses on these parcels could serve local shopping and service needs of neighboring populations, as well as U.S. Route 50 travelers.

Growth Area

The annexation areas shown on Map #5 are based on areas the Town thought most likely to request annexation and are in locations that would benefit the future of Mardela Springs. The growth area represents lands that the Town may consider annexing to address future growth needs. The parcels designated for growth are the only areas slated for annexation during the planning period. The growth area should be revisited every six years when the Comprehensive Plan is scheduled for review and revision and / or if the Town implements a community sewer system.

Rural Buffers and Transition Areas

Based on the most recent Land Use Plan for Wicomico County (1998), much of the land use surrounding Mardela Springs is either Agriculture Resource, Forest Resource, Conservation, or Park/Open Space. There is a small amount of scattered low density residential development along major roadways. The growth area (Town Growth) for Mardela Springs on the current County Land Use plan is quite large. The Town has elected to dramatically reduce the proposed growth area in this Comprehensive Plan update.

Wicomico County is currently in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan. This process will include an updated Land Use Plan for the County which will determine areas to be designated for future residential development as well as for resource conservation. Mardela Springs will work with Wicomico County to determine suitable land uses surrounding the Town, but outside of the Town's growth area; and will cooperatively participate in discussions with the County to determine appropriate Rural Buffers and Transition Areas. These discussions are anticipated to include future land use polices of mutual interest and benefit that may result in changes to current County zoning designations and subdivision regulations.

Sensitive Areas Protection

In the growth area, sensitive areas should be avoided and point and non-point sources of pollution reduced. Sensitive areas include streams, wetlands, and their buffers; 100-year floodplain; habitats of threatened and endangered species; steep slopes; and agricultural and forestlands intended for resource protection. Sensitive areas within the growth area will be protected consistent with the goals, objectives,

policies, and recommendations outlined in the Sensitive Areas Element.

Growth Demands

Increased residential and commercial growth will place additional demands on public services and facilities provided by the Town of Mardela Springs and Wicomico County. Table 12 summarizes the estimated potential impacts on public facilities and services associated with build-out of the in-fill and growth area capacities previously mentioned in this MGE.

**TABLE 12
IMPACTS OF GROWTH ON PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES
TOTAL BUILD-OUT FOR PLANNING PERIOD 2010 - 2030
TOWN OF MARDELA SPRINGS**

Facility / Service	Total	Factor	Description
Households	211	69	New Households from 2000 Census
Population	540	176	Population Increase from 2000 Census
SCHOOLS (new students)	42	0.611	Per Household
High School	14	0.206	Per Household
Middle School	9	0.135	Per Household
Elementary School	19	0.270	Per Household
TOWN ADMINISTRATION / MEETING (GFA)	188	1.07	S.F. Per Capita
PUBLIC WORKS (GFA)	176	1	S.F. Per Capita
LIBRARY (GFA)	17.6	0.1	S.F. Per Capita
POLICE (personnel)	0	2.6	Per 1,000 Population
RECREATION LAND (acres)	0	30	Acres per 1,000 Population
FIRE & RESCUE			
Personnel	0	1.59	Per 1,000 Population
Facilities (GFA)	0	800	S.F. Per 1,000 Population

Assumptions: Impact projections for growth in the Town of Mardela Springs utilized the following sources:

- MDP Development Capacity Analysis for population and household projections for complete build-out of infill and growth areas.
- Wicomico County Board of Education multipliers for school enrollment.

- State of Maryland Program Open Space recommendation for recreational land.
- Multipliers for Municipal Administrative and Public Works Space based on current space per thousand people.
- American Library Association for library facility square foot multiplier.
- International Association of Police Chiefs for personnel multiplier.
- International City Council Management Association for fire personnel multiplier.
- National Planning Standard for fire facility square foot multiplier.

Growth Impacts

The most significant potential impacts of the Mardela Springs Growth Plan at build-out are on schools and town administration/public works facilities. Future annexations and large-scale development proposals should be required to perform a fiscal impact analysis to determine if the projected revenues of the project will cover the costs of the necessary public facilities and services.

Public Schools

The projected impact is approximately 42 new students: 19 elementary school students, 9 middle school students, and 14 high school students.

No public or private schools exist within the corporate boundary of Mardela Springs. Northwestern Elementary (Pre-K through 5) is located about a mile from the Town across U.S. Route 50 on Sharptown Road. According to the FY2011 Wicomico County Educational Facility Master Plan (EFMP), Northwestern Elementary has a State-rated capacity of 274 pupils and the May 2010 enrollment was 294 pupils, which includes 16 PRE-K students. The overall physical condition of the school is rated as "good". Northwestern Elementary is not programmed for expansion in the current EFMP.

Mardela Middle and High School (Grades 6-12) is also located across U.S. Route 50 in the same vicinity as the elementary school. The FY2011 Wicomico County EFMP has a combined State-rated capacity of 616 students and the May 2010 enrollment was 716 students. The overall physical condition of the school is listed as "good". The County plans to add four classrooms to Mardela High School by 2013 in order to deal with overcrowding and an expected increase in enrollment numbers.

Schools are under Wicomico County's authority and control. Wicomico County acknowledges that school overcrowding is one of their greatest infrastructure issues and will likely continue to be as the County's population increases. The Town of Mardela Springs will continue to consult and work with the County on future growth plans and development projects in order to help to determine potential impacts on the area school system.

Library

Residents of Mardela Springs are within 12 miles of the Wicomico County Public Library in downtown Salisbury. In addition, the County's Bookmobile services the area via bi-weekly visits to Northwestern Elementary School. The projected growth impacts indicate that an additional 17.6 square feet of library space will be needed to accommodate the Town's Growth Plan. The County's library facilities should adequately serve these needs.

Recreation/ Open Space Lands

The State of Maryland and the Program Open Space goal is to provide 30 acres of park space for every 1,000 residents and Wicomico County adopted this standard as part of its 2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP).

If the State standard is used as the guiding principle for determining the adequacy of open space and recreational acreage, then the Town of Mardela Springs appears to meet the mark. With a 2000 population of 364 people, State standards would indicate that park acreage should total 10.92 acres and 34.3 acres is actually provided. The 34.3 acres includes the 1.80 acre Mardela Springs boat ramp and picnic area; the 4.0 acre Mardela Springs Park Recreation Area; the 1.0 acre Mardela Springs tennis courts; the 5.6 acre Northwestern Elementary School site; and the 21.9 acre Mardela Middle and High School facility. These combined acreages more than meet the State standard for parks. In addition, projected growth impacts indicate no need for additional park and open space lands to accommodate Mardela Springs' Growth Plan.

Public Safety

Mardela Springs does not have its own police force. The Wicomico County Sheriff's Office and the Maryland State Police currently respond to police and 911 calls in the Town. Although the growth impact table

indicates no need for a full-time municipal police officer, the Town should continue to work with the County and State police forces to monitor crime rates and responses. The Town should also work with these police forces to identify and implement crime prevention programs.

The growth impact table indicates no additional need for fire and rescue personnel or facilities. The Town's Fire Department, including emergency medical services (EMS), has adequate staffing and resources to serve the Town and the surrounding area. The Fire Department will continue to evaluate its needs to ensure response times and services do not decline.

Town Administrative Offices and Public Works Space

The projected impact of the Town's Growth Plan results in a need for an additional 188 square feet in Town administrative/meeting space; and an additional 176 square feet of public works space.

The Town recognizes that any gain in population will require an equivalent increase in municipal meeting space. The current Town Hall is 1,153 square feet and was built in 1960. In planning for such future need, the Town has shown a large, vacant agricultural land use parcel (P.257) next to the existing Town Hall and post office properties as future institutional land use on the Proposed Land Use Plan. (See Map #4)

Public Works facilities usually provide space for personnel and equipment needed for street repairs, trash collection, snow removal, and water and sewer systems. At this time, Mardela Springs does not provide any of these services to the community. However, the Town should be aware that as the population increases, the Town may have to provide some or all of these services.

Water, Sewer and Stormwater Management

Mardela Springs does not have a public water or sewer system. For water, all properties are served by individual on-site wells. All of the Town's water supply, including potable and non-potable water, is secured from ground water aquifers. The Town is totally dependent upon this source of water.

For sewer, all properties are served by on-site individual septic tanks. Further discussion about the Town's existing on-site septic systems

and the Town's future plans for a public sewerage facility is provided in the Community Facilities and Water Resources Elements.

The Town hired a consultant in 2009 to identify and examine various options for providing community, regional water and sewer service to all of the residents of Mardela Springs. The study included a summary of site conditions and the extent and severity of public health / environmental conditions. The study also included a description of the various options for wastewater collection, disposal, treatment, and distribution. Design parameters and configurations for each option, as well as cost estimates were also discussed. Additional information about the study is provided in the Community Facilities and Water Resources Elements.

Mardela Springs has an existing municipal stormdrain system that handles the bulk of the Town's stormwater run-off. However, the Town recently entered into a cooperative agreement with Wicomico County to adopt the County's stormwater management regulations and to have the County review and enforce all stormwater management plans. Therefore, all new development and re-development projects within Mardela Springs will have to comply with Wicomico County's stormwater management ordinance.

Funding Mechanisms

A number of mechanisms exist that enable the Town to finance necessary infrastructure improvements to accommodate expected growth. Wherever possible the Town should pursue available sources of funding from State and federal programs, especially with respect to the implementation of a community water and sewer system.

Mardela Springs has the authority to enact excise taxes and impact fees. These tools exact infrastructure funds from developers as a condition of project approval. Excise taxes are the more flexible tool in terms of how the funds can be used.

Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreements (DRRA) can be used to legally bind the Town and a developer for specific development projects and supporting services and facilities. Infrastructure improvements are an important part of those agreements.

Table 13 lists potential funding sources to address impacts of growth on public facilities and services. Although not all of these funding

mechanisms may be utilized by the Town and/or the County, they represent ways to generate revenue for infrastructure maintenance and construction.

**TABLE 13
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR
GROWTH IMPACTS ON PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES
TOWN OF MARDELA SPRINGS**

<u>Facility / Service</u>	<u>Potential Funding Source</u>
School Facilities	Property Tax, Excise Tax, Impact Fee, Federal/State Public School Construction Funds
Town Administration	Property Tax, Impact Fee, State Grants & Loans, Service Fees (inspection & building permit fees)
Public Works	Property Tax, Impacts Fee, User Fee, Connection Fee, Federal/State Grants & Loans, Service Fee (water & sewer charges)
Library Facilities	Property Tax, Excise Tax, Impact Fee, Federal/State Grants & Loans
Police	Property Tax, Impact Fee, Fines & Fees
Recreation / Open Space Land	State Program Open Space (POS), Federal & State Grants, Donations
Fire & Rescue (Non-Profit)	Federal/State Grants, Public and Private Contributions
Water & Sewer	Federal/State Grants & Loans, Connection Fee, User Fee, Service Fee

Municipal Growth Recommendations

In order to meet the future growth needs of the Town and the goals, objectives, and visions of this Comprehensive Plan, the following recommendations should be considered to accommodate future growth in Mardela Springs:

- (1) The Town should give priority to, and provide incentives for, infill development on small vacant lots; as well as the creation

of well-designed infill projects on the larger vacant parcels, consistent with the provision of adequate services.

- (2) The Town should encourage and support County policies that channel the appropriate type, scale, and mixture of growth to the Town and its growth area.
- (3) The Town shall discourage the inefficient use of land for development within the growth area and shall encourage the County to take measures to prevent sprawl and resourceconsuming patterns of growth.
- (4) The Town should require developers to mitigate growth impacts on infrastructure by creating an annexation process that allows for Town/developer negotiation, utilizing Developers Rights and Responsibilities Agreements, allowing the Comprehensive Plan to be a guide for necessary improvements, and providing the County with the required impact fees for schools.
- (5) The Growth Area Map should have the following features:

Growth Areas:

- These areas are the locations that the Town may annex in the future.
- The County should provide the appropriate zoning in a timely fashion or grant waivers where needed.
- The County should incorporate the Town's Growth Area Map in its Comprehensive Plan.
- The order of annexation should be determined by adjacency, landowner choices, and availability of services.
- Critical Area regulations and Forest Conservation Act requirements should be required for developing sites.
- Annexation plans must be consistent with the Land Use Element including the Growth Area Map.
- Developers should be required to estimate project impacts on existing infrastructure.
- Project design should reflect traditional town or village character.
- Until annexed, the County should refer proposed land use changes within the identified growth area to the Town for review and comment.

Rural transition areas surrounding the Town:

- These areas are part of the geographic setting of the Town and the Town has an interest in what happens on these sites.
 - The County should refer proposed land use changes in these areas to the Town for review and comment.
 - These areas are planned for conservation by the County.
 - The County and Town may explore the transfer of development rights to areas within the Town's growth area.
 - The County and Town should discourage growth and development in these areas.
- (6) Wicomico County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan: Should Mardela Springs implement community water and sewerage, the Town should work with the County to establish service area changes, adequacy reviews for proposed growth, maintenance plans, and impact fees for certain development.
- (7) Zoning Amendments and Zoning Collaboration with the County: Flexible and innovative zoning districts may be developed. The Town may use floating zones to increase the chances for a marriage between the market and private landowner choices. Overlay zones may be developed for a number of purposes including architectural design, protection of traditional neighborhoods, and protection of sensitive areas and water quality.
- (8) Annexation Plan: The phasing of annexations, prioritizing of sites, site planning, and zoning coordination with the County should be addressed. Guidance should be developed for preparation of an Annexation Plan that is consistent with the Municipal Growth and Water Resources Elements.
- (9) Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's): The Town should evaluate the practical value of developing an inter-jurisdictional TDR program with the County, whereby development rights under County zoning can be voluntarily sold and transferred from surrounding rural areas, for use in the Town growth area.
- (10) Municipal Character Policy: Under the Town's long term development policy, the character, visual cohesiveness, and

bounded edges of the Town should stay intact. New edge development is permitted, but it must reflect traditional Town character in terms of scale, land use, and design. Development must be compatible with community and historic character in terms of design. The Town should identify patterns of housing styles, building materials, lot arrangements, setbacks, and other elements of design to guide infill, redevelopment, and new growth in a manner that reinforces community character. Infill and growth area projects should be developed as traditional neighborhoods under coordinated multi-parcel development plans.

(11) Planning Contracts:

- Joint Planning Agreements: HB1141 enables counties and municipalities to enter into contractual agreements as a means to solidify the inter-jurisdictional aspects of the new Comprehensive Plan (e.g., the Growth Area Map). A Joint Planning Agreement between the Town of Mardela Springs and Wicomico County should be developed.
- Developer's Rights and Responsibilities Agreements (DRRA): A DRRA is similar to the Joint Planning Agreement, but operates on a different level. A DRRA is a contract between the municipality and the developer that spells out rights and responsibilities of the parties. The Town should develop a standardized DRRA that can be adapted to suit particular projects.