

WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

Thursday October 6, 2022

Worcester County Government Center, Room 1102, One West Market Street,
Snow Hill, Maryland 21863

Thursday, October 6, 2022

- I. Call to Order** (1:00 p.m.)
- II. Administrative Matters** (1:00 p.m. est.)
 - A. Review and Approval of Minutes – September 1, 2022
 - B. Board of Zoning Appeals Agenda – October 13, 2022
 - C. Technical Review Committee Agenda – October 12, 2022
- III. Worcester County Comprehensive Plan Update Discussion** (1:25 p.m. est.)
 - A. Presentation from Patti Stevens, Chair, Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition.
 - B. Presentation from Jennifer Keener, Director, Department of Development Review and Permitting
- IV. Miscellaneous**
- V. Adjournment**

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – September 1, 2022**

Meeting Date: September 1, 2022

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Location: Worcester County Government Office Building, Room 1102

Attendance:

Planning Commission

Jerry Barbierri, Chair
Mary Knight, Secretary
Ken Church
Brooks Clayville
Marlene Ott
Betty Smith

Staff

Jennifer Keener, Director, DRP
Gary Pusey, Deputy Director, DRP
Kristen M. Tremblay, Zoning Administrator
Stu White, DRP Specialist
Robert Mitchell, Director, Environmental Programs
Roscoe Leslie, County Attorney

I. Call to Order

II. Administrative Matters

A. Review and approval of minutes, August 4, 2022

As the first item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the minutes of the August 4, 2022 meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Ott, seconded by Ms. Knight, and carried unanimously.

B. Board of Zoning Appeals Agenda, September 8, 2022

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the agenda for the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting scheduled for September 8, 2022. Ms. Tremblay was present for the review to answer questions and address concerns of the Planning Commission. No comments were forwarded to the Board.

C. Technical Review Committee Agenda, September 14, 2022

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the agenda for the Technical Review Committee meeting scheduled for September 14, 2022. Ms. Tremblay was present for the review to answer questions and address concerns of the Planning Commission. No comments were forwarded to the Committee.

III. Site Plan Review §ZS1-325

Diakonia

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the site plan submittal for Diakonia. The site plan illustrates the proposed construction of a retail, office, storage, and conference building in addition to 48 one-bedroom housing units. The proposed project is located

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at 9601 Stephen Decatur Highway, Ocean City, MD, Tax Map 26, Parcels 292 & 365, Tax District 10, C-2 General Commercial District. Diakonia, Inc., is the owner of the property and Carpenter Engineering, LLC, is the engineer for the project. Scott Evans and Ronnie Carpenter were present for the review.

Mr. Evans introduced the project and described the scope of the proposal. He stated that the housing units would require a minimum one-year occupancy for the residents. Mr. Carpenter requested a reduction in parking requirements as the estimated parking for residents would be minimal. He also stated that the required EDUs have not been procured yet as they are waiting for Planning Commission approval and the results of the wetland impact study.

Mr. Evans then described the architectural design features for the facilities buildings. He explained to the Planning Commission that the architecture was designed within the spirit of the Worcester County Design Guidelines and Standards. He asked for waivers for the flat roof design and architectural detail requirements as the buildings are designed to fit the Seaside Architectural style. He explained that the main entrance to the retail/office buildings is closest to the parking area to on the north side, located within a recess of the first building. He also stated that the plan meets all pedestrian requirements and that there is a common space between the two (2) retail/office buildings as well as open gathering spaces throughout the site.

Ms. Tremblay added that the remaining Zoning Code requirements will be addressed after the Planning Commission rules on the proposal. Mr. Mitchell also added that if approved, it should be conditional on acquisition of the remaining required EDUs.

After discussion, a motion favoring the site plan was made by Ms. Ott, seconded by Mr. Wells, and carried unanimously by the Planning Commission to conditionally approve the project with regard to staff comments.

IV. Residential Planned Community (RPC) Site Plan Review §ZS1-325

Sea Oaks Phase II

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission performed the Step II review of Phase 2 of Sea Oaks Village RPC. The project consists of 76 townhome units and ‘active recreation courts.’ It is located on the west side of MD Route 611 (Stephen Decatur Highway) on Sea Oaks Lane, Tax Map 26, Parcel 274, Lot 3A, Tax District 10, in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential. Sea Oaks Village, LLC is the owner of the property and Carpenter Engineering, LLC, is the engineer for the project. Steve Murphy and Ronnie Carpenter were present for the review.

Mr. Carpenter introduced the project and described the scope of the proposal. He added that the proposal consists of two (2) loop roads and contains seven (7) parking spaces designated for the

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MEETING MINUTES – September 1, 2022

amenities. Ms. Tremblay added that any remaining Zoning Code requirements would be addressed after the Planning Commission rules on the proposal.

After discussion, a motion favoring the site plan was made by Ms. Knight, seconded by Ms. Smith, and carried unanimously by the Planning Commission to conditionally approve the project with regard to staff comments.

V. Text Amendment

**VI. County Project
Lewis Road Pumping Station**

VII. Amendment of the Worcester County Comprehensive Plan for Water and Sewerage Systems

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed an application associated to expand the Pocomoke City sewer planning area to serve a single property, the Royal Farm store located just south of the Virginia state line in New Church Virginia in the *Master Water and Sewerage Plan (The Plan)*. Royal Farms, submitted the amendment and were represented by Mark Cropper. Robert Mitchell, Director of Environmental Programs presented the staff report to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Mitchell explained that the applicant requests the inclusion of the store's flow, estimated at 2,250 gpd, in the sewer planning area of Pocomoke City. This flow would amount to nine (9) EDUs of flow according to the Town's planning figures. He indicated that this is essentially the same application as the one the Town submitted in 2021, this time with a different applicant, Royal Farms. The store will connect to a previously installed line completed in 2010 that serves the Virginia Rest Area Plaza, which is also located in New Church, Virginia, south of this property. That plaza tied into an existing force main that runs south from the corporate limits of Pocomoke City to the Virginia state line. Mr. Mitchell added the amendment for that prior connection was approved in 2010 under Worcester County Commissioner Resolution No. 10-11. That amendment also provided for the sewer main widening project that would assist with the delivery of sewage from the southern end of the Town's service area to the plant.

Mr. Mitchell further explained that the current onsite septic system serving the property has failed and the option for repair is limited to a connection to public sewer. He noted that the Pocomoke City Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is already receiving their sewage as part of their septage receiving flow as the store is on a pump-and-haul arrangement at the present time. That use of the current septic system as a holding tank which needs pumping out every few days is a costly expense for the store's owner. The lack of a sufficient septic repair option is why the Royal Farms ownership group is applying for this amendment. The corporation will pay all infrastructure, connection, and associated town charges for this sewer hookup. Besides the visitor's center, this

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is the only location over the Virginia line that the town will support a tie-in to their WWTP. The transmission line is currently designated as a restricted access line and this amendment requests that designation remain, save for the addition of the subject property.

Mr. Mitchell added that he also provided the Rt 13 Utility Contract for Sewer Service between Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Pocomoke City to the Planning Commission before the meeting. That contract details how the original connection was made for the Visitor's Center. County staff also provided with the application a letter from the Town indicating support of this proposed connection, reasoning for their support of the connection, and includes the proposed contract for connection between the Town and Royal Farms.

Mr. Cropper introduced himself and indicated to the Planning Commission that he was here representing the applicant, Royal Farms. He introduced Chris Bollino, Royal Farms construction manager and Jeremy Mason, City Manager for the Town of Pocomoke City. He indicated that the 2021 amendment failed at the County Commissioner public hearing on a 3-3 tie. He further explained that Commissioner Church was not present for that hearing, and would like the opportunity to be heard on this matter. Mr. Cropper explained to the Planning Commission that the amendment was in conformance with the County Comprehensive Plan and the Town's plan, the same as the last amendment. He said the Town does receive this sewage currently via pump and haul by sewage trucks delivering to the Town's wastewater plant. He indicated that the pipe is already in the ground in front of the store, the pipe is sized for the addition of this store, everyone knows this works, and that it's just a matter of the County Commissioners approving this amendment

Mr. Cropper introduced Chris Bollino, construction manager for Royal Farms. He asked if everything was the same as before, Mr. Bollino responded it was. He asked Mr. Mason, City Manager, if everything was the same as before, Mr. Mason responded it was. He asked if the Town agreed with this connection and Mr. Mason indicated it was and referenced the letter from his office that is in the application packet. He also indicated that the Town wanted to modify the existing agreement with VDOT and VDOT has approved this connection by virtue of the connection permit approval.

Mr. Cropper introduced Jeff Harman of Becker Morgan to explain specifics involved with the connection. Mr. Harman indicated that the sewer force main running by the store is currently utilizing 18% of its capacity, the store would take another 10% of the line's capacity, leaving over 70% of the capacity for the remaining customers along the main route. Mr. Cropper stated that the owners of the Royal Farms store had replaced the system twice and could not replace the system again on the property. Due to the expenses in hauling multiple loads to the Town's plant, if they cannot secure this connection, they will have to shut down the store that has been there 29 years and lay off the 40 employees, many who are from the Pocomoke City area.

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Mr. Cropper handed out an exhibit for the Planning Commission and staff that depicted the store location and environmental features adjacent to the property. They indicated drainage from the store's property would flow to Worcester County to Pitts Creek, a tributary of the Pocomoke River. Mr. Harman said that eliminating the threat of surface runoff to the creek and ending the pump and haul trips to the wastewater plant, up to four (4) times a week, would be a benefit to the local environment.

Mr. Cropper finished his presentation by stating this amendment was favorable with the Comprehensive Plan. He added positive economic talking points regarding this potential connection: that Royal Farms has invested millions of dollars in Worcester County for their existing properties and was a large employer of county residents. Regarding similar instances of cross-border service, Mr. Cropper mentioned that there are over 250 residential properties in northern Worcester County served by Delaware treatment plants, that have an assessed value of tens of millions of dollars. He closed by asking for a favorable recommendation as was done in the prior amendment by the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission members did have a few comments. Mr. Barbierri, Chairman, indicated that he was concerned about the accidents in the Rt 13 corridor and didn't like the idea of multiple truckloads a week from this store traversing those heavily travelled roads. Mr. Wells said he objected to the connection to the Virginia store. He said others would try to connect and if this continues then Virginia needs to establish a sewer service in the area. He also added that it would take capacity from the Pocomoke wastewater plant.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Ott, seconded by Ms. Knight, to find this application consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and recommended that they forward a favorable recommendation to the County Commissioners. The vote was 4-2 with Commissioners Clayville and Wells opposed.

VIII. Adjourn – A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Ott and seconded by Ms. Smith.

Mary Knight, Secretary

Stuart White, DRP Specialist

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
WORCESTER COUNTY
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
AGENDA**

THURSDAY OCTOBER 13, 2022

Pursuant to the provisions of the Worcester County Zoning Ordinance, notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held in-person before the Board of Zoning Appeals for Worcester County, in the Board Room (Room 1102) on the first floor of the Worcester County Government Center, One West Market Street, Snow Hill, Maryland.

6:30 p.m.

Case No. 22-48, on the lands of Anita Roy, requesting a variance to the rear yard setback from 5 feet to 3.3 feet (to encroach 1.7 feet) for a proposed deck in the A-2 Agricultural District, pursuant to Zoning Code §§ ZS 1-116(c)(4), ZS 1-202(c)(18) and ZS 1-318, located at 8839 Bay Ridge Dr, Tax Map 33, Parcel 347, Lot 164, Tax District 10, Worcester County, Maryland.

6:35 p.m.

Case No. 22-50, on the application of Mark Cropper, on the lands of Steven Benz, requesting a modification to extend a waterfront structure in excess of 125 feet by 15 feet for a proposed 140 foot pier, platform, and boatlift(s), pursuant to Zoning Code §§ ZS 1-116(n)(2) & Natural Resources Code NR 2-102(e)(1), located at 64 Skyline Court, Tax Map 16, Parcel 15, Section 19, Lot 64, Tax District 3, Worcester County, Maryland.

6:40 p.m.

Case No. 22-49, on the lands of John Larsen, requesting a variance to the rear yard setback from 30 feet to 9.1 feet (to encroach 20.9 feet) for a proposed single-family dwelling in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District, pursuant to Zoning Code §§ ZS 1-116(c)(4), ZS 1-207(b)(2) and ZS 1-305, located at 13412 Madison Ave., Tax Map 5, Parcel 1, Lots 146 & ½ of 145, Tax District 10, Worcester County, Maryland.

Administrative Matters

**WORCESTER COUNTY TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

**Worcester County Government Center, Room 1102, One West Market Street,
Snow Hill, Maryland 21863**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Site Plan Review (§ ZS 1-325)
 - a. **Assateague Farm Brewery** – Minor site plan review
Proposed Agritourism facility / farm brewery operation consisting of the construction of a 1,736 sq. ft. building containing a commercial kitchen, bar, and bathrooms with a 382 sq. ft. covered patio/porch, a 2400 sq. ft. brewery building, and a 4,768 sq. ft. pavilion structure. Located at 8816 Stephen Decatur Highway, Tax Map 33, Parcel 29, Block 10, Tax District 03, A-2 Agricultural District, Assateague Island Farm, LLC, owner / Russell Hammond, surveyor.
- III. Adjourn

Comprehensive Plan Update – Community Profile

WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

OCTOBER 6, 2022



Data Sources

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (multiple years)

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census (multiple years)

U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Agriculture (multiple years)

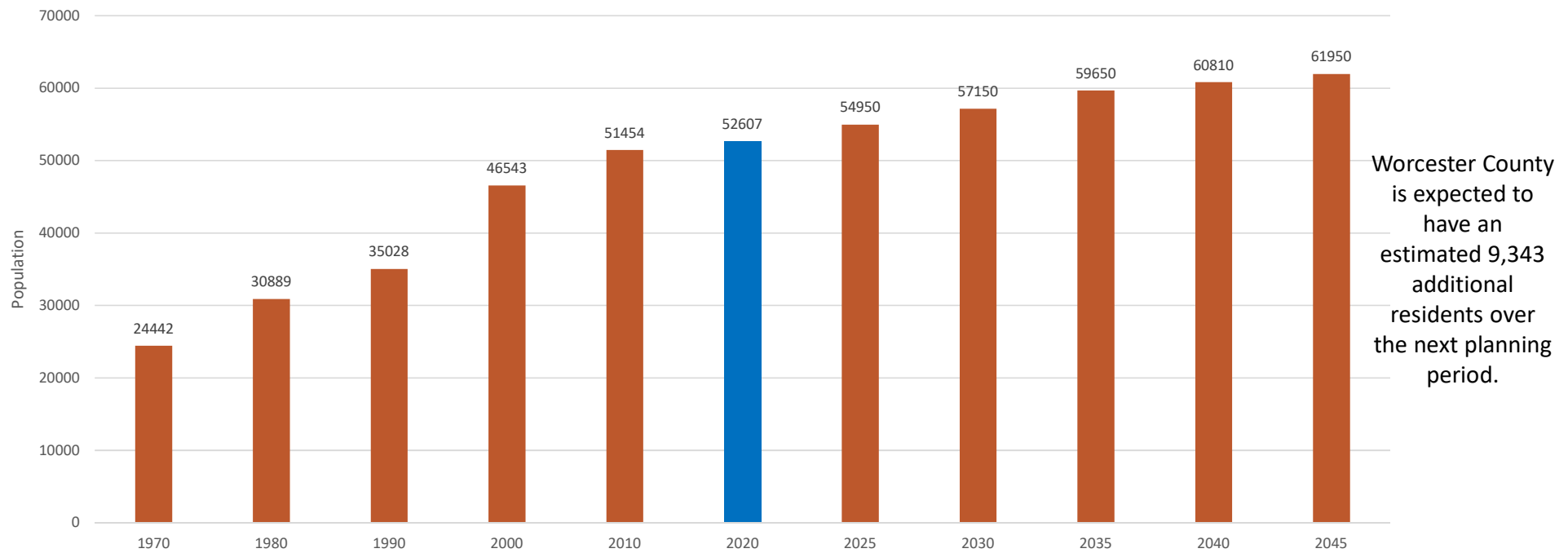
U.S. Census Bureau, Economic Census, 2017

Maryland Department of Planning State Data Center

2022 – 2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan, Worcester County Board of Education

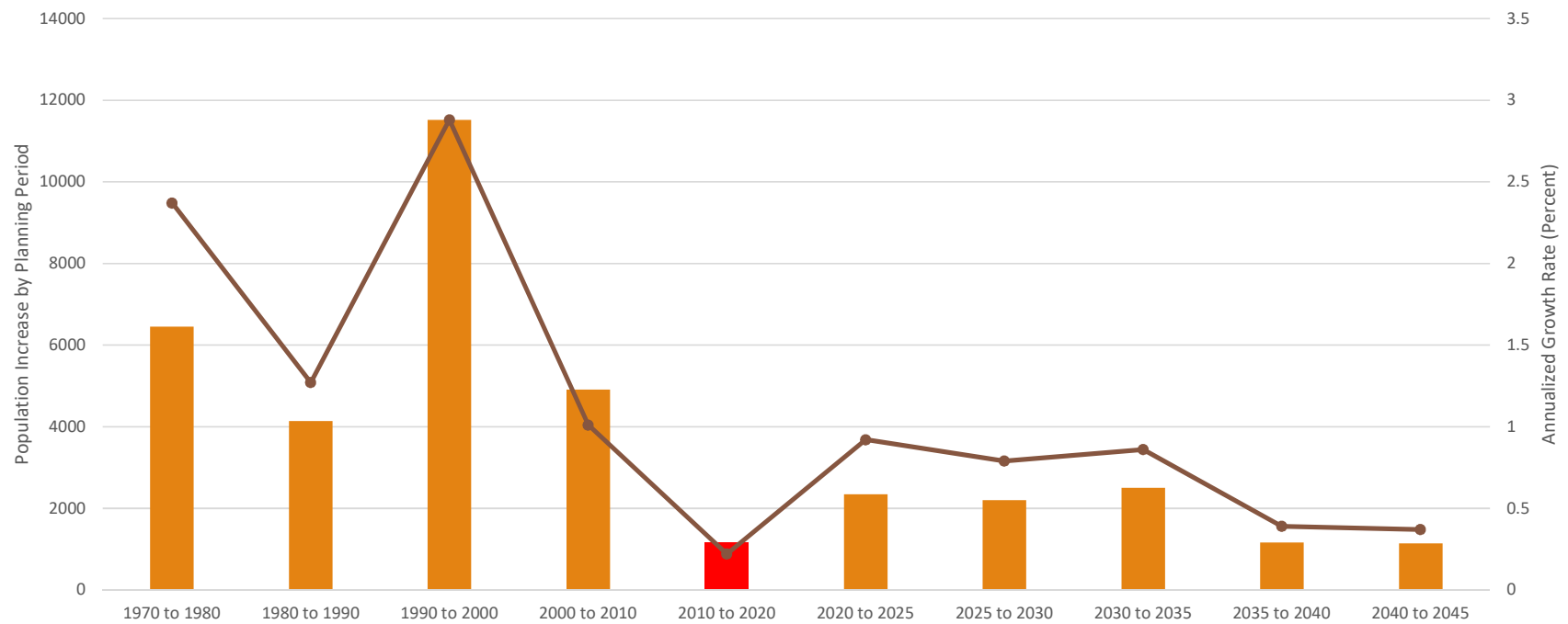
Worcester County Comprehensive Plan (2006 with amendments)

Worcester County's population has grown over the past fifty years, and that pattern is expected to continue.



Source: Maryland Department of Planning, December 2020

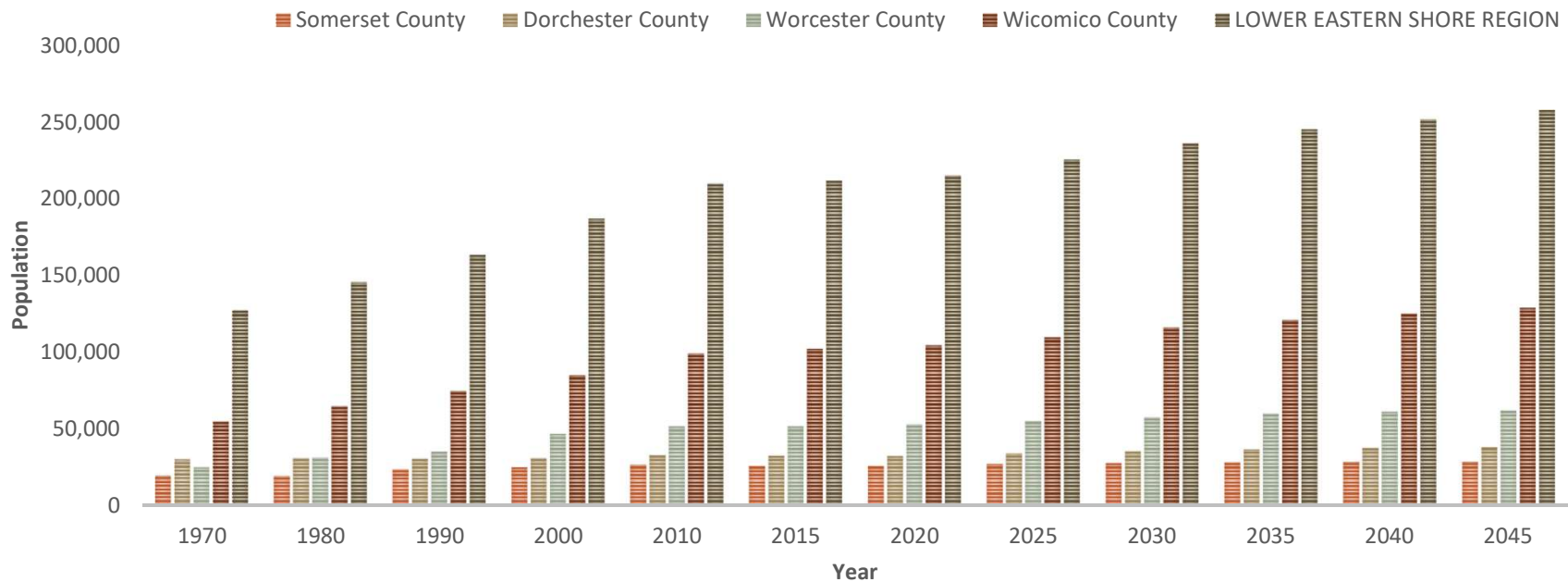
However, the average annual rate of increase has varied. Future planning estimates show a much more conservative rate of growth.



Source: Maryland Department of Planning, December 2020

Regional Population Growth

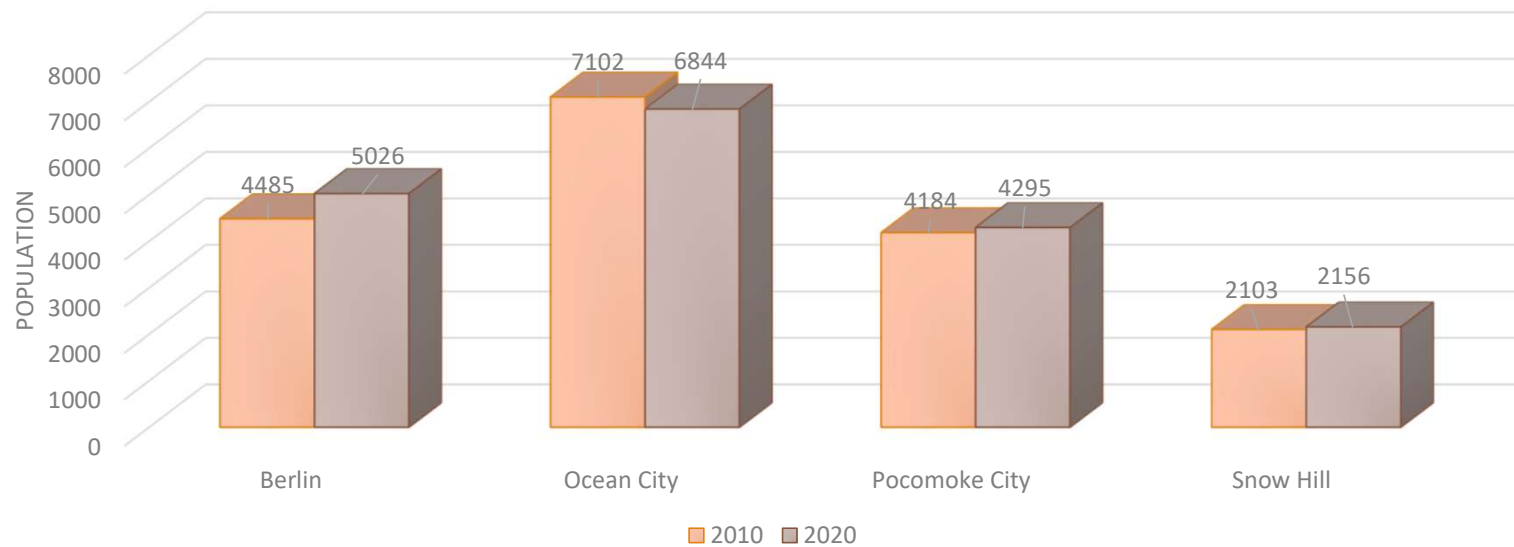
The other counties on the Lower Eastern Shore have experienced similar growth patterns.



Source: Maryland Department of Planning, December 2020

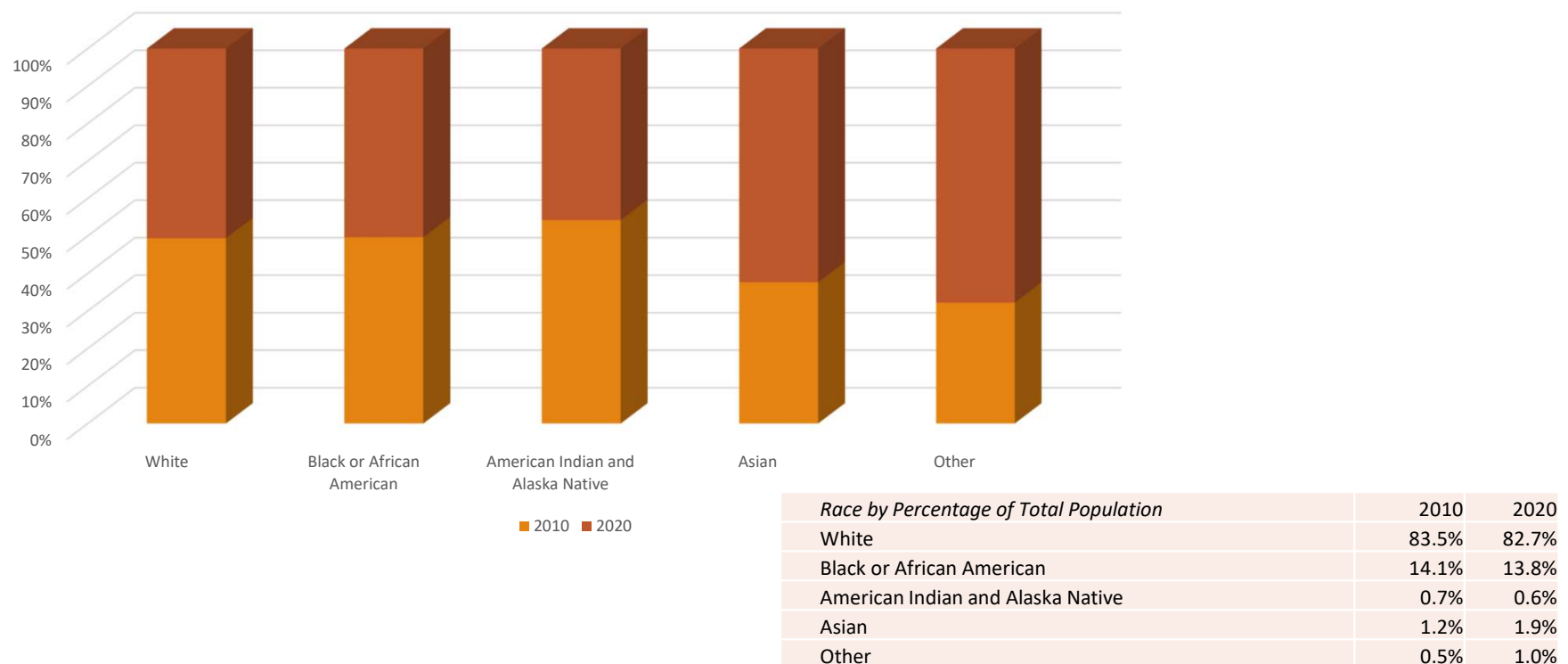
Municipal Population Growth

Overall, less than 40% of the population growth occurred within Worcester County's municipalities. Maryland's Smart Growth initiatives encourage infill development to relieve pressures on rural areas and direct growth to areas that have existing infrastructure to reduce building costs.



Source: Maryland Department of Planning, August 2021

The racial composition of the population has been fairly consistent over the past decade.



Source: Five Year American Community Survey, 2010 and 2020

When comparing the current population figures to the 2006 Comprehensive Plan estimates, actual growth was not as high as expected.



Sources: Maryland Department of Planning, December 2020; U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2015; Worcester County Comprehensive Plan (2006)

In fact, the 2045 estimated population is not anticipated to exceed the Comprehensive Plan's estimate for 2020.

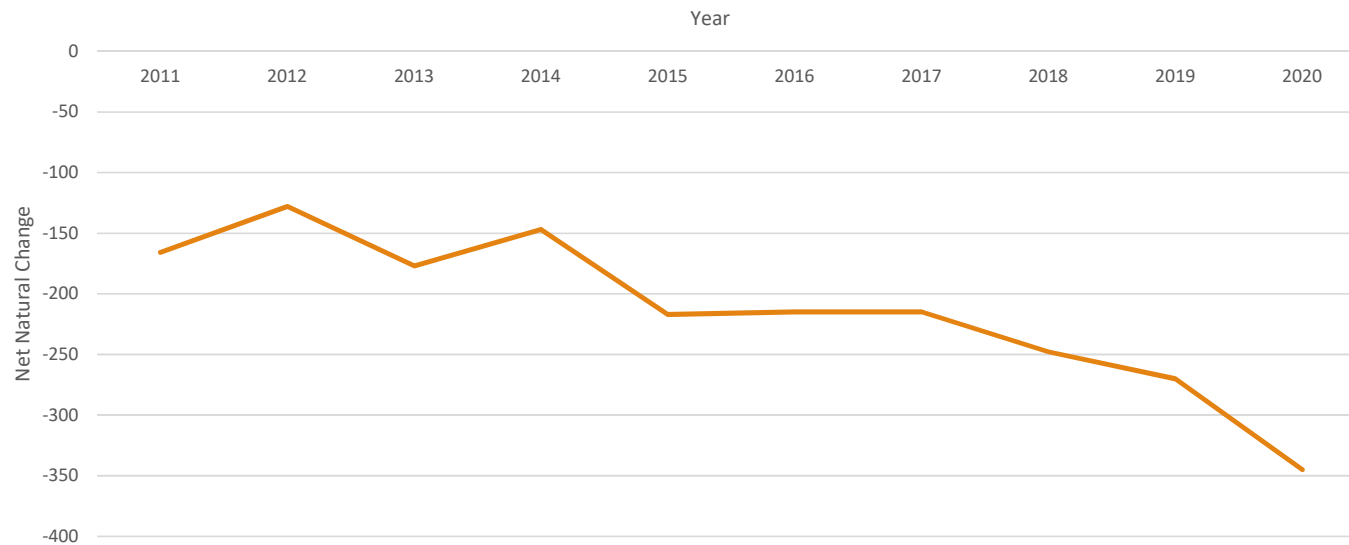
Year	Current Comprehensive Plan Projection	2020 Census	Current MDP Projections	Difference
2020	62,043	52,607	-	-9,436
2025	64,543	-	54,950	-9,593
2030	-	-	57,150	-
2035	-	-	59,650	-
2040	-	-	60,810	-
2045	-	-	61,950	-

However, the Planning Commission will need to taken into consideration the various changes that have occurred during this planning period, such as infrastructure improvements (roads, water, sewer, etc.) and the current status of planned Growth Areas, to ensure adequate capacity will be available for the anticipated population growth in our next planning period.

So how did we grow?

Net Natural Change

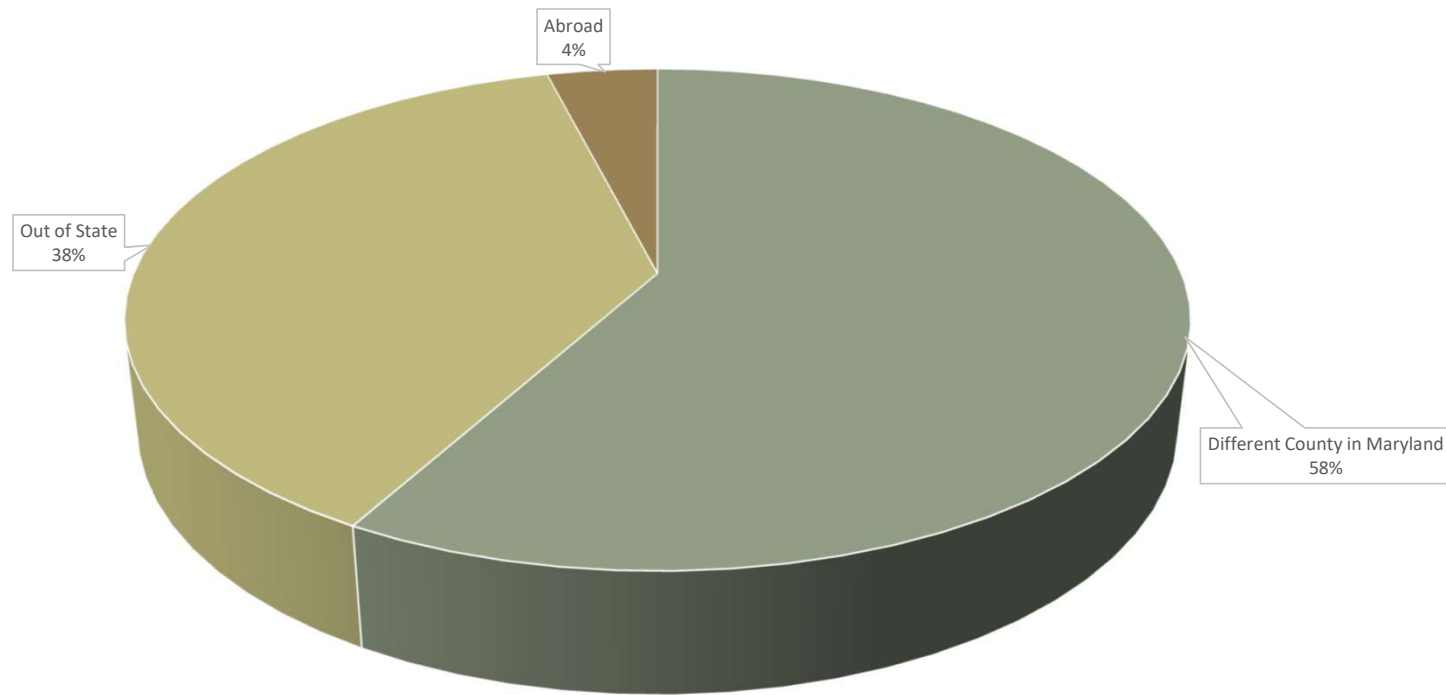
Defined as the total number of births minus the total number of deaths per year, Worcester County experienced a **negative** net natural change of 2,128 persons over the past ten years. This indicates that the population increases documented in the 2020 Census are as a result of in-migration.



Source: Maryland Department of Planning, Projections and State Data Center Unit, May 2021

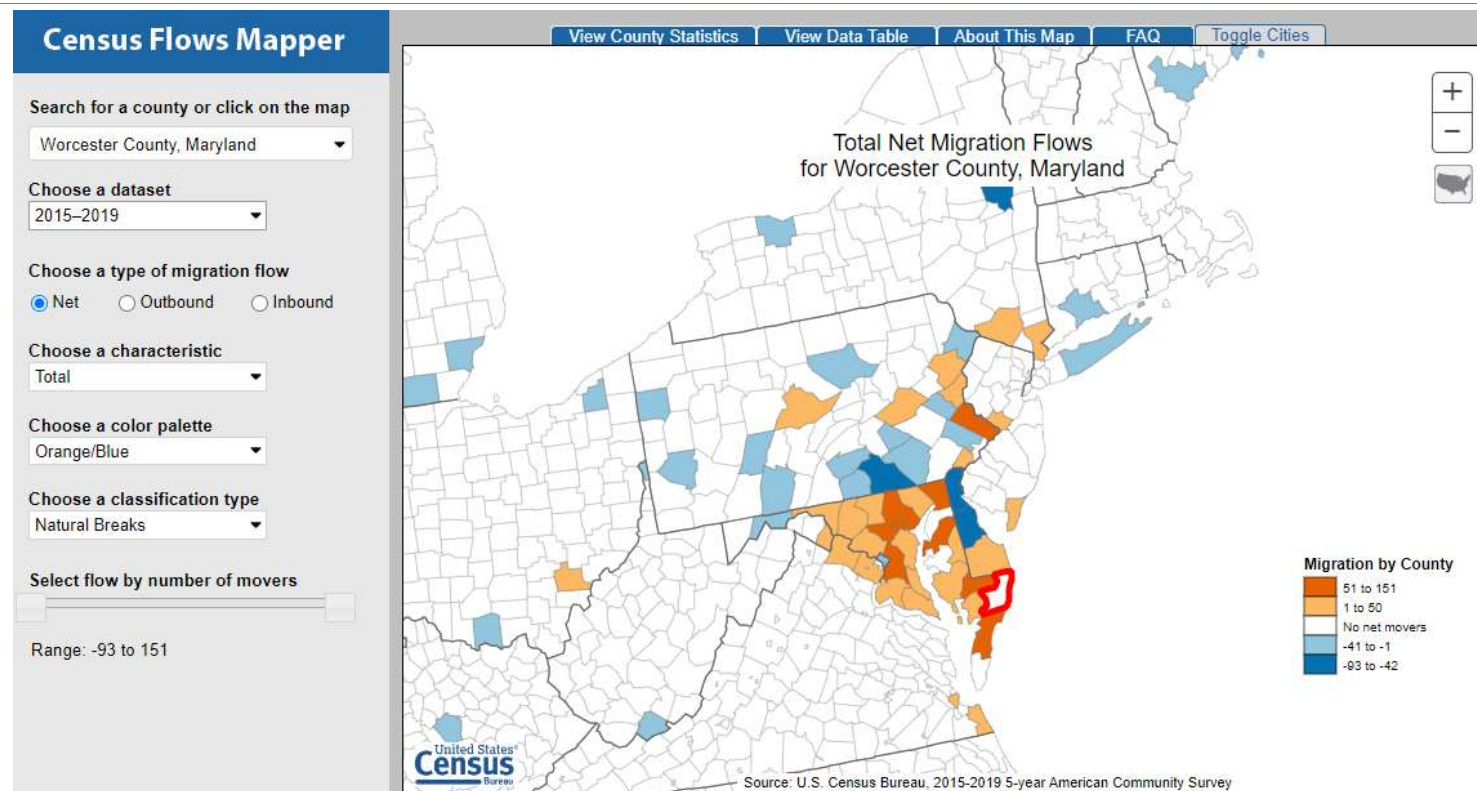
Net Migration Patterns, 2010 to 2019

Where did the new residents come from?

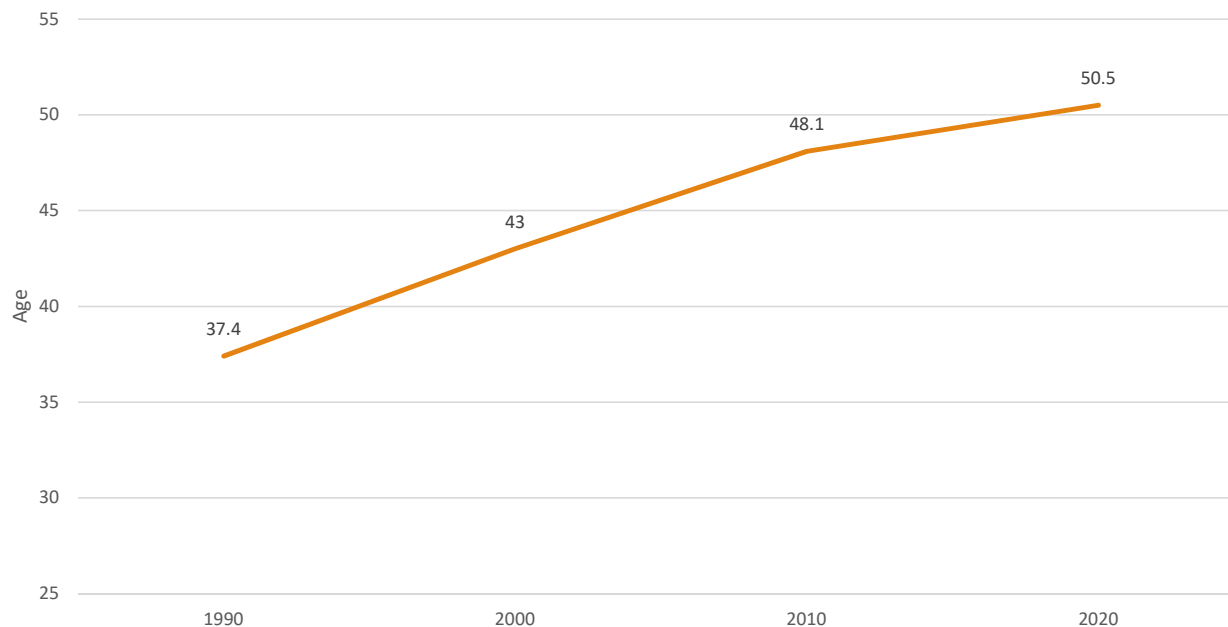


Sources: U.S. Census, County to County Migration tables, 2010 to 2014 and 2015 to 2019

Net Migration by County, 2015 to 2019



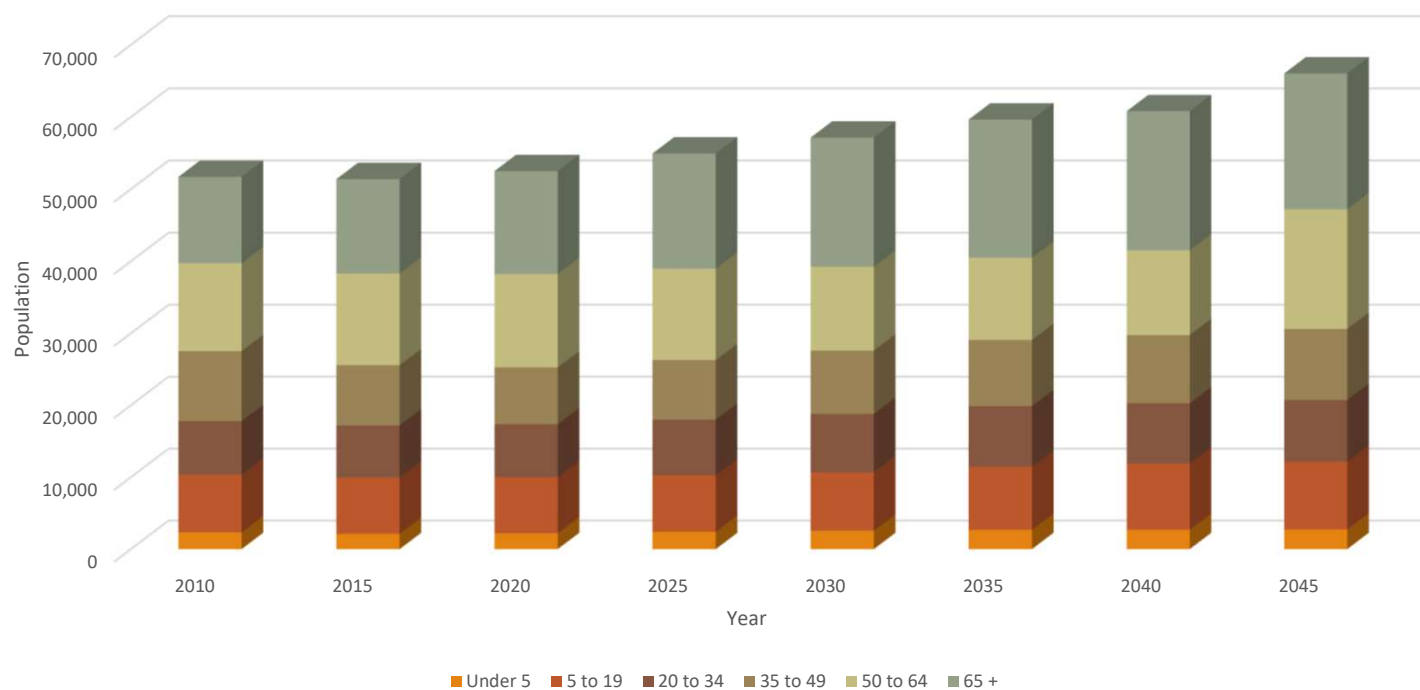
The median age of Worcester County residents has been steadily increasing....



...with the median age as of 2020 at 50.5 years, higher than the state (38.3 years) and national (38.5 years) medians.

Source: Maryland Department of Planning; US Census Bureau

Worcester County's population is expected to predominantly increase in the 50-64 and 65+ age groups over the next planning period. The growth rate in these groups is nearly 3.8 times higher than that for school-age children.



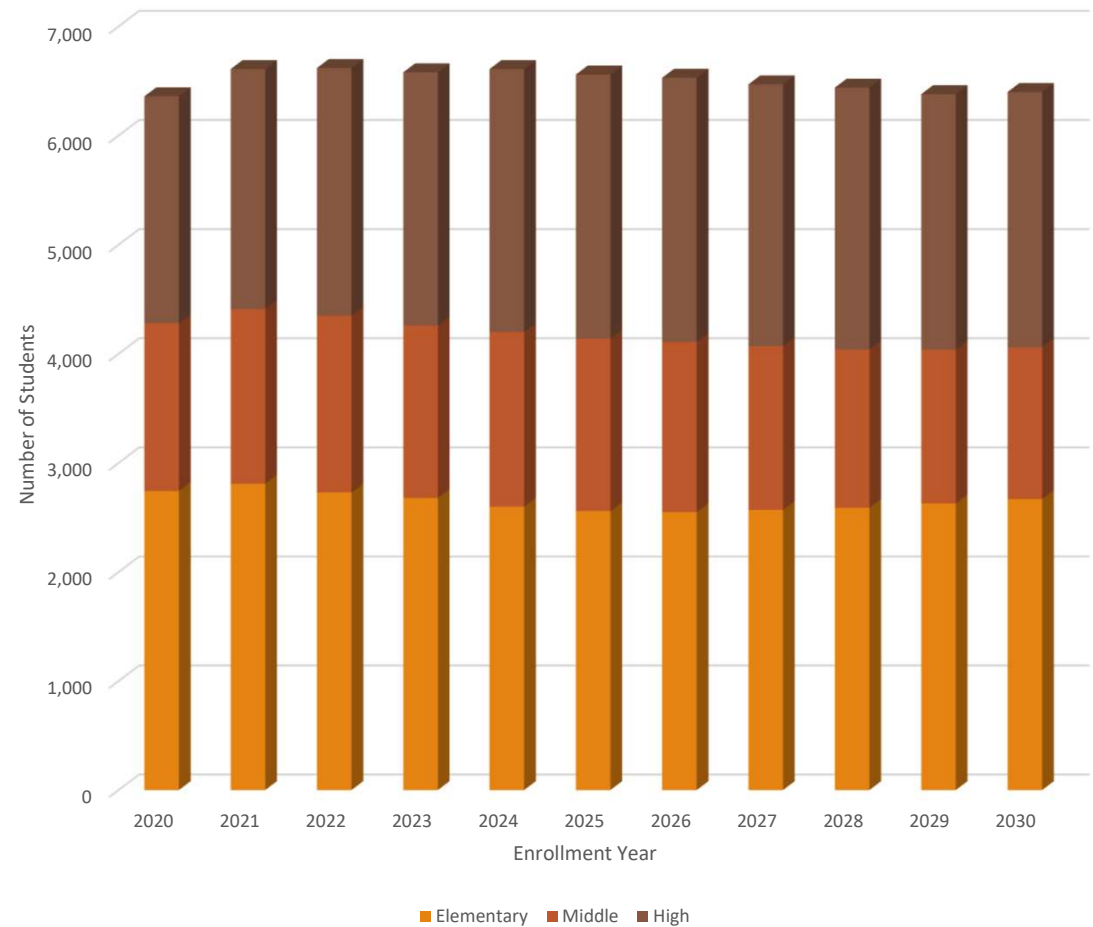
Source: Maryland Department of Planning, December 2020

Historic and Projected School Enrollment, K - 12

Worcester County enrollment is expected to remain fairly stable over the next ten years. Peak enrollment over the planning period is expected to occur in 2022.

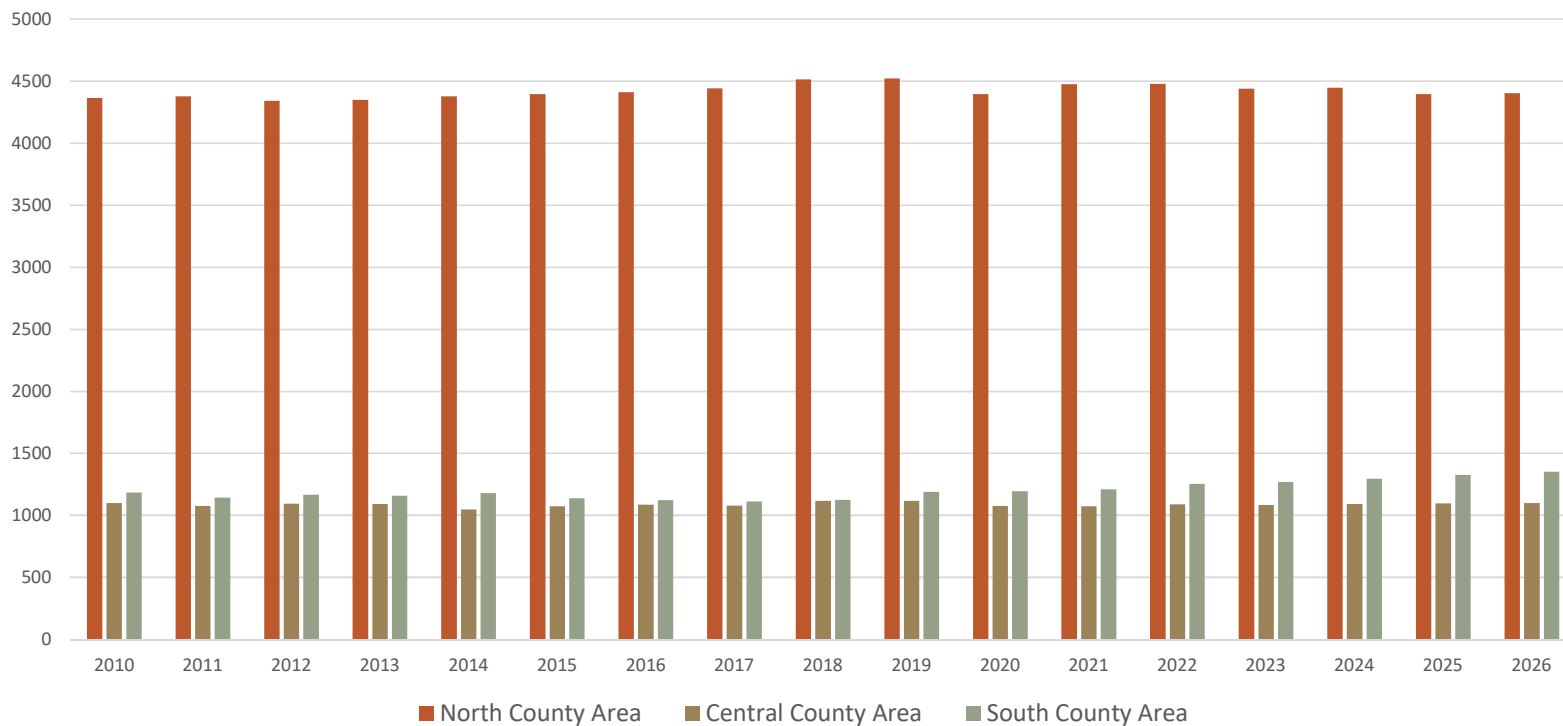
This information does not include Pre-K enrollments.

The 2022 – 2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan considers the states' planning estimates to be conservative, and anticipates greater enrollment levels as additional residential developments reach build out.



Sources: Maryland Department of Planning, March 2022;
2022-2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan, Worcester County Board of Education

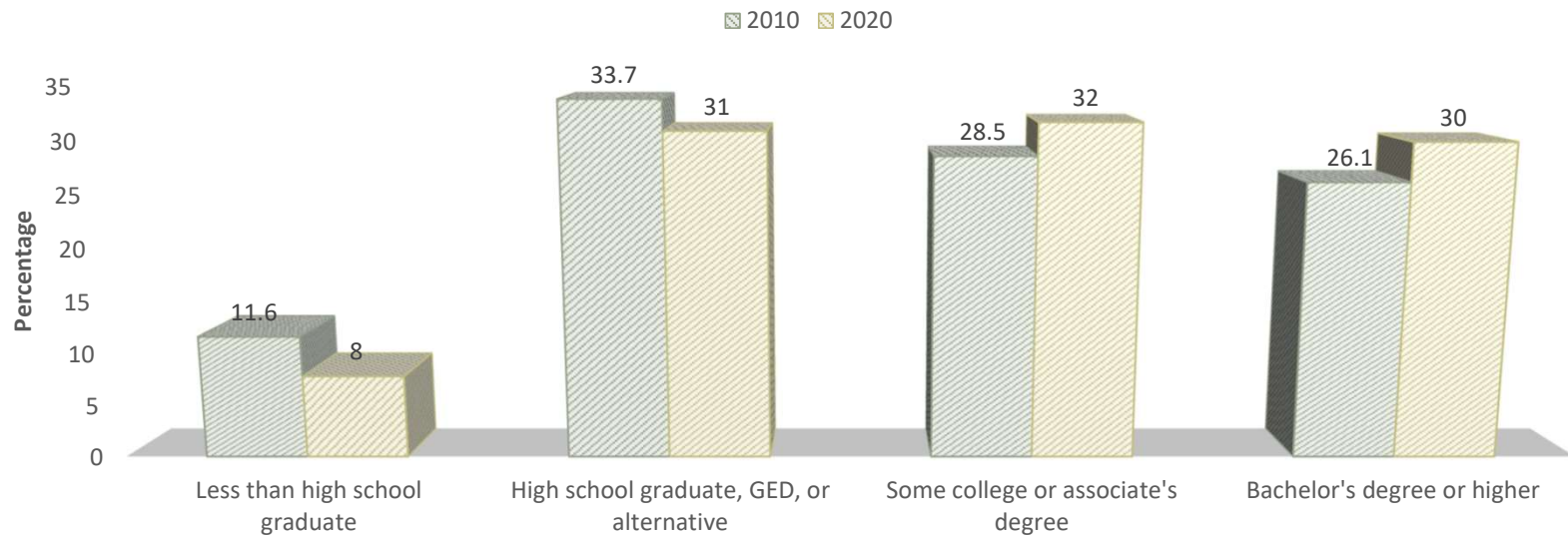
Enrollment Figures by Geographic Area, 2010 - 2026



Source: 2022-2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan, Worcester County Board of Education

Educational Attainment

For our population 25 years and older, a fairly even number are high school graduates, have some college or an associates degree, or have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher.



Source: Five Year American Community Survey, 2010 and 2020

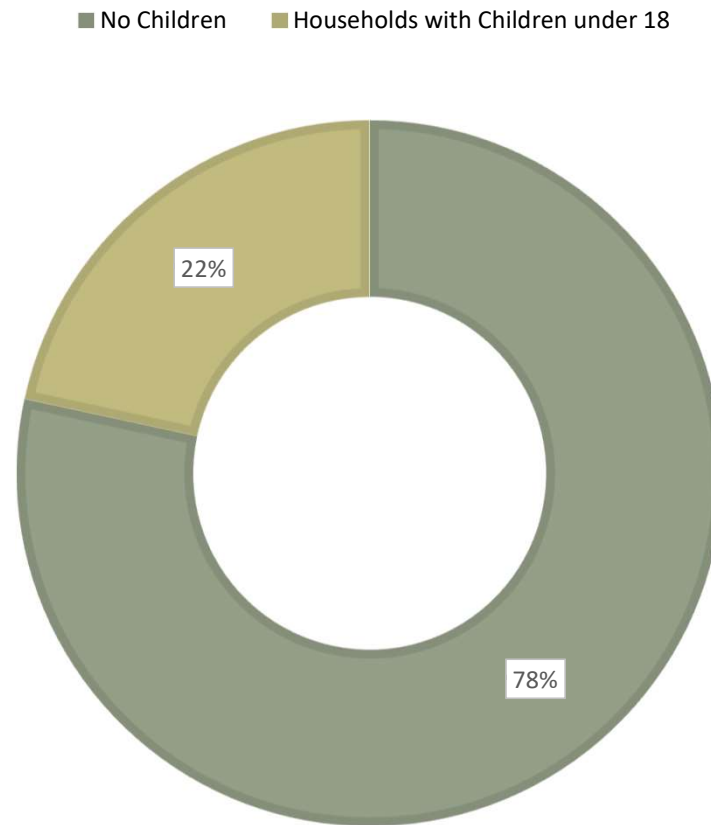
Household Composition

There are a total of 22,661 households in Worcester County as of 2020.

The average household size is 2.26 persons.

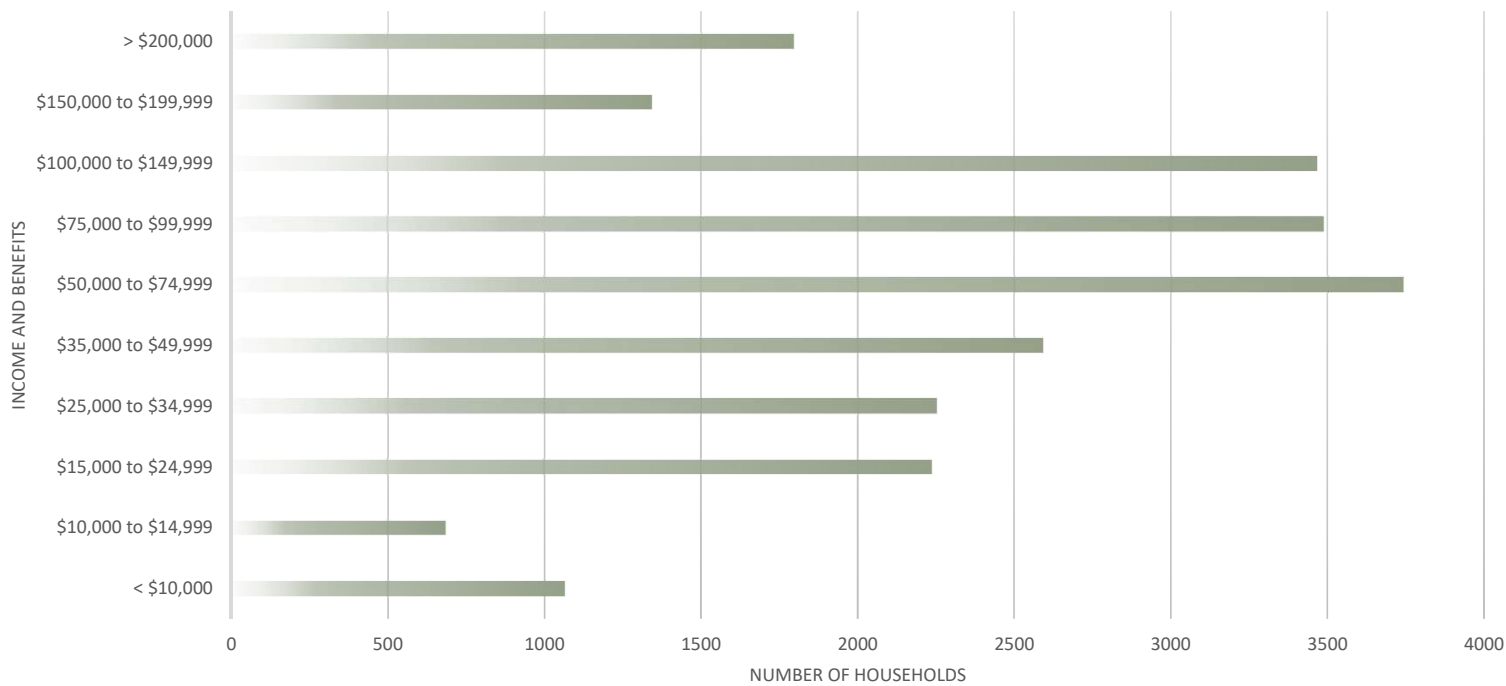
30.1% of the population lives alone in the household.

Only 22% or 4,898 households have children of school age residing in the home.



Source: Five Year American Community Survey, 2016 to 2020

Worcester County Income by Household



Source: Maryland Department of Planning, Five Year ACS 2016 - 2020

Area Median Income

The area median income is the level at which 50% of families are above and 50% are below the income threshold.

Worcester County has a median income of \$89,100, which is higher than our surrounding counties.

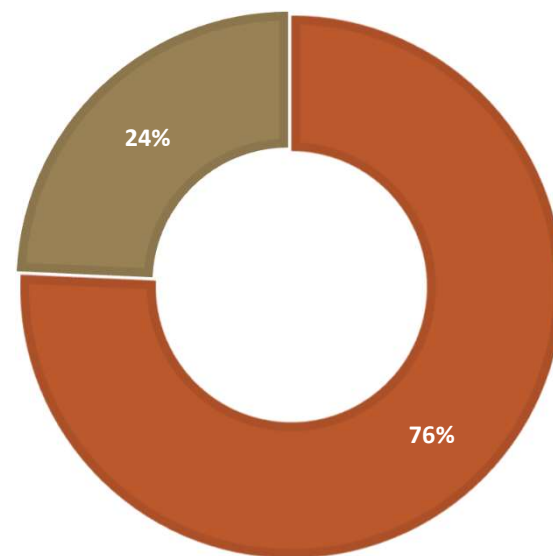


Source: Five Year American Community Survey, 2016 to 2020

Housing Tenure

Out of the 22,661 households in Worcester County, 76% are owner occupied.

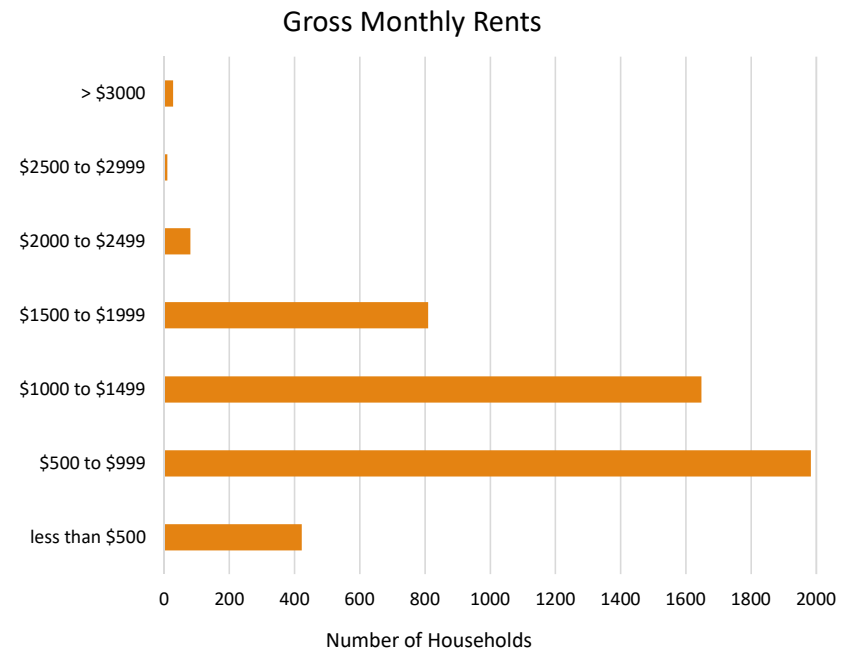
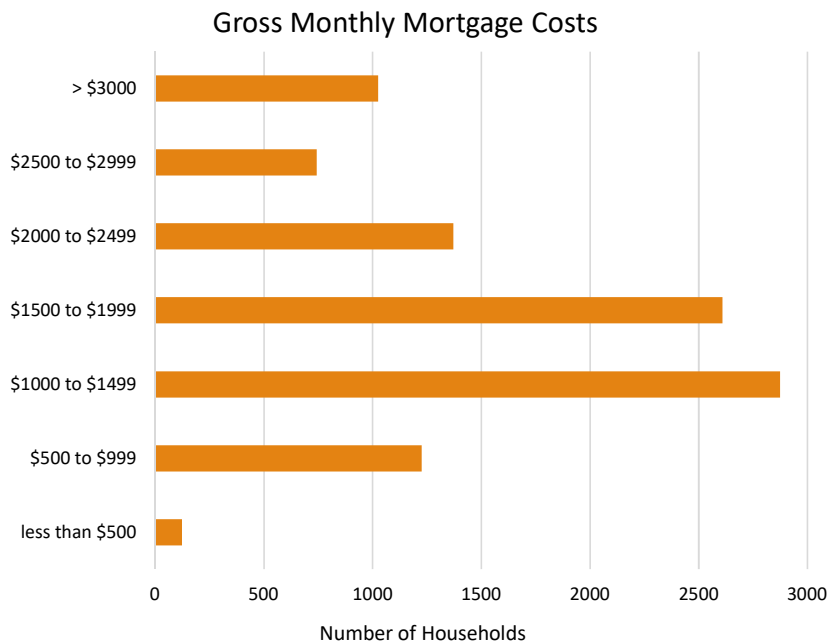
■ Owner Occupied ■ Renter Occupied



Source: Five Year American Community Survey, 2016 to 2020

Housing Expenses

Mortgage or rent payments should account for no more than 30% of your household income.



Source: Five Year American Community Survey, 2016 to 2020

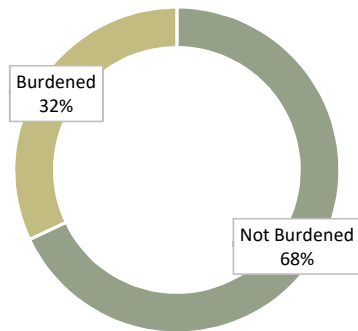
Housing Affordability

Housing burdened is defined as households that pay more than 30% of their income for housing expenses, leaving less money available to pay for necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.

Across the state, nearly one-third of Maryland households are experiencing some form of housing burden. Worcester County is no exception.

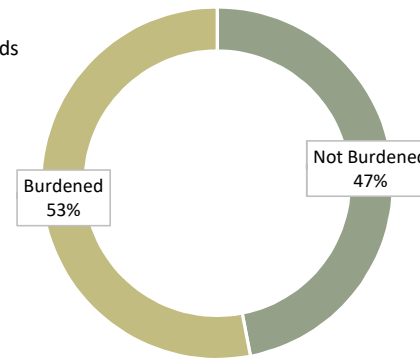
Home Owner Costs as a percentage of Household Income

5,490 Households



Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income

2,918 Households



These figures are directly comparable to the housing expenses shown on the previous slide.

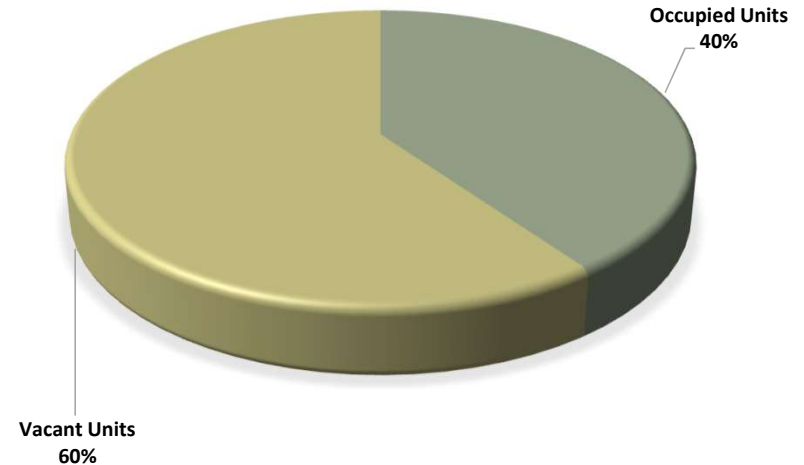
Overall Housing Units

While Worcester County has 22,661 households, that does not represent the total number of housing units in the county.

There are an additional 33,824 housing units that were vacant, equating to 60% of the existing housing stock.

These additional units represent second homes and rental properties.

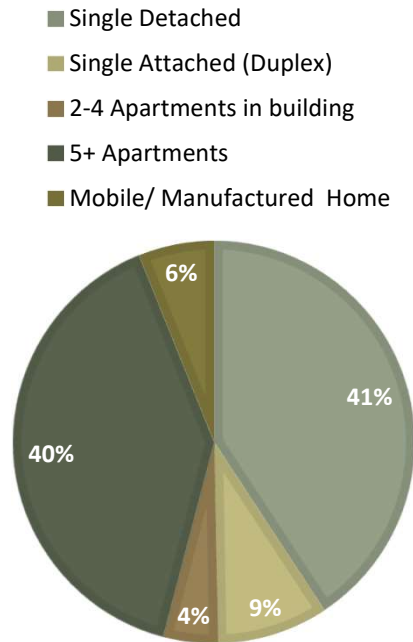
A March 2022 analysis prepared by Granicus showed that there were 9,297 individual short-term rental listings in Worcester County, 93% of which were within the Town of Ocean City. This number is likely to be conservative based on the timeframe that the analysis was conducted.



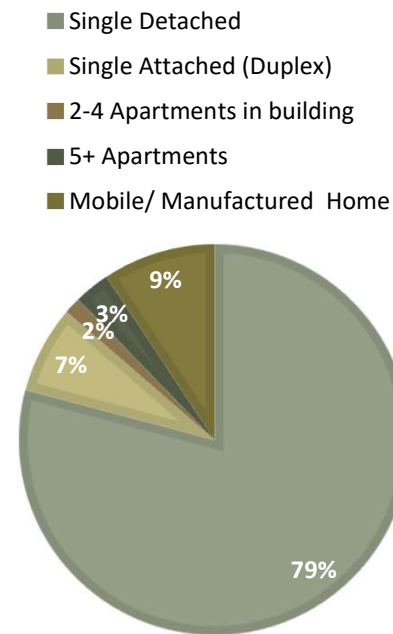
Housing Types

While Worcester County has roughly as many apartment units as single-family dwellings, nearly 92% are located in the Town of Ocean City.

WORCESTER COUNTY OVERALL



UNINCORPORATED AREAS ONLY



Source: Five Year American Community Survey, 2016 to 2020

Employment



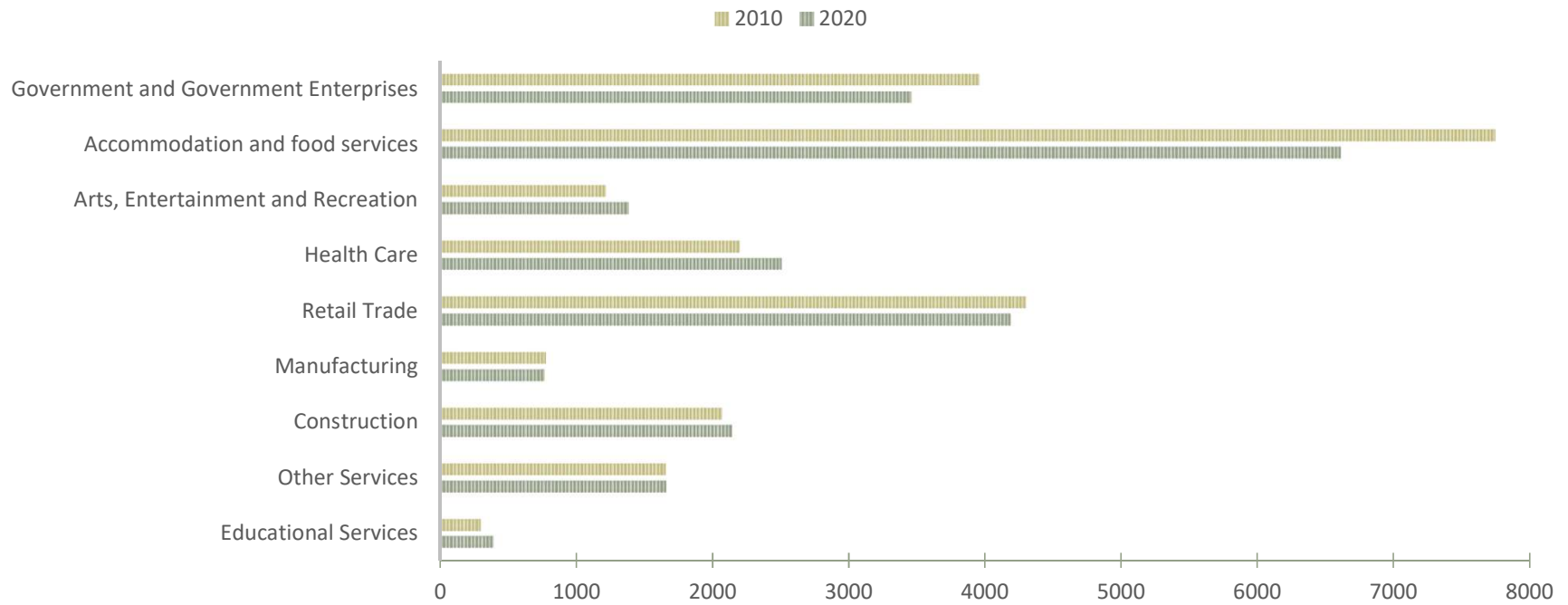
The unemployment rate in Worcester County as of July 2022 is 5.0% according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The top employers in Worcester County can be found in the following industries:

- Accommodation and Food Services
- Health Care
- Retail Trade
- Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Other Services
- Educational Services
- Government and Government Enterprises

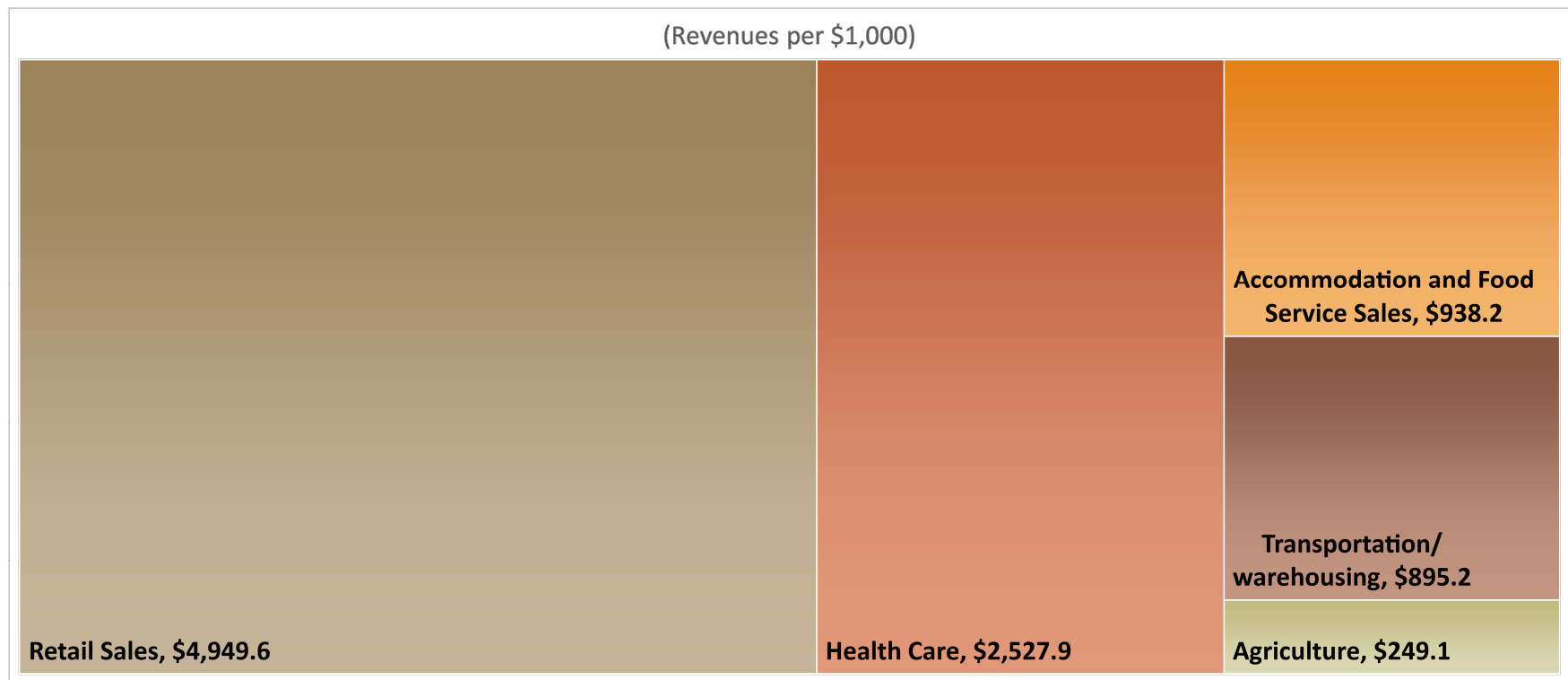
Source: MD Dept of Commerce, October 2015, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by NAICS Industry

Number of Jobs in Select Industries



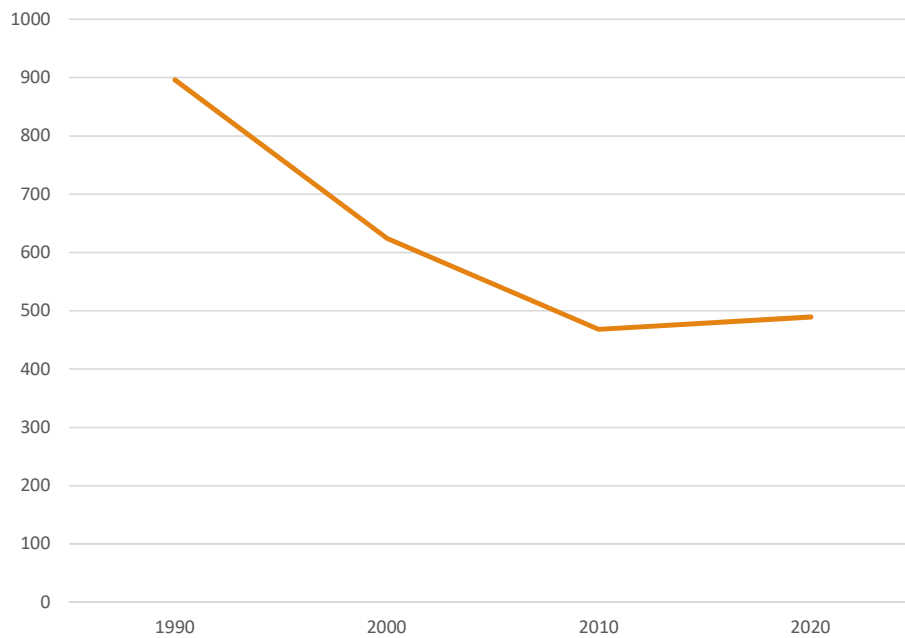
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by NAICS Industry

Economy at a Glance



Source: US Census Bureau, Economic Census, 2017 & Census of Agriculture, 2017

Farm Employment



Description by Industry	1990	2000	2010	2020
Farm employment	896	624	468	489
Non-farm employment	26,234	30,847	32,254	32,258

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by NAICS Industry

Agriculture in Worcester County

- Agriculture is an important part of the economy in Worcester County. The current Comprehensive Plan notes that the value of agricultural products in 2002 was \$123.5 million, an increase of only 1% since 1987.
- According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, total sales that year constituted \$249.1 million, more than double the 2002 figures. This is a testament to the more recent focus on value-added agriculture that has spurred more rural economic development.
- Despite the dramatic increase in value, there continues to be a steady decrease in the number of farms and acreages of farmland in production over the past 30+ years.
- In 2002, there were 403 farms, comprising 131,249 acres of land. The median farm size was 70 acres.
- In 2017, there were 369 farms, comprising 99,239 acres of land. The median farm size was 50 acres.

Conclusions

Worcester County has experienced positive growth over the past 50 years, driven by net migration, with a higher area median income than surrounding Lower Shore counties, reaffirming that Worcester County is a great place to work, live and play.

While housing stock is in great abundance, housing affordability continues to be an issue of great concern, especially among renters.

Worcester County's economy will continue to grow in the health care services sector to serve existing and anticipated residents in our community as they age.

Protection of the agricultural backbone of the county will be important to our predominantly rural way of life, while still allowing economic growth in that sector.

Next Steps...

Public Engagement

- A Request for Proposals (RFP) is being finalized that will allow us to engage a consultant to conduct a public engagement program.
- The role of the consultant is to plan, prepare for, and facilitate the direct outreach to Worcester County residents, engage in data collection, and develop a report containing a set of recommendations and action items based upon information gained from the public engagement effort.

Development Capacity Analysis (DCA)

- DRP has been working with the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) to prepare a Development Capacity Analysis. This “build-out” analysis is an estimate of the total amount of development that can be built in an area under a certain set of assumptions, such as existing zoning, land-use laws, and environmental constraints.
 - This estimate will help the Planning Commission determine how and where to adequately plan for future growth.
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