

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

NOTES ON '99 - THE YEAR IN REVIEW

COUNTY BUILDING ACTIVITY REMAINS CONSTANT RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS

The adoption of new criteria for townhouse approvals and a new school capacity allocation policy during 1999 did not significantly affect building permit activity. Building permit activity for new residential structures kept pace with the average activity recorded over the past 20 years. The year's total of 1,154 permits issued for new single-family structures was 21% lower than last year's total, and just slightly higher than the approximately 1,000 permits per year average of the past 20 years.

Taking a further look into the year's totals, there were 1,023 permits issued for single-family detached units and 131 permits for townhouses. A comparison of the mix of permits issued over the past 5 years is provided below:

TYPE	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Single-family	739	735	825	1030	1023
Townhouse	266	354	299	424	131
Multi-family	0	54	108	0	0
TOTALS	1005	1143	1232	1454	1154

To give some regional perspective to these numbers, Calvert County's average number of new housing units was 912 per year for the period 1994 through 1998, and St. Mary's averaged 829 units per year during that same period of time. (See also following article on county and regional growth.)

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

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Estimates of the average household income for Charles County residents indicate an increase from the \$50,334 figure reported in the 1990 census, to a 1998 figure of \$64,100. Statewide figures represent a similar increase, from a census figure of \$47,805 to a 1998 average household income of \$64,500. These estimates were prepared by the Maryland Office of Planning, using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

COUNTY AND REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH

As the Census Bureau has not yet released their 1999 county population estimates, Charles County is still considered the State's eighth fastest growing county this decade. The 1998 estimate of 117,963 persons represents a 16.6% increase in population between the last census in 1990 and July 1, 1998. The 1999 population estimates should be released in March.

Our neighbor to the east, Calvert County, has the distinction of being the fastest growing county in the State. With a 1990 census population of 51,372 persons and a 1998 estimate of 71,877, Calvert's population has risen 39.9% so far this decade. St. Mary's County has seen a 15.4% rise in population during this same time period, making it the tenth fastest growing county in the State.

On a regional basis, Southern Maryland ranks as the fastest growing area in the State during the decade.

According to an article in the January, 2000 *Maryland State Data Center Newsletter*, the Maryland Office of Planning estimates that "virtually all of Maryland's population growth between 1990 and 1998 was made up of minorities", defined as African-Americans, Asians, American Indians and Hispanics (White and non-White). The Census Bureau estimates that this increase in the minority population actually made up approximately 66.8% of the 1990-1998 population gains in Charles County. This statement was qualified to say that the estimate was produced by a method still in the developmental stages, and that it may possibly over state the minority growth for some of the smaller counties such as Charles County. For the full text of the article, refer to <www.op.state.md.us/MSDC/index.html>

RESIDENTIAL USE & OCCUPANCY PERMITS

For the first time since 1994 when many of the County's permit processes became automated, more U&Os than building permits were issued for single-family structures during the year. U&O permits must be issued once a structure has been completed, prior to occupancy of the structure. The year's total of 1,193 issued U&Os not only surpassed the total of U&Os issued in any of the past five years, but also represents a total of 3% more U&Os than building permits issued during 1999.

When comparing the total number of U&Os to the total number of residential building permits issued between 1995 and 1999, it is noted that the number of U&Os issued average approximately 90% of total building permits issued.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING PERMITS

Total new commercial/industrial square footage for the year was 443,413 square feet, which includes new commercial/industrial structures, additions to existing structures, and changes in use to commercial and/or industrial space. This represents a 54% increase over the 287,977 square feet that was permitted during 1998.

Significant projects were permitted during the year, including 93,480 square feet in two new hotels, a new post office in Port Tobacco, the Golden Corral Restaurant in Waldorf (which is now open), medical facilities, and several new retail establishments, including an Eckerd Drug, now under construction on Rte 301 at St. Patrick's Drive. In addition, several new churches were constructed or expanded and three new convenience/gas stations were permitted.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES

PRELIMINARY LOTS

Total preliminary lots approved during 1999 were down approximately 60% from the previous 5 years average (1994-1998) of 1877 lots per year. The 769 lots approved in 1999 are broken down as follows:

Total	Type
767	Single-family
0	Townhouse
2	Commercial
769	TOTAL

FINAL LOTS

During 1999, the Planning Commission approved a total of 190 final plats containing a total of 468 new lots. The lots are broken down as follows:

Total	Type
345	Single-family
118	Townhouse
5	Commercial
468	TOTAL

The 468 lots approved during 1999 are down 68% from the previous 5 years average (1994-1998) of 1442 final lots approved per year.

DID YOU KNOW???

This April, each and every household in Charles County will be receiving a Census 2000 questionnaire. Those people living in areas served by 911 style addresses will be receiving their forms in the mail, while those in rural or remote areas may receive their forms from a Census taker who will visit their home.

Approximately 83% of households will receive a short form, which asks about seven subjects: name, sex, age, relationship, Hispanic origin, race and housing tenure - and takes about 10 minutes to complete. The remaining one in six households will receive a longer form, which asks about 34 subjects and takes approximately 38 minutes to complete.

By law, the information you provide to the Census Bureau is *confidential*. Your individual responses cannot be shared with ANYONE, and Census workers take an oath to this effect before they can see the numbers. Data are, however, compiled and used to determine apportionment in the U.S. House of Representatives and boundaries for local and state legislative districts. In addition, many decisions concerning vital community services/facilities such as schools, healthcare, employment services, housing assistance and road construction are based on census data. It is estimated that each person missed during the census costs the County approximately \$1,000 each year in lost grant and loan revenues.

COUNT YOURSELF IN CHARLES COUNTY'S FUTURE, by completing and returning your Census questionnaire. Your answers are important!!!!

Vision Statement

Charles County is a place where ...

- * Private initiative is rewarded and businesses grow and prosper, while the preservation of our heritage is paramount,
- * Government services have reached the highest level of excellence, and
- * The quality of life is felt by its citizens to be the best in the region and its government is recognized as a leader in support of these expectations.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient, and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long and short term planning, and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility.

This information is provided by the Charles County Government, Department of Planning and Growth Management, Planning Division, Post Office Box B, La Plata, Maryland 20646, home page address www.govt.co.charles.md.us/