

# Cecil County Comprehensive Plan Future Growth Scenario Summaries August 2008

## Introduction

Three scenarios of future growth in Cecil County have been developed for review by the Citizens Oversight Committee. Details of each are presented below.

Please note that these scenarios are intentionally general in nature and will be developed in more detail as the process moves forward. We ask that each subcommittee review these scenarios and compare them to the goals set in June and July. We want to know whether your goals are reflected in one or more of the scenarios, and we invite you to provide any comments or suggest ideas that we may use to refine these alternatives or develop a fourth scenario, that would better incorporate your goals.

Please forward any comments to Michael Bayer of ERM as soon as possible after your committee meeting so that we may review them in advance of the September 17 Oversight Committee meeting. We will review all of the comments at that meeting.

## Elements Common to Each Scenario

Several elements are common to each scenario. They include, but are not limited to:

- Development in designated growth areas would be planned at a density that would support transit.
- Minimum and maximum densities would be required of residential projects.
- Future employment would be concentrated in the technology and medical sectors and located in offices and office parks, not warehouse and distribution centers.
- Employment areas would be concentrated at Bainbridge, Principio Business Park, along MD 272 in North East, and at Triumph Business Park and sites around Elkton.
- The expansion of MARC service to Elkton is shown, as well as a connection between MARC and SEPTA rail service. (The viability of MARC service extension will be reviewed as the process moves forward and may vary across scenarios.)
- Preserving agricultural lands and rural character is emphasized.

For purposes of the initial review of the scenarios, seven categories of land use are shown on the scenario maps:

- **Development:** These areas would be developed on land served by public water and sewer.
- **Rural:** These areas would not be served by public water and sewer.
- **Resource:** These lands have significant natural and sensitive environmental resources. Some of these areas likely would be included in the county's Priority Preservation Area.

- **Employment Center:** These areas would be developed with employment uses.
- **Mixed Development:** These areas would be developed as mixed-use centers of residential, commercial, employment, and institutional uses. The specific mix of use types has not been defined.
- **Town:** The areas within the County’s eight incorporated towns have been shown in their own category.
- **Water**

In addition to these categories, major tracts of **State Owned Land** are outlined.

We have not assigned specific development densities or intensities but will as we move closer to September 17. However, some scenarios have been developed with an idea of their relative densities. These are noted within the scenario descriptions.

### **Scenarios**

The scenarios are:

- **Growth Corridor**
- **Growth Centers**
- **Greenbelts**

The ***Growth Corridor*** and ***Growth Centers*** scenarios both are based on “build out.” For purposes of this process, we assume build out at the current capacity, as defined by the Maryland Department of Planning’s 2008 capacity analysis of the potential of 67,500 additional households, given the County’s current zoning. For each of the scenarios, we will allocate the additional households and jobs based on new densities developed for each scenario. Because the ***Growth Centers*** scenario has less developed land than the ***Growth Corridor*** scenario, we are assuming that densities would be higher in the ***Growth Centers*** scenario to yield the same build out number.

The ***Greenbelts*** scenario assumes a more constrained build-out than either of the other two scenarios. Again, density would be increased to increase the development potential, but not to the extent that would make up for the entire decrease in land developed on public water and sewer. This is based on the assumption that there are limits on the density that the Cecil County market and public would support. The exact calculations for this have not been completed but will be in time for the September 17 meeting.

#### **Growth Corridor Scenario**

The ***Growth Corridor*** scenario represents the build out of Cecil County’s growth corridor in a manner that is generally in keeping with current policies (except as noted below). The provision of water and sewer infrastructure is seen as a key force driving change, as the lack of infrastructure has been a constraint to growth. The County’s agreement with Artesian, a private water and sewer provider, allows it to move forward with the

development of Elkton West and opens the easternmost section of the growth corridor for residential and employment uses.

### *Rationale*

The provision of water and sewer infrastructure is seen as an important driving force of change in the County. The franchise agreement with Artesian shows the County's intent regarding the future provision of water and sewer infrastructure in the Elkton West area; this scenario assumes it is a given.

The Growth Corridor is a long-established concept in Cecil County, and considerable infrastructure has already been built based on the desire to provide a more or less contiguous development corridor from the Susquehanna River to the Delaware Line.

### *Key Assumptions*

- Sewer and water infrastructure in the Elkton West area would be provided as described in the County's franchise agreement.
- The growth corridor between Perryville and Elkton would remain substantially intact.
- The Stewart property would be developed as a mixed-use residential area flanked by employment areas as envisioned by the property owners.

### *Questions to Resolve*

- The type and scale of transportation network improvements to implement this scenario are unknown (until the travel model runs are completed in late September) but are likely to include upgrades to all roads with I-95 interchanges, the interchanges themselves, as well as a new road through Elkton West, and new I-95 interchanges at Belvidere Road and at one of the roads serving Elkton. Upgrades to US 40 and many local roads also are likely.
- This scenario is likely to require additional sources of water and additional wastewater discharge capacity (involving nutrient trading or alternative disposal methods). (The Elk Hills Quarry may be a water source in the very long term.)

### **Growth Centers Scenario**

The ***Growth Centers*** scenario would concentrate growth in centers developed adjacent to existing infrastructure. This would encourage the development of compact, pedestrian-oriented communities, would make these communities easier to serve with transit, and would protect more environmentally sensitive lands.

Under the ***Growth Centers*** scenario, the County would develop in a manner similar to the ***Growth Corridor*** scenario, except that portions of the growth area would be designated as rural areas not to be served by public sewer and water. The amount of build out assumed in this scenario is the same as the ***Growth Corridor*** scenario, but fewer acres

would be developed, meaning that densities would be increased to make up the difference.

This scenario responds to the goal to concentrate growth and to preserve open space within the growth corridor.

Growth would be concentrated within five nodes: Rising Sun, Chesapeake City, Perryville/Port Deposit, Elkton and North East, including the Stewart property.

This scenario would include provisions to encourage infill and support the growth of the towns; however, it leaves open the question of whether the towns would annex any of the land designated as development.

The growth corridor would be bisected by a green corridor between the developed area around Elkton and North East to link the Northern Agricultural Region to the Elk Neck peninsula and another corridor along Principio Creek?

#### *Rationale*

- This scenario seeks to concentrate growth into centers and make open space an important part of the growth corridor.

#### *Key Assumptions*

- Sewer and water infrastructure in the Elkton West area would be developed and provided as described in the County's franchise agreement.
- A portion of the existing growth corridor west of MD 213 and east of Blue Ball Road would be designated as "rural."
- The growth corridor between Perryville and Elkton would be interrupted by green corridors along the Principio Creek and between Elkton West and North East.
- The Stewart property would be developed as a mixed-use community as envisioned by the property owners, except for an area along Principio Creek. A portion of the Stewart property west of Principio Creek would be developed for similar uses, but would be served by infrastructure from the Perryville/Port Deposit node. The overall amount of development on the Stewart property would be similar to the **Growth Corridor** scenario, but would be more dense.
- Development would be adjacent to the towns but would not necessarily be annexed by them.

#### *Questions to Resolve*

- Many of the transportation network improvements are likely to be similar to those under the **Growth Corridor** scenario.
- This scenario is likely to require additional sources of water and of wastewater discharge points (The Elk Hills Quarry may be a water source in the very long term.)

- Given the gap between Elkton and North East and a smaller one between the Stewart property and Perryville/Port Deposit, it may be more difficult to create an integrated system of public water and sewer in this scenario.

### **Greenbelts Scenario**

The **Greenbelts** scenario assumes that the people of Cecil County do not want to develop to the extent depicted in the **Growth Corridor** or the **Growth Centers** scenarios. To constrain future growth, additional lands are designated for rural protection and the greenbelts are wider than in the **Growth Centers** scenario. Although the allowable densities would be similar, if not slightly higher, than the **Growth Centers** scenario, the amount of land to be developed is constrained, and therefore, the capacity yielded by this scenario is less than the others.

An area east of Elkton that is slated for development in the **Growth Centers** scenario would be designated as resource (no public sewer and water), while the area in and around the Fair Hill Natural Resource Management Area would be designated for rural preservation, allowing for development at very low densities, perhaps 1 unit per 50 acres. This area, along with the portion of the County south of the C&D Canal, could be a Priority Preservation Area.

Greenbelts of protected lands (rather than just “rural” land in the **Growth Centers** scenario) would be interspersed within the growth corridor. Densities within designated growth areas would be higher than in the **Growth Centers** scenario, so as to encourage the development of walkable, pedestrian oriented communities surrounded by greenbelts and linked by transit.

The extent of developed areas around the towns of Rising Sun, Chesapeake City, North East and the Stewart property would be decreased. More emphasis would be given to protecting agriculture and environmentally sensitive areas than in the other scenarios.

### *Rationale*

This scenario gives higher priority to sensitive natural resources, compared to the **Growth Corridor** or the **Growth Centers** scenarios, while still allowing for considerable development within the I-95 corridor. It strengthens the towns and their associated communities by providing more impetus for infill and higher-density development.

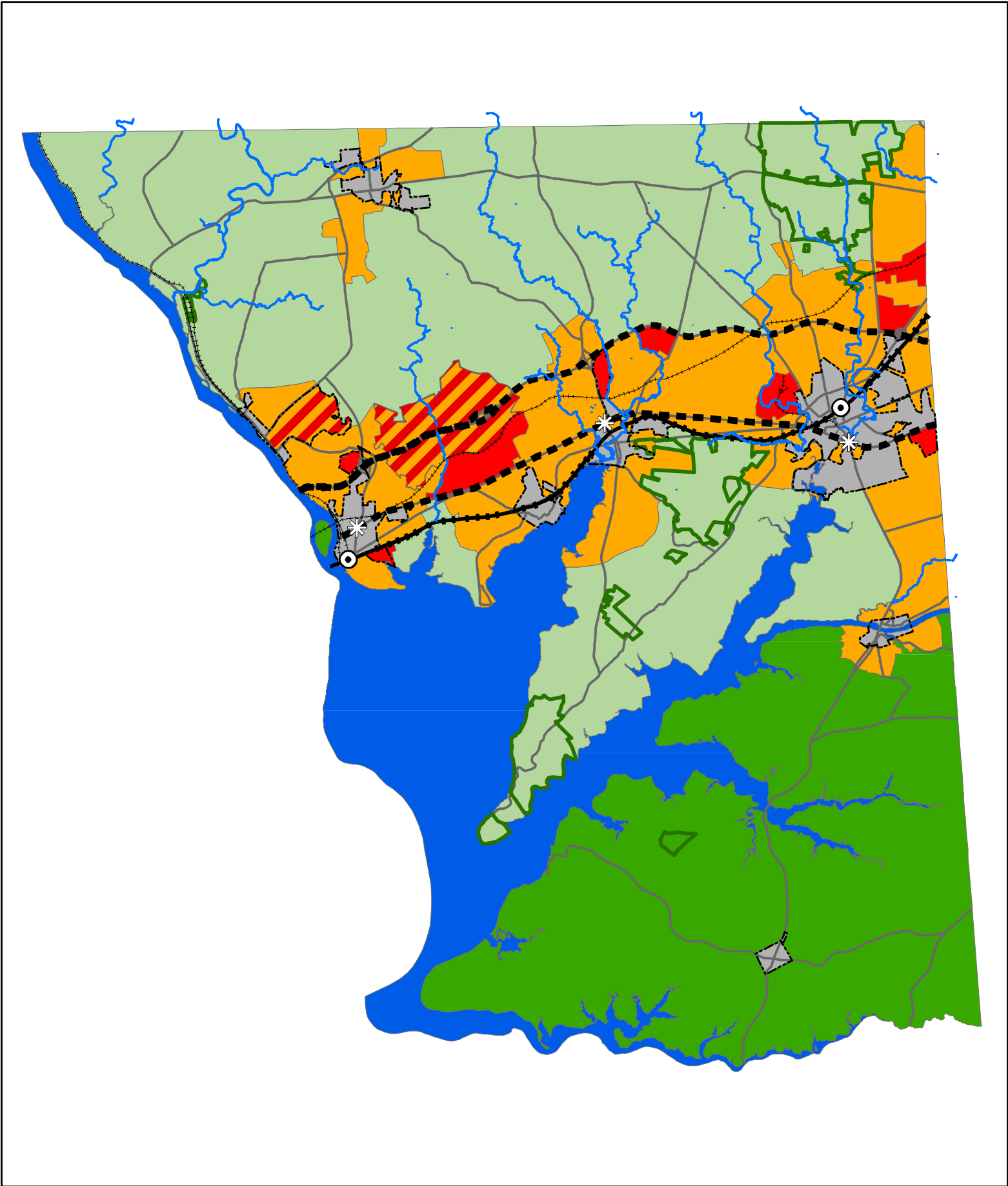
### *Key Assumptions*

- As with the **Growth Centers** scenario, sewer and water infrastructure in the Elkton West area would be developed and provided as described in the County’s franchise agreement. A portion of the existing growth corridor west of MD 213 and east of Blue Ball Road would be designated as “rural.”
- The growth corridor between Perryville and Elkton would be interrupted by wide green corridors along the Principio Creek and between Elkton West and North East.

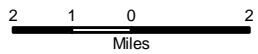
- The Stewart property would be developed as a mixed-use community as envisioned by the property owners, except for an area along Principio Creek. This area would be more constrained than in the ***Growth Centers*** scenario.
- No development on Stewart property west of Principio Creek is envisioned. The overall amount of development on the Stewart property would be reduced compared to the ***Growth Corridor*** or the ***Growth Centers*** scenarios—proportional to the overall reduction in development capacity.
- Development would be adjacent to the towns but would not necessarily be annexed by them.

#### *Questions to Resolve*

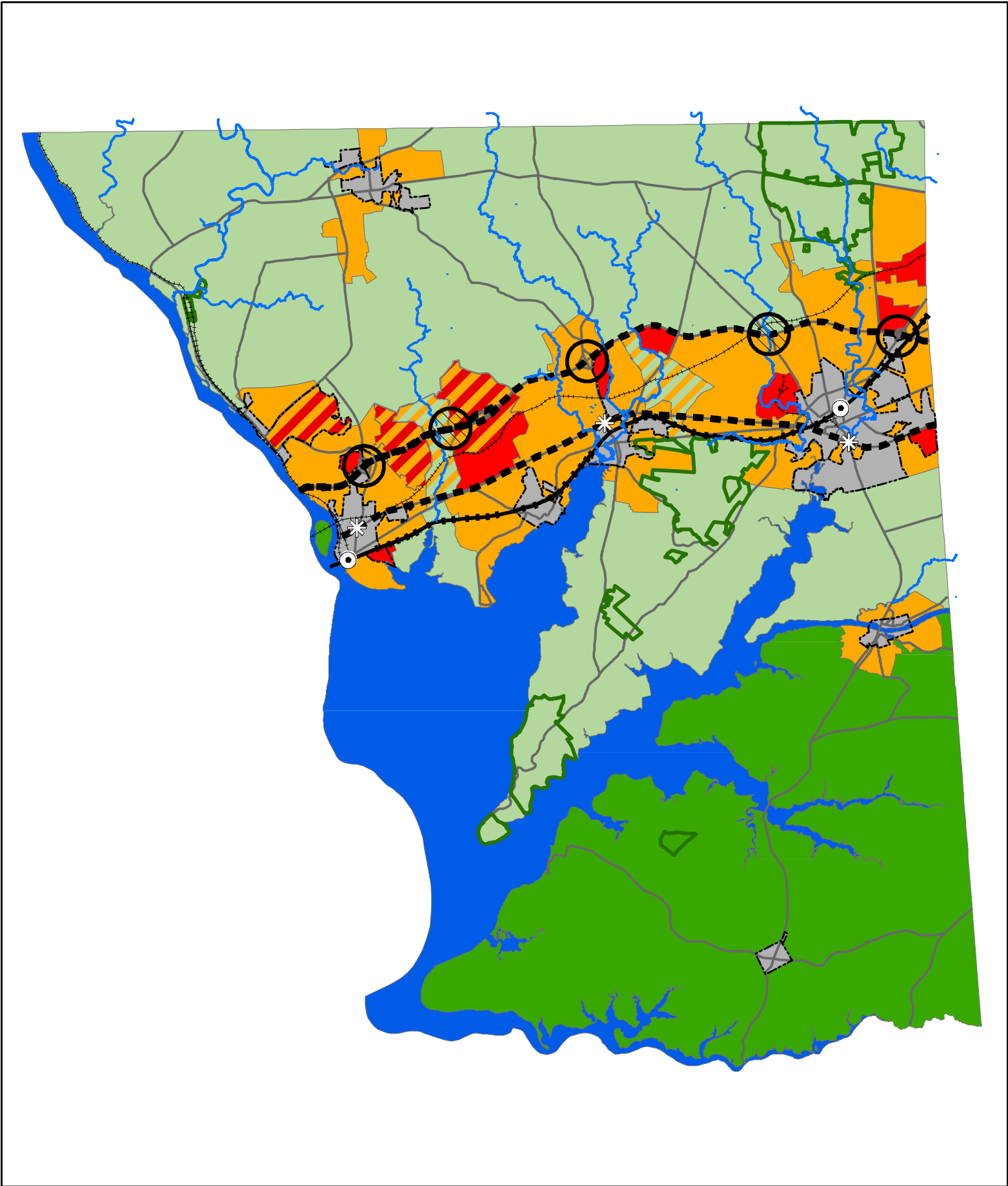
- The scale of transportation network improvements is likely to be less than that of the ***Growth Corridor*** or the ***Growth Centers*** scenarios.
- This scenario may require additional sources of water and of wastewater discharge points, but the amount would be less than in the ***Growth Corridor*** or the ***Growth Centers*** scenarios.
- Although the implementation of this scenario would be less costly than the ***Growth Corridor*** or the ***Growth Centers*** scenarios (because it requires less infrastructure to serve fewer people), it is not known how much this would cost or what affects it might have on the County's economic health.



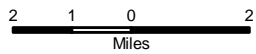
**Growth Corridor Scenario**  
**Cecil County Comprehensive Plan**



- Legend**
- Development
  - Rural (No public water/sewer)
  - Major Road Upgrades
  - Intersection Upgrades
  - Employment Center
  - Town/Development
  - Upgraded Commuter Rail Service
  - Commuter Rail Stations
  - Mixed Development
  - Water
  - Municipalities
  - Resource Lands
  - State Owned Land



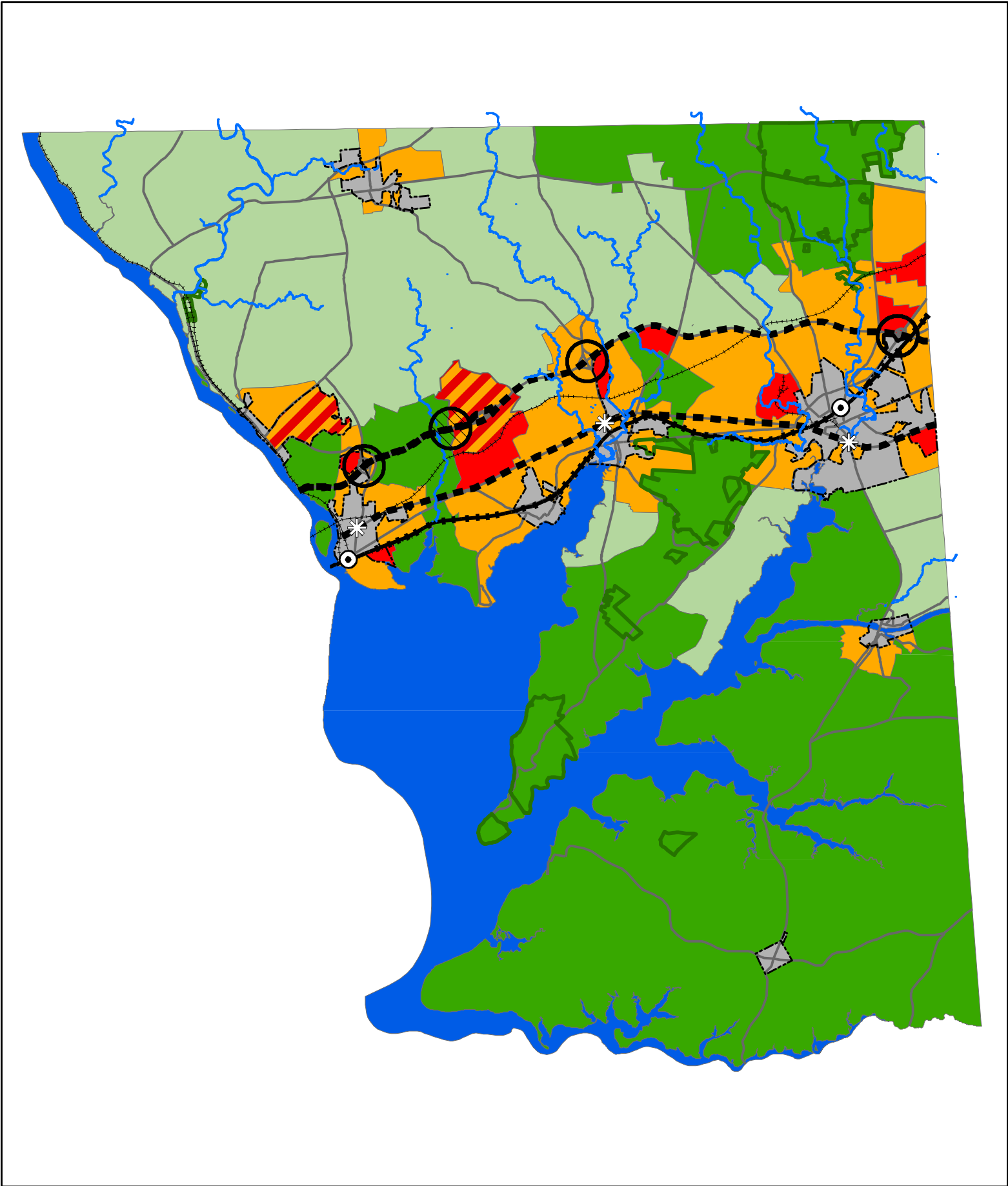
**Growth Centers Scenario**  
**Cecil County Comprehensive Plan**



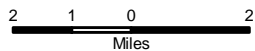
**Legend**

- |                   |                               |                       |                                |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Development       | Resource Lands                | State Owned Land      | New Interchange                |
| Employment Center | Rural (No public water/sewer) | Municipalities        | Existing Interchange           |
| Mixed Development | Town/Development              | Major Road Upgrades   | Upgraded Commuter Rail Service |
| Urban Open Space  | Water                         | Intersection Upgrades | Commuter Rail Stations         |





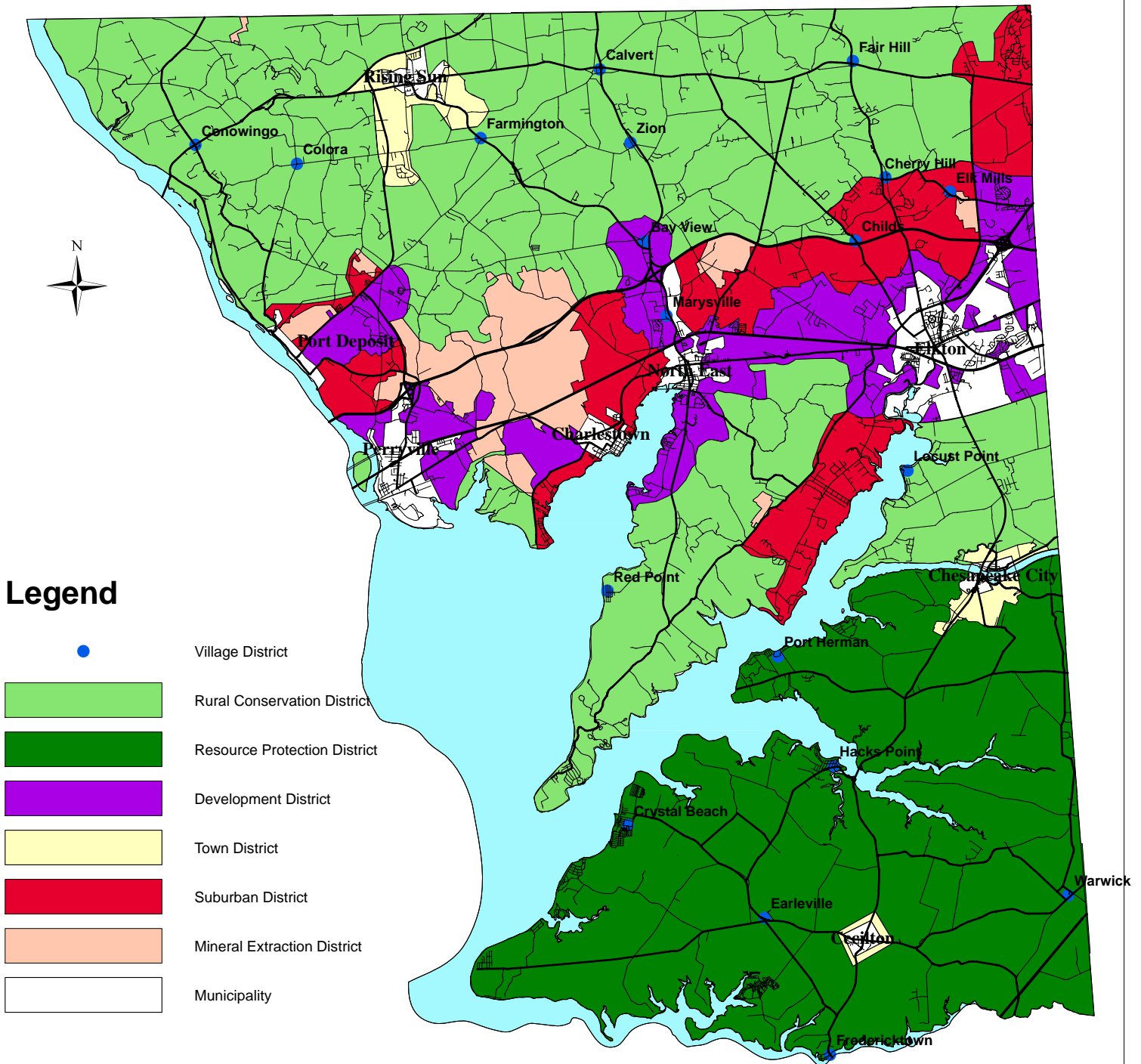
**Greenbelts Scenario**  
**Cecil County Comprehensive Plan**



**Legend**

- |                   |                               |                                |                        |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Development       | Rural (No public water/sewer) | New Interchange                | Municipalities         |
| Employment Center | Town/Development              | Existing Interchange           | Intersection Upgrades  |
| Mixed Development | Water                         | Major Road Upgrades            | Commuter Rail Stations |
| Resource Lands    | State Owned Land              | Upgraded Commuter Rail Service |                        |

# CECIL COUNTY LAND USE PLAN



## CECIL COUNTY MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 1990

Cecil County Office of Planning and Zoning, Updated March 2004

