



TOWN OF

LA PLATA

Maryland

Comprehensive Plan

Phase I Public Meeting

July 9, 2019

DRAFT

What is a comprehensive plan?

- Required by state law every 10 years and must include certain elements
- The Comprehensive Plan for municipal governments must include the following elements:
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Community Facilities
 - Areas of Critical State Concern
 - Land Use
 - Development Regulations
 - Sensitive Areas
 - Transportation
 - Water Resources
 - and Municipal Growth
- Additionally, the plan must address "twelve visions":
 - Quality of Life and Sustainability
 - Public Participation
 - Growth Areas
 - Community Design
 - Infrastructure
 - Transportation
 - Housing
 - Economic Development
 - Environmental Protection
 - Resource Conservation
 - Stewardship
 - Implementation

Project Schedule



Land Use Element

Existing Conditions & Issues for Consideration

- Pace of development has been far less than expected in 2009 Comprehensive Plan
- Rapid development has been in northern parts of Charles County
- Density has increased; more townhouse/multifamily
- Major zoning code re-write in 2018 sets the stage for more focused growth.

“Current land use and development capacity should support a stable, if not growing and diverse population and economy. The ability to leverage its land use powers and its flexibilities is key to spurring future growth within existing town boundaries, as is a development review process that is fair, transparent and predictable. Additional issues related to land use planning include how to best support the Town’s **anchor institutions and businesses, strengthen the downtown core and character,** manage potential growth of the Town’s municipal boundaries and **diversify the Town’s economic base.”**

Land Use Element

Selected Goals & Actions

GOALS

- La Plata will maintain and enforce its plans and policies to strengthen the downtown core and maintain its small-town character.
- New development areas will reflect the principles of walkability, sustainability and environmental protection.
- La Plata will plan to develop flexible planning requirements to support anchor institutions and new/micro-economy business opportunities.

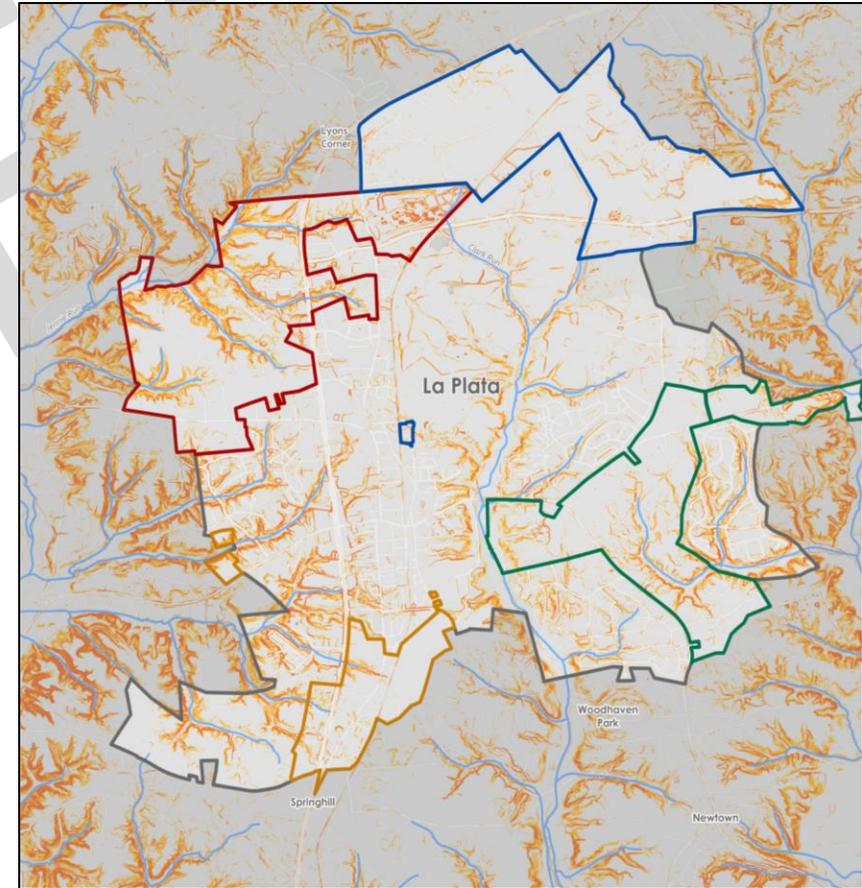
ACTIONS

- Establish a “Community and Campus Zone for Hospitals and Health Care Facilities”
 - ✓ Overlay to cover common ownership/affiliated facilities
 - ✓ Establish performance standards for landscaping, parking, signage, traffic, noise/air/light pollution.
- Ensure that zoning definitions include the concepts of “micro-manufacturing” and “makerspaces” to be permitted in commercial and mixed-use areas.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas Element

Existing Conditions & Definitions

- The Town of La Plata and surrounding potential municipal growth areas lie within the Port Tobacco River and Zekiah Swamp watersheds
 - **Greenways** are large areas of open and natural space that are protected from development
 - Areas of **steep slopes** over 15% are located within the potential municipal growth areas and present challenges that should be addressed as part of land use and development considerations.



Environmentally Sensitive Areas Element

Selected Goals & Actions

GOALS

- Protect sensitive environmental areas through resource conservation and other natural resource management tools.
- Require a high standard of environmental protection in new subdivisions through regulations that protect forest stands and mature trees, stream valleys, steep slopes and waterways.

ACTIONS

- Close gaps in the local greenway network through direct acquisition, easements and exactions during the development process.
- Make regular application for funding from MD DNR Program Open Space to secure priority greenway areas where new development is not planned.
- Prepare an environmental protection ordinance comprehensively integrates all existing and new development review requirements, including both high standards and flexibility for creative environmental protections

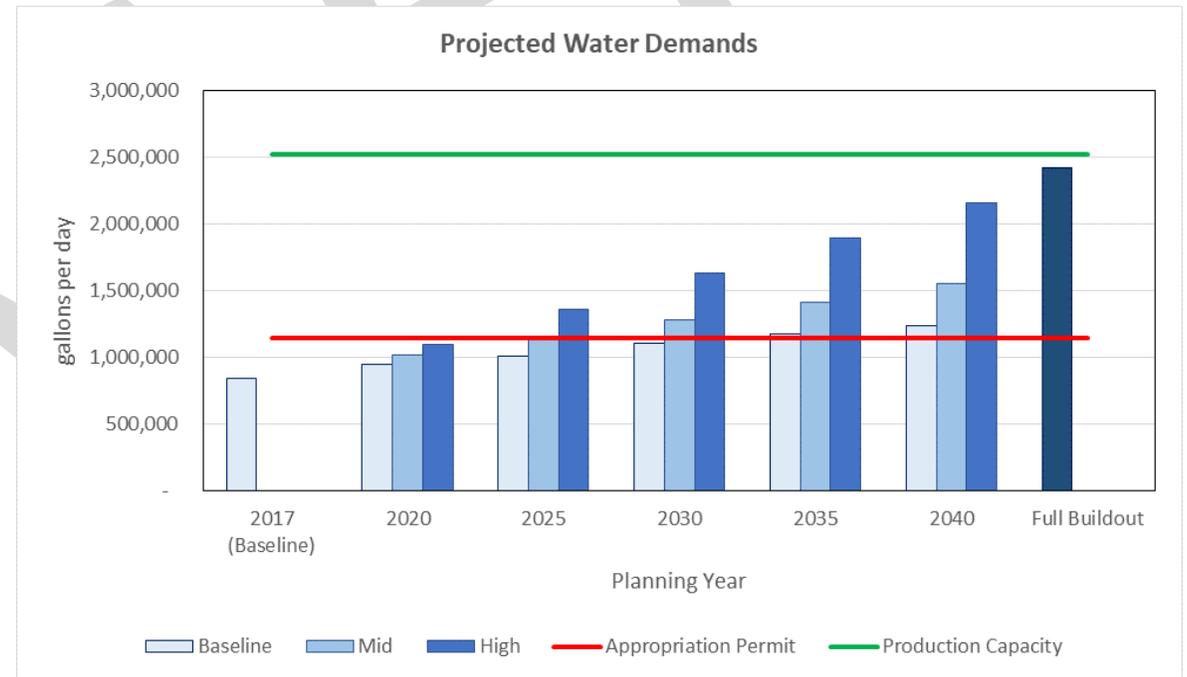
Water Resources Element

Existing Conditions & Issues for Consideration:

Drinking Water Supply

- Groundwater resources have historically provided a robust supply of high-quality water to support the entire region.
- However, they are a limited and shared resource that must be carefully managed to ensure their viability as a long-term, sustainable source of supply.
- Over pumping and over-appropriation of these aquifers has, in the past, caused problems with declining water levels, excessive drawdown, poor water quality, and reduced well production

By 2030, the Town will approach its water appropriation limit.

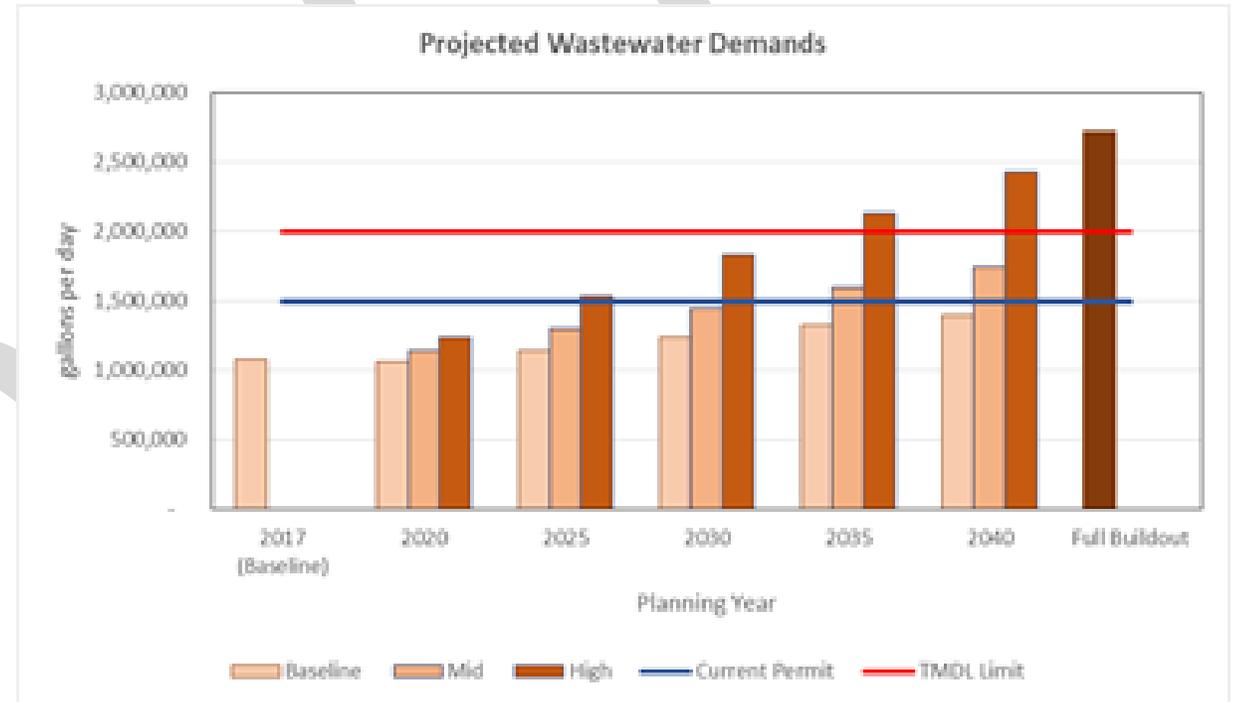


Water Resources Element

Existing Conditions & Issues for Consideration:

Waste Water

- Wastewater Plant has adequate capacity to meet baseline and mid-range growth to 2040 but exceed design capacity sometime after 2030 under high growth scenario.
- Only 15 residential properties have septic. Properties are within existing sewer service area but predate construction of collection system and were not required to hook up to public sewer.
- In the potential growth areas, it is estimated that there are approximately 492 existing septic systems – 94% of which are single family residences.



Water Resources Element

Existing Conditions & Issues for Consideration:

Storm Water

- Town began improving its regulation of stormwater management in 2010, updated in 2013 and several other actions since then.
- Town is now subject to MS4 permit and required reductions in nutrient, phosphorous and
- The current fee of \$13.25 per ERU is insufficient to fully support the operation, maintenance, capital replacement needs of the Town's stormwater system. (Rough estimate is \$22 without offset from general fund.)
- Many options for "dual purpose" improvements (parks and greenspace, tree planting, etc.)



Water Resources Element

Selected Goals & Actions

GOALS

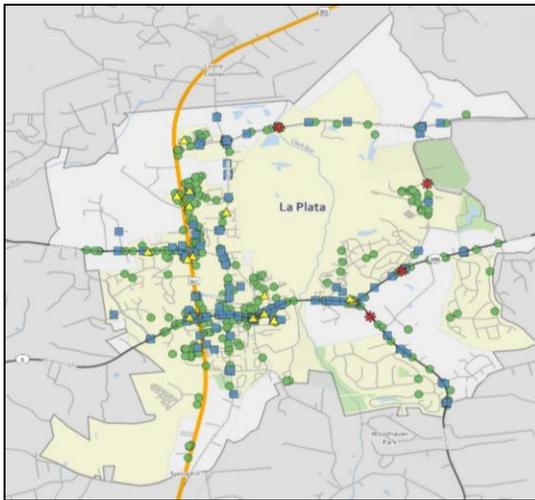
- Ensure that the future **water supply** needs of the Town can be met while preserving the long-term sustainability of shared groundwater resources.
- Plan upgrades and enhancements to the Town's **wastewater** infrastructure to ensure that growth and development can be accommodated within the Chesapeake Bay Restoration framework.
- Meet or exceed **stormwater management** goals as expressed in MS4 Restoration Plan requirements.

ACTIONS

- **Connect with other water supply systems**, such as the Town of Waldorf, to create greater opportunities for resource balancing and enhancing system redundancy.
- **Alternative disposal**, through spray irrigation, reuse, “purple pipe” or other means is also a potential long-term strategy that the Town is considering addressing wastewater capacity limitations.
- Target **fee-in-lieu revenue** to stormwater mitigation projects that **support the Town's overall watershed restoration program**.
- Identify a **sustainable source of funding for the Town's MS4 restoration plan**, including funds needed for long-term maintenance, capital replacement, and MS4 permit compliance

Transportation Element Existing Conditions & Issues for Consideration

Between 2016 and 2018, there were 1,003 reported traffic crashes within La Plata. More than 300 of these crashes resulted in involved injuries and nine were fatal.



Windshield survey indicates ample available on-street and rear of building parking throughout the town during regular business hours.

Gaps in the sidewalk infrastructure including places where worn patches of dirt demonstrate that pedestrians do traverse the area.



CSX railroad causes disjointed grid network and increases traffic congestion



Transportation Element

Existing Conditions & Issues for Consideration

The Maryland Department of Transportation **does not have any planned road projects in or around La Plata in the FY2019 – 2024 capital program**; however, north and south of La Plata are projects which may have a long-term impact on traffic and growth in the area

Crossing of railroad rights-of-way is a problem encountered by large urban and small rural communities across the country. Areas of interest in La Plata include:

- In the downtown area where existing streets end at the railroad tracks to create a full street grid.
- Access to the proposed Heritage Green development from Washington Avenue.
- In the potential growth area at the north end of La Plata where Jaybee Lane could be extended to meet Rosewick Road.

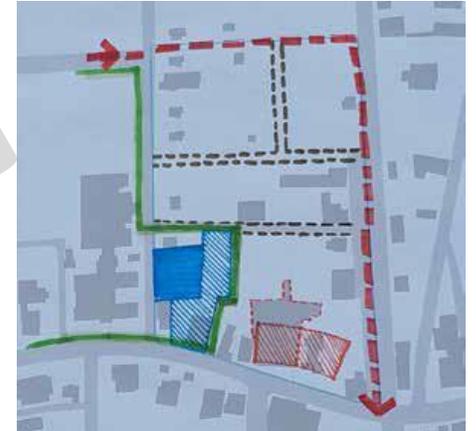
Transportation Element Selected Goal & Actions

GOALS

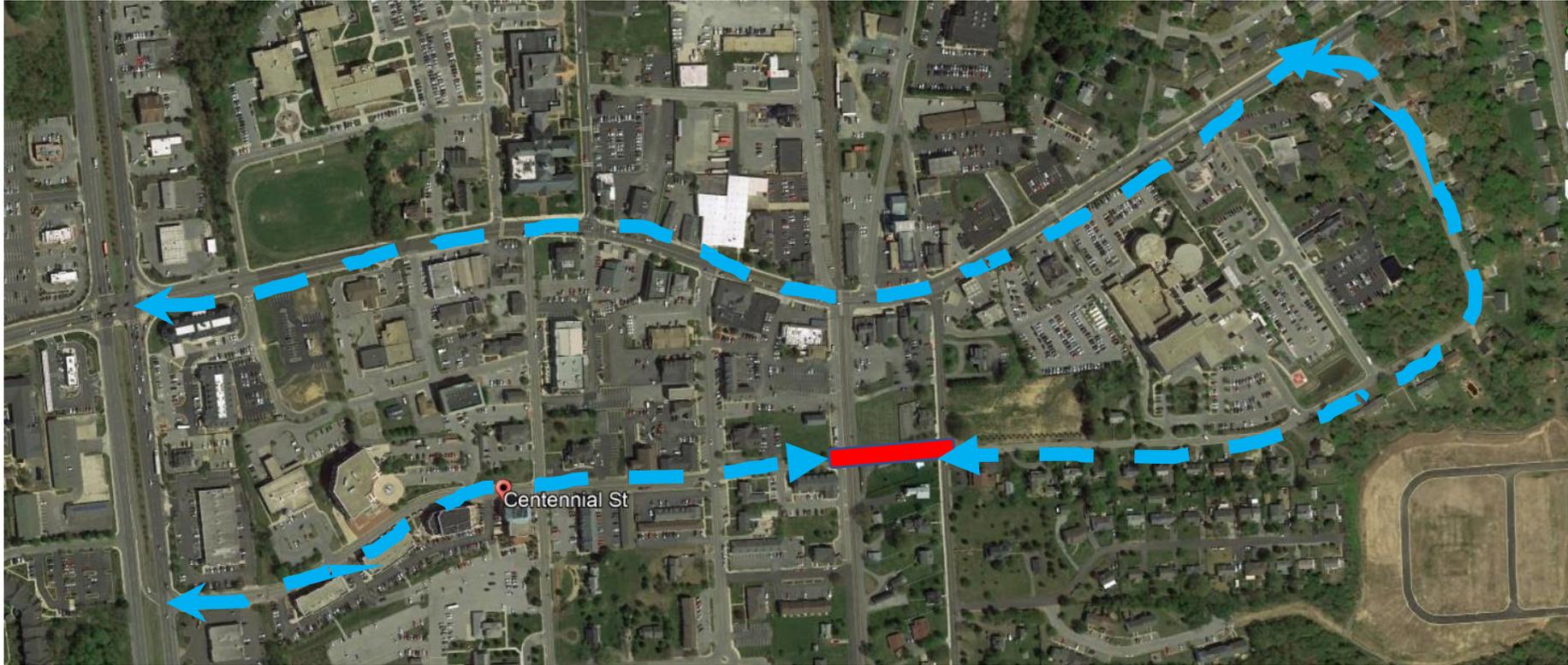
Make strategic, proactive efforts to **restore the street grid** in support of economic and community development projects and **better management of through traffic.**

ACTIONS

- **Conduct at-grade crossing study** and present to CSXT for potential new crossings; establish the necessary mitigation measures that will be required at-grade crossings to be built.
- **Advance concept development and preliminary engineering** for key transportation investments so that they are ready to go as development and redevelopment investment becomes possible
- **Acquire real estate options for future right-of-way** acquisition necessary to construct road, establish right-of-way for preferred alignments in record plats.

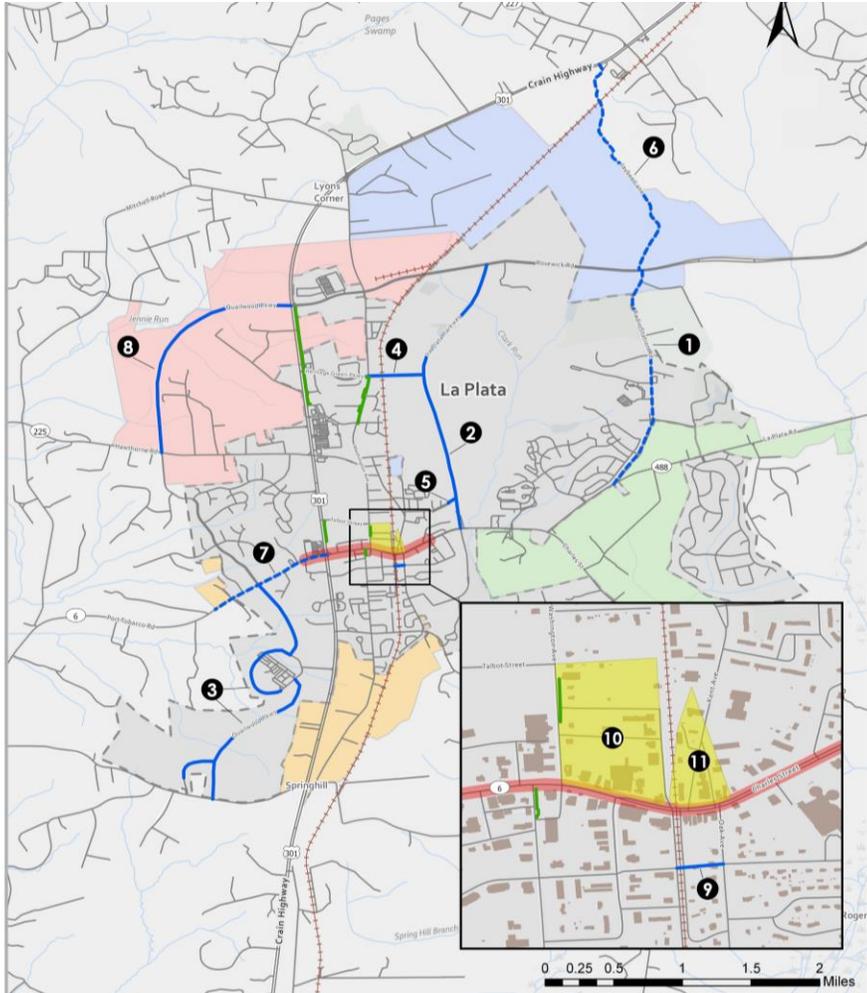


Centennial Street Connector



To accommodate east-west through traffic as well as improve access to University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center from MD 301, additional crossing of CSXT south of Charles Street is recommended.

Transportation Project Priorities



ID #	Project Description	Planning	Engineering	Construction
1	Radio Station Road: Reconstruct from MD 488 to Rosewick Road. Phase 1: Reconstruct as 4-lane boulevard; create 4-way intersection at Jaybee Lane Phase 2: Reconstruct as 4-lane parkway	C	C	C
2	Extend La Plata Parkway through Heritage Green	D	D	D
3	Quailwood Parkway South (NOTE: this project has been removed from the MGE)	D	D	D
4	Heritage Green Parkway	T	D	D
5	Caroline Drive East: extend to La Plata Parkway	T	T	T
6	Jaybee Lane: Upgrade to provide an alternative north-south route from US 301 into La Plata.	T/C	C	C
7	Charles Street Streetscape, Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Improvements	T	S	S
8	Quinwood Parkway North: Extend from MD 225 to US301 and Rosewick Road.	T/D	D	D
9	Centennial Street Connector: New crossing of Pope's Creek Branch to create full downtown loop and improve access from US 301 to Medical Center	T	T	T
10	Talbot Street Grid (La Plata Town Centre Development)	T	D/T	D/T
11	Kent & Oak Avenues: Realign to create safe pedestrian path north of Charles Street, create developable parcels and improve the view of the area from Charles Street	T	T	T
		C = County T = Town	D = Developer S = State Highway Administration	

Municipal Growth Element

Existing Conditions & Issues for Consideration

Absent some major positive economic disruption, high-end population growth is estimated at 3,500 – 4,000 through 2040. This includes infill and development of potential annexation areas.

Population Projection	
Year	Population
2010	8,753
2012	8,982
2017	9,365
2020	9,812
2025	10,470
2030	11,433
2035	12,188
2040	12,837

Factors affecting La Plata's growth:

- Development capacity in northern Charles County, closer to major employment centers in the Washington, DC suburbs.
- Road improvements such as the MD 5 interchange reconstruction at US 301 will mitigate traffic congestion to the east of La Plata making the areas somewhat more desirable from a commuting perspective.
- The strength of downtown housing markets and campaigns to attract and retain younger families in highly urbanized areas is reducing demand for suburban multi-family housing.
- The evolution of employment patterns in the federal civilian agencies, and the relocation of nearby agencies to areas outside of the Washington, DC metropolitan area will adversely affect La Plata's growth.

Municipal Growth Element Development Potential and Impact

- La Plata's **tax base is largely residential**. A growing body of empirical evidence shows that while commercial and industrial development can improve the financial well-being of a local government, residential development brings needs for services which exceeds the revenue generated.
- Ensuring that municipal growth **yields diverse land uses** should be a critical evaluation point when considering potential growth areas.
- How does new residential development support primary community/economic development goal of **strengthening downtown core?**

Municipal Growth Element Selected Goals & Actions

GOALS

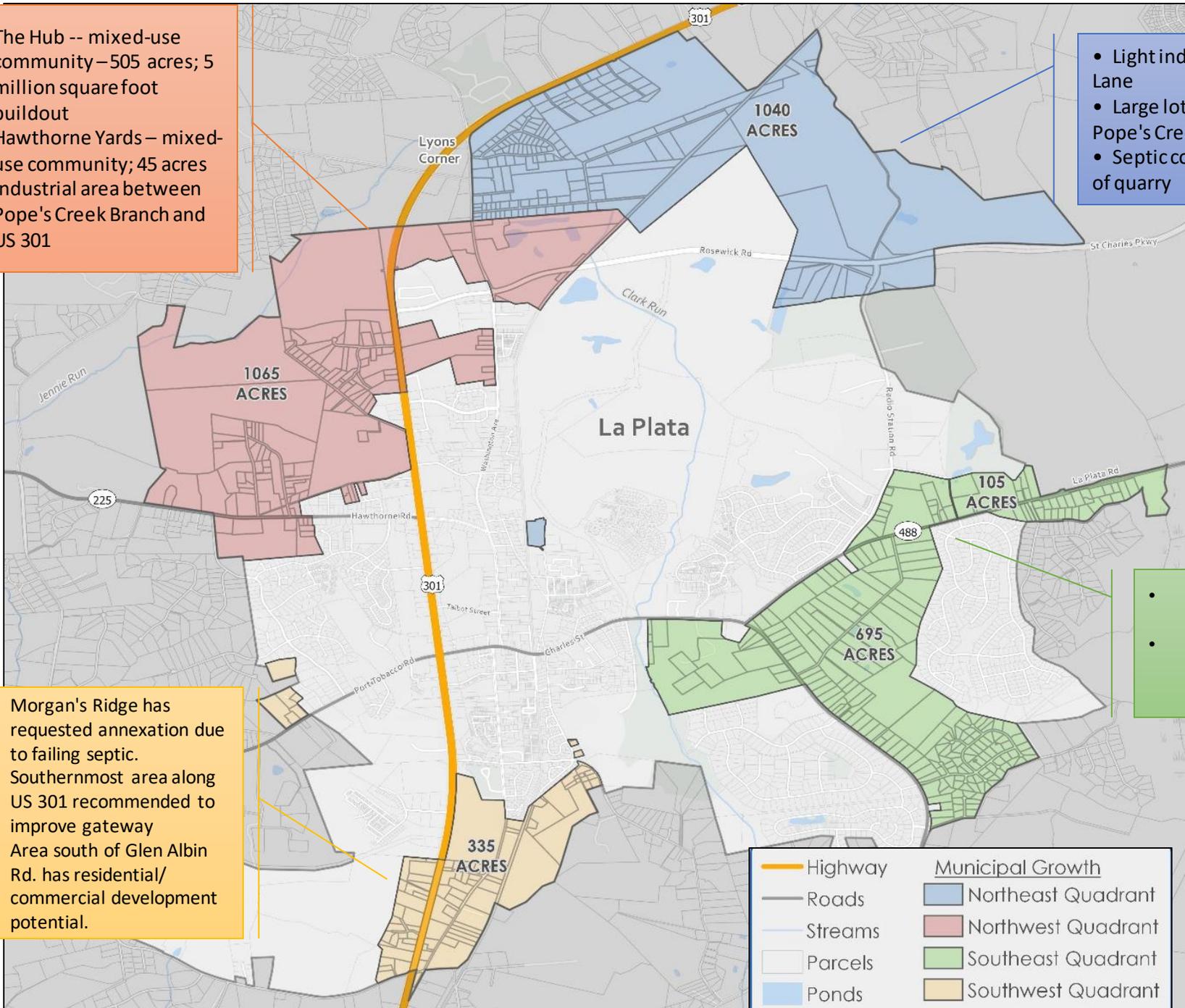
- Expand municipal boundaries when and where there is a **clear net economic and/or environmental benefit** to doing so and only when supported by adequate public facilities.
- **Improve intergovernmental coordination** with respect to annexation, development processes and public facilities.

ACTIONS

- Require that all new growth areas are connected to water and sewer service and provide or support **adequate multimodal transportation capacity**.
- Review and revise the town's school capacity policies in coordination with Charles County and the Board of Education with respect to available seats at the elementary school level.
- Review Town ordinances requiring that properties connected to the **water and sewer system must be within the town's corporate limits**.
- **Annexation fee agreement or excise tax** on new residential development which would be used for downtown improvements?

- The Hub -- mixed-use community – 505 acres; 5 million square foot buildout
- Hawthorne Yards – mixed-use community; 45 acres
- Industrial area between Pope's Creek Branch and US 301

- Light industrial along Jaybee Lane
- Large lot residential east of Pope's Creek
- Septic considerations north of quarry



- Morgan's Ridge has requested annexation due to failing septic.
- Southernmost area along US 301 recommended to improve gateway
- Area south of Glen Albin Rd. has residential/commercial development potential.

- Large lot residential in undeveloped areas
- Sewer connections to eliminate failing septic

Highway	<u>Municipal Growth</u>
Roads	Northeast Quadrant
Streams	Northwest Quadrant
Parcels	Southeast Quadrant
Ponds	Southwest Quadrant



Any Questions?

Thank You