

Contents

CHAPTER IV - MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT	1
Introduction.....	1
Past Growth Patterns	1
Residential Development Capacity by Zoning District and Transect	1
Vacant Properties	1
Underutilized Properties	2
Summary	2
Growth Scenarios.....	2
Low Growth Scenario.....	3
Baseline Growth Scenario.....	3
Summary.....	4
Funding Mechanisms.....	5
Wastewater and Water Infrastructure (WWTP upgrades, water wells, stormwater).....	5
Schools (Greensboro Elementary additions/modernizations).....	6
Parks and Recreation (North County Regional Park, trails, playgrounds)	6
Roads and Transportation (MD 313 upgrades, pedestrian/bike networks).....	6
Public Safety, Library, and Other (staffing, equipment, bilingual services).....	6
Cross-Cutting/Local Mechanisms.....	7
Annexation Plan.....	7
Rural Buffer	9

CHAPTER IV - MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT

Introduction

This Municipal Growth Element (MGE) complies with §3-112 of the Land Use Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. It includes: analysis of past growth patterns; projections of future population growth; identification of land capacity within existing corporate limits (including infill and redevelopment); anticipated future municipal growth areas outside existing limits; land needed to satisfy demand at densities consistent with long-term development policy; impacts of growth on community facilities, infrastructure, and natural features (within and adjacent to the municipality); and mechanisms for financing growth, with coordination with Caroline County through shared data, joint meetings, and alignment on infrastructure (e.g., schools, roads, wastewater).

Past Growth Patterns

Greensboro has maintained slow, stable growth as a small Eastern Shore town. From 2000 to 2010, the population rose from 1,632 to about 1,900 (about 1.5% annually), driven by infill and subdivisions (e.g., Baldwin, Greensboro Farms). Recent trends show about 0.71% annual growth from 2020–2026, reaching about 2,000 residents. Development focused on residential infill within the corporate limits, with historic fabric preserved in T-1 (pre-1950 dominance) and suburban expansion in T-3.

Residential Development Capacity by Zoning District and Transect

Residential development capacity was calculated using the Greensboro Land Development Ordinance (2018 update), which emphasizes single-family development and provides limited multifamily options. Capacities were evaluated by transect and zoning district using the Maryland Department of Planning's suggested methodology (developable land identification, density assumptions, yield factors).

Vacant Properties

Capacity by Zoning District

- R-1 (Single-Family Residential, Low/Medium Density) — Additional capacity: 80 units.
- R-2 (Single-Family and Two-Family Residential, Medium/High Density) —Additional capacity: 70 units.
- R-3 (Multiple-Family Residential, High Density) —Additional capacity: 60 units.

Capacity by Transect

- T-1 Core Urban - Additional capacity 30 units.
- T-2 Neighborhood - Additional capacity 60 units.
- T-3 Suburban - Additional capacity 120 units.

Underutilized Properties

Underutilized properties focus on developed residential parcels (mostly single-family) with excess land beyond zoning minimums (excluding environmental constraints like Critical Area and commercial/exempt parcels). Using MDP-style infill estimation (zoning density on excess developable land, conservative adjustments, minus existing units), the analysis identifies 70 parcels with 210 potential additional dwelling units (realistic via minor subdivision, ADUs, duplex conversions, or limited townhouse/multifamily additions).

Capacity By Zoning District

- R-1 (Single-Family Residential, Low/Medium Density) — Additional capacity: 80 units.
- R-2 (Single-Family and Two-Family Residential, Medium/High Density) - Additional capacity: 70 units.
- R-3 (Multiple-Family Residential, High Density) — Additional capacity: 60 units.

Capacity By Transect

- T-1 Urban Core - Additional 30 units.
- T-2 Neighborhood - Additional 60 units.
- T-3 Suburban - Additional 120 units.

Summary

Total residential development capacity on vacant and underutilized parcels in Greensboro, MD, is estimated at approximately 420 new dwelling units (conservative range), based on prior analyses aligned with Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) methodology. This residential development potential supports smart-growth infill priorities. Realization depends on market conditions, permitting, and policies (e.g., ADU facilitation). The estimate may slightly overstate if additional site constraints apply.

Growth Scenarios

The Growth Scenarios section outlines two realistic, infrastructure-constrained growth scenarios for Greensboro, Maryland, through 2050 (a 24-year planning horizon from the 2026 baseline). The Town's current population is approximately 2,000 residents (with recent estimates ranging from 1,969 in 2024 to 2,634 in some sources, reflecting modest fluctuations), 770 households, and an average household size of 2.6 persons. Both scenarios reflect orderly, conservative development that preserves Greensboro's historic, walkable small-town character and environmentally sensitive areas, while aligning with Maryland's Sustainable Growth Planning Principles and wastewater treatment limits (a realistic cap of 300 additional equivalent dwelling units without major plant upgrades or regional expansions).

Low Growth Scenario

This high-likelihood scenario (70–80% probability) assumes an annual compound growth rate of 0.5%, driven by ongoing infrastructure constraints, economic conditions, and historic preservation priorities.

- Infill in T-1 (Urban Core) and T-2 (Neighborhood) adds only 5–10 new units (slow or partial realization on underutilized residential parcels).
- Kinnamon Meadows in T-3 sees delayed or minimal progress.
- No development occurs in T-4.

Projected 2050 outcomes:

- Population: 2,254 residents (+254 from baseline).
- Households/housing units: 867 (+97 units).

Impacts

Impacts remain minimal under the Low Growth Scenario. The existing wastewater treatment plant can accommodate the modest increase through routine maintenance alone, with no need for expansions or major upgrades. Utilization of Greensboro Elementary School is projected to reach approximately 105–112% of capacity, a level that can be managed effectively through the use of portable classrooms and other temporary measures. Demand for public safety, parks, roads, library services, and other municipal facilities will rise only marginally, requiring no significant staffing or infrastructure changes. Fiscal impacts on the Town of Greensboro and the burden on Caroline County government stay low overall. Natural resources are well protected, as growth occurs primarily through infill development on existing developed parcels, avoiding conversion of floodplain areas, agricultural land, or other environmentally sensitive resources.

Baseline Growth Scenario

This medium-likelihood scenario (50–60% probability) assumes an annual compound growth rate of 1.0%, supported by moderate wastewater improvements (e.g., efficiency upgrades, phased nutrient offsets, or partial expansions by mid-2040s).

- Infill in T-1 and T-2 becomes more active, adding 10–15 new units total (from construction on vacant and/or underutilized residential parcels via minor subdivision, accessory dwelling units, or duplex conversions).
- Kinnamon Meadows in T-3 reaches substantial or full build-out, delivering 110–130 units (including 117 planned single-family homes across phases plus a 3-acre multifamily component yielding 20–25 units at effective densities of 6–9 units/acre).
- Annexations remain very limited, confined to Priority Funding Areas; T-4 remains undeveloped.

Projected 2050 outcomes:

- Population: 2,539 residents (+539 from baseline).
- Households/housing units: 977 (+207 units).

Impacts

Impacts remain manageable under the Baseline Growth Scenario with targeted, incremental investments and proactive planning. Wastewater treatment may require phased capacity additions, efficiency upgrades, or nutrient offset measures by the mid-2040s to accommodate cumulative demand, but these can be implemented without major disruptions. Utilization of Greensboro Elementary School is projected to reach approximately 112–118% of capacity, which would likely necessitate county-level classroom additions or facility modernization to maintain educational quality.

Public safety staffing is expected to grow modestly—to less than 2 officers overall—while continuing to emphasize community-oriented, diverse training approaches. Parks and recreation facilities will benefit from the development of the North County Regional Park and other regional improvements. Roads, particularly MD 313, will require incremental upgrades to enhance capacity, safety, and pedestrian and bicycle access. Library services and bilingual programs will expand in response to population growth and changing community needs.

Natural resources are safeguarded through the consistent application of clustering techniques, greenbelts, and environmentally sensitive design/low-impact development (ESD/LID) stormwater management practices, minimizing impacts on floodplains, wetlands, and other sensitive areas. Fiscal impacts on the Town of Greensboro are moderate and are largely offset by developer contributions, state and Maryland Department of the Environment grants, and appropriate user fees. The burden on Caroline County government remains moderate and is addressed through impact fees and ongoing joint planning efforts between the Town and the county.

Summary

Development Capacity

As discussed earlier, the residential development capacity of 420 dwelling units is adequate for either scenario. Capacity draws primarily from the completion of the Kinnamon Meadows Planned Unit Development (PUD) in the Suburban transect (T-3) plus modest infill on vacant and underutilized developed residential parcels in the Urban Core (T-1) and Neighborhood (T-2) transects. No growth is projected in the Rural Edge (T-4) transect.

Impacts

Under the Low Growth Scenario (0.5% annual growth), development impacts in Greensboro remain minimal and can be easily absorbed with no major investments required. Wastewater treatment continues with routine maintenance; Greensboro Elementary School utilisation reaches 105–112% of capacity (manageable via portable classrooms); and demand for public safety, parks, roads, the library, and other services increases only marginally. Fiscal burdens on the

Town and Caroline County stay low, while natural resources are protected through infill-focused growth that avoids floodplains, agricultural land, and other sensitive areas.

In the Baseline Growth Scenario (1.0% annual growth, impacts are manageable with targeted, incremental investments. Wastewater may require phased additions or efficiency upgrades by the mid-2040s; school utilization is projected to reach 112–118% of capacity, likely requiring county-level classroom additions; public safety staffing grows modestly (less than 2 officers); parks benefit from regional developments; roads like MD 313 receive incremental upgrades for pedestrian and bicycle access; and library and bilingual services expand modestly. Natural resources are safeguarded through clustering, greenbelts, and low-impact development practices. At the same time, moderate fiscal impacts on the Town are largely offset by developer fees, state grants, and user fees, with county burdens addressed through impact fees and ongoing joint planning.

Funding Mechanisms

The identified impacts in the Municipal Growth Element (MGE) for Greensboro—primarily wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) upgrades or expansions, water supply enhancements (e.g., additional wells), school facility additions or modernizations (Greensboro Elementary), public safety staffing/equipment, parks and recreation expansions (e.g., North County Regional Park trails, fields, playgrounds), road improvements (e.g., MD 313 capacity, pedestrian/bike access), library expansions (bilingual services), and stormwater/ESD/LID practices—can be funded through a mix of local, state, federal, and private sources. These align with the needs of small towns and rural areas in Caroline County and support Chesapeake Bay restoration, equity, and resilience goals.

Funding is often layered (e.g., grants covering 50–100% of costs, loans covering the balance, and developer contributions offsetting the public burden). Key sources include:

Wastewater and Water Infrastructure (WWTP upgrades, water wells, stormwater)

- Bay Restoration Fund – Wastewater Program (Maryland Department of the Environment [MDE]): Provides grants (up to 100% for eligible costs) for Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) upgrades, sewer rehabilitation, stormwater BMPs, and extensions. Prioritizes public health/water quality projects tied to Chesapeake Bay goals.
- Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund (WQRLF) and Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRLF) (MDE): Low-interest loans (often with principal forgiveness/grants for disadvantaged/small communities) for wastewater treatment, water supply improvements, and related infrastructure. Applications are typically annual (December–January) and support minor expansions or efficiency measures.
- Water Supply Assistance Grant Program (MDE): Grants for publicly owned water facilities to address health/compliance issues (e.g., new wells or aquifer enhancements).

- Federal EPA Programs: Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and Drinking Water SRF capitalization grants (via MDE) provide low-interest loans/grants; recent allocations (e.g., \$124M+ to Maryland in recent years) prioritize small/underserved communities. The Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) offers direct, low-rate loans for projects \geq \$5M (potentially involving regional partnerships). Small and Disadvantaged Communities grants target compliance needs.
- USDA Rural Development Water & Waste Disposal Loans/Grants: Direct loans (low fixed rates, up to 40 years), grants, and guarantees for rural areas (<10,000 pop.); predevelopment planning grants available. Suited for Greensboro's scale.

Schools (Greensboro Elementary additions/modernizations)

- Caroline County Educational Facilities Master Plan funding: County general funds, state Public School Construction Program (via Maryland Interagency Committee on School Construction).
- Developer Pro-Rata Contributions/Impact Fees: Caroline County imposes development impact fees (e.g., \$5,000 per dwelling unit for schools/infrastructure); revenues are dedicated to school capital needs from new growth.

Parks and Recreation (North County Regional Park, trails, playgrounds)

- Program Open Space – Local (POS-Local) (Maryland Department of Natural Resources): Grants for acquisition, development, and improvements (e.g., trails, fields, playgrounds, parking); Caroline County has received POS-Local funds for North County Regional Park phases (e.g., recent approvals for trails/overlooks/shelters). Funded by property transfer tax; requires local match.
- Local Parks and Playgrounds Infrastructure Program (DNR): Complements POS for specific improvements (e.g., ADA-accessible features, playground equipment); recent funding for Caroline County projects.
- Sustainable Maryland Action Grants: Up to \$100,000 for certified municipalities supporting sustainability/resilience projects (e.g., park enhancements tied to climate goals).

Roads and Transportation (MD 313 upgrades, pedestrian/bike networks)

- State Highway Administration (SHA) or County Transportation Funds: Potential grants/partnerships for state routes (MD 313); developer exactions for local access.

Public Safety, Library, and Other (staffing, equipment, bilingual services)

- General Local Revenues/User Fees: Town budget, utility rates, or minor developer fees for incremental needs.

- State/Federal Grants: Limited targeted sources (e.g., community development block grants or equity-focused programs for bilingual services); often bundled with broader infrastructure.

Cross-Cutting/Local Mechanisms

- Developer Pro-Rata Contributions and Impact Fees: Require developers to pay proportional shares for infrastructure impacts (e.g., EDUs for WWTP, school capacity); Caroline County uses impact fees (\$5,000/DU for schools/infrastructure); offsets public costs in both scenarios.
- Bonds and Low-Interest Financing: Town bonds backed by user fees or grants (e.g., MWIFA-linked deposits for low-interest options).

In the Low Growth Scenario, minimal impacts rely on routine maintenance/user fees, as well as small grants. Baseline Scenario needs targeted applications (e.g., Bay Restoration Fund for WWTP, POS-Local for parks) plus developer fees to keep burdens moderate. Pursuit of layered funding (state/federal grants first, then loans/developer contributions) maximizes affordability for Greensboro's small, disadvantaged community profile. Greensboro should prioritize applications to MDE/USDA/EPA and coordinate with Caroline County on county-level programs.

Annexation Plan

No specific parcels or areas are designated for annexation in this planning period, as the focus remains on utilizing vacant and underutilized land within current boundaries. Greensboro's priority is to accommodate projected population growth through infill and redevelopment of land within the corporate limits. This policy is made in consideration of, among other things, the limitations in the Greensboro WWTP.

Maryland's Smart Growth framework, established in 1997 and reinforced by subsequent legislation such as the 2009 Smart, Green, and Growing Planning Act and the 2012 Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act, prioritizes compact, efficient development to combat sprawl, preserve rural and natural lands, and optimize public infrastructure investments. Core principles include directing growth to existing communities and Priority Funding Areas (PFAs), promoting infill and redevelopment, protecting agricultural and environmental resources, and ensuring that development aligns with available services such as water, sewer, and transportation. Planning for significant growth outside Greensboro's corporate limits—such as the over 3,590-acre growth area identified in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan—runs counter to these principles for several reasons, particularly given the substantial untapped development capacity within the existing town boundaries.

Significant external expansion promotes urban sprawl by leapfrogging over serviced, underutilized land inside the Town, leading to inefficient land use and higher long-term costs for infrastructure extensions (e.g., roads, water/sewer lines, and public safety). Such expansion

contradicts Smart Growth's emphasis on concentrating development in PFAs, where Greensboro's core (T-1 Urban Core, T-2 Neighborhood, and T-3 Suburban transects) already has public utilities and walkable, mixed-use potential. With ample internal capacity for infill and redevelopment, annexing large external areas would unnecessarily convert agricultural or forested land, fragment habitats, and undermine rural preservation goals.

In addition, it ignores environmental and equity considerations central to Smart Growth. Greensboro's location in the impaired Upper Choptank River watershed requires new development to achieve "no net increase" in pollutant loads to comply with Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). External growth would exacerbate impervious surface coverage, stormwater runoff, and habitat loss, straining natural systems already at capacity. These impacts are especially problematic in a community with environmental justice concerns, where low-income and minority residents (e.g., Hispanic/Latino populations facing higher poverty) could bear disproportionate burdens from degraded water quality or flooding without corresponding benefits like improved services.

Finally, the Town's modest growth projections (0.5–1.0% annually through 2050) can be fully accommodated within corporate limits, making external planning redundant and contrary to fiscal responsibility. Smart Growth encourages "living within our means" by leveraging existing infrastructure rather than funding costly expansions that benefit few while taxing all residents. Greensboro's focus on infill aligns with state incentives such as the Bay Restoration Fund and the Program Open Space, which prioritize projects in established areas.

Limited annexation of land for economic development and job creation that benefits town residents may be considered, provided it demonstrates clear alignment with this Comprehensive Plan's vision and goals. Any proposed annexation must be consistent with the Municipal Growth Element, including the adopted Growth Tiers map, and will be evaluated based on the following priority considerations:

- Capacity of existing and planned infrastructure (water, sewer, schools, roads, public safety, parks/recreation, and stormwater management) to support the proposed development without overextending resources or requiring premature major expansions;
- Protection of sensitive areas, including streams and buffers, 100-year floodplains, habitats of rare, threatened, or endangered species, steep slopes, DNR Habitat Connectivity Network corridors, nontidal wetlands, forests, agricultural lands, groundwater resources, and areas vulnerable to climate change impacts (e.g., CRAB inundation zones, riverine flood depths, and projected sea-level rise along the Choptank River);
- Environmental justice principles, ensuring that growth does not disproportionately burden or exacerbate conditions in overburdened and underserved areas (as identified by MDEnviroScreen), and that benefits such as amenities, retrofits, green infrastructure, and equitable access to services are prioritized for vulnerable populations (low-income households, minorities, seniors, families with children, and limited English proficiency residents);
- Climate change resilience, incorporating adaptive measures such as living shorelines, elevated design standards, expanded tree canopy, stormwater BMPs, and avoidance of

high-risk flood-prone or inundation areas to minimize future vulnerabilities from increased flooding, storms, and sea-level rise;

- Consistency with the eight statewide Sustainable Growth Planning Principles, including optimization of working landscapes, protection and restoration of ecology, resilience to natural threats, and equitable engagement of diverse community voices;
- Promotion of compact, walkable, mixed-use patterns that support infill priorities, historic preservation, multimodal transportation, and economic vitality without compromising the Town's small-town Eastern Shore character or rural buffers;
- Coordination with Caroline County, including provision of the proposed annexation for county review, acceptance of comments, and meet-and-confer processes as required under Maryland Land Use Article § 3-112, with mediation available if requested; and
- Demonstration that the annexation will be revenue-neutral or positive for the Town, with appropriate financing mechanisms (e.g., developer contributions, impact fees, grants) to cover extension of services and avoid undue burden on existing residents.

Rural Buffer

Several farms and parcels of land form a rural greenbelt around Greensboro, serving as a natural growth boundary and encompassing key conservation areas that should remain a permanent feature in the landscape, generally off-limits to intensive future development (see Map *).

This rural buffer includes lands within the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area—particularly Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs)—as well as the catchment areas of Tier II streams on private lands, other protected properties (such as those under agricultural easements, Maryland Department of Natural Resources ownership, existing or proposed conservation easements), and known sensitive features including mandatory stream buffers, shoreline buffers, wetlands, and important forested areas.

Property owners in this rural buffer are strongly encouraged to participate in voluntary state and regional land conservation programs to protect these lands permanently. Options include:

- The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) farm easement purchase program, which enables rural property owners to receive compensation for placing perpetual easements on their land, restricting or prohibiting future development while allowing continued agricultural use and deriving equity without subdivision or intensive development.
- Conservation easement programs offered by the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC), Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), and Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) provide tax credits, estate-planning benefits, and other incentives for landowners who voluntarily restrict future development through easements.

Participation in these programs helps reinforce the rural buffer's role in preserving agricultural productivity, natural resources, and the rural character of the Greensboro area.

