The Historic Roots of Green Urban Policy in Baltimore County, Maryland

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Erin E. Pierce
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The Historic Roots of Green Urban Policy in Baltimore County, Maryland

by

ERIN E. PIERCE

has been approved for
the Department of Geography
and the College of Arts and Sciences by

Geoffrey L. Buckley
Associate Professor of Geography

Benjamin M. Ogles
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
ABSTRACT

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Planners have responded to the harmful consequences of sprawling development with a suite of growth management tools. Often utilized as Smart Growth policies, these efforts can include urban growth boundaries to guide growth. Many of the planning studies quantitatively evaluate boundaries at the state scale; however, few have considered the policy process at the local scale. This study explores the historic process of boundary adoption, implementation, and success in Baltimore County, Maryland. Specifically, this study utilizes the Lower Back River Neck to explore the impacts of the policy. Employing qualitative methods, this research shows that boundary adoption experienced false starts and was influenced by private planning efforts. Results indicate that the boundary’s purpose has evolved, and it is now the symbol of the county’s Smart Growth effort. This research is part of the Baltimore Ecosystem Study, which seeks to understand how cities function as ecosystems and change over time.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Geoffrey L. Buckley

Associate Professor of Geography
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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Almost 90% of metropolitan growth since 2000 has been outside the core of cities (Kotkin and Leinberger 2008). This pattern of growth has been blamed for consuming vast amounts of land and energy, adding to pollution, stretching public funds, and a host of other ills. As the status quo form of development, sprawl has contributed significantly to the 81% increase in average vehicle miles traveled since 1980 (Federal Highway Administration 2000). Furthermore, to connect sprawl and single-use zones the nation paves an area equal to the size of the state of Delaware each year (Duany et al. 2000). Nationally, almost 3.5 million acres of open space were lost to sprawling development between 1990 and 2000 - an area larger than Connecticut (McDonald et al. 2010). Some analysts have even held the sprawling form of modern development partially responsible for the current housing and financial crisis, as many over-extended, suburban dwellers defaulted on subprime mortgage loans (Leinberger 2008). Low-density, suburban sprawl may be the dominate pattern of growth in the U.S., but it is also the least sustainable form (Newman and Kenworthy 2000).

In Maryland, Baltimore County has struggled with this pattern of growth. Like many other cities and counties across the country, it has experimented with a number of Smart Growth planning initiatives in recent years. Since these policies strive to establish compact developments, viable communities, and achieve environmental justice and the conservation of natural resources, they are often considered “green,” or environmentally-minded initiatives.
Through Smart Growth efforts the county has preserved over 55,000 acres of productive farm and forestlands (Baltimore County 2010). The county’s Green Renaissance initiative has sparked diverse efforts including subsidized taxes for new development that meet the U.S. Green Building Council’s environmental certification standards. It has also resulted in over 9,200 new trees in the county, as well as the Growing Home Campaign which provides discounted trees for homeowners (Smith 2008). Started in 2003 to reduce pressure from sprawl development, the Renaissance Redevelopment Initiative provides financial incentives to private developers who collaborate with community members to focus revitalization efforts in established urban areas. This initiative produced 196 new energy efficient and affordable homes, townhouses, and apartments in the Renaissance Square development in the Essex community. Baltimore County’s success with Smart Growth planning efforts has garnered accolades from state and national planning organizations, government associations, and universities (Outen 2007). The Smart Growth advocate and watchdog group, 1000 Friends of Maryland, found Baltimore County would produce the least amount of sprawl in the state by 2020 thanks to its success with Smart Growth initiatives and commitment to guiding growth (1000 Friends of Maryland 2001). Clearly, Baltimore County is a model of Smart Growth planning success.

The county maintains that it was practicing green planning and Smart Growth long before these terms became fashionable (Outen 2010). One of the county’s earliest initiatives was establishing an urban growth boundary in 1967 to restrict sprawl. One of the first in the nation, the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line (URDL) has resulted in almost
90% of the population living on just one third of the county land area (Baltimore County Office of Planning 2000). The county considers this tool to be one of its fundamental planning achievements - one which laid the foundation for its later Smart Growth success (Baltimore County Office of Planning 2000; Outen 2007; Outen 2010). Indeed, Baltimore County’s success guiding growth with a boundary may well serve as a useful template for other places looking to adopt an alternative to sprawl.

1.2 Research Area

Baltimore County has been described as the wrench to Baltimore’s bolt, the Golden Horseshoe, and a crab’s claw surrounding the city. Whatever the metaphor there is no denying that the county encapsulates the city (Figure 1). This proximity to the city line resulted in the post-war suburbanization of the county which now boasts a greater population than the city itself. While portions of the county close to the city are typical of post-war suburbs, other portions of the county exhibit a diversity of rural uses. The northern portion of the county is characterized by agricultural fields, stands of forest, and a patchwork of horse farms. Historically, the coastal peninsulas or “necks” have housed intensive war-time industries, residences, and coastal recreation areas.

The county government consists of an elected County Executive and a County Council. There are no incorporated places or townships within the county. Instead, seven election districts divide the county and guide the selection of the Executive and Council. This system of local government means that planning policies are devised at the county level and managed uniformly across this scale. Historically, the Office of
Figure 1. A map of Baltimore County and peninsulas. Urban places are areas of dense population and are designated by the Census, not the county.
Planning and Zoning (OPZ) has the responsibility of formulating the plans and policies that guide development. Unincorporated communities, like Towson or Essex, do not adopt their own planning schemes. Thus, this scale of local government is appropriate for the majority of this research. However, this research also considers the less defined scale of the unincorporated community to better illustrate the historic pressures of sprawl and changing attitudes of OPZ.

The Lower Back River Neck community provides this vantage point. Over the years, it experienced a variety of industrial and residential development pressures, complicated by a rural history, environmental heritage, and the physical challenges of sewering the coastal plain. The peninsula or “neck” is located in the southeastern portion of Baltimore County in the upper Chesapeake Bay, 12 miles east of Baltimore City. The peninsula is bounded on the southwest by the Back River, on the northeast by the Middle River, and to the south by Hawk Cove and the Chesapeake Bay. Politically, the peninsula is incorporated in the Sixth County Council and is divided in two by the URDL. Thus the northern portion is designated for urban land use while the southern portion is set aside for rural land use (URS 2005). While the lower third of the peninsula is checkered with residential and commercial waterfront properties, the area is nevertheless classified as rural. Of this rural area 3,819 acres have been designated part of a Coastal Rural Legacy Area, a Smart Growth effort designed to preserve large blocks of open space with significant ecological value (URS 2005).

As part of the Baltimore metropolitan area, Baltimore County is part of the Baltimore Ecosystem Study (BES). This urban Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER)
site seeks to understand how the city and urban area function as an ecological system. The LTER recognizes that humans have an integral role in the urban system, and it is particularly interested in understanding how its ecology has changed over time. OPZ planners have influenced the physical structure of the county, and the related ecological system. This research considers this historic process and contributes to our understanding of the social role and influence of humans in the system.

1.3 Research Questions

The purpose of this project, which is supported by the National Science Foundation’s Long-Term Ecological Research Baltimore Ecosystem Study, is to explore the historical planning process experienced by Baltimore County. Particularly, it explores the transition from accommodating sprawling growth to guiding that growth with the 1967 URDL. This research will utilize Baltimore County’s Lower Back River Neck peninsula (LBRN) community as a vantage point for these policy changes. This study adds to the planning literature surrounding urban sprawl, smart growth, and containment policies at the local scale of government. With these goals in mind, this research will address the following questions:

1) How did the concept of growth containment policy evolve in Baltimore County, and what was its impetus?

2) How did the 1967 URDL policy interact or contrast with previous plans to accommodate growth, particularly for the LBRN area?
3) Who were some of the key actors in the URDL adoption process and what were their roles regarding this policy?

4) What can other places learn from Baltimore County’s experience with an urban growth boundary?

1.4 Methodology and Data

Planning regulations dictate where certain kinds of development can take place, stipulate the structural densities and heights, and even demand a specific type of architecture in development. Dierwechter (2008) describes planning as:

A complex, messy, emotional system with many moving parts embedded deeply in the internally conflicted state apparatus, planning broadly understood …involves the public regulation of privately owned land in pursuit of often bitterly contested goals that specify the preferred physical nature and social function of a discretely defined place (Dierwechter 2008, 47).

Thus, planning decisions and ensuing policies, like growth boundaries, affect the way in which citizens interact, move through, and reside within urban places. In short, they dictate the city experience. Planning decisions and resulting regulations are not static, objective policies created in a vacuum (Jacobs and Manzi 1996). Drawing on a post-structural framework, this research considers the planning process and its products (like plans and tools) to be similar to any other human creation in that they are negotiated within a social, political, and even environmental context. As Jenkins (2006) points out in his historic examination of Parisian urban planning:

…plans can only be realized when the political, economic and administrative conditions exist to make them possible. This implication means that there is as much potential for them to remain unrealized as there is for them to be passed (Jenkins 2006, 347).
Realized plans must always contend with decisions made in the past. Like a palimpsest that is never completely wiped clear, the urban landscape is the physical manifestation of past planning policy decisions. Thus, to vision an alternative future, planners must contend with the conflicts, tensions, and possible limitations derived from past planning efforts.

Baltimore County, Maryland is an example of one such palimpsest. The county has struggled to provide progressive directions for growth since its inception of local planning powers in the 1940s. The aim of this research is to illuminate the historic planning process as it relates to the development of the URDL. Because the goal of this project is to describe and interpret the historical policy experience in Baltimore County, this research will employ qualitative methods to answer the four research questions. This naturalistic approach is fitting for research designed to identify structures and processes, and question the ways in which they are constructed, maintained, resisted, and negotiated (Hay 2000).

To answer the four research questions, primary data will be collected through archival research of historic planning documents as well as semi-structured interviews with actors engaged in the Baltimore County planning process. A historic approach to archival sources is of primary importance to this research, as it offers a means to answer questions about the recent past that are not recoverable by other techniques (Hay 2000). Semi-structured interviews will supplement the archival data. They will allow for triangulation of data from different sources to produce a rigorous study.
For Cole Harris (2001), archival research methods cannot be contained within a single methodology, as any research question pursued in the archives will likely produce a variety of relevant textual, cartographic, statistical, and pictorial data. For Harris, more relevant data exist than does the time to interpret them. The researcher must “steer” a discerning course – picking and choosing data relevant to the research question, while also remaining open to the possibilities created by a new archival find (Harris 2001). To negotiate the archives for this study, the researcher was guided by the boundaries of the research questions, a familiarity with secondary planning literatures, and the filter of her own experience.

To explore Baltimore County’s process of containment policy adoption, implementation, and modification this research explored primary planning documents at the Maryland Room of the Pratt Free Library in Baltimore City, as it contains an extensive selection of planning publications from the Baltimore County Office of Planning, as well as from state and regional planning bodies. Additional primary documents were sourced from the Maryland State Archives, the Maryland Historical Society, and the Legislative Reference Library at City Hall in Baltimore. Primary documents included, state and local technical reports, development maps, The Sun and local weekly newspaper articles, meeting minutes, as well as historic master planning documents associated with the URDL planning actions.

While the researcher spent four non-consecutive weeks at the various archival sites, the majority of data analysis was conducted off-site at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. Dividing the archival fieldwork into non-consecutive weeks allowed the researcher
to conduct basic data analysis that focused successive trips to the archives. Employing qualitative methods, the data were evaluated and organized through the coding process (Cope 2000). Open codes were used to identify basic information (who, what, where, when), while focused codes were applied to reflect themes and issues important to the researcher and the research questions. The nature and volume of the archival data sources challenged the researcher to devise a comprehensive coding system to guide analysis. While some line-by-line, open coding was useful for identifying actors, issues, and opinions in short newspaper articles, it was less helpful for master plans composed of rich cartographic, statistical, textual, and pictorial information. Thus, open codes were used selectively and focused codes were more generally applied to the data. Focused codes were reduced and organized into an axial framework. This hierarchical framework functioned much like an outline and informed the structure of the results and discussion in Chapters Three and Four.

The themes that emerged through archival data were verified and further informed through semi-structured interviews. Participants were identified through the relevant planning literature as well as through a snowball sampling from contacts at the county planning office. They included Donald “Don” Outen, and J. John “Jack” Dillon. Don Outen is a Natural Resource Manager for the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management, and previously worked in

\footnote{For ease of identification among hundreds of pages of primary documents, focused codes were color coded and physically organized relevant documents into separate folders. Focused codes included themes of Smart Growth, Public Utilities, and Methods of Resistance. These themes informed the axial framework. The physicality of this system was beneficial since the majority of the data were pieces of paper conducive to physical organization. This coding system presented challenges when one document contained multiple focused codes. Unable to be in two folders at once, a source with multiple focused codes was simply included in one folder but had a proxy “pointer” in another folder.}
Maryland land use planning and environmental management at the state, regional, and county levels. Before his retirement, Jack Dillon had many professional roles within Baltimore County. Beginning in the early 1960s, he assisted Public Works and the Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ) as a planner. In the 1970s he helped to draft five important Rural Conservation zones for the county. From 1996 to 2004 Dillon served as the Director of the Valley Planning Council, an active and historically influential community land conservation organization. Phone interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and coded for analysis. As with the archival data, focused codes identifying major themes were applied to the data, and these codes were inserted into the axial framework.

Unlike much of the research surrounding urban growth boundaries and other sprawl-curbing policies, this research is not an attempt to quantitatively evaluate the failures and successes of policy implementation. By examining primary planning documents and conducting interviews with actors in the historic planning process, this research seeks to understand how the concept of containment materialized in Baltimore County and the evolution of that role over time. Framed by a historical approach, this research is a qualitative supplement to common evaluation literature. Understanding the qualitative processes at work in Baltimore County can inform future planning and Smart Growth efforts at the local scale of government.
1.5 Chapter Outline

In order to answer these research questions, this research is presented in multiple chapters. This chapter attempts to provide the reader with a basic understanding of the Baltimore County and LBRN areas. Chapter Two presents a literature review of research that is pertinent to the study of growth management policies. Specifically it addresses research on sprawl, Smart Growth, growth management tools including urban growth boundaries, and scales of planning.

Chapter Three provides the results and analysis to answer the first research question. It accomplishes this by considering several early state and regional containment efforts as well as the dynamic population and economic characteristics of the region in the post-war era. These data are necessary to give the reader a foundation for understanding the subsequent chapter on planning efforts. It also reviews the early master planning efforts to accommodate growth in the county, specifically on the LBRN peninsula. These efforts are important to provide contrast with the later URDL effort to contain growth.

Chapter Four provides data and analysis necessary to answer the second and third research questions. It continues the pattern begun in the previous chapter by chronologically exploring the county’s planning efforts. It explores the influence of private planning efforts in the county before discussing the implementation of the URDL in 1967. It follows the modification of the URDL with subsequent master planning and zoning efforts before discussing the benefits and challenges of this tool in the
contemporary policy landscape. Chapter Four concludes with speculations for the future of the URDL policy.

Chapter Five briefly summarizes the responses to the first three research questions. This chapter compares the Baltimore County experience of urban growth boundaries with the topical literature and suggests the need to modify the UGB discussion to include elements of the historic process experienced in Baltimore County. It presents a synthesis of the data presented in the previous chapters to consider how the Baltimore County experience with an urban growth boundary might be a model for others.
CHAPTER TWO

2.1 The Problems with Sprawl

People have been seeking open living space since the ancient Romans decided that *suburbium* was anything outside of the city walls (Bruegmann 2005). In the United States the first suburban explosion took place in the late 1800s. While this period produced new growth it was not the isolated and scattered, automobile-dependent projects that characterize our modern sprawl. Growing private wealth fueled by the industrial revolution lead the wealthy to search for salubrious neighborhoods outside of the crowded and dirty manufacturing portions of the city. This period of burgeoning personal wealth and mobility coincided with the movement that sought to promote bucolic landscapes as a solution to the social and environmental ills of the inner city. Landscape architects, or self-titled “landscape improvers,” like Fredrick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, unrolled detailed plans for vast landscape parks on the fringes of cities. They correctly predicted that these areas would be engulfed in future development and that only preemptive park planning would secure large swaths of land for later future suburban dwellers. Olmsted’s pastoral ideals were far-reaching. His designs ranged from Central Park in Manhattan to the magnificent private Biltmore Estate in North Carolina (McHarg and Steiner 1998).

In some cities the working middle classes immigrated into suburban developments that clustered around railroad and street car lines. Like an orderly string of pearls, these developments allowed an escape from the city but also provided access to
work (Bruegmann 2005). Chicago’s Lake Forest, Riverside, and Kenilworth suburbs are prime examples of early bedroom communities as they were designed to hug the Chicago Burlington & Quincy Railroad. Company-owned and rigorously planned by professionals including Olmsted, these rail and streetcar suburbs created a larger spatial division between work and home for some residents in the late 19th century (Kane and Bell 1985). Company boosters described Kenilworth as a place “admirably suited to the wants of the business and professional man…[There are] no manufacturing plants, no unsightly buildings…to mar its natural beauty” (Harris 1994, 1). The upper-middle class and the wealthiest residents often retreated furthest from the city center to large exurban country homes and estates (Bruegmann 2005).

While elongated city growth in the late 19th century was a precursor to what was to come in the post-war era, it has little in common with the later 20th century suburban explosion in terms of design. In fact, the 19th century transport-oriented, and green-space preserving designs from landscape architects like Olmsted arguably have more in common with the present planning and design theories of Smart Growth and New Urbanism than with the low density, car-dominated growth which appeared after the Second World War. To better understand this temporal difference, this chapter turns to the causes and consequences of the 20th century form of development known as sprawl.

While Americans continued to suburbanize in the 1920s and 30s with the help of Henry Ford’s cars and influential five-dollar a day wages, the years following the Second World War saw the second explosion of major suburban development. This growth was spurred by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veterans Administration (VA)
loan program which provided low rate mortgages for over 11 million new single family homes (Duany et al. 2000). The nature of these programs discouraged renovation of existing housing within cities, as the new subsidized construction was vastly less expensive. The 1956 Federal Interstate Highway Act subsidized the expansion of the nation’s highway system, established the new interstate system, and facilitated development far beyond center cities (Burchell et al. 1998).

With subsidized mortgage payments lower than rent for a city apartment, and mortgage interest deductible under new federal income tax rules, the suburbs became a rational choice for families and young couples (Kunstler 1993). Residents of new suburban areas expected to find good, safe, affordable places to raise children (Appleton 1994). What they received for their minimal financial investments were well packaged homes produced from prefabricated components courtesy of merchant developers like William Levitt. Levitt’s streamlined system of production birthed 150 new homes per day in his quintessential post-war development of Levittown, New York (Kunstler 1993). Homes were brimming with amenities including steel kitchen cabinets, brand name washers, GE refrigerators, electric ranges, and wide, green lawns.

While a successful and marketable product, suburban development had its shortcomings. Unlike the planned streetcar suburbs of the 19th century, the post-war suburbs were built to meet the needs of the automobile, not the pedestrian. Single-use zoning created “pods” of separate land uses which were designed to be navigated from the front seat of a car. Streets became wider to accommodate faster driving and easier turning. Formal street tree planting was even discouraged so as not to increase the
likelihood of collisions with reckless motorists (Kunstler 1993). Federal subsidies for single family homes and exclusive zoning meant that compact corner stores could not set up shop in new neighborhoods (Duany et al. 2000). Retail was forced to occupy specific areas spatially divided from customers by highways, parking lots, water retention ditches, and other code requirements. Adjacency and accessibility became very distinct in post-war suburbs, as spatially close destinations are contrived to be distant in suburbia (Duany et al. 2000).

Post-war suburban sprawl was no accident. Subsidized highway systems coupled with financial incentives for low-cost mortgages attracted people and their automobiles to the suburbs, leaving the center cities and mass transportation systems to crumble. This conscious federal investment has aptly lead some to label suburban sprawl as the largest public works project in the history of the world (Kunstler 1993).

While professional planners and academics agree that the last half century of urban growth in the United States has been dominated by suburban sprawl, they have been unable to reach consensus regarding a single definition of the term. Urban historian Kenneth Jackson (1987) has noted that American places have been christened “suburban” based on a dizzying variety of attributes including economic relationships, density, commuting patterns, building type, even the vague “way of life.” Simply put, there are no overarching rules to define suburban sprawl. While likely frustrating for purists and quantitative die-hards, the diversity of sprawling suburban form and instance can be oddly intriguing. While there is likely no welcome mat, most of us know when we have
arrived in such places. Jackson (1987, 6) states that most of us recognize that “…affluent and middle-class Americans live in suburban areas that are far from their work places, in homes that they own, and in the center of yards that by urban standards elsewhere are enormous.”

For the purpose of this research, suburban sprawl can be defined as very low-density residential and non-residential development which leads to a dominance of movement by use of private automobile (Downs 1998; Carruthers 2003). This car dependency causes sprawl to occur in areas along major thoroughfares at the fringe of metropolitan areas (Burchell and Mukherji 2003). Suburban sprawl is also unbounded, in that it has unlimited outward expansion and can leap-frog established developments to enter cheaper outlying, undeveloped areas (Downs 1998; Burchell and Mukherji 2003). This type of development is often unplanned and unregulated due to its spatial location just outside of incorporated urban districts (Downs 1998; Carruthers 2003). Clearly, for local governments looking to regulate and guide development along the lines of a comprehensive plan, suburban sprawl is akin to a rapid and destructive cancer.

Definitions aside, it is useful to question the appeal of sprawling development. Besides our history with federal policies, which spurred post-war sprawl and set the precedent in development for decades to follow, why do we voluntarily sprawl?

Economically speaking, simply supporting sprawling developments with ever expanding

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33 Alternatively, it could be written that we know when we have arrived in such “placeless” places like the suburbs. Geographers often define place as a segment of space in which identity is constituted. Some argue that the post-industrial homogenization of landscape (e.g. sprawling strip malls and single-family subdivisions) has reduced the diversity of place identities, and created inauthentic, ubiquitous places in their stead. See Arefi, M. (1999). "Non-place and Placelessness as Narratives of Loss: Rethinking the Notion of Place." *Journal of Urban Design* 4(2): 179.
sewers, roads, bridges, parking lots, and services created hundreds of thousands of jobs for laborer and engineer alike (Kunstler 1993). Sprawl was and still is big business. Aside from the creation of jobs, most people simply like living in suburban developments. Modern arguments that support sprawl maintain that low-density lifestyles are attractive to the majority of metropolitan citizens (Downs 1998; Myers and Gearin 2001). More private space associated with larger homes and yards continues to be a popular selling point for modern sprawl. In contrast to many urban residents, suburban dwellers often have easy access to beneficial park and recreation spaces at home as well as in the surrounding countryside (Downs 1998; Wolch et al. 2005). While space and access to the outdoors are important, the total price tag is still the main determinant of sprawl’s success. Land outside of incorporated urban areas is often comparatively free from restrictive regulations and thus inexpensive for developers and more affordable for homebuyers (Carruthers 2003). Personal gains from sprawling suburban living also include a variety of places to work and live, the spatial separation from inner-city poverty and crime, and a strong influence on local government (Downs 1999). Thus, “cheap” and “large” can express the attributes of the common McDonald’s meal as well as those common to McMansion-style suburban development.

Nutritionists and planners could also add “unhealthy” to the list. While suburban development may be attractive, it is increasingly viewed as a significant and expanding problem. The low-density, car-dependant nature of this type of development involves a number of economic and social costs. With regard to transportation costs, critics proclaim that the negative impacts of sprawl outnumber the positive. Sprawl also results
in higher costs for public infrastructure and services. Low density development requires roadways, sewer lines, and other types of public infrastructure to stretch for long distances in the suburbs. This increasing distance also results in increased costs to public services, like trash removal and police protection in that area (Carruthers and Ulfarsson 2003). It is argued that sprawling development fosters residential segregation and contributes to city fiscal woes, as tax-payers remove themselves to the politically separate suburbs (Burchell et al. 1998). Ewing et al. (2003) suggest that residents of suburban counties walk less and weigh more than people living in more compact communities. They attribute these disturbing findings in part to the automobile dependency associated with living in an area dominated by sprawl. Even though the majority of people prefer low-density living, critics have attacked sprawl for creating ugly, impersonal, unhealthy, and uninspiring surroundings scaled to cars instead of people (Kunstler 1993).

Regarding the consumption of natural resources, sprawl’s appetite is insatiable. The nature of low-density development means that sprawl requires significant tracts of land. Eighty percent of new homes since 1994 have been suburban and more than half of those lots have been ten acres or more (Speth 2008). Kahn (2000) reveals that a homeowner in the city making $50,000 per year had an average lot size of 7.8 thousand square feet (less than a quarter of an acre), while their income equivalent in the suburbs has an average lot size of 12.33 thousand square feet. He points out that the gap between city and suburb land consumption varies among cities, where older cities like Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia see a larger discrepancy in land consumption than newer cities like Houston and Miami. Thus, while there are geographic differences in land
consumption related to the age and structure of the city, in all of these cases suburbanites consume more land than their urban counterparts.

Building at the fringe of urban areas entails changes in land use. One of the oft-cited environmental impacts of sprawl is loss of farmland, its agricultural products, and the associated open space that farms provide (Johnson 2001). Not only are prime agricultural lands removed from production during development, but farms adjacent to sprawling development incur intense development pressures as farmers can obtain high prices for their land when sprawl is already next door (Burchell et al. 1998). For states like Illinois, Indiana, Washington, and Pennsylvania evidence suggests that population growth reduces farmland (Kahn 2000). Numerous local and state policy initiatives, coupled with non-profits like American Farmland Trust are playing a role in sprawl containment specifically for farmland preservation (Burchell et al. 1998; Kahn 2000; Johnson 2001).

Continuing the notion that sprawl requires vast inputs of land area, is the allegation that more fragile or environmentally significant lands are destroyed by sprawl than by more compact settlement patterns. Since sprawling development is unplanned, there is a greater chance that fragile lands will be converted to residential uses. Since colonial times, the continental U.S. has lost 110 million acres of wetlands, or 55% of total inventory (Dahl 1990). While most of this loss is attributed to early agricultural conversion, more recent losses can be traced to development. For example, 20% of Michigan’s forested, wetland, and steeply sloped areas were lost to development just between 1970 and 1990 (Burchell et al. 1998). Proponents of more compact
development have illustrated that planned and more compact development could reduce consumption of fragile environmental lands by almost one-fifth, thus protecting forests, wetlands, and the multitude of beneficial ecological services they provide (Burchell et al. 1998).

Automobile dependence is one of the most visually obvious elements of sprawling development. It is also one of the most environmentally destructive since the number of miles driven is an important indicator of resource consumption. Personal automobiles require vast amounts of gasoline and result in the emission of climate-changing greenhouse gasses like carbon dioxide. Automobiles also introduce planning issues like traffic congestion (Ewing 1997). In 1996 transportation accounted for 33% of carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion. Of that, over 60% of the emissions resulted directly from gasoline consumption for personal vehicle use (EPA 2000). While proponents of sprawl sometimes claim shorter commuting times, sprawl causes residents to log more vehicle miles per year and make more trips than traditional development (Burchell et al. 1998). Transportation studies have shown that central city residents drive an average of 60% fewer miles than their suburban neighbors, a likely result of compact, walkable cities, public transportation, and lower income levels (Kahn 2000). As with farmland loss, there is a similar geographic component to miles driven. However, in younger western cities that often lack the public transit infrastructure, city and suburb are blurred and city residents drive only 17% less than their suburban counterparts (Kahn 2000).
Single family homes on low-density lots require significant energy inputs to heat and cool. Even the unassuming suburban lawn demands vast water and chemical inputs (Robbins and Sharp 2003). Increasing incomes and cheap suburban land have produced homes in terms of square feet per person unseen in other societies (Duany et al. 2000). As the bulk of a house grows, so do the utility bills. This increasing demand has significant environmental impacts associated with the way that Americans choose to light, heat and cool their homes; namely through cheap and heavily polluting sources of coal. Since 1970 average house size has ballooned 50% and electricity consumption per person has increased over 70% (Speth 2008). The current model of suburban home, commonly tagged the “McMansion” (Nasar et al. 2007), sits at the center of a small plot, commonly lacks sidewalks, and is architecturally typified by a variety of window sizes and increasingly complex roof lines (Duany et al. 2000). Even the open space around these homes that suburban developers are required to preserve is residual, unused, often tree-less, and does little to satisfy any residential need for nature or facilitate outdoor recreation. For many critics of this type of development modern McMansion sprawl and its intensive use of resources has come to symbolize the troubling priorities of our time.

2.2 Land Use Controls, Smart Growth, and the American Scale of Planning

Early land use controls, and later, planning and management schemes, developed across the nation in response to the economic, social, aesthetic, and environmental problems associated with growing urban places. Historically, early forms of land use control appeared at the city or local level, as individual states granted police powers to
local governments for the purpose of public health and safety (Cullingworth 1993). These were primarily zoning and subdivision controls which are collectively known as the “traditional model.” While this traditional model dictates land use types, and the related built urban form, it has temporal weaknesses (Kelly 2004). For the most part, zoning can predict where and how a place will develop but gives no clue as to the when or cost of that development. Early growth management programs, initially adopted due to the temporal pressures of rapid post-war growth and later by the environmental movement, filled this void by focusing on the timing and cost of development.

The nation experienced a resurgence of interest in land use policy with the emergence of the modern environmental movement (DeGrove 1984). Spurred by the work of authors like Rachel Carson, who revealed the harmful consequences of synthetic pesticides, the environmental movement influenced a wave of national environmental policies like the federal Clean Air Act of 1963 and the Clean Water Act of 1972. As science helped to reveal the environmental degradation of natural resources, urban planners, politicians, and citizens alike began to question public land use policies. Urban sprawl, supported in some respect by zoning’s stipulation of separate land uses, had created the vast suburbs where single family homes commanded large footprints and consumed even larger amounts of electricity, water, and fossil fuels (Duany et al. 2000). Vast changes in this system of urban living would be needed to mitigate environmental impacts and create more environmentally and socially sustainable places to live. Land use management would have to play a vital role in this new endeavor.
While growth management concepts and policies did not appear in widespread planning and legal literature until the beginning of the 1970s, and were not commonly practiced even up until the 1990s, some communities adopted growth management programs in the 1960s (Kelly 2004). The 1966 adoption of a phased growth plan in Ramapo, New York, as well as the caps to development utilized in Petaluma, California’s 1972 plan are often cited in the literature as early successes of growth controls, both in practice as well as in court (Cullingworth 1993; Kelly 2004).

The historic growth management efforts of planners in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s evolved in conjunction with environmental and social concerns to form a new “smart growth” development paradigm that swept the nation in the mid-1990s (Dierwechter 2008). Advocates of smart growth seek to promote economic growth while simultaneously protecting the environment, revitalizing the center city, and improving general livability (Calthorpe 1993; Calthorpe and Fulton 2001). While a universally accepted definition of smart growth does not exist among its proponents, “smart” development may consider mixed land uses, compact neighborhood design, walk-able neighborhoods, and preservation of open space (Bruegmann 2005; Ewing 2008). Smart growth principles of urban planning have evolved into an architecturally-rooted urban design theory called New Urbanism. New Urbanism creations, while making environmental strides with their higher density designs and promotion of public transportation, often do little to quell sprawl and may actually reinforce the status quo of standard suburban ideals (Till 2001; Zimmerman 2001).
The American tradition of planning at the local level means that cities, towns, and even some counties have been relatively free to design and implement development controls or strategies unique to their own geographies. While this is certainly an appropriate scale for some places, local-scale planning may also produce challenges for environmental planners, especially where ecosystem boundaries and political boundaries do not match. It has also created a complex system of political jurisdictions particularly within larger metropolitan areas. Regional planning developed to provide comprehensive solutions to development pressures, environmental concerns, and sprawl on a broader scale. While regional planning commissions which incorporate multiple local government stakeholders have been formed in many metropolitan regions, they are often regarded as unsuccessful in professional planning circles, mainly because they lack local authority and regulation powers (Kelly 2004). These regional approaches, like efforts in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, and Silicon Valley, California areas, have seen varying shades of success (Cullingworth 1993). The directly-elected “Metro” planning agency established in Portland, Oregon in 1977 is often referenced as one of the strongest regional governing bodies. This is in part due to the fact that Metro has real regulatory powers over local governments, which were deliberately granted by the state of Oregon (Dierwechter 2008). This higher state-legislative involvement in local growth policies seen in Oregon was and still is, relatively uncommon. Only a handful of states became involved in growth management in the early 1970s; a time period often called the “quiet revolution” in land use policy thanks to an influential state call to arms by scholars Bosselman and Callies (Cullingworth 1993). Hawaii adopted a state approach due to
post-war growth coupled with the severe spatial limits of its physical geography. It was followed by Vermont, Florida, California, and Oregon, as one of the early states to apply state-specific planning goals, create regulating regional agencies, and generally enact mandatory comprehensive approaches to management (DeGrove 1984).

2.3 Planning and the Emergence of Growth Management

Planning itself is a complex concept (Cullingworth and Caves 2003), and is typically understood at the local-level as being a formal, government process concerned with the future development or preservation of an area in the long-term, which considers community and regional goals (Cullingworth 1997). In this sense, planning is composed of comprehensive policies that guide development for existing as well as future residents. Since the scope of planning is long-term it should also make provisions for undesirable, but needed land uses like landfills and power plants. Planning typically centers on creating and abiding by a master plan (Cullingworth 1993). This is commonly accomplished by administering comprehensive surveys and studies of present and future conditions in an area.

To accomplish master plan goals municipalities adopt land use management techniques, also known as land use controls, or public policy instruments. Under the canopy of growth management planning initiatives, planners often make use of public policy instruments to manage urban growth and protect open space. In the technical literature, these policies are generally referred to as the tools of the trade, or collectively conceptualized as an all encompassing “toolbox” (Cullingworth 1993).
Presently, growth management techniques are targeted at preventing urban sprawl and simultaneously protecting rural farmland and environmentally significant areas. A locality might adopt growth management policies to limit new development to reduce traffic congestion or to restrict the added infrastructure costs of road and service extensions associated with new development. Alternatively, a local government may adopt land use management policies which force developers to pay for any new infrastructure instead of taxpayers. If slower growth is the goal of an area, municipalities may adopt these policies to better control the pace or timing of development. Regardless of the local reasons for implementing policies, these management strategies attempt to improve the quality of life in urban and suburban places.

The question remains, what do we find when we take a peek inside this toolbox? In a thorough review of growth policy literature Bengston et al. (2004) categorized public policies for managing development and protecting open space into three categories. Their taxonomy states that public acquisition, incentives, and regulation approaches describe the policy toolbox utilized by communities. While the remainder of this research will focus on an urban growth boundary approach to growth management, it is critical to understand where such policy fits into the larger “toolkit” of options available to planners. A single policy approach by any local government is rare, thus gaining a working knowledge of each policy tool is important. This next section details the public acquisition, incentive, and regulation methods commonly found in planning programs and continues with a more detailed look at urban growth boundaries.
2.3.1 Public Acquisition

Public acquisition simply involves buying privately held land on the market to turn over to the public in the form of parks, wildlife areas, or greenbelts. This strategy of management has a long history and was particularly popular with the federal government during the Progressive Era, as evidenced by the Weeks Act of 1911. This legislation allowed chief forester Gifford Pinchot to purchase millions of acres of eastern lands for the establishment of national forests. While popular today with conservation groups like The Nature Conservancy, this management strategy is often too expensive for smaller land trust organizations or local governments looking to extend their green spaces. In such cases, it has become popular for interested parties to purchase or otherwise accept the development or other property rights from a private landowner. While the private landowner retains the property and maintains its current use, future development is often strictly limited and the parcel essentially acts as protected property (Nelson and Duncan 1995).

2.3.2 Incentives

Managing growth with an incentive approach provides communities and developers with the opportunity to reach their individual development goals. Under this policy option a community may give a developer a financial break to move a development scheme from an exurban lot to a vacant “infill” area within the city. The developer is able to complete the project and save money, typically in the form of tax breaks or tax waivers for a specific period of time, while the city also benefits from the deal. The city avoids spending money to extend services to the original exurban location,
has possibly preserved a rural open space for the short-term, and by directing infill
growth, the new development could serve as a catalyst for the improvement of the urban
area. This is the “carrot” approach (Bengston et al. 2004).

Conversely, communities may dissuade unwanted growth with the “stick”
approach by levying development taxes or impact fees on developers, homeowners, or
even peak hour commuters to slow suburban sprawl (Brueckner 2000; Bengston et al.
2004). Impact fees pay for public improvements that are needed as a result of increased
use and demand from new development. These fees cover the cost of extending public
roads, sewer, water, and police or fire protection to newly developed areas. The city of
Boulder, Colorado implemented this strategy in the 1980s to discourage development in
certain areas (Nelson and Duncan 1995). Likewise, the city encouraged efficient
development patterns with lower fees in areas that already had established services.
Bengston et al. (2004) reveal that the limit of incentive and related disincentive
approaches to growth management is that developers are never required or obligated to
accept the terms. They are free to ignore a subsidy for compact development in a certain
area if they simply do not want to pursue that type of building form. Incentives and
disincentives cannot dictate a specific development outcome, like compact development
or mixed-use. This policy instrument can only make that desired outcome less expensive
for developers.

2.3.3 Regulation

Regulation policies fill the authoritative void for communities looking to manage
urban growth. This category incorporates a diversity of different strategies that are
backed by negative sanctions which assure developer compliance. According to Bengston et al. (2004) regulation policies include development moratoria, growth-phasing regulations, adequate public facility ordinances (APFOs), small-lot zoning, greenbelts, urban growth boundaries, urban service boundaries, and planning mandates from the state or region.

Development moratoria typically limit the number of building permits issued in a municipality, and thus limit the amount of new development. Viewed as an extreme regulation used by planners for short periods of time until long-term planning strategies can be implemented, these regulations are typically always temporary fixes to the growth issues (Nelson and Duncan 1995). Growth-phasing regulations synchronize the timing of development to the schedule of improvements to public services like sewers and roads. Similarly, adequate public facility ordinances require that certain services will be established before development is complete. However, APFOs are administered on a project-by-project basis, not within a period of time like growth-phasing regulations.

Zoning is arguably one of the most popular techniques presently utilized in land use management efforts (Cullingworth 1993). Traditional, or Euclidean, zoning encompasses the practice of separating seemingly incompatible land uses like residential and manufacturing areas. Zoning can also stipulate the characteristics of development in each land use by setting limits on building height, density, percent of buildable lot coverage, setbacks, or a combination of these characteristics (Nelson and Duncan 1995).
Urban areas often utilize small-lot, or upzoning\textsuperscript{4} to encourage more intense development. This was a common technique used in Oregon in the 1970s and 80s with a state initiative that attempted to prevent sprawl (Nelson and Duncan 1995). Similarly, down-zoning sets minimum lot sizes to include upwards of hundreds of acres to encourage exclusive farm or forest uses. The goal of traditional zoning is to divide an area into districts where the population density, the size of yards, the height of buildings, and park space can be regulated. Traditional zoning produces very straightforward visions of future development, and most communities appreciate this predictability particularly when it assures the resale value of their land (Marwedel 1998). Presently, some communities are adopting performance zoning which dictates intensity of use rather than type of use. Form-based zoning codes are also emerging when the appearance of development is a higher community concern than use. These latter examples of zoning more easily allow for mixed-use development, a characteristic of smart growth theories.

While the general welfare of the community might be a concern of zoning, this is not to say that every act of zoning impacts citizens equally. While zoning is exclusionary by its very definition, some zoning practices are more discriminating than others. Practices of exclusionary zoning abound in communities interested in attracting new development, but also concerned with maintaining their property values, limiting additional taxes, and preserving their socioeconomic status (Downs 1994). In such cases zoning can be used to prevent low-income households from entering a locality. This is typically achieved by zoning the community for large lot sizes and large minimum floor

\textsuperscript{4} The term draws its name from the fact that the zoning designation changes to an increased number or higher use. With upzoning a plot that was previously zoned R3 (Residential-Density 3) and limited to one story structures, could be zoned R4.5 (Residential-Density 4.5) and multiple stories.
areas, thus creating property that is out of reach for low-income households. This and similar schemes are for the most part presently seen as unethical, if not unconstitutional according to some state Supreme Courts (Cullingworth 1993). Thus, many communities now make an effort to practice inclusionary zoning techniques by requiring developments to have affordable housing, or contribute to the funding of this type of housing through development incentives (Nelson and Duncan 1995).

The second type of regulation to be discussed at length and the main topic of this research are containment policies. The purpose of containment is to direct growth in a way which, “preserves public goods, minimizes fiscal burdens, minimizes adverse interactions between land uses while maximizing positive ones, improves the equitable distribution of the benefits of growth, and enhances quality of life” (Nelson 2004, 1). This may be a tall order, but proponents of containment claim that containment tools can achieve those goals if supported by complementary incentive and zoning policies to locate development inside their bounds. Champions argue that these containment policies preserve open space, protect valuable agricultural land, decrease pollution, increase transportation options, improve accessibility, integrate races, and enhance incomes more effectively than the status quo (Nelson and Duncan 1995). Critics point out that these policies limit the amount of developable land and location choices for all uses. Critics point to the possibility that containment policies can actually add to sprawl, as residents and developers may relocate to cheaper land in neighboring jurisdictions with less strict policies (Nelson and Moore 1996; Kelly 2004). Clearly, containment policies
are not straightforward solutions to sprawl, but command considerable attention from local planners to ensure the benefits outweigh the costs for that municipality.

Containment policies fall under the umbrella of regulation policies and typically consist of greenbelts, urban service areas, and urban growth boundaries. A greenbelt is a physical area of open or green space which girdles growth in an urban area. These swaths of conserved open space are intended to be permanent fixtures on the landscape and are typically utilized as accessible park and recreation space for urban dwellers. In the United States, greenbelts are typically created by non-profits or the public through outright purchase of land or development rights (Pendall et al. 2002). Greenbelts, or parkbelts, were a particularly popular development mechanism with landscape architects of the City Beautiful movement, as the circumferential form was thought to be an efficient way to simultaneously shape city growth and provide access to salubrious park space (Freestone 2002).

An urban service area (USA) is a line which limits the spatial extent of public services like water and sewer. Also commonly called a service boundary, this policy tool is committed to providing efficient public services by controlling the timing of development. Simply put, if sewers are not installed in an area new development is effectively prohibited. Jurisdictions can use service boundaries to discourage sprawling development outside of the established limits of these services, and encourage infill development where the services already exist. Pendall et al. (2002) describe how service areas “pull” growth to places where public infrastructure already exists, as opposed to growth boundaries which “push” growth away from rural lands which are effectively “out
of bounds.” However, the boundary of a service area is usually flexible; it is meant to accommodate projected development for a period of time, typically 10 to 20 years (Nelson and Duncan 1995). During this period comprehensive planning determines the extension of the boundary to accommodate the next decade or so of growth based on forecasts of future growth trends.

An urban growth boundary (UGB) is not a preserved physical space like the greenbelt, but a political line which guides growth by separating urban and rural land uses (Bengston et al. 2004). This policy tool may incorporate or bound an urban service area, but an urban growth boundary typically has more policy objectives than to simply provide efficient services. Next to service boundaries, UGBs appear to be a policy workhorse. While they can certainly be used like a USA to provide efficient public services, they are also commonly charged with discouraging sprawl, increasing urban densities, managing the timing of development, and protecting valuable natural resource areas like farmlands, wildlife habitat, and important watershed areas (Nelson and Duncan 1995). As the subject of this research, this type of containment policy will be detailed in the next section.

2.4 Urban Growth Boundaries

By conscious design and implementation, containment and other growth management policies challenge the decades-old status quo of sprawling low-density development that has come to define the American Dream as well as some of our personal preferences. Accordingly, containment policies have passionate champions and
detractors in the technical literature. Proponents of UGB containment celebrate the ability of this tool to overturn the standard of sprawling American suburban development by denying this type of development its lifeblood, namely, inexpensive land (Pendall et al. 2002). An urban growth boundary places a restriction on development outside the boundary and this results in lower land values on the rural side of the line as landowners are restricted to the types of land uses they can apply to the property (Nelson et al. 2007). Demand for development then shifts inside the boundary and results in increased urban land values. These open space or rural constraints are the “push” factors which Pendall et al. (2002) identify with growth boundaries or greenbelts. If there is no gap in land values on either side of the boundary then the boundary is too large or the potential for development in rural areas still exists in the form of low-density residential estates or hobby farms (Pendall et al. 2002).

Much of the literature regarding containment policies agrees that higher land values inside a UGB lead to the production of more efficient land development (Nelson and Duncan 1995; Pendall et al. 2002). Developers react to higher land prices and limited land by building at higher densities, as seen within many of Oregon’s city growth boundaries (Weitz and Moore 1998). For the local government, increasing density translates to more efficient provision of public services like police and fire coverage; reducing coverage distance translates to faster response times and possibly the need for fewer of these public servants. Infrastructure like public transit also becomes more affordable as density increase.
Efficiencies in public facilities are also realized with dense development, as sewers and roads can be initially designed and constructed to account for high volumes of use. UGBs can force planners to design for density rather than reacting to growth with later infrastructure and service upgrades. The cost savings of initially laying sewer line with sufficient volume, as opposed to constantly upgrading pipes as demand increases is well understood in the literature. Since land is more expensive and limited inside the line of containment, planners maintain that multi-family housing in the form of row houses, townhouses, condominiums, and apartments is encouraged by UGBs (Nelson and Duncan 1995). In most cases this variety of multi-family construction is the desired outcome of containment. Multi-family development is not only financially efficient for the local government providing urban services, but also more environmentally responsible than the land and energy hungry single-family development in the suburbs. Nelson and Duncan (1995) maintain that UGBs are beneficial to landowners and developers since these parties gain information about the future development options for their land based on parcel location inside or outside of the boundary.

Some of the policy literature suggests that UGBs are not always capable of delivering on all of their promises. One of the most common arguments against the use of UGBs and other containment policies is that they inflate housing prices. In making land outside the UGB off limits to certain types of development, developable land is now scarce. As anyone with even a basic economic background knows, scarcity increases the value of a commodity, so land prices rise. Studies are inconclusive as to whether this basic economic theory actually plays out in complex metropolitan land markets. An early
and important study by Correll et al. (1978) saw increasing values with greenbelt containment, but Knapp’s (1985) later study saw discrepancies in the economic relationship from one Oregon county boundary to the next. Kelly (2004) maintains that these are often “perceived,” but unfounded scarcities since individual communities in larger metropolitan areas typically adopt this policy and have little influence on larger regional land markets. The Portland metro area, with its strong state-led containment policies, admits that housing costs increased 2.85% in the ten years from 1985 to 1995 (Anderson 1999). However, larger increases were seen in boundary-less cities like Salt Lake City, Phoenix, and San Diego, which saw increases of 5.58%, 10.66% and 4.81% respectively. Presently, the literature seems to accept that containment policies like UGBs will likely influence housing prices in a community, but offers no hard and fast rule to predict the increase since local governments implement containment and growth management uniquely and independently (Kelly 2004). Kelly further maintains that appropriately “sized” containment policies must be supported by complementary housing and zoning policies to introduce a variety of houses in a variety of urban locations to keep housing costs reasonable.

Planning literature also shows that urban growth boundaries can miss the mark. Kelly (2004) details a Portland study which found that some counties within the UGB experienced “underbuilding,” where development failed to meet the maximum zoned densities as a result of locally restrictive zoning and approval of development projects at less than desired densities. Weitz and Moore (1998) found that containment alone does not always produce desirable urban form. They concluded that while some communities
within the Portland UGB were able to develop in efficient, contiguous patterns, others developed in strip and “leapfrog” clusters which were not desirable. Jun (2004) introduces a model which highlights the tendency for development in Portland to spillover or “leapfrog” even further into neighboring counties. Another Portland study revealed that 1- to 5-acre, low density residential development has occurred immediately outside the UGB under the guise of hobby or estate farming, posing an obstacle to future urban expansion (Nelson and Moore 1993). Jun and Bae (2000) discuss how containment policy in Seoul, South Korea has lead to increased commuting times and potential for pollution.

Critics also point to the problem of drawing UGBs too broadly, which then limits their effectiveness in preventing sprawl. Drawing these lines “correctly” now involves an exacting science supported by sophisticated mapping techniques and population growth forecasting models. These time and resource-consuming methods can present challenges for small planning departments. Bengston et al. (2004) detail how these methods have advanced from early attempts that incorporated little scientific data and primitive population forecasts.

While urban growth boundaries and other containment policies are used to guide urban development and protect rural resource areas, political fragmentation often complicates the picture. What remains critical to the success of UGBs are complementary growth management policies like supportive zoning densities, incentives for infill development, and rural zoning efforts. Urban growth boundaries alone do little to solve problems of sprawl. Besides complementary policies, plans for growth
management involving a UGB must be effectively implemented. This transition from paper to real-world policy can mean failure for many plans. In states like Hawaii and Oregon that have strict state land use regulations in place, a solid framework for implementation exists (DeGrove 1984; Kelly 2004). For local governments that adhere to the tradition of home rule, implementation can resemble a crap-shoot if local politics lacks an effective execution framework.

2.5 Examples of Urban Growth Boundaries

The literature regarding the historic development and usage of growth boundaries and other containment policies suggests that America has a relatively unique experience with the implementation and use of these regulations. Bengston and Youn (2006) identify 13th century B.C. as the birth of the containment concept, when Palestinian cities were surrounded by a belt of open space and croplands. However, Anderson (1999) points to London’s greenbelt as the first “true” growth boundary established by the Queen in the 1500s to satisfy public health and farmland preservation concerns. London’s greenbelt was not drawn to accommodate future growth, but instead to force the city to grow more slowly and direct new growth into areas beyond the belt. The same purposeful “leapfrogging” manifested itself in Sir Ebenezer Howard’s late 19th century ideas of a regional system where city decentralization was encouraged by channeling rapid growth to “new towns” beyond the city boundary (Pendall et al. 2002). Regional decentralization is also occurring in Seoul, South Korea where the greenbelt and complementary land use policies have encouraged growth in six satellite cities beyond
the greenbelt to diffuse population and employment densities in the main city. Employment opportunities have been slow to match population densities in the new towns, so Seoul struggles with long commuting distances and a host of environmental and economic externalities (Jun and Bae 2000; Pendall et al. 2002). Nelson et al. (2007) point out that many examples of containment outside of the United States are often characterized by their centralized approach to planning, implementation, and monitoring. They maintain that this is very different from the range of scales and types of containment programs found in the United States.

Most scholars and planners give Lexington, Kentucky the credit for the earliest documented use of a growth boundary in the United States. Established in 1958 as a joint intergovernmental agreement between Lexington and Fayette counties, the purpose of the boundary was to protect the scenic bluegrass country and horse farms around the city (Kelly 2004). The counties cooperated to target areas where capital improvements of urban services would be extended and growth encouraged. Anderson (1999) points to Fayette County’s booming agricultural sector – estimated at $130 million dollars a year - as proof that this foresight and early management action has been successful.

Hawaii was the first state to establish requirements for rigid UGBs around every city in 1961, but Nelson (2004) does not consider it a mainstream American example due to its unique physical geography which restricts developable land, and historic plantation ownership patterns. Oregon joined Hawaii in 1973 thanks to its Land Conservation and Development Act which required state and local planning agencies to work together and made the drawing of urban growth boundaries around all cities and a metropolitan growth
boundary around the Portland region mandatory (Pendall et al. 2002). While planners (DeGrove 1984; Pendall et al. 2002; Nelson 2004) recognize Oregon as having one of the strongest state growth management laws in the nation, they also recognize that wide adoption of state-enforced regional boundaries similar to Portland’s is doubtful due to long traditions of home rule. Thus, while the Portland boundary has dominated the UGB technical planning literature (DeGrove 1984; Knaap 1985; Nelson and Moore 1993; Nelson and Duncan 1995; Weitz and Moore 1998; Staley and Mildner 1999; Pendall et al. 2002; Bengston et al. 2004; Jun 2004; Nelson 2004; Jun 2006; Nelson et al. 2007), it is an unlikely model for the rest of the nation.

Boulder, Colorado began experimenting with containment in 1959, when it passed a citizen-initiated “blue-line” amendment prohibiting the extension of water (and later sewer) service above 5,750ft to limit pumping costs (Pendall et al. 2002). This early delineation of a simple urban service area was complemented in 1967 with a revolutionary sales-tax initiative to purchase open space which later formed the Boulder greenbelt and continues to contain city growth (Nelson et al. 2007). The city and county joined planning forces in the late 1960s and by 1970 they produced a joint comprehensive plan to guide future development. This was revised in 1978 when voters approved a Growth Limitation Ordinance which adopted a capital improvements program to coordinate with the availability of urban services. Simply stated, Boulder adopted a growth boundary guided by an urban service area, an approach to urban growth boundaries that Boulder city planners call “a service area concept” (Pollock 1998). Martin County, Florida has a reputation for aggressive growth management, having
established a UGB in 1980 (Anderson 1999). Initially too large to have much of an effect on guiding development, the UGB was amended to produce a primary growth area and a secondary “reserve” area similar to Portland’s scheme.

Many other cities and counties in states without laws mandating growth management or urban growth boundaries have established UGBs over the last forty years. The only national survey of containment policies was conducted as part of Rolf Pendall’s 1994 dissertation and illustrated in a later technical publication (Pendall et al. 2002). Pendall found that only 17% of surveyed metropolitan jurisdictions contained urban boundaries but concludes that they have continued to proliferate in the Mid-Atlantic region and the West since 1980 and particularly in the 1990s with the growth in popularity of smart growth ideals. The survey identified jurisdictions stretching across the country, including the Boston, Washington, D.C., Minneapolis, Chicago, Atlanta, Denver, and San Francisco metropolitan areas. According to the study, there were fewer than 10 boundaries in existence before the 1960s and only 10 more adopted from 1960 to 1970 (Pendall et al. 2002). While not nearly as common a tool as traditional zoning regulations, growth boundaries have garnered support from land use planning advocates thanks to Oregon’s high profile system, as well as through the sheer amount of professional and academic discussion surrounding this tool (Pendall et al. 2002).

Furthermore, growth boundaries have been described as an “iconic” planning tool in the nation due to the unique local scale at which they are implemented (Dierwechter 2008).

Nelson et al. (2007) note that establishing a UGB requires either a self-centered attitude for a community or an enormous amount of foresight, since population
projections constantly change and it is extremely difficult to predict the “right” size of a boundary. Additionally, Anderson (1999) states that the delineation and creation of UGBs is generally ad hoc at the local level, and that there are no hard and fast rules to follow in areas without state influence. Truly, America has produced urban growth boundaries in all sizes, shapes, and scales.

2.6 Summary

Through a historic lens, we can see that the suburban lifestyle and associated sprawling development has not been an accidental blemish on our American landscape, but a purposeful form of development. Through federal mortgage incentives and huge highway projects, our nation consciously made way for sprawl. While this type of development surely has attractive features in its low-density and large housing footprint, it has effectively left our cities to crumble from disinvestment. This type of lifestyle is taking its toll on our planet. Sprawling development demands vast quantities of land, infrastructure investment, and energy, while encouraging vehicle travel.

A new direction towards more sustainable ways of living in urban places should be purposeful and directed. Smart Growth plans that combine growth shaping tools like urban growth boundaries, with New Urbanism ideals like walkable neighborhoods and mixed use development represent a step in a “green,” more sustainable and responsible direction.

While urban growth boundaries are one useful tool for communities looking to plan for growth, the body of literature surrounding this tool remains mostly silent on
boundary processes at the local level. The majority of boundary knowledge has been established from the rare state-lead Portland UGB example. This may not be the most realistic model for local governments looking to change or expand their smart growth initiatives. Additionally, much of the literature is sourced from professional planners and has focused on the economic and land market consequences of UGBs. This technical literature mostly views UGBs as a value-free tool with straightforward benefits and consequences. This study argues that drawing a line which dictates where private development can and cannot occur is in fact a disorderly process often involving many different actors. It does not necessarily follow the orderly model presented in the UGB literature. Evidence regarding the local historical planning and implementation process is scarce, as seen with the Boulder example. This study seeks to broaden the UGB conversation by taking a historical case study approach to the UGB policy experience seen in Baltimore County; a scale of government where boundaries are the most prevalent but most underserved by the literature (Pendall et al. 2002). Reflecting on the ways in which one of the oldest, local boundaries came to be established provides a valuable model of the UGB process at this critical American scale of government.
CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Early Planning Efforts in the County

The first comprehensive zoning ordinance in the nation created one of its most iconic skylines; the delicately tiered, Art Deco skyscrapers of New York City. However, it was not until the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act was passed in 1924, that state legislatures had a legal procedure for allowing local zoning. Even then, it was not until 1947 that Baltimore County and other Maryland counties were officially authorized to plan, not just zone, locally. This enabling legislation was passed by the Maryland General Assembly, and Baltimore County leapt at the opportunity with the formation of the Baltimore County Planning Commission that same year (Outen 2007).

In just two short years the Commission had produced a report for the development of the Baltimore Beltway, and by 1952 they had announced their intention to develop land use plans for the most populated communities in the county. In 1955, the County Planning Act created a separate Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ) to pick up the pace of the land use, or “sector” plans that roughly coincided with individual election districts within the county. In 1956 Baltimore County followed in Montgomery County’s footsteps to become only the second county to adopt a “home rule” charter to make its own laws and ordinances without the approval of the Maryland State General Assembly (Brugger 1988). This was important for planning activities in the county, since ordinances could be passed more quickly at this scale of government, and would not have to wait until for one of the General Assembly’s periodic meetings. With all of the legal
pieces in place, basic zoning tools in hand, and government structure quickly arranged, the county was ready to step into planning.

3.2 Industry and Population Dynamics

What was the impetus behind the idea to plan locally, and to begin as soon as possible? Examining the enormous growth pressures and explosion of development the county experienced in the post-war period helps to answer these questions. People did not wait for local planning to appear before they charged into the county looking for places to live and work. By 1947, the year Baltimore County received permission from the state to officially start its local planning process, the county was already home to around 250,000 people, or one third of its year 2000 total (Outen 2007). These citizens had already established roots in the county and left their mark on the landscape, be it in rural agricultural towns, town centers like Towson, or in new subdivisions outside the city line. It was now the county’s job to shuffle unplanned past, present, and future development patterns into something orderly and purposeful.

The Essex-Middle River waterfront community offers a good vantage point from which to view the development pressures the county faced during the war and post-war era. Lying just east of Baltimore City, the Essex-Middle River waterfront community experienced a change in character around the turn of the 20th century thanks to flourishing industry surrounding the Port of Baltimore. This area, which includes the Lower Back River Neck, was primarily a weekend or vacation destination for city residents looking to hunt or fish along Middle River in the early 20th century. In 1887
the Sparrows Point Steel Works, a site that was later occupied by the Bethlehem Steel Company, opened ship building facilities on the nearby Patapsco River Neck peninsula. The housing market began to expand with subdivisions in 1909. More and jobs were created ten years later with the installation of a steel rolling mill at the head of Back River (Menzer 2007). In 1929 the Glenn L. Martin aircraft factory opened just east of Essex along Middle River. On the eve of World War II it employed 3,000 workers (Brugger 1988).

The First and Second World Wars spurred an almost overnight economic and population boom for the Port of Baltimore, and those industries immediately surrounding it in Baltimore County. Between 1939 and 1942, employment at Glenn Martin exploded from 3,000 to 52,000 workers as the factory accepted government contracts for wartime aircraft (Menzer 2007). As new workers poured into the Martin factories, the demand for housing reached a level never seen before in the Essex-Middle River community. Cheap, compact, and affordable single-family homes and apartments were thrown together in an industrial spirit reminiscent of that fueling the rapid construction of Liberty Ships at the nearby Sparrows Point Shipyard. Thanks to subsidies from Glenn Martin, as well as the Federal government, 10 to 12 homes could be built each day to accommodate new workers (Menzer 2007).

While the population growth associated with the wartime economy lead to early suburbanization immediately outside the bounds of Baltimore City in places like Essex-Middle River, the city was still the engine of the region’s economy, with 75% of the jobs and 70% of the population (Levine 2000). By the 1920s Baltimore City had easily
established itself as one of the country’s leading port and industrial nodes of the regional “manufacturing belt” and its industries thrived during periods of war and into the post-war era of the 1950s (Meyer 1990). It was during the 1950s, however, that Baltimore City began its post-industrial metamorphosis, where manufacturing experienced redistribution outside the traditional belt region. Between 1950 and 1970 Baltimore lost one third of its industrial jobs, and the deindustrialization trends continued with another 55,000 manufacturing jobs disappearing by 1995 (Lavine 2000).

In 1950, Baltimore City was the sixth-largest city in the nation with a population of 950,000 (Levine 2000). However, this year represents the high-water mark for the city, as population and development patterns shifted in the post-war years. Suburbanization or “flight” out of Baltimore City and into surrounding suburban counties began in earnest in 1950 (Figure 2).

With these forces in motion, the city population fell almost 30% to 657,000 by 1997 (Lavine 2000). Where Baltimore had commanded a strong 71% majority of the metropolitan region’s population in 1950, the tide of suburbanization left it with just 43% by 1970. These post-industrial trends had critical ramifications for planning in Baltimore County, and resulted in the alteration of old zoning strategies and deployment of more comprehensive plans and adoption of growth management tools to deal with this new massive wave of suburbanization. This chapter examines early efforts to accommodate this growth from the 1930s to the mid 1960s. It sets the stage for the transition to more strict growth management that occurred from the mid 1960s to the present day.
Figure 2. Post-War population changes in the city and county. (Source: Maryland State Data Center, Historical Census and U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000)

3.3 Regional Introduction of the Greenbelt: The 1937 Report

Many of the early warnings of population growth and the need for land use planning and government guidance came from the Maryland State Planning Commission, the Baltimore Regional Planning Council (BRPC), and its later offspring, the Regional Planning Council (RPC). The commission was created in 1933 to inventory planning issues throughout the state and supply advice and solutions when possible. It was never granted legislative or executive powers to enforce its recommendations, and always served an advisory role. In its first five years, it tackled issues of population growth, local finances, land use and resettlement, conservation, highways, and public works projects (Maryland State Planning Commission 1937). It is evident in a 1937 regional
planning report from the Maryland State Planning Commission that the pressures of
growth for the Baltimore area were weighing heavily on the minds of government: “The
most imperative force within the [Baltimore-Washington-Annapolis Area] is the
suburban expansion, almost explosion, of the two cities, Baltimore and Washington.”
(Maryland State Planning Commission 1937, 20). The 64-page report was intended to
present the condition of the future “Megalopolis” area to the public and drum up support
for future regional studies, plans, and regulations. While the information was serious, the
report sometimes took a lighter tone, offering casual phrasing and whimsical illustrations
for its citizen audience (Figure 3). Coupled with art-deco inspired hand-drawn tables and
city plans, the report drove home the issue of population pressures in the Washington and
Baltimore region: “Moreover, of these 40 election districts, 15 located immediately
outside the two cities grew not less than 200 percent from two to three times as fast as the
cities” (Maryland State Planning Commission 1937, 21). Growth was occurring in the
suburbs and it needed to be addressed. While the report lacked rigorous forecasts to
clarify where growth would occur, it suggested areas based on past trends. In all, it
suggested that 40 square miles would be needed in the following 13 years for the
development of subdivisions and schools, churches, and fire station that accompany
suburban growth. It identified the broad location of this development as follows:

It appears that in general the Piedmont section, (the area including Catonsville,
Green Spring Valley, Ellicott city, around Baltimore; and Chevy Chase,
Rockville, Silver Spring around Washington) will continue to grow as a district of
estates, suburban farms and relatively prosperous homes; while the Coastal Plain
section (Linthicum, Glenburnie near Baltimore; Severna Park near Annapolis;
Berwyn, Bladensburg, Capital heights near Washington) will grow as a district of
smaller homes and market gardens (Maryland State Planning Commission 1937, 22).
Figure 3. An illustration of the agriculture in the Washington and Baltimore region. (Source: Maryland State Planning Commission 1937)

If the report was vague on where growth would occur, it was convinced on the form that unchecked growth would take. It identified three forms of development common to the area as, “…the radial, or “finger” suburb, the continuous suburban or city-like “blanket,” and the “satellite,” “garden-suburb” or “greenbelt” community” (Maryland State Planning Commission 1937, 22). The report maintained that all three could be seen in the area, as initial suburbanization occurred in “finger” patterns around major roads leading out of the cities. The commission postulated that this form of development occurred as residents left the city to be near open space. In time, the fingers
fused together in a web-like “blanket” pattern. Thus, the open space initially sought became a casualty of the development.

The report suggested an alternative when it introduced planned garden-suburbs, the likes of which had been suggested in the last century by Sir Ebenezer Howard. The State Planning Commission pointed to Greenbelt, Maryland as an example of this “ideal” form which preserves open space while allowing for development. Greenbelt was located northeast of Washington D.C. and was the result of a federal planning effort by the Resettlement Administration. The report presented two area maps to illustrate the threat of continued status quo suburban development (Figure 4) and hypothetical suburban development promoting “garden-suburbs” and the use of numerous greenbelts to separate and contain growth (Figure 5). Note that established industrial and commercial growth, particularly heavy industry around the Port of Baltimore and Patapsco River Neck peninsula, is not established on either map, but was included in another section of the report focused on those types of development.

As for actual implementation of these greenbelt suggestions, the State Planning Commission, having no legal authority over planning in cities and counties, had its hands tied. As such, it weakly pointed out that regulation would be the responsibility of the local city, county, or community government and its interactions with private development:
Figure 4. A map of projected unmanaged development to 1950 in the Baltimore-Washington-Annapolis Area. Black areas are suburbs existing in 1937, hashed areas are growth expected by 1950, and stippled areas represent principle open spaces. (Source: Maryland State Planning Commission 1937, 24)
Figure 5. A map of projected suburban development for 1950 in the BWA Area if guided by greenbelts. Again, areas in black are existing 1937 suburbs, hashed areas are suburban growth by 1950, stippled corridors contain parks, parkways and forests, and large stippled areas are controlled open space. (Source: Maryland State Planning Commission 1937, 25)
But the establishment of a true greenbelt community depends on the careful guidance of a controlling agency - a private industry or corporation, a public or private housing agency. Encouragement should be given to such developments, but cannot be established merely by general public fiat or regulation - they will come only as particular combinations of circumstances furnish a reason. Their location is a matter to be decided by cooperative study of the development agency and the interested planning authorities (Maryland State Planning Commission 1937, 26).

The report also expressed the need to guide future growth through the closely related issue of public services like sewer and water. The report stressed the need for timely management of these services and the adherence of all metropolitan city, county, and community governments to the scientific recommendations of infrastructure professionals:

The sanitary engineering need not be a particularly serious Area problem, provided the Area will listen to the doctor and pay for the medicine he prescribes. Regulations on suburban growth, however can assist the sanitary engineers in mapping and the cheapest and best program of sewage collection systems, and prevent over-expansion at public expense [emphasis in the original] (Maryland State Planning Commission 1937, 53).

What kind of regulation to suburban growth, exactly? The State Planning Commission remained purposefully vague regarding specific frameworks to hand down to local government, as this was intended to be the first of a series of efforts to bring coordinated planning and managed growth to the region. More importantly, the fact that Maryland had yet to pass enabling legislation that would have given counties and communities outside the cities authority to plan rendered it immediately impossible for any place to do much of anything relating to this plan. In short, the State Planning Commission was not sure what this final greenbelt product would look like, or if any local governments would
be able to adopt and enforce it legally until enabling legislation gave them the go-ahead. These were obviously first steps.

However, the report did indicate that, “[the character of growth] should be regulated by sub-division control, zoning, building codes, and provision for adequate open spaces to prevent overdevelopment” (Maryland State Planning Commission 1937, 2). It also called for the creation of forests, parks, and open spaces using tools of outright purchase, use of eminent domain, open space zoning of floodways, tax breaks, and refusal to extend public utilities unless a subdivision was deemed necessary (subdivision control). Recognizing its own enforcement limitations, the State Planning Commission’s final recommendations highlighted the need for state enabling legislation. It urged that this authority be passed to cities, counties, and communities in the area to allow them to enact local laws that would support these ideas for the BWA. Clearly, the State Planning Commission was not trying to consolidate power (which would become more common in states like Hawaii and Oregon much later in the 1960s and 1970s). Instead it supported the national precedent of home rule. Recall, enabling legislation was eventually passed ten years later in 1947, but by then the Commission had turned most of its focus from guiding regional development to public health issues and creating standards for public parks (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b). By 1959 the Commission had evolved into the Maryland State Planning Department, and continued to aid local planning by disseminating Federal and state development grants for various local endeavors including highway building.
For the purpose of this research, the 1937 report remains important, even though it failed to be completely implemented across the region due to lack of authority. Here, we see an independent agency of the state promote a model of “ideal” form for the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan region; an idea that introduced the use of greenbelts to contain and control suburban form. This report also called for regulation of growth through attention to water and sewer management; the same concept actualized with Baltimore County’s 1967 urban growth boundary. The report marks the beginning of growth management efforts to guide urban form.

3.4 Greenbelt Containment Refined: The 1960 Report

The post-war population boom and resulting rapid development sparked concern among the Baltimore metropolitan counties and highlighted regional development issues once more. This concern lead to the formation of the Baltimore Regional Planning Council in 1957 (State Planning Department 1961). Formed as an ad hoc, independent regional planning agency, BRPC consisted of political or public representatives from Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard Counties along with Baltimore City. BRPC focused development issues on greater Baltimore, rather than the greater Washington-Baltimore scale which was seen with the earlier State Planning Commission efforts. This new body was also well connected. BRPC developed a broad network of contacts with other state and regional planning agencies from Pennsylvania to New England in order to exchange information and maintain, “a high quality of professional competence in planning” (State Planning Department 1961, 23).
As its professional knowledge grew, BRPC, like the State Planning Commission before it, produced a number of technical reports on issues ranging from land use and industrial land development to water supply and sewerage. For the purpose of this research, BRPC’s Technical Report No.5: Open Spaces published in 1960 stands out as an early testament to growth management. The BRPC report furthered the idea of greenbelt implementation which was originally voiced in the Maryland State Planning Commission’s 1937 report for the larger Baltimore-Washington-Annapolis-Area.

Whereas the 1937 plan called for a spider web of many small greenbelt communities and park corridor belts, the 1960 plan called for only two belts. The BRPC suggested a series of greenbelts horseshoeing the Baltimore metropolitan area (Figure 6). While one metropolitan belt, or “separator” contained Baltimore City and the immediate metro area, a second regional belt would serpentine through the rural areas of several surrounding counties.

Due to the eruption of post-war development immediately outside Baltimore City, there was no longer enough vacant land near the city line to implement the many smaller belts of the 1937 plan. Development had pushed available belt land to a new fringe. The BRPC explained the critical placement of the smaller greenbelt to assure growth management when it stated that, “…the metropolitan separator must be made as effective as possible and it must be pulled in as close to the fringe of present urban development as is consistent with the topographic features and other factors” (Baltimore Regional Planning Council 1960, 15). This specific implementation of the belt at the “fringe” of
Figure 6. The 1960 greenbelt strategy called for an inner metropolitan belt and outer regional belt to contain development in the region.

development was certainly consistent with greenbelt containment theory, and also alludes to a division between rural and urban; the later goal of the 1967 urban growth boundary.\footnote{While this research does not attempt it, overlay of the BRPC’s greenbelt map with current topographic, watershed, and urban growth boundary (URDL) vector data in a GIS could provide further spatial explanation as to how these two policies could be similar and possibly related.}

Besides offering demarcation advice, the report gave recommendations for timing growth management through planned satellite cities outside the metro greenbelt:

All efforts must then be directed toward first providing the incentives to have the future growth occur in those sections inside the metropolitan separator where land use plans call for additional residential and other growth; secondly, it appears
advisable to establish policies which would concentrate growth outside the metropolitan separator to a few sections, permitting varying densities, but preventing continuation of urban sprawl by surrounding these sections with well planned separator stripes of their own (Baltimore Regional Planning Council 1960, 33).

While this 1960 satellite city concept, and the previous “greenbelt community” form of 1937, were introduced to the Baltimore region in the 20th century, they were without a doubt based on the famous greenbelt guidelines previously set forth by Sir Ebenezer Howard and adopted throughout Europe. In fact, his theory of using greenbelts as tools to slow and redirect central city growth to highly planned suburban towns, seen best in the 1960 report, was later advanced and illustrated in the BRPC’s 1962 iteration of their greenbelt concept. The resulting “Metro Towns” scheme continued to back the use of trans-county greenbelt connections, but expanded on the call for carefully controlled growth outside the metropolitan greenbelt by accommodating planned growth centers outside the metropolitan greenbelt (Outen 2007). Like the 1937 report, neither the 1960 nor the 1962 greenbelt suggestions were completely implemented by the associated county governments, a sure indication of BRPC’s limited influence on implementation.

While the regional planning body had been established at the request of the growth-stricken metropolitan counties and was a well-connected and evolving authority on planning theory, it held no regulatory powers in its advisory position. Perhaps in light of this political impotence, it is understandable that the counties lacked a common desire to implement either greenbelt plan. There were certainly no regulatory “sticks” or even tangible “carrots” to influence participation. Thus, a pattern of top-down planning lead by a state or regional advisory body produced early containment policies but little real-
world adoption. Bottom-up, locally-driven growth management efforts were to have slightly better results for Baltimore County as it moved into the 1960s.

3.5 Baltimore County: The Sector Plans

When the Maryland General Assembly did not authorize Baltimore County to prepare and enforce local planning laws until 1947, the growth-pressured county quickly mobilized when it was eventually granted permission. That same year it established a Planning Commission and by 1949 had produced a highway report which developed into the Baltimore Beltway concept (Outen 2007). In 1955 the Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ) was established through the County Planning Act to assist with the creation of land use plans to guide zoning for major communities in the county (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b). The first three community or “sector” plans to be adopted included the Towson, Dundalk, and Timonium-Lutherville-Cockeysville plans in 1955 (Outen 2007). In reality, these first three plans do not resemble today’s comprehensive master plans of today, which typically outline long-term goals, short-term objectives, implementation strategies, and development concepts for an area with graphics and text. These sector “master” plans of the 1950s were simply zoning maps which delineated the separation of specific land uses in the unincorporated urban areas of the county. Regardless, rapidly creating these zoning plans remained the focus of OPZ’s planning efforts, and retained enthusiastic support from the Baltimore County Council by the closing years of the 1950s ("Speed-Up In Master Plan Adoption Slated in County" 1958).
While county planners were becoming adept at using zoning as a tool to manage growth, under the pressure of post-war development the limitations of zoning with regards to guiding the timing of development were becoming obvious. A planning office is surely not doing its job well if development occurs before public services are in place to service it. By 1958 planners were discussing the creation of rural zoning “safeguards” which could delay development until necessary services were in place ("Rural Land Zone Studied" 1958). This resulted in the R.40 zone\(^6\), created for “openness” by requiring a minimum of an acre or more until a time when it was deemed to be “ripe for more intensive development, if at all” (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b, 55). OPZ had begun to hone its traditional tools.

By 1959 county planning efforts became more comprehensive thanks to the call from two zoning officials, including Spiro Agnew\(^7\), for distinction between planning and zoning efforts within OPZ so that long-range plans could be produced for future county growth (Feingold 1959b). Zoning remained the traditional tool to guide growth, but planning efforts could now focus on creating inventories of population and land use trends, exploring more ideal forms of growth, and better coordinatting the provision of

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\(^6\) The R.40 zone was created under the existing Residential Zoning, hence the “R” designation, but according to code at the time was not restrictive to only residential uses. The county simply lacked zoning designation for any other uses requiring large tracts of land, like agriculture. So the R status was used until later rezoning occurred in the 1970s and created a Rural designation. While R.40 could be used to denote land in or suited for acre-lot development, it could also used to denote areas not ready for such development or areas which could be suitable for more intensive (denser) use and should be preserved until that time.

\(^7\) Agnew was elected to the position of County Executive in 1962, and then Governor in 1966. In 1968 he successfully ran as Richard Nixon’s Vice-Presidential candidate, but resigned the office in 1973 after he was charged with tax evasion, and for accepting kick-backs during his time as Governor. The University of Maryland has an extensive collection of information regarding Agnew’s life. University of Maryland. (2003). "Spiro Agnew: University Communications Newsdesk, University of Maryland." 2010, from http://www.newsdesk.umd.edu/culture/release.cfm?ArticleID=815.
services. While planning efforts would retain and rely on zoning tools, planning produced a more comprehensive framework for implementing zoning in the county.

After this internal reorganization the remaining community master plans of the 1960s evolved to include statements of purpose and basic inventories of physical, population, economic, and land use characteristics (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b). These later iterations of the sector plans also included clear objectives of community design; namely a spatial hierarchy relating neighborhood units to larger town and regional systems (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b). The location of public facilities like highways, schools, and parks were also discussed. These plans were the first hint that a more comprehensive planning theory was beginning to catch on among Baltimore County planners.

Besides the recognition that comprehensive planning and zoning are two very different endeavors, this first step towards better management of growth through planning can also be explained by influences from the Federal and state scale. An activities report by the State Planning Commission points to the influence of Federal money and state agencies:

Further consideration [for locating development] that is often stressed [by developers] and which in recent months has grown in significance and importance is the fact that participation by communities in the Federal Urban Renewal Programs requires the existence of a master plan for the community. A further point to stress, of course, is the fact that the existence of a professionally drawn and technically acceptable master plan is of invaluable assistance to the development of transportation and road networks by State Roads Commission personnel in pursuit of their assigned duties (State Planning Department 1961, 22-23).
Clearly, if Baltimore County was to retain its share of Federal monies for urban renewal projects, as well as smooth the way for state highway funding from the Maryland State Planning Department, more detailed master plans would be needed.

The county began to eye an urban renewal program in 1961, and with the assistance of the sector plans and county support, the Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Commission was formed and approved by the State Planning Department whose responsibility it was to divvy up Federal renewal funds ("County Eyes Urban Plan" 1961; New Urban Renewal Plans for County Okayed By U.S." 1962). While county planners wanted to channel these early funds into the aging Cantonsville and Towson areas, the renewal legislation was deleted and the Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Commission was dropped just three years later amidst public fear that renewal would bring unwanted public housing into the predominantly white county ("County Agency Abolished" 1965). One of the sector plans published that same year had this to say about the new void:

> Urban Renewal legislation recently deleted from Baltimore County’s ‘books’ leaves a gap in Master Plan implementation in areas where the revitalization of outmoded and blighted development is desirable. When such action is propitious urban renewal should once again be added to the planning effectuation kit of the County (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b, 44).

Without the legislation, the county had one less source of funding to implement its plans. Regardless, the county remained focused on completing the sector plans in the 1960s.
3.6 Baltimore County: The 1965 Eastern Sector Plan

By 1965 nine area maps had been processed by OPZ and the Planning Commission, and legally adopted by the County Council ("Hearings On County Master Plan Set" 1965). That same year the last sector plans for the eastern and northeastern communities were presented to County Council for consideration and adoption. These last two master plans reflected OPZ’s move toward more comprehensive planning.

The sector plan for the Eastern Planning Area consisted of a 68-page report accompanied by a zoning map, and a transparent overlay showing proposed motorways, schools, and other services. Taken together, this product was a far cry from the zoning maps of the earlier sector studies. The report served as a “guide for the physical development of the community,” and provided everything from commentary on the spatial and social role of the neighborhood unit, to a basic land use and transportation plan (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b, 2). It is not known if the original zoning map and transparent overlay still exist. Regardless, the report and attendant maps serve the purpose of this research.

The Eastern Planning Area comprised a 39.7 square mile area spread across the Back River Neck and Middle River Neck peninsulas (Figure 7). Pre-1965 development established the older community areas of Essex, Middle River, Deep Creek, and Seneca Creek. Citing the imposing population forecasts, the report suggested that three new planned community developments should occur in the area including the future Holly Village at the south end of the Back River Neck peninsula which was to house 35,000 people.
The master plan pointed to the 206% increase in population growth that this area experienced in just ten years from 1940 to 1950 - the fastest growth of any county district for that period. For the future, it suggested that the sector’s population would grow from the 63,282 people in 1960, to 115,000 people by 1980 (Figure 8). While this growth would be at a slower rate than experienced immediately following the war years, the plan still maintained that growth in population, urbanization, and economy would dominate the Eastern Sector Area in the coming decades.
Figure 8. Projected population increase for the Eastern Planning Area. (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1960)

As for the form this development should take, the report suggested a spatial hierarchy based on the neighborhood unit (Figure 9). This small unit was to contain up to two thousand homes in various forms including dense apartment buildings and single-family "cottages." The unit would contain an elementary school and a few retail stores near the edge (Figure 10).
Figure 9. Map of future industrial and hierarchal residential development. (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b)
Open space would be preserved while “unsightly” services like gas stations would be pushed to the edge of the unit. In the spirit of orderly hierarchy and efficient provision of public services, several neighborhoods clustered together would form a community where a junior high school, recreation center, and shopping center would be located. Several communities clustered together would form a “community area,” like Middle River, and contain a high school and larger park space. Finally, a “suburbtown” or town center, like that planned for Essex, would house a community college and the highest densities in the area.

Figure 10. The neighborhood unit was to hold up to two thousand dwellings. (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b)
The rest of the proposal detailed park, highway, and zoning considerations. Most important for the Lower Back River Neck area, it proposed new zoning which would reserve 1,350 acres of the peninsula for future port-oriented manufacturing. A physical inventory described the proximity of the Back River to the deep bay waters leading to the Port of Baltimore, noting that it provided an opportunity for easy access to well established commercial waterways. With an economic history so tightly tied to the industry pouring into and out of the Port of Baltimore, planners reasoned that Baltimore County’s economy could only similarly thrive if their port activities increased. Thus, the new zone, Manufacturing Port (M.P.), was introduced with the hope that industry would locate there in the future. Deindustrialization had only just started by the 1960s and had yet to define the future direction of Baltimore’s economy, so it is no surprise that the master plan for this area did not focus on economic diversification.

While the M.P. zoning was new with the 1965 report, the idea of port expansion up the Back River was not. As far back as 1954, the county had been in talks with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the possibility of dredging the slow and shallow Back River (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b). By 1959 the Army Corps were “sympathetic” to the cause, and had determined that the creation of a deep channel would cost $10,000,000, but that the “ratio of monetary benefits to the economy of the area against the channel cost should be greater than one” before the project would proceed (Feingold 1959a). The Corps further stipulated that the entire Back River would have to be “bracketed” with industrial zoning on both shores and that
at least two industries must be built on the Back River Neck peninsula before any
dredging could occur.

Plans for port enhancement and industry zoning were given an additional
publicity boost from a 1963 study by Dr. Dorothy A. Munsey, the first female industrial
planner and consultant for the Maryland Department of Economic Development (Bentley
1963). Munsey urged that 1,500 acres on Back River and thousands of acres in
neighboring Anne Arundel County should be immediately set aside for future industry.
The study cited these areas as rare examples of waterfront sites with the potential for
shipping access, but without the protection of industrial zoning, the report maintained, the
areas would likely be lost to residential shoreline development. Baltimore County
commissioned its own, more detailed, study after Munsey’s initial report and the resulting
publication consisted of graphs and maps that essentially echoed the earlier argument;
protect industrial sites now or undercut the potential for economic growth later
(Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965a). The eastern sector plan
provided OPZ with the opportunity to make that zoning change for the Back River a
reality.

An early county study had recommended construction of a causeway to connect
Hart Island Chain with the tip of the Back River Neck peninsula to control the movement
of future industry-caused water pollution as well as provide public access to the future
Hart Island Park (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1960). The physical
barrier would prevent the mixing of polluted Back River water with the cleaner Middle
River water, so that recreation and real estate values on the Middle River side of the Back
River Neck would be protected (Figure 11). Moreover, the causeway would be constructed using the dredged material from the Back River in a “reuse” strategy of sorts. The island chain, consisting of naturally separate Miller and Hart Islands, would be artificially connected with another causeway of dredged material. This fill would increase shoreline and recreation potential for the future park system to be located at the mouth of the industrial channel.

While the joint development of industry and parkland may seem questionable with a modern understanding of detrimental environmental pollutants and the ill health effects of industry, the plan presents an excellent snapshot of the planning pressures for OPZ in the 1960s. Expecting massive population growth in the future, and the continued economic domination of industry, OPZ was attempting to pile all its developing theories of “good” planning into one area. Parks, schools, neighborhoods of all sizes, open space, jobs, shopping, waterfront recreation; it wanted everything for inclusive living available in this single sector of the county. While a noble endeavor, particularly considering OPZ’s past concern with the placement of only a few zoning types, OPZ had likely created plans that were too forward looking and too controversial.
In the early months of 1959 OPZ held a community meeting in the Essex-Middle River area to introduce and discuss the extensive development that would define the future Eastern Sector plan ("County Plan is Protested" 1959). At this meeting, years before the publication of the actual physical plan and zoning map, residents were already protesting the changes. Most of the NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) dissent that emerged from the three-hundred person crowd, was in response to the proposed industrialization of the Back River Neck peninsula. Residents expressed concerns about the loss of

*Figure 11* The eastern sector plan depicts intensive development for the Hart-Miller Island complex. (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965b)
residential and recreational possibilities if land was reserved for industry and effectively removed from the land market. They also expressed concerns about water pollution from industry. Brought together by their argument, residents formed the Back River Civic Improvement Association and followed up the meeting arguments with a formal letter to OPZ questioning how the plan would assure pollution elimination and the preservation of property values (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1965a).

OPZ responded to the pollution concerns with a 1960 study that recommended causeway construction to prevent pollutant mixing, and language built into M.P. zoning requiring pollution control measures (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1960). At the same time OPZ planners also admitted that their future planning efforts should be directed at completing a single county-wide master plan which would avoid industry and residential uses in the decades to come (Elliot 1960). This was the first evidence that county planners realized the limitations of sector planning and needed to refine growth management into a true county-wide master plan. Those efforts would dominate in the 1970s, but until then OPZ focused on completing the Eastern Sector plan by 1965.

By the time OPZ was required to hold a hearing for the proposed M.P. zone in 1965, arguments against the zoning were well-developed. According to The Sun, two-hundred Back River Neck residents attended the Towson meeting to argue many of the same points:

…a steady string of residents rose to denounce the proposal. A variety of arguments were presented against the new zoning; among these were objections that it was premature, that it would depreciate property, cause increased pollution,
produce more congestion on the already overtaxed roads in the area and place unfair restrictions on homeowners (Dennis 1965).

Back River Neck residents had gained a valuable ally in the lawyer and resident, James Kardash. Kardash aired concerns about the grandfathering of 180 private homes situated in the future M.P. area. He pointed out that grandfathered homeowners would not be allowed to modify or even rebuild their homes in the case of natural disaster or a house fire. Moreover, the zoning restrictions would jeopardize their ability to get fair value for their homes if they chose to sell. Kardash also pointed out that the majority of the land to be reserved for industry was not evenly owned by the majority of the people living there:

“One man owns about 800 acres, “ he charged, “and this man is one of the nation’s biggest junk dealers.” The lawyer concluded with the observation that it was noteworthy that scrap metal processing would be one of the light industries allowed under the M.P. zoning (Dennis 1965).

Thus, Kardash argued that only a minority population of the Lower Back River Neck would directly benefit from the zoning change, and that 180 other homeowners would unfairly suffer. While the county continued to maintain that the zoning would be for the general good of the county population for economic reasons, there could be no denying that the proposal was not agreeable to the majority of the community it was to affect.

Much to the relief of the dissenting residents of the LBRN, the M.P. rezoning of the Neck never occurred. In fact, many of the sector proposals for well-developed town centers, highways, and even the Hart-Miller Island Park were never implemented with this sector introduction or with the later county master “Guideplan” examined in the next chapter. A year after the Eastern Sector plan was published by the OPZ and handed over
to the Baltimore County Planning Board for final hearings and actual adoption, only the roadways portion had been officially adopted while the rest was pending approval (Orrick 1966). While the M.P. zoning was never officially adopted by the Planning Board, we will see in the next chapter how the industrial plans for the Lower Back River Neck persisted through the establishment of the urban growth boundary in 1967, as well as through the next iteration of master planning in the early 1970s.

While this research could not clarify the official position the Planning Board eventually took regarding the manufacturing zoning, it does posit some possibilities. First, a review of historic literature revealed that local residents attribute much of the later M.P. zoning failure to the fight put up by residents and the Back River Civic Improvement Association (Roberts 1993). While this research contends that they were an impressive force, it also maintains that larger economic and population changes likely played a role as well.

Perhaps the most modern aspect of the Eastern Sector Plan, its attempt at long-range comprehensive planning, was also its weakest. The earliest call for dredging Back River, reported in 1954, identified actual industry development as being ten to twenty years in the future. Ten years later, county planners maintained that same projection in the 1965 Eastern Sector plan. Why had the original ten-year projection not been met, but extended another ten years? Possibly the industrial demand OPZ and others called for never materialized into a force capable of pushing adoption. Maybe industry never actually came knocking. The whispers of deindustrialization in the Baltimore of 1950 had amplified by the late 1960s and planners must have realized that industry on the Back
River Neck peninsula was a pipedream not to be met by the post-industrial economy. Recall, from 1950 to 1970 Baltimore lost 46,000 manufacturing jobs, one third its industrial base (Levine 2000). As for the astounding forecasts of future population for the Eastern Planning Area, and the county at large, those never materialized either. In the 1960s the Regional Planning Council had called for the county to house one million people by 1980 (Outen 2007). However, the surge of suburbanization that characterized the post-war era was not sustained, and by 1980 Baltimore County was only home to about 650,000 people.

3.7 Summary

Examining the early planning efforts in Baltimore County and the surrounding area reveals an interesting story of both process and policy. The earliest top-down plans from the State and later regional planning body reveals that containment policy in the form of greenbelts and managed satellite town overflow has a long history in the Baltimore area. As for the first bottom-up approaches at local planning at the county level, we see that Baltimore County jumped at the chance to organize and accommodate a surging post-war population. The early adoption of systematic zoning regulations through the sector “master” plans of the 1950s depicts a county’s first attempts at managing growth and also its understanding of a distinctive urban and rural settlement pattern within the county. The last sector plans, exemplified by the Eastern Planning Area, illustrates a growing understanding of the need for comprehensive planning and better growth management tools to guide growth. The development of a county-wide
comprehensive master plan would be the next efforts of OPZ in the late 1960s and through the 1970s. While most of the early endeavors examined in this chapter were never implemented, they represent an important foundation that would support later planning efforts, like the implementation of the urban growth boundary, to be examined in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Citizens Respond: The 1964 Plan for the Valleys

While the focus of the Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ) remained on completing the sector plans in the 1960s, private planning efforts brought the issue of Baltimore County sprawl into the national spotlight and influenced the future path of OPZ. In 1962 a group of citizens residing north of Baltimore City, in the Green Spring and Worthington valleys felt that development pressures in the form of suburban subdivisions threatened their pastoral landscape. To protect their 70-acre rural area of the county (Figure 12), simply known as The Valleys, five hundred residents, most with extensive acres of real estate, established The Greenspring and Worthington Valley Area Planning Council, Inc. The name was later simplified to The Valleys Planning Council, Inc. (VPC).

Who were these independent citizens and what was the nature of their motivation? Consulting early membership records revealed that the VPC consisted of doctors, bankers, and city business owners who resided in this wealthy and fashionable part of the county (Carroll 1971). The 1962 meeting minutes reveal their initial purpose:

At the request from the floor the Chairman explained that the purpose of the Council is to plan for the growth of the Green Spring Valley area as a low density, residential community. It is felt that planning for such orderly growth of the area must satisfy two essential requirements, the first of which is compatible integration with the broader ideas of the planning program already undertaken by Baltimore County. Since the inclusion of low density residential areas in metropolitan planning is both desirable and acceptable, the Council believes its own ideas for development will be recognized and adopted by the County government. Thus, our goal will be achieved, so long as our plans are drawn and expressed to fit the larger scheme (Minutes, 1962, Douglas G. Carroll Papers, Maryland Historical Society, hereafter cited as Carroll 1971).
Figure 22. The location of the Greenspring and Worthington Valleys and encroaching spots of development. Darker areas represent the oldest urbanization and lightest areas are the youngest. (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964, n.p.)
Clearly, the VPC wanted to protect their current style of low density living, but at the same time recognized that the area must accept some share of the County’s projected future growth. It is important to note that this was not a defense of private privilege fueled by no-growth policy; rather, we find a pro-growth attitude and an interest in growth management strategies to guide that metropolitan growth. That is, as long as the VPC had a hand in the form of growth and could be assured that their aesthetics and real property values would not suffer. Also, it is obvious that the VPC recognized that they would need the support of the County for the plan to be implemented. Initial membership funds were raised and a preliminary promotional brochure was commissioned from a local professional planner to outline the group’s purpose and drum up residential and county support (Minutes 1963).

Fortunately for the group’s membership, the VPC was well connected in local government and planning circles so gaining their attention and support proved to be simply a matter of holding VPC meetings and extending the right invitations. According to their first meeting report the Councilman for the 2nd district, the political area of the county where The Valleys are located, was an original member of the VPC Advisory Board. This elected Republican Councilman, Jervis Finney, was also the county representative on the Baltimore Regional Planning Council8 (BRPC). Recall, the BRPC had just developed the 1960 greenbelt and 1962 “Metro Town” plans. Finney was not only politically well positioned to push the VPC agenda, but had considerable planning experience as a member of the BRPC. The VPC was not a group of novice activists, but

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8 The Baltimore Regional Planning Council would be renamed the Regional Planning Council (RPC) in 1963 when it became independent of the State Planning Department.
a well-organized force in the county. County Executive Spiro “Ted” Agnew attended the very first meeting as a guest speaker. According to the report:

Those members of the Council who were able to be present last night at our meeting were highly encouraged by Agnew’s high commendation of our project, and his “unequivocal support.” He was introduced by Jervis Finney…Ted Agnew stated that he was firmly behind the project and would do everything in his power to see that all county agencies involved cooperate to the fullest extent with members of our Council, as well as with our professional planners. (First Report meeting, 1962, 1)

The path ahead appeared to be smooth for this elite group of citizens. The only challenge that remained would be to find and employ a private planning firm to provide a strong and convincing plan when the group went before the County and lawmakers. Joining their personal wealth, education, and business faculties, the VPC privately raised over $100,000 to finance a professionally produced plan for The Valleys. This was a feat of private planning which had no precedent in the United States ("Residents Would Control Use of Valleys" 1964). The well-organized, and later paid, staff of the VPC foresaw “the need for the best possible consultant available any place in the United States,” and decided to open the project for proposals at the national scale (Minutes, 1963).

From among five proposals, submitting bids from $35,000 to $75,000, the VPC made the decision to work with Wallace and McHarg of Philadelphia. Impressed with the firm’s qualifications, initial proposal design, and relatively low quote of $40,000, the VPC checked-in with Malcolm Dill, the Baltimore County Director of Planning and Agnew for preliminary thoughts or objections. Receiving only enthusiastic support from both parties the VPC confidently moved ahead with contract negations. Correspondence between the VPC and David A. Wallace indicates that there also existed “excellent
cooperation” between Wallace and McHarg and all departments of the county administration (Letter to Spilmann, 1963).

While the warm reception of outside, professional planners by the public OPZ may be initially surprising - surely the outside efforts could be interpreted as an attack on county planning failures - a closer study reveals interesting results. By the time the firm took on The Plan for The Valleys in 1963, David A. Wallace was already an old hand in Baltimore planning. He had prepared the mixed-use Charles Center project in Baltimore’s central business district in the late 1950s. It had been praised by the likes of Jane Jacobs as the precursor to revitalization of the Inner Harbor, another project that would be tackled by Wallace and McHarg. According to McHarg’s autobiography, Wallace was the dominant city planner in the United States by the 1970s (McHarg 1996). While Wallace was highly regarded and well received in planning circles, McHarg was no stranger to them either. By the time he accepted The Plan for The Valleys project, he had already established the planning department at the University of Pennsylvania, had a popular CBS television show based on his natural environment lectures, and was in the process of revolutionizing the planning profession with his take on ecological or environmental planning - ideas which would be illustrated in The Plan for The Valleys (McHarg and Steiner 1998). Described as “brief, forceful and amusing” in VPC meetings, McHarg was a Scotsman who would exert a strong environmental and analytical influence on traditional planning (McHarg and Steiner 1998). His now classic book, In Design With Nature, would establish the analytical foundations for the development of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), just five years after The Plan for
The Valleys was completed using the same overlay techniques. Together Wallace and McHarg were a well-respected team, and with the VPC footing the bill OPZ could reap the benefits of the firm’s professional advice while focusing their own efforts on sector plans elsewhere. Indeed, those very sentiments were echoed in a 1968 VPC internal report:

The Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning is now involved in the detailed planning of “Sectors” of the County. The Valleys area breaks down into several Sectors and the County is anxious that we continue our program begun in 1963 by developing more detailed Sector Plans. This would relieve the County of considerable time and expense and would permit the Council to influence the process of planning for the Valleys…It will relieve the County’s Planning Office of staff time here which is urgently needed in other areas (Carroll 1971).

The end result produced by Wallace and McHarg, the 1964 Plan For The Valleys, was much more than a depiction of different development options for the community – it was a 62-page commentary on suburban sprawl and its physical, social, and environmental impacts as they were then understood. It was a call not only for the community to guide growth, but for the county, region, and nation to also direct and guide the shape of growth. The Plan For The Valleys was intended not only as a solution for the Greenspring and Worthington Valleys, but as a model for the nation. While modern implications of sprawl are recognized to include a vast number of environmental externalities including air pollution, water pollution, and habitat destruction, to name just a few, Wallace and McHarg, and the community they represented were motivated to preserve The Valleys mostly on aesthetics alone. The Preamble set the stage for this motivation and situated the local problem as a microcosm reflective of national problems:

Today, careless building in the city and suburb destroys natural beauty. Too often, tawdriness, discontinuity, disorder and even anarchy are the result. Nature
is destroyed, the image of man in the artifice of city and suburb is tragically distant from the dream. The image of happiness eludes. …Cannot we create, from a beautiful natural landscape, and environment inhabited by man in which natural beauty is retained, man housed in a community? …The urban expansion which menaces the Green Spring and Worthington Valleys today is typical of a national problem. The normal expectation for this and other areas is that growth will be uncontrolled, sporadic, representing short term values, little taste or skill. Slowly nature will recede to be replaced by growing islands of development. These will in time coalesce into a mass of low grade urban tissue, having eliminated all natural beauty, diminished rare excellences, both historic and modern (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964, n.p.).

This passionate plea for change stood in stark contrast with any plans the county had ever produced. Indeed, it was a mosaic of planning, rigorous scientific analysis, growth forecasting, and social commentary reflective of its private origins. The VPC had a product capable of appealing to county government logos as well as citizen ethos. Recall, this plan was commissioned the same year that Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*; the environmental movement was in its infancy and aesthetics were a major point of rally for most citizens. Besides the argument for guiding growth to preserve natural beauty, The Plan for The Valleys also set out to prove that guided growth would be financially beneficial for both county and citizen more than unchecked sprawl. This was to be an example of a how development could be done with “wisdom, skill and taste” worthy of the American dream (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964, n.p.).

What did Wallace and McHarg propose as a solution for accommodating development pressures in the agricultural valleys and wooded ridges of the area? The firm recognized that development in the area was inevitable because of its location surrounding major highways, as well as the forecasts for future population growth; a warning call which regional and county governments had repeated like a broken record
since the 1940s. Wallace and McHarg reviewed the multiple growth forecasts produced by the BRPC, County, State Department of Planning, as well as individuals, and produced their own composite projection. Their calculations predicted 350 to 450 new homes would be built in the area every year for the next sixteen years. Thus, they projected The Valleys to grow from 17,000 people in 1964 to 110,000 or 150,000 in thirty years (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964).

The plan explained that The Valleys had escaped early development pressures because the first waves of post-war suburbanization had primarily focused on the industrial areas of the county where jobs flourished, as seen in the primary suburbs of Dundalk and Essex. By the early 1960s there were subdivision proposals for residential lands along the beltway on the fringe of the Valleys. Most of these proposals were for lots under one acre in size and the plan maintained that these subdivisions would rapidly change the historic, large-lot agricultural pattern historically experienced in The Valleys. Why had these proposals taken place at the fringe of The Valleys? Wallace and McHarg pointed out that those were the areas where county sewers existed or could be implemented cheaply. These subdivision proposals served as an early warning for the rest of The Valleys area. This vulnerability to development was inevitable, according to Wallace and McHarg, on account of three factors: prevailing land values, current zoning codes, and the imminence of sewers. The plan expounded upon the latter concern as it explained:

The major defense of the Valleys is the absence of sewers and a County policy which does not anticipate sewering them in the near future. Should the valleys be sewered, they will succumb to development and be erased forever. Sewers are
like a rifle aimed at the heart of the area. When, and if, the trigger is pulled, The Valleys will surely succumb (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964, n.p.).

The plan illustrated what the area would look like once that trigger was pulled and the traditional pattern of scattered growth encouraged - what Wallace and McHarg named “The Uncontrolled Growth Model” (Figure 13). This was a “spectre of the future, sufficient to convince even the most insensitive as to the likely despoliation of The Valleys” (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964, n.p.). It was also useful for the firm to establish forecasts of future land values if the status quo development was continued into the future. The plan projected increases in land value from $1,400 to $8,500 for single-family lots (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964). These projections then became the baseline value against which the firm would compare their land values from alternative forms of development. With a healthy dose of pragmatism, Wallace and McHarg understood that the natural beauty of the area was enough for some residents to commit to alternative forms of development, but other residents, including county power brokers, needed financial reassurance that alternate forms could be as, if not more, profitable than sprawl.

Ultimately, the Uncontrolled Growth Model, and its attendant maps and financial tables, which the firm called “The Spectre of The Future,” provided a useful pictorial representation as well as economic “cost” of status quo growth. Wallace and McHarg would use this image of the future as leverage for their own alternative proposals. They concluded the section with an illustrative description of this path of growth, typical of their passionate style:
The Spectre Map shows catastrophe, the face of the future, “noplace” U.S.A. …Winding roads, now pastoral, tree lined and fence bordered, will be replaced by land, straight strips of asphalt or concrete. Trees, hedges, fences will go as will the familiar rural scene. Homes will dot the wooded slopes like broken teeth. …A stream will be culverted, a gas station appear, more houses and suddenly the
impetus to protect will be supplanted by the instinct to sell, profit and flee. Deterioration will accelerate, valleys change to seas of houses, broad, faceless highways, commercial development and the valley swill have gone, submerged in subtopia (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964, n.p.).

How best to evade these “broken teeth” and this creation of a value-less “noplace?” Wallace and McHarg tackled the problem from multiple angles including hierarchical community design theories, concerns for open space, infrastructure issues, and by considering the regional “Metro Town” proposal. Wallace and McHarg also suggested a spatial hierarchy of hamlets, villages, and town centers; the same general community form which was to be adopted and repeated by OPZ’s 1965 Eastern Sector Plan (Figure 14). Low density homes would be nestled on the plateaus, while the densest development, high rises, would be pushed to the edges of the plateaus (Figure 15). The firm introduced the concept of “clustering” development to preserve larger tracts of land - an often cited concept in contemporary Smart Growth schemes. Wallace and McHarg also introduced the need for more protective zoning for the area and suggested iterations of restrictive zoning for flood plains, valley floors, and areas with steep slopes.

According to one retired county planner charged with developing OPZ’s Rural Conservation (R.C.) zones, Wallace and McHarg’s suggested zoning changes were precursors to the county R.C. zones of the 1970s (Dillon 2010). Wallace and McHarg also saw the benefits of involving non-profit land trust organizations to purchase or accept the tax-deductable donation of individual development rights and suggested the VPC organize such a group. Today, advocates of Smart Growth promote Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs) among non-profits and Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) among local governments to manage growth. Interestingly, the plan also called
Figure 14. The Optimum Land Use proposed by Wallace and McHarg for The Valleys with development depicted as a pink area. (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964, n.p.)
for the creation of a Real Estate Syndicate which was to distribute part of the profits from private development on plateau properties with the valley landowners whose lands were preserved. This concept of all those included in the plan, faced resistance from Valley residents and was never implemented. Dillon reflects on this failed concept:

[The Valleys] are wealthy areas. [The Syndicate] was a little bit socialistic, and for what is probably a pretty conservative area, that’s a strong pill. That didn’t fly, that didn’t fly at all. But the idea of preserving the valleys certainly flew, and protecting the slopes flew (Dillon 2010).
For the most part, The Plan was a convincing call for growth management. In their calculations, the proposed “Optimum Land Use” scheme would remove 3,000 valley acres from development but produce about $40 million worth of development by 1980. Over the same period, they projected that an uncontrolled growth model would produce about $33.5 million. Thus, planned growth proved to be as profitable, if not slightly more so than unplanned and environmentally damaging growth. Furthermore, while this research does not attempt to analyze each suggestion in the plan, it does focus on the infrastructure concerns and proposals, as infrastructure is directly related to the purpose of the 1967 Urban-Rural Demarcation Line.

The firm devoted an entire section of The Plan to the critical sewer issue - what they considered to be the gun to the heart of the entire area. With a nod to McHarg’s work in environmental planning, a land use inventory analyzed the “physiographic characteristics” of the area, namely the underlying geology and soil characteristics of The Valleys. The firm vehemently insisted that the poorly drained soils of the valley floors were no place for installing septic systems. This was due to the potential for widespread groundwater pollution into the underlying and valuable Cockeysville marble aquifer which the rest of the county and city depended upon as a drinking water source. To preserve these valleys in pasture and agriculture, the plan suggested locating development on the ridge tops, or plateaus, where sewerage of any type would be less damaging to the environment. Specifically, this policy would continue the pattern of large lot, low-density development desired by residents and supported by the County’s 1962 “Metro Town” plan which located denser dwellings outside of the Valleys. As for the legality of
denying sewer service to the valleys, Wallace and McHarg specifically state that any policy:

…based on an officially approved Plan for the valleys, would be unlikely to incur successful legal action protesting that the denial of sewers was an unconstitutional taking of land or property rights. The refusal of sewers would be neither arbitrary nor capricious, but a part of a Plan whose implementation was necessary to the overall public welfare (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964, n.p.).

With that, the idea of legally designating the extent of sewers within the county for the specific control of growth was once more voiced, as it had been pointed out on a regional scale as early as the 1937 greenbelt plan. But this argument, now at the county-scale, further focused and legitimized the call for sewers by pointing to the legal powers of an official county plan or policy. If the somewhat scattered efforts of the land use sector studies could be compiled into an actual county-wide master plan with stipulations about infrastructure limits, the county would be in a strong legal position to defend its decisions and actually manage growth. While the official “Recommendation” section of the plan specifically called for the county to develop public policy for sewering The Valleys, since sewers were, “…the most important implementing factor for the Plan,” the broader policy was still encouraged (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964, n.p.). Wallace and McHarg suggested that the county view the provision of sewer infrastructure as an opportunity to use public investment to guide growth rather than as a response to random development. While their printed plan stuck to their project area, they could not help but see the bigger picture.

Wallace and McHarg also argued that their recommended sewering option for The Valleys would be more economical for the county and taxpayers. The firm presented
a number of sewer options for the area, with the sewering of the ridges proving to be a more economical option as fewer pipes would be required in this scheme (Figure 16). Furthermore, sewering the plateaus raise the land values of these unimproved areas and effectively slow growth pressures in the area.

The plan received instant local attention from newspapers, as no citizen group anywhere had ever initiated anything similar at such a personal cost ("Residents Would Control Use of Valleys" 1964). Also, Baltimore County planners and government, having been included in the planning process, viewed The Plan as a valuable product which could assist their own efforts, and continued their support for the area for years after its publication ("County Vows Valleys Aid" 1967). At a July 26, 1966 VPC meeting held two years after the publication of the plan, Jervis Finney, County Councilman and BRPC representative expressed this appreciation and government reception:

[Finney] warmly endorsed the goals of the Plan for The Valleys and commended the [Valley Planning] Council for the leading role which it was taking in assisting the Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning and other related agencies by providing a constructive and workable solution to the problems of the residential growth faced by Baltimore County (Carroll 1971).

Furthermore, the meeting revealed just how influential Wallace and McHarg’s call for sewer policy and utility management had been:

Mr. Francis N. Inglehart, former [VPC] member and Chairman of the Baltimore County Planning Board, added that the plan has had a tremendous impact not only in Baltimore County but also on the regional planning council’s program in the Baltimore area. [Inglehart reports] that the Plan for The Valleys has had a tremendous impact on [the County planning staff’s] own planning policies in that the staff is now attempting to hold the line where extensions of utilities are concerned. The form of the Plan for the Valleys will be incorporated in the forthcoming county guide plan [emphasis added] (Carroll 1971).
Figure 16. The plan depicts four alternatives for sewering the area. Note that Fig 4, the final recommendation, sewers only the valleys using the least amount of pipe. (Wallace-McHarg Associates 1964, n.p.)
Clearly, the concept for the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line was well in the works by mid-1966 thanks to the foresight of the VPC, the innovative ideas of Wallace and McHarg, and their influential plan. As a final product, the Plan For The Valleys was iconic for Baltimore County, the nation, and the emerging field of environmental planning. The plan held sewers responsible for development. Furthermore, it highlighted the need for a strong county policy on that infrastructure. The Plan For The Valleys became a well known product for the planners and with its subsequent adoption by Baltimore County, brought many accolades to both firm and local government (McHarg and Steiner 1998). Even among contemporary planners and planning associations, The Plan For The Valleys is considered to be a milestone in planning history and the evolution of “good” design. In January 2010 the American Planning Association, the national professional body for planners, selected the plan for a National Planning Landmark Award (Eckdish Knack 2010).

4.2 The 1967 Urban-Rural Demarcation Line

The attempt by Baltimore County to “hold the line” on sewer extension was made manifest with the creation of one of the country’s first urban growth boundaries, the 1967 Urban-Rural Demarcation Line (URDL) which delineated the extent of sewer and water within the county. Unlike the zoning regulations that the county had previously used to enforce land use management, the URDL had no legal precedent in the state. There was no example to follow. This was relatively new and mysterious planning territory for OPZ. Don Outen, Baltimore County Natural Resource Manager and planning historian,
reflects on this somewhat sudden emergence of the URDL concept: “It’s one of our big mysteries for a long time. In our growth history, it’s one of those things that really puzzled me having worked for the county. Where did this idea really come from?..There is not clear documentation” (Outen 2010). Outen maintains that the earliest depiction of the URDL was on an 8” x 11” map of the county where a line was generally drawn, labeled, and dated July 1966, just a month after Inglehart discussed holding the line on public utilities with the VPC. However, that document failed to discuss or even reference the URDL, no less explain what it implied for sewer extension.

What is known and documented is the legal establishment of the URDL in 1967 with what one planner referred to as “famous Bill 40” (Dillon 2010). The bill defined the URDL:

A boundary line established by the Planning Board, dividing that portion of Baltimore County considered as “urban” from that portion of the County considered as “rural.” In establishing or relocating such line, the Planning Board shall consider population density, existing public water-supply and sewerage facilities, other existing public facilities, and public facilities scheduled for planning or construction in the Capital Budget and Five-Year Capital Program (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1975, 101).

While this definition recognized the flexible nature of UGBs over time, it simplified the delineation of the boundary. The 1966 illustration of the URDL was a hand-drawn line at the county scale (Outen 2007). This depiction stands in stark contrast to the modern delineation methods that are based on rigorous land use analysis at a fine scale. As its definition suggests, the URDL was drawn to mostly coincide with the already established Metropolitan District line, the official area where public water and sewer service was available at cost from Baltimore city (Dillon 2010). The District line, and later URDL,
followed the natural topography of county watersheds and included the lowest elevations in the service area. These lower areas could be serviced by gravity lines, which was a significantly more cost effective method for transporting water and sewage than pumping these services over ridges. The URDL was expected to periodically expand and contract, thus planners attached a date to the line that corresponded to the traditional four year rezoning process. When the county was rezoned, the URDL gained a new date. The 1980 URDL was the last iteration of the line to have a date attached to it, after which the line changed very little.

This county bill legally established specifically zoned overlay “districts” to guide one type of development, the location of gas stations. Bill 40 stated that outside of the urban area, gas stations could only be located where the newly created Rural-Commercial District was superimposed over certain zones, like the “business local” or “manufacturing, light” (Orrick 1967). Thus, the Rural-Commercial District was laid on top of previously established “base” zones in the area. It did not change the base zoning, but simply added regulations on gas station locations and avoided the need for complicated “rezoning” of the entire area.

Furthermore, there was a deeper political implication nested within the new overlay zones which would determine the legal course a service station proposal would take within the county zoning process. The different overlay districts would help “planners to determine where new gas stations can locate without a hearing; where they

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9 Overlay zones are now commonly used to place additional use regulations on an area, particularly regarding a single subject or use. Homes and businesses in historic districts are able to retain their individual land uses, but also contribute to historic designation thanks to this type of zoning. Overlay zoning is also commonly used to protect natural as well as cultural features.
can locate only after persuading the zoning commissioner at a hearing, and where they cannot locate” (Orrick 1967). Since a copy of this zoning overlay scheme has not been identified by this research or through the attempts of others (Outen 2010), the specific location of districts, base zones, and permissions remains a fuzzy area of URDL history. What can be determined from the research is that the new Rural-Commercial overlay district guided the location of service stations, and in turn the URDL guided the location of the land use districts (Orrick 1967).

The zoning restrictions for gas stations in Bill 40 were not well received by the oil industry. The industry considered the new zoning to be “the toughest in the nation” ("County Council Relaxes Regulations On Filling Stations" 1967). Indeed, even the elected County Councilmen expressed concerns that these new zoning regulations would unfairly discriminate against a single type of business and possibly jeopardize free enterprise in the county. They wanted to manage growth but not be perceived badly by business interests who might then take their companies elsewhere. Interestingly, this research did not reveal any immediate opinions surrounding the implementation of the URDL in Bill 40 and its implications for sewer and water service. As Wallace and McHarg had predicted in their plan, there were no immediate lawsuits against the county for restricting utilities but it was not for the reasons they had forecasted. The lack of an initial public response to the restrictions of the URDL was likely due to the fact that this new line was incapable of completely restricting development in the rural parts of the county. Dillon explains this was a matter of zoning which was not changed under Bill 40:
In theory the areas that were in the rural parts of the county were treated as residual R.6 [Residential 6,000 ft² lots]. Imagine that. Six-thousand square foot lots all over the north and east side of the county. They were trying to build houses on \( \frac{1}{2} \) acre lots with well and septic systems (Dillon 2010).

Thus, developers faced little initial resistance to build on small lots from the new URDL as long as they stuck to private sewerage and water systems. Suburban-style growth was still possible, even with the 1967 URDL. This was to change in the 1970s when the county realized that their zoning and UGB tools needed to be more effective against this type of growth and its environmental consequences.

However, until zoning regulations could be modified to better support the URDL, the focus of public reaction to Bill 40 remained fixed on the impetus for the Bill - gas stations ("County Council Relaxes Regulations On Filling Stations" 1967). This suggests that the URDL was not initially the important tool that it has since evolved into, but that its meaning to planners and residents has been modified over time as it has been strengthened with other planning policies.

How had gas stations, as a specific form of development, set the wheels turning for the establishment of one of the nation’s first iconic growth management tools? An interview with Jack Dillon, who worked for OPZ at the time, reveals the intense pressures that this land use exerted on residents, politicians, and planners alike.

Prior to ’67 there was a rush as development was creeping out along the [highway] corridors. There was a desire to have a gas station at every corner, on the intersection of any two major streets. Every service station company was looking to have their own locations at these things. In those days, you could ask for a reclassification [of zoning] on a weekly basis. So neighborhoods found themselves constantly battling a Citgo, Exxon, Shell, or whoever wanted to put a gas station on their corner. It got to be so bad, and the political pressure was so bad, that [Spiro] Agnew put in a moratorium on service stations. It was immediately challenged by the service station industry. During that moratorium
he required that legislation be developed to control the location of gas stations (Dillon 2010).

It was reported as early as November of 1965, that Planning Director George Gavrelis was considering OPZ action to contain the “commercial mess of piecemeal roadside development...Possibly, we can do something about signs and clutter, but beyond that we are somewhat impotent” (Orrick 1965). Clearly, the OPZ needed new regulatory powers not available in the current zoning scheme.

Bill 40 was that legislative product which Agnew demanded and Gavrelis needed to overcome his department’s weaknesses. As for how a UGB, a tool which traditionally delineates sewer and water, was developed to guide the location of the overlay districts, the story is not exactly clear. “There were a whole lot of [stipulations] under Bill 40. I don’t remember exactly how the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line was worked into that bill, but that’s probably how it happened,” states Dillon (Dillon 2010). Outen concurs that the URDL’s modest beginnings in Bill 40 were not initially recognized as a landmark moment in county planning history:

It was dealing with consequences of growth, but it was not intended initially, or described, to be as what we look at as the URDL today...It drew a line on the map and said, well there should be these districts beyond that...It’s one of those things that over time a lot of those details get lost. I’ve never seen a depiction of that Rural overlay district. That whole area [of history] is still unclear” (Outen 2010).

What can be said with certainty was that the county was still struggling to manage the form of growth in the 1960s and that Wallace and McHarg’s 1964 Plan For The Valleys specifically spelled out the need to control the limits of sewerage to slow and control growth. County planners and officials, like Inglehart, recognized the importance of this call to action and were actively seeking to “hold the line” by the mid-1960s. It...
would appear that passing Bill 40 in 1967, with its focus on the aesthetics of gas station development, simply provided planners with the opportunity to simultaneously control gas station locations and implement some sort of county-wide sewer policy. Such foresight and creativity is not surprising to Outen due to the professional quality and connectedness of the OPZ:

[The URDL is] our fundamental achievement, but there is such uncertainty about that. I can say that one of the things I did find, pretty consistently, is that our planners in those days were following the profession very well, in terms of new ideas and new developments. Anything out there that was being described, they were following. Whether they could have picked things up from [The American Society of Planning Officials]¹⁰ we don’t know for sure, but they seemed pretty well aware of what the planning profession was doing (Outen 2010).

Dillon also confirms that OPZ had good leadership which was open to the sewer concepts presented in Wallace and McHarg’s plan:

That idea of having a demarcation line kind of settled in with different people and ultimately influenced the legislation that established the URDL. Water, sewer, and roads drive development…there were aspects of [The Plan] that the planning side [of OPZ] picked up. At the time we had a director, George Gavrelis, who was a Harvard educated planner, and while George was a pro-development planner, he was also a smart guy. He knew and embraced that idea. In his own way, he probably cultivated the idea of the URDL [within OPZ] (Dillon 2010).

Gas stations and growth boundaries certainly seem like odd bedfellows according to a modern understanding of UGBs, but their pairing in Bill 40 represents a remarkable achievement of early growth management techniques by Baltimore County planners. Interestingly, we see that the URDL was initially drawn to delineate the spatial extent of water and sewer, and guide gas station overlay districts, but had no powers to preserve rural areas of the county. This history runs counter to the modern UGB literature which

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¹⁰ The American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO) is now the American Planning Association which represents the professional field of city and regional planning. It is charged with certifying planners through its American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) division.
generally describes the dual conservation and growth management goals of this tool. Essentially, without policy beyond the extent of services, the URDL was initially more of an Urban Service Area (USA) tool than a traditional UGB. This research argues that the URDL has transitioned from simple USA to a more complex UGB tool beginning just a few years after it was established in 1967. It maintains that the URDL has been a framework for subsequent growth management zoning and policies, and has conceptually evolved into the “fundamental achievement” of growth management in the county. This transition from gas station guide to iconic tool is explored through the county plans and zoning changes which followed the establishment of the URDL.

4.3 The Changing Nature of the Line: The 1980 Guideplan

In 1968, just one year after the creation of the URDL, OPZ began the process of compiling its very first comprehensive master plan. This plan, called the 1980 Guideplan, experienced a preliminary release in 1969, but was not completely adopted until 1972. The purpose of the plan was to compile the efforts of the sector plans and significantly update the oldest versions which had begun back in the 1950s. Like the Eastern Area Plan, the Guideplan would combine map, text, graphic illustrations and guide zoning efforts. For the purpose of this research, the Guideplan is important as it is the first plan to make use of the URDL and illustrate its importance for planning efforts. From the start the Guideplan explains how growth should be channeled inside the URDL:

…Baltimore County is both rural and urban, town and country. This “double identity” is accentuated by dividing the County into those areas now served by utilities or potentially serviceable by 1980, and those not slated to receive water and/or sewer until after 1980…new development should be encouraged for many
reasons, not the least of which is to save tax dollars, to “fill in” the urbanized areas. There is enough vacant land within the demarcation line to accommodate more than half again as many people as live in the whole County today (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1969, 3).

Here, planners have perfectly described what Pendall et al. (2002) call the “pull” factors of a USA. Development is “pulled” to places where public infrastructure already exists, and “fills in” these areas. This strong commitment to growing the urban area to capacity before expanding into the rural parts of the county is the same motivation described in modern Smart Growth plans. Modern notions often express environmental factors as being primary for this concern. While county planners in 1969 predated the “ecological footprint” or “sustainability” concepts as they are now generally understood, they were certainly aware that infill and redevelopment permitted undeveloped areas to remain open.

Pendall et al. (2002) state that a true UGB has not only “pull” pressures from limiting the extent of infrastructure, but “push” forces that deter growth away from rural lands and place them “out of bounds” for development. Without the latter force, the UGB is really just a USA. The Guideplan provides the first hint that the OPZ was looking to remedy the lack of a “push” force for the URDL. Recall, that development on septic systems could still occur on R.6, half-acre zones outside of the URDL. The Guideplan presented two new zones, Rural: Deferred Planning (R.D.P.) and Rural-Suburban: Conservation (R.S.C.) which were separately adopted in 1970. These new zones were an attempt to bolster the URDL’s effectiveness in guiding growth, and also remedy the risk of pollution from septic systems on small lots - a risk which had attracted the attention of the county Health Department. Further complicating the development
system, the Health Department felt half-acre lots were too small and fought for the right to approve this type of development on a case-by-case basis (Dillon 2010). While the Health Department recommended new zoning in 10 (R.D.P) and 3-acre (R.S.C.) minimums, OPZ settled on a 1-acre unit for both of the “rural” zones (Outen 2007). While zones had the same minimum size, the plan suggested they would be used differently. The R.D.P. zones were for areas which might be suitable for urban development in the future, and should be protected from low-density sprawl which might negate the possibility of denser urban development later. These were intended as zones that controlled the timing of growth. The R.S.C. zone, on the other hand, was for areas which should never be considered for any sort of urban development because they were not suitable for sewer and water service. The R.S.C. zone was where Wallace and McHarg’s ideas of preservation based on physiographic characteristics were somewhat realized. The Guideplan described this zone:

There are sections of the County outside of but contiguous to the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line which, because of poorly drained soil, rough topography, steep slope, juxtaposition to reservoir or a combination of these factors, should never be considered for urban development, and thus should not be considered for extension of municipal sewer and water service. These areas should be maintained as permanent low density, predominantly rural or suburban conservation areas (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1969, 6).

While the 1-acre minimum size was a slight health improvement over the R.6 designation which had been previously applied across the rural parts of the county, the two new zones were not particularly effective due to their small minimum sizes. What is important for this research, is that the Guideplan and the two new zones illustrate that OPZ was beginning to see a need for stronger zoning to reinforce the URDL and better guide
development. This first step of “rural” zoning would evolve into stronger code by 1974 with subsequent county and citizen actions.

While the Guideplan included zoning that started to “push,” albeit weakly, development into the urban portion of the URDL, it does not resemble a contemporary UGB. What a modern planner might consider “urban” land uses were still depicted outside the URDL. The Lower Back River Neck area is an excellent example of this paradox. On the Guideplan map, complete with the 1980 URDL, we see the port industry zoning established in the 1950s (Figure 17). The 1980 URDL shows actual extension of sewer and water at the time (1969), and the forecasted extension of those services by 1980. The URDL snakes just west of this land use, placing this industry in the “rural” portion of the county. This example suggests that the initial establishment of the URDL did not play an instant role in saving the LBRN from intensive port industry uses, but that the zoning stayed on the books and in the map. Jack Dillon confirms this contradiction would have been possible at the time since the URDL itself had no power to change the zoning map. Changes to zoning were accomplished every four years during the rezoning process. That rezoning procedure, Dillon contends, is a separate and somewhat elevated above other planning and capital budget processes in OPZ:

[The county zoning code] has been amended over and over and over again. What was a small little black book is a great big blue book…Zoning in this county has always been a purview that the County Council would adopt zoning regulations and maps which would be in effect for a period of about four years…So theoretically, every piece of land is up for rezoning every four years…Zoning has always been King, not the master plan. [OPZ] still resist having the master plan be the driving factor of the zoning maps. Even today (Dillon 2010).
Figure 17. The 1980 Guideplan map. The M.L.P. industrial zoning for the LBRN is brown and the URDL is a grey line cutting between the LBRN and Essex. (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1969)
The MLP zone was still in on the zoning map when the preliminary Guideplan was published in 1969. Only the rezoning process could remove this zone. While this first comprehensive planning process should have been guiding the zoning decisions, as a new product the Guideplan was faced with working with some older codes. At first glance the URDL seems to contradict its own demarcation purpose of rural and urban, but Dillon maintains that the plan was simply contending with what was already in the zoning books. Baltimore County planners certainly did not consider port uses to have rural characteristics. Far from it, planners were well aware of the intensive use of the zone, but reasoned that the MLP area would not develop or need to be serviced by 1980. Thus, it would not be within the 1980 URDL.

The next year, in 1970, the 4-year rezoning process was initiated by OPZ. During this process public hearings were held regarding the Guideplan and the R.D.P. and R.S.C. zoning changes it proposed for the county. This process evaluated over 500 separate issues, which included the adoption and approval of the two new “rural” zones. The 1970 rezoning process was also the moment concerned citizens of the LBRN had been waiting for. It was during this process that OPZ removed the M.L.R. zoning from the LBRN and applied the new rural deferred 1-acre zoning in its place. An OPZ report on the rezoning process for the Eastern Area pointed to the changes the Guideplan and the URDL (the 1976 version which would become the 1980 iteration) would have for the area:

There are no new growth areas beyond the proposed 1976 Urban Rural Demarcation Line being recommended for this sector...because there is ample unused land available within even the existing Urban Rural Demarcation Line. All of the land outside of the [URDL] is being recommended for rural deferred
planning zoning at this time. The Eastern Area Zoning Map added 240 acres of M.L.R. Zoning to lower Back River Neck Peninsula in 1966. Lack of utilities and roads have made the Board reconsider and recommend removal of this industrial land (Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning 1970, 15).

Clearly, attitudes had changed significantly at OPZ from the accommodating nature of the 1965 Eastern Area Sector plan to this 1970 zoning recommendation that identified concepts of growth management. The report essentially threw out the notion of making the LBRN a population and industry center by applying what was then, the strictest rural zoning that OPZ had on the books. The fact that the report mentioned the lack of utilities and adequate roads as a reason for zoning removal indicates that planners did not foresee URDL expansion to include this area.

This was perhaps a simplistic explanation, suitable for a zoning report, but this research revealed other public concerns for this development in the previous chapter. Recall that citizens voiced their concern regarding land values, and interviews identified water pollution and a growing concern for the health of the Chesapeake Bay. No less important is the fact that manufacturing had more or less emptied out of the city and county by 1970 and industrial demands for space were likely nowhere near their pre- and post-war levels. The amount of residential development slated for the area was considerably reduced thanks to slowed population forecasts. There is little doubt that the 1970 rezoning process was a good opportunity to remove what was now illogical zoning and replace it with the newest rural zoning codes. The Guideplan shows a UGB in progress; a new tool contending with previously established zones which were created before the concept of urban and rural demarcation existed. While the new rural zoning codes indicate that OPZ was attempting to strengthen the preservation goals of the new
UGB, the 1-acre stipulation did not advance that goal very far. OPZ was well aware of the preservation limitations on 1-acre lots, and while it was a respectable start, by the next rezoning process they had moved to produce stronger codes to bolster the URDL.

4.4 Growth Management: Conservation Zoning and Smart Growth

While the establishment of the URDL in 1967 and the creation of rural zoning were preliminary steps toward growth management for the county, OPZ was able to modify and expand this “toolbox” to effectively manage growth in the 1970s. In 1974 the county formed a semi-public North County Advisory Group to address the concerns of rural and farmland preservation that were not being effectively managed outside the URDL under the 1-acre lot scheme. According to Dillon, the group consisted of a cross-section of rural interests including developers, farmers, residents, environmentalists, and two county planners. Rural Conservation zoning classifications were born from this planning effort and would truly provide the “push” needed to deter rural growth and make the URDL a useful UGB. These five new classifications were intended to protect reservoirs, floodplains, agricultural, rural-residential, and rural-deferred areas from development. Development was to be completely restricted for the first two zones, mostly restricted for agricultural areas, limited in rural-residential areas, and delayed in rural-deferred areas, at least until more urban land was needed within the URDL.

Jack Dillon was part of the OPZ team charged with the development of the zones and determining what uses would be permitted in each category. He reflects on this period in OPZ history: “This was all growth management, but we didn’t call it that then” (Dillon 2010). The agricultural zoning was applied to most of the northern, rural parts of
the county and immediately caused public uproar as it significantly reduced the development potential of those lands. Where the previous R.D.P. zone allowed 1-acre lot development, the Rural Conservation 2 (R.C. 2) agricultural zone introduced a density factor of .2. For a 100 acre farm, this translated to 20 houses. For a farmer previously able to develop 100 1-acre lots under the R.D.P. zoning, the R.C. 2 zone only permitted 20 lots with a minimum of 1 acre each. “Preferably they would be clustered so you could keep the farmland available, but that was not required, it was just a suggestion,” explains Dillon (Dillon 2010). According to Dillon while some farmers were upset with the reduced land value potential in their lands, most were more concerned with the lack of legacy lots for their children under R.C. 2 stipulations (Dillon 2010). Bowing to pressure from farmers County Executive Dale Anderson creatively mediated this problem and simultaneously strengthened the county’s preservation efforts. Baltimore County had entered into the state Agricultural Preservation Program which focused on using state money to purchase development rights from farmers, and Anderson reasoned that if farmers would participate in the program they would be permitted a certain number of lots per child. Not only did R.C.2 strengthen growth management efforts in the county by significantly decreasing the developable potential of rural lands, it had also spurred the county to utilize the new state preservation program.

While the rural zones of 1970 met with little public resistance, since they were mostly ineffective at changing the status quo of rural development, the new R.C. zones affected citizens across the county. Outen, a resident of the county at the time recalls:

[I was] hearing all these battles back and forth. There were some things that were publically [stated by] developers on the north side. When the R.C. zones went in,
I remember seeing…literally a full page ad in The Sun Paper, telling people down in the southeast side of the county that the county was dumping all the development on them; that they would be forced to take all this future growth and that it was unfair that they were cutting everyone off up here in this area north of Towson. It was very political, with a small “p” (Outen 2010).

According to Outen, a group of developers even attempted to sue the county when the R.C. zones were applied to the rural parts of the county. “Those developers felt very burned because they felt they had vested interest into the development of that area because they had paid for the utility studies” (Outen 2010). But not all residents were upset with the change. Residents in the Greenspring and Worthington Valleys, and particularly the VPC, welcomed the zoning. For The Valleys, the R.C. zones completed the preservation concept that Wallace and McHarg had endorsed. Like the rural zones of 1970, the R.C. zones were located according to physiographic factors as Wallace and McHarg had suggested, but this time the placement was even more discriminatory.

According to Dillon who helped to develop these zones:

[The R.C. zones] were adopted in ’75 and came into effect in ’76 on the new comprehensive maps. That set up how we fell back to the McHarg plan, where the R.C. 5 [Rural Residential] was placed on the ridge tops, R.C.2 [Agriculture] on the floor and the valley walls where there would be no public water and sewer. That’s the relationship back to the plan for the valleys. That closed the circle (Dillon 2010).

This research argues that the Rural Conservation zones were a huge advance in growth management for Baltimore County and critical to the success of the URDL.

These zones strengthened the effectiveness of the URDL when they came online in 1976.

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11 Outen mentions that the conduits for water and sewer for this area, now called Hayfield, were actually installed under present day I-83 before the R.C. zones removed the potential for development in this area. They would have accommodated the major interceptors for water and sewer but were never used due to the zoning changes. They remain a hidden artifact of the pre-growth management era in Baltimore County planning history.
While the URDL had maintained the “pull” on development over its lifetime by restricting utilities, it was finally provided with effective “push” forces from the R.C. zones. With the new zones sprawling development could be successfully deflected away from rural areas to the confines of the URDL. With the stronger zoning in place, the URDL was now a more useful UGB tool. Over the next few decades, as growth management became a common national practice, Baltimore County planners would continue to modify and enhance the role of the URDL independently, as well as with later state regulations.

The next master plan, simply called the 1975 Comprehensive Plan, saw further commitment of OPZ efforts to maintaining the rural and urban divide in the county. This plan responded to slower growth rates by shrinking the URDL and shifting 58,500 acres of urban land into R.C. designation (Outen 2007). Even with this reduction and shift of the URDL, Dillon maintains that OPZ had still left themselves with a surplus of urban reserve land within the URDL, as that was general practice at the time. Furthermore, the county entered into a $600,000 Growth Management Study in 1977 which contracted with a plethora of land use, engineering, and environmental consultants to establish much needed data regarding the state of future development in the county and where it should occur in specific “growth areas” (Outen 2010). It was for this study that McHarg, this time without Wallace, reappeared as an environmental consultant, this time on the county payroll. The study was a substantial commitment of fiscal resources to planning efforts, and produced a huge amount of data included in over 40 technical reports that have yet to be extensively compiled and studied to this day. The Growth Management study
provided OPZ with the leverage it needed to convince lawmakers and citizens that managed growth was more cost effective for the county and for taxpayers than haphazard sprawl. The study assisted OPZ in determining how and when to bring the growth areas, stipulated in the Guideplan, into development. It convinced OPZ to channel its 1979 management efforts into just two future growth areas, the Owings Mills and White Marsh areas. At that time, it pulled these areas out of rural conservation, which had prevented sprawl and preserved the potential for urban densities, and opened them for focused development which is still occurring in those locations today.

While these efforts focused development in a specific area within the URDL, the 1980s saw the county reinforcing the protection of important natural areas, particularly in the Lower Back River Neck area. Baltimore County responded to the state’s 1984 Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Act by designating Areas of Critical State Concern where development within 1,000 feet of tidal waters could impact the aquatic resources of the Bay. Outen reflected on the impact of this legislation, and its later expansion for the LBRN:

The Critical Area Program was an opportunity for the county to finally say, “No we have a lot of resources here; forests, wetlands, and a lot of low lying areas and coastal zones.” So Baltimore County did something which I don’t think has been done much in Maryland even today, it expanded the two-thousand food critical area line significantly to cover the whole Back River peninsula (Outen 2010).

The extension of the Critical Areas designation enabled the state to have a stronger hand in local development in these areas. Essentially, it kept the state informed of development changes by requiring state reviews of subdivision and zoning changes in these areas. Among many other stipulations, it required counties to have specific
management programs and natural buffers to mitigate the pollution of the Bay. By 1988 the entire LBRN area was under this designation and more effectively protected from calls for intensive marina and resort-style development that had dominated development efforts on the Neck for most of the 1980s (Carson 1983a; 1983b; 1983c).

While OPZ planners produced a number of master plans, added to the Resource Conservation zones, and focused on downzoning areas outside the URDL throughout the late 1970s and into the 1980s, one of the major events for the URDL occurred with the appearance of Governor Paris Glendening’s Smart Growth legislation in 1997. The Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act established a number of Smart Growth principles to guide planning at the state and local level. According to the Maryland Department of Planning (2007) these principles include efforts to:

- Mix land uses
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

While the legislation positioned Maryland as a stronger force in local growth management efforts, it lacked regulatory authority to directly enforce the adoption of these general principles. Unlike the strict state-led growth management program in Oregon, the Maryland Act did not give the state the authority to hand down specific
requirements on comprehensive planning, zoning, or growth boundary creation to implement these priorities. Implementation of this lighter version of state influence was only apparent in that the Act required communities to designate Priority Funding Areas (PFAs). The PFAs would guide state funding and subsidies for transportation, infrastructure, and housing. By locating these areas in urban communities, the PFAs were an attempt by the state to provide targeted incentives to support redevelopment and revitalization (Maryland Department of Planning 2007). Balancing the efforts of urban endorsement was a complementary designation called Rural Legacy Areas (RLAs). RLAs were created to receive state grants to support the conservation efforts of local land trusts and county governments (Figure 18). This state money would be used for fee simple purchase of land parcels, as well as the purchase of development rights and the transfer of development rights. The latter situation would legally move the development rights in RLA sending areas to designated receiving areas in urban portions of the community. These transferred rights might enable higher densities or building heights not typically allowed in urban zoning. The Smart Growth Act and resulting PFA and RLA efforts have experienced varying shades of success among different counties due to the tradition of home rule and limits of the state, as well as variations in planning efforts and commitment to the program12

This research argues that Baltimore County’s strong commitment to the URDL has enabled it to be experience success with Smart Growth legislation that is evident today. Baltimore County had a relatively easy time designating its PFAs and RLAs

12 John W. Frece provides a critique for and political history of the Smart Growth Act in Sprawl And Politics: The Inside Story of Smart Growth in Maryland (2009).
Figure 18. Baltimore County’s Rural Legacy Areas (Baltimore County Office of Planning 2000).
thanks to the URDL framework. Four RLAs were established in areas outside the
URDL, and included the LBRN in a Coastal Rural Legacy designation. The PFA
became, for the most part, the urban area inside the URDL (Baltimore County Office of
Planning 2000). In a study of the effectiveness of these Smart Growth initiatives Shen
and Zhang (2005) found that some counties experienced more success with PFAs and
RLAs than others. Thanks to its historic pattern of urban and rural development
reinforced by the URDL, Baltimore County was found to be one of the most successful
Smart Growth counties. Specifically, the study revealed that Baltimore County’s PFA
had a greater chance of experiencing development within its bounds than otherwise
comparable land outside the PFA. Similarly, the county’s RLAs had lower odds of
experiencing development than comparable land outside the RLA. This outcome may
seem obvious considering the role of the URDL and complementary zoning in the
county, but it proved that these efforts combined with state funding had worked for the
county. Other counties had a tougher time designating PFAs, as they lacked the URDL
framework and resulting pattern of historically denser urban development. Thus, PFAs
were designated in areas that may have been less than ideal to begin with. Don Outen
reflects on this struggle:

[PFAs might be] one of the biggest failures of the Smart Growth effort. PFAs
were whatever anybody wanted them to be even though there were technical
density guidelines because the counties designated them and the state didn’t say
no. So they ended up with these areas that people looked at and said, “You’ve got
to be kidding that’s not Smart Growth, that’s an area of rural sprawl.”

Baltimore County has had a long tradition of developing along a clear urban and
rural divide regarding land uses - a tradition enforced by policies which progressively
strengthened the URDL. While this pattern is now considered an excellent example of Smart Growth, as it discourages sprawl, and creates efficiencies in utilities and services, externalities are still produced by this form of development. The county currently faces the consequences of juggling a rapidly aging post-war housing stock with the modern wants and needs of families. While revitalization efforts are underway, the county must make the difficult choices of what those efforts should include. Recent revitalization efforts in Essex-Middle River replaced post-war apartment complexes with some mixed use and detached single-family homes. Essentially, the county had reduced the density of that area inside the URDL and faced criticism for that decision (Menzer 2007).

Baltimore County’s dense urban area within the URDL houses about 87% of the population and also produces concentrated environmental externalities. In particular, Outen points to the problem of Bay pollution due to urban run-off as one of these spatially specific resource issues. Subsequent contradiction of URDL policy emerged in the late 1990s on the LBRN peninsula. Bowing to state and local pressures, OPZ realized the shore shacks along the LBRN coast could no longer be permitted to retain private septic systems (Apperson 1999). The coastal location and poor infiltration capabilities of the peninsula soils meant that onsite treatment was incapable of preventing water pollution in the Back and Middle Rivers. The situation “was gruesome,” according to one planner (Dillon 2010). Thus, the Neck would be serviced for health and environmental reasons. In 1999 the county took steps to install limited water and sewer service in this area outside of the URDL. In an attempt to dissuade growth and keep the area as rural in character as possible, the county maintained that sewer and water hook-
ups would only be provided for the existing population with no expectations for additional hook-up or capacity upgrades (Figure 19). The URDL was not redrawn to include this area which is still included in R.C. zoning and Rural Coastal Legacy designation. Regardless, this area has continued to face development pressures, most recently regarding townhome development and McMansion-style renovations to the old shore shacks (Mitchell 2007; Dillon 2010) (Figure 20). In response to these pressures, the county and residents are currently implementing a Community Action Plan that includes a modern form-based code to provide strict footprint, height, and aesthetic standards (Lower Back River Neck Community Action Plan Advisory Committee 2009). Thus, the URDL is not, and never has been, a static tool. Its meaning, purpose, and active role in growth management is in a state of flux. Interestingly, as a result of its commitment to the URDL and an urban/rural divide, Baltimore County is challenged with balancing the benefits and consequences of that form.
Figure 19. Water service on the LBRN peninsula provides a striking image of a changing rural area. (Image by author, June 2009)

Figure 20. A new, large building footprint on an old, narrow lot is the modern trend in development along the LBRN coast. (Image by author, June 2009)
4.5 Tweaking the Line: Future Growth Boundary Policy

This research argues that the URDL has evolved from modest beginnings to a relatively complex modern framework involving regulation and incentive policies. If history has anything to say, this transformation is continuous and we can expect to see subsequent changes and updates to Baltimore County’s growth management policy. Currently, county citizens are leading the way on determining future URDL policy, as one group is privately funding a study to locate parcels of land outside the URDL which may be at risk for premature development. This study will identify areas where PDR and downzoning efforts should be focused. Outen reflects on the current direction:

[The group is doing] all of these things to tweak that line…There has been change in the URDL. Two decades ago we were very defensive about that because we were trying to raise the issue with our Carroll County neighbors to the west about their development in the rest of our watersheds. We said, “Look, we’ve done all this work over here with the URDL.” They fired back, “Well you guys have violated the URDL.” The change [to the URDL] was small, but we couldn’t hide behind that absolute. We couldn’t say that we had never changed the R.C. zoning outside the URDL, or that we didn’t expand the URDL.

This “stone throwing” between counties inspired Baltimore County to refocus some of its management efforts and question its commitment to the URDL. According to Outen, this has transpired into an unofficial policy which recommends no net-change for the URDL. The idea stipulates that the URDL can “slip” and expand to include a few acres of urban development, as long as it contracts the same acreage in another area. This tradeoff will likely present planners with difficult management issues, not unlike the quality problems experienced in the process of wetland “banking” and construction. The rural quality of
one parcel “lost” to urban development may not match the quality of the parcel placed in Rural Conservation outside the URDL in its place.

4.6 Summary

While planners and Baltimore County residents may currently consider the URDL to be “the symbol of growth management in the county” (Outen 2010), this chapter illustrates that this tool emerged from very modest beginnings. Wallace and McHarg’s influential 1964 Plan for the Valleys trained the spotlight on the dangers of sprawling growth fueled by easy access to sewer utilities. While some of their recommendations for directing growth never materialized, their suggestions for restricting development in environmentally important areas were manifested in the 1-acre Rural, and subsequently more restrictive Resource Conservation zones. Their call to spatially discriminate where sewer service would be located was manifested with Bill 40’s 1967 creation of the URDL. This initial tool was effective at restricting sewers from entering the rural portion of the county including The Valleys area, but it did little to otherwise defend those areas. Essentially, the URDL had the pull factor to attract development to serviced areas, but was missing the push force which would also protect rural areas from development serviced by private systems. The URDL was essentially an Urban Service Area until specific rural zoning regulations made it more difficult for septic-system sprawl to develop. Fortified by the R.C. codes, the URDL became a more significant UGB capable of influencing the rural and urban shape of county growth. This framework became particularly useful for Baltimore County planners when state Smart Growth legislation
required the county to establish a PFA and RLAs. Thanks to the ability of the URDL to guide growth for the thirty previous years, the PFA was overlaid on the urban portion of the URDL and the RLAs were designated in rural areas outside the line. This historic pattern of development has helped Baltimore County to be one of the most successful contributors to the state Smart Growth effort. While the URDL has given Baltimore County an alternative to detrimental sprawling development, the concentration of urban growth within the URDL does not permit the county to avoid all the externalities of development. Managing the consequences of condensed urban pollution and revitalization aging housing to meet modern demands will certainly occupy county efforts in the future. As the URDL is likely to see the addition of a no-net-change policy in the future, new issues will most certainly emerge and challenge this growth management tool. No stranger to change and modification, this research argues that the URDL will likely weather this new challenge and continue its dynamic role in growth management.
CHAPTER FIVE

The technical and academic literature surrounding urban growth boundaries presents a picture of a transparent, scientific, and value-neutral tool used to curb growth and preserve open space. Quantitative analyses have described the economic effects UGBs have on land markets, as well as their driving push and pull forces on development. However, this research suggests that a new understanding of UGBs can be gained using a historical perspective. The Baltimore County process reveals that the URDL has experienced an evolution in purpose and meaning. It has also had to contend with contradictory policies, and has been a site of support or resistance for a number of different actors over time.

Unlike UGBs in communities in Oregon, Baltimore County’s boundary was not clearly conceptualized and administered at the highest level of state government. The concept of growth containment was indeed initiated by larger planning bodies in Maryland with the 1937 and 1960 plans for regional greenbelts. However, the county did not make any decisive efforts to adopt containment measures beyond zoning controls until Wallace and McHarg devised the 1964 Plan For The Valleys. This innovative plan trained the spotlight on the consequences of unlimited access to sewer utilities in the absence of a restrictive county policy. County planners themselves should not be overlooked as a contributing source of inspiration for the containment policy. OPZ’s attempts to direct a burgeoning post-war population began with the 1955 sector plans, continued with iterations of master plans in the 1970s, and have since culminated with modern Smart Growth conservation and revitalization initiatives. The URDL has left a
scarce paper trail through the archives and the details surround its beginnings confound some local planners. This research argues that its conception was not the clearly defined process which appears in modern UGB literature, but that the URDL slowly evolved into a recognizable growth boundary tool.

This evolution has produced interesting and unlikely conflicts. The initial tool stemming from Bill 40 was effective at restricting sewers from rural areas, but did little to conserve rural areas. This research argues that the URDL lacked a push force and was essentially more of an Urban Service Area than a fully functioning Urban Growth Boundary according to modern definition. Furthermore, the early boundary initially coexisted with contradictory zoning. The 1980 Guideplan depicts intensive industry zoning in the rural LBRN area outside of the URDL. The modern planning notions that the line was strictly urban inside and rural outside do not initially apply to the Baltimore experience. This research argues that the URDL was able to evolve into a stronger tool with more complex conservation goals when the Rural Conservation zoning codes were developed in the 1970s and one-acre septic lots were no longer possible outside the URDL. Thus, while it decreased the likelihood of initially sewerizing the LBRN, it did not initially save this area from intensive uses with its implementation. The rural nature of the LBRN was slowly assured through the efforts of its residents, a growing understanding of environmental impact on the Chesapeake Bay, the infrastructural challenge of sewerizing and providing roads on the peninsula, as well as the passing of the R.C. zones. The URDL certainly helped to define the LBRN as a rural area over time, but was not its clear savior from intensive development in 1967.
The conceptualization, implementation, and subsequent strengthening of the URDL has involved a vast cast of characters, some of whom have been identified in this research. Interestingly, initial containment greenbelts for growth management were suggested at the state and regional scale, but it was the local government in Baltimore County that actually carried the UGB torch and implemented the containment policy. It took almost sixty years for state efforts to experience success with growth management through Smart Growth legislation in the 1990s. Even then, top-down efforts are limited to financial carrots and the local home-rule system retains the regulatory rights over land uses and policies. This research argues that the vigilant and affluent citizens of the Greenspring and Worthington Valleys were a major force on growth management in the county. Fueled by private funding, their efforts produced an unprecedented private plan that spelled out the dangers of status quo sprawl and motivated OPZ to develop and implement the URDL. Related, the private planning firm of Wallace and McHarg played a critical role in the Baltimore County process of URDL development, implementation, and utilization.

Finally, this research posits that the Baltimore County experience with the URDL can inform the growth management efforts of others and serve as a model for areas looking to distance themselves from the status quo development of sprawl. Granted, this research has illustrated that the county has had a long history of management efforts - it is a complex palimpsest with a unique planning history. However, lessons can still be gained from this story. While the strict, state-imposed Portland growth boundary has attracted the majority of academic research in the past, the scale of the policy is unachievable for
many local governments looking for a quick and efficient tool to control sprawl. Portland’s boundary spans multiple counties and requires its own regional planning body. While well served by the planning literature, it is certainly not the most realistic UGB example for a country dominated by counties traditionally practicing home-rule. However, planning at the state and regional level has allowed Oregon to better integrate disparate county planning efforts into common regional goals – sprawl can be fought from all fronts in a state-mandated model. Even if tackling the state planning system is out of the planning goals of a county, the Baltimore example illustrates it is still worthwhile for a locality to pursue a local UGB. Within its county lines Baltimore County has achieved great success with the URDL, even if the policy has likely pushed some development to other places outside of its county lines – an issue recognized by county planners. Thus, at the county scale, the URDL has been a great planning success, but its impacts on development in the greater Baltimore region are not yet fully understood.

Furthermore, the metropolitan Baltimore experience provides a vastly different example from the metro Portland or Boulder, Colorado UGBs prominent in boundary literature. Economic and social processes have left Baltimore city with a fraction of its historic population. While the URDL has created efficient densities of population in the county, its effects on the city population and densities remain unknown. Thus, while Smart Growth has been successful in the county thanks to the URDL and resulting densities, there are still serious challenges of creating a vibrant, walkable, “green” Smart Growth city. In terms of the Baltimore Ecosystem Study, which seeks to understand how
the city and urban area function as an ecological system, this research illustrates how the URDL has influenced the built environment of the county and its related ecological system. This research considers this historic process and contributes to our understanding of the social role and influence of humans in this system.

A historic approach to the UGB process has revealed that boundaries are more dynamic than the technical literature suggests. The Baltimore County example depicts an initially weak URDL able to evolve into a stronger tool with subsequent, complementary zoning regulations. More than simply expanding and contracting, the purpose and meaning of the URDL has truly evolved with time. That change in purpose and meaning shows no signs of ending, as the county enters a new no-net-change URDL management policy. Clearly, the URDL has been no stranger to modification. The URDL itself has provided a framework for modern Smart Growth efforts including PFAs and RLAs. Thanks to the long history of accentuating urban and rural parts of the county with the URDL and zoning policy, the county has seen great success in channeling state funds for conservation and revitalization efforts into focused areas. While the literature surrounding UGBs most often considers rising land values and leapfrogging development to be consequences of this tool, this research posits that other challenges can result from the use of UGBs. The fact that almost 90% of the county’s population is concentrated on just 30% of the land produces serious externalities and consequences for modern management.

Furthermore, the case of the LBRN proves that the URDL, even today, is not a one-stop solution to diffuse development pressures. While the county has a long history of
growth management efforts, has produced some innovative zoning measures, and has a long commitment to focusing development using the URDL, it is not out of the woods in terms of sprawl and inefficient growth. Even Smart Growth initiatives to redevelop urban places experience pressure to reduce density and gain wider appeal from homeowners. Rather than viewing this experience negatively and considering the efforts failed since growth pressures still exist to challenge management, other places can gain reassurance in this model. The Baltimore County example illustrates that growth management utilizing a UGB is a dynamic product wherein opportunities are constantly being created to adopt new techniques and evolve.
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APPENDIX

List of Abbreviations

APFO – Adequate Public Facility Ordinance
BES – Baltimore Ecosystem Study
BRPC – Baltimore Regional Planning Council
FHA – Federal Housing Administration
GIS – Geographic Information Systems
LBRN – Lower Back River Neck
LTER – Long-Term Ecological Research
M.P. – Manufacturing Port (Zone)
NIMBY – Not In My Backyard
OPZ – Office of Planning and Zoning (Baltimore County)
PFA – Priority Funding Area
PDR – Purchase of Development Rights
R.C. – Rural Conservation (Zone)
R.C.2 – Rural Conservation (Agriculture Zone)
R.D.P – Rural: Deferred Planning (Zone)
RLA – Rural Legacy Area
RPC – Regional Planning Council
R.S.C.- Rural-Suburban: Conservation (Zone)
TDR – Transfer of Development Rights
UGB – Urban Growth Boundary
URDL – Urban-Rural Demarcation Line

USA – Urban Service Area

VA – Veterans Administration

VPC – The Valleys Planning Council, Inc.