



ALLIANCE  
FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

# Growth Management Policy Examples

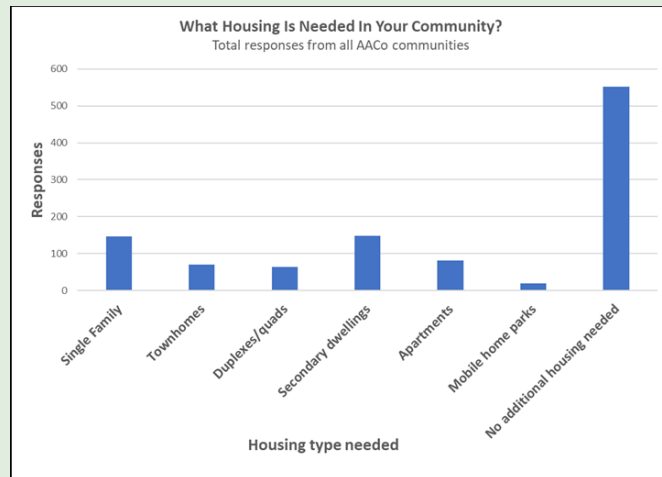
**New ideas for  
the new GDP ...**



## Conflict between market demand and citizen desires

In the numerous visioning sessions and surveys conducted prior to initiation of work on Plan2040, Anne Arundel County citizens have made clear their general perception that the rate of residential growth in most areas of the County is excessive.

For example, the chart at the right summarizes responses in the July 2019 Visioning Follow-up Survey to the question "What housing is needed in your community?". Most respondents felt that no additional housing was needed locally. However, a [Land Use Market Report](#) from the consulting firm RKG Associates indicates that market demand for residential housing in the County will be adequate to fuel recent growth rates until at least 2035. ***This mismatch between market demand and citizen desires makes growth management a top priority for Plan2040.***



[Click here for larger image](#)

## .Challenges for growth management

The two key challenges for effective management of growth in the County are:

- (1) *Determining how much growth is desired, and*
- (2) *Establishing effective techniques for constraining development to the desired level.*

Since different amounts and types of development are likely to be optimal in different regions in the County, the first challenge – determining the desired amount and type of growth - is likely to be best addressed by the Regional Plans. But, to achieve the growth targets identified by the Regional Plans the County will need to implement new policies and administrative procedures.

Fortunately, growth management has been addressed by many other communities in the nation, and some proven techniques have been developed. The following examples of effective long-term growth management deserve review. In each of these, the building permit system was used to implement growth management policies derived from a comprehensive planning process.

## Examples of effective growth management

### Boulder, CO

In 1993, after experiencing explosive growth in the 1980's and early 1990's, the city of Boulder, CO enacted growth control ordinances which limited building permits issued each year to a number specified in the city [municipal code](#) (click to view). Exceptions were made available to allow special treatment of affordable housing, redevelopment, and selected other issues. In addition, city ordinances require that housing development of five or more units include 25% of the total number of units as permanently affordable dwelling units. The residential growth rate cap has for some time been about 1%.

### Petaluma, CA

Petaluma, CA is a San Francisco bedroom community that experienced a rapid growth spurt in the 50's and 60's. In 1972, ordinances were added to the city's [municipal code](#) (click to view) that established an allocation system whereby rights to apply to make a residential lot or construct a residential building are granted by the city council and limited to 500 units per year. Exemptions are available for low income housing and senior housing. This system has been legally tested and has remained in continuous operation since inception. It has reduced the annual residential population growth rate from 2.5% to 0.8%.

### Sanibel, FL

Sanibel is an island just off the Gulf Coast near Ft. Meyers. Its citizens are typically conservation oriented, and about half of the island is a wildlife refuge or open space. The Ft. Meyers coast is blanketed with dense development, high rises, and beach front mansions. More than 50 years ago, developers convinced Lee County to target Sanibel for the same future with more than 30,000 projected housing units. The Sanibel residents strongly objected but could make no progress with the county. Desiring more self-determination, the island incorporated as a city in 1974 and gained the right to make its own ordinances. A [Comprehensive Land Use Plan](#) was adopted which limited development to about 7,800 dwelling units which has since been increased to 9,000 units. Implementation of the Land Use plan was carried out through the permitting system. The Comprehensive Plan and implementation process are still in use. About 640 unbuilt dwelling units remain and only very minimal modification of this number is anticipated.

**ALC recommends that Anne Arundel County establish policies and procedures for limiting residential growth to amounts determined by the Regional Plans.**

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## CAC meetings

Citizen Advisory Committee meetings are held the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 5 pm. Open to the public, but no public comment. Video recordings are posted. Go to [this page](#) for email links to CAC representatives.

### **About the Alliance**

*The Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities is a non-partisan coalition of 25 local and state*

*organizations advocating for sustainable growth and environmental protections to safeguard and enhance residents' quality of life.*

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## **Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities**



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