

Maryland Scenario Project

Summary of Themes

Using the data gathered from the Scenario Advisory Group through the first workshop’s exercises and questionnaire on driving forces, project staff identified three draft themes—sets of driving forces that fit together in some logical story. Detailed descriptions of these themes—Realizing the Information Age, Rural Infill, and The Region Defensive—are contained in the subsequent pages of this document. The table below summarizes the three themes by identifying the primary driving forces contained within each. Exercise 1 at Workshop 2 asks the Advisory Group whether these themes should be amended and whether additional themes should be added.

What Driving Forces Define the Themes?

- = included in stated direction
- = included in opposite direction

	1	2	3	4	5
	Info Age	Rural Infill	Region Defensive	?	?
GIVENS*					
1. population growth continues					
2. immigration continues	●		●		
3. aged population grows		●			
4. employment / income growth continues					
5. land development continues					
6. traffic congestion increases					
7. climate change more apparent					
8. pressure on environmental quality and resources more serious	●				
9. digital world reigns	●	●	●		
10. improvements in transport technology					
11.					
12.					
UNCERTAINTIES					
1. terrorism occurs in US			●		
2. agriculture declines		●	○		
3. energy prices increase	●	●			
4. energy independence sought			●		
5. Baltimore’s health/bio-tech sector increases	●	○			
6. federal location policies/BRAC	●	●	●		
7. damages from effects of climate change	●				
8. strong growth mgmt extended statewide	●	○			
9. infrastructure expansion dollars limited			○		
10. septic technology improves		●			
11. republican vs. democrat state/local leadership cycles increase	●	●			
12. federal government spending on infrastructure and R&D continues					
13. health of bay declines		○			
14. federal environmental policies tighten					
15.					
16.					

* Note: All the “Givens” are included in all themes. As such, “●” indicates a stronger emphasis in a particular theme.

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Draft Theme #1: Realizing the Information Age

Title of Theme: *Realizing the Information Age*

Theme Summary: This theme tries to identify and set up a combination of driving forces that would result in something like a Smart Growth land use outcome. It thus selects Uncertainties that support growth and rebound in the City of Baltimore and conditions in many of the outlying Counties that constrain growth. Rising fuel costs and the political constraints on increasing funds for highways are added into the mix as well as State and Federal Democratic regimes that support transit. Therefore, more specifically, Maryland and Baltimore City's assets capitalize on a resurgent high-tech era, spurred by Federal investment, attracting "creative class" in-migrants seeking urban amenities who are transit-friendly; international immigration fuels urban renaissance; suburbanizing counties, with little funding for schools and roads, clamp down on growth, aided by regulations to reduce threats to environmental resources;

Main Uncertainties: Strength of bio-tech/info-tech future, future of Baltimore City, infrastructure financing, Federal installation location policies and BRAC, strength of growth management, Democratic/Republican political leadership, energy prices, environmental hazards.

Theme Elements:

- An industrial corridor, centered on the research and manufacturing complexes of East Baltimore, emerges as one of the country's dominant InfoTech/Biotech regions.
- The federal government issues a National Emergency Mandate requiring many of the state's "critical workers" to live within a 30 minute commute of work.
- The state successfully integrates rail transit in the info-tech and bio-tech corridors, vastly improving the accessibility of jobs in these regions.
- Additional rounds of BRAC consolidations occur bring more military families to Md.
- The waterfronts of East and South Baltimore are further gentrified.
- A rising tax base in Baltimore City provides money to improve the school system.
- The proportion of family-based households falls significantly statewide as the proportion of Boomer retirees and late workers in the state increase.
- New full-service retirement communities proliferate throughout the state's rural counties.
- Development restrictions rapidly spread throughout the state's outer counties to slow growth – most second and third tier counties adopt stringent APFOs.
- Bay ecology continues to decline from non-point source pollution and new development.
- Drinking water supplies in many coastal counties suffer as aquifers are depleted and rising sea levels result in saltwater intrusion in deep wells.
- Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties modify their rural zoning to provide public utilities and allow new, low-impact development.
- Border communities near the edges of Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Delaware experience high levels of growth and begin to clamp down on development.
- Fuel prices increase dramatically.
- Advances in technology allow more people to telecommute.
- State and federal governments increase funding for transit and schools in urban areas.
- The state experiences a new wave of international immigration to urban areas.

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Draft Theme #2: Rural Infill

Title of Theme: *Rural Infill*

Theme Summary: This theme imagines the preconditions for a widespread dispersal of Maryland's population across the state, though not all at low densities. The collapse of Agriculture is the major initial driving force here but further BRAC relocations encourage land policy changes. The Bay's health improves as a result of farming's decline and retirement communities proliferate on the Eastern shore. The dynamics for a second Bay crossing are established as well as several other longstanding regional highways, supported by Republican administrations. The continuation of current growth limitations in the inner counties continue to facilitate outward migration of households followed by related employment, all encouraged by increased telecommuting. Growth in the bio-tech/info-tech sector stagnates (international competition) reducing central Maryland's draw. Congestion pricing is assumed which limits peak hour congestion and facilitates mobility, while advances in septic technology support dispersal.

Main Uncertainties: Decline of Agriculture, infrastructure investments, Republican vs. Democratic power, septic technology, BRAC, decline of growth management, Baltimore City's economy stagnates, energy prices increase.

Theme Elements:

- The average age of farmers increases to unsustainable levels.
- Government subsidies dry up for most crops and agribusiness, which is buffeted by intense competition from abroad and progressively abandons the Eastern Shore.
- With farming's demise, the Bay's health improves, becoming a stronger recreation draw.
- The Eastern shore becomes a retirement/early retirement magnet, augmented by an influx of footloose information age workers
- Rte 301 is improved to become a de facto DC bypass and a second Bay crossing is built.
- Farming in the shadow of the metropolis suffers as the storage, distribution and processing capacities of the state decline.
- Development pressures increase in counties where the constituency for farmland protection is weakened, such as in Harford County, where infrastructure is expanded to absorb BRAC growth.
- Harford County rezones its rural areas to a 5 acre cluster zone, significantly increasing its ability to absorb growth along the northeastern I-95 corridor.
- The state implements congestion pricing on I-95 and US1.
- Cecil County develops a new 8,000 acre town astride two new interchanges on I-95.
- Rapid growth of new urban villages in Carroll County, facilitated by utility expansions, sets a pattern for several new growth areas in Frederick and Washington Counties.
- Ft. Dietrich gains additional BRAC expansions, spurring infrastructure investments.
- Frederick County adopts a TDR program creating numerous new "crossroad villages."
- The centrifugal trends are reinforced by continued limitations on growth in the inner counties and stagnation in the bio-tech/info-tech sectors, slowing growth in central Md.
- New, low impact, package treatment plants and on-site membrane septic systems proliferate throughout the Mid-Atlantic.

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Draft Theme #3: The Region Defensive

Title of Theme: *The Region Defensive*

Theme Summary: This theme imagines the consequences of terrorist attacks in the Capitol region and the region-wide spatial effects of a nation with enhanced defensive priorities. Substantial decentralization occurs, spearheaded by federal agency dispersals but, concurrently, the Baltimore region's core is strengthened because of its transportation assets and R&D capacities. Federal policies for national defense loom large and override local infrastructure investment decisions and their funding. Conventional transit fares badly because of vulnerability and then deconcentration (unlike carsharing and paratransit) but small area communities flourish, supported by enhanced investments in digital technology and increased telecommuting.

Main Uncertainties: Terrorism, federal location policies, self sufficiency in food and energy production, infrastructure funding under national defense mandates

Theme Elements:

- Terrorist attacks in the Baltimore/Washington region induce some spatial restructuring.
- There is wholesale relocation of many key federal agencies and North/central Virginia sees a large federal presence as do Maryland's northern counties.
- There are massive waves of outmigration to the hinterlands of the state, which are supported by regional collaboration on infrastructure investments in these areas.
- The City of Baltimore absorbs thousands of federal jobs (and millions in aid to address its longstanding social problems and facilitate their deconcentration).
- There is an increased emphasis on Readiness Training and R&D at JHU, APL, DuPont and APG/Ft Meade/Ft Dietrich.
- Increased security at the Port of Baltimore and BWI render them the preferred destination points on the East coast for the defense-related movement of people and goods.
- Metro and rail terror attacks, and the resulting public fear of mass transit, empty out the DC transit system overnight. AMTRAK and MARC fare little better.
- Policy and technology improvements drastically increase telecommuting/tele-shopping, resulting in much larger daytime populations within residential communities.
- The state's population becomes more dispersed in diffused, low-density areas as small-scale commercial and employment centers and mixed-use communities proliferate and home town communities are cemented around local institutions.
- Emergency and evacuation highways (including a second Bay Crossing) are constructed, facilitating the widespread dispersal of the population.
- Existing and new hi-tech/biotech nodes are supported by the conversion of several General Aviation airports to commercial service and small-jet airports.
- Maryland's flagging agricultural economy receives a slew of subsidies with the increased emphasis on self-sufficiency and agricultural land use controls are reinforced.
- An emphasis on energy independence results in a boom in corn-based ethanol production throughout Maryland and especially on the Eastern Shore.
- A new wave of international immigration results from a flow of information workers into areas of the state once very homogenous.