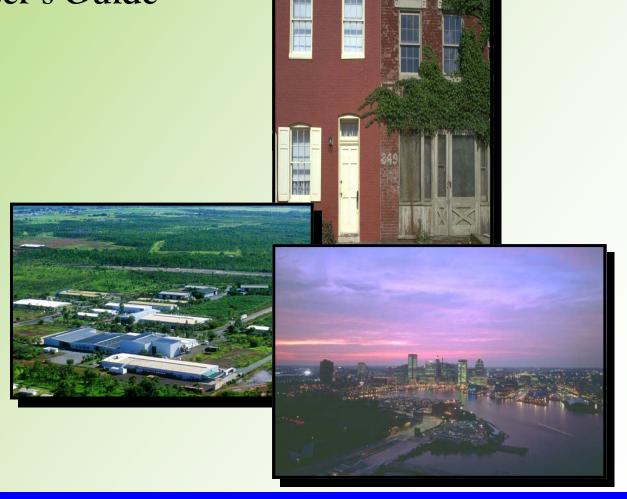
Online Building Permit Data System User's Guide



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RPD – 2000 Census Tract Boundary Maps

- Anne Arundel County
- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Carroll County
- Harford County
- Howard County

## Introduction

Building permit data, an important economic indicator, reflects the future trend of the construction market and therefore, is widely used by government, research institutions, and businesses etc. to assess the existing market, derive forecasts and create various economic products.

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council, the regional planning and policy organization for the Baltimore region <a href="www.baltometro.org">www.baltometro.org</a>, has been collecting building permits from local jurisdictions in the region for many years and now is committed to providing the data online in a timely fashion to a wide range of users.

## **Facts At a Glance**

#### When

Permits issued since January 1999 included. Newest permits are released on a weekly basis.

#### Where

5 Counties: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard 2 Cities: Baltimore City and City of Annapolis

All permits for towns are included in the jurisdictions in which they are located

#### What

Four permit types\*

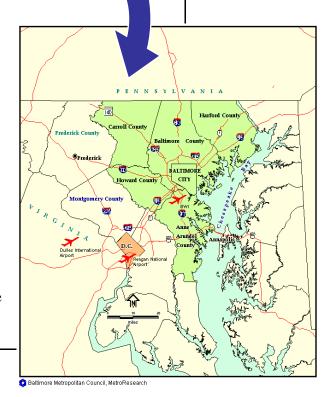
- New residential construction
- New non-residential construction
- New mixed use (residential & non)
- Additions, alterations or repairs

Four geographic identifiers

- Jurisdiction (city, county)
- Regional planning district (RPD)
- Census tract
- Zip code

More site information (not always present for permits with value less than \$50,000)

- Site address
- Construction description
- Construction \$ amount (estimated)
- Owner's name, address and telephone
- Contractor's name, address and telephone



<sup>\*</sup> Permits of \$10,000 and above in value

## **Tutorial: How to do a Building Permit Search**

Once you have reached the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's building permit web site (at <a href="http://bmc.baltometro.org/BMCPermit">http://bmc.baltometro.org/BMCPermit</a>) type in your Username and Password and click on the Login button or hit the Enter key.

In order to conduct a search for building permits on the website, you will need to specify:

- 1. Permit Type
- 2. Date Range
- 3. Amount Range (if desired)
- 4. Geographic Range (if desired)
- 5. Data to be Displayed
- 6. How the Data Should be Sorted (if it matters)

The instructions below include an example of a search for new office buildings in Anne Arundel County and Howard County in August, 2008.

## 1. Permit Type

Specify the type(s) of permits you are looking for by selecting building categories under "New Construction of a Residential Building", "New Construction of a Non-Residential Building", "Additions, Alterations or Repair", and/or "Mixed Use" (Exhibit 1). Please note that you can choose as many categories as you wish, using the shift or the control key. To deselect a category, hold the control key down and select it again.



Exhibit 1

In the example, the box for Office Building under the category "New Construction of a Non-Residential Building" and the two boxes for Office structures under the category

"Mixed Use" have been selected. If you don't select anything, your results will include all types of permits.

## 2. Date Range

## **Issued Date Range**

Specify the time frame for your permit search. The issue date is the date the permit was issued by the local jurisdiction.

In the example (Exhibit 1), the beginning and ending dates of August 1 and August 31 of 2008 have been specified.

If you do not specify a date range, the first 10,000 permits issued between January 1, 1999 and the current date will be included in the results, unless you choose to limit by "Entered Date Range", which is discussed below.

## **Entered Date Range**

Instead of searching by permit issue date, you can limit your search to permits entered in our system within a particular date range. This will be useful if you just want to look at the most recent permits that have been added to the database (for example, those added since you last looked at it). Specify the time frame as in the above example. If you fill in both types of date ranges, the results will be limited to permits that fit both criteria.

## 3. Amount Range

You may specify a range in dollar amount for the permits selected. In the example, the boxes for "Minimum Amount" and "Maximum Amount" are left blank (Exhibit 2) since we wish to view all permits meeting the other criteria specified, regardless of dollar amount. Please note that when keying in dollar amounts, the system will not let you enter a dollar sign nor any commas, as they are unnecessary.

Please note also that for permits with a value less than \$50,000, the information available in the database is more limited than for permits with a value of \$50,000 or more. Prior to 2004, the only data items available for permits under \$50,000 were: issue date, jurisdiction, value, ownership, permit type and permit number. Since some point in 2004 (specific date varies by jurisdiction), more data fields, including site address, are being released for smaller permits.

Issue Date From:	8/1/2008	Issue Date To:	8/31/2008
Enter Date From:		Enter Date To:	
Minimum Amount:		Maximum Amount:	
Jurisdiction:	Anne Arundel County City of Annapolis Baltimore City Baltimore County Carroll County Harford County Howard County	RPD:	101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108
Census Tract:		Zip Code:	

Exhibit 2

### 4. Geographic Range

In specifying the geographic area of your building permit search, you can choose entire jurisdictions or smaller areas like Regional Planning Districts, census tracts, or zip codes. (Maps for each jurisdiction showing RPDs and census tracts are included at the end of this guide.) You can only search one type at a time.

If you do not specify any geographic limits, your search results will be for the entire region.

*Jurisdiction*. Select the jurisdiction(s) in which you would like to focus your permit search. In order to select more than one jurisdiction, hold down the Ctrl key while highlighting the jurisdictions. If you wish to select several jurisdiction names which are contiguous, select the first jurisdiction in your list and then hold down the Shift key while selecting the last jurisdiction in the list.

In the example, Anne Arundel County and Howard County have been selected and are highlighted (Exhibit 2).

RPD (Regional Planning District). Select the RPD(s) in which you would like to focus your permit search. Use the Shift or Ctrl keys to select multiple values.

*Tract*. Type in the 6-digit census tract number where you would like to target your search. You can only search for one tract at a time. If the tract you're interested in has only 4 digits, add two zeroes to the end. If the tract you're interested in has only 3 digits, type in one leading zero and add two zeroes to the end. Tract 104 in Baltimore city would be entered 010400.

Zip Code. Type in the 5 digit zip code where you would like to target your search. You can only search for one zip code at a time.

Since the example search is focusing on two jurisdictions in their entirety, no RPD, census tract or zip code selections have been made.

### Select Fields to Display

Select the fields which you would like to display in your search results. (These field names will become your column headings.) To do this, highlight the desired field name or names in the "Available Fields" box on the left, then click on the double arrow pointing to the right to move the name(s) into the box on the right. Continue until you have selected all the fields you wish to have displayed. If you change your mind, a field name can be removed from the box on the right by highlighting the name and clicking on the arrow pointing to the left. Not all fields have data for all permits. For example, if there is no Contractor's phone number given on the permit, that field will be blank, and non-residential permits will not show number of new dwelling units.



#### Exhibit 3

To change the order in which the columns will appear, select the field name which you would like to move and then click on the "Move Up" button (to have the column display more to the left) or the "Move Down" button until the field name is in the desired location.

In the example, Jurisdiction, Issued Date, Description, Site Address, Owner Name and Amount (estimated cost of the project) have been selected (Exhibit 3).

## 6. Sort By

In the "Available Sort Fields" box, choose how you would like your search results sorted. The procedure for selecting and changing the order of the selected columns is as described under "Select Fields to Display". The search results will be sorted first by the field name at the top of the list, then by the second name in the list, etc.

In the example, since Jurisdiction has been selected first and Issued Date second (Exhibit 3), the search results are sorted first by Jurisdiction in alphabetical order and then by Issued Date within each jurisdiction, in chronological order.

When you have finished your selections, choose Run Report.

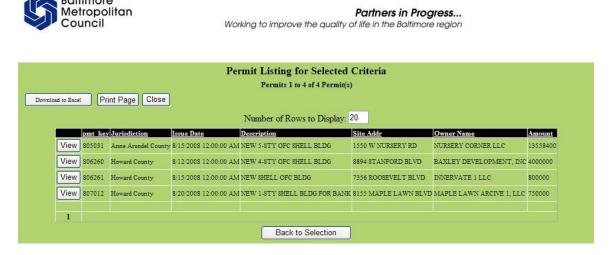
#### **Permit Results**

The results of the example permit search (new office buildings permitted in Anne Arundel County and Howard County during August 2008) are shown in **Exhibit 4**. There are just 4 records, so all of them display on the initial screen. By default, the records are shown in batches of 20, but if there are more than 20 records, you can change the number of records to be displayed. If there were, for example, 57 records in the results, at the top of the screen it would initially say "Permits 1 to 20 of 57 Permit(s)". If you type 57 in the "Number of rows to display" box and press enter, all 57 will display on one screen. Alternatively, you can scroll through the pages using the page numbers at the bottom left of the screen. (In Exhibit 4, because there are fewer than 20 results, all 4 of them show up on page 1, so only the number 1 appears.)

The system defaults to returning no more than 10,000 permits at a time. If your results list would include more than 10,000 records, you will get the following message at the top of the screen:

Permit display is limited to 10,000 records per search. Please revise your selection to return fewer records.

You can revise your selection by choosing a shorter date range, or a smaller geographic area (one jurisdiction instead of several), or fewer permit categories.



#### Exhibit 4

Once search results have been generated, you can view the details on any of the permits on the list. The whole list can also be printed out (using your browser's print function) or downloaded to your hard drive or diskette.

#### View Details

To view the details of any permit, click on the View button to the left of it, and the results will open in a new window. Details of the third permit on the list are shown in Exhibit 5.

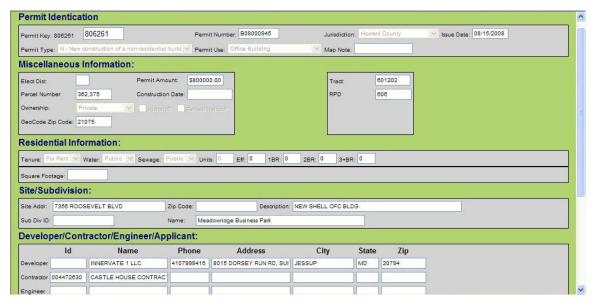


Exhibit 5

You can print this screen by right-clicking in the window; that will open a dialogue box asking you to confirm which printer to send it to. Before you print, you may want to go to the Printing Preferences tab and change the print layout from portrait to landscape; otherwise, only the left side part of the detail screen will print.

When you are finished looking at the detail, scroll to the bottom and choose "Back to Listing" to return to the results list. If you choose "Back to Selection" you will go back to the initial selection screen.

#### Download Results List

If you want to download the entire list of search results, first make sure you have changed the "Number of Rows to Display" to include the total number of permits in the list. If there are 57 permits in the list, and you choose download with only the first 20 displaying, your file will only have those first 20 permits in it.

To download the search results from the "Permit Listing for Selected Criteria" screen, click on "Download to Excel" at the top of the results screen. In the dialogue box that appears (Exhibit 6), choose Save and then specify the location on your hard drive or diskette where you want to keep the file. You can also change the name of the file in this dialogue.

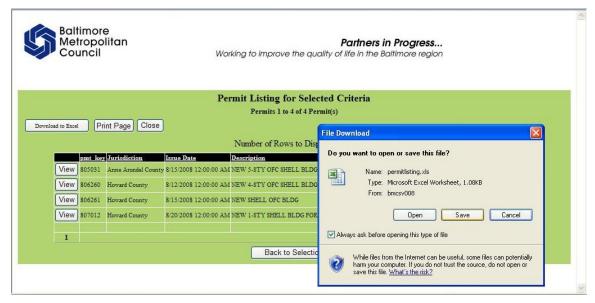


Exhibit 6

As soon as the download is complete, you will get another dialogue box asking if you want to open the Excel file or close it (Exhibit 7).

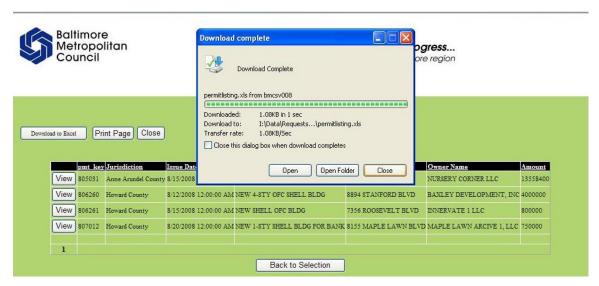


Exhibit 7

You can choose either to open it now or close so you can open it later. When you do open the file, it will look something like **Exhibit 8**. This file can then be manipulated the same way any other Excel file can be.

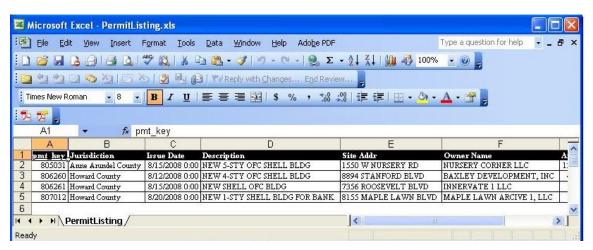


Exhibit 8

Column A ("pmt\_key") is an automatically generated number and can be ignored.

## **Questions & Answers**

1. What is the source of the building permit information on the BMC website?

The BMC receives electronic copies of all building permits issued by Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties. The information on these permits is transferred into the database. The BMC uses building permit data to track development patterns in the Baltimore metropolitan area in order to facilitate long-term transportation planning.

2. How many permits are in the database?

The BMC received on average 1,500 permits each month in 2008, not including permits with an Amount lower than \$10,000 which are not entered in the database.

3. What time frame is covered by the building permit data?

Permits from January 1, 1999 through present are in the database.

4. Whom can I contact if I have problems using the permit search system or have questions about the data?

Please refer to the next section for technical support.

5. What is the difference between "Issue Date" and "Enter Date"?

The Issue Date is the date the local building permit office issued the permit. The Enter Date is the date that we added the permit to the online system, so it will always be later than the Issue Date, though sometimes only by a few days. The Enter Date is useful if you want to see all permits we've added to the database since the last time you did a search.

6. What does the Amount value represent?

The Amount shown with each permit is the estimated cost of labor and materials associated with construction of the project.

7. Why is there a "0" in Square Footage?

Square footage information is not always available from the source. When there is a "0" in Square Footage, it means that the information is unavailable.

8. There are 79 permits in my results list. Why are there only 20 permits in my Excel file?

Excel will only download the results displayed on the results screen. To display all 79 permits on the screen, change the box next to the "Number of Records to Display" to 79.

## **Technical Support**

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council provides technical support to users of the building permit website. For assistance with using the website and any questions regarding the permit data, please call or e-mail:

Mary Logan

Regional Information Center Manager

Phone: 410-732-9570

Email: mlogan@baltometro.org

In the event you are unable to reach Mary Logan, please contact:

Shawn Kimberly

Phone: (410) 732-0500 ext. 1026 Email: <a href="mailto:skimberly@baltometro.org">skimberly@baltometro.org</a>

### Disclaimer

The database used in *Building Permits Data System Online* is supplied by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC), based on permit data provided by local permit-issuing jurisdictions. No database of this size and complexity, however, is error-free. You might find some incorrect data in *Building Permits Data System Online*, as you would in any other marketing database or list.

## Warranties

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council does not make any warranty, express or implied, as to the use or appropriateness of the licensed data, and there are no warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose or use and no representation is made as to the accuracy or completeness of the data or image products included in *Building Permits Data System Online*.

#### Liabilities

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) shall not be subject to liability for human error, defect, or failure of machines. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) shall not be liable for any losses, consequential damages or claims against the subscriber by third parties. The liability of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) for damage regardless of the form of the action may not exceed a yearly subscription fee paid for *Building Permits Data System Online*.

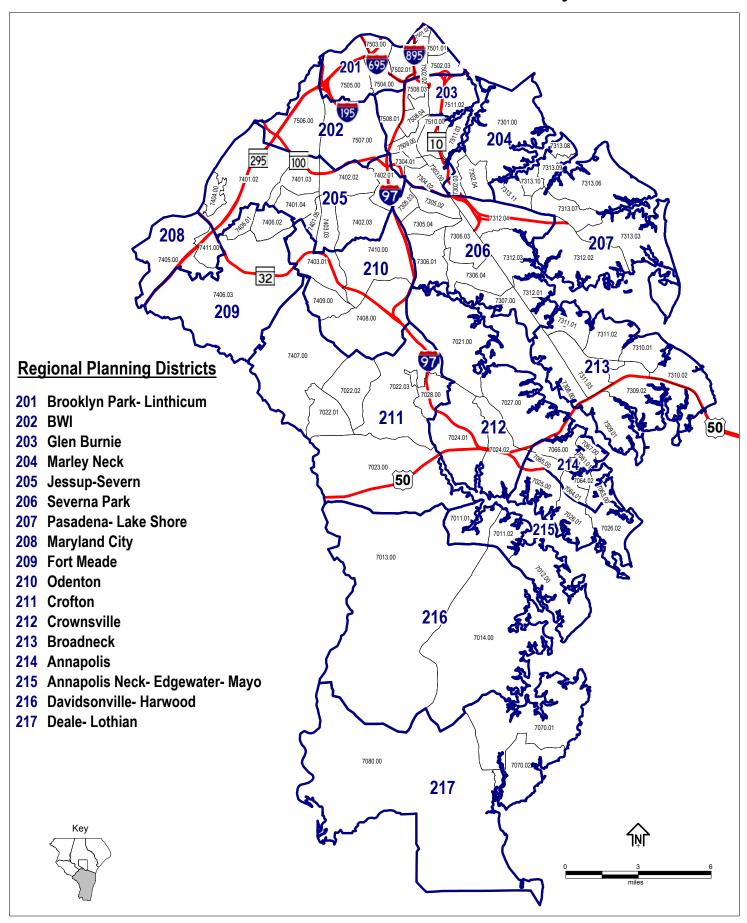
**Baltimore Metropolitan Council BPDS Field Definition Table** 

PDDS Field	Baitimore Metropolitan Council BPDS Field Definition Table				
BPDS Field	Definition Definition				
Issued Date	Date when the permit was issued				
Entered Date	Date when the permit was entered into the Building Permit Data System				
Permit Type Description	Text field identifying the type of construction project				
	"A" - Addition, alteration or repair				
	"N" - New construction of a non-residential building				
	"R" - New construction of a residential building				
Use Description	Text field identifying the use for a building				
	New residential:				
	Single family detached (non-condo) Single family detached (condo)				
	Semi-detached/duplex (non-condo)				
	Semi-detached/duplex (non-condo)				
	Townhouse (non-condo)				
	Townhouse (condo)				
	Multifamily (non-condo)				
	Multifamily (nondo)				
	Mobile home				
	Miscellaneous residential				
	Residential swimming pool				
	residential swiffining peo-				
	New Non-Residential				
	Industrial structure				
	Commercial				
	School				
	Public utility				
	Arts/cultural & recreational facilities				
	Hotel or motel				
	Parking garage or lot				
	Auto dealership or service station				
	Miscellaneous non-residential				
	Religious facility				
	Office building				
	Warehouse				
	Group home				
	Health care facility				
	Other institutions				
	Additions, Alterations or Repair				
	Residential				
	Industrial Industrial				
	Commercial				
	Institutional				
	Office				
	Warehouse				
	Public utility				
	Miscellaneous				
	Residential demolition				
D	Non-residential demolition				
Permit Number	Building permit number assigned by the local permitting office.				
Permit Development Name	Subdivision name ("R" ONLY)				
Description	Text description of construction authorized by the building permits, when available.				
Amount Unit Count	Dollar value of materials and labor reported on the building permit, usually less than the total value of a structure				
Unit Count	Number of new residential units ("R" ONLY)  Standardized street address for RRDS record (not always available for parmits less than \$50,000)				
Site Address Jurisdiction	Standardized street address for BPDS record (not always available for permits less than \$50,000)  City or county of the construction site				
Zip Code (Geocoded)	Zip code of the construction site, generated by BMC; does not appear until some weeks after permit is entered.				
Zip Code (Geocoded) Zip Code (Reported)	Zip code of the construction site, generated by BMC; does not appear until some weeks after permit is entered.  Zip code of the construction site as reported on the permit; not always accurate.				
Owner Name	Developer's or owner's name				
Owner Name Owner Address	Developer's or owner's street address				
Owner City	Developer's or owner's city				
Owner State	Developer's or owner's state				
Owner Zip Code	Developer's or owner's five digit zip code				
Owner Phone	Developer's or owner's telephone number				
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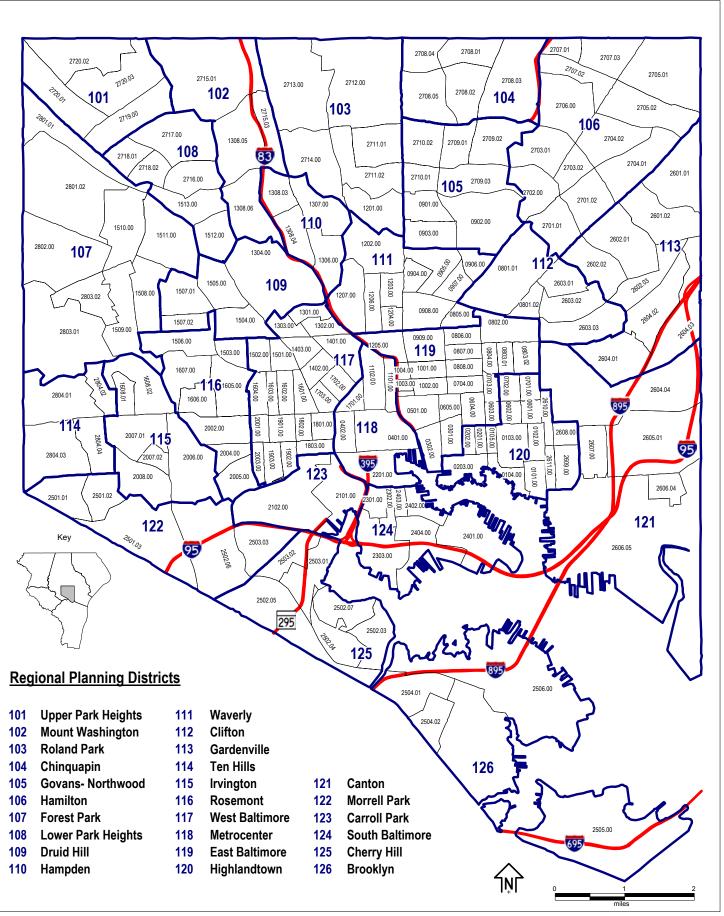
## **Baltimore Metropolitan Council BPDS Field Definition Table**

BPDS Field	<b>Definition</b>				
Contractor Name	Contractor's name				
Contractor Address	Contractor's street address				
Contractor City	Contractor's city				
Contractor State	Contractor's state				
Contractor Zip Code	Contractor's five digit zip code				
Contractor Phone	Contractor's telephone number				
Engineer/Architect Name	Engineer's or architect's name				
Engineer/Architect Address	Engineer's or architect's street address				
Engineer/Architect City	Engineer's or architect's city				
Engineer/Architect State	Engineer's or architect's state				
Engineer/Architect Zip Code	Engineer's or architect's five digit zip code				
Engineer/Architect Phone	Engineer's or architect's telephone number				
Applicant Name	Applicant's name				
Applicant Address	Applicant's street address				
Applicant City	Applicant's city				
Applicant State	Applicant's state				
Applicant Zip Code	Applicant's five digit zip code				
Applicant Phone	Applicant's telephone number				
RPD	Regional Planning District, defined by local jurisdiction and BMC for regional planning purpose.				
	See attached maps for details.				
Tract	Census tract. See attached maps for details.				
# of Efficiency Dwellings	Number of efficiency dwelling units ("R" ONLY)				
# of 1 Bedroom Dwellings	Number of one bedroom dwellings ("R" ONLY)				
# of 2 Bedroom Dwellings	Number of two bedroom dwellings ("R" ONLY)				
# of 3 Bedroom Dwellings	Number of three bedroom dwellings ("R" ONLY)				
Square Feet	Square footage for new non-residential buildings ("N" ONLY)				
Ownership	Text field identifying whether property is privately or publicy owned; not always filled in.				
Tenure Description	Text field indicating whether building is expected to be for rent or for sale after construction is complete;				
	not always filled in.				
Sewer Service	Text field identifying the type of sewage treatment ("R" ONLY)				
	Private means onsite sewage treatment, usually with a septic tank.				
	Public means offsite sewage treatment.				
Water Service	Text field identifying the source of water ("R" ONLY)				
	Private means onsite water supply, usually from a well.				
	Public means offsite water supply.				
Historic?	Indicates property is deemed historicUsed only in Baltimore City.				

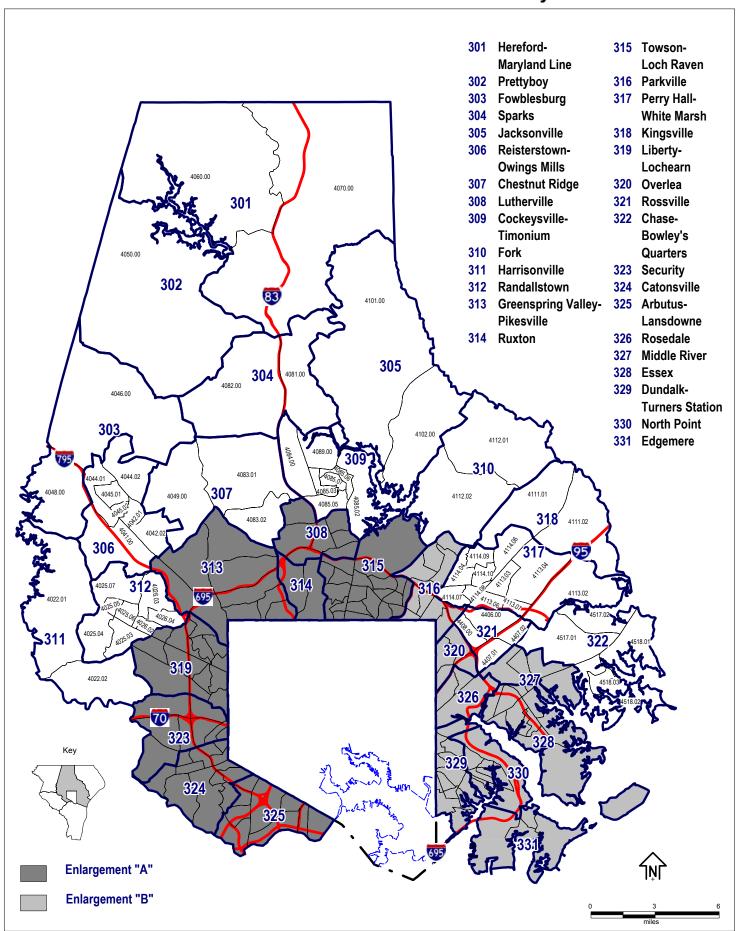
# 2000 Census Tracts in Anne Arundel County



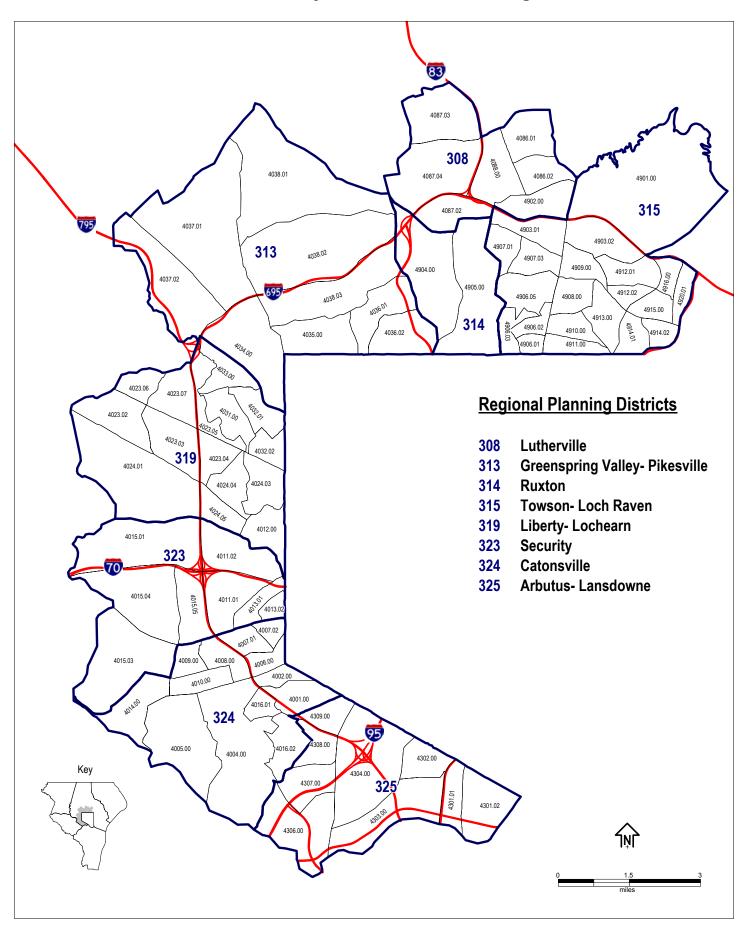
# 2000 Census Tracts in Baltimore City



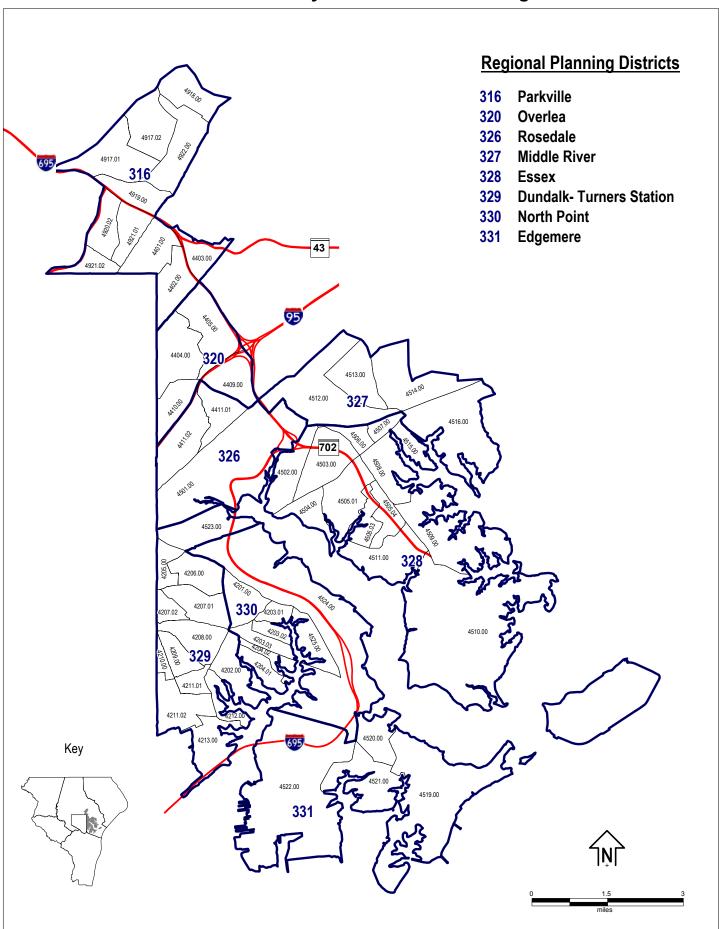
# 2000 Census Tracts in Baltimore County



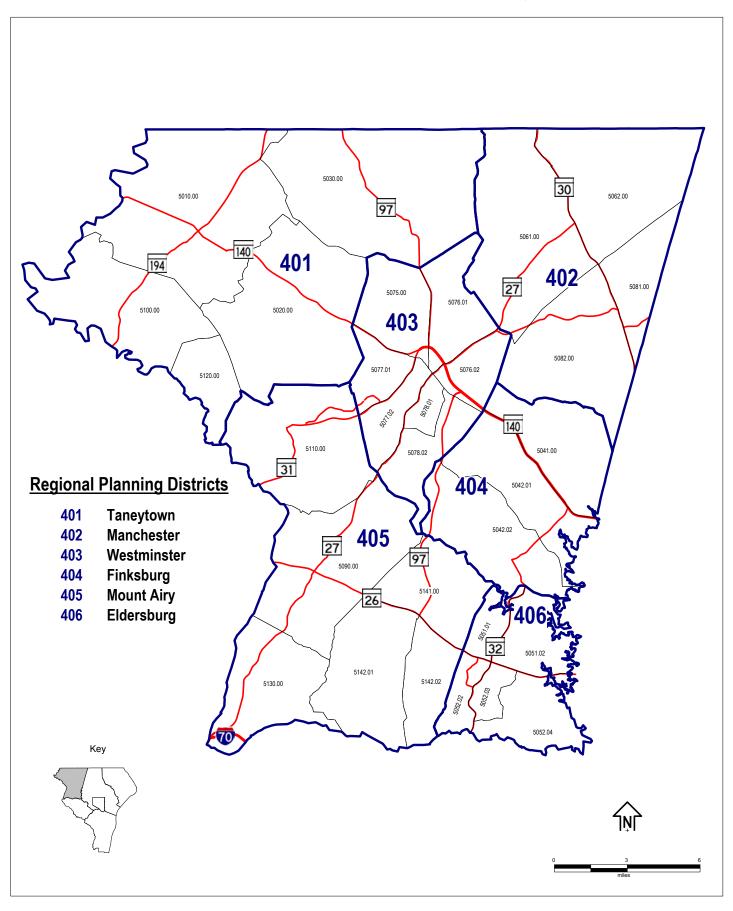
# 2000 Baltimore County Census Tracts - Enlargement "A"



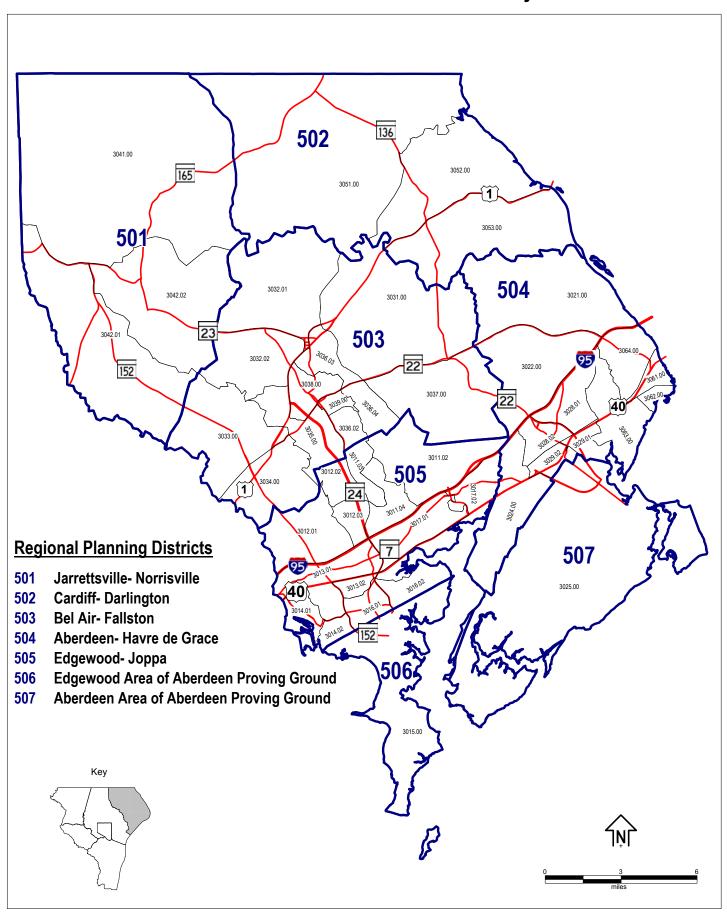
# 2000 Baltimore County Census Tracts - Enlargement "B"



# **2000 Census Tracts in Carroll County**



# **2000 Census Tracts in Harford County**



# **2000 Census Tracts in Howard County**

