



Baltimore Metropolitan Council

*Online Building Permit Data System
User's Guide*



April 2004

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- 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 www.baltometro.org, 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 2002 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

Three permit types*

- New residential construction
- New non-residential construction
- Addition, alteration or repair

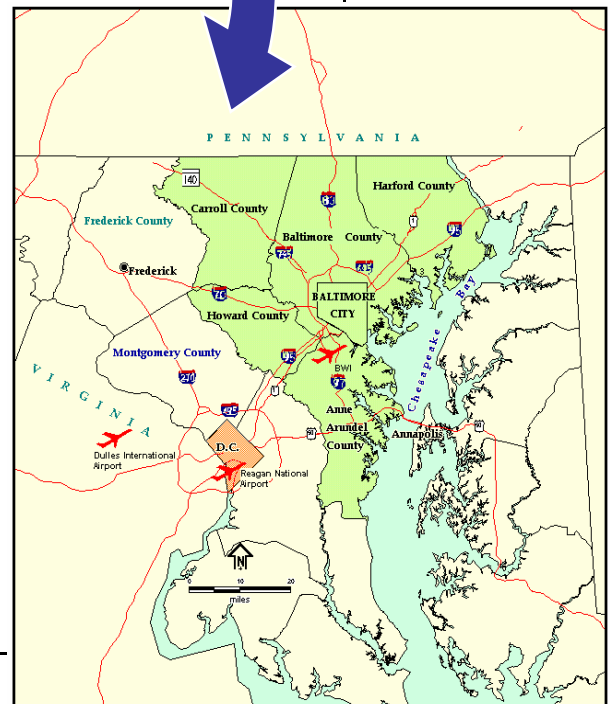
Four geographic identifiers

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

More site information

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

* Permits of \$10,000 and above in value



Baltimore Metropolitan Council, MetroResearch

Tutorial: How to do a building permit search

Once you have reached the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's building permit website, 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: permit type, date range, geographic range, data to be displayed and how the data should be sorted. The instructions below include an example of a search for new office buildings in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel County during the first two months of 2002.

Permit Type

Specify the type(s) of permit you are looking for by checking boxes under Addition, Alteration and Repair, New Construction of a Non-Residential Building, and/or New Construction of a Residential Building (**Exhibit 1**). Please note that you can check as many boxes as you wish. To deselect a box, click on it and the check mark will disappear. You can also check all the boxes with 1 keystroke by clicking on the Select All button.

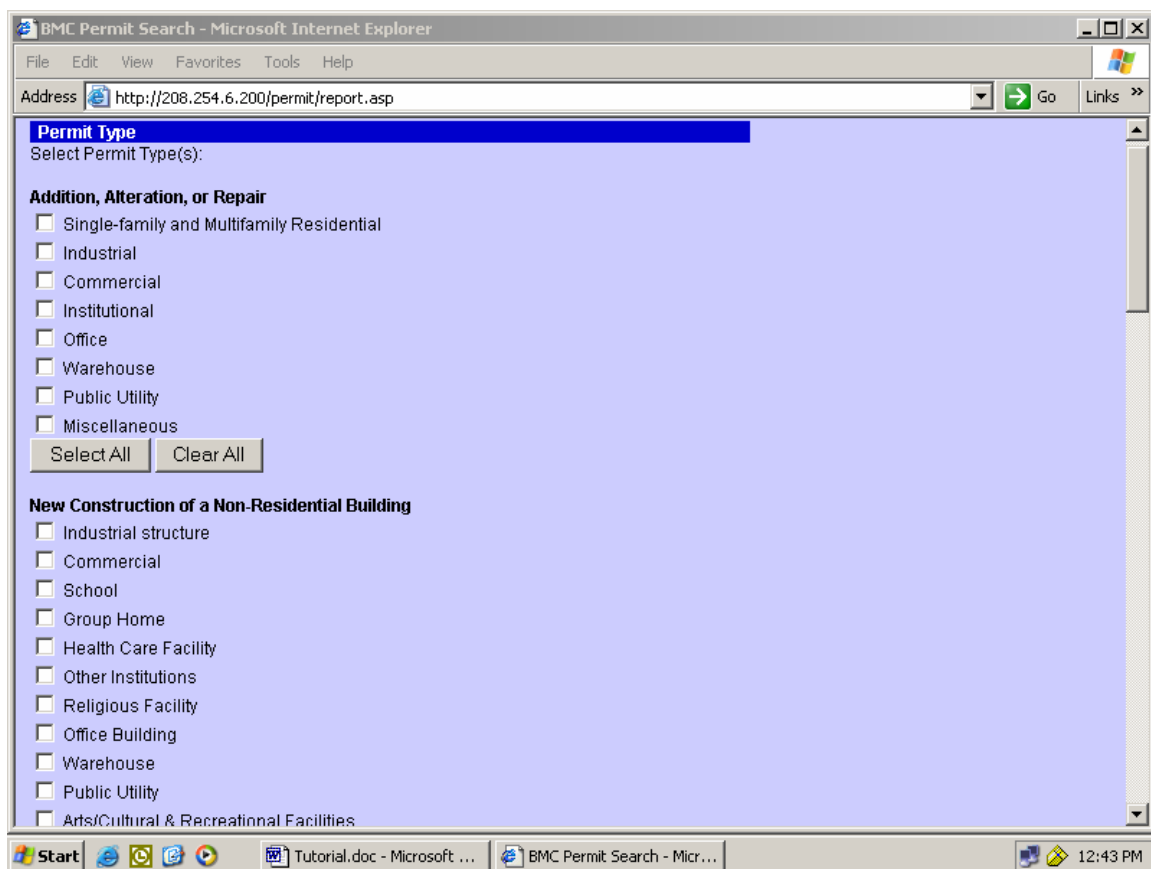


Exhibit 1

In the example, the box for Office Building under the category "New Construction of a Non-Residential Building" has been checked (**Exhibit 2**):

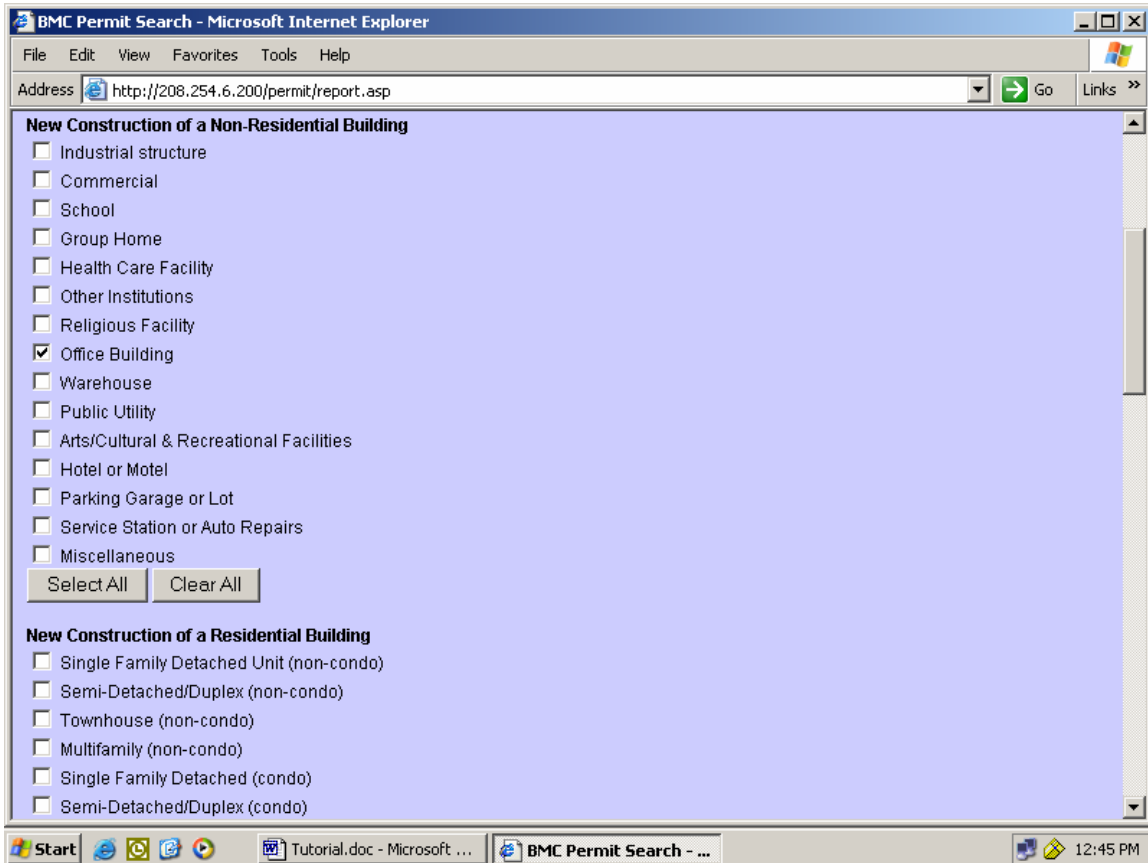


Exhibit 2

Issued Date Range

Specify the time frame (by using the pulldown boxes for month, day and year) for your permit search. The issued date is the date the permit was issued by the local jurisdiction.

In the example, the beginning and ending dates of January 1 and February 28 of 2002 have been specified using the pulldown boxes (**Exhibit 3**).

If you do not specify a date range, all permits between January 1, 2002 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. Specify the time frame exactly as in the above example.

Amount Range

The option is available to specify a range in dollar amount for the permits selected. In the example, the boxes for "Amount Range" are left blank (**Exhibit 3**) since we wish to view all permits meeting the other criteria specified, regardless of dollar amount. **Please note that when keying in dollar amounts, no commas should be entered.** Please note also that for permits with a value less than \$50,000, the information available in the online building permit data system is more limited than for permits with a value of \$50,000 or more. The data available for permits under \$50,000 are: permit number, jurisdiction, issue date, value, ownership, and permit type.

The screenshot shows the BMC Permit Search interface in Microsoft Internet Explorer. The address bar displays <http://208.254.6.200/permit/report.asp>. The search criteria are as follows:

- Issued Date Range:** From: Month: January, Day: 1, Year: 2002; To: Month: February, Day: 28, Year: 2002.
- Amount Range:** From: \$; To: \$.
- Jurisdiction:** Jurisdiction(s): Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County. Below the list, it says "Use the Shift or Ctrl keys to select multiple values".
- RPD:** RPD Number(s): 101, 102, 103, 104. Below the list, it says "Use the Shift or Ctrl keys to select multiple values".

The taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button and several open applications: Tutorial.doc - Mic..., Yahoo! - Microsof..., BMC Permit Sea..., BMC Permit Searc..., and a system clock showing 4:45 PM.

Exhibit 3

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, and zip codes. You can define your search using just one of these types of geographic areas or a combination of them.

Jurisdiction. Select the jurisdiction(s) in which you would like to focus your permit search. Click on the jurisdiction you would like to select. 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 and Baltimore counties and Baltimore City have been selected and are highlighted (**Exhibit 3**).

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

Tract. Type in the Census tract numbers where you would like to target your search. Separate multiple tract numbers with commas, but include no spaces after the commas.

Zip Code. Type in the Zip Codes where you would like to target your search. Separate multiple zip codes with commas, but include no spaces after the commas.

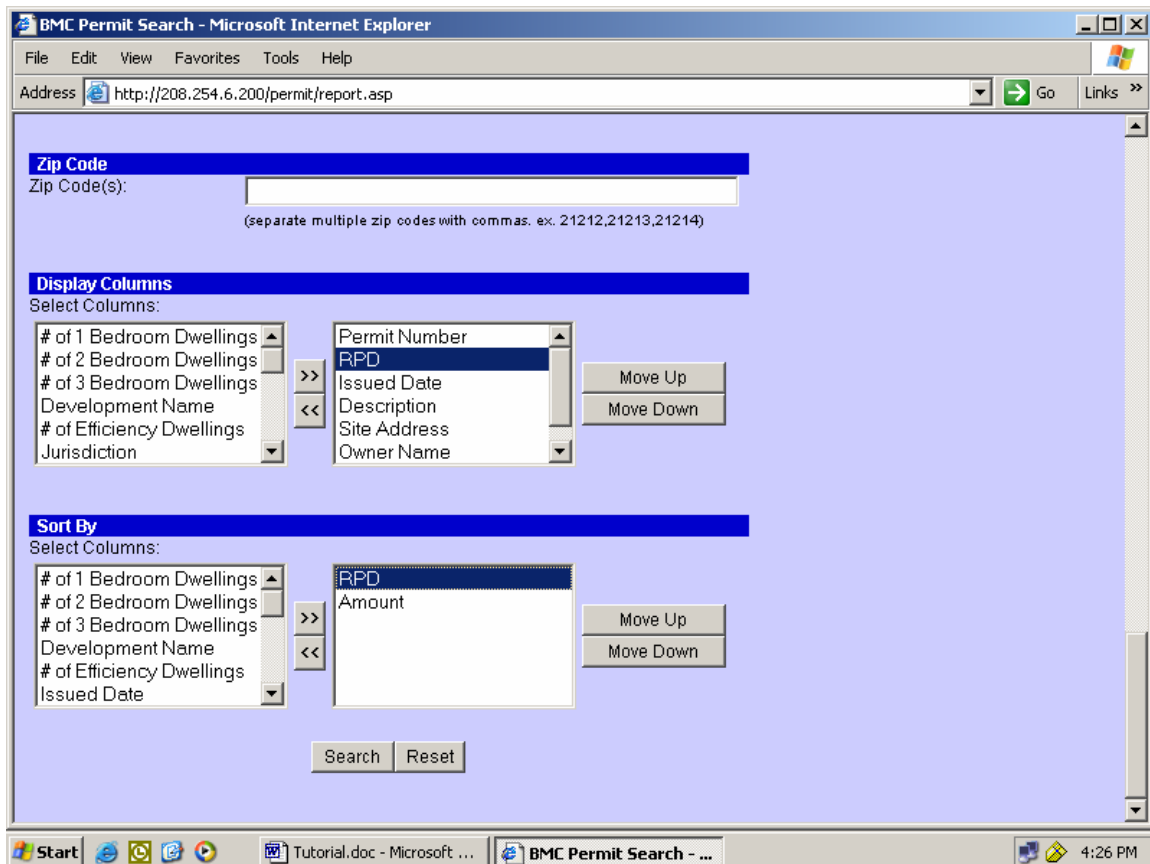
Since the example search is focusing on two jurisdictions in their entirety, no RPD, Census tract or Zip Code selections have been made.

Display Columns

Select the columns which you would like displayed in your search result. To do this, highlight the column name in the box on the left and then click on the arrow pointing to the right to move the name into the box on the right. Continue until you have selected all the column names you wish to have displayed. If you change your mind, a column name can be removed from the box on the right by highlighting the column name and clicking on the arrow pointing to the left.

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

In the example, Permit Number, RPD, Issued Date, Description, Site Address, Owner Name and Amount (estimated cost of the project) have been selected (**Exhibit 4**).

**Exhibit 4**

Sort By

Select the columns by which you would like your search results sorted. The procedure for selecting and changing the order of the selected columns is as described under "Display Columns". The search results will be sorted first by the column at the top of the list, then by the 2nd column in the list, etc. In the example, since RPD has been selected first and Amount second (**Exhibit 4**), the search results are sorted first by RPD in ascending order and then by Amount in descending order.

Tutorial: Permit results -- types of reports

The results of the example permit search (new office building construction in Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City for the first two months of 2002) are shown below (Exhibit 5). Once search results have been generated, they can be printed out or downloaded to your hard drive or diskette.

To download search results, click on "Download Report" (Exhibit 5).

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "BMC Permit Search - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows "http://208.254.6.200/permit/result.asp". The page content includes a "Close Window" link, a "Download Report" link, and search parameters: Permit Use: Office Building, Date Range: from 1/1/2002 to 2/28/2002, Jurisdiction: 1, 3, 4, Sort by: RPD, Amount, and Number of Rows Returned: 4. Below this is a table with 7 columns: Permit Number, RPD, Issued Date, Description, Site Address, Owner Name, and Amount. The table contains 4 rows of data and a final "Totals" row.

Permit Number	RPD	Issued Date	Description	Site Address	Owner Name	Amount
184470	120	2/25/2002	NEW OFFICE AND RETAIL	901 S BOND ST	FELLS POINT DEVELOPMENT LLC	\$7,000,000.00
170761	120	2/22/2002	NEW 3 STORY COMMERCIAL OFFICE BLDG/WPARKING	900 S WOLFE ST	ARUNDEL STATION LLC	\$900,000.00
474729	312	2/26/2002	NEW SHELL OFFICE/RETAIL BLDG	9411 COMMON BROOK RD	LYONS MILL #2 LLP	\$1,000,000.00
473542	319	2/20/2002	NEW SHELL BLDG/OFFICE	3217 TIMANUS LN	TIMANUS LANE PTNRS/D BROWN ENT	\$1,000,000.00
Totals:						\$9,900,000.00

Exhibit 5

In the dialogue box which appears (**Exhibit 6**), click on Save. You will then need to specify the location on your hard drive or diskette where the file containing your search results (report.tsv) should be downloaded. You can also change the name of the file in this dialogue. The .tsv file (tab-separated variable) can easily be opened in Excel as a spreadsheet.

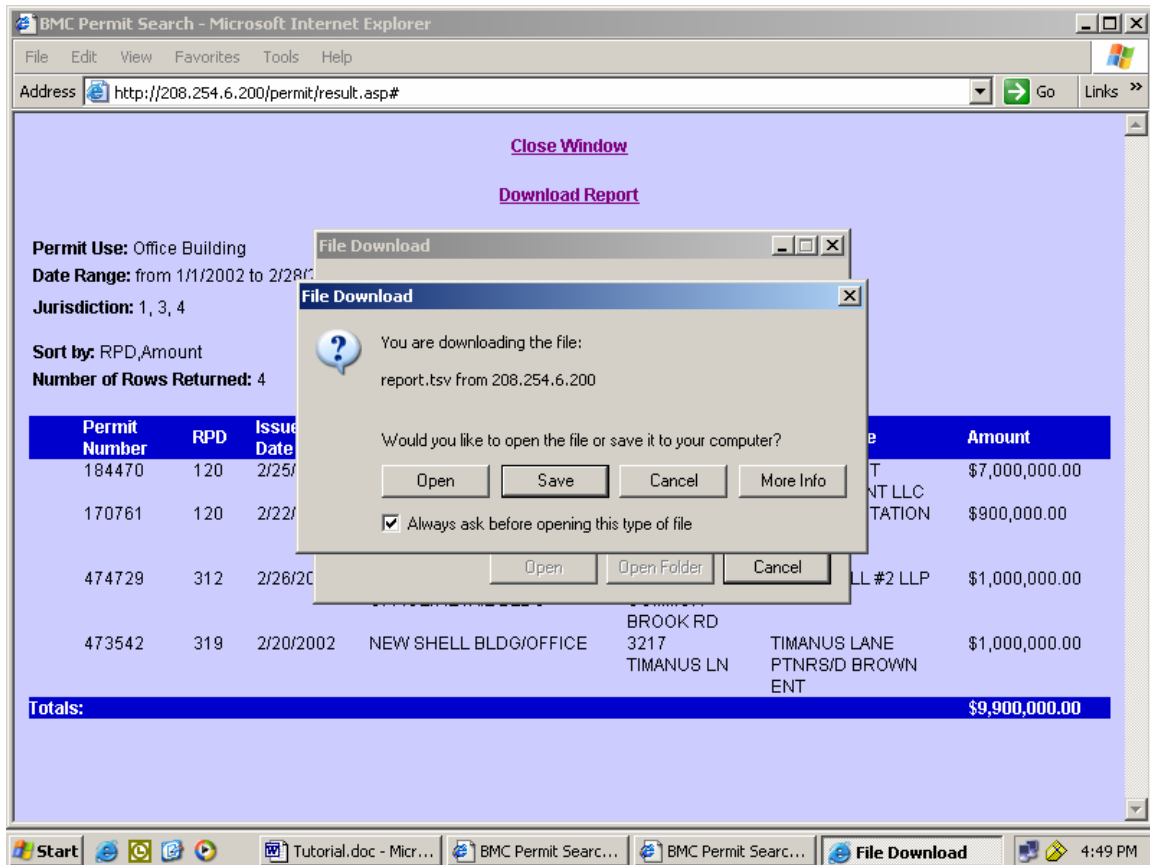


Exhibit 6

HOW TO OPEN THE SAVED REPORT IN EXCEL

“Open” an Excel spreadsheet from “File”, locate the saved report.tsv (or whatever you’ve named it) file and click “Open”. A text import wizard will pop up automatically (**Exhibit 7**). Check “Delimited” under “Choose the file type that best describes your data”, choose “start import at row 1” and choose “Windows (ANSI)” as the “File origin”. Then click “Next”.

On the next step, check “Tab” as the “Delimiters” and then click “Next” (**Exhibit 8**).

On the last step, check “General” under “Column data format” and then click “Finish” (**Exhibit 9**).

The saved report.tsv will be opened in Excel automatically as a spreadsheet (**Exhibit 10**).

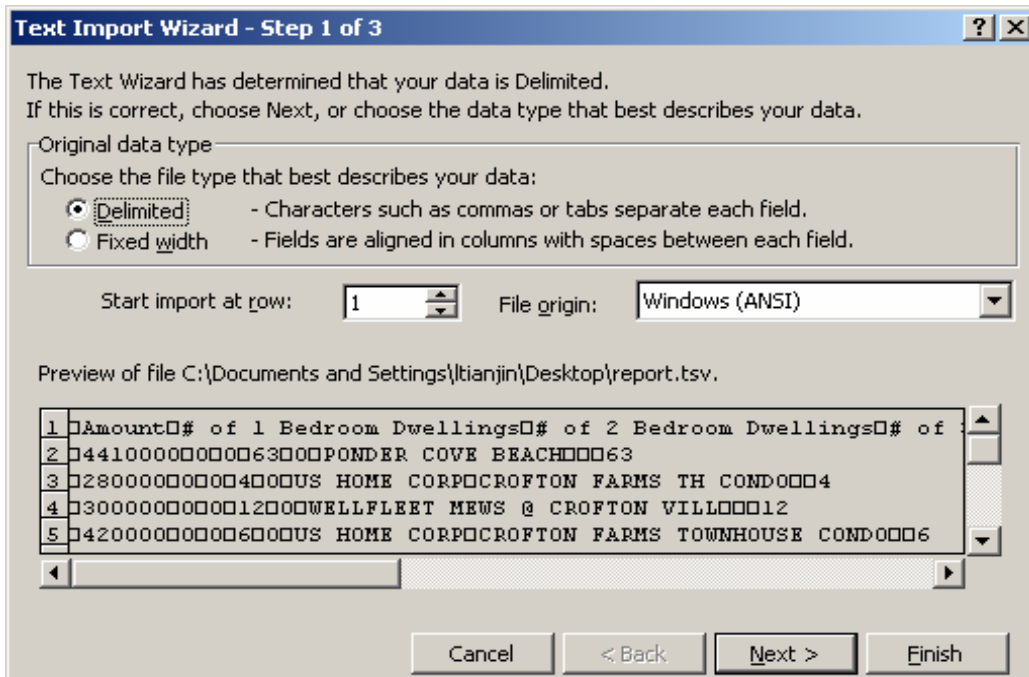


Exhibit 7

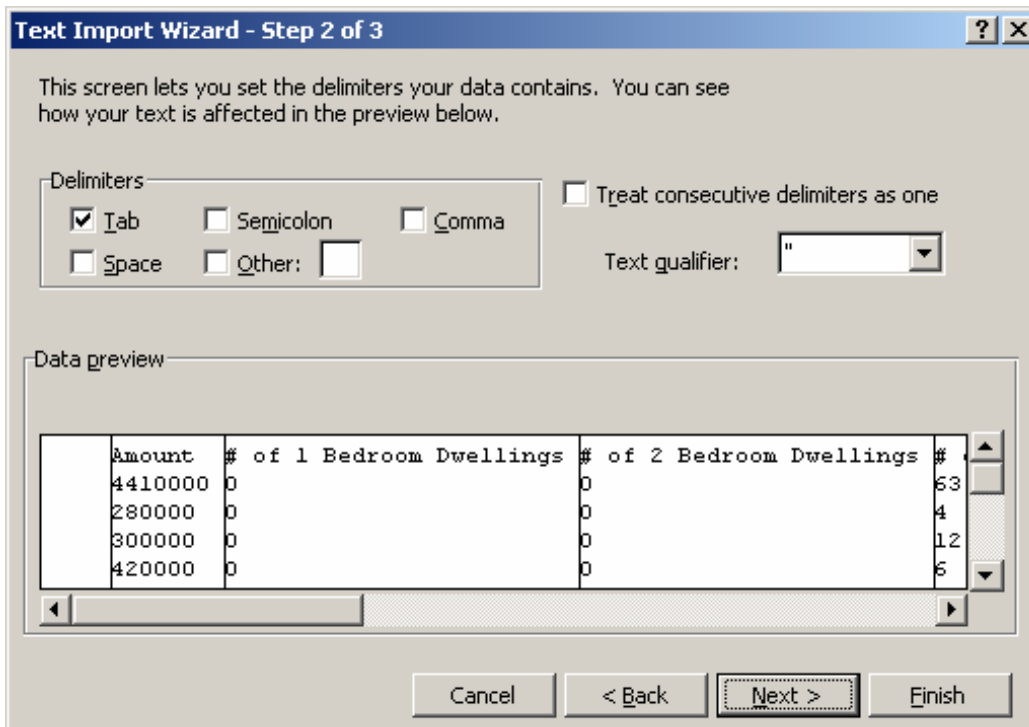


Exhibit 8

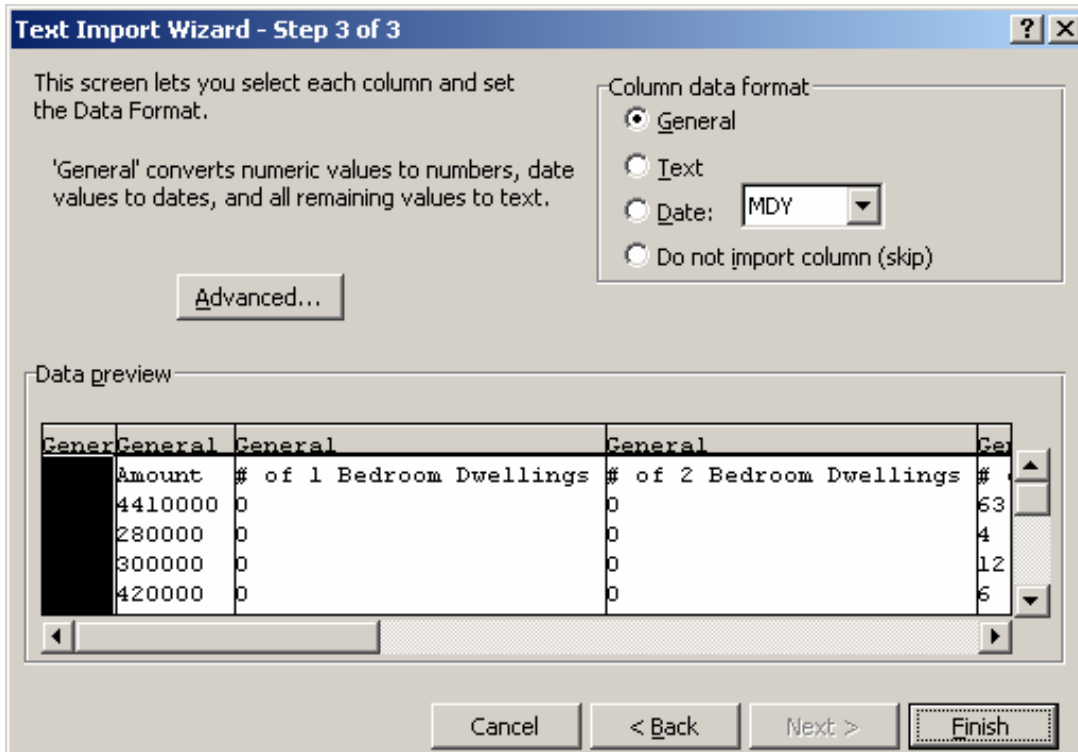


Exhibit 9

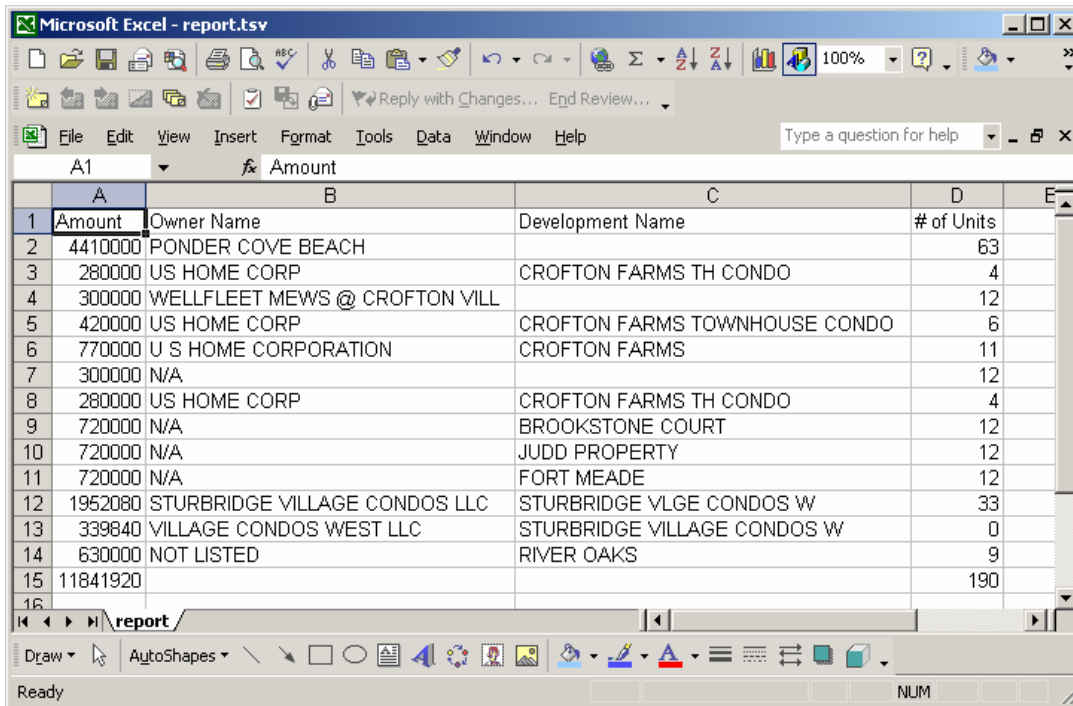


Exhibit 10

Questions & Answers

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

The BMC receives copies of all building permits issued by Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties. The information on these permits is entered in a 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 receives on average 1,500 permits each month. Of these only permits with an estimated cost of \$10,000 or more are entered in the database.

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

Permits from January 1, 2002 through present are in the database.

4. Who 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 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.

6. 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.

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:

Rick Bennett
MetroResearch Division
Phone: (410) 732-0500 ext. 1023
E-mail: rbennett@baltometro.org

In the event you are unable to reach Rick Bennett, please contact:

Tianjin Luo
MetroResearch Division
Phone: (410) 732-0500 ext. 1026
E-mail: ltianjin@baltometro.org

or Mary Logan
Director, Regional Information Center
Phone: (410) 732-9570
E-mail: mlogan@baltometro.org

Disclaimer

The database used in *Building Permit 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 Permit 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 Permit 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 Permit Online*.

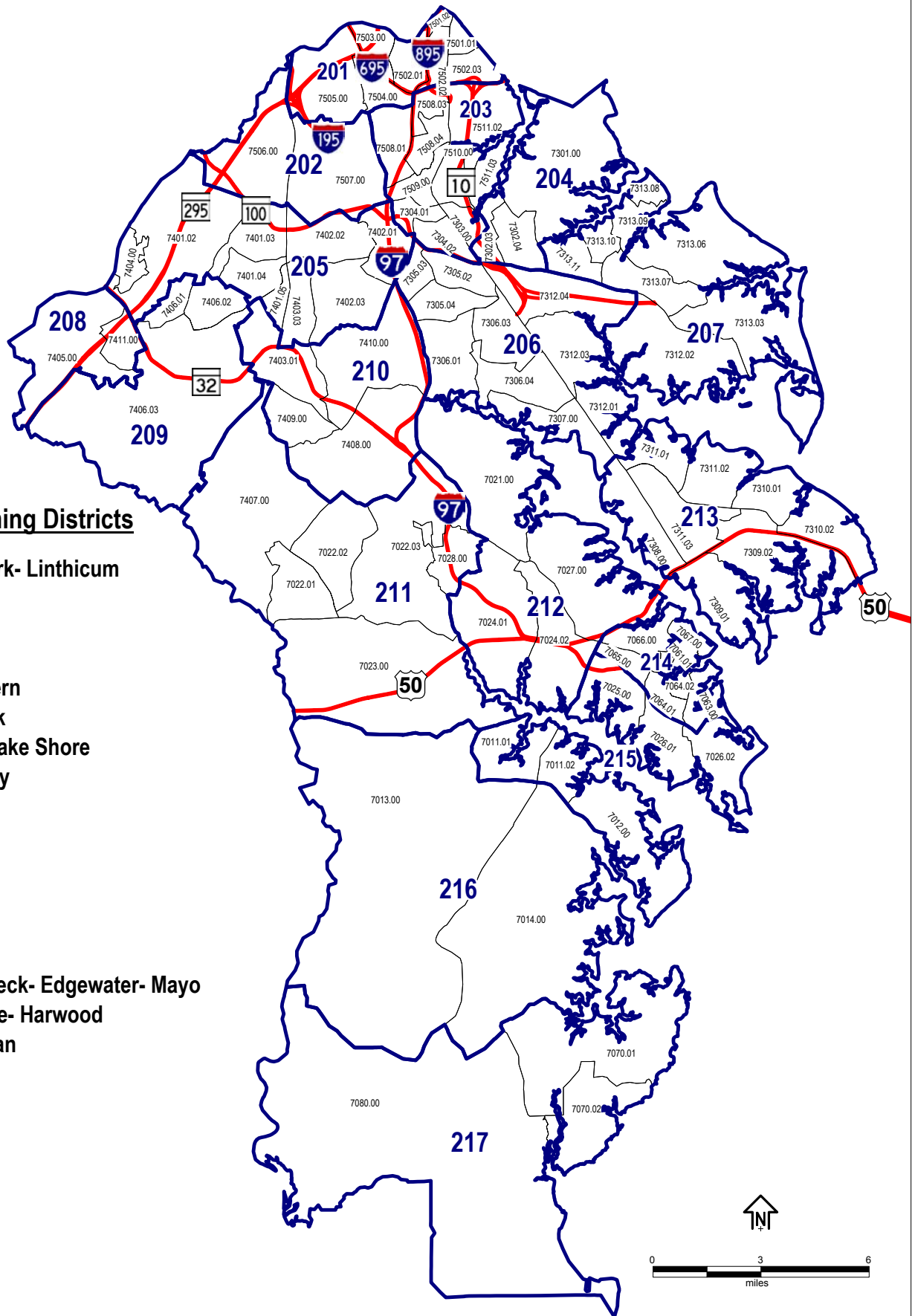
Baltimore Metropolitan Council BPDS Field Definition Table

BPDS Field	Definition
Permit Type	Alphabetic 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
Permit_use	Numeric field identifying the use for a building "A" 01 - Single family and multi-family residential "A" 02 - Industrial "A" 03 - Commercial "A" 04 - Institutional "A" 05 - Office "A" 06 - Warehouse "A" 07 - Public utility "A" 08 - Miscellaneous "N" 20 - Industrial structure "N" 21 - Commercial "N" 22 - School "N" 23 - Group home "N" 24 - Health care facility "N" 25 - Other institutions "N" 26 - Religious facility "N" 27 - Office building "N" 28 - Warehouse "N" 29 - Public utility "N" 30 - Arts/cultural & recreational facilities "N" 31 - Hotel or motel "N" 32 - Parking garage or lot "N" 33 - Service station or auto repairs "N" 34 - Miscellaneous "R" 40 - Single family detached (non-condo) "R" 41 - Semi-detached/duplex (non-condo) "R" 42 - Townhouse (non-condo) "R" 43 - Multifamily (non-condo) "R" 44 - Single family detached (condo) "R" 45 - Semi-detached/duplex (condo) "R" 46 - Townhouse (condo) "R" 47 - Multifamily (condo) "R" 48 - Mobile home "R" 49 - Miscellaneous
Amount	Dollar value of materials and labor reported on the building permit, usually less than the total value of a structure
Jurisdiction	1 = Anne Arundel County 2 = City of Annapolis 3 = Baltimore City 4 = Baltimore County 5 = Carroll County 6 = Harford County 7 = Howard County
Issued Date	Date when the permit was issued
Entered Date	Date when the permit was entered into the Building Permit Data System
Permit Number	Building permit number assigned by the local permitting office; always 6 numeric digits in BMC's BPDSsystem
Tract	Census tract
RPD	Regional Planning District, defined by local jurisdiction and BMC for regional planning purpose. See attached map for details
Ownership	Numeric field identifying existing ownership; not always filled in. 1 = Privately Owned 2 = Publicly Owned
Tenure	Numeric field indicating disposition after construction is complete; not always filled in. 1 = Building for rent after completion 2 = Building for sale after completion
Water Service	Numeric field identifying the source of water (" R " ONLY) 1 = Onsite water supply, usually from a well. Also known as a "private" water source 2 = Offsite water supply, also called "public"

Baltimore Metropolitan Council BPDS Field Definition Table

BPDS Field	Definition
Sewer Service	Numeric field identifying the type of sewage treatment ("R" ONLY) 1 = Onsite sewage treatment, usually with a septic tank. Also known as "private" sewage treatment 2 = Offsite sewage treatment, also called "public"
# of Units	Number of new residential units ("R" ONLY)
# 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)
Development Name	Subdivision name ("R" ONLY)
Description	A standardized text description of construction authorized by the building permits.
Site Address	Standardized street address for BPDS record (except "A" under \$50,000)
Zip Code	Five digit ZIP code of the construction site
Owner Name	Developer's or owner's 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
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

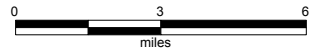
2000 Census Tracts in Anne Arundel County



Regional Planning Districts

- 201 Brooklyn Park- Linthicum
- 202 BWI
- 203 Glen Burnie
- 204 Marley Neck
- 205 Jessup-Severn
- 206 Severna Park
- 207 Pasadena- Lake Shore
- 208 Maryland City
- 209 Fort Meade
- 210 Odenton
- 211 Crofton
- 212 Crownsville
- 213 Broadneck
- 214 Annapolis
- 215 Annapolis Neck- Edgewater- Mayo
- 216 Davidsonville- Harwood
- 217 Deale- Lothian

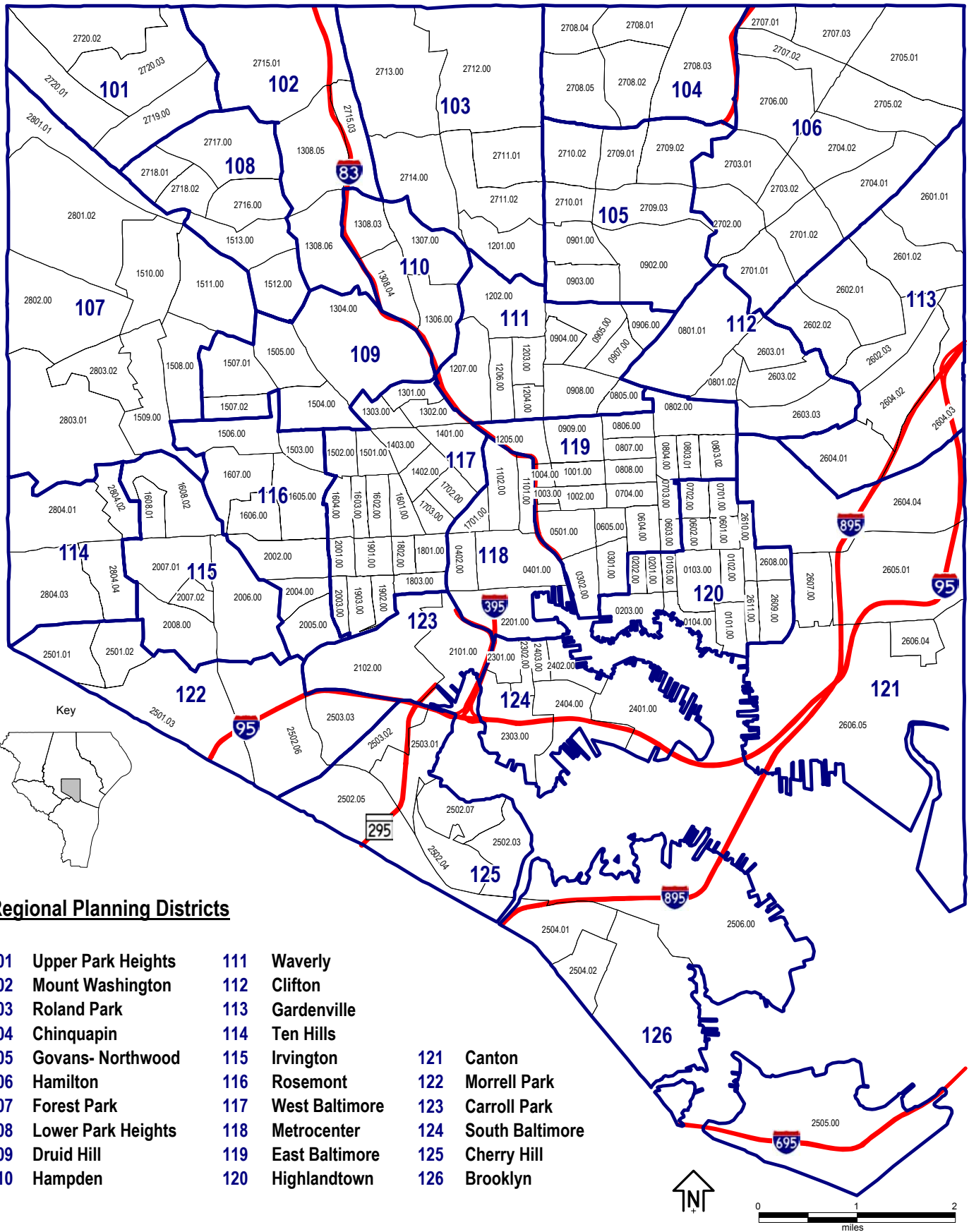
Key



0000.00 = Census Tracts

000 = Regional Planning Districts

2000 Census Tracts in Baltimore City



Regional Planning Districts

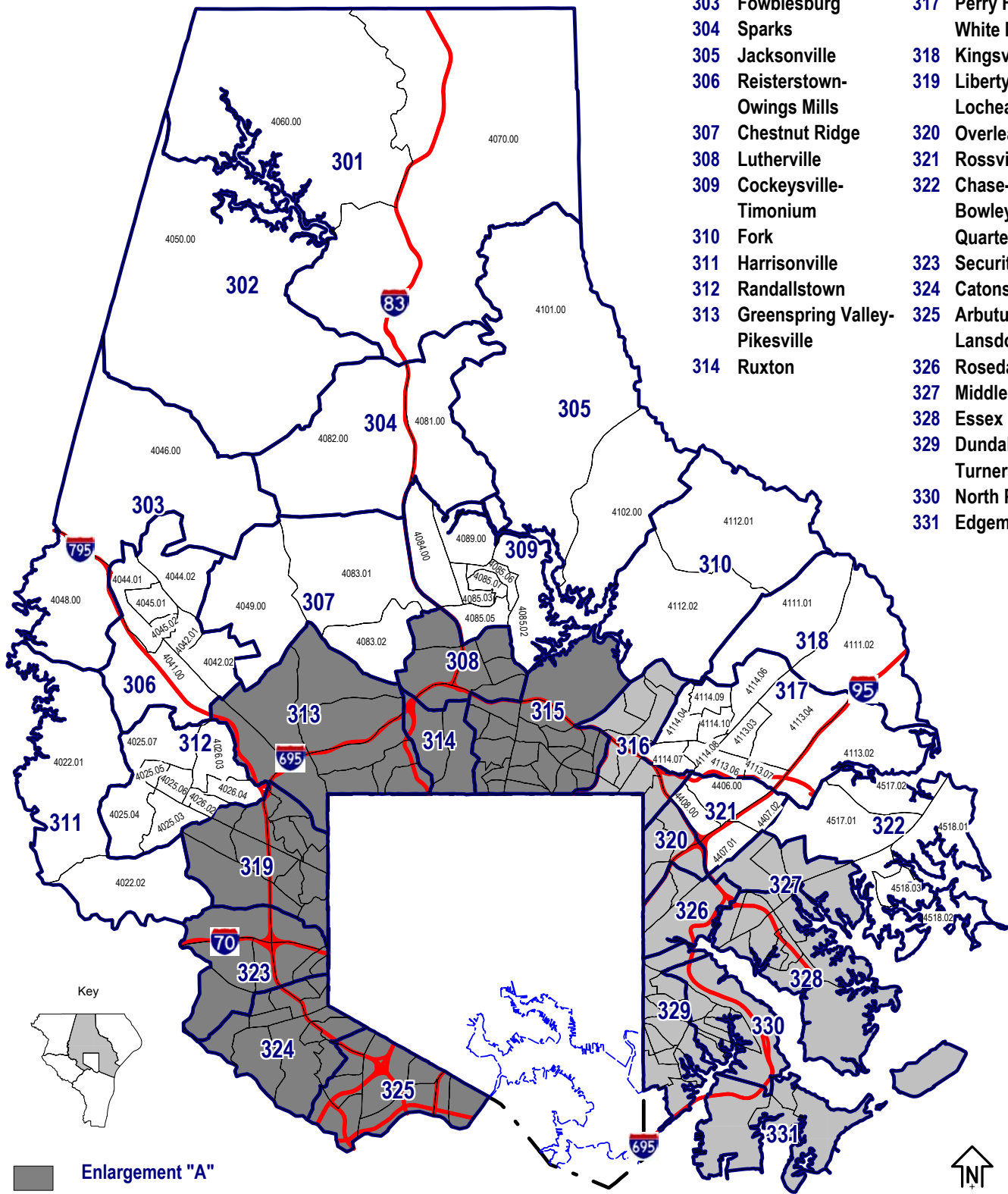
- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 101 Upper Park Heights | 111 Waverly | |
| 102 Mount Washington | 112 Clifton | |
| 103 Roland Park | 113 Gardenville | |
| 104 Chinquapin | 114 Ten Hills | |
| 105 Govans- Northwood | 115 Irvington | 121 Canton |
| 106 Hamilton | 116 Rosemont | 122 Morrell Park |
| 107 Forest Park | 117 West Baltimore | 123 Carroll Park |
| 108 Lower Park Heights | 118 Metrocenter | 124 South Baltimore |
| 109 Druid Hill | 119 East Baltimore | 125 Cherry Hill |
| 110 Hampden | 120 Highlandtown | 126 Brooklyn |

0000.00 = Census Tracts

000 = Regional Planning Districts

2000 Census Tracts in Baltimore County

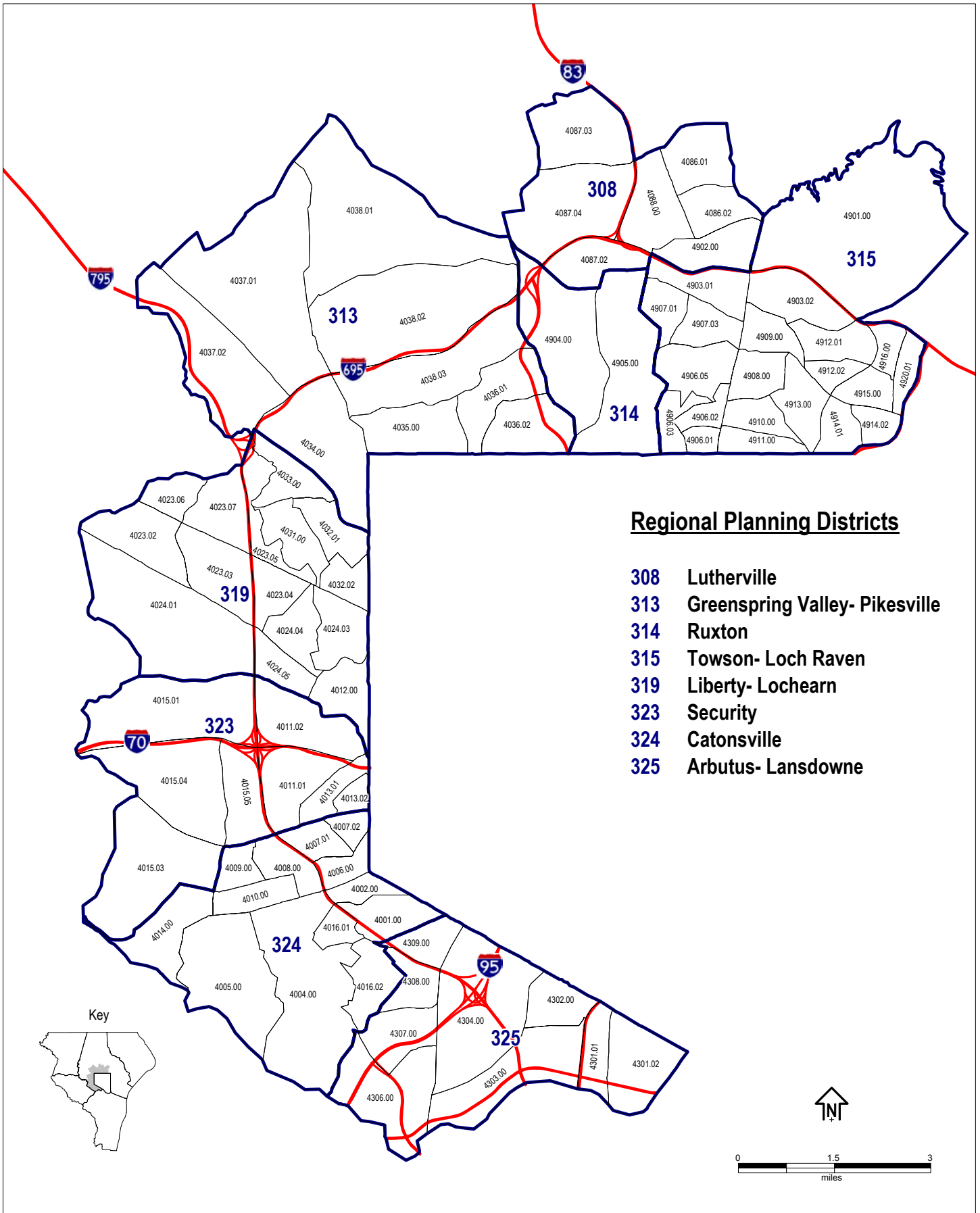
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 301 Hereford-Maryland Line | 315 Towson-Loch Raven |
| 302 Prettyboy | 316 Parkville |
| 303 Fowblesburg | 317 Perry Hall-White Marsh |
| 304 Sparks | 318 Kingsville |
| 305 Jacksonville | 319 Liberty-Lochearn |
| 306 Reisterstown-Owings Mills | 320 Overlea |
| 307 Chestnut Ridge | 321 Rossville |
| 308 Lutherville | 322 Chase-Bowley's Quarters |
| 309 Cockeysville-Timonium | 323 Security |
| 310 Fork | 324 Catonsville |
| 311 Harrisonville | 325 Arbutus-Lansdowne |
| 312 Randallstown | 326 Rosedale |
| 313 Greenspring Valley-Pikesville | 327 Middle River |
| 314 Ruxton | 328 Essex |
| | 329 Dundalk-Turners Station |
| | 330 North Point |
| | 331 Edgemere |



Enlargement "A"
 Enlargement "B"

0000.00 = Census Tracts
000 = Regional Planning Districts

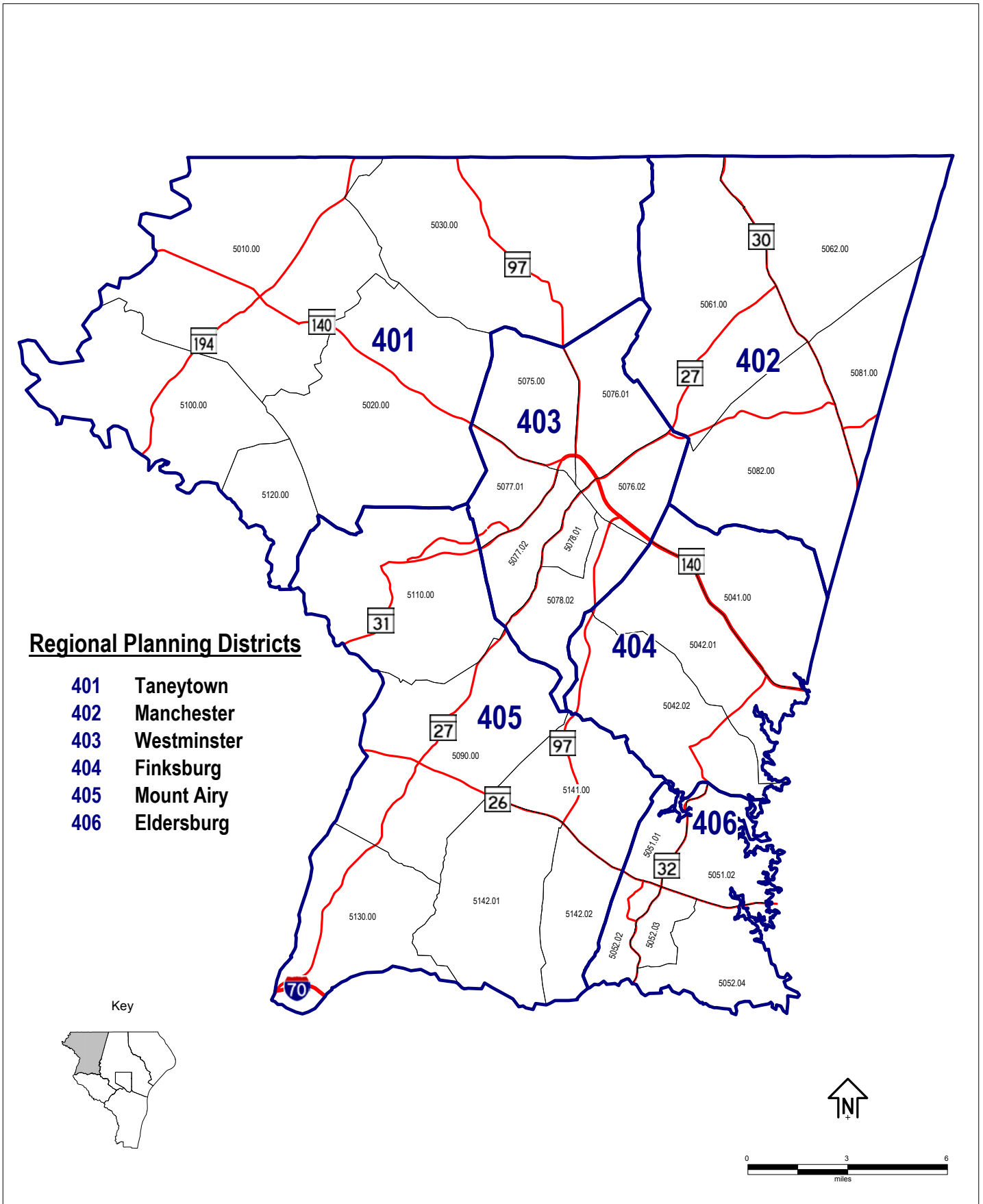
2000 Baltimore County Census Tracts - Enlargement "A"



0000.00 = Census Tracts

000 = Regional Planning Districts

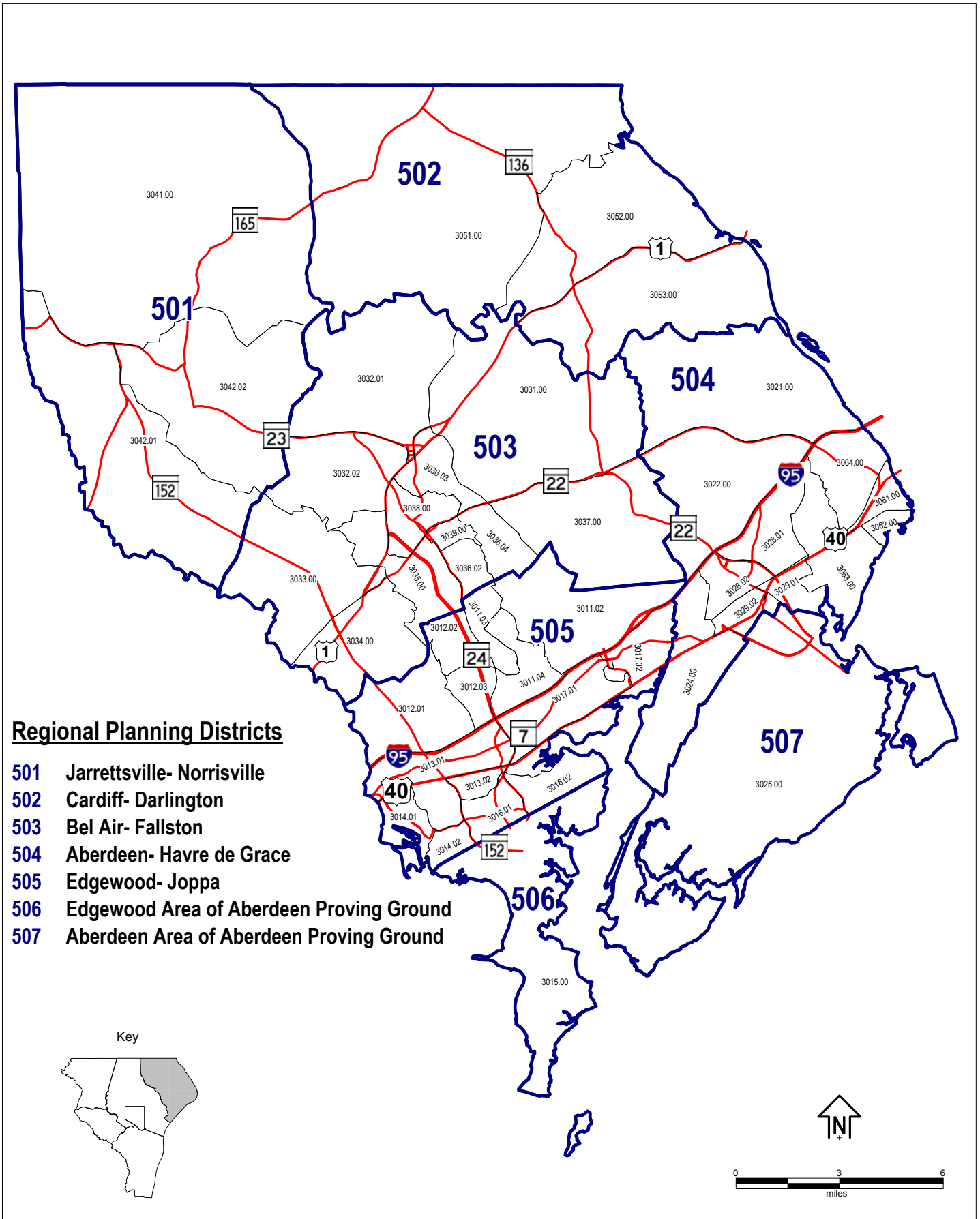
2000 Census Tracts in Carroll County



0000.00 = Census Tracts

000 = Regional Planning Districts

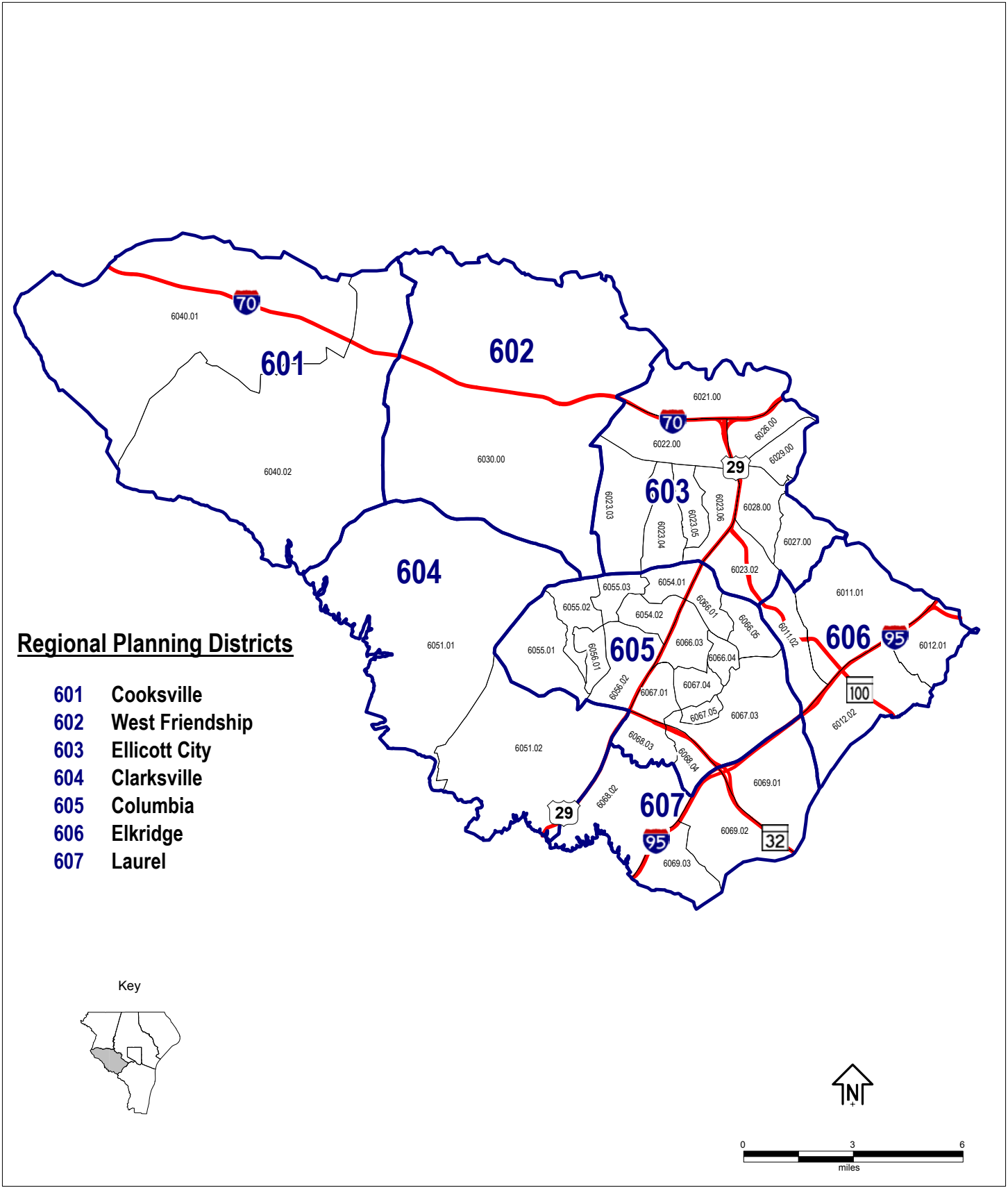
2000 Census Tracts in Harford County



0000.00 = Census Tracts

000 = Regional Planning Districts

2000 Census Tracts in Howard County



0000.00 = Census Tracts

000 = Regional Planning Districts