



# Howard County

*Internal Memorandum*

**Subject:** *Testimony for Council Resolution to Designate Historic Downtown Ellicott City as a Sustainable Community*

**To:** *Lonnie R. Robbins  
Chief Administrative Officer*

**Through:** *Marsha McLaughlin, Director  
Department of Planning and Zoning*

**From:** *Stephen Lafferty*

**Date:** *June 21, 2012*

The Department of Planning and Zoning supports the adoption of Resolution No. \_\_\_\_ - 2012, which requests the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to designate historic downtown Ellicott City, the historic district and adjacent properties as a Sustainable Community.

Such a Resolution is required by the State to demonstrate the County's support of its application. The application indicates the County's initiative, support for and commitment to enhancing the growth and vitality of the historic portion of Ellicott City through a partnership with residents, property owners, merchants and local organizations. The designation of this area as a Sustainable Community, under the Sustainable Communities Act of 2010, will make this area eligible for various state funds and resources.

The anticipated fiscal impacts associated with adoption of this Resolution involve a continued allocation of staffing to support this effort and as yet undetermined use of capital funds for physical improvements. Please contact Stephen Lafferty at 410-313-4302 if you have any questions.

cc: Jessica Feldmark, Chief of Staff  
Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator  
Paul Johnson, Deputy County Solicitor  
Ray Wacks, Budget Administrator  
Kimberley Flowers, Deputy Director, DPZ

2012

# Ellicott City Sustainable Community



Department of Planning and Zoning  
Howard County Government  
7/2/2012

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**I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY APPLICANT INFORMATION**

**Name of Sustainable Community:** Historic Downtown Ellicott City

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**Legal Name of Applicant:** Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning

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**Federal Identification Number:** 52-6000965

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**Street Address:** 3430 Court House Drive

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**City:** Ellicott City                      **County:** Howard              **State:** MD              **Zip Code:** 21043

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**Phone No:** (410) 313-2350    **Fax No:** (410) 313-3467    **Web Address:** howardcountymd.gov

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**Sustainable Community Application Local Contact:**

**Name:** Steve Lafferty                      **Title:** Director of Special Projects for the County Executive

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**Address:** 3430 Court House Drive    **City:** Ellicott City    **State:** MD    **Zip Code:** 21043

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**Phone:** (410) 313-4302    **Fax:** (410) 313-3467    **E-mail Address:** slafferty@howardcountymd.gov

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**Sustainable Community Contact for Application Status:**

**Name:** Steve Lafferty                      **Title:** Director of Special Projects for the County Executive

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**Address:** 3430 Court House Drive    **City:** Ellicott City    **State:** MD    **Zip Code:** 21043

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**II. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASELINE INFORMATION (20 Points)****A. Proposed Sustainable Community Area(s): (5 points)**

- (1) **Name of proposed Sustainable Community Area(s):** Historic Downtown Ellicott City
- (2) **Provide a description of SC Area boundaries. In addition to the written description on-line, include as an attachment hard copies of the project location map. Also include on a CD-ROM a PDF of the proposed Sustainable Community and a GIS shapefile of proposed Sustainable Community boundaries and other GIS related data, e.g., spreadsheet of detailed listing of parcels that form the project boundary. Please also include on a CD-ROM, pictures of your Sustainable Community as it relates to your application. If applicable, label and show targeted areas within the boundaries (Attachment 2).**

The Historic Downtown Ellicott City Sustainable Community Area is proposed to include 350 acres, and combines the boundaries of the historic district and designated neighborhood. The GIS-related files are provided on the enclosed CD-ROM.

The Area generally extends to the Patapsco River to the east, Park Drive to the north, Papillon Drive to the west (along Main Street/Frederick Road), and Weavers Court (along College Avenue) to the south.

- (3) **Approximate number of acres within the SC Area:** approximately 350 acres
- (4) **Existing federal, state or local designations:** Designated Neighborhood, National Register Historic District, Local Historic District, Other – National Scenic Byway (Historic National Road)
- (5) **Prior Revitalization Investments & Smart Growth:**
- a. **List and describe any significant State and local smart growth or revitalization related program investments (for instance, Community Legacy or SC Rehab Tax Credit) that have been invested in the Area since the launching of Maryland's Smart Growth initiative and programs in 1997 (including Housing investment). What impact have these investments made in the community? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Ellicott City is currently a Maryland Designated Neighborhood. The historic downtown was part of the original Main Street Maryland program but is not currently designated.

Howard County has denoted historic Ellicott City as one of its two Historic Districts. As a historic district, Ellicott City contains special Historic Village zoning and properties are eligible for local and state property tax credits for improvements made to the property.

Frederick Road, which is Main Street, is part of the Historic National Road, a federally designated scenic byway.

Maryland Capital Access Program (MCAP) loan funds have been accessed by two businesses on Main Street, totaling over \$490,000. The County's Department of Housing and Community Development has utilized HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds and Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) in the Burgess Mill Station housing redevelopment. The County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds have been used at the Roger Carter Community Center (RCCC) and will be used for the construction of a new community facility soon to replace the RCCC.

State resources have been used to facilitate the opening of Ellicott City's only hotel and have been essential to the mixed-income housing redevelopment at Burgess Mill Station.

- b. **Describe any existing barriers to Smart Growth that may affect your jurisdiction or the proposed SC area. For instance, does your area have higher development fees than outer "cornfields"? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

There is little new land or "greenfields" available for development in the Area. The Area is largely built out although some minimal redevelopment may be possible. The historic nature of most buildings is seen, by some, as a barrier.

Another barrier is the Area's geography. Built into granite rock, the town slopes down to the Patapsco River; this makes pedestrian activity more difficult. The Main Street is narrow as it runs between two steep hillsides, and on street parking has restricted the width of some sidewalks and limited accessibility.

Several named and unnamed tributaries within the Lower Patapsco River Watershed (including the Tiber Branch and the Hudson Branch) further constrain redevelopment potential and create potential flooding issues. Main Street has seen flooding from the river and also from the western end of the watershed. The narrow streets and space limitations also limit the ability of transit vehicles to effectively serve the Area.

Another limitation is the location of parking. The largest lots are at the upper end of Main Street while the vast majority of businesses are down the hill at lower Main.

## **B. Community Conditions: Strengths and Weaknesses (5 points)**

- (1) **Describe the strengths and weaknesses in the proposed Area's existing built environment. For example, what is the condition of housing? Are there underutilized historic buildings and cultural places? What is the condition and availability of community parks and recreational assets? Are there transportation assets? What is the current condition of community infrastructure such as roads and lighting? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

### ***Strengths***

A unique mill town built on the Patapsco River and over the Tiber River, historic downtown Ellicott City features a rich history and heritage that create conditions for a high quality of

life. The community features several historic sites, including one of the first B&O rail stations on the initial B&O rail line. Now a museum, the station is a cultural and historic centerpiece. The community's former Post Office has been renovated and now serves as the County's Visitors' Center. Other historic sites include the Thomas Isaac Log Cabin, the old Howard County Courthouse, Mt. Ida, the Ellicott City Fire Station, the Ellicott City Colored School, and the Patapsco Female Institute. Ellicott City has thematic ties to larger historic areas; the community is located on the Historic National Road Scenic Byway, is a stop on the Civil War Trail, is proximate to nearby historic communities (such as Oella in Baltimore County) and is within the Patapsco Valley Heritage Greenway.

The successful preservation of historic structures is a key strength; Ellicott City's architecture and adaptive reuse of historic buildings provide character and appeal. The community developed with a compact, concentrated form that has been preserved. In addition to the historic mixed-use buildings downtown, historic homes are situated at the community's gateway. Cobblestone streets and alleys in some locations further reinforce the unique community character.

Historic character remains a key component to Ellicott City's appeal. The County actively engages property owners in an alteration approval process that helps them adhere to preservation guidelines and maintains the historic qualities of the town. Since 2000, more than 225 applications were reviewed and approved by the Historic District Commission. During that same period, property owners received nearly \$190,000 in local property tax credits for historic repairs.

### ***Weaknesses***

While Ellicott City features existing built environment strengths, there are also weaknesses to be addressed. There is a limited framework for preservation enforcement. In terms of condition of the built environment, property and building upkeep needs improvement. Ageing retaining walls need fortification. The bridge which crosses into Baltimore County is of concern, as is maintenance of the railroad. Extensive overhead wires mar and sometimes obstruct views of the historic structures.

Pedestrian access and connectivity exists but is hampered by difficult topography and by narrow sidewalks. The condition of sidewalks could be enhanced to improve accessibility and include more frequent crossings. The road system is constrained and cannot be expanded. There is a perception that Ellicott City lacks adequate parking.

The community's gateways, signage, and wayfinding could be improved to both welcome visitors to the community and aid in navigation. Ellicott City also offers few public gathering spaces where visitors, residents and business people may congregate. Small public "parks" offer little green space while access to the nearby Patapsco State Park is limited.

- (2) **Describe the Area's land use/zoning make-up (residential, commercial, industrial and mixed-use). Is the current land use or zoning conducive to revitalization investment?**  
(Answer Space 4,000 characters)

The Area is a mix of residential and commercial zoning and uses. The designated historic district contains three special zones for residential, commercial and mixed use in the historic district. Residential uses occupy upper-story spaces above retail and commercial uses downtown. The Area contains multi-family developments, single-family detached houses and rental units. Part of the historic district is zoned Residential-Environmental Development to maximize the environmental features and to limit building footprints. The West End has commercial buildings. Institutional uses, including the Howard County government office complex, complete the mix.

The Area's land use and zoning composition are conducive to revitalization and reinvestment.

- (3) **Describe the strengths and weaknesses in basic features of community quality-of-life. For instance, is crime an issue for this SC Area? What is the condition and quality of educational choices available to the community? Area artistic, cultural, or community resources, events or facilities within or accessible to residents in the proposed SC Area?** *(Answer Space 4,000 characters)*

### ***Strengths***

Howard County is situated between two large urban areas, Washington, D.C. and Baltimore. The County is a prime location of choice for residents, with its access to extensive opportunities for business, arts and culture, entertainment, education, health care, and social interaction. Columbia also affords wonderful cultural, community and recreational opportunities for those living in Ellicott City. In addition to access to regional destinations, Ellicott City is readily accessible from Route 40 and Interstates 95 and 70. It also has easy access to Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, giving residents access to national and even international locales.

The Howard County Public School System is one of the best in the country, offering Ellicott City residents the opportunity for an outstanding education, and enabling neighborhoods the ability to attract and retain residents. Howard Community College is also a strong local educational institution.

Historic downtown Ellicott City is a unique destination. The downtown hosts a number of events and cultural activities throughout the year that attract visitors as well as add to local residents' quality of life. Downtown's eclectic mix of businesses provides a unique set of offerings for residents and visitors alike. Ellicott City's historic sites, including the B&O museum and those owned and maintained by the County, provide a unique look into the past. The mix of residences, institutions and commercial uses increases downtown activity. Among downtown's institutions is the Howard County Office of Tourism, and this presence is but one element of the support and partnerships the County provides to Ellicott City (the Departments of Planning and Zoning and Public Works also actively support revitalization).

The community is a safe area, with very minimal crime. Residents and business owners are environmentally active and conscientious. The broader community is diverse, highly-educated and relatively affluent.



***Weaknesses***

Though the community is walkable, the topography adds challenges, and connectivity to the surrounding area is limited. Bicycle access and connectivity are also limited. Traffic along Main Street is heavy and compounded by truck traffic, which must use Main Street for deliveries and trash/recycling pickup (downtown lacks alleys to divert such traffic). Railroad noise is also an occasional nuisance.

While the community experiences minimal crime, the proximity of some bars to residences presents some conflicts and public safety concerns.

With very little open or public spaces, downtown lacks social spaces where people can gather, play, or just enjoy. The beautiful Patapsco River runs along the edge of town, but there is little access to the river or the state park. Park upkeep could be improved. The streetscape of Main Street could be enhanced with colorful plantings and landscaping, and with enhanced efforts to maintain a clean and tidy appearance, as excessive trash is at times an issue.

**C. Natural Resources and Environmental Impact: Strengths and Weaknesses (5 points)**

- (1) **Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the community's "natural environment" in or near the Sustainable Community Area. What is the current condition of key natural resources – lands, air, water, watersheds, tree canopy, other? If the community is located in a coastal zone, what risks might the community be subject to associated with climate induced sea level rise? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

***Strengths***

Originally a mill town, Ellicott City is located along the Patapsco River. The Tiber River and Hudson Branch feed into the Patapsco, and flow under many of the structures along Main Street. Natural rock formations, into which many buildings are built, are a naturally imposing, yet beautiful, element. Many buildings feature locally quarried granite, and granite outcroppings are visible along Main Street and other roadways. The topography and hills contribute to the Area's scenic landscape.

The Patapsco River Valley is an underutilized amenity that could enhance the scenic, natural, and recreational qualities of the Area. Historic Ellicott City is surrounded by wooded areas that give the sense of being in a larger, more pristine natural environment. Additionally, the Area experiences four distinct seasons and, as a result, varied scenery.

Proximity to Patapsco State Park creates the potential for Ellicott City to be a launching-off point for visitors looking to access the park. Participation in recreational activities in the park has been increasing; mountain biking in particular has become a popular activity at Patapsco State Park. Ellicott City is also the western terminus of the #9 *Trolley Trail*, a 1.25 mile rail-trail that connects Catonsville in Baltimore County to Ellicott City.

Most roads within and leading to Ellicott City are considered 'scenic' roadways and are part of the County's scenic road inventory. Notably, New Cut Road and College Avenue showcase some of the natural features surrounding Ellicott City.

### ***Weaknesses***

While Ellicott City is surrounded by natural beauty and recreational opportunities, the historic downtown area lacks public open space and park land for community use.

The Tiber, Hudson and Patapsco Rivers are assets, but at the same time can – and have – presented risk of harm and damage. Floods from major storms (Agnes contributing to the most serious flooding in recent memory) can cause the Patapsco to “backup”, overflow and cause severe damage. During storms Irene and Lee, the Tiber overflowed its banks and caused unusual flooding from the upper end. The flood plain is fairly wide and inhibits some remediation efforts, and the management of stormwater runoff is a key issue to be addressed. Channelization of smaller waterways is also an issue.

- (2) **Describe the strengths and weaknesses of any current efforts to reduce the community's “carbon footprint” or impact on the environment. Is recycling (commercial or residential) available to minimize waste? Are there current efforts to encourage the purchase and availability of fresh local food and other local products and services to the community? Describe any current energy or water conservation efforts that may be underway. If the community has not implemented one of the above initiatives, has the community identified a need or interest to pursue these or other efforts to reduce environmental impact, for instance through the new Sustainable Maryland Certified initiative? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

### ***Strengths***

The Howard County government has made a serious commitment to protecting the environment, to reducing the carbon footprint and to using its resources to minimizing negative impacts on the environment. The County has installed solar arrays on a local school and at its landfill; it has added hybrid vehicles to its fleet and purchased hybrid buses to be used by Howard Transit; and, it has engaged in tree planting, initiated single stream recycling and is piloting a composting program for homeowners. Initiatives to expand sustainability programs within the Area are ongoing.

The County office complex, which is in the proposed Area, was totally renovated to LEED silver standards in 2010, increasing efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint. Howard County provides recycling, both with carts and with larger dumpsters, for the businesses in the historic downtown and provides curbside, single stream recycling for the residents in the Area.

All of the traffic lights in the Area and throughout the County are LED lights which, after the first year of operation, used 60% less energy.

A Farmers' market, providing access to locally grown produce and fruits, is held on the Second Sunday of each month and draws hundreds of people.

Howard Transit services the Area using hybrid buses, enabling more people to leave their cars and join others in getting to work and shopping. Since downtown Ellicott City is walkable, residences and businesses can be accessed on foot.

While there is not a community-wide initiative for green building renovation, some individual building owners have made green improvements (such as cool roofs and the addition of insulation).

### ***Weaknesses***

Some community stakeholders suggested historic district requirements may need review and/or greater flexibility to support the use of green materials and alternative sources of energy (it should be noted that the Historic District Commission does offer guidelines for installing solar panels that balance their use with historic preservation).

There is limited bicycling activity and the streets are not accommodating to bicyclists who must compete for a travel lane with vehicles. Due to the narrowness of the street, the County's current transit vehicles have limited access on lower Main Street.

- (3) **Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the jurisdiction's current stormwater management practices and how these may affect the proposed SC Area. Is redevelopment and retrofitting of infrastructure an issue or opportunity in this SC Area? Stormwater runoff is a significant source of pollution to Maryland's streams and the Chesapeake Bay. Buildings constructed before 1985 have little or no stormwater controls, and development between 1985 and 2010 have some controls. Updated stormwater regulations passed by Maryland's General Assembly in 2010 require that development and redevelopment projects utilize stringent stormwater controls. Sustainable Community Areas may have opportunities for redevelopment practices that can reduce stormwater flows. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

### ***Strengths***

Howard County's engineers took a very aggressive posture with the adoption of the state's stormwater regulations in 2010. They developed policies and regulations for residential and commercial development in order to increase infiltration and change the handling of stormwater. They provided training for public and private sector engineers and consultants in order to fully embrace the new approaches. All new development in Howard County must adhere to the new standards and County design professionals work closely with development consultants to ensure the best techniques are used.

Howard County has also made a commitment to reducing stormwater runoff in Ellicott City. The County contracted with Versar, an environmental design consulting firm, to identify ways to creatively mitigate stormwater. This planning exercise has led to a series of recommendations to reduce the impact of stormwater in the Area, which has a lot of impervious surface. There are opportunities to manage runoff beyond the boundaries of

historic downtown Ellicott City, as well. The County is analyzing the Tiber-Hudson subwatershed for possible improvements and continues to review and investigate these recommendations.

While many stormwater management best practices will require further evaluation, community stakeholders indicated that the County has been attentive to flood control in the Area and has had some minimal success in reducing the flooding.

### ***Weaknesses***

Stormwater management and associated water pollution is a problem in Ellicott City, but is being assessed by the County. Much of Ellicott City is prone to flooding from both the Patapsco and Tiber Rivers. Built along the river as a mill town, the Area has few opportunities to control high waters and limited space for the introduction of stormwater management technologies (i.e., green infrastructure or low impact development solutions). The Area contains a large amount of impervious surface relative to its open space. The topography of the Area limits opportunities for mitigation and private property ownership further constrains the County's ability to change channels or limit runoff. Potential solutions may be cost-prohibitive.

## **D. Economic Conditions & Access to Opportunity: Strengths and Weaknesses (5 points)**

- (1) Describe the SC Area's current economic strengths and weaknesses. For example, are there distinct economic drivers in the area or region that will affect access to job opportunities and the progress of the SC Plan? What are the main barriers to the Area's economic competitiveness? What is the current level of broadband access available to serve residents, businesses and public facilities? What efforts are currently in place to increase worker skills and employment? Describe trends in employment rates and business formation. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

### ***Strengths***

Ellicott City is the County Seat for Howard County. County office buildings (and associated workforce and visitors) are only a half mile from the historic downtown. Howard County's median income (\$105,358) is the fifth highest in the country and the County's large population (287,085) results in substantial disposable income for people who want to eat and shop in Ellicott City.

The Area's central location affords access to a large regional customer base (residents of Baltimore, Annapolis, DC, etc.) beyond county residents, alone. Access to major highways and proximity to Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, business parks, and the Fort Meade Complex strengthens the Area's economic competitiveness. Education and research opportunities are available at nearby University of Maryland Baltimore County, Loyola University's satellite campus, and Howard Community College. The Area is increasingly attractive as a business location.

As an historic community, Ellicott City is very attractive to tourists and boasts a significant amount of tourism activity. This includes the B&O Railroad Museum, multiple historic sites owned and operated by the County's Department of Recreation and Parks, special events, cultural arts events and regular "Ghost Tours" sponsored by Howard County Tourism. The County purchased and renovated a closed post office, converting it to a Visitors' Center on Main Street.

Ellicott City offers a wide range of businesses that, along with its heritage, contribute to an authentic, historic Main Street experience not found in more generic retail shopping centers. While there are attorneys and other service providers, the largest part of the retail sector is the niche retail establishments (antiques and boutique businesses) and popular restaurants that attract customers from varying distances. The retail product mix also appeals to a broad demographic spectrum. The downtown also boasts a fully renovated four-room hotel, The Obladi.

Ellicott City's local customer base is poised to grow with the development of Burgess Mill Station, a 198-unit residential community which will open in Fall 2012. This multi-family, mixed-income project is just a three minute walk from the historic downtown Ellicott City.

The merchant community, lead by the Ellicott City Business Association, is a real asset. There is a mix of long-time business people and over the past 10 years, a group of new merchants have located in Ellicott City, adding new energy, vitality, and vision.

As testament to its economic success, there are few vacancies in the business district and a couple of new businesses have recently opened. The retail and restaurant establishments offer jobs suited to younger workers, allowing for younger people to develop employment experience.

While not in place, broadband is planned for the Main Street area as part of the Inter-County Broadband Network initiative.

### ***Weaknesses***

Many individual businesses lack coordinated operating times, and early closings can dissuade shoppers. The number of jobs in the Area, and the Area's potential for job growth, is limited since most of the local businesses are small establishments without need for large numbers of employees. Getting customers into the Area could be made easier, particularly related to directing customers to parking (many feel the parking situation makes it less competitive with nearby shopping centers and the Columbia Mall). Ellicott City's rent structure may make it less competitive with other Main Street communities.

- (2) **Describe the jurisdiction's housing market and access to affordable workforce housing. What are the trends in residential construction (rental and homeownership), homeownership rate, foreclosure rate, and property values? Describe whether your jurisdiction's prevailing housing costs – both homeownership and rental – are affordable to households below 120% AMI, 80% AMI and 50% AMI. What efforts are in place**

**currently to house individuals, families and the disabled at or below the AMI levels described above? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

***Strengths***

Howard County has an exceedingly strong housing market, and is frequently cited among the nation's best places to live. Like other jurisdictions, home values have decreased over the past few years. The average sales price of homes has declined 3.63% since April 2011. Vacancy rates for all types of housing were under 5% at the end of 2011. However, very few for sale units are priced below \$150,000. The continued demand for housing has led to an increase in rental unit construction throughout the county's Priority Funding Area.

Howard County's Department of Housing & Community Development (HCHCD) and the Housing Commission are active and committed to providing housing opportunities for low and moderate income residents of Howard County, as well as residents with special needs. Together, they carry out activities that maintain and expand the supply of affordable housing through acquisition, new construction, rehabilitation and home ownership assistance.

Within the proposed Sustainable Community Area a new, major 198-unit, mixed-income multi-family housing community is under construction. Burgess Mill Station replaces a publicly subsidized development of less than 100 units and will enhance the residential opportunities and add a significant number of new people into the Area.

There is no other construction taking place in the Area. Just beyond the Area's boundaries, and proximate to the historic downtown, is Ellicott Mills Overlook, which will add 168 townhomes and apartments. The Alta Regency Crest also recently opened with 150 apartments for active adults.

All new multi-family housing projects constructed in Howard County must provide Moderate Income Housing Units (MIHUs). Therefore, Ellicott Mills Overlook will provide 17 and Alta Regency Crest has provided 15 units for people whose incomes are 60% of Area Median Income or less.

Howard County's current balance of owner- to renter-occupied housing is approximately 68% owner- to 32% renter-occupied. However, the majority of units in the proposed Area are rental units; most of the Area's owner-occupied units are historic properties. Household size in the County has remained steady over the past twenty years. It may decline slightly as the population ages.

Foreclosure activity is relatively low in Howard County and in Ellicott City; according to a report by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, the entire Ellicott City zip code experienced fewer than 20 foreclosures in the first quarter of 2012. Foreclosures throughout the County have been trending downward. HCHCD also provides counseling and workshops to help those faced with foreclosures.

Few foreclosures occurred within historic downtown Ellicott City, but also few new housing starts. Apartments atop businesses downtown bring a core of workers and customers to the Area, potentially reducing transportation costs for these residents.

### ***Weaknesses***

Since the market is strong, housing is expensive and affordability is an issue. Prevailing housing costs for owner-occupied housing are not affordable to households earning less than 120% Area Median Income (AMI). AMI for Howard County for FY 2012 was \$85,600 (according to HUD); households below 120% AMI include those earning less than approximately \$100,000, households below 80% AMI earn less than approximately \$65,000, and households earning 50% AMI earn less than \$42,800.

Housing is considered affordable when housing costs comprise less than 30% of annual income. The median home sale price in the County in April 2012 was \$375,000, requiring at least \$100,000 in annual income. Households earning less than 120% AMI (or \$100,000) cannot afford the median home in Howard County.

The median rental rate in the Ellicott City market area, according to a 2012 market analysis, was \$1,850 for a three-bedroom apartment. A household must earn approximately \$75,000 to afford this rental rate, suggesting that rental rates are not affordable to those earning less than 80% AMI.

- (3) **Describe the SC Area's demographic trends (with respect to age, race, household size, household income, educational attainment, or other relevant factors).** *(Answer Space 4,000 characters)*

The proposed area does not fully conform to census tracts or block groups, making it difficult to identify specific demographic trends. The Area is a subset of the Ellicott City planning area, and the County estimates that there were over 63,000 residents in this broader Ellicott City area at the end of 2011.

Across the County, and certainly within and in the communities surrounding the Area, the percentage of seniors has grown; this trend will continue as Baby Boomers (who make up about 29% of countywide population) age. The area considered "Normandy," which includes Historic Ellicott City, contains 54% married-couples and, notably, 40% senior renters (the highest such concentration in Howard County). In 2010, most of the age-restricted housing units built or planned in Howard County were located in broader Ellicott City. Families are still attracted to the Area and its adjacent communities by the excellent schools. The median household size across the county, 2.71, has not changed in twenty years.

The Area is overwhelmingly White, but in the broader Ellicott City area, the White population has declined while the Hispanic and Asian populations have grown. Countywide, the Hispanic population grew by 123% from 2000 to 2010, while the Asian population grew 116%.

From 2000 to 2010, in broader Ellicott City 9,719 new residents were added; at the same time 4,026 new residential units were built. More recently, since there has been almost no residential construction in the past few years, any recent growth is due to smaller families moving out and being replaced by families with more children.

While demographic data on children in the Area is not available, public school enrollment gives a sense of the number of children and youth in broader Ellicott City. There were 5,340 students enrolled in the 2011-2012 school year at schools relevant to the center of Ellicott City, according to Howard County Public Schools. This total included 2,746 elementary students, 1,142 middle school students, and 1,452 high school students.



**III. LOCAL CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT PLANS (15 Points)****A. Organizational Structure:**

**Describe the Applicant's organizational structure. Specifically, which organizations are members in the Sustainable Communities Workgroup and who are the respective staff? Who are the leaders, and how will the Workgroup advisor or staff manage the implementation of the SC Area Plan? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The applicant is Howard County's Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), which includes the divisions of Comprehensive and Community Planning, Resource Conservation, Zoning Administration, Research, Engineering Development, and Land Development. The Comprehensive and Community Planning and Resource Conservation divisions will be the primary units involved with this initiative.

The Sustainable Communities Workgroup will be primarily staffed by employees in DPZ with support from other County agencies. Lead staff members are the Director of Special Projects for the County Executive and the Planning Supervisor in DPZ's Division of Comprehensive and Community Planning.

The Workgroup will have governmental representatives from DPZ, Public Works, Recreation and Parks, the Economic Development Authority, Housing and Community Development, and the Howard County Tourism Council. It will include property owners, residents, and representatives of community based organizations such as the Ellicott City Business Association, Ellicott City Restoration Foundation, Historic Ellicott City, and Patapsco Heritage Greenway.

**B. Organizational Experience:**

**Describe the Applicant organization's past experience in administering revitalization plans and projects. Describe the roles of the members of the Sustainable Communities Workgroup, including their experience in implementing revitalization initiatives. What are the strengths and challenges of the capacity of these groups with respect to implementation of the SC Plan? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

DPZ has been the applicant for the Community Legacy and Designated Neighborhoods designations by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MDHCD). Additionally, DPZ was the applicant and is the administrator of a portion of a Community Legacy award for the renovation and revitalization of the Baldwin Commons and Baldwin Hall in Savage on US Route 1.

DPZ has also been the grant recipient of funds from the Maryland Historical Trust for a decade to conduct an extensive survey of historic sites and structures in the county.

Over the past ten years, DPZ has utilized capital funds to make various improvements in older neighborhoods, including the installation of sidewalks to expand pedestrian access and create public spaces. For more than ten years, DPZ has operated and managed the Howard County

Transit system which provides thousands of County residents with transportation for employment, health care, and shopping.

Other government agencies have, similarly, implemented programs and capital projects to enhance and revitalize older communities including those within the proposed Area. This has included the Department of Recreation and Parks, HCHCD, and the Department of Public Works.

The non-profit Historic Ellicott City, Inc. has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to preserve and protect Ellicott City's cultural heritage and structures. The Ellicott City Restoration Foundation has also been involved in projects which serve to invigorate and stimulate reinvestment in Ellicott City.

The Patapsco Heritage Greenway (PHG) has, since 2006, managed a Stream Watch program focused on waterways within the Patapsco River Valley. Since 2006, PHG has been responsible for overseeing nearly 8,000 volunteers who donated more than 34,000 hours of work toward stream clean-ups and restoration. In that time, volunteers removed over 264 tons of trash and debris, removed 8.1 tons of invasive plant biomass, and planted 361 new trees.

**C. Public Input:**

**How did residents and other stakeholders in the community provide input to Action Plan described below in Section IV? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

In 2011, DPZ representatives met and worked with residents, property owners, and members of Ellicott City's non-governmental organizations to identify a vision, goals, and priorities for the Area. Many of these priorities have been incorporated into the Sustainable Communities Action Plan (Plan). In January 2012, a meeting of county agencies was held to identify information for inclusion in the application as well as potential undertakings to be included in the Plan. Then, in May 2012, a public meeting was held during which residents, business and property owners, and other stakeholders reviewed the proposed application content, including the Action Plan. More than 20 people attended to offer their comments. Those who attended provided numerous suggestions for actions which need to take place to help Ellicott City continue to move forward. A workgroup session was held in June 2012 to engage stakeholders in a further review of the application.

**IV. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN (65 Points)**

The Sustainable Community Action Plan (SC Plan or Plan) is meant to be a multi-year investment strategy – a strategic set of revitalization initiatives and projects that local partners believe will increase the economic vitality and livability of their community, increased prosperity for local households and improved health of the surrounding environment. The Plan should be flexible enough to be updated regularly and renewed every five years as the community envisions new goals. The priority initiatives and projects identified in sections are the priorities for improving the livability of community places – residential, commercial, or other public or private properties – and the sustainability of new work, retail, recreational and housing opportunities for residents. At the same time, the plan should describe how it is geographically targeted, so that resources have the best opportunity to have the intended effect. These projects can also be designed to reduce the environmental impact of the community through water and energy resource conservation and management strategies. In this way, the Plan can be a road map for local stakeholders as well as State agencies to work together to create a more livable and sustainable community.

**A. Supporting existing communities & reducing environmental impacts. (15 points)**

- (1) **A community's approach to Smart Growth generally includes two inter-related areas of focus: encouraging reinvestment and growth in existing communities; and, discouraging growth that degrades natural resources, and farms and rural landscapes. Broadly describe your jurisdiction's Smart Growth approach and any significant accomplishments made over the last decade or so. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Howard County has long followed a Smart Growth approach to development activities. The County's 1990 General Plan established the Planned Service Area for public water and sewerage as the County's growth management boundary, which a few years later was also identified as its Priority Funding Area (PFA). The PFA encompasses the easternmost 40% of Howard County.

The County has made progress under the Smart Growth approach established in the 1990 and 2000 General Plans. Since the adoption of these plans, most of the new residential and nonresidential development in the County has occurred in the PFA. Since 2000, several higher-density, mixed-use projects were completed or in progress along US Route 1 and US Route 40 – both areas the County targeted for such development – and the Downtown Columbia Plan was adopted with a framework for redevelopment and intensification on nearly 400 acres. Regulations allowing revitalization of older Columbia Village Centers were also adopted.

Howard County has a unique housing allocation program as part of its growth management. The ability to construct housing units is paced through housing allocations based on geographic and housing product goals, as well as road and school capacity set by the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

The County's new General Plan continues and expands upon its past Smart Growth approach. It responds to the PlanMaryland charge to jurisdictions to identify more focused target areas for future growth. As a result, *PlanHoward 2030* identifies Growth and

Revitalization areas within the PFA. The Ellicott City SC Area is an identified Growth and Revitalization area.

Howard County has been successful in its efforts to preserve and protect agricultural land. Since its inception in 1984, the County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP) has purchased easements on 143 properties totaling 14,633 acres. This includes the 2011 easement acquisition on 500 acres of the Doughoregan property (where another 90 acres are held in easement by the Howard County Conservancy and 75 acres are in environmental preservation). The ALPP has also received dedicated easements on 74 properties for another 2,972 acres through the subdivision process, including density sending and cluster subdivision remainder parcels. A major factor in the success of the ALPP purchased easement program has been its unique Installment Purchase Agreement (IPA) method of payment. The IPA provides a significant financial incentive for owners to place their properties in preservation, and Howard County was the first in the nation to implement this innovative arrangement in 1989. Additionally, 35 farms totaling 3,960 acres are in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation program.

- (2) Describe any major investments in community infrastructure – water, stormwater, sewer, sidewalk, lighting, etc. – that must be undertaken in order to improve the readiness or competitiveness of the proposed SC Area for private investment and compliance (if applicable) with TMDL regulations. Addressing the stormwater during redevelopment can reduce the pollution entering our streams and contribute to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Investments in infrastructure, generally, can be an important catalyst for new private investment in the community. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The proposed SC Area is currently ready to compete, even with some infrastructure limitations. The County's compliance with the TMDL requirements and the Area's competitiveness will be *enhanced and improved by*:

1. Howard County will continue to review and investigate recommendations to manage runoff that were generated from a planning charrette in May 2012. In addition to stormwater management site practices, a broader assessment of the Tiber-Hudson subwatershed is underway to identify ways to mitigate and minimize flooding.
2. Completing the parking management program currently underway as a result of a study conducted in 2009.
  - a. Identifies methods to improve parking accessibility.
  - b. Suggests complimentary stormwater management techniques (including permeable parking surfaces and other tools).
  - c. Includes a system for customers and visitors to more easily find vacant and available parking, both on-street and in the lots.
  - d. Offers means to preserve loading zones and accommodate larger trucks.
  - e. Provides parking lot improvements to improve wayfinding (including signage), access, configuration, and aesthetics (trees, landscaping, and water features).
  - f. Improves pedestrian access to connect the Court House parking lot to the business district.
3. Retaining wall fortification and/or replacement to prevent future wall collapse.

4. Pedestrian improvements to encourage more walking in the Area, including additional crosswalks, sidewalks, and widened sidewalks (which would also allow outdoor seating and improve accessibility) in strategic locations.
  5. Bicycle facility improvements to encourage more cycling in the Area, including bike lane(s) and bike racks.
  6. Streamlined overhead wires and poles through a possible partnership with BGE to study options for removing unused poles and wires, relocating poles and wires, and bundling wires.
- (3) **Describe policies, initiatives or projects that the community will undertake or expand in order to reduce the SC Area's impact on the environment. Examples include but are not limited to: conservation or management of stormwater through retrofitting of streets and by-ways (Green Streets, rain gardens, etc.); retrofitting of facilities and homes for energy conservation; implementation of "green" building codes and mixed-use zoning; recycling of waste; clean-ups of watersheds; and, encouragement of "Buy Local" approaches that benefit local suppliers and food producers. A comprehensive menu of such actions may be found through the Environmental Finance Center's Sustainable Maryland Certified Initiative. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

There are several policies, initiatives or projects underway or recommended in order to reduce the negative impacts on the environment:

1. Stormwater management studies are ongoing (also noted under infrastructure investments in the prior question) of areas upstream of the central business district to determine the potential for reducing choke points, addressing channelization issues, and removing structural impediments to water flow.
2. The County sponsored a community charrette to explore the applicability of Low Impact Design (LID) solutions that may include rain barrels, permeable pavement, rain gardens, and other solutions that help better control runoff within the Area.
3. Development of the Burgess Mill Station residential project, which is pursuing LEED certification and includes high stormwater management standards.
4. Continuing single stream recycling for residents, and possible expansion of recycling in the historic downtown.
5. Cleanup of the Lower Patapsco River Watershed (including Tiber-Hudson and Sucker Branch subwatersheds).
6. Historic preservation should continue to be encouraged, as preservation and reuse of existing structures is an inherently green activity.
7. Evaluate revisions to Ellicott City Historic District Design Guidelines to encourage green improvements to individual properties in ways that complement historic preservation needs.
8. Tree plantings where possible throughout the Area.
9. Improved recycling participation and pickup to reduce recyclable material entering the waste stream.
10. Examine placement of public waste receptacles and pickup schedules to ensure overflow does not contribute to pollution of local waterways.
11. Supporting the Farmers' Market in order to encourage residents and visitors to "Buy Local".

**(4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The key community groups and stakeholders that will be involved in implementation of this section's initiatives and projects include:

- County government including the Department of Planning and Zoning, Department of Public Works, Economic Development Authority, and Office of Environmental Sustainability;
- Other partners include BGE, Ellicott City Restoration Foundation (ECRF), Patapsco Heritage Greenway, and Ellicott City Business Association (ECBA).

**B. Valuing communities and neighborhoods – building upon assets and building in amenities: (10 points)**

**(1) What are the key assets that exist in the community upon which the Plan's projects and initiatives will build? Assets may include physical assets such as parks and historic structures and also civic and economic assets such as employers, educational institutions, and cultural organizations and activities. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Ellicott City contains key assets on which to build sustainable initiatives and projects. Community stakeholders emphasized the following major assets:

1. The county's commitment to innovation, environmental protection, and advancing the use of new green technologies;
2. The historic fabric and the many historic sites and buildings in Ellicott City;
3. Inclusion in the Historic National Road Scenic Byway as a major heritage corridor;
4. New Cut Road and College Avenue - County Scenic Road Inventory;
5. An active Tourism Office and new visitors' Center;
6. Outstanding public education and higher education facilities in close proximity;
7. Location in the Patapsco Valley and proximity to its recreational and scenic qualities;
8. Increasingly active group of merchants, residents, and owners as well as community organizations that will help implement the Action Plan;
9. Planned new County recreation facility next to Burgess Mill Station project;
10. An increase in residents in the Area and nearby.

**(2) What policies, initiatives or projects will reuse or enhance the historical assets, traditional business districts/Main Streets and cultural resources of the community? What actions will reinforce your community's authentic "sense of place" and historic character? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The heart of the Area is the historic Main Street that of itself, fosters a unique "sense of place" and authentic, historic character. Current efforts are underway, through a cooperative relationship between the County and local organizations to enhance and reinforce Ellicott City's assets.

1. Cooperation and a possible merger of community organizations with compatible goals to focus on preservation, business growth, and community enhancement;

2. Adoption of National Main Street principles and four-point approach and five-points in Maryland) to preservation-based economic development;
  3. Renovation and curatorship of historic sites and B&O Railroad Museum, including educational programming at the historic Mill site. Parking Lot F was identified as a property of interest for further investigation as a potential educational site;
  4. Expansion of arts and arts activities, including serving as the site for Plein Aire arts program;
  5. Expansion of historic tax credit use;
  6. Coordination with property owners to make improvements, particularly façade improvements. Programs that allow tenants receive credit for improvements should also be explored;
  7. Repainted mural at Old Columbia Pike;
  8. Development and marketing of a heritage theme that builds upon the Mill and its ties to the industrial revolution. Celebration of history with festivals, festive activities, and demonstrations;
  9. Coordination with CSX to repair the aging railroad bridge and apply rail silencing techniques to regular rail line maintenance;
  10. Incorporate interpretive signage throughout the Area to promote cultural and historic assets;
  11. Expand programs to attract local schools for educational programs and activities;
  12. Explore potential for reestablishing the theatre on Main Street to address the need for an entertainment venue.
- (3) **Describe policies, initiatives or projects that will increase community access to green spaces, parks and other amenities? A community can gain social and physical benefits from access to a healthy natural environment. The inclusion of complete streets, trails, green space, parks and trees contribute to the character and health of a community. Examples might include improvements to the tree canopy by planting street trees, improving local neighborhood streams, or reusing a vacant lot for a new community park or playground. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Opening up access to the Patapsco River Valley and to the natural environment will be an important part of future efforts. Policies and projects will include:

1. Creating better access to the Patapsco River;
  2. Adding interpretive signage to note history, character, importance, and available amenities of the Patapsco State Park;
  3. Exploring possible trail connections to Patapsco State Park;
  4. Examining a connection to Baltimore County's Old #9 rail trail;
  5. Expanding passive recreational opportunities;
  6. Improving small open spaces next to parking lots;
  7. Integrating stormwater management facilities that remove impervious cover within the Area, improve water quality, and provide additional green assets.
  8. Lower Patapsco River Watershed clean-ups to serve as a community recreational activity as well as an environmental protection measure;
  9. Removing invasive plants and replacing with native species.
- (4) **Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

As with all sections, the key stakeholders will be government, citizens and citizen organizations. Therefore:

- Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning;
- Howard County Tourism;
- Historic Ellicott City;
- Ellicott City Restoration Foundation;
- Ellicott City Business Association;
- Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks;
- State Department of Natural Resources;
- Patapsco Heritage Greenway;
- CSX Corporation (rail);
- Merchants and property owners;
- Residents.

**C. Enhancing economic competitiveness & access to economic opportunity. (10 points)**

- (1) **What economic development policies, initiatives or projects will improve the economy through investments in small businesses and other key employment sectors? What economic development and business incentives will you build upon or implement as part of the SC Plan? Examples could include but are not limited to: green-taping for expedited project application review; permitting and inspection; job training; business tax credits; and, revolving loan funds. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The Area contains a relatively small business district. As previously stated the merchant community is working together to address its economic posture and how to utilize the Main Street principles and approach as a method for achieving their economic goals.

1. Better town-wide marketing, branding, and public relations, to include (but not be limited to) events, a unified calendar, and a promotional/informational web site with link to Howard County Tourism web site;
2. Develop a program with Howard County Tourism to attract new local or regional patrons and international visitors in addition to regular visitors;
3. Capitalize – through promotion – on eclectic and unique establishments;
4. Expand County government employee patronage of the business district through better connections (such as a workday shuttle), special promotions, and increased evening hours to capture after-work spending;
5. Increase outdoors activities and entertainment that occurs on the street, in a plaza, or elsewhere;
6. Promote consistency in buildings, in operating hours, and in activities to attract more visitors;
7. Encourage expanded hours and greater public relations for historic County sites and B&O Railroad Museum;
8. Partner with Howard County Economic Development Authority to expand efforts to target small businesses, provide additional resources, and to fill all vacancies;
9. Increase or enhance the local historic tax credit;



10. Develop a façade improvement program, and as part of development consider ways to involve both property owners and tenants;
11. Investigate the potential to create a Main Street Manager position to coordinate economic development and other efforts;
12. Expand or capitalize on arts and cultural events (e.g. performances of Shakespeare at Patapsco Female Institute, Plein Aire Arts Program) and evaluate potential for an Arts and Entertainment District;
13. Consider potential for a Business Improvement District (BID) to focus upon specific needs of the Area;
14. Convert portions of larger parking lots to accommodate events that attract more visitors to the Area;
15. Increase the involvement of property owners to aid in both property improvement and tenant recruitment (particularly anchor tenants and those that expand the business mix).

- (2) What workforce development policies, initiatives or projects will increase access to jobs and economic opportunity for residents in the SC Area? Do you have a goal for job creation? Are “green jobs” an opportunity in the jurisdiction or SC Area? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

As mentioned previously, job growth is constrained in the Area due to its relatively small business district and nature of establishments, which are primarily small businesses with limited numbers of employees. However, several of the action items addressed in other parts of this application support enhanced worker access and potential modest job growth. These items include:

1. Increasing transportation access to the business district, including bus transit access;
2. Maximizing the role of the new expanded recreation center that will support more employees and serve a larger population within the Area;
3. Examining zoning and land use allowances of certain properties to accommodate potential expansion of existing businesses;
4. Encouraging green development solutions and renovations throughout the Area to generate contract employment opportunities;
5. Filling business vacancies as well as expanding hours of existing operations, both of which could result in modest job growth in the Area.

- (3) Describe whether the Sustainable Community will be impacted by the Base Re-alignment and Closure (BRAC) activities in Maryland. If impacted, how do the initiatives and projects in your Plan complement BRAC-related growth? (If not applicable, all ten points will be assessed based on answers to questions 1,2, and 4). (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Residential demand in Howard County will remain high in the foreseeable future. Employees relocating to jobs created by BRAC and the cyber security detail will increase demand for the quality of life and residential offerings within the Ellicott City market.

- (4) Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Many of the stakeholders are the same but the focus would lie within:

- Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning;
- Howard County Tourism;
- Howard County Economic Development Authority;
- Howard County Office of Workforce Development;
- Ellicott City Business Association;
- Local merchants and property owners.

**D. Promoting equitable access to high quality affordable housing. (10 points)**

- (1) What housing policies, initiatives or projects will expand housing choices – rental and homeownership – for people of a range of ages, incomes, and also for disabled individuals? How will these actions address the current housing conditions and needs noted in Section II? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Howard County Housing (HCH) consists of the Howard County Department of Housing and Community Development and the Howard County Housing Commission. Their combined mission is “to provide safe, quality, affordable, and sustainable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families living or working in Howard County.”

Several actions to expand housing choices and enhance housing conditions are underway or recommended by one or both entities that comprise HCH. These include:

1. Construction of Burgess Mill Station as a high quality, mixed income multi-family community;
2. Exploration of the possible redevelopment of other older apartment complexes in the Area to expand choice and preserve affordability;
3. Maintenance of apartments located above stores in the business district;
4. Maintain mix of rental units (approximately 72 within the central Ellicott City district) and owner-occupied residences;
5. Continued support for the County’s moderate income housing unit policy (MIHUs);
6. Work with owners at the West End to develop preservation and rehabilitation tools for residential properties.

- (2) Will these housing initiatives or projects increase access to transit or community walkability and/or decrease transportation costs? In other words, will the housing investments result in more people living near work or town centers, or able to more conveniently reach work, school, shopping and/or recreation? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The housing initiatives and projects advance the potential to walk more and decrease transportation costs. Burgess Mill Station will bring a substantial influx of residents to Ellicott City within walking distance of shopping, work opportunities, and cultural activities. New residents will find that the Town is generally walkable, and would be made even more so through the enhancements to the pedestrian environment suggested elsewhere in this

application. Transit adjacent to development will increase demand for non-vehicular or non-motorized modes of travel, and decrease transportation costs.

- (3) **What is your goal for of number of units to be created of affordable, workforce housing, rental and homeownership? What populations (by income or special needs) will benefit from this increased access to affordable housing? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

*PlanHoward 2030*, the County's draft General Plan, calls for the expansion of housing for residents at diverse income levels and life stages (including senior citizens and the disabled), and for high quality, mixed income, multigenerational, well designed, and sustainable communities. The draft Plan also suggests that County policies to provide such housing build upon the current Moderate Income Housing Unit regulations, which require that 10-15% of newly constructed housing accommodate households with incomes up to 80% of the County's median income.

*PlanHoward 2030* identifies Route 40 as an area for redevelopment and increased potential residential development. Redevelopment of properties at Normandy and Chatham nodes will increase potential for providing affordable housing in close proximity to the proposed Area.

Burgess Mill Station will open 198 new residential units and Ellicott Mills Overlook 168 units; Alta Regency Crest recently opened 150 units for active seniors.

- (4) **Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The key community groups and stakeholders that will be involved in implementation of this section's initiatives and projects include:

- Howard County Executive, Howard County Council
- Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning
- Howard County Department of Housing and Community Development
- Howard County Housing Commission

#### **E. Supporting transportation efficiency and access. (10 points)**

- (1) **What policies, strategies and projects are envisioned to strengthen the transportation network that affects the proposed SC Area? How will these initiatives support transportation choices (including walking, bicycling, bus or rail transit, and carpooling) or otherwise promote an efficient transportation network that integrates housing and transportation land uses? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The transportation network is largely set since only two primary roads provide access to the Area, Frederick Road/Main Street and Court House Drive, with streets that connect to them. Transportation efforts will concentrate upon:

1. Exploring ways to enhance existing bicycle facilities/potential new bicycle routes.
2. Evaluating existing and potential future transit routes and transit service.

3. Installing and/or improving bus shelters and stops.
  4. Working with Baltimore County and UMBC to potentially increase buses that bring students from UMBC to Ellicott City (building upon student visitation to nearby Catonsville).
  5. Exploring added ways for connecting Mt. Ida, the Court House, and Main Street.
  6. Improving the condition of sidewalks and cross walks to enhance pedestrian safety.
- (2) **If applicable, describe the SC Area's connection or proximity to transportation centers (e.g. Metro, MARC, and light rail stations) and describe opportunities for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Will the planned strategies and projects contribute to jobs/housing balance or otherwise provide a mix of land uses that can be expected to reduce reliance on single-occupancy automobiles? (If transit or TOD is not applicable in your community, all points in this section will be based on questions 1 and 3). (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Presently, there is no direct connection between the Area and transportation centers for Metrorail, MARC, or light rail.

- (3) **Which community groups or stakeholders will be key to the implementation of the initiatives and projects noted in this section? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The key community groups and stakeholders that will be involved in implementation of this section's initiatives and projects include:

- Howard County Office of Transportation (Howard County Transit);
- Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning;
- Howard County department of Public Works;
- University of Maryland at Baltimore County;
- Ellicott City Business Association;
- Local merchants and property owners.

**F. Coordinating and leveraging (federal, state, and local) policies and investment. (10 points)**

- (1) **What specific steps will the Sustainable Community Workgroup take to coordinate policies and funding streams to remove barriers to investment and maximize and increase funding in the proposed Sustainable Community Area? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Since the Sustainable Community Workgroup (Workgroup) is composed of governmental and local stakeholders, it is well-positioned to learn about and apply for assistance to benefit the Area. It is expected that the Workgroup will work with the local groups pursuing Main Street designation and assist in identifying other resources that can be leveraged. DPZ will continue to provide guidance and personnel resources where needed.

The Workgroup will specifically look for ways to promote federal, state, and local historic tax credit programs to maximize the benefit to income producing properties.

- (2) **How is the proposed Sustainable Community Plan consistent with other existing community or comprehensive plans? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The Action Plan for the Area is consistent with the Howard County General Plan, *PlanHoward 2030*. The General Plan is nearing completion and is scheduled for final consideration by County Council. The General Plan calls for the creation of small area plans in the County.

Howard County has previously obtained Designated Neighborhood status for the southeast area of the county, so this Action Plan is consistent with previous initiatives. Howard County has not conducted small area plans in the past, so the Sustainable Communities application process is the initial effort to do so.

As implementation of action items occurs, activities will be reviewed to ensure consistency with existing plans and future plan updates.

**(3) How will the Plan help leverage and/or sustain more private sector investments? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The private sector is directly involved in the Sustainable Community Workgroup, with many business owners participating in the Workgroup. The business community will continue its strong involvement in implementation of the action agenda, and action items call for expanded property owner involvement as well.

One element of the action agenda involves using the National Main Street four-point approach (five points in Maryland) for revitalization, which includes among its eight guiding principles a focus on partnerships between the public and private sectors. The Main Street approach recognizes that the private sector has a vital interest in the business district and must be involved to work toward common revitalization goals.

**V. PROGRESS MEASURES (20 Points)**

Explain how the jurisdiction will measure its progress towards the goals of the Action Plan outlined in Section IV.

**A. List the specific outcomes that the Plan seeks to produce. (15 points) (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Community stakeholders identified several specific outcomes they desire to see as a result of Action Plan implementation. These include:

1. Expanded local organizational capacity.
  - Coordinate with local non-governmental organizations to continually assess community needs;
  - Support local non-governmental organizations to promote revitalization within the Area. Efforts may include the adoption of Main Street principles and the hiring of a Main Street Manager;
  - Evaluate potential for Business Improvement District (BID) to support the delivery of services to the Area.
2. Improved and expanded transportation services for transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists.
  - Examine solutions for improved pedestrian access and safety;
  - Analyze ways to promote and enhance built environment to support cycling;
  - Assess current transit routes and schedule, and promote transit options, in order to increase local ridership.
3. Increased parking efficiency and access through a parking plan that addresses parking management comprehensively.
  - The parking plan will result in better access and navigation to spaces, fewer parking complaints, and the more frequent visits by large visitor groups that will not be dissuaded by parking.
  - The parking management program being considered by the County will provide real-time data, which can be used to analyze parking needs and create more permanent parking solutions.
  - Parking enforcement will be more consistent and more efficient.
4. Enhanced aesthetics, appearances and preservation of the community's built environment, including historic buildings, housing and public spaces and infrastructure.
  - Façade improvements (or improvement assistance program);
  - Increased maintenance of public spaces– through partnerships with local merchants and residents ;
  - Improved coordination with Historic District Commission and non-governmental organizations to ensure improvements meet local guidelines;
  - Improve interpretive signage for community assets (cultural, historic, recreational, environmental);

- Evaluate garbage receptacle locations to reduce litter;
  - Examine garbage and recycling collection schedules to reduce recyclable material entering waste stream;
  - Explore the creation of a residential building improvement program.
5. Integration of stormwater management solutions to better prevent and reduce negative environmental impacts of flooding.
- Implementation of integrated SWM solutions within the proposed SC Area;
  - Study potential for [larger] SWM solutions to be undertaken within the broader watershed.
6. Improved access to and integration of the Patapsco River into the fabric of the Area.
- More direct access to the recreational opportunities via trails, pathways, or boat entry locations;
  - Improved signage or other visual cues indicating the relationship of Ellicott City to the local streams, rivers, and river valley.
7. Enhancing economic competitiveness through improved branding and marketing,
- Capitalize on the Area's history and the uniqueness of its businesses;
  - Promote opportunities for events and use available spaces to host outdoor activities and entertainment;
  - Fill vacancies and assist in business retention
  - Improved signage at Area gateways to define the Area's boundaries, promote its stature as Howard County's more historic community, and increase visitation by area residents and tourists.

**B. And, list the specific benchmarks that will be used to measure progress toward these outcomes. (5 points) (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

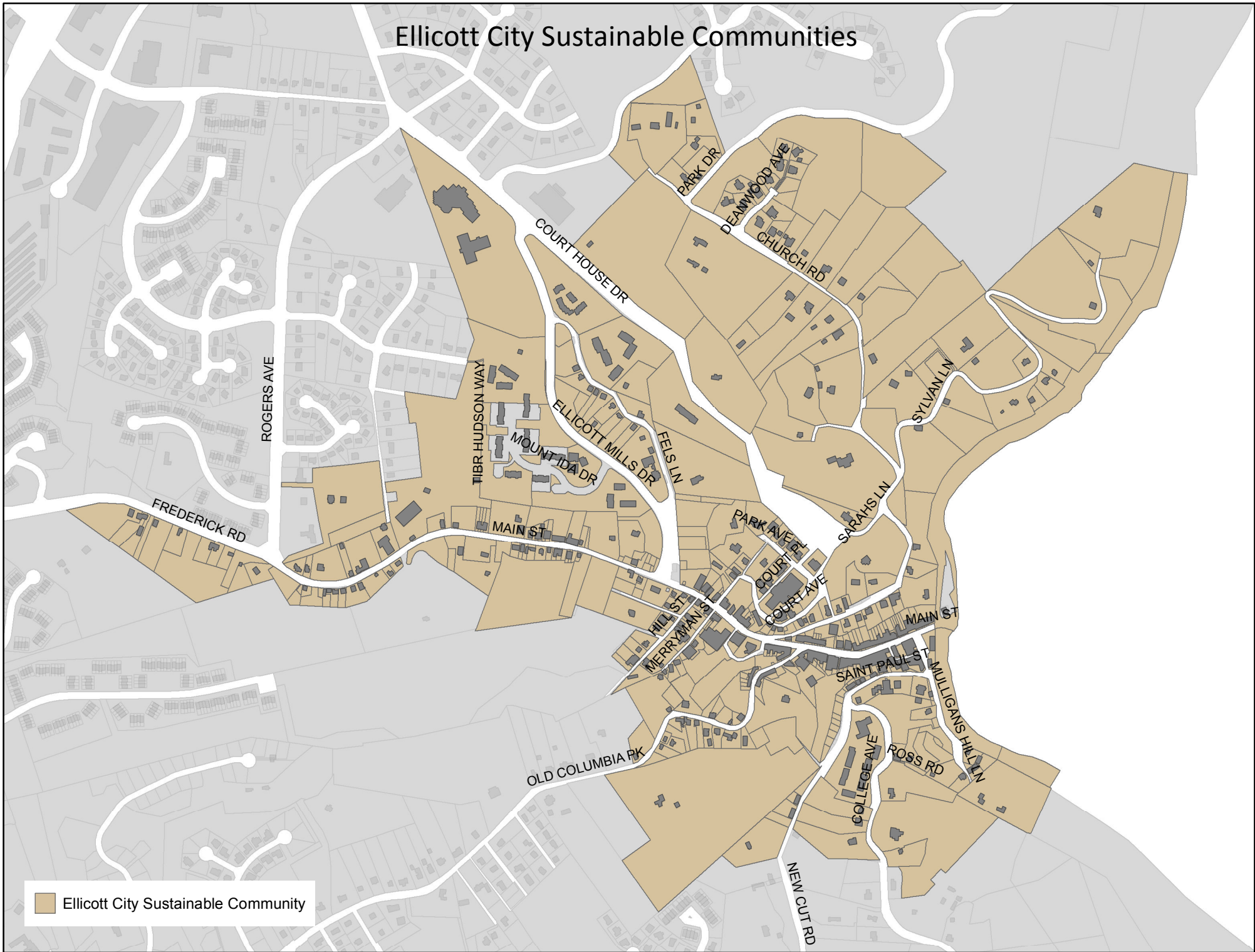
1. Expanded local organizational capacity.
- Coordination with local non-governmental organizations to create a work plan to address community needs;
  - Successful merger or coordination of multiple organizations leading to a partnership entity responsible for managing future Main Street program;
  - Promote revitalization within the Area by funding improvements, providing advice and direct work with merchants;
  - Evaluate efficacy Main Street program – and partnership organization – and contribute to the hiring of a dedicated Main Street Manager.
2. Improved and expanded transportation services for transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Complete a survey of sidewalk and crosswalk conditions;
  - Develop a maintenance program and inventory of needed capital projects to improve pedestrian access and safety;
  - Complete an analysis of ways to promote and enhance built environment to support cycling;

- Assess current transit routes and schedule to determine if expanded service is warranted or possible;
  - Evaluate location of bus stops and shelters to maximize access for riders.
3. Increased parking efficiency and access through a parking plan that addresses parking management comprehensively.
    - Install a new parking management system to provide real-time information regarding available parking and recognize goals set in 2009 study by Desman Associates;
    - Evaluate parking data to determine usage, costs, enforcement efficiency, and parking needs.
  4. Enhanced aesthetics, appearance and preservation of the community's built environment, including historic buildings, housing, public spaces and infrastructure.
    - Establish a façade improvement program to aide refurbishment of commercial buildings;
    - Establish a housing improvement loan program to aide external refurbishment of residential buildings;
    - Pass legislation to expand current historic district [local] tax credit;
    - Create an adopt-a-park/public space program to increase maintenance of public spaces;
    - Ensure County Historic District Commission guidelines support needs of merchants and residents as well as historic preservation goals.
  5. Improved stormwater management to better prevent flooding and reduce negative environmental impacts.
    - Identify specific projects based on Urban LID charette and set implementation program for most feasible and cost effective solutions;
    - Install stormwater retrofit projects and reduce impervious surfaces;
    - Complete a study of the Tiber-Hudson subwatershed to identify upstream flood risks (including choke points, channelization issues, and structural impediments) and work to control runoff before it reaches the Ellicott City business district.
  6. Improved access to and integration of the Patapsco River into the fabric of the Area.
    - Revisit prior studies for potential to increase access to/along the Patapsco River;
    - Work with advocates including the Friends of the Patapsco Valley State Park and the Patapsco Heritage Greenway to provide direct access to recreational opportunities via trails, pathways, or boat entry locations;
    - Create an improved signage program to highlight the environmental and recreational importance of the waterways and river valley.
  7. Enhancing economic competitiveness through improved branding and marketing,
    - Establish a marketing campaign/program which promotes the Area's history and uniqueness of its businesses;
    - Develop a campaign to attract [new and returning] visitors including international travelers



- Create a coordinated program and calendar of events and use available spaces to host outdoor activities and entertainment;
- Evaluate existing business incentives and identify needed additions
- Have Economic Development Authority work with realtors and owners to fill vacancies and ensure business retention
- Assess condition and usefulness of existing signage at Area gateways to define the Area's boundaries, promote the Area's stature as Howard County's most historic community, and increase visitation by area residents and tourists.

# Ellicott City Sustainable Communities



Ellicott City Sustainable Community