



Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan

3/7 Master Plan Advisory Team Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 7, 2018; 7:00 pm

The fourth Ellicott City Master Plan Advisory Team (MPAT) meeting was held Wednesday, March 7, 2018, at the George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043.

Consultants present: Tom McGilloway, Jeff Dube, Matt Thomasson, Tripp Muldrow (via phone)

Staff present: Valdis Lazdins (Planning and Zoning), Phil Nichols (County Administration), Kate Bolinger (Planning and Zoning), Peter Conrad (Planning and Zoning), Karitsa Holdzkom (Planning and Zoning), Amy Gowan (Planning and Zoning), Kristin O'Connor (Planning and Zoning), Beth Burgess (Planning and Zoning), Mark DeLuca (Public Works)

MPAT present: Allan Shad, Ed Lilley, Gary Maule, Beth Woodruff, Rob Brennan, Jean Sedlacko, Karen Besson, Len Berkowitz, Ben Barlow

MPAT Absent: Don Reuwer, Debbie Slack Katz

Kate Bolinger, Department of Planning and Zoning, opened the meeting at 7:02 pm and thanked everyone for coming. K. Bolinger described the evening's agenda and summarized the involvement and input received at public workshops in November and online. She described the master plan team's work between November and March, including hydraulic modeling of flood mitigation concepts and meetings with private property owners.

K. Bolinger asked MPAT members to approve the October 30th meeting minutes. Rob Brennan motioned to approve and Beth Woodruff seconded. The motion unanimously carried.

To preface his presentation, Tom McGilloway, Mahan Rykiel Associates, reminded MPAT members that their feedback on concepts would help the team prepare for the March 22nd workshop. He stated that the presentation would highlight selected strategies from a longer outline provided to MPAT. T. McGilloway noted that the team identified the most effective flood mitigation options through hydraulic modeling with McCormick Taylor.

T. McGilloway, Jeff Dube (Mahan Rykiel Associates) and Tripp Muldrow (Arnett Muldrow and Associates) presented the following to MPAT:

- Updated master plan schedule
- Master plan vision and aspirations
- Organization of strategies and recommendations:
 - Strategy 1: “Managing and Protecting the Water”
 - Strategy 2: “Planning for Economic Success”
 - Strategy 3: “Enhancing the Experience”
 - Strategy 4: “Protecting and Promoting the Identity”
 - 5: “Organizing for Success”

As part of the “Managing and Protecting the Water” strategy, T. McGilloway described the county’s current work to further study and design retention ponds, culvert expansion and diversion pipes deemed Phase 1 facilities resulting from McCormick Taylor’s Hydrology and Hydraulics (“H&H”) study.

T. McGilloway described the master plan team’s flood water conveyance objective: to keep water in the channel and prevent water from flowing down Main Street. He stated that the team’s technical analysis concluded that opportunity to achieve this objective varied by area, finding opportunity in the Upper Main area compared to limited opportunities in the West End and constructability issues in Lower Main.

J. Dube described existing conditions that contribute to flooding. He indicated that the existing water conveyance system of channels and culverts is unable to contain the 100-year storm, and a series of pinch points and constrictions exacerbate flooding.

T. McGilloway described a conveyance improvement strategy for Upper Main to move flood water to Lot D while keeping it in the channel, and referred to the strategy as the “All to Lot D Proposal.” He indicated the team explored two options with the strategy: 1) a daylight and widened channel through parking Lots E and D, and 2) a by-pass culvert between Ellicott Mills Drive and Lot D.

J. Dube described the details of the daylight and widened channel option to include: an expanded culvert under Ellicott Mills Drive, an expanded and daylight culvert under Court Avenue, an expanded and daylight channel from Court Avenue through Lot E, an expanded culvert under Main Street (with removal of the arch culvert), and an expanded and daylight channel through Lot D. J. Dube said that a gathering space could be developed around the daylight channel in Lot D. He described the impacts of the daylight and widened channel on private property owners – requiring removal of the Ellicott Mills brewing annex building and the LaPalapa building.

T. McGilloway noted that the master plan team developed different scenarios to illustrate how private uses impacted by the daylight and widened channel could be relocated. He said the property owners consented to showing the scenarios in the plan. He noted the daylight and widened channel would require a long-term timeframe for implementation and phasing of improvements.

J. Dube showed the hydrologic and hydraulic model results of testing the “All to Lot D” proposal options. He said the modeling indicated the daylight and widened channel would be more effective than the bypass option: the daylight and widened channel, as modeled, would eliminate flooding from Ellicott Mills Drive to mid-Main Street. He said the bypass option reduced but did not eliminate flooding in the model results. In either option, J. Dube said Lower Main would still be subject to significant flood risk per the modeling results. T. McGilloway noted that shear stress to Lower Main would be slightly reduced (but not eliminated) with either option. J. Dube suggested that an acceptable flood level may need to be determined.

T. McGilloway described a strategy to convey water through Lower Main with parallel culverts under Main Street. He said that the team tested multiple culvert size options through the hydraulic model, and that while the culverts would reduce flooding, they would not eliminate floodwater. He said that constructability challenges make the strategy infeasible – notably, the need to shut down Main Street entirely while culverts are constructed and resulting challenges to business operations.

T. McGilloway indicated that the flood management strategy for Lower Main should focus on localized improvements (for instance, removal of stringers) and floodproofing of buildings. T. McGilloway described one additional strategy for Lower Main of opening buildings to allow flood waters to pass through, and described this strategy as an option to be considered should another flood event occur.

T. McGilloway then summarized the risk posed by Patapsco River flooding. Displaying historic maps, he said the team theorized that the river may have been filled and narrowed over time as the flour mill developed. T. McGilloway said that the master plan would recommend a sensitivity analysis to test widening the river at the flour mill site and changes to the Main Street bridge.

T. McGilloway described the recommendation for a Tiber Hudson Watershed special protection district, including options to increase stormwater management on development and redevelopment sites.

T. McGilloway described a potential open space/conservation network comprised of existing parks, dedicated open space, forest conservation easements, steep slopes, floodplains and stream buffers.

MPAT members provided feedback on the presentation of Strategy 1: “Managing and Protecting the Water:”

- Add the parking lot letter names to the diagrams/maps to orient the viewer.
- Consider the effect of floodproofing individual buildings on neighboring buildings that lack floodproofing features. T. McGilloway said the team was looking for examples of communities that undertook coordinated floodproofing efforts.
- Flood conveyance improvements should be constrained mainly to parking lots and avoid impacts to important buildings and the community.
- Explain what the phrase “acceptable flood level” means. T. McGilloway noted that flood levels are relative and dependent on many other factors.
- Consider displaying cost estimates of flood management options alongside flood rebuilding costs, and compare by geographic location. Given the severity and cost of rebuilding Lower

Main, the more expensive solution may be a better deal. T. McGilloway noted that properties that experience repeat loss should be evaluated for floodproofing solutions.

- Note that the Maryland general assembly is considering a bill that would change stormwater management requirements. T. McGilloway said the team was tracking this legislation.
- Consider an incentive programs for additional stormwater storage capacity on upstream projects. T. McGilloway said the master plan team explored the suggestion but that the county would need to review proposals on a case-by-case basis for effectiveness.

T. McGilloway then described Strategy 2: “Planning for Economic Success.” T. McGilloway said the team included historic preservation in this strategy because the historic nature of Ellicott City is the engine of its economic success. T. McGilloway described the different types of retail and commercial opportunities that could respond to Ellicott City’s unique setting.

T. McGilloway shared a mixed-use land use strategy for different districts in the watershed. He described a potential “Hudson Bend” mixed-use development that could be built in coordination with the “All to Lot D” flood conveyance proposal. He noted that new development would need to be articulated to fit in with the historic fabric. T. McGilloway described the “Courthouse Hill” area as a significant opportunity for mixed-use development. He noted that the site could accommodate a variety of uses, and that regardless of the use mix, development should reinforce connections to Main Street, the historic courthouse building, Mount Ida and the Patapsco Female Institute.

T. McGilloway described a “Central West End” mixed-use opportunity including appropriately-scaled residential buildings, a maker space, flood water storage, and an open amenity area at the West End Service Center site. He noted that the concept was shown with the consent of the property owner and emphasized there were no plans for the existing business to relocate in the foreseeable future. He said the concept was a master plan-level illustration showing long-term potential for the property.

T. McGilloway then presented Strategy 3: “Enhancing the Experience.” T. McGilloway described the importance of parking close to Main Street to serve businesses. He said that a widened stream channel in Lot D would result in removal of parking spaces, thereby resulting in a need for a parking deck nearby to recoup lost spaces. He said the team determined the parking deck was necessary from an economic perspective.

Valdis Lazdins, Department of Planning and Zoning, explained that there is an economic reason for wrapping parking lots with mixed use developments. V. Lazdins said that commercial uses help pay for the parking structure and relying on paid parking alone generally does not cover the costs of constructing a garage.

T. McGilloway said that if the stream channel is daylighted, then Lot D should become more of an amenity and an attraction. He said that a parking garage in Lot D wrapped with mixed uses would need to serve as an attraction and be consistent with the surrounding architecture.

T. McGilloway said the team developed two approaches to increase the parking supply in coordination with flood conveyance improvements: 1) parking garages at the “bookends” to the core (Lot A and Lot F) and 2) a concept that focuses parking garages within the core (Lot F and Lot D, or Lot A and Lot D).

T. McGilloway described a surface parking lot reconfiguration option for Lot F that would increase open/green space and create more connection to the Barnard Fort House and pedestrian connections to the amenities in Lot E.

To illustrate the importance of phasing and replacement of lost spaces, J. Dube described how parking garages could be developed in Lots A and D through a detailed phasing scheme and noted the impacts to the overall parking supply.

T. McGilloway showed a concept for the streetscape in front of St. Luke AME church which would make it a gateway to the downtown core. Phil Nichols, County Administration, said that a project to stabilize the slope in front of St. Luke’s is in the design phase and moving forward.

J. Dube presented Main Street streetscape sections proposing bollards, mountable curbs and scored concrete. T. McGilloway said that concrete would need to be high quality material and finished to a high standard.

T. McGilloway described a strategy for parks and open space to include enhancing the area encompassing the B&O plaza, Maryland Avenue and Tiber Alley so that the entire area could occasionally be used as an amenity space (but most of the time retain its current functions). In the long-term, T. McGilloway suggested the potential for a river overlook near the B&O museum be explored. T. McGilloway also described the sidewalk/trail network strategy including enhanced sidewalk and trail connections.

MPAT members offered the following feedback on the presentation of Strategy 2: “Planning for Economic Success” and Strategy 3: “Enhancing the Experience:”

- There will be push-back from the public to changing the character of Lot D.
- Investigate the potential to store floodwater underneath buildings. Develop Lot D with an underground stream channel to allow the buildings to help pay for improvements.
- Consider a parking garage without wrapped development (a standalone garage).
- Wrapping a parking garage with mixed uses is necessary to conceal the parking garage structure.
- Consider the architectural integrity of any potential parking garage.
- Consider valet service rather than shuttle service, and provide valet drop-off area behind the Visitor Center/Post Office building.
- Lot A does not seem to be well used currently. T. McGilloway replied that with marketing and a larger, more visible parking resource, usage can be increased.
- Was the Courthouse parking lot included in the future parking counts? T. McGilloway indicated Courthouse parking was not included, but that the consultant team would recommend that any future development of the courthouse site should include some public parking. V. Lazdins

affirmed that, because of the RFP process, there would be parking included as part of any proposal.

- Has a study been completed to determine how many new customers Ellicott City can hold? T. McGilloway responded that an objective of the master plan is to address flood water conveyance while accommodating new customers and new businesses.
- What is the timeframe for these projects? T. McGilloway responded that 20 years might be a reasonable timeframe for the larger conveyance projects.
- Reference the Wilkins-Rogers flour mill in the plan. T. McGilloway said that although there is no sign that the flour mill will shut down or move, the site will be recommended for future consideration if the situation changes.
- Main Street currently has low curbs (generally no higher than 5-6" curbs) so the town already essentially has a mountable curb.
- Will the bollards be moveable? T. McGilloway said the bollards as proposed are removable.
- Considered a terraced approach for different transportation modes (pedestrian vs. vehicular) as an alternative to the mountable curb. T. McGilloway said this a terraced approach may not be feasible because of the tripping hazard.
- Provide safe pathways from existing residential developments to the downtown core.
- The map illustrating a potential green network is a helpful framework to give context at the beginning of the presentation.

T. McGilloway summarized Strategy 4: "Protecting and Promoting the Identity." He described strategies to enhance the physical environment, such as a potential design guide for areas outside the historic district. He showed graphics illustrating how the existing "Old Ellicott City" community brand could be extended and expanded (for example, through application to banners, construction signs, and street sign toppers).

T. McGilloway asked Tripp Muldrow to describe Strategy 5: "Organizing for Success." T. Muldrow described the concept of an umbrella organization to help Ellicott City thrive, and indicated this concept was still being considered by the team.

MPAT members offered the following suggestions

- Everyone says Historic Ellicott City yet the brand says Old Ellicott City. T. Muldrow replied that the master plan is not charged to recommend a name, but rather to offer a cohesive marketing and branding strategy.

K. Bolinger asked all the MPAT members to let the presentation and outline sink in and then provide additional input via email. V. Lazdins emphasized the importance of MPAT members expressing their thoughts to the consultant team before the public meeting.

An MPAT member asked the consultant to describe the master plan implementation process, noting that an explanation of how projects are funded and constructed would be useful for the public

presentation. T. McGilloway answered that the master plan will recommend priority projects to go through the capital budget process.

V. Lazdins said that given the nature of the projects envisioned, public-private partnerships and a long-term implementation schedule would be necessary. T. McGilloway also said that there is an interrelationship between the projects that must be considered.

Regarding streetscape material, an MPAT member noted that the National Main Street Center advises against dry pavers because they can present a tripping hazard, and because snow and ice removal can be difficult.

An MPAT member said that when he first came to town, Main Street's commercial activity was concentrated at the lower end of Main Street, but now the West End is growing. An MPAT member replied that the center of town changed over time, and at one point the West End was the center of town.

An MPAT member expressed support for the master plan concepts, suggesting the beauty of this set of recommendations is the "yin-yang" of the hardscape and open space amenities.

An MPAT member suggested that V. Lazdins open the public meeting presentation by emphasizing that this master plan cannot be the sole responsibility of the county but will require private sector partnership and investment. T. McGilloway replied the master plan team recognizes the importance of public private partnerships.

An MPAT member suggested that the team emphasize that projects will need to be phased, and that not everything can be done at once.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm.