

# **ELLICOTT CITY MASTER PLAN**

March, 2003

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## Introduction

On July 13, 2001 twelve Ellicott City residents and business persons were asked by County Executive James Robey and Councilman Christopher Merdon to become members of a Steering Committee that would be develop the Ellicott City Master Plan (ECMP). Their responsibility was to craft a plan that would guide growth and delivery of services within the community.

The basis of the Steering Committee's work was the previous version of the Ellicott City Master Plan, "Ellicott City: New Life for an Old Town", published in the early 1970's. The initial meeting of the Steering Committee occurred on July 25, 2001. The Steering Committee adopted the Howard County 2000 General Plan Ellicott City Planning Area as the Ellicott City Master Plan area. This area is anchored by the Ellicott City Historic District and Howard County Government County seat. Major intrastate highways such as Route 70 and Route 95 traverse the planning area along with state Routes 40, 99, 100, 103 and 144. State road Route 108 serves as part of the planning area's southern boundary. The Patapsco River and its watershed, a major environmental feature, define the north and east boundary of the study area. Other key environmental and recreational uses in the area include the Little Patuxent River and two regional parks - David Force and Centennial.

This report is a starting point in an on-going dialogue with the County Executive and members of the County Council. The work of the Ellicott City Master Plan Steering Committee will help guide our elected officials and members of the Comprehensive Plan Task Force in determining growth and quality of life issues for the residents, neighborhoods and businesses of Ellicott City. A committee should be appointed to oversee the plan, and monitor its implementation. Recommendations and action plans from each of the Subcommittees follow.

Respectfully submitted,

Councilman Christopher Merdon  
Angie Beltram  
Robert Bernstein  
Ann Jones Koch  
Grace Kubofcik  
Janet Kusterer  
Charles Kyler  
Michael Levine  
Pat Patterson  
Ned Rogers  
Mike Smith  
Jared Spahn  
Courtney Watson

Committee staff: Anne Hubbard, Terry Chaconas

## Acknowledgments

The Steering Committee established four subcommittees, chaired by one or more Steering Committee members, to define issues and propose actions. Numerous Ellicott City residents and business owners participated in the work sessions held by each Subcommittee. We thank each Subcommittee member and recognize the invaluable input of the residents and business owners who lent their time and expertise sharing issues and suggestions for action as well as preparing the text for the Master Plan document.

### Development and Infrastructure Subcommittee

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Mike Smith, Chair  
Janice Bloodworth  
Janice Fox  
Gary Kuc  
Lee Moser  
Marian O'Byrne  
Norm Powell  
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### Quality of Life Subcommittee

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Courtney Watson, Chair  
Dawn Chrystal  
Chris Merdon

### Route 40 Subcommittee

Angie Beltram, Chair  
Ann Jones Koch  
Dee Schmitt

Ned Rogers, Chair  
Grace Kubofcik  
Courtney Watson

Howard County and State of Maryland staff knowledgeable in the programs, services and initiatives under review presented to each subcommittee. The work of the subcommittees could not have progressed without their assistance. We appreciate their participation, expert knowledge and assistance. We acknowledge the contributions of the following County and State employees to our understanding of the issues.

### **Howard County**

Joseph W. Rutter, Director, Planning and Zoning  
Marsha McLaughlin, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning  
Chuck Kines, Planning Specialist, Planning and Zoning  
Gary J. Arthur, Director, Recreation and Parks  
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Joann Maxfield, Public Works  
Jim Rawle, Inspection License and Permits  
G. Wayne Livesay, Howard County Chief of Police  
Lt. Richard Witte, Howard County Police Dept.  
Joseph Herr, Chief, Howard County Fire and Rescue  
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Russ Doupnik, Director, Technology and Communications Services  
Debbie Yare, Child Care Resource Center  
Coleen West, Executive Director, Howard County Arts Council  
Richard Story, Administrator, Economic Development Authority

### **State of Maryland**

John Concannon, State Highway Administration  
Grant Dehart, Department of Natural Resources  
George Miller, State Highway Administration  
Dennis E. Yoder, State Highway Administration

### **Others**

Design Collective, Inc. Baltimore, Maryland  
Donna Mennitto, Ellicott City, Maryland  
Larry Ponsford, Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning

The Steering Committee members appreciate the leadership and work of County Council member Christopher Merdon, who spent countless hours with the Steering Committee and actively worked on the Quality of Life Subcommittee. In addition, we could not have completed the ambitious task of creating this Master Plan without the support and dedication of Ms. Anne Hubbard, Councilman Merdon's former staff person. We are very indebted to her for her good cheer and skill in coordinating and facilitating the countless meetings of the Steering Committee and subcommittees.

# 1. DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## Mission Statement

The Development and Infrastructure Subcommittee sought to create a set of principles guiding development and infrastructure enhancements in the Ellicott City Master Plan Area, (ECMPA). The subcommittee gathered input from a cross section of County officials, community leaders, neighborhood associations and residents soliciting their input on issues and challenges inherent in managing and directing growth in the ECMPA.

Some of the key topics addressed through this process include: growth management, neighborhood preservation and enhancement, community participation in the development decision-making process, the adequacy and maintenance of infrastructure, environmental preservation, expansion of open space and the effects of development and redevelopment on the neighborhoods of Ellicott City. We coordinated our efforts with other Ellicott City Master Plan subcommittees, encouraged public participation, invited public officials to make presentations and established a clearly defined agenda and schedule for our work including the identification of resources to complete our mission.

**Based on this outreach, this Subcommittee recommends adoption of the following Key Master Plan Principals to guide development and redevelopment in the ECMPA:**

- ? Enhance the quality of life of residents within ECMPA.
- ? Encourage residents and businesses to participate in the land planning and land use decision-making process in the ECMPA.
- ? Affirm that the primary land use of the ECMPA is and should remain residential in character.
- ? Strengthen the County's commitment to neighborhood preservation and enhancement by assuring that:
  - ? the scale, height, configuration and density of development and redevelopment within ECMPA should be compatible with existing residential neighborhoods, and
  - ? the Department of Planning and Zoning, Planning Board, Board of Appeals and Zoning Board project approval process should include a design review requirement for all commercial, mixed-use and residential projects to ensure proposed projects are compatible (scale, height, configuration and density) with their surroundings.
- ? The Master Plan recognizes the unique and valued contribution of the important elements that comprise our community – its varied residential neighborhoods, the businesses that serve our community, Historic Ellicott City, Howard County Government Seat, county and state court complexes and county and state parks. The plan recognizes the importance of the unique environment that defines the

physical character of our community including streams, flood plain areas, open space, topography and forests.

- ? The County Executive and County Council should support measures that strengthen neighborhoods and support residential and business involvement in the land planning decision-making process

A summary of the Subcommittee's findings and recommendations regarding commercial use, in-fill, Planned Senior Community and Age Restricted Adult Housing developments, architectural standards, infrastructure, neighborhood preservation, open space, affordable housing and transportation follows.

### **RETAIL/COMMERCIAL/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Findings**

The ECMPA currently includes substantial quantities of undeveloped and/or underdeveloped land zoned for retail and commercial uses, which appears to be sufficient. Additional commercial and mixed-use capacity is found in several large Planned Office Research (POR) zoned parcels located throughout the area, the Turf Valley Golf Course Community and in the Waverly Woods development. We oppose expansion of commercial development into existing residential areas. For example, existing commercial sites found on Route 103, as well as the HD, should not be expanded nor should new commercial uses be introduced in these locations. In addition, commercial development should not be allowed on Route 99. We also support continuation of the County's policy of prohibiting additional commercial access to Route 144.

#### **Short Term Recommendation**

- ? Implement design standards and design review for all forms of commercial development (office, hotel, flex, retail, etc.) to ensure that such development or redevelopment is compatible with adjacent land uses.

### **RESIDENTIAL INFILL**

#### **Findings**

The impact of residential infill was a major issue of concern to the Subcommittee. The County's Ellicott City Regional Planning District (which includes all of the ECMPA except the Turf Valley Planned Golf Course area and Waverly Woods) has 13,034 Single Family Detached (SFD) dwelling units constructed as of December 1, 2001. Based on an informal study of ECMPA land available for development in late 2001 (excluding the HD, Turf Valley Planned Golf Course and Waverly Woods), residential infill dwelling units could increase the SFD dwelling units already constructed by almost 30 percent. In fact, this percentage is considered conservative in that the analysis did not take into consideration the probability of additional residential density through demolition of older residential dwellings, the permitted smaller lot size, the use of clustering techniques that increase density on buildable areas of a parcel and rezoning residential land to a higher density. Neither the fabric of the community nor the existing

infrastructure will be able to absorb the potential extent of infill.

The study included currently zoned R20 and RE-D land in the ECMPA. It did not include the Ellicott City HD, Waverly, or the Turf Valley Planned Golf Course Community. As far as could be determined, no flood plain, open space, parks or roadways were included. In the R-20 zoning category, lots larger than one acre shown on the Howard County Government zoning map were included in the analysis.

**Analysis**

**R-20 Parcels in the ECMPA**

Parcels of one acre or larger as shown on the Howard County Zoning maps were included. It is assumed that one-acre could support at least one additional unit.

Total R-20 acres (possible infill)	2,495
Total potential infill dwelling units	2,495

**R-ED Parcels in the ECMPA**

To establish an average number of dwelling units per acre that could be achieved on R-ED zoned parcels, random samples of the Howard County inventory "Subdivisions in Process" were used. The average density was determined to be 1.49 units/acre, as follows.

Total R-ED acres (possible infill)	802
Total potential infill dwelling units	1,195 (at 1.49 units/acre)

Potential Build-out in ECMPA

ECMPA dwelling units:

R-20	2,495
R-ED	1,195
	3,690 infill units

The random sample of the Subdivisions in Process encompassed 164.39 acres and yielded 245 dwelling units or 1.45 dwelling units per acre and included:

Cook's Lane	34 units on 19.25 acres	Townhouses
College Avenue	46 units on 31.15 acres	SFD
College Avenue	38 units on 29.87 acres	SFD
Gorman Road	70 units on 69.76 acres	SFD
Autumn View	21 units on 9 acres	SFD, SFA
College Ave./Bonnie Branch	36 units on 5.36 acres	SFA
Gorman Road		

This study confirmed that the impact of infill development is a serious issue for the ECMPA. Our older neighborhoods are already being affected by infill as pressure builds to greatly increase the degree of residential density within these communities.

### **Short Term Recommendation**

- ? Adopt regulations to reduce the impact of infill, preserve the integrity of existing neighborhoods and ensure that the scale, density and type of infill development projects is compatible with that of existing residential neighborhoods.

## **PLANNED SENIOR COMMUNITY (PSC) and AGE RESTRICTED ADULT HOUSING**

### **Findings**

In the ECMPA, there are numerous parcels zoned R-ED and R-20 that can be changed in use from low density to higher density residential housing through a conditional use authorized under Section 131 N-1 of the Zoning Code, Age Restricted Adult Housing (Age Restricted), or by use of a floating Zoning District, the Planned Senior Community (PSC) District, Section 127.1 of the Zoning Code.

There could be negative implications of developing dense PSC and Age Restricted Adult Housing on existing less densely developed residential neighborhoods. Current PSC regulations permit density of up to 8 dwelling units per net acre with a minimum of 50 dwelling units. By comparison, the Age Restricted Adult Housing provision allows a density of up to 5 units per net acre but allows a potentially greater number of sites to qualify for these projects due to a lower minimum requirement of 20 dwelling units in an R-20 or RE-D zoning district. Both provisions also allow use of vertical building forms such as mid-rise apartments (up to 60 feet or approximately 6 stories in height for PSC projects and 40 feet or approximately 4 stories in height for Age Restricted and Adult Housing projects); uses that are not typically found or allowed in residential neighborhoods zoned for R-ED and R-20 use.

The potential effect of PSC and Age Restricted Adult Housing developments on existing residential neighborhoods is a concern to the subcommittee. For example, a PSC development on a 10 acre parcel could yield from 50 dwelling units to 80 dwelling units in a neighborhood where densities of 1 to 4 dwelling units per acre is the norm. These projects can also exceed the height of existing 1 to 2 story residential development typically found in the community in which a PSC or Age Restricted Adult Housing development is proposed. Despite the laudatory goal of the PSC zone and the Age Restricted Adult Housing provision to create a broader array of housing alternatives for senior citizens, the vastly increased densities associated with PSC and Age Restricted Adult Housing projects will significantly change the character, quality of life and traffic patterns of the relatively low-density residential neighborhoods in which these projects can be located.

The appropriate County regulatory authority (the Department of Planning and Zoning, Planning Board, Board of Appeal and/or Zoning Board) must find that a proposed PSC or Age Restricted Adult Housing project is compatible in density, scale, height and

character with adjacent existing residential development. Limiting a project's density through a compatibility test also ensures that infrastructure is adequate to the task of serving these developments. In addition, the provisions of PSC and Age Restricted Adult Housing governing height, density, minimum lot size, open space, setbacks and related matters are inconsistent with one another. Adoption of consistent provisions with preference to those that are more likely to mitigate the physical and visual impact of these projects on adjacent residential neighborhoods is recommended.

Community associations play an important role in the development review process and support improved communication between a development applicant, adjacent property owners and the local neighborhood association. Development review would be better served if applicants and those who live in the vicinity of a project meet before an application for a project is filed with County officials. To that end, it is recommended that developers of PSC and Age Restricted projects notify adjacent property owners and the neighborhood/community association of their plans to develop a project and meet with these parties before filing an application with the County. In addition, the Department of Planning and Zoning should seek and describe community input in its recommendation on these projects.

#### **Short Term Recommendations:**

- ? Modify existing regulations regarding PSC and Age Restricted Adult Housing developments to require the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Planning Board, the Board of Appeal and/or the Zoning Board to approve a project on the basis of a project's compatibility in density (which should not exceed the density allowed on adjacent residential land uses), and character with an existing residential neighborhood. This condition of approval would be added to other considerations described in current regulations.
- ? Provisions of the PSC and Age Restricted Adult Housing governing height, density, minimum lot size, and setbacks should be made consistent with one another. In setting standards for these provisions, we recommend density, height, lot size, open space and setback standards that provide the greatest mitigation and buffering between these projects and adjacent residential land uses.
- ? Require developers to notify all adjacent property owners and the local neighborhood associations of a developer's intention to file a PSC or Age Restricted Adult Housing project for County review. The Department of Planning and Zoning is to seek community input before formulating a recommendation on a PSC or Age Restricted Adult Housing project and is to reflect that community input in its recommendation.

**ACTION:** Regulations will be enacted by the appropriate county authority.

- ? Review and approve all PSC and Age Restricted Adult Housing developments on the basis of compatibility. To receive approval, a project must be compatible in scale (single family detached etc.), density (number of units per acre), height, setback, open space and configuration (non-cluster housing etc.) with the existing pattern of residential development in a neighborhood
- ? Require developers of these projects to notify adjacent neighbors and the

local neighborhood/community association of the proposed development and provide them with a copy of the site/development plan.

- ? Direct the Department of Planning and Zoning to seek community input before formulating a recommendation on a PSC or Age Restricted Adult Housing project and reflect that community input in its recommendation.
- ? Recognize adjacent neighbors and the neighborhood association, if one is active, as having standing to appear before any County regulatory authority without needed legal representation.

### **ARCHITECTURAL, SITE AND AMENITY DESIGN STANDARDS**

#### **Findings**

The County does not have design review regulations in place. This critical planning tool, used in adjacent county jurisdictions, can protect neighborhoods and enhance the quality of life of ECMPA residents and businesses.

The development and placement of directional and identity graphics at key locations will enhance our sense of community and sense of place. Stronger street design features can be utilized to enhance the ECMPA.

#### **Short Term Recommendations**

- ? Develop directional and identity graphics for placement on key County and state roads leading to and through the county seat and HD.
- ? **ACTION:** Acquire the services of an architectural, engineering and/or landscape-consulting firm with expertise in attracting tourists to design signage and recommend high impact locations.
  
- ? Introduce unique street design features such as tree planting, street lighting, pavers and signage on public rights of way leading to the HD.
- ? **ACTION:** County projects that involve these public rights-of-way should include these enhanced street design features. As lighting or signs need replacement, retrofit with design enhanced lighting and identity graphic signage.
  
- ? Adopt design review regulations requiring developers to submit detailed elevation and depth perspectives of proposed projects.  
**ACTION:** The County Council will adopt regulations that directs the Department of Planning and Zoning, Planning Board, the Zoning Board and any other appropriate review agency to review proposed residential development and redevelopment projects and add as a condition of approval of such projects that a project must be compatible in scale, density and styles with the surrounding/adjacent residential neighborhood. Require developers to submit detailed elevation and depth perspectives of proposed projects and the adjacent residential neighborhood.

## INFRASTRUCTURE, UTILITIES & PUBLIC WORKS

### Findings

The ECMPA area has some of the County's oldest infrastructure and utilities. Maintenance and retrofitting is an on-going major challenge and cost. A closed landfill is located within the ECMPA and the County's only operating landfill, Alpha Ridge, is sited on the ECMPA western boundary. The ECMPA is in the Patapsco sewer service area, including the Route 108 pump station area, and is served by public water through the Baltimore County Central System. The confluence of major tributaries and rivers requires protections of stream valley and flood plains and well designed storm water management controls. The capacity of utility infrastructure needs to be periodically expanded, accomplished by adoption of biennial master plan updates, and built through the resources of the County annual capital program.

### Mid Term Recommendations

- ? Structured parking shall be added in the HD to meet business, tourist and residential needs. The County should continue to insist that sufficient parking be provided for any commercial, mixed-use or residential development in the HD.  
**ACTION:** Ensure that sufficient parking is provided in the HD. Any proposed residential, mixed-use or commercial project in the District should provide adequate parking for its tenants and owners.
  
- ? Develop comprehensive storm water and flood control measures for ECMPA.  
**ACTION:** Retain a flood control consulting engineering firm to recommend ways to use/store storm water for potable water, recreational use and/or supplemental fire protection.
  
- ? Study the feasibility of using the perennial streams and storm water flowing into downtown Ellicott City, including storm water mitigation measures, as a source of water for artificial cascades, architectural enhancements, historical exhibit recreations, mill restorations, supplemental fire control for use in sprinklers and water storage structures, and/or a river front park with enhanced water features for boating, canoeing and fishing.  
**ACTION:** Retain a specialty recreational planning, architectural and engineering consulting firm to assess the feasibility of reprogramming use of perennial streams and storm water.
  
- ? Reduce or eliminate overhead wiring and poles.  
**ACTION:** County officials in coordination with the appropriate utility company(s) are to eliminate overhead wiring and poles where feasible and to encourage new development to place such utilities underground.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION/SMART GROWTH

### Findings

The over-arching goals described at the beginning of this report speak explicitly to neighborhood preservation and the challenge of balancing growth with the existing character of the ECMPA. The principal land use in the ECMPA is and shall remain residential. Stable neighborhoods are the foundation of any community and intentions of Smart Growth are to enhance the development of stable neighborhoods. Smart Growth should not be used as a justification for adding density to existing ECMPA neighborhoods and commercial districts. Protection of our existing stable neighborhoods is recommended from dissection by new through roads, increased traffic from without and from inconsiderate development within. By carefully planning growth, the ECMPA can continue to be a desirable place to call home.

Certain neighborhoods within the ECMPA are undergoing a significant transformation, from rural enclave to suburban subdivision. Some of these neighborhoods include the Route 99 corridor and a number of Scenic Roads such as College Avenue, Bonnie Branch Road and New Cut Road adjacent to the HD. Steps need to be taken to preserve the unique character of neighborhoods that are prime targets for development and redevelopment.

Developers and property owners should be directed to provide County officials with comprehensive studies and plans of the environmental, traffic, infrastructure, school and related effects of all phases of a proposed project on the community. Developers should not be allowed to phase projects in such a way as to avoid studying and disclosing the comprehensive development effects a project will have on an adjacent community.

RE-D zoning, created by the County to encourage preservation of environmentally sensitive lands in neighborhoods, has been used as a means of increasing the density of residential development in neighborhoods where this zoning use is found. R-ED zoned parcels are prime candidates for in-fill development. This land is usually comprised of large lot parcels with a single residential dwelling per lot. Most of the R-ED zoned land in the ECMPA was previously zoned R-20, which generally limits development to 2 houses per acre. Unlike R-20 zoning, RE-D zoning allows retention of density on a lot even if a portion of that lot is not considered buildable due to the presence of steep slopes or wetlands (conditions usually found in RE-D lots). This practice encourages denser cluster-style forms of development on the buildable portions of a lot, potentially resulting in development of more homes per acre than previously allowed in R-20 zoning. R-ED zoning also allows uses such as townhomes, which are not allowed in R-20 zoned neighborhoods. The enhanced density and broader land uses allowed on R-ED zoned parcels can change the character of adjacent residential neighborhoods.

### Short Term Recommendation

1. Strike an appropriate balance between residential and commercial development, redevelopment, infill and preservation and enhancement of social, cultural,

aesthetic, environmental and architectural attributes of the neighborhoods that comprise the community.

**ACTION:** The Department of Planning and Zoning should coordinate development of a Smart Growth Plan that emphasizes retention of the existing residential character of the ECOMP in consultation with the Maryland Planning Office, Maryland Smart Growth Office and Smart Growth Research and Training Center at the University of Maryland, College Park.

- ? Maintain the rural character of Western Route 99 (Rogers Avenue, Route 29 to Marriottsville Road) and Scenic Roads such as College Avenue and New Cut and the more suburban character of the area from Route 29 east to Route 40 by holding to current density levels of residential development and prohibiting office, hotel, flex, retail or any other form of commercial development. Introduce traffic controls and road improvements to facilitate traffic movement in these neighborhoods.

**ACTION:** Prohibit denser forms of residential development, retail outlets, office or other forms of commercial development along Western Route 99, Scenic Roads and the area from Route 29 east to Rt. 40.

**ACTION:** Traffic controls should be implemented to facilitate local rush hour traffic without inviting permanent spill over from I-70 and US 40.

**ACTION:** Design changes should be considered, including left turn lanes and the inclusion of more traffic lights at Wetherburn Road as it aligns with Route 99, Waverly Woods II, and the intersection of Woodstock and Route 99).

- ? Require developers or property owners who control one or more adjacent parcels of land that could be developed in phases to present a comprehensive development plan of the entire land holding for County review. Adopting this change precludes incremental development plan review. Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) tests, environmental assessments, traffic studies and school tests should be conducted for the entire phased project and presented to county officials and neighborhood groups for review.
- ACTION:** Modify appropriate County ordinances to accommodate the goal of comprehensive development plan review and approval.

- ? The number of dwelling units proposed on a parcel of land in an R-ED Zone shall be no greater than the number of dwelling units that would have been allowed under the zoning provision (R-20, etc.) previously granted to that parcel.
- ACTION:** Modify the R-ED zoning provision to limit development on these parcels to no more house lots than would be allowed under the pre-existing zoning designation for that parcel.

- ? To enhance compatibility of housing styles within a neighborhood, remove townhomes or other forms of cluster style development as an allowed use in R-ED zones.

**ACTION:** Modify the R-ED zoning provision to remove townhome and other forms of cluster style residential development as an allowed use.

## OPEN SPACE

### Findings

One of the key attributes of Ellicott City - its rural character, is being lost due to the extensive residential building occurring in northeast Howard County. Open space, whether in the form of community parks, planted buffer zones, playgrounds, athletic fields, bicycle paths and/or nature trails, are examples of a widely recognized means of mitigating the effects of development.

County officials need to encourage creation and maintenance of open space, discourage development in areas of natural beauty and prohibit development on parcels of special historical significance. Taking these actions will preserve the unique resources that contribute to the appeal and character of the ECMPA.

County planners should develop a comprehensive master plan to conserve and improve our natural assets. The plan should identify properties that have unique natural beauty or historic significance and be created in coordination with property owners, neighborhood associations, conservation/preservation groups and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Particular attention should be provided to parcels of historic or natural beauty along the periphery of the Patapsco State Park and the Patapsco River. The Baltimore County side of the Patapsco River down stream from Ellicott City is an area that has considerable potential for enhancement as a natural resource. Howard County should take the initiative with Baltimore County and the State of Maryland to improve the visual appeal of the area including the remaining operating vestiges of the industrial heritage of the Patapsco Valley, the Wilkins Flour Mill and Simpson recycling facility.

A privately held property with impressive potential for the above stated purposes is the old St Mary's Seminary property on Bonnie Branch Road that overlooks the Patapsco River and the paper-recycling factory. It is strongly suggested that the county and state consider purchase of this property as parkland and append it to the State Park.

### Short Term Recommendations

- ? County officials should adopt a master plan to create, maintain and expand open space, discourage development in areas of natural beauty and prohibit development on parcels with great historical significance.  
**ACTION:** The County Council is encouraged to introduce legislation to direct the appropriate County departments to develop an open space master plan for the ECMPA, discourage development in areas of natural beauty and development of properties with great historical significance.
  
- ? Update the 20 year-old Patapsco State Park Master Plan.  
**ACTION:** The Department of Natural Resource should prepare an updated Master Plan for the Patapsco State Park based on contemporary environmental, aesthetic and historical requirements. County Planners and Engineers and

neighborhood associations should participate in this effort with the Department of Natural Resources.

- ? A forum should be convened to determine the community's interest in making parkland continuous throughout the ECMPA.  
**ACTION:** Howard County Parks and Recreation personnel should collaborate with Department of Natural Resources staff to facilitate a community forum to discuss the pros and cons as well as costs associated with development of an interconnected natural area network for pedestrian, hikers, bicyclists and wildlife in the stream valleys and environmental corridors throughout the ECMPA. These networks could link the ECMPA with adjacent communities. State and County officials should be encouraged to pursue the alternative selected by the community.
- ? Require developers to retain landscape and trees on parcels and discourage clear cutting.  
**ACTION:** The County Council should adopt an ordinance that directs developers to retain landscape and trees on their site plans unless a feasible reason is presented to remove such site features. If areas are cleared, require replacement of trees elsewhere on-site with environmentally compatible and sound plantings. Open space meadows or lawns should be integrated into plans and used as buffers between existing neighborhoods and/or other project elements. Buildings should be sited to enhance the physical environment and view. Signs and other advertising should be subtle and compatible with the character of the area. Streetlights should be limited in height and output (luminosity). Overall, lighting should mesh with the character of the neighborhood and contribute to public safety and convenience.

### **Mid Term Recommendations**

- ? ECMPA residential neighborhoods shall have open space and neighborhood parks of sufficient size and amenity to support resident's needs. County government, neighborhood associations and/or the developers that create residential subdivisions should support these parks and open spaces.  
**ACTION:** The Howard County Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan shall include plans and identify specific locations, such as the St. Mary's School site on Bonnie Branch Road, for additional neighborhood parks and open space. The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks shall consult with residents and neighborhood associations regarding specific neighborhood park locations, recreational and open space uses as well as funding sources.
- ? Key parcels adjacent to the Patapsco Valley State Park and the Patapsco River need to be identified for acquisition to enhance the State Park System. These key parcels could be conserved by easement or purchased by the state or county government.  
**ACTION:** Howard County government in partnership with the Howard County Conservancy, other interested groups and property owners should identify specific preservation parcels.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Findings

It is evident that increased levels of traffic congestion are a by-product of growth. The ECMPA area has several major transportation corridors used by area residents and increasingly significant numbers of commuters who reside or work outside of the ECMPA. These corridors include: I-70, Route 29, Route 100 and Route 40. Steps need to be taken to maintain and improve the efficient movement of traffic to and along these routes.

Increased attention should be placed on verifying the validity and comprehensiveness of traffic forecasts provided by developers. The current limited scope of counting traffic at the nearest intersection to a proposed development does not adequately address traffic impact or capacity. Roadway capacity and level of service should be based on the road's origin and termination.

County roads and intersections within the ECMPA should operate and achieve a minimum "C" level of service. In order to evaluate this level of service, traffic studies need to address current and future roadway and intersection capacities. Trip generation data should include the proposed development, existing background traffic and the impact of future development in terms of other projects in the review process.

Public mass transit and private transit services currently exist in the ECMPA. Those services should be expanded, including the network of locations to access the system. Mass transit ridership includes commuters, seniors, youth, the disabled and ECMPA residents, all of whom utilize this service to link with job and retail centers, health care providers, the HD, schools, government offices, parks, libraries and senior citizen facilities.

With the exception of the few insignificant state highway signs on I-70, Route 29 and Route 40, there are no visual clues such as prominent signage, unique lighting patterns, uniform treescape or landscape patterns or other features that alert the public to the location of Historic Ellicott City. Unfortunately, the lack of appropriate way-finding signage diminishes the general public's awareness of this major asset of the ECMPA.

### Short Term Recommendations

1. To ensure that road intersections in the ECMPA shall maintain a minimum "C" level of service, the County should impose a more comprehensive traffic test.  
**ACTION:** Require comprehensive traffic studies assessing impact at all intersections within a one-mile radius as measured from the entire circumference (edge) of a proposed project. Studies are to include the effect of the proposed development and any background traffic reasonably assumed to be associated with approved but unbuilt projects. If the resulting study indicates that an intersection will have a level of service of less than Level C, the developer will be required to mitigate in such manner as to return the level of service to Level C

and/or implement a trip reduction plan for the proposed development that will ensure that intersections function at Level C.

**ACTION:** Updated point-in-time level of service data for roads and intersections should be readily available for developers and residents.

- ? Improve roadway and intersection planning through closer coordination of State and County agencies.  
**ACTION:** The County highway department should coordinate with their state counterparts to anticipate and avoid roadway congestion by planning roadway and intersection improvements using a 10, 15 and 20-year forecast for local and regional land use development and redevelopment.  
**ACTION:** Traffic engineers and transportation planners from the county, state and regional jurisdictions should share their expertise and traffic generation projections on a continuous basis.
- ? Public mass transit and private transit connecting the ECOMPA to Baltimore and Washington, D.C. metropolitan area needs to be maintained and expanded.  
**ACTION:** Transit service should accommodate both residential and commuter use and extend throughout the daytime and weekend hours.  
**ACTION:** Transit stops should be designated at key locations, such as shopping centers, senior centers, schools, libraries, parks and other prominent locations. Route schedules and next arrival data should be available at designated stops.
- ? Efforts should be undertaken to encourage wider use of public transit.  
**ACTION:** Park and Ride areas should be expanded and other practices adopted to encourage commuters to use public transit.
- ? Route 40 should become the preferred pathway to the Ellicott City HD.  
**ACTION:** Create unique signage and a prominent marker/feature at the intersection of Route 40 and Rogers Avenue that would raise visibility and interest in this important portal to the HD and the County seat. Establish similar markers/features at other key intersections.
- ? Evaluate traffic and land use patterns and alternatives for Ridge Road between Route 29 and Rogers Avenue, in order to reduce complex traffic patterns.  
**ACTION:** The Department of Planning and Zoning, County Highways Department and State Highway Administration should retain the services of a land use and transportation engineering consultant to recommend options for improvement to the Ridge Road and Rogers Avenue vicinity.
- ? County and State Highway Departments should take steps to improve traffic flow on I-70, Route 100 and Route 29 to reduce traffic congestion which often clogs these routes at peak AM and PM periods. If traffic flow can be improved, drivers will be less inclined to take local roads as alternate routes.  
**ACTION:** Implement measures to maximize traffic flow patterns on I-70 and Route 29 to ease the flow of traffic from these routes and the Baltimore Beltway. The rapid pace of development along the Route 32 corridor is perceived to be a major contributor to diminished traffic flow on adjacent highways.

### **ADDITIONAL ISSUES**

The subcommittee did not have the time to address the following issues, but recognizes their importance and recommends the County Council consider modifications to the appropriate regulations.

- ? Enhancing community input to the County planning and zoning process
- ? Prohibit the use of flag/pipe stem lots
- ? The effects of infill residential development on tax assessments of existing residential parcels
- ? Affordable housing
- ? Legislation needed to implement the recommended changes

## **2. Historic District**

### **INTRODUCTION**

An increase in residential and commercial success throughout Howard County has brought with it some unanticipated consequences in the Historic District (HD), including: additional traffic, insufficient parking, stressed public facilities and infill development pressure on historic areas.

This document is designed to address these issues as well as readdress many of the items from the 1976 Summary Planning Report, "Ellicott City: New Life for an Old Town," much of the original analysis and recommendations that comprised the first plan are still valid and can be built upon.

The committee put a critical eye to what needs to be done to make the HD an attractive place for businesses and people, both local and tourist, to come into the HD to live, shop, locate businesses, stay and to return. In short, the committee addressed what needs to be done to make the HD a tourist/business/resident friendly city. Key issues were brought up in public meetings held by County Councilman Christopher Merdon in 2001; those issues were grouped together and are addressed herein. The following are meant to be recommendations on what needs to happen, along with recommendations as to how to accomplish it. Key issues addressed are:

1. Parking
2. Storm Water Management
3. Howard County's HD Commission
4. Development
5. HD Boundary Expansion
6. Transition Zones
7. Hospitality
8. Lighting and Utility Design

### **PARKING**

User-friendly parking is the key to positive, planned-for growth in the HD. Without adequate parking, current businesses will have difficulties attracting and retaining more consumers, new businesses will have nowhere for employees and customers to conveniently park and residents will continue to be inconvenienced by overflow from Main Street.

Providing convenient parking in the HD of Ellicott City has been a challenge since the invention of the automobile. An article in "The Ellicott City Times" in August 1939 addresses the fact that parking regulations need to be enforced to continue to attract visitors to the area. Despite continued efforts over the years, this most serious of situations still plagues us, and more aggressive tacks should be taken to affect

noticeable improvement. Accessibility and availability are limited due to the current locations of parking spaces and the area's topography.

The issue was addressed in a chapter in the Murphy/Williams summary planning report for Ellicott City, prepared in 1976. In 1995 a "Parking Management and Financing Strategy Plan for Historic Ellicott City Maryland" was prepared in conjunction with the Ellicott City Business Association (ECBA), The Ellicott City Restoration Foundation (ECRF), Historic Ellicott City, Inc. (HEC, Inc.) and the Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning. The deficit of parking spaces in 1976 was 446. With an increase of business on Main Street over the intervening 26 years, that number has surely grown. A number of viable recommendations in that report, including improved signage and resource reorganization, remain to be implemented.

The Ellicott City Parking Committee, made up of representatives of the above named organizations, has been assessing, surveying, and reporting on the parking situation periodically since 1994. While parking is an admittedly fluid state of affairs, requiring constant monitoring and adjustment, there are several actions that could provide relief immediately and in the future. The ultimate goal of these recommendations is to make a visit to the HD of Ellicott City the totally enjoyable experience it can and should be to retain its viability and attractiveness for the future. Attention must be paid to the different parking needs of the casual visitors, business owners, employees and residents.

## **Recommendations**

### **Short-term**

- ? Allow funds collected from meters, parking permits and parking tickets to be placed into a separate parking revenue fund, rather than the county's general fund, to help finance future parking improvements, such as a parking garage, vertical pedestrian walkways to upper parking lots, trams, and trolleys.
- ? Erect easily legible signs at all entry points to the HD (such as near the county courthouse parking lot) directing visitors to convenient available parking. If visitors cannot easily find parking, they don't stop. Design these signs to provide directional information, improve traffic flow and increase general visibility of the area.
- ? Erect signs at the entrance to each of the parking lots, defining the location of all available parking in the area, and clearly delineating paid vs. free zones. On the signs, clearly mark major points of interest—primarily landmarks like the Railroad Station Museum, the Tourism Office/Post Office, and the Roger Carter Center.
- ? Incorporate parking regulations and maps into a general brochure prepared for visitors to the Ellicott City HD.
- ? Local restaurateurs should consider the cooperative use of valet parking on weekend evenings. A suitable location for valet parking should be identified.

- ? It is essential to educate the HD business community as to the importance of convenient parking being left available for visitors, rather than being taken by merchants and employees. It has been noted that when convenient metered parking is made available for free, Main Street 'regulars' fill the spaces rather than leaving them for revenue-generating visitors.

### **Mid-term**

- ? Parking on the streets leading from Main Street has become a problem for the local residents. Parking permits should be issued to local residents and the side streets posted as available for parking only to residents and their guests during certain hours.
- ? Residents renting apartments on Main Street should have parking information included in their leases, with suitable parking areas clearly delineated. They should receive parking permits as well.
- ? The area should be made more attractive and fun for foot traffic. Abundant free parking is available in the upper lots, and the scenic beauty of the route to them should be enhanced. Vertical walkways, like those behind the Howard House and the Opera House, should be developed, promoted and enjoyed as tourist attractions, linking the numerous historic roads adjacent to the HD to the vitality of Main Street.
- ? A shuttle has enjoyed limited success in the past, especially when used during special events. The use of a trolley or even a horse-drawn vehicle instead, where the ride itself could be an attraction, should be explored. The development of multiple stops on Main Street is recommended.

### **Long-term**

- ? Form a committee to address the construction of a parking garage in the next five years. Years of debate on this issue has yielded the current wisdom that the only way to increase convenient available parking is to build a parking structure. One location for such a garage is Parking lot D, behind the Post Office. This location would be the largest, most convenient, and have the least impact on 'business as usual' during construction. The garage could consist of a mix of business offices, shops, public restrooms and parking on the ground floor, with additional parking on the upper floors. The facade should be designed to meet HD Guidelines and blend with the surrounding streetscape. Such a location would not dominate the local streetscape, and the design could be integrated around existing structures.
- ? Consider eliminating parking on Main Street, except for loading zones and trolley stops once the parking structure is complete. While easing traffic congestion, it would also provide the ability to widen the sidewalks, plant trees, move utilities underground, and would enhance the streetscape. Parking in loading zones should be time limited.

## **STORM WATER MANAGEMENT**

The floods caused by Tropical Storm Agnes in 1972 and Hurricane Eloise in 1975 caused significant damage and disruption in the historic downtown area of Ellicott City. Since then, a significant amount of residential and, to a lesser extent, commercial development has occurred or is planned to occur upland of the HD along the tributaries that feed into the Tiber-Hudson River which courses throughout the District. Additional storm water runoff associated with this development can exacerbate the impact of storm events on the district.

Because storms like "Agnes" and "Eloise" are cyclical, Ellicott City needs a plan to minimize the impact of future storms. Howard County has made an effort to guard against future flooding by patching and repairing a number of storm drains and other storm water management systems over the years. However, a comprehensive plan needs to be prepared and implemented to prevent significant flooding and to alleviate persistent concerns regarding the impact of floods in the HD. A key component of this plan should measure the impact of upstream development on the quantity and quality (sedimentation) of water flowing through or toward the HD.

One of the goals of this committee is to recommend development of a Storm Water Management plan that will address flooding problems and develop short and long term solutions for the HD and the tributaries of rivers that flow toward the district.

Another concern that needs further consideration is the 1992 Channelization Study, which reported that many of the channels under and adjacent to Main Street are eroding at a fast pace and without a proper repair and shoring could cause buildings and roadways to fall into the Tiber-Hudson. A building failure, particularly near the lower end of Main Street, could block a portion or all of the Tiber-Hudson stream causing flooding that could extend upland into a wider area of the HD.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Short-term**

- ? Develop a storm water management plan for the HD.
  - ? According to the Baltimore Metropolitan Water Resources Study, flood protection is inadequate within the Patapsco and Gunpowder River basins. There are a number of recommendations in the study, which should be given further consideration. We urge adoption of these recommendations.
  - ? A committee composed of County officials, experts in the field of storm water management and members of the residential and business community in the HD should be formed to develop a plan to address the potential flooding problems Ellicott City faces.
  - ? Issues that should be considered are as follows:
    - ? Flooding
    - ? Developers of development projects upland of the HD along the Tiber-Hudson and its tributaries should be required to prepare a study of the amount and quality of storm water

runoff caused by their project. A baseline projection should also be provided of existing, pre-development runoff from such sites. The County Planning staff and the Planning Board should discourage development that increases runoff to the Tiber-Hudson above existing conditions. Off and/or on-site storage of run-off should be encouraged as a means of fostering new development in this critical watershed area.

- ? Developers should be levied a permit fee to pay for long-term storm water management initiatives in the HD.

- ? Re-examine the Tiber Hudson Channelization Study

- ? Form a committee composed of County officials, experts and community members to readdress the Tiber Hudson Channelization Study.
- ? Nominate the channels in the HD for placement on Preservation Howard County's endangered historic properties list.
- ? Put together a walking tour of the HD area to identify channel foundation problems and streambed stabilization opportunities. Publicize the findings of this tour to bring more public interest to these conditions.
- ? Form a public-private partnership to develop and fund solutions to improve the deteriorating channel walls.
- ? Consider use of alternative financing strategies such as a tax increment finance district to finance suggested improvements.
- ? Seek participation in the cost of improvements by property owners and developers who may develop projects that increase storm water run-off in the HD.

#### **Mid-term**

- ? Implement the storm water management plan and benchmark the project's progress.
- ? Undertake repairs to channel walls in the HD.

#### **Long-term**

- ? Implement a long-term maintenance and surveillance program that will proactively insure that the HD and its environs can persevere through subsequent major and minor storm events.
- ? Discourage upstream development that increases flow of storm water runoff and sediment downstream toward the HD.

## **HOWARD COUNTY'S HD COMMISSION**

The governing legislation for the HD is Subtitle 16.600, which defines a HD Commission with the purpose:

“... to regulate construction, alteration, reconstruction, moving and demolition of structures of historic and architectural value, together with their appurtenances and environmental settings within respective specified limits.” (16.600)

The Commission has been charged since its inception “to safeguard the heritage of the county by preserving districts herein which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history; to stabilize and improve property values in such districts in the county; to foster civic beauty; to strengthen the local economy; and to promote the use *and preservation* of such HDs in the county for the education, welfare, and pleasure of the residents of the county.” (sec. 16.600).

In recent years, the county has been focused on growth management, with less emphasis on historic preservation, despite the strong evidence that preservation of HDs provides substantive economic benefits to property owners, businesses in the HD and the surrounding community.

In order to accomplish the tasks outlined for the Commission in its enabling legislation, the Commission must be guided by expertise more tangible than merely demonstrated interest and residency in Howard County. This expertise can be fostered through the appointment of Commissioners with substantial experience in related fields, as called for in the enabling legislation. Continuing education and training for both Commission members and staff would have the added benefit of bringing new ideas and information to the county on how to best integrate the new with the old.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Short-term**

- ? Appoint Commission members meeting the qualifications set forth in the legislation, exhibiting a balance of not only interest, but also expertise as required.
- ? Provide ongoing training for members and staff on cutting edge topics, including alternative materials and the provisions of the new Smart Growth Code legislation (Chapter 8, specifically), as well as cyclical training in architecture history, design review, etc. Provide sufficient funding to pay for such training.
- ? Take advantage of Preservation Incentives for Local Governments (PILG) funds for staff/consultant salaries and commissioner training, etc. -- tiered matching funds to support expansion of historic preservation programs (make existing program more comprehensive -- worth approximately \$25,000 to Howard County as an Entry Level commission, because it is not 66B compliant.)

### **Mid-term**

- ? Adopt, and make available to the public, criteria strengthening the knowledge and training qualifications for membership on the Commission. Members should have sufficient qualifications in areas of expertise such as architecture, history of architecture, American history to meet standards established by the National Park Service (NPS) for Certified Local Government (CLG) commissions and/or following the state enabling guidelines under Section 66B. Appropriate qualifications should meet those established by the Maryland Historical Trust's (MHT) consultant's list.
- ? Provide Staff and/or Consultant, available to the Commission and general public, who are professionally trained in historic preservation—meet NPS standards (36CFR61).
- ? By upgrading the qualifications of the Commission members and staff, and increasing the staff time available for Commission efforts, Howard County and nonprofit agencies operating therein will be eligible for increased grant funding from MHT. Use the PILG and Non-capital and Capital Grant funds from MHT to enhance Howard County's preservation efforts in public-private partnerships.

### **Long-term**

- ? Secure funding for and provide full-time staff, professionally trained in historic preservation—meet NPS Standards (36CFR61).
- ? Howard County should again review becoming a Certified Local Government, which, while imposing higher standards, also provides additional technical assistance, sources of funding for training and survey, and opportunities to influence National Register nominations, as well as state and federal reviews of projects affecting HDs and resources.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

The HD, like most of Ellicott City, is undergoing substantial new development and redevelopment, the scale and scope of which may change the character and charm of the HD. To protect the integrity of the district and the scenic roads that connect it to adjacent neighborhoods of Ellicott City, development of new and redevelopment of existing structures should be compatible in scale and texture with the prevailing development pattern in a specific neighborhood of the HD. For example, if the prevailing pattern of development in a neighborhood within the district is single-family detached housing on half-acre lots then subsequent development or redevelopment in that neighborhood should adhere to that pattern.

Granting the HD Commission the power to review and approve/reject/defer development and redevelopment projects proposed within the boundaries of the district is recommended. The Commission serves as one of the key regulatory safeguards for the district but lacks the authority to recommend approval or denial of a project on the grounds of a project's impact and compatibility with the district. Clarification and study of

the role of the Historic Commission and the Department of Planning and Zoning regarding review and approval of development, revitalization and improvement projects in the district is recommended. Consideration should be given to the notion of allowing the Historic Commission and the Department of Planning and Zoning to serve as advisor on technical matters – slopes, drainage, etc. with regard to the projects in the HD. Review and approval of questions regarding materials, project density, zoning code compliance and project compatibility should be the responsibility of the HDC.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Short-term**

- ? Modify the zoning code to limit development density and land uses within the boundaries of the HD to densities that are no greater than the prevailing density in the neighborhood in which a project is located.

#### **Mid-term**

- ? Modify County code to provide the HD Commission with authority to approve, reject or defer development and redevelopment projects within the HD. Revise the Planning Commission's role accordingly.

#### **Long-term**

- ? Monitor compliance with revised guidelines.

### **HD BOUNDARY EXPANSION**

The county officially recognized the Ellicott City HD in 1974. In 1978, the HD was added to the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1990 the district was expanded.

The formation of the district was clearly to establish a means of preserving the unique environment of Ellicott City's oldest homes and commercial district so that future generations could enjoy the rich fabric of the past.

Currently, the HD is facing pressure from developers to develop the remaining open spaces in and around the District. As a result, the "fabric" of the past is being threatened. The narrow, steep, scenic country roads that characterize the area in and around the HD are backing up with traffic from new multi-unit developments, while open spaces and forested areas are being replaced with in-fill developments that permanently destroy the very characteristics that the HD was formed to protect.

The HD is at a turning point. It could continue on the same course, in which it is possible the State and National recognition as a place of historic value could be removed, or, it could embrace the County, State and Federal guidelines for historic preservation and take advantage of the funding available from those sources. Preservation should not mean "no new building," it should mean that new in-fill development (all new construction in the HD is in-fill), should be designed to meet the established guidelines for HDs. Areas of Ellicott City not now in the HD that are of historic value should be identified and added to the HD.

## **Recommendations**

### **Short-term**

- ? Look again at the current boundaries of the HD with the purpose of expanding the district to capture areas to the south of the current boundaries.
- ? Close the loopholes that permit the subdivision process to circumnavigate the HD Commission. Reinterpret and strengthen existing Code to provide HDC with multi-tiered review of subdivision, i.e., preliminary review of plans for features such as proposed demolition, major alterations to environmental setting to see if they would affect historic resources on and off parcel under consideration, proposed density, etc., followed later by full-scale review.
- ? Add a new zoning designation of "HDZ" HD Zone to current zoning regulations. All current properties in the HD or those on county, state or federal registers should be automatically rezoned. The new zoning provision will allow the HD Commission to work closely with developers and the community to ensure integrated in-fill development meets with the current guidelines.
- ? Accomplish a thorough review of historic sites across the county, an inventory of all relevant sites, following MHT's standards.
- ? Examine the opportunity for individual homes/sites to be designated as HDs or landmarks to provide protection and incentives for noncontiguous properties and resources.

### **Mid-term**

- ? Come into compliance with or adopt 66B of the State code in its entirety to gain access to the additional funding available for projects and personnel.
- ? Secure funding for continued work on a thorough, countywide historic sites inventory following MHT's standards.
- ? Establish the procedure for designation of individual homes/sites as HDs or landmarks to provide protection for noncontiguous properties and resources. These locally designated historic resources can then take advantage of the tax credits and benefits available at the local, state and federal levels.

### **Long-term**

- ? Complete a thorough, countywide historic sites inventory following MHT's standards, and ensure local ability to track these sites through Geographic Information Systems (GIS)—and make available to and advertise this service to the public.
- ? Create demolition-by-neglect controls, including specific criteria proving economic hardship. (Many models have already been established in jurisdictions

like Baltimore City, Prince George's and Montgomery Counties). Existing Howard County provisions (Section 16.608) for Structures of Unusual Importance is neither strong enough to truly protect those structures identified, nor comprehensive enough to protect "average" historic resources.

### **TRANSITION ZONES**

Transition Zones are identified as areas leading into the Ellicott City HD offering a buffer between heavily developed residential and commercial sectors and the HD. In Ellicott City, they contain significant green space as well as historic and non-historic structures. Maintaining and preserving these areas will greatly enhance the overall quality of life, visual impact and historic nature of the town. Consideration should be given to either establishing specific transition zone regulations or enlarging the existing HD limits. Establishing transition zones could allow individual property owners within them to opt into the HD and follow existing guidelines. The establishment of an open space program for the HD would also help stabilize the scenic nature of the HD.

Entry corridors to the HD could be a means of buffering the transition from the 2000's to the 1800's. Providing transitions into the HD will contribute to the real and perceived value of the HD by gradually moving through time as represented in the buildings, their settings and the environment. This will also act as a "pressure valve" to restrict overburdening the infrastructure in and around the HD.

**Six zones have been identified, with recommendations for each:**

#### **Frederick Road East**

The Patapsco River and the Wilkins-Rogers plant are the predominant features in this zone and in Baltimore County. A cooperative joint venture with Baltimore County should be pursued.

#### **Recommendations**

- ? Establish a working relationship with the Wilkins-Rogers Company and Baltimore County Government offices to enable our input on the future of this site.
  
- ? Consider long-term alternative uses and allocate funding to participate.

#### **Frederick Road West**

From Toll House Road east to the district.

#### **Recommendations**

- ? Take immediate action to address the problems identified in the Tiber-Hudson Channelization Study.
  
- ? Investigate preserving the few remaining green spaces either by easements, acquisitions or donations to the county with the aid of State and/or Federal funds if possible.
  
- ? Add properties that meet HD criteria to the HD so that the property owners can

take advantage of the monetary incentives available.

### **Rogers Avenue/Court House Drive/Ellicott Mills Drive**

From the Route 40 intersection south.

#### **Recommendations**

- ? Retain as much green space landscape screening as possible fronting on Rogers Ave. when the county office complex is built on the west side of Rogers.
- ? Long term, acquire the property on the east side of Rogers Ave. directly across from the new complex for a public space.
- ? Along Court House Drive limit development and maintain and preserve the existing green space. Maintain a continuing dialog between the county and all concerned parties regarding the future of the Circuit County complex.
- ? Preserve the remaining green space on Ellicott Mills Drive. This should be a simple task on the west side as most is county owned. The east side will require working with current property owners.

### **Columbia Pike**

From Rt. 103 north/east to Main Street.

#### **Recommendations**

- ? This area is experiencing rapid infill construction. Anything that can be done to diminish the visual and infrastructure impact of development should be attempted. Rezoning to a lower density would help. The recent success of the Howard County Conservancy with Keewaydin offers some hope.

### **College Avenue**

#### **Recommendations**

- ? To counterbalance the effects of increasing development pressure at the east end of the district, the county should enhance the Scenic Roads Guidelines already in existence for this and other scenic roads.
  - ? Development should be setback a minimum of 100 feet from the closest edge of a scenic road to the proposed development.
  - ? Development should be integrated into and compatible in style and density with the existing development pattern along a scenic road.
- ? The county should implement policies to diminish the visual and infrastructure impact of development, including rezoning to a lower density, along a scenic road.
- ? The County Council should enact special protections to insure that properties with historic designations and/or historic significance are not compromised in character and contribution to the district due to subdivision or development.
- ? Minimize the number of curb cuts allowed along this scenic road.

- ? Encourage the State of Maryland to acquire more land along this road and append it to Patapsco State Park.

### **New Cut Road**

Running from Route 103 to St. Paul St.

#### **Recommendations**

- ? Same recommendations apply as those described for College Avenue.
- ? Given the proximity of proposed residential development along the periphery of the former county landfill on New Cut Road, concerns exist about the quality of groundwater and soil adjacent to these proposed developments. Developers of these proposed projects should work with the county to insure that potential health hazards associated with this closed landfill have been properly disclosed to potential lot purchasers and ameliorated through ongoing county remediation efforts.

## **HOSPITALITY**

Hospitality issues in the HD include parking, restrooms, brochures, signage, site availability, cleanliness and comfort. These factors impact and influence the experience of a visit to the HD, and affect the desire of visitors to return and recommend the HD to others.

When and where possible, public/private partnerships should be sought to extend budgets and obtain community support and buy-in for projects.

### **Restrooms**

Public restrooms are a major problem within the HD. There are three current locations that qualify as public restrooms: the Roger Carter Neighborhood Center, the Howard County Tourism Council Office and the Ellicott City B & O Railroad Station Museum. With the exception of the Carter Center, the facilities are small and, in the case of the Tourism Office, rather outdated. All are open limited hours and none is well marked. Larger, better, handicapped accessible and centrally located facilities are needed.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Short-term**

- ? Post signs at all locations identifying them as having public restrooms. The Tourism Office facilities should be renovated and made handicapped accessible and, if possible, enlarged.
- ? Add baby-changing stations to all restrooms to accommodate parents with infants.

#### **Mid/Long-term**

- ? Provide additional funding for the Museum that would enable it to extend its hours.

- ? The county should develop a public/private partnership and lease space at mid Main Street to install and maintain public restrooms. Ellicott Square is the most likely area, as there are hard-to-lease spaces (less desirable retail space) in that building. Ideally, if the county could install the facility, the Ellicott City Business Association could pay the expense of cleaning and supplies, thus being a true public/ private partnership.

### **Brochures**

The few brochures in current circulation, focusing on the HD, are poor quality, have mistakes, or are not inclusive of the entire community.

### **Recommendations**

- ? Design a high-quality brochure to provide visitors with an overview of Elliott City and all that the HD has to offer. The Howard County Tourism office should join with local non-profits and businesses to develop the brochure and to design a comprehensive marketing strategy for the HD. The end product would be beneficial to the entire community.
- ? The design should be inclusive of both public and private businesses.
- ? The brochure should be high quality — something people will want to keep for reference. Include walking tour information, parking and restroom location, a calendar of annual events, and other useful information. It would be available everywhere in Ellicott City: all stores, restaurants, Tourism Office, museums, historic sites, and businesses.
- ? The cost of the brochure could be paid for by local businesses that would be included on the map showing their location and a brief description of the business in a directory. No ads would be sold so that premium space is left for HD information. Any business that wants inclusion in the directory would have to pay.

### **Signage**

There is a need for coordinated, better signage directing visitors into the HD and to parking as well as signs in town indicating how to exit, e.g. "to 95", "to US40", etc.

### **Recommendations**

- ? In town, kiosks or signage boards as well as the parking lots should be posted/re-posted (There are two parking/HD map signs posted currently, if you can find them.). These would feature maps showing historic sites, parking locations, information office, public restrooms, ATM, etc., and utilize the "you are here" feature. These should also feature the same logos and layout used in the visitor brochures.
- ? Shuttle stop signs should indicate stops if this service is installed.
- ? Install a large wall map in a central Main Street location like the Ellicott Square Building, complementing those on the parking lots.

### **Historic Site Availability**

#### **Recommendations**

- ? Open all of the historic attractions as often as possible.
- ? Expand county funding and identify new funding sources.
- ? Establish a volunteer pool through the high school community service requirement and local community groups such as Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, or senior centers.

### **Cleanliness**

#### **Recommendations**

- ? Schedule regular cleanups for the streets, parking lots, the Tiber-Hudson Channel and the Patapsco River.
- ? In the short-term, convince each shop owner to sweep the sidewalk and street gutter in front of their business two to three times a week.
- ? For the mid/long-term, contract with a small street-cleaning unit.

### **Comfort**

#### **Recommendations**

- ? Add benches where possible within the HD.
- ? Welcomers in either uniform (logo shirts) or period attire could provide a friendly, helpful feel to town.

### **Underutilized Spaces**

Several public and private venues are currently underutilized as magnets for promoting local events. Current HD assets such as the Patapsco Female Institute, B&O Railroad Station Museum, the Fire House Museum, and the old theater are currently underutilized or unused.

#### **Recommendation**

- ? Provide coordinated event planning and promotion to utilize these spaces. The whole HD would benefit from the increased pedestrian traffic and generated revenue. This would also serve to increase both regional and local interest in the HD.

### **Accommodations**

Currently, there are no hotel/B&B accommodations within the HD.

#### **Recommendation**

- ? Encourage development of B&B type accommodations within the HD to encourage visitors to use the HD as their home base while visiting the Baltimore area.

## **Lighting and Utility Design Guidelines**

### **Utilities**

Overhead power lines were put into service on Main Street Ellicott City circa 1958. Their size and location makes them a very prominent feature of the HD.

### **Recommendations**

- ? Removing overhead power lines from the streetscape would greatly benefit pedestrian flow and the aesthetics of the HD.
  
- ? Modern technologies should allow for the burial of these lines, but the placement of transformer vaults could provide a design difficulty. Contract for a new study to determine the feasibility and cost of such a project.

### **Lighting**

Lighting should be uniform in brightness along the streetscape to help illuminate pedestrian walkways and roads while at the same time not being a nuisance to residents of the district. Lighting treatments should be similar in scale and of compatible style throughout the district.

### **Recommendation**

- ? Single pole brightness and head designs criteria should be adopted by the HD Commission to create uniformity throughout the district.

### **3. QUALITY OF LIFE**

#### **Recreation and Parks**

##### **Introduction**

Parks, open space and varied types of recreation, from organized sports to arts and crafts, contribute to the high quality of life Ellicott City residents enjoy. But this variety requires many different types of facilities, and makes planning and managing the parks and recreation system quite challenging. Recreation areas, parks and open space are often incorrectly referred to as interchangeable aspects of the same service to the public. However, they serve different purposes and have different characteristics. Parks or open space acquired to protect environmental resources may not be suitable for intensive recreation facilities. The recreation potential of such areas may be limited to low intensity or passive activities such as hiking or nature studies.

##### **Services Currently Offered**

The Howard County Recreation and Parks Department provides a high quality recreation and park system that promotes opportunities for all Howard County residents to pursue safe and enjoyable leisure activities in balance with protection and conservation of natural resources. Such programs and activities include youth programs, children's activities, senior activities, creative arts classes, fitness programs, and personal development and leisure programs. The Recreation and Parks Department also maintains parks and recreational facilities throughout the county

The Howard County 1999 Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan (the R&P Plan) is the County's primary vehicle for determining needs for parkland, open space and recreation. The 1999 Plan analyzes future needs based on expected population growth, demographic characteristics, the acreage needed for anticipated facilities and the land resources needing protection.

This Master Plan addresses some key issues that Ellicott City and Howard County will face over the next 10 years in planning for and providing open space, parks and recreation facilities that will enable Howard County to maintain and enhance its quality of life.

##### **Desired Services to be Offered**

Seniors and young people will most likely continue to require the lion's share of programming offered by the Department of Recreation and Parks. In order to provide young people with a healthy atmosphere in which to grow and thrive the County will have to commit more time and funding to teen programs. Seniors will also require a great deal of commitment from the county. As valuable members of society, seniors will need activities and programs sponsored by the Department of Recreation and Parks that will allow them to remain active and productive.

The Department of Recreation and Parks now maintains a number of facilities countywide. The need for an indoor facility in Ellicott City should be assessed. Such a facility could meet the need of many age groups throughout the year.

The Quality of Life of many Ellicott City residents revolves around the environment in which they live. While the county has focused most of its' funding for open space and land preservation in the west, equal consideration should be given to the Ellicott City/eastern area of the county.

### **Goals**

- ? Implement the goals proposed in the 1999 Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan which include the following:
  - ? Provide for future passive, active, and lifetime recreational opportunities, ensuring that all land, programming, and recreational facility needs are met.
  - ? Ensure that land and resource conservation programs are consistent with the County's priorities, character, and economic resources.
  - ? Protect resources, renewable and non-renewable natural resources, cultural and historic.
  - ? Integrate the preservation of the county's agricultural activities with resource protection and recreational goals.
- ? Request a more activist government strategy to protect and acquire land for use by residents.
- ? Place equal emphasis on land preservation and open space in the eastern Ellicott City area as in western Howard County.
- ? Develop a plan to protect what open space is still available in the eastern part of the county through creative partnerships with communities and corporations.
- ? The Department of Recreation and Parks should continue to survey residents' needs on a regular basis, and tailor programs to address those needs
- ? Identify properties throughout Ellicott City with the potential to be recreational parkland.
- ? Expand upon the existing facilities owned and operated by the County to include indoor facilities to serve the growing youth and senior population in Howard County.
- ? Pursue alternative financing mechanisms for the Department of Recreation and Parks and land acquisitions, including pay-as-you-go, private and corporate sponsorship of activities, and debt financing tools.
- ? Examine challenges and opportunities for involving and maximizing unique recreation possibilities within Ellicott City's HD, while keeping historic preservation a priority.

### **The Arts**

#### **Services Currently Offered**

Since 1981, the Howard County Arts Council has been the cornerstone of the arts in Howard County. Located in Ellicott City, the Arts Council serves citizens by fostering the arts, artists, and arts organizations. The goals of the Arts Council include acting as

an advocate for community arts, furthering the public's appreciation of the arts, encouraging life long learning through the arts and ensuring the arts are accessible to all residents.

Currently the Howard County Arts Council offers numerous activities and programs for citizens. From bus trips to regional cultural sites to year-round classes in the visual and performing arts for people of all ages, the Arts Council is always working to enhance access to the arts in Howard County.

### **Desired Services to be Offered**

In 1984, the Howard County Arts Council became the official grant-giving agency for the arts in the Howard County. The Council administers several grant programs and awards funding to local and regional arts organizations, PTAs and key cultural institutions. It will be important for the Arts Council to be able to continue these grant programs as well as address the needs of a growing population.

As Ellicott City and Howard County experience increases in population there will be an increased need for additional arts funding to accommodate the needs of the community. The current level of service offered by the arts council will be strained by the weight of a growing population, therefore in order to maintain the quality of the programs and activities offered by the council serious consideration should be given to increased funding.

### **Goals**

- ? Provide adequate resources for the growth and expansion of the Howard County Arts Council.
- ? Assess the continuing needs of the community.

## **Community Health**

### **Introduction**

Howard County's Health Department is responsible for offering a number of services, from offering flu shots during the winter months to inspecting community pools during the summer, the Health Department is a key player in the Quality of Life Ellicott City residents have come to expect in Howard County.

### **Current Services Offered**

The Howard County Health Department provides a variety of clinical services to county residents, including maternity, family planning, child health, communicable disease and addictions treatment and education. The Health Department privatized mental health services in 1999, through Shepard Pratt Health System. The Health Department also provides addictions services at the Howard County Detention Center, where an estimated 80 percent of inmates have addiction problems.

In 1997, the Howard County Health Department produced the *Howard County Health Survey*. The survey is an assessment of present and future health care needs of County residents, demographics and special needs of uninsured individuals. The priorities identified as important for most residents were heart disease, cancer

(especially breast and lung), drug abuse and alcoholism, AIDS, health insurance for the uninsured, and assurance of access to services for low income and senior citizens. As a result of the survey, the *Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Health Improvement Plan for Howard County* was developed in January 2001. It is the most comprehensive analysis of health-related data for Howard County in terms of leading causes of death and of Years of Potential Life Lost (a weighted measure for the age of death of an individual in relation to average life expectancy).

The Department of Health also provides the community with resources and services to improve and protect the environmental health of Ellicott City residents. Such services include inspecting public pools and spas, providing annual rabies vaccination clinics, landfill monitoring, investigation of community hygiene concerns, noise pollution, air quality testing, monitoring the West Nile Virus, testing for lead paint, inspecting water and sewage plans, and reviewing food protection plans at vendors and restaurants throughout the county.

### **Desired Services to be Offered**

Because seniors have more chronic health problems, they require a broad range of health services – inpatient, outpatient and in the home. According to the 2000 census, there are over 6,000 residents in Ellicott City who are 65 or older. This population is expected to increase significantly over the next ten years as baby boomers approach their twilight years. As the population increases and ages, additional beds and facilities will be required. Although two adult day care centers are located in Columbia, other day care centers will likely be needed in other parts of the County. There is a need for more homebound care for the elderly and people with disabilities. Homebound care would include personal care, in-home nursing, housekeeping, grocery and meal assistance, and respite for caregivers.

Most of the clients who use Health Department services have a low income or are above medical assistance guidelines but below 150 percent of the poverty level. Since many people who use clinics do not have cars, the location and accessibility of clinics is paramount. Health Department services are not currently easily accessible to clients, which have limited transit access. Additional clinics should be located in schools with large numbers of children eligible for free lunch, an indicator of low income families, additional health services in Ellicott City may also be needed. Some consideration should also be given to serving Ellicott City's diverse population. Over the last decade Ellicott City has seen an increase in foreign-born residents. This will require the Department to make accommodations for constituents who may not speak English or have other cultural differences.

While the services provided with regard to the community's environmental health are adequate, it is important that the Health Department be able to quickly identify future needs in the community. It will also be important for the Health Department to continue monitoring issues of concern such as lead paint removal, West Nile Virus and mosquito control. As more people choose to make the Ellicott City area their home, the Health Department will play a key role in maintaining the quality of life so many have come to enjoy.

## **Goals**

- ? Continue decentralization of health resources. Locate clinics and resource centers where they are needed in Ellicott City, for example the new Ellicott City Senior Center should be considered for a clinic or resource center.
- ? Establish multi-service centers for convenient access and efficient use of resources and space.
- ? Provide for the needs of those with disabilities by ensuring appropriate accessibility and transportation to health facilities;
- ? Develop programs to educate citizens with different cultural backgrounds about the resources available to them at the Health Department.
- ? Provide the Environmental Health Department with the resources necessary to continue monitoring issues impacting the community's environmental health.
- ? Continue to assess the health service needs of county residents

## **Seniors**

### **Introduction**

Senior citizens are a vital component of any healthy community, and the rapidly growing senior population in Ellicott City is no exception. In Ellicott City, the senior citizens (ages 60 and above) are the fastest growing segment of the population. With a 260% increase in population since 1995, it is anticipated that by the year 2020, there will be 72,000 seniors in Howard County. At that rate, the number of seniors will equal the number of school-aged children by 2020.

### **Services Currently Offered**

The Office on Aging is the agency primarily responsible for planning, developing, and coordinating programs and services for seniors. In addition to those programs sponsored by the Office on Aging, additional services are offered by a number of service-specific agencies (e.g., Department of Recreation and Parks), resulting in a wide range of services offered to the senior citizens of Ellicott City.

Senior activities are available through a variety of venues. The new Ellicott City Senior Center, which opened in 2001, offers arts and crafts, exercise, and social outings to the senior population. In addition, the Department of Recreation and Parks offers a number of opportunities for seniors, to include recreation and sports, and day trips.

The range of social services available to seniors in Ellicott City runs the gamut, from housing referral services to health care. Meals are obtainable at senior centers and, for those seniors who are homebound, mobile meals are available. In Ellicott City, health care services are available at the Normandy Health Department satellite office.

### **Desired Services to be Offered**

While there are currently a range of programs and services for seniors in Ellicott City, there are additional services needed to meet the demands of a growing population with a variety of needs.

The growing number of seniors requires additional health care services. In addition to a need for more extensive medical services, there is also a specific need for mental health services to address reports of serious depression by 60 percent of seniors.

The increasing senior population also needs more adaptable housing. Single-level, ranch style housing is needed, as well as additional group homes for those seniors who cannot live alone. Moderate priced facilities for active seniors are needed, in addition to services for seniors with varying degrees of mobility. More affordable rental units, and facilities for low-to-moderate income levels are also needed.

Transportation is needed to provide door-to-door services for those seniors that cannot or do not have transportation means.

Finally, as a vibrant part of the community, seniors who desire to be active in either volunteer or employment opportunities should be welcomed by the business and government sector.

### **Goals**

- ? Assess anticipated housing requirements for seniors and planned development to meet those needs;
- ? Provide incentives to developers who commit to senior-friendly housing;
- ? Assess need for additional multi-use recreational facilities, with goal of meeting needs of growing senior population (e.g., more walking trails in Ellicott City, additional senior center in west);
- ? Increase number of assisted living and nursing home spaces to meet anticipated increase in senior population;
- ? Encourage business community to consider senior population for employment opportunities through education, training and incentives;
- ? Increase transportation options for seniors;
- ? Increase/improve educational opportunities for seniors;
- ? Assess healthcare needs of senior population and address accordingly.

## **Child Care**

### **Introduction**

Howard County has been a leader in providing before and after school care services since the 1970's. Leading the State in recognizing the need for care for elementary school children, the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, in cooperation with the Howard County Public School System, operates school age programs in most elementary schools in the Ellicott City area.

### **Services Currently Offered**

The Maryland Child Care Resource Network was established in 1998 to provide leadership and services designed to improve the quality, availability, and affordability of childcare in communities across the state. Howard County is served by one of the thirteen regional childcare resource and referral centers. The Howard County childcare resource center provides services for parents, employers, childcare providers and the community at large. The resource center provided information for this report.

In the 1980's and 1990's, there was an increased demand for childcare services in Howard County due to the rise in the "working family" population. In response to this demand, larger childcare centers and family providers were opened. At that time, the childcare industry continued to grow. Over the past several years however, issues of cost, quality of care and the lack of qualified staff have begun to impact both childcare centers and family providers in the community. The number of family providers in Howard County is declining at an alarming rate. This void has caused an abundant need in all areas of childcare including before and after school care, preschool care and infant care.

In order to document these and other childcare related concerns the Howard County Child Care Task Force was created in November of 2000. The Task Force tackled several issues, including the decreasing supply of childcare workers, the decline in family care homes, the inability to find care for children of any age and the low wages for child care workers. The Child Care Task Force produced a study on July 12, 2001. The Howard County Child Care Task Force Findings and Recommendations study identified a number of interesting facts about childcare in Howard County and listed a number of recommendations.

The average weekly cost of childcare is greater in Howard County than in any other jurisdiction in Maryland with infant care being the highest. Financial assistance in Howard County is limited to Purchase of Care. This childcare voucher program is operated through the Howard County Department of Social Services and is designed to assist eligible parents obtain and pay for safe and secure childcare. Program eligibility is based on gross annual income, family size and need.

#### **Desired Services to be Offered**

Families in Ellicott City are seeking childcare because of work demands. The need for childcare overwhelmingly exceeds the supply of services available in the community. The greatest demand is for infant care. Unfortunately, the cost associated with providing infant care discourages childcare centers from opening or expanding this type of care. Similarly, the liability, restrictions and low pay have negatively impacted the number of family providers offering infant care.

Although every elementary school in Ellicott City offers a before and after school program, in many schools there remains demand for additional childcare slots. The program space in elementary schools is usually limited to the cafeteria and the gymnasium. Many classrooms in the school are vacant during before and after school hours and could be utilized to serve additional children needing childcare.

Childcare centers are helping to meet the demands of before and after school care; however, they must contend with issues surrounding inadequate transportation. For example, childcare centers located outside of a school district are forced to supply their own transportation to and from schools. Because the costs associated with transportation are high, some childcare centers opt not to offer before and after school care.

Countywide intramural middle school programs were cut in the 1990's. The intramural programs now vary at each middle school. Many of the programs are only offered one to two times per week. In addition, transportation is not usually provided after the intramural programs end.

The decline in family providers is expected to continue. Factors include low income, lack of benefits and higher paying employment opportunities. The decrease in family childcare providers has resulted in a loss of about 800 childcare slots over the past six years. Similarly, childcare centers are continually faced with the lack of adequate and quality staff, low salaries, lack of benefits and lack of inexpensive training.

Only fifty three percent of Howard County family providers and seventy five percent of Howard County childcare centers currently accept POC vouchers. Some childcare programs are eligible to utilize grant money to serve economically disadvantaged families. The number of childcare providers accepting POC vouchers and offering financial assistance must increase in order to serve the needs of the all families in Ellicott City.

### **Goals**

- ? The goals of the Child Care Task Force should be carefully considered and implemented.
- ? Provide incentives for the expansion and opening of childcare centers.
- ? Identify land that may be designated for childcare centers.
- ? Encourage full utilization of public school facilities to accommodate elementary and middle before and after school programs.
- ? Identify additional public facilities to accommodate elementary before and after school programs
- ? Provide reliable and affordable transportation between schools and childcare centers serving school age children.
- ? Implement a region wide intramural program in all middle schools.
- ? Provide reliable transportation to homes after middle school intramural activities.

## **Fire and Rescue Department**

### **Introduction**

As an all-hazard department, HCFR not only provides emergency medical, fire, and rescue services to Ellicott City and Howard County citizenry, but also maintains specialized teams for technical rescue situations, such as, hazardous materials, structural collapse, ice/water rescue, overland search, and confined space.

### **Services Currently Offered**

Statistical data analysis reveals that demands for emergency service from the community have steadily increased and will continue to increase. Aside from daily, emergency-related services, HCFR also participates in numerous public education, life safety, and emergency management programs. Public education initiatives provide free services to citizens in the areas of fire safety training, child safety seat inspections/installations, portable fire extinguisher training, Citizen Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation, installation of smoke detectors, and counseling for individuals referred to

the Juvenile Fire Setter Program. The life safety programs provide the opportunity for our personnel to participate in commercial building pre-plans/inspections and the investigation of county arson cases. Emergency Management develops and revises plans for the oversight of both natural and man-made disasters (blizzards, long term electrical outages, terrorist attacks, etc.) and operates the emergency operations center.

### **Desired Services to be Offered**

In an effort to continually provide improved service to Ellicott City residents, HCFR has implemented the regular use of performance measures and data analysis to better identify the changes and improvements needed. HCFR also recognizes the need to maintain consistent staffing levels. Population projections continue to show growth in both Ellicott City and Howard County, so HCFR will need to augment their workforce in order to meet the increased demands for service, which will parallel the increased population. HCFR currently attracts a quality and diverse workforce of career personnel, and currently have competitive pay, benefits, and retirement to surrounding jurisdictions. The recruitment and retention of volunteers will continue to be important. Implementation of state-of-the-art technology will also improve services provided to the citizens.

HCFR has contracted with a consultant for a study of the infrastructure of the department. The outcome of this study should give a precise view of the effectiveness of many areas of HCFR. It is imperative that all fire and rescue personnel continue to train and maintain high skill levels.

### **Goals**

- ? Augment workforce to address population increase
- ? Develop programs to attract more volunteers
- ? Implement new technology to improve safety and effectiveness
- ? Provide continuous training to career personnel and volunteers
- ? Review and consider for implementation the recommendations made by the independent consulting service that is currently studying HCFR's effectiveness

## **Police Department**

### **Introduction**

The Howard County Police Department is an integral part of the quality of life Ellicott City residents have come to expect. In service for 50 years, the Police Department serves a number of functions in the community. From setting up community watch programs to keeping the peace, the Police Department is the most visible component of the criminal justice system.

### **Services Currently Offered**

The Howard County Police Department is a full-service law enforcement agency serving the citizens of Howard County. The Department is staffed by 356 sworn police officers and 160 dedicated civilian employees who provide a full range of law enforcement services to include patrol operations, criminal investigations and special operations such as aviation, SWAT and traffic enforcement. The 911 Center, Anima1Control Division and Automated Enforcement Division (Red Light Camera Program) are also part of the

Police Department. During calendar year 2001, the Department served a population of more than 258,000 citizens and responded to more than 119,000 calls for police service.

The Police Department recognizes that much has changed in Ellicott City over the past ten years and expects additional changes in the next decade. Community policing has become a top priority and complements the need for community conservation and planning as outlined in the general plan. An increase in juvenile arrests for crimes such as simple assault, vandalism or disorderly conduct have spurred the Department to interact more with the public school system to develop prevention programs and youth programs.

### **Desired Services to be Offered**

The Department will need to continue to grow in order to meet the needs and expectations of the Ellicott City community. With anticipated increases in both call volume and population, it will be necessary for the Department to expand both sworn and civilian staffing to provide the professional level of service the community has grown to expect and demand. The Department must also take into consideration the changing population in Ellicott City. Additional services may be required to assist an increasingly diverse population, which includes the elderly, foreign-born citizens, the disabled and young people.

The Department must continue its efforts to increase efficiency and safety through the use of technology. Efforts underway include the installation of an 800 MHz radio system (see Technology page), which will provide enhanced county-wide radio coverage for all public safety components, as well as inter-operability with surrounding jurisdictions and the installation of Mobile Data Computers (MDC's) in all police vehicles to increase officers' access to criminal intelligence and databases.

The Department currently conducts their basic and in-service training programs in one classroom and some administrative office space on the fourth floor of the Gateway Building in Columbia. This space is inadequate to provide the necessary range of specialized training required for a law enforcement agency of this size. In cooperation with the Department of Fire and Rescue Services, the Department has undertaken the development of a Public Safety Training Center located off of Sandhill Road in the Marriottsville area of the County. When completed, the Training Center will provide the space and specialized training facilities necessary to prepare our public safety personnel for their critical roles.

There is currently a backlog of older warrants, which could not be readily served upon receipt from the Court. At the current time there are approximately 3,600 of these warrants on file in Howard County. To address this backlog, the Department is undertaking a Warrant Service Initiative, which will assign sixteen additional officers to warrant service duties for a period of 60 to 90 days in an effort to serve as many of the significant warrants as possible.

## **Goals**

- ? Improvements in technology must be made to keep the Howard County Police Department efficient and on the cutting edge, including:
  - ? Add Computer-Aided Dispatch and Automatic Vehicle Locator abilities to the current system.
  - ? Acquire and implement a computer-based "paperless" reporting system, which will streamline the report writing, review, data entry and retrieval processes.
  - ? Expansion of the Automated Enforcement Division to include Automated False Alarm Reduction and Automated Speed Enforcement.
- ? Provide continuous and state-of-the art training to Police Department personnel.
- ? Ensure that the Police Department is capable of providing adequate service through maintaining appropriate staffing levels to reflect the growth in population.
- ? Continue efforts to bring community policing to neighborhoods throughout Ellicott City.
- ? Adjust services to reflect the changes in the population including the elderly, the young, and the increasing diversity of the Ellicott City citizenry.
- ? Additional traffic enforcement and calming methods should be considered and used regularly in the Ellicott City community.

## **Technology**

### **Introduction**

Technology plays a vital role in the quality of life of Ellicott City residents. From cable television to cellular telephones to the Internet, technology is integrated in to all aspects of the Ellicott City community. Access to a variety of services using state-of-the art tools and systems is key to maintaining the level of technology support Ellicott City residents have come to expect.

### **Services Currently Offered**

The Department of Technology and Communication Services in the county office complex is responsible for technology support to the Howard County Government and the citizens of Ellicott City. This department assesses and provides infrastructure and operational services to the citizenry. Most of the infrastructure is currently wired, although wireless capabilities are under development. At the current time there is limited access to digital communications via cellular technology. A fiber optic network links the government offices and there is email access between government departments and access via email from the public to government departments. A new 800MHz infrastructure is being installed and, when complete, will provide more efficient and reliable communications means for county systems.

Access to services provides Ellicott City residents with efficient and effective means for both communicating and acquiring information. Virtually all public access to government electronic services is available via the Internet or telephones. The Howard County government website portal provides access to information as well as some services. Currently the Howard County government website has over 2000 pages of reference documents available on-line. In addition, announcements of contracting opportunities, meeting schedules, job openings, health alerts, and major county

initiatives are also available. The capability for the county government to provide electronic access to services such as on-line payment for taxes, water/sewer bills, parking fines, red light citations, recreation and parks registration and interactive mapping has evolved and continues to progress. Some tourist and business development information is currently available electronically.

### **Desired Services to Be Offered**

There is an increasing demand for more interactive 24/7 services on-line including enrollment for government services and access to public information. There also needs to be consideration given to how more access can be provided to citizens of all socioeconomic levels. In addition the government, technology services need to become compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Security protection and assurance for systems, services, and personal information needs to be continually assessed and updated.

County citizens would benefit from an enhanced web presence that included broadcasting county meetings via the Internet. The county citizens could also benefit from enhanced wireless communications infrastructure. Last, the county is in a position to insure quality of services at competitive costs.

### **Goals**

- ? Expand Internet services for citizens and business
  - a. On-line registration for social services
  - b. County meeting broadcasting via the web
  
- ? Upgrade Howard County Web Portal
  - a. Opt-in citizen newsgroups by topic
  - b. Expansion of available reference information and linked information
  - c. Up-to-date county calendar with appropriate hyperlinks
  
- ? Assess and address security of technology (systems and infrastructure) to protect vital records.

## **4. ROUTE 40**

### **OVERVIEW**

#### **Functionality**

Route 40 in Ellicott City has a dual and increasingly contradictory function. Growing demands on its role as a through route and major arterial road take place at the same time as its developing importance as a major commercial site. From Normandy Shopping Center to Turf Valley, people experience significant delays in travel or commute due to congestion on a road that was designed to speed trips across the nation. At the same time, customers of many businesses must often cross three or more lanes of traffic without signals and contend with through motorists traveling upwards of 50 miles per hour.

Both uses of Route 40 can be better accommodated by improved engineering/design. Central lanes dedicated solely to through traffic could significantly enhance this function, particularly with access only at major intersections and the synchronization of lights. Parallel access roads, separated from central through lanes by landscaping and barriers would allow better access to businesses and improved pedestrian safety. These improvements might create more of a “Main Street” effect, with a variety of goods and services offered in one concentrated commercial and professional service environment. Transition from the central lanes to local access lanes should only be provided at major intersections such as Center Drive, Rogers Avenue, Ridge Road, St. Johns Lane and Chatham Road. Improved vehicular access and bus transit could further enhance the shopping environment.

Pedestrian access to and from adjacent commercial and professional office parcels should be provided to enhance shopper convenience to goods and services.

#### **Aesthetics**

Route 40 in Ellicott City lacks aesthetic consistency. Shopping centers and buildings of all types and styles line the road. Signs advertising the businesses along the corridor are of at least as many different types and styles as the buildings along it. Route 40 has gained the appearance of development that was done in a piecemeal manner with minimal or no planning at all. Unless the congestion is reduced and the streetscape is improved, the opportunity for attractive infill development and redevelopment will be squandered. The impact of future development on surrounding residential areas must be minimized through appropriate landscaping, setbacks, lighting and noise controls.

## **GOALS AND ACTIONS**

**GOAL:** Improvement in Design Standards and Sign Regulations

**Action:** Encourage cohesive appearance of buildings.

Require plans to address location of street trees, planting areas on parking lots, street and parking lot lighting, special pavement areas (commercial, office and government complex parks) and edge treatments along the right of way;

Require the front of buildings to face the dominant public right of way. Permit flexible setback standards to encourage the location of parking lots to the rear of the building;

Reduce the proliferation of signs by the year 2005;

Where three or more businesses exist on one site, signs must be consolidated and shall include display of addresses large enough to be visible to motorists;

Eliminate excessive clutter of window signs by limiting to 25% per "business" whether they are permanent or temporary;

Permit temporary signs to announce special community or public event for 30 days prior to and 5 days after event;

Permit temporary signs 30 days prior to and 30 days after a grand opening of a business;

Prohibit portable signs and neon signs; and

Require standards to grant variances to sign law, such as:

The hardship is not self-imposed.

The hardship is not the location of a legal sign on surrounding properties or a natural element.

**GOAL:** Economic Development and Redevelopment

**Action:** Upgrade land use to Class A office by reducing the number of B1 and B2 zoned parcels.

Assemble parcels to provide for Class A professional uses;

Assemble B1 and B2 zoned parcels to provide for commercial centers;

Prohibit additional commercial uses on the crossroads of Route 40. Existing uses that are commercial in nature should be grandfathered and should be upgraded to professional offices;

Maintain the existing residential parcels abutting Rt. 40 as residential zoning;

Require redevelopment to comply with new standards; and

Encourage the Dept. of Planning and Zoning to work with the Economic Development Authority on the task of working to enhance the value, convenience, and attractiveness of locating commercial and office use on Rt.40.

**GOAL:** Access

**Action:** Reduce number of points of ingress and egress.

Assemble individual parcels to create centers to Rt. 40;

Provide pedestrian access to areas of higher density (Chatham Gardens, Normandy Woods, Plum Tree);

Connect pedestrian access between adjacent businesses;

Provide transit stops near high-density areas; and

Study the availability of unused parking spaces for Park and Ride facilities (Wal-Mart, Home Depot).

**GOAL:** New Government Office Complex – Amenities

**Action:** Provide the following:

- ? Pedestrian access adjacent to complex;
- ? Transit stop;
- ? Sensitive site design;
- ? Preservation of natural features;
- ? Day care on site;
- ? Lighting and signage materials (use HD elements); and
- ? Special pavement areas.

**GOAL:** Incentives/Funding Mechanisms/Howard County Government Commitment/Special Development District

**Action:** Investigate and make available State and Federal Grants to County and to Individual property owners;

Create an incentive program to provide for flexible standards to accomplish these goals; and

Encourage more new professional offices in the Rt. 40 area;

Request a firm resolution from Howard County Government to assist in this endeavor through additional or revised regulations to make these recommendations come to fruition.

**PRIORITIES:**

Request the State Department of Transportation to begin its feasibility study on Route 40 described in a letter dated July 20, 2001 from County Executive James Robey; and

Move as soon as possible to plan and implement a new streetscape plan from Normandy Shopping Center to Turf Valley.