



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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Voice/Relay

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Subject: Planning Board Recommendation for the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan, an amendment to Howard County's General Plan, *PlanHoward 2030*

To: Deb Jung, Council Chair
Liz Walsh, Council Vice-Chair
Christiana Mercer Rigby, Council Member
Opel Jones, Council Member
David Yungmann, Council Member

From: Ed Coleman, Chair, Howard County Planning Board

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ETC

Date: October 20, 2020

Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan Background

The Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan provides policies and implementing actions for protecting and enhancing flood-impacted Ellicott City and the surrounding Tiber-Hudson Watershed. To accomplish this, the plan integrates strategies for community character and placemaking, flood mitigation, environmental stewardship, economic development and transportation and parking frameworks. Specific strategies are then illustrated through options for geographic areas including streetscapes, riverfront, lower and upper main, Ellicott Mills gateway, the West End and the courthouse areas. The plan is guided by and builds upon the EC Safe and Sound plan currently underway.

General Plan Amendment

The proposed amendment to *PlanHoward 2030* includes new text to incorporate the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan by reference. If the amendment is approved, *PlanHoward 2030* text will be amended in the first page of the Executive Summary.

Title 16, Subtitle 9, Section 16.900(j)(1)(iii) states that:

A bill proposing the adoption and amendment of the Comprehensive General Plan, regulations regarding the Planning and Zoning of the County, or the zoning map or zoning regulations shall not be added to the Council's legislative agenda until the County Council has received: a.) A final technical staff report and recommendation from the Department of Planning and Zoning; and b.) A recommendation and report from the Planning Board.

Planning Board Recommendation

The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) posted its Technical Staff Report on the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan on the Planning Board webpage on October 1, 2020, two weeks prior to the Planning Board meeting. On October 15, 2020, the Planning Board held a public meeting to consider the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan, proposed as an amendment to *PlanHoward 2030*, as submitted by DPZ.

At that meeting, DPZ staff presented an overview of the master plan, the multi-year public outreach process used to develop the plan, and the proposed amendment to *PlanHoward 2030*. Staff described the plan's flexible nature with its menu of options and adaptable policies and goals. The Planning Board members then received public testimony and held a work session following public testimony. A recording of the proceeding will be posted at <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Planning-and-Zoning/Boards-and-Commissions/Planning-Board>.

During the work session, the Planning Board commended the effort, acknowledging the scope and level of detail, integration of multiple topics, and depth of alternative options. The Board commented that they were pleased with the level of community outreach undertaken during the multi-year process to develop the plan. The Board expressed appreciation for the plan's flexible nature as the EC Safe and Sound flood mitigation plan moves forward on a separate, yet parallel track.

Based on the information presented, and the Board's discussion, Mr. McAliley made a motion that the Board recommend the County Council approve the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan as an amendment to PlanHoward 2030, the General Plan for Howard County, as presented at the October 15, 2020 Planning Board Meeting. Ms. Adler seconded the motion, which passed 5-0.