

2013

# North Laurel - Savage Sustainable Community



Department of Planning and Zoning  
Howard County Government  
10/1/2013

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**I. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY APPLICANT INFORMATION**

**Name of Sustainable Community:** North Laurel/Savage

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

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**Federal Identification Number:** 52-6000965

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**Street Address:** 3430 Court House Drive

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

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

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**Sustainable Community Application Local Contact:**

**Name:** Steve Lafferty              **Title:** Director of Special Projects

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

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**Sustainable Community Contact for Application Status:**

**Name:** Steve Lafferty              **Title:** Director of Special Projects

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

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

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

The North Laurel-Savage community is located in southeastern Howard County. The planning area generally follows the County's boundary with Anne Arundel County to the east, the City of Laurel in Prince George's County to the south, the I-95 corridor to the west and Guilford Road north of Route 32. The area orients along US Route 1 (Washington Boulevard) which plays an important role in defining the area's development.

- (3) **Approximate number of acres within the SC Area:** Area includes approximately 5,680 acres or 9 square miles.
- (4) **Existing federal, state or local designations:**

The area is located within Howard County's Planned Service Area (PSA) which also serves as the County's designated growth boundary or Priority Funding Area per the state's Smart Growth Act. It was previously part of a larger Community Legacy and Designated Neighborhood area. Additional State designations include the Savage Town Center. Located at MARC's Savage stop on the Camden Line, the site is recognized as a BRAC Zone.

The County's General Plan was adopted in 2012. The area's Designated Place Types are generally divided by US Route 1 with Growth and Revitalization on the east and Established Communities to the west. The entire area is classified as Tier I (designated growth area served by public sewer) per the Sustainable Growth and Agriculture Preservation Act of 2012.

The area shares both local and national historic designations. There are presently 45 buildings on the County's Historic Sites Inventory within the Area. The Savage Mill, along with a number of these sites, was designated as a National Register District in 1975.

- (5) **Prior Revitalization Investments & Smart Growth:**
  - a. **List and describe any significant State and local smart growth or revitalization related program investments (for instance, Community Legacy or SC Rehab Tax Credit) that have been invested in the Area since the launching of Maryland's Smart Growth initiative and programs in 1997 (including Housing investment).**

**What impact have these investments made in the community?** *(Answer Space 4,000 characters)*

Over the last decade, the North Laurel-Savage community has been the focus of a many local and state investments. In 2000 a Federal Special Projects grant for \$500,000 was secured for construction of streetscape improvements for the US Route 1 corridor. An additional \$500,000 grant was awarded in 2004. Enhancements included community gateway signage, special paving, and landscaping.

The County initiated a community-based US Route 1 Corridor Revitalization Study in 2000. Reports documented community conditions and articulated a vision for the future of the corridor. In 2004, comprehensive rezoning was adopted to transform portions of the corridor into mixed-use, pedestrian and transit oriented development. Significant portions of the corridor in North Laurel and Savage were rezoned to corridor activity and employment districts. A transit oriented development district was also created for locations surrounding MARC stations. An accompanying design manual to guide building and site design was completed the same year. The Maryland Department of Planning awarded \$10,000 for the preparation of the manual.

Several transportation studies have been conducted. In 2004, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) evaluated regional aspects of the area's tri-county travel patterns in the Central Maryland Mobility Study. In 2008, the State Highway Administration (SHA) received \$1,000,000 in federal funds for the US 1 Corridor Improvement Strategy. The study comprises a physical improvement plan for new typical street sections and expansion of other travel networks throughout the corridor and includes a variety of tools to bring about change consistent with local and regional goals. SHA's Partnership Planting Program was utilized to increase the location of new tree plantings within the US Route 1 right of way in 2003.

Pedestrian-oriented enhancements have been supported by a number of funding partnerships. SHA constructed sidewalks as part of a 2003 intersection improvement project. Through the County's Capital Improvement Program, nearly three-quarters of a mile of sidewalk along US Route 1 frontage within the North Laurel-Savage area has been built. SHA is presently partnering with the County to study sidewalk retrofits along the corridor's one-way couplet.

Various strategies have been used to invest in and grow the communities' affordable housing stock. The Department of Housing and Community Development was awarded a \$125,000 grant in 2001 and a \$300,000 grant in 2002 for the purchase of affordable units. In 2005, the County utilized a \$150,000 Community Legacy grant to secure affordable housing in the Patuxent Square mixed-use development north of US Route 1's one-way couplet.

Economic development initiatives include a US Route 1 Corridor Revitalization Loan Program, which, from 2002-2008, was responsible for lending \$26,000,000 for 24 projects. A Business Relocation Study was completed in 2005 to assess the economic conditions of the US Route 1 corridor, identify challenges and

opportunities associated with revitalization goals and the mechanisms that could support desired outcomes. In 2011 a market analysis was conducted to identify the corridor's competitive advantages, opportunity sites for growth and redevelopment, and economic incentives that could be used by the public sector to support economic development.

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

Much of the area's development along US Route 1 consists of small-scale, low-intensity commercial businesses that have evolved over time. Auto-oriented uses sprinkled throughout much of the area tend to be seen as negative impacts on the character and quality of development. Residents have expressed a desire for new and different types of retail; however, small parcel sizes limit some major new projects, and it may be difficult to justify private-sector land assembly costs for redevelopment.

There is overwhelming agreement that the aesthetic of the US Route 1 corridor needs improvement, and that without it, there continues to be a real threat to the area's economic viability. A more cohesive arrangement among small businesses is needed. Better congruency among buildings could be achieved through the use of unifying materials and colors, plantings and signage. Economic incentives aimed at aesthetic improvements could be a useful tool for providing a higher aesthetic throughout the corridor's built environment.

Another important barrier, highlighted in a 2011 market study, is the ability to absorb certain types of uses such as Class A/B office space, which show preference for more desirable locations within the County. Sustaining long-term opportunities for Smart Growth will depend on leveraging the corridor's commercial and industrial assets in more strategic ways. With returns on investment 30 times higher for residential than non-residential uses, the study indicates that the demand for housing in the corridor could have significant consequences for maintaining flex/industrial development that is central to the economic engine of the corridor.

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

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

### **Strengths**

The blend of different neighborhoods and employment settings provide for a high level of community diversity. Neighborhoods share the characteristics of both rural and older

suburban areas. The range of housing types and styles accommodates a population that is just as socio-economically diverse as it is racially and ethnically represented. As a growth area for the County, preservation, development and redevelopment efforts must balance actions that support community assets with the people and social institutions that contribute to the communities' identity.

Though it comprises only 8% of the County's land area, the US Route 1 corridor accounts for 30% of the County's employment base. Seven industrial parks are located within the proposed SC area with opportunities for employment growth along the Route 32 corridor.

The area has geographical advantages, located within the Baltimore-Washington corridor. With excellent highway access, it's close to important commercial and employment centers including Fort Meade (2 miles), BWI airport (10 miles), and Downtown Columbia (5 miles). The growth of these and other metro centers will create opportunities that will benefit the community.

The MARC transit corridor, including the North Laurel and Savage stations, are additional assets that uniquely position the area for transit-oriented, mixed-use development. Proximity to adjacent counties creates opportunities to evaluate development programs for the TOD sites that extend beyond county lines to strengthen competitive advantages and create regional synergies.

The area includes a number of parks programmed for passive and active recreational uses. Based on standard metrics, the area provides slightly less acreage than desired based on the population of the area. However, there are environmental assets that could be utilized as additional parkland. Floodplain along the Patuxent River has potential as a tri-county greenway that would allow for greater connectivity and conservation. A County pathway is planned that would connect the Patapsco River to the Patuxent River, connections to the City of Laurel are possible.

### ***Weaknesses***

Some public infrastructure and facilities have struggled to keep pace with development. Residents expressed concern about the overcrowding of schools, which is projected to continue into the foreseeable future. However, finding appropriate locations for new public facilities will be a challenge.

The transportation network serves local and regional traffic. US Route 1 parallels I-95 and helps to mitigate regional congestion by absorbing traffic during peak use. However, there are few direct connections between destinations and residents have to rely primarily on US Route 1 for local trips. The daily flow of large truck traffic on US Route 1 creates additional conflicts. The number of improved bus stops has not kept pace with increasing ridership. Also, many neighborhoods were developed without sidewalks creating a fragmented network of pedestrian connections with gaps between neighborhoods and retail and employment areas. Likewise, bicycle and pathway connections have been described as isolated and fragmented. Some intersections are in need of pedestrian improvements to make them safe and accessible.

Many residential and commercial development pre-dates infrastructure requirements for stormwater management, which creates potential environmental and flooding problems. In some instances, private roads in residential neighborhoods lack curb and gutter and storm drains. Flooding and drainage issues occur on an ongoing basis in some areas.

The Savage area contains sites on the County's historic inventory and is recognized as a National Register District; however, the communities' historic and cultural identity is threatened by the alteration or removal of structures. Infill development creates inconsistencies with existing neighborhood patterns which can negatively impact neighborhood character.

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

US Route 1 generally divides the area's zoning among residential commercial, manufacturing, and mixed-use districts; residential zones are primarily located to the west of US Route 1. The bulk of the area's eastern half consists of manufacturing districts with transit-oriented development zoning on properties surrounding the North Laurel and Savage MARC stops. Mixed-use activity and employment districts line US Route 1 with most properties zoned for business and light manufacturing use.

In terms of land use, areas to the west are largely a mix of low and medium density residential neighborhoods. Commercial property primarily lines the US Route 1 frontage with some locations in neighborhoods and industrial areas beyond. Currently, two mixed-use residential projects with road frontage have been developed. The bulk of land to the east consists of industrial uses which have commonly developed as business parks for the corridor. These employment areas evolved due to their close proximity to the CSX freight lines as well as Interstate 95 and MD Route 32.

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

### ***Strengths***

(Public Facilities)

Local investments have been focused on the North Laurel-Savage community to complement the programming of state resources and ensure community facilities and services keep pace with residential growth. The North Laurel Community Center near the southwest intersection of US Route 1 and Whiskey Bottom Road was completed in 2011 and is the newest regional community facility in the County. The facility creates an opportunity to strengthen the location through additional investment as a center of community life. In 2013, construction of the Savage Fire Station was completed at the US Route 1/Route 32



interchange. Renovations to the Savage Library west of US Route 1 on Gorman Road began in 2013 and are scheduled to be completed in 2014.

Investments have also been made in the provision of social services. The North Laurel-Savage Multi-Service Center, opened in 2007, provides a central location for residents seeking assistance from different service providers. In 2008, the Route 1 Day Resource Center was opened near Guilford Road and Route 32. The center focuses on providing services to the homeless and includes meals, showers, clothing, basic living supplies, and referrals to social services. A permanent location for the center has been acquired near the US Route1/Guilford Road intersection. The facility will be expanded to include a single-occupant room (SOR) component, a key action item in the County's Plan to End Homelessness.

### ***Weaknesses***

#### ***(Health/Social)***

As part of the larger tri-county area, the community lacks good access to localized health care and must rely on facilities and services located beyond the community boundaries. Lack of health services results in health disparities for some residents, particularly for low income earners and those who lack insurance. Historically, the homeless in Howard County have concentrated in US Route 1 corridor. Many residents believe this requires immediate action to prevent the situation from worsening. Some residents perceive the area as having a more transient population than other parts of the County, a trait that inhibits residents' capacity to build a connected, cohesive community.

US Route 1 accommodates important trucking routes between distribution centers within the vicinity of the North Laurel-Savage area and major regional highways. Prostitution and other illegal activities have been the source of local police stings in efforts to reduce crime. The industrial character of the corridor will continue to influence perceptions about the area and present ongoing challenges to revitalization efforts.

#### ***(Arts and Culture)***

The area is also underserved by arts and cultural venues. While opportunities exist, the community lacks a central civic center. Although the area's population is culturally diverse, some residents identified a certain level of isolation among groups that would benefit from more opportunities for community interaction and engagement.

The school system continues to experience the need for more specialized services resulting from a growing diversity among families. Cultural barriers include English as a second language (ESL) and conflicting value systems that deemphasize education for young people, particularly younger women. Lack of transportation options limit the ability of some students to participate in after school activities. Ongoing communication with students and their parents through digital media is threatened by a lack of internet access. The area includes a large number of free and reduced meal (FARM) students. The perceived stigma associated with aid programs causes some students to not participate in academically enriching services such as free SAT preparation. Public-private partnerships continue to be a

necessary part of a broader strategy for addressing these and other challenges students face.

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

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

***Strengths***

Both the County and the Southeast Study Area are bordered on the south by the Patuxent River. A portion of the area immediately adjacent to the river includes High Ridge Park, offering natural beauty and opportunities for recreation. The floodplain on the Laurel Racetrack property in Howard County has potential as part of a larger recreational area as that property is developed. Other floodplain areas along the Patuxent River are expected to remain as natural areas. Residents treasure the scenic and natural beauty and wildlife these areas provide within the community. The open spaces, woods and parks contribute to their quality of life and sense of identity.

Likewise, Savage residents have long enjoyed the natural beauty of the Little Patuxent River and Middle Patuxent River and the adjoining Savage Park. The original mill town relied on the river for power that drove the local economy. Although no longer operating as a mill, the mill provides a complex of buildings for retail businesses. Among the attractions is a recreation business that capitalizes on its location by providing a zip-line in the tree canopy next to the mill buildings.

Most recently in 2011, the County developed the North Laurel Park and Community Center. This park features a dense, wooded perimeter and is located in the middle of residential neighborhoods and thus, easily attracts people from the community. The park and community center offer recreational opportunities for all ages.

***Weaknesses***

Residents have said that relative to other parts of the corridor they enjoy the benefits of living near natural open spaces. Because they value their natural environment so highly, the loss of open space and woods to development creates concerns. There is a desire to preserve existing natural features and for environmental considerations to be more prominent in the development process. Creating a healthy community begins with not taking away existing green spaces, something that threatens the communities' connection to nature. The lack of green spaces along US Route 1 is also seen as a detractor for new business the community would like to attract to the area.

Long-time residents are aware of past pollution of area watersheds. The majority of the study area is located within the Little Patuxent River watershed with a smaller portion in the Middle Patuxent River and Patuxent River Upper watersheds. Both the Upper Patuxent and

Little Patuxent are impaired by sediment. Consequently, the State assigned a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), or an allowable pollutant load, along with an implementation plan to reduce the pollution for these water bodies. Much of the development in the study area occurred prior to the adoption of environmental protection and stormwater management regulations. As a result, many sensitive habitats including forests, wetlands and streams, have been degraded or eliminated. The area adjacent to the Patuxent River floods occasionally, but the impact is greater on the City of Laurel in Prince George's County because, unlike in Howard County, many older businesses and roads there are located close to the river.

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

### ***Strengths***

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

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

Howard Transit services the area using hybrid buses, reducing automobile trips to work and for shopping.

Some community workshop attendees expressed interest in developing community gardens, perhaps on utility easements, with the help of Master Gardeners and the Department of Recreation and Parks. Such gardens could help compensate for the current lack of farmers' markets within the study area. The North Laurel Community Center or the Savage Library could potentially serve as host locations for selling produce from the community gardens.

### ***Weaknesses***

Community workshop attendees noted the poor sidewalk connections or lack of sidewalks in neighborhoods that cause concerns about pedestrian safety. Similarly, bike paths were described as isolated and disjointed. These factors inhibit the use of public transportation in the area, forcing reliance on the private automobile.

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

### ***Strengths***

Howard County's engineers took a very aggressive posture with the adoption of the state's stormwater regulations in 2010. They developed policies and regulations for residential and commercial development in order to increase infiltration and change the handling of stormwater. They provided training for engineers and consultants in order to facilitate the transition to the new approaches. All new development in Howard County must adhere to the new standards and County design professionals work closely with development consultants to ensure the best techniques are used. The County's design for the Savage Library renovation may include bioretention facilities and permeable pavement.

Howard County has identified seven repair projects for stormwater management ponds in the study area. These ponds are designed to help reduce the pollutant load in the waterways resulting from stormwater runoff associated with urban land use. Future projects can be designed as amenities that both enhance the attractiveness of the area and educate and promote awareness of sustainable environmental designs that improve the ecological function of the natural systems.

Portions of the Little Patuxent River watershed are designated by the State for special protection because of the presence of rare, threatened or endangered fish, amphibians, reptiles or mussel species. This designation indicates that portions of the watershed have sufficiently good water quality to provide habitat for this aquatic life.

The Howard County Green Infrastructure Network links the most ecologically significant natural areas in a system of hubs and corridors; the study area includes both hubs and corridors, primarily along area waterways. The Savage Park Hub in this network contains the largest area of forest cover in the study area. Overall, 26% of the study area has forest cover.

### ***Weaknesses***

Because the study area is located partially in a Growth and Revitalization area and partially in an Established Community area according to the Designated Places of the County's approved general plan (*PlanHoward 2030*), the demand for new housing in the area is expected to remain high. As new development continues on currently vacant land or as redevelopment occurs on larger pieces of land with few structures, the urban runoff from the developments will increase. New development will have better treatment, but there will still be an increase in urban stormwater runoff. Redevelopment offers an opportunity to improve stormwater management on site; however, developed areas can be difficult to retrofit.

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

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

##### ***Strengths***

###### *Employment Access*

The Southeast area serves a dual role with regards to access to employment. One role is a gateway to the region's employment; many residents take advantage of the area's transportation network to get to jobs elsewhere. The Southeast is also a regional employment destination that brings residents from other parts of the county and region to work.

The Southeast area has geographic advantages, including:

- Centrally located between DC and Baltimore, where many of the region's jobs are located (75% of Southeast area residents work outside the County);
- Close to Fort Meade, a major employer in Anne Arundel County;
- Served by major highways (I-95 and MD 32), two MARC Camden line stations, CSX freight, and Howard Transit;
- Near to other major roads (US 29 and MD 295);
- Proximate to Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

In addition to being well situated for commuting to jobs elsewhere, the Southeast itself is a jobs hub. Employers in the Southeast provided nearly 12,000 jobs in 2010, representing roughly 8% of all jobs in the County.

The largest industries in 2010 by number of jobs were: wholesale trade, retail trade, manufacturing, construction, and professional, scientific and technical services. According to

census data, the services industries added the most new jobs in the area between 2002 and 2010. An estimated 500 residents both live and work in the Southeast area.

#### *Broadband*

The study area is part of the Inter-County Broadband Network (ICBN), a high-speed fiber optic network initiative that will connect anchor institutions across Maryland.

#### *Route 1 Revitalization*

Beginning in 2000, business owners and elected officials saw the need to improve the Corridor and make the area more attractive. In 2004 the county adopted changes to zoning to allow more compact and mixed-use development. These changes were adopted because the county's population is growing as available developable land is decreasing. For the corridor, streetscape improvements are now required when developing property. Also the state and county governments began installing sidewalks and street trees where feasible and within the limits of available funds.

Since 2004, several mixed use properties were developed along US Route 1, such as Patuxent Square and Ashbury Courts. In addition, a transit oriented development project is proposed next to the Laurel Racetrack MARC train stop. Industrial properties expanded, such as the Dreyer's Ice Cream plant, as did institutional uses, like North Laurel Park and its community center. All these and other new developments show revitalization at work.

#### ***Weaknesses***

##### *Slow Pace of Route 1 Revitalization*

The recession of 2008 affected development plans in the area. The difficulty of getting financing for developments held back some plans. Likewise for county and state governments, funding became more limited for installing streetscape improvements along the US 1 roadway. Some workshop participants see the pace of redevelopment of properties as slow and the hoped-for improvements are not yet all in place. The businesses that are not well-maintained or that do not present an attractive frontage still exist. Clearly, there are opportunities for continued improvements.

##### *Lack of Retail Options*

A frequent complaint of residents and others familiar with the study area is the lack of restaurants and coffee shops that could serve local residents and businesses. Community members have expressed a desire for a more diverse array of shopping options, including higher-quality retailers.

The Director of the Howard County Economic Development Authority explained that the study area does not currently meet the market requirements of many chain restaurants and coffee shops – establishments desired by local residents. Many existing businesses serve a regional market and do not serve local commercial needs.

- (2) **Describe the jurisdiction's housing market and access to affordable workforce housing. What are the trends in residential construction (rental and homeownership), homeownership rate, foreclosure rate, and property values? Describe whether your jurisdiction's prevailing housing costs – both homeownership and rental – are affordable to households below 120% AMI, 80% AMI and 50% AMI. What efforts are in place currently to house individuals, families and the disabled at or below the AMI levels described above? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

### ***Strengths***

Howard County has a strong housing market and is often cited among the nation's best places to live. Like other jurisdictions, home values decreased over the past few years, but recently the housing market has been rebounding. The average sale price was \$450,000 in July 2013, up 2.96% compared to July 2012 (per Real Estate Business Intelligence).

Renewed demand for housing has led to increased single-family detached construction permits being issued; such permits were up 17% in April 2013 over April 2012. At the same time, permits for townhomes fell 20% and permits for multi-family units decreased 77%.

Housing in the study area is generally less expensive than in other parts of the county. Median home values and median rent are less in the area than in the county as a whole, making the Southeast an entry point to the county for families seeking its excellent schools. The less expensive housing has allowed the area to grow with a diverse socio-economic population.

One element making the Southeast less expensive is the composition of its housing types: the area contains relatively more townhomes, more small multiunit buildings, and more mobile homes than elsewhere in the county. The area also contains relatively fewer single-family detached homes and fewer new homes compared to the rest of the county. Most of the Southeast's housing was built during, or prior to, the 1980s.

Howard County Housing (HCH) is committed to providing housing opportunities for low and moderate income residents in the County, as well as residents with special needs. HCH carries out activities that maintain and expand the supply of affordable housing through acquisition, new construction, rehabilitation and home ownership assistance.

All new multi-family housing projects in Howard County must provide Moderate Income Housing Units (MIHUs).

Foreclosure activity is relatively low in Howard County and in the Southeast area compared to other Maryland jurisdictions. There were relatively few foreclosures in the study area over the past several years, as tracked by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Only one zip code overlapping the study area (Laurel) recorded "high" foreclosure activity in the past few years, and that activity has subsided since 2009.

***Weaknesses***

Since the market is strong, housing is expensive and affordability is an issue. Prevailing housing costs for owner-occupied housing are not affordable to households earning less than 120% Area Median Income (AMI). AMI for Howard County for FY 2013 was \$85,600 (according to HUD); households below 120% AMI include those earning less than approximately \$100,000, households below 80% AMI earn less than approximately \$65,000, and households earning 50% AMI earn less than \$42,800.

Housing is considered affordable when housing costs comprise less than 30% of annual income. The median home sale price in the County in April 2012 was \$414,000, an annual income of at least \$90,000 (dependent on interest rates). Only households earning near 120% AMI (\$100,000) or above would be able to afford the median home in Howard County.

Though the study area is less expensive than other parts of the county, it is not necessarily affordable for all. An estimated 36% of households in the area spent more than 30% of their income on housing in 2010, up from 28% in 1999 (per census data).

Renters in the area are more likely than owners to be housing-cost burdened. An estimated 43% of renter households paid more than 30% of their income in 2010 compared to 32% of owner-occupied households in the Southeast.

Some lower income residents may find that housing is too expensive and move to nearby cheaper areas outside of Howard County. Displacement of lower income residents as mobile home parks are redeveloped is also of concern.

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

The proposed area does not fully conform to census tracts or block groups, making it difficult to identify specific demographic trends. Wherever available, the data presented in this section represents people and households within the Southeast planning area, drawn from census blocks within its boundaries, or census tracts overlapping it.

Key demographic statistics from 2010 Census or American Community Survey:

- Population: 25,159
- Households: 9,091
- Median age: 33.4
- Median household income: \$83,117
- Average household size: 2.77

The study area contained approximately 25,000 residents representing 9% of Howard County's population in 2010. Compared to the county as a whole, the North Laurel-Savage area can be characterized as:



- Younger – median age of 33.4 compared to 38.4 for the county; the area contains higher shares of children and teenagers than the county as a whole;
- Less affluent – median household income of approximately \$83,000 compared to \$103,000 in the entire county;
- Containing slightly larger households – 2.77 average household size compared to 2.72 in the entire county; roughly half of area households are either 1- or 2-person households, similar to the composition of the entire county;
- Including a relatively higher share of single-parent households (20%) than in the entire county (14%);
- Increasingly diverse – minority populations comprise the majority (54%) of the population in the North Laurel-Savage area compared to 38% in the county as a whole; Hispanic and Asian populations had the largest proportional increases from 2000 to 2010.

The North Laurel-Savage area and vicinity has been growing, though not as fast as the entire county. Over the past ten years new residents were added to the census tract area at a rate of 0.9% per year. New households were added at a rate of 0.5% per year. These rates are slower than growth rates experienced in Howard County as a whole (1.5% per year for both population and households).

Diversity of population is a key feature in the North Laurel-Savage area, and immigration has contributed to that diversity. The census tracts surrounding the Southeast planning area feature a higher share of foreign-born residents than the County as a whole. Approximately 1 in 5 residents (or 21%) in the Southeast's census tracts were born in a foreign country; in the entire County, 1 in 6 residents (or 17%) was foreign-born.

With a relatively high share of foreign-born residents, it is not surprising that foreign languages are spoken in many households in the census tracts surrounding the study area. For approximately one quarter of residents, the language spoken at home is a foreign language. Languages spoken include Spanish (8%), Asian and Pacific Islander languages (8%), other Indo-European languages (7%), and other languages (2%).

The top countries of origin for foreign-born residents of the area were primarily Asian and Latin American countries. As in the County as a whole, the top two countries of origin for the Southeast's census tracts were Korea and India. Countries of origin that appeared in the top ten list for the Southeast's census tracts but not the County were: Brazil, Nigeria, Guyana, Burma and Ghana.

In terms of education, the North Laurel-Savage area is not as highly educated – 43% of residents in the North Laurel-Savage area held a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 59% in the county as a whole. The share of residents with higher education degrees has been increasing over the past 10 years.

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

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

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

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

The Workgroup will have governmental representatives from DPZ, Public Works, Recreation and Parks, the Economic Development Authority, Housing and Community Development, Citizen Services, and the Howard County Police Department. Members will also include property owners, brokers, residents, business owners, and representatives from the North Laurel-Savage Multiservice Center.

**B. Organizational Experience:**

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

DPZ has been the applicant for the Community Legacy and Designated Neighborhoods designations by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MDHCD). Additionally, DPZ has, in the past few years, received and administered a Community Legacy grant for the renovation and revitalization of the Baldwin Commons and Baldwin Hall in Savage. In 2012, DPZ applied for and received a Sustainable Communities designation for Historic Downtown Ellicott City.

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

DPZ recently applied for a \$135,000 Community Legacy grant from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. The grant will be used to fund streetscape revitalization in historic Ellicott City, which was designated as a Sustainable Community in 2012. In 2012, Ellicott City was the recipient of a \$50,000 grant from the same program to be used to fund the newly implemented Ellicott City Façade Improvement program.

Over the past ten years, DPZ has utilized capital funds to make various improvements in older neighborhoods, including the installation of sidewalks to expand pedestrian access and create public spaces. For more than ten years, DPZ operated and managed the Howard County Transit system, which provides thousands of County residents with transportation for employment, health care, and shopping.

Other agencies (e.g. Department of Recreation and Parks, HCHCD, and Public Works) have implemented programs and capital projects to enhance and revitalize older communities including those within the proposed area.

The Carroll Baldwin Memorial Institute, Inc. (CBMI) is a volunteer-run, 501(c)(3) organization responsible for maintaining the historic Carroll Baldwin Hall since 1922. In 2010, CBMI received \$50,000 (Bond Bill) from the state and \$75,000 from the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP); in 2012 CBMI received \$150,000 (Bond Bill) from the state and \$15,000 from DRP. These grants, coupled with local matching donations and time committed by volunteers, have aided the restoration of Carroll Baldwin Hall, which is a treasured community resource and was the site of one of DPZ's fall workshops.

### **C. Public Input:**

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

DPZ held two public workshops in October, 2012. More than 65 participants, including residents and business owners, engaged in exercises designed to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). DPZ staff also interviewed more than a dozen stakeholders and representatives from other county agencies. Interviewees included real estate brokers, chamber of commerce representatives, local school administrators, community association representatives, members of the Fort Meade Regional Growth Management Committee, and staff from the Maryland Department of Transportation and Maryland Transit Administration.

Feedback from the interviews and workshops was compiled and presented at a third public workshop in November, 2012. Attendees were asked to vote for the most important issues; items were scored and sorted to create a prioritized list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. That list helped inform the action plan reviewed and approved by the Sustainable Communities Workgroup.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Revitalization areas within the PFA. The Designated Place Types for the subject area include a mix of Growth and Revitalization and Established Community.

Howard County has been successful in its efforts to preserve and protect agricultural land. Since its inception in 1984, the County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP) has purchased easements on 144 properties totaling 14,684 acres. This includes the 2011 easement acquisition on 500 acres of the Doughoregan property (where another 90 acres are held in easement by the Howard County Conservancy and 75 acres are in environmental preservation). The ALPP has also received dedicated easements on 74 properties for another 2,972 acres through the subdivision process, including density sending and cluster subdivision remainder parcels. A major factor in the success of the ALPP purchased easement program has been its unique Installment Purchase Agreement (IPA) method of payment. The IPA provides a significant financial incentive for owners to place their properties in preservation, and Howard County was the first in the nation to implement this innovative arrangement in 1989. Additionally, 35 farms totaling 3,960 acres are in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation program.

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

The proposed SC Area is currently ready to compete, even with some infrastructure limitations. The projects and initiatives listed below will benefit existing communities and support efforts to revitalize some commercial portions of the corridor. The County's efforts include:

1. The existing pedestrian master plan identified and developed concepts for significant sidewalk projects improve transportation options for walking on Route 1, Whisky Bottom Road, and MD 216;
2. The upcoming pedestrian master plan update will reassess existing conditions to develop a comprehensive and detailed approach to advance pedestrian infrastructure in this area. Included in the update will be how commercial areas can be better linked to residential areas and developing a pedestrian network model to measure the impact of improvements;
3. The draft bicycle master plan has proposed a series of off and on road connections to improve access to commercial centers, along corridors, and to regional train service;
4. The County is continuing to develop and strength pedestrian links from existing residential development to commercial areas, parks, schools by requiring the installation of sidewalks for new developments and constructing sidewalks and paths to schools and parks;
5. The area is served by local bus and regional train service, and the county has revised local routes to improve services to a new community center and regional connections in downtown Columbia and Laurel Mall. The County will be continuing to reassess and

refine the local bus services to improve connections to MARC and the Baltimore light rail stations;

6. The Dorsey Run Road project includes sidewalks and a realigned intersection at Route 1;
7. The County has committed to work with SHA to install a sidewalk and bike lane on US 1 Southbound from Whiskey Bottom Road to the County Line; additional sidewalk projects within the area are progressing.

- (3) **Describe policies, initiatives or projects that the community will undertake or expand in order to reduce the SC Area's impact on the environment. Examples include but are not limited to: conservation or management of stormwater through retrofitting of streets and by-ways (Green Streets, rain gardens, etc.); retrofitting of facilities and homes for energy conservation; implementation of "green" building codes and mixed-use zoning; recycling of waste; clean-ups of watersheds; and, encouragement of "Buy Local" approaches that benefit local suppliers and food producers. A comprehensive menu of such actions may be found through the Environmental Finance Center's Sustainable Maryland Certified Initiative. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

There are several policies, initiatives or projects underway or recommended that would help reduce the negative impacts on the environment. These include:

1. Encouraging preservation of historic structures as preservation and reuse of existing structures is an inherently green activity;
2. Planting trees where possible throughout the area;
3. Improving participation in recycling program to reduce recyclable material entering the waste stream;
4. Implementing a project to construct storm drain improvements in the High Ridge area, funded in the FY 2013 budget;
5. Implementing various stormwater management projects funded in the FY 2013 budget;
6. Implementing projects to retrofit stormwater management facilities to improve water quality, funded in the FY 2013 budget;
7. Implementing projects to design and construct Environmental Site Design small scale stormwater facilities, funded in the FY 2013 budget.

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

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

- County government including the Department of Planning and Zoning, Department of Public Works, Economic Development Authority, Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Office of Environmental Sustainability;
- Community groups or homeowner associations will play an important role in implementing sustainable practices (e.g. Bowling Brook Farms' participation in the Sustainable HOA Pilot Program).

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

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

The North Laurel and Savage communities contain key assets on which to build sustainable initiatives and projects. Community stakeholders emphasized the following major assets:

1. The county’s commitment to innovation, environmental protection, and advancing the use of new green technologies;
  2. The Savage Mill complex, including the Bollman Truss Bridge;
  3. Carroll Baldwin Hall in Savage;
  4. The many historic sites and buildings in Savage;
  5. Outstanding education facilities in close proximity;
  6. High Ridge Park;
  7. Proximity to recreational trail system and scenic qualities of High Ridge Park and the Patuxent River;
  8. Increasingly active group of merchants, residents, and owners as well as community organizations that will help implement the Action Plan;
  9. New regional community center is one of only five in the county (North Laurel Community Center);
  10. Proximity of transit (MARC) stations to emerging commercial and residential nodes;
  11. An increase in residents in the area.
- (2) **What policies, initiatives or projects will reuse or enhance the historical assets, traditional business districts/Main Streets and cultural resources of the community? What actions will reinforce your community’s authentic “sense of place” and historic character? (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

Howard County recently passed legislation that raised the Historic Property Tax Credit from 10% to 25%. The legislation also increased the number of years that any unused portion of the credit can be carried over, from four year to five years. Additionally, the County expanded the scope of work that is eligible for the Historic Property Tax Credit, allowing work performed by an architect or historic preservation consultant to be an eligible expense. Properties listed on the Howard County Historic Sites Inventory are eligible for the tax credit, which includes historic primary structures and historic outbuildings.

There are many historic buildings in the North Laurel and the Savage area. By increasing the tax credit and adjusting the eligibility requirements, it is anticipated that property owners will be better able to properly maintain their historic structures. The changes might also encourage new developments to retain historic structures, which contribute greatly to the community’s sense of place.

- (3) **Describe policies, initiatives or projects that will increase community access to green spaces, parks and other amenities? A community can gain social and physical benefits from access to a healthy natural environment. The inclusion of complete streets, trails, green space, parks and trees contribute to the character and health of a community. Examples might include improvements to the tree canopy by planting street trees, improving local neighborhood streams, or reusing a vacant lot for a new community park or playground. (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The area has two County parks, both west of Route 1, and an extensive network of trails. With the development of Laurel Park, there are opportunities to expand the trail and green space network east of Route 1 with possible connections to the City of Laurel.

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

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

- Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning;
- Howard County Tourism;
- Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks;
- State Department of Natural Resources;
- Merchants and property owners;
- Residents.

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

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

In 2011, DPZ hired a consultant to perform a market analysis of the US Route 1 corridor. The County was specifically interested in ways to enhance existing conditions of the corridor and capitalize on economic development opportunities. The final report recommended that the County develop a “toolbox” to address redevelopment and aesthetic improvements, both outcomes desired by the County.

**REDEVELOPMENT**

Prior efforts to encourage redevelopment of properties along US Route 1 were modestly successful. During the recent comprehensive zoning process, the County adjusted the special zoning districts along US Route 1 to reflect the findings of the 2011 market study. These changes, along with the addition of new commercial zoning districts, are aimed at encouraging redevelopment and revitalization of key sites.



The County continues to actively pursue ways to promote economic development, particularly along US Route 1. The EDA's Catalyst Loan Program is designed to assist in the creation or growth of small business in Howard County. Additionally, the County is analyzing opportunity sites that could be potential candidates for land assembly to promote redevelopment.

#### ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING BUSINESSES

Portions of US Route 1 are characterized by existing businesses that are not well-maintained, or whose frontage is not considered to be attractive. Recognizing that small businesses in particular may be less able to undertake renovations or aesthetic improvements, the County is exploring programs that will assist owners who physically upgrade their properties. The new programs would augment existing initiatives administered by the Howard County Economic Development Authority and support economic growth in the SC Area. Current and proposed initiatives impacting small businesses and economic development in the SC Area include:

1. Proposed tax credit program aimed at stimulating renovations and enhancements to buildings or frontages along US Route 1;
2. Proposed grant program aimed at stimulating renovations and enhancements to buildings or frontages along US Route 1;
3. Route 1 Revitalization Loan Program to encourage building or site conditions along the US 1 corridor.

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

The Route 1 Market Analysis, completed in 2011, highlighted the importance of the US Route 1 corridor to Howard County's overall economic performance. Approximately 30% of all jobs in the County are within the corridor, and current forecasts suggest some 49,000 jobs will be added to Howard County by 2030. The SC Area, while characterized largely by its older residential communities, is expected to capture a portion of new jobs in that timeframe.

Over the past decade, the US Route 1 corridor has become attractive for new residential development due to its proximity to Baltimore and Washington, DC as well as the various base-related jobs at Fort Meade. Many of the corridor's industrial spaces are also in high demand for similar reasons. The County recognizes the importance of preserving the job growth potential of the corridor while maximizing opportunities for adding affordable housing options. The concentration of housing and jobs will support efforts to improve worker access.

In addition to promoting access to jobs, the County will continue to examine policies and actions that expand economic opportunities along US Route 1. Such efforts may include:

1. Increasing transportation access between employment centers and residential nodes;
2. Plan for future transportation services connecting major employment and residential nodes along US Route 1 and to Downtown Columbia;
3. Plan for future transportation services connecting US Route 1 to major employment centers in Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties;
4. Examining the efficacy of zoning districts to meet the emerging needs of businesses;
5. Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship, particular in green industries.

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

Residential demand in Howard County will remain high in the foreseeable future. Employees relocating to jobs created by BRAC and the cyber security detail will increase demand for the quality of life and residential offerings within SC Area market. The close proximity of US Route 1 to Fort Meade and related support enterprises may elevate the impact of BRAC activities on the SC Area. Mixed-use development, increased access to transit, and new regional commercial centers will enhance the attractiveness of US Route 1 for prospective employers and employees.

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

Stakeholders include:

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

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

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

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

Moderate Income Housing Unit Program (MIHU) – Inclusionary zoning program that requires developers to offer 10-15% of new units for sale or rent to households of moderate

income at affordable prices and rents. The program has created 95 for-sale units and 433 rental units, many of which are in the US Route 1 corridor. The program has recently been expanded to incentivize developers to offer units to low income households as well.

Settlement Downpayment Loan Program (SDLP) – Provides deferred, low interest loans to first-time moderate income homebuyers to cover settlement and down payment costs. Since 2009, the SDLP program has helped provided over \$1.1 million in loans to 62 families to help them realize the dream of homeownership.

Supportive Housing for Homeless Persons – The County has acquired an 8-acre parcel on Guilford Road that will be used to develop a 30-unit small efficiency apartment building and new day resource center for homeless persons. A future phase may include supportive housing for young adults.

Greenwood Village – An award-winning subdivision of 10 for-sale homes on Mary Lane in Jessup that are affordable, universally-designed, and LEED Platinum. The Commission is planning a second phase of 25-30 units on Jones Road.

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

The housing initiatives and projects advance the potential to walk more and decrease transportation costs. County projects and units added through the MIHU program will bring a substantial influx of residents to the US Route 1 corridor within walking distance of shopping, work opportunities, and cultural activities. New residents will find that area is generally walkable, and would be made even more so through the enhancements to the pedestrian environment suggested elsewhere in this application. Transit adjacent to development will increase demand for non-vehicular or non-motorized modes of travel, and decrease transportation costs.

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

*PlanHoward 2030*, the County's General Plan, calls for the expansion of housing for residents at diverse income levels and life stages (including senior citizens and the disabled), and for high quality, mixed income, multigenerational, well designed, and sustainable communities. The Plan also suggests that County policies to provide such housing build upon the current Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) regulations. Changes to zoning regulations extended the MIHU obligation to all zoning districts to promote greater diversity of options includes single family detached.

Howard County strives to provide affordable housing to the full spectrum of economic need.

However, no numeric goals have been set for the creation of affordable housing units in the SC Area or in any specific area of the County. The calculated need for affordable units (to incomes below \$50,000) in the County is approximately 5,000 units. However, given that only about 2,600 new rental units are expected to come on line in the next 5 years, the emphasis will be on finding ways to make the existing housing stock affordable through acquisition, rehabilitation, and redevelopment.

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

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

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

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

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

Communities along US Route 1 are older than most in Howard County. As such, rights-of-way are often constrained and present a unique challenge with regards to improving transportation choices. Primary roadways within the area include US Route 1, Whiskey Bottom Road, Scaggsville Road, and Gorman Road:

1. Exploring ways to enhance existing bicycle facilities/potential new bicycle routes;
2. Evaluating existing and potential future transit routes and transit service;
3. Installing and/or improving bus shelters and stops;
4. Improving the condition of sidewalks and cross walks to enhance pedestrian safety.

**(2) If applicable, describe the SC Area's connection or proximity to transportation centers (e.g. Metro, MARC, and light rail stations) and describe opportunities for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Will the planned strategies and projects contribute to jobs/housing balance or otherwise provide a mix of land uses that can be expected to reduce reliance on single-occupancy automobiles? (If transit or TOD is not applicable in your community, all points in this section will be based on questions 1 and 3). (Answer Space 4,000 characters)**

The area is served by local bus and regional train service, and the County will be continuing to improve connections to nearby MARC stations. Because transit runs through the area, the County has aggressively pursued zoning changes to encourage Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) within 3,500 feet of the stations. Additionally, there are opportunities

to create commercial and residential nodes on US Route 1 to support increased bus service including rapid transit options.

As described elsewhere in this application, the County is working to facilitate parcel assembly, which will enhance the potential of TOD projects to create unified centers that mix commercial, employment, and residential uses. This will, in turn, contribute to improved environmental conditions (i.e. air quality) by reducing trips by automobile.

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

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

- Howard County Office of Transportation (Howard County Transit);
- Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning;
- Howard County Department of Public Works;
- Local merchants and property owners.

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

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

Since the Sustainable Community Workgroup (Workgroup) is composed of representatives from Howard County government agencies and local stakeholders, it is well-positioned to learn about and apply for assistance to benefit the area. DPZ will continue to provide guidance and personnel resources where needed.

The Workgroup will specifically look for ways to promote federal, state, and local historic tax credit programs to maximize the benefit to income producing properties. The Workgroup may also provide feedback on new programs and initiatives aimed at stimulating private investment, revitalization, and enhancements to property (e.g. tax credits for façade improvements, grants for property enhancement, land banking, etc.).

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

The Action Plan for the area is consistent with the Howard County General Plan, *PlanHoward 2030*. The General Plan calls for the creation of small area plans in the County.

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

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

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

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

As mentioned previously, the County is pursuing several initiatives aimed at stimulating reinvestment and revitalization in the area. The Plan supports these initiatives.

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

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

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

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

1. Expanded community services and facilities.
  - Coordinate with local non-governmental organizations to continually assess community needs;
  - Support agencies serving the Multiservice Center and the Day Resource Center;
  - Provide assistance to homeless population;
  - Examine opportunities to expand or enhance the library serving the area.
2. Reduction in crime and focus on areas where criminal activity is prevalent.
  - Work to curb gang-related activities;
  - Target properties that enable prostitution and related activities.
3. Improved and expanded transportation services for transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists.
  - Examine solutions for improved pedestrian access and safety;
  - Analyze ways to promote and enhance the built environment to support cycling;
  - Assess current transit routes and schedule, and promote transit options, in order to increase local ridership.
4. Enhanced aesthetics, appearances and preservation of the community's built environment, including historic buildings, housing and public spaces and infrastructure.
  - Participation in façade improvement programs via grants or other assistance;
  - Improve multilingual signage for community assets (cultural, historic, recreational, environmental) and essential services (e.g. health care);
  - Develop historic preservation goals, increase participation in tax credit program.
5. Integration of stormwater management solutions to better prevent and reduce negative environmental impacts of stormwater runoff.
  - Implementation of integrated SWM solutions within the proposed SC Area
  - Incorporate innovative SWM solutions into capital projects and encourage use in new development or redevelopment projects.
6. Preservation of historic structures and assets.
  - Ensure new development or redevelopment maintains and does not disrupt historic character of Savage;

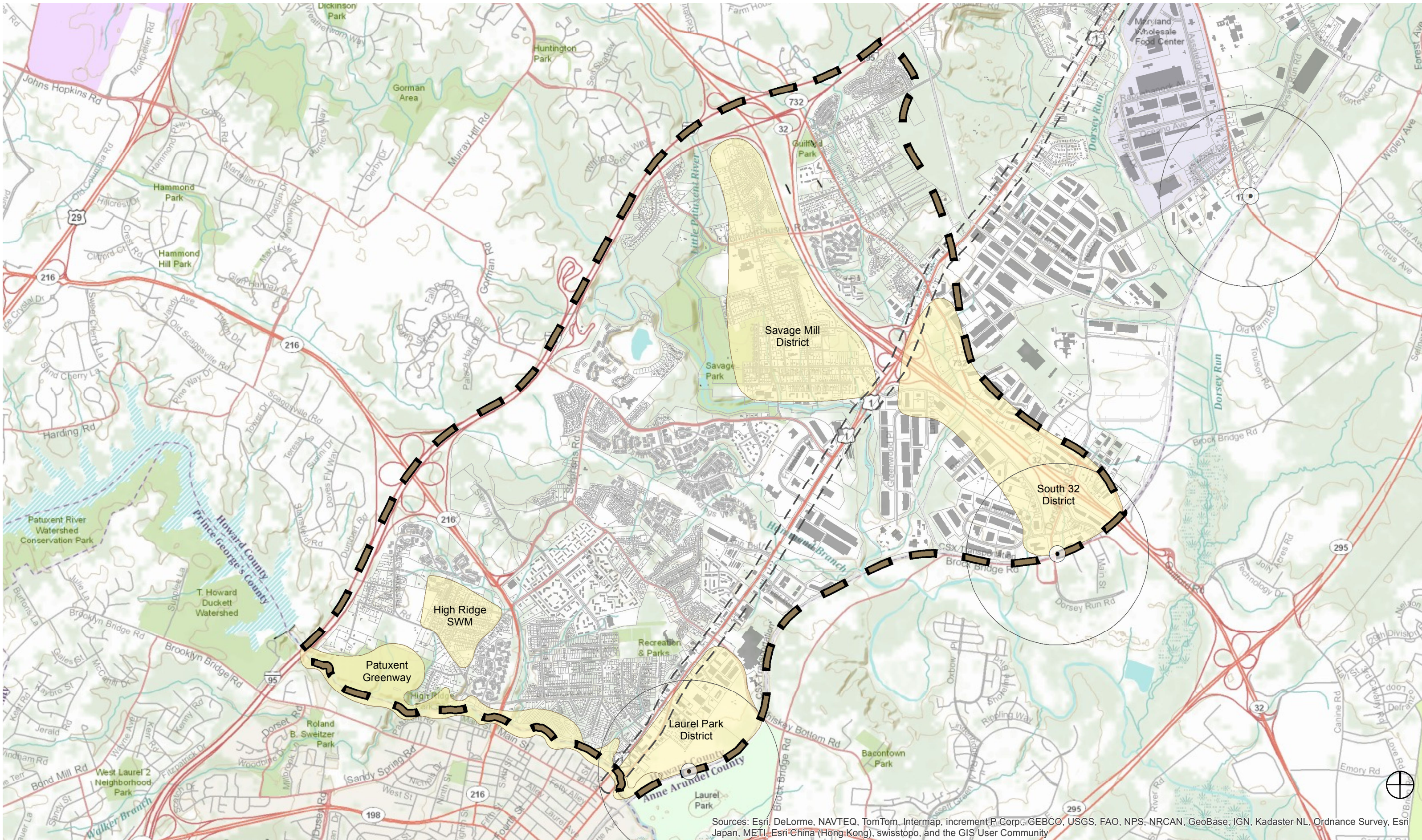
- Strengthen historic preservation program to minimize loss of historic structures and preserve existing assets.
7. Enhanced economic development opportunities using passive and active mechanisms.
    - Revisions to zoning districts to encourage desired development models;
    - Incentivize parcel assembly for larger redevelopment efforts;
    - Create strategies to assemble or reserve properties for future development;
    - Develop tax credit or grant programs to aid small business revitalization.
  8. Improved access to parks and green space.
    - More direct access to the recreational opportunities via trails and pathways;
    - Explore potential for expanded greenway connections;
    - Improved signage or other visual cues indicating the relationship of existing communities to the local streams, rivers, and river valley.

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

1. Expanded community services and facilities.
  - Coordinate with local non-governmental organizations to create a work plan to address community needs;
  - Coordinate with agencies serving the Multiservice Center to assess and address needs;
  - Coordinate with County agencies and non-governmental organizations to create a plan for transitioning homeless population to permanent solutions;
  - Coordinate with Howard County Library System to facilitate renovation/replacement of Savage Library per their Master Plan.
2. Reduction in crime and focus on areas where criminal activity is prevalent.
  - Work with Police, schools, and other agencies to deter gang-related activities;
  - Identify problem locations where prostitution occurs, target enforcement for short-term, encourage new uses for long-term.
3. Improved and expanded transportation services for transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists.
  - Complete a survey of sidewalk and crosswalk conditions;
  - Develop a maintenance program and inventory of needed capital projects to improve pedestrian access and safety;
  - Complete an analysis of ways to promote and enhance built environment to support cycling;
  - Assess current transit routes and schedule to determine if expanded service is warranted or possible;
  - Evaluate location of bus stops and shelters to maximize access for riders.



4. Enhanced aesthetics, appearance and preservation of the community's built environment, including historic buildings, housing, public spaces and infrastructure.
  - Establish a façade improvement program to aide refurbishment of commercial buildings;
  - Pass legislation to authorize tax credit for revitalization;
  - Develop historic preservation goals for the area and support efforts to preserve key historic assets.
5. Improved stormwater management to better prevent flooding and reduce negative environmental impacts of stormwater runoff.
  - Install stormwater retrofit projects and reduce impervious surfaces.
6. Preservation of historic structures and assets.
  - Develop historic preservation goals for the area and support efforts to preserve key historic assets.
7. Enhanced economic development opportunities using passive and active mechanisms.
  - Evaluate new zoning districts to ensure outcome is desired development models;
  - Identify parameters to optimize opportunities for parcel assembly;
  - Identify locations and guidelines for land-banking pilot project;
  - Pass legislation authorizing tax credit or grant programs to aid small business revitalization.
8. Improved access to parks and green space.
  - Improve access to recreational opportunities via trails and pathways;
  - Create an improved signage program to highlight the environmental and recreational importance of the waterways and river valley.



Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, and the GIS User Community