

Sustainable Community Action Plan

Finksburg Corridor

Submitted by Carroll County Government for the Finksburg Sustainable Community Workgroup

1/31/2018

BCC Adopted 12/14/2017

Environment

(Environmental strengths and weaknesses can include but are not limited to quality of land, water, air, watersheds, tree canopy, risk of sea level rise, carbon footprint, energy conservation, access to local foods, green infrastructure, stormwater infrastructure/management, parks, trails and recreation, recycling, water and sewer capacity, etc)

Strengths

- Approximately 218 acres of property owned by Baltimore City surrounds the east side of the corridor. This acreage provides a buffer for purposes of the Reservoir and limits development.
- The close proximity to the reservoir limits growth potential and only 125.38 acres of potential new development, 39.23 without Congoleum, a space for industrial development).
- Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement – (“Reservoir Agreement”) – signatory of a multi-jurisdictional agreement to voluntarily implement action strategies to protect the reservoir.
- Reservoir Technical Group Members/Coordination – as part of the Reservoir Agreement, projects are thoroughly reviewed by this body to make sure there are no detrimental effects on the reservoir and that the project conforms to the Agreement.
- The Farmer’s Market at Mount Zion United Methodist Church provides access to local food.
- Development and redevelopment potential offers the opportunity for the use of green technology.
- Access to a new, state of the art, storm water management facility.

Weaknesses

- No public water and sewer facilities – This area is dominated by older properties on small lots. Many properties do not have room for any replacement areas for troubled septic systems. There are development and redevelopment constraints when needing to take septic systems and/or replacement fields into consideration.
- There is a lack of parks, trails, and recreational spaces.

<p><u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u></p> <p>Based on the strengths and weaknesses identify the strengths on which you would like to build and the challenges you would like to address. What outcomes are you trying to achieve? Where/ in what area do you want those changes to happen?</p> <p>Progress Measure: Identify how you will know that you have achieved your outcome.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">→ <u>Strategies and Action Items</u> →</p> <p>Identify strategies that will help your community to achieve each identified outcome to the left. If applicable, break down each strategy into specific action items that outline different steps of the strategy. Specify how you are planning to achieve the desired outcomes.</p>	<p><u>Implementation Partners</u></p> <p>Which community stakeholders need to be involved to realize each action step and strategy? Name specific public and/or private sector partners.</p>
<p>Outcome 1: Utilized green building technologies to promote energy efficiency, low water use, water reuse, alternative practices for stormwater management, and the use of innovative building materials.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Work with Bureau of Permits and Inspections to track permits issued within the Sustainable Community boundary. Data to be tracked includes address, work description, kilowatts and permit numbers. Determine where energy efficiencies and conservation choices were made by developers/owners. Analyze monthly/quarterly reports of permit activities from the Bureau of Permits and Inspections to determine the number of energy efficient upgrades to businesses and homes. Work with Bureau of Permits to obtain more detailed information on the number of energy efficient products and buildings completed when their new system is up and running.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Work with volunteer committees and partners to investigate feasibility of how state and federal green standards can be incentivized in the Corridor.</p> <p>Strategy B: Research and determine the best technologies and present them to developers/owners for consideration.</p> <p>Strategy C: Promote Carroll County’s Energy Saver Loan program for owner occupied residential units.</p> <p>Strategy D: Work with the Bureau of Permits and Inspections to get a report of permit activities in the area for development and redevelopment.</p> <p>Strategy E: Develop public outreach piece to educate the community on green building standards and benefits.</p> <p>Strategy F: Promote the PACE, Property Assessed Clean Energy, program for commercial properties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) • Design and Architectural Review Committee (DARC) • Bureau of Development Review • Carroll County Department of Land & Resource Management • Bureau of Permits and Inspections

<p>Outcome 2: Determine the feasibility of a Public Sewer System</p> <p>Progress Measures: The completion of a feasibility study to demonstrate the need, scope & in depth cost analysis for a public sewer system.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Conduct a feasibility study to determine total capital and projected operating cost, identify potential sources of funds to construct, who will pay for it, types of new systems possible w/ zero discharge, options for using existing discharges, timeframe, which specific properties would be served, expected demand, etc.</p> <p>Strategy B: Determine funding sources for construction plus ongoing maintenance and operations.</p> <p>Strategy C: Complete another Sanitary Survey within 5-10 years of the previous to reassess conditions of old septic systems in Finksburg and determine the need for a feasibility study. The County may utilize this in its determination of the need for a sewer system.</p> <p>Strategy D: Once the study is completed, provide potential costs and benefits to community members and property owners and determine interest in a public system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carroll County Health Department • Carroll County Department of Permits and Inspections • Carroll County Department of Planning • Department of Land and Resource Management • Bureau of Development Review • Carroll County Department of Public Works • Carroll County Department of Economic Development • Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc. • Board of County Commissioners
<p>Outcome 3: Encourage passive community open space in development for public gathering places.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Assess and determine the extent of any new development as the process moves forward. Summarize this yearly to determine if open space has been included in the site plan.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Assess locations within the Corridor.</p> <p>Strategy B: Consider any structures that may need to be demolished to create a community gathering space.</p> <p>Strategy C: Work with County staff to recommend code changes that would enhance open space in residential and commercial zones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carroll County Department of Recreation and Parks • Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc. • Zoning Administration • Bureau of Development Review • Carroll County Government (various staff)

Outcome 4: Educate individual property owners, when possible, about the planting of native plant species that are easy to maintain and thrive under regional water norms.

Progress Measures: Obtaining a count of attendees at various outreach events.

Strategy A: Determine the best plants for the Finksburg Corridor Area.

Strategy B: Determine the best strategy to educate about plantings in the Finksburg Corridor Area.

Strategy C: Work with Bureau of Resource Management to market the Tree Planting Program for the purposes environmental conservation and beautification.

Strategy D: Work with Carroll County Master Gardeners to provide public education and consult on planting of native trees and plants.

- Department of Land and Resource Management

Economy

(Economic strengths and weaknesses can include but are not limited to regional accessibility, business attraction/retention, health of the business district and commercial vacancies, workforce/employment and economic drivers, local policies/regulations, marketing, tourism, cultural and historic assets)

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial identity- The corridor is an auto corridor with the majority of businesses along MD140 supporting that type of commerce (auto repair shops, auto detailing, gas station, etc.) The corridor supports an auto-centric market. Gateway into Carroll County – There is huge redevelopment potential. Gateway Renovation Tax Credit acts as a catalyst to encourage eligible property owners to visually enhance their properties. Dual access - Many businesses have joint frontage onto both MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike. The redevelopment potential for these properties presents an opportunity to give Old Westminster Pike pedestrian connectivity and the “Main Street” experience that the residents are looking for. High retention of businesses – There is approximately a 4.8% vacancy rate within the corridor. Small home businesses along Old Westminster Pike. New businesses have developed in the Corridor with improved aesthetics - Walnut Plaza and Dunkin Donuts. Goal of the Finksburg Corridor Plan (2013) - To encourage redevelopment as a way to promote new small scale business, offices and retail activity within the corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Properties are in need of façade improvements or redevelopment. This is due to the age of the structures and internal infrastructure. Since there is minimal foot traffic within the corridor the buildings are about functionality vs. aesthetics. Lack of business type diversity - With a few areas of exception the majority of commercial businesses are auto-centric or industrial. The community would like to see retail, restaurants Major highway keeps this area from having customer foot traffic- MD 140 keeps this area from becoming a commercial corridor with pedestrian and bicycle customers. There are minimal destinations for dining, shopping, services, or attractions within the Corridor. There are no public Water and Sewer facilities. Some of the vacancies within the Corridor are a result of this. It also hinders development and redevelopment. There is minimal potential for new commercial and industrial development (125.38 acres total, 39.23 acres without Congoleum).

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>	<u>Strategies and Action Items</u>	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
<p>Outcome 1: Increase participation in the Gateway Renovation Tax Credit program</p> <p>Progress Measures: An increase in the number of applicants improving their business facades</p>	<p>Strategy A: Go out into the community with informational materials to explain the County’s program and how the business community could be improved by taking advantage of a program like this.</p> <p>Strategy B: Work with Economic Development to analyze the number of applicants and the different projects that are being completed. Work with that information to see how we can get even more businesses involved</p> <p>Strategy C: Have a booth at the Finksburg Library and Finksburg Plaza to provide information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carroll County Department of Economic Development Carroll County Department of Planning Board of County Commissioners Carroll County Tax office

Outcome 2: Encourage new development and redevelopment through a marketing campaign.

Progress Measures: The creation of a website and distribution materials with resources and information for businesses in the Finksburg Corridor.

Strategy A: Create a website highlighting the benefits of the Finksburg Corridor.

Strategy B: Create a brochure for distribution.

Strategy C: Promote Finksburg History on the website as a tourist attraction.

Strategy D: Create an ArcGIS Online map that allows people to determine if their property is in the Corridor/PFA.

- Carroll County Dept of Planning
- Finksburg Planning and Citizens Council
- Carroll County Department of Economic Development
- Small Business Administration
- Carroll County Career and Technology Center

Transportation

(Transportation strengths and weaknesses can include access to transit corridors, pedestrian safety and accessibility/sidewalks, alternative modes of transportation, such as bikeways and trails, public transit, such as bus and rail, carpooling, proximity to transportation centers, parking, road conditions)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual access to properties from both MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike- allows for better circulation within the corridor if patrons of businesses have multiple options for access. • The Finksburg Corridor Plan (2013) has recommendations for Planned Major Streets that would improve the circulation of traffic within the corridor. • Roaring Run Trail is a planned hiker/biker trail in the Finksburg Corridor Plan. It is planned to be located parallel to the railroad tracks and stream that deposits into the Liberty Reservoir. • The Highway Needs Inventory identifies improvements to the intersection of MD 91 and MD 140 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited availability for different modes of transportation- In an auto corridor with a major highway running through, it is not safe to have pedestrian crossing possibilities within the majority of the corridor. • MD-140 is a barrier to multi-modal connectivity. • The main roads within the Corridor are state owned- Local government does not have much control on projects along these road ways. • Heavy traffic along MD 140- SHA data (2014) recognizes MD 140 being one of the most heavily traveled roads in Carroll County with 44,100 AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic) in Finksburg (east of MD 91). • Old Westminster Pike is underutilized and provides the opportunity to be a type of “main street” for the Finksburg area with the installation of sidewalks and streetlights. • One of the most dangerous intersections in Carroll County is within the Corridor- MD 140 and MD 91. • Housing is spread throughout the Corridor- it would be difficult to have a cohesive trail connecting all of the neighborhoods without having to cross MD 140.

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>	<u>Strategies and Action Items</u>	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
<p>Outcome 1: Improve pedestrian access, circulation, and safety within the Corridor.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Any walking and biking related improvements.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Direct pedestrian and bicycle activity away from MD 140 to promote safety. (Old Gamber Road/Cedarhurst Road Old Westminster Pike)</p> <p>Strategy B: Encourage streetlights, sidewalks and trails within neighborhoods by focusing on connections to Old Westminster Pike and along Old Gamber and Cedarhurst.</p> <p>Strategy C: Gain input from residents along Old Westminster Pike to identify interest in developing a Main Street-type atmosphere through the area that also adjoins/fronts on MD 140.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carroll County Department of Public Works • SHA

Housing

(Housing strengths and weaknesses can include affordability, homeownership vs rental, housing stock diversity, housing condition and value, housing programs, foreclosures, residential vacancies, property values, home sale values)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility for a potential 116 additional homes within the corridor. • Goal of the Finksburg Corridor Plan (2013) - To provide opportunities for residential uses along secondary roadways that are compatible in design and density with the historic structures and the existing community character. • Entry level housing opportunities are provided within the Corridor. • Incentives are available to address façade improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some homes are on small lots which is a challenge with a septic system. • Small amount of houses within inventory because it is mostly a commercial/industrial corridor, only 109 residential properties • Older housing stock, average of 72 years old, would benefit from façade improvement grants. • There are more renters in the Finksburg Corridor (34% - SDAT) compared to the County (18% - ACS). • Some of the housing stock is of poor quality.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	→ Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Encourage home improvement upgrades among homeowners.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The number of homeowners taking advantage of financial incentives.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Take an inventory of existing housing units and conditions to determine specific needs.</p> <p>Strategy B: Educate homeowners on incentives and resources available for financial assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carroll County Dept of Planning • FPACC • Carroll County Bureau of Housing
<p>Outcome 2: Encourage home ownership among existing renters.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The number of people taking advantage of financial homeownership programs.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Work with local banks to promote financial planning and to assist existing renters and potential Finksburg residents, particularly in the Corridor.</p> <p>Strategy B: Advertise the financial incentives for homeownership in the Corridor.</p> <p>Strategy C: Encourage first time homeowner and homeowner education classes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carroll County Dept of Planning • FPACC • Carroll County Bureau of Housing

Quality of Life

(Strengths and weaknesses can include crime, socio-economic demographics, educational opportunities, museums, libraries, historic and cultural assets, civic amenities, faith-based organizations, economic health of households, sense of place, etc)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Finksburg Plaza Shopping Center is located within the Corridor. • A United States Post Office branch is within the Corridor. • A new, state of the art library is just outside of the corridor and is part of the greater Finksburg area. • Large indoor fitness facility is within the Sustainable Community Area. • 26 sites within the corridor have been listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Places. • Three faith based organizations are within the corridor. • There is a Farmer’s Market at Mount Zion United Methodist Church. • There is a low property and violent crime rate compared to the state (as of 2015, 1 in 757 in the greater Finksburg area compared to 1 in 219 in Maryland, according to FBI data from neighborhoodscout.com). • Wide spread high speed internet access (unlike much of the County) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some have feelings of being unsafe as it relates to transportation – walking, biking and driving in the corridor • Must leave the community for the majority of goods and services not related to the auto industry. • Lack of cultural and civic activities, as well as a community center • Lack of parks, trails, and recreational spaces within the Corridor.

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	→ Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Create a stronger sense of community within the Corridor.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The creation of a site and the creation and distribution of promotional materials.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Create a Finksburg Corridor website (in conjunction with a marketing campaign) that has access to various products & resources and incentives for living in the Finksburg Corridor as well as community assets.</p> <p>Strategy B: Create usable & friendly public spaces and community gathering spots. Locate a space for community leisure and activities.</p> <p>Strategy C: Create a Finksburg logo, slogan, bumper sticker or other placemaking marker in conjunction with a marketing campaign.</p> <p>Strategy D: Come up with low manpower community activities that promote a sense of place.</p> <p>Strategy E: Identify an area within the Corridor that could be a center for the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Economic Development • Finksburg Planning and Citizens Council
<p>Outcome 2: Preserve and maintain community assets.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The number of community assets highlighted or maintained through grant funding or new programs.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Take an inventory of community amenities.</p> <p>Strategy B: Highlight properties of historic significance and consider adding properties to the MIHP.</p> <p>Strategy C: Create a historic properties tour.</p> <p>Strategy D: Encourage the rehabilitation of historic structures through promotion of the federal and State tax incentives available.</p> <p>Strategy E: Add historic markers to places of significance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finksburg Planning and Citizens Council • Maryland Historic Trust • Department of Planning • Historical Society of Carroll County

Local Planning and Land Use

(Strengths and weaknesses in the local planning and land use subject area include but are not limited to zoning, land use, policies, taxes and fees, historical patterns of development, lot sizes and shapes, etc)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal of the Finksburg Plan: To strengthen the boundaries of the corridor by supporting resource protection and land preservation on lands adjacent to the corridor. • No municipal government – Finksburg is governed under Carroll County as a whole. • The Finksburg Corridor Plan was Adopted in 2013. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No municipal government – Finksburg is governed under Carroll County as a whole. • There are not enough properties with historical integrity to constitute a historic district. • In need of more usable friendly public spaces/gathering spots • There are too many billboards.

<u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u>	→ <u>Strategies and Action Items</u> →	<u>Implementation Partners</u>
<p>Outcome 1: Create flexibility in regulations and design standards to allow for the creation of the concepts desired in the community's core.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The number of properties taking advantage of financial incentives. Any successful changes to the code that promotes development or redevelopment. Any successful development or redevelopment that is consistent with the Corridor Plan.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Obtain Maryland Dept of Planning (MDP) rendering of what Finksburg Corridor can be.</p> <p>Strategy B: Work with County staff to develop code changes that would help to facilitate redevelopment and new development that is consistent with the Finksburg Corridor Plan and the desired outcomes of the community.</p> <p>Strategy C: Encourage redevelopment and new development that is aesthetically pleasing, augments a sense of community, complementary and unifying, and creates a sense of place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD Department of Planning • Carroll County Government (various staff)

<p>Outcome 2: Continue to Implement the Finksburg Corridor Plan.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The number of master plan items that are implemented.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Work toward creating a more attractive Corridor.</p> <p>Strategy B: Work toward creating a sense of community in the Corridor.</p> <p>Strategy C: Continue to explore the feasibility of a public sewer system</p> <p>Strategy D: Investigate means by which incentives could be established for streetscaping and landscaping as a service to residential and commercial property interests.</p> <p>Strategy E: Explore ways to enhance the protection of historic resources and determine eligibility for individual property listings on the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>Strategy F: Maintain viewsheds and the visual connection to forests and open space by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using site layout and building design to retain and emphasize existing views; • Preserve to the greatest extent possible existing green, open spaces along the MD 140 corridor; • Minimizing the addition of paved surfaces by creating shared access and parking and internal circulation networks; and, • Creating opportunities to conveniently and safely access the surrounding area by foot and bicycle. <p>Strategy G. Encourage owners of historic properties to adapt and reuse historic properties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPACC • Economic Development • Department of Recreation and Parks • Maryland Historic Trust
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