

SECTION B - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACTION PLAN

[Finksburg Sustainable Community]

DRAFT

Environment

This section describes projects involving the natural environment, our use of natural resources, and our relationships or access to the natural environment.

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): the quality of land, water, and air; tree canopies and green spaces; green infrastructure; habitat improvement, climate change mitigation and adaptation; nuisance flooding; stormwater infrastructure and management; water and sewer capacity; energy conservation; recycling, pet waste, and organic waste programs; the mitigation of environmental hazards; and parks and recreation improvements.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Baltimore City-owned property surrounds the east side of the corridor and provides a buffer to the Liberty Reservoir.● Proximity to the reservoir limits growth potential – there is 29.1 acres of potential new residential development and 65.7 acres of potential new commercial and industrial development.● Development and redevelopment potential offers the opportunity for energy efficiency.● Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement – signatory of a multi-jurisdictional agreement to implement action strategies to protect the reservoir. As a result of the Agreement a Technical Group was formed and meets monthly to ensure growth and development is consistent with the Agreement.● Access to a new, state of the art, stormwater management facility just outside the Sustainable Community.● A 2017 Finksburg Environmental Health Sanitary Survey gives insight into how public health and economic development are impacted by existing and future septic conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● No public water and sewer; the corridor is dominated by older properties on small lots – many of which do not have room for a replacement septic system. There is development and redevelopment constraints for commercial and residential.● No parks, trails, and recreational space.

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Educate residents, business and property owners, and incentivize solutions when possible, about environmental concerns and topics of interest.</p> <p>Progress Measure: Track events, programs, incentives in and near the sustainable community.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Promote private septic system proper care and maintenance to extend the life of the system.</p> <p>Strategy B: Promote planting and care of native species for the purpose of environmental conservation and beautification.</p> <p>Strategy C: Promote energy efficiency and saving best practices among existing infrastructure, new development, and redevelopment to protect the community's natural resources.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Finksburg Public Library, Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development, Natural Resources, Health, Environment</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Advance public and environmental health by understanding the need and opportunities for a public sewer system.</p> <p>Progress Measures: A sanitary sewer survey, and/or feasibility study.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Monitor private septic system existing conditions, permits, upgrades, etc.</p> <p>Strategy B: Complete a second sanitary sewer survey to reassess conditions of septic systems, and to determine the need for a public septic system based on public health and economic development/revitalization.</p> <p>Strategy C: Complete a feasibility study to determine opportunities for a public sewer system including demand, type, cost, timeframe, etc.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Maryland Dept. of Health, Environment</p>

Economy

This section is centered on economic growth and management.

Strengths and weaknesses might focus on the following: business attraction & retention; improving and maintaining the health of business districts, downtowns, and main streets; commercial vacancy reduction; workforce attraction and retention; employment/job training; marketing, branding, and tourism; improving or creating economic impact of cultural and historic assets; providing technical and financial assistance to businesses; commercial building acquisition, rehabilitation and/or adaptive re-use; and creating a sense of place and vibrancy through streetscaping and beautification.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment potential is high as Finksburg serves as the most gateway into Carroll County. • The Gateway Renovation Tax Credit (GRTC) acts as a catalyst to encourage eligible property owners to visually enhance their properties. • Dual access to commercial 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. • High retention of businesses; there is a 5.4% commercial and industrial vacancy, up .6% from 2019. • Encourage redevelopment as a way to promote new small-scale business, offices, and retail activity within the corridor is a goal in the Finksburg Corridor Plan (2013). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties are in need of facade improvements or redevelopment. • Major highways vastly limit pedestrian and bicycle customers; building functionality is prioritized over aesthetics. • Minimal destinations for dining, shopping, services, or attractions within the Corridor. • No public water and sewer which hinders development and redevelopment. A result of this is vacancies and failing systems on commercial properties. • Proximity to the reservoir limits growth potential – there is 65.7 acres of potential new commercial and industrial development.

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Improve the appearance of businesses and the corridor.</p> <p>Progress Measures: An increase in the number of businesses utilizing the FIP and GRTC.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Promote the Finksburg Facade Improvement Program (FIP).</p> <p>Strategy B: Promote the Gateway Renovation Tax Credit (GRTC).</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Chamber of Commerce, Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Attract and retain businesses.</p> <p>Progress Measures: A decrease in the vacancy rate.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Promote businesses by strengthening their online and community presence.</p> <p>Strategy B: Engage businesses in roundtable and networking forums.</p> <p>Strategy C: Increase vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle access to businesses.</p> <p>Strategy D: Connect businesses with qualified workers to fill their training and hiring needs.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Career & Technology Center, Public Schools, Carroll Community College</p>

Transportation

This section describes the way people in your community get from place to place.

Strengths, weaknesses and outcomes can focus on: 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; and road conditions.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned Neighborhood Connection <i>Dede Road Extended</i> will improve traffic circulation within the Corridor and is identified as a High Priority project in the County’s Transportation Master Plan (2023). • Maryland State Highway Project <i>MD 140 from the Baltimore County line to west of MD 91</i> will maintain functionality of the Corridor. The project is identified in the Highway Needs Inventory as a <u>divided highway reconstruct, including access controls and an interchange</u> at MD 91 and is identified in the FY24 MDOT CTP Priority Letter. Also identified in the priority letter is the “jughandle” type design for westbound traffic at the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91. • A 2009 MDOT SHA Access Management (AM) Plan of MD 140 from Leidy Road to I-795 in Baltimore County recommends the public purchase of access control rights and laid out a detailed implementation plan. • Dual access to commercial 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. • Recent curb and sidewalk enhancement by SHA improved drainage and sidewalk along a one mile stretch of the Corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most roads within the Corridor are state owned; local government has little control over projects along these roads. • MD 140 is a barrier to multi-modal connectivity; it’s speeds and volume do not allow for a safe bicycle or pedestrian network within most of the Corridor. Housing is spread throughout the Corridor; pedestrian circulation between neighborhoods would be difficult without having to cross MD 140. • The MD 140/91 intersection has safety and congestion related issues. • Old Westminster Pike is underutilized and provides the opportunity for economic and social revitalization as a commercial and community activity center servicing the area’s residential population and the future commercial needs of the neighborhood. • Limited inter-parcel connectivity encourages vehicles to use MD 140 to travel between businesses.

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Improve non-motorized access, circulation, and safety within the Corridor.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Any study, design, right-of-way acquisition, and infrastructure improvement for non-motorized travel.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Complete a bicycle and pedestrian feasibility study to determine opportunities to create linkages where the need supports such connectivity.</p> <p>Strategy B: Advance the design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of non-motorized infrastructure through the use of the County's CIP, state funding, grants, and other financing tools, the development review process, and partnerships with the state, BMC, landowners, land developers, and other public-private partnerships.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Recreation & Parks, Maryland Dept. of Transportation, Baltimore Metropolitan Council</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Improve vehicle access, circulation, and safety within the Corridor.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Any study, design, right-of-way acquisition, and infrastructure improvement for vehicular travel.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Continue to prioritize and advance the Maryland State Highway Project <i>MD 140 from the Baltimore County line to west of MD 91</i>, including intersection improvements, through the submission of the County's annual CTP Priority Letter.</p> <p>Strategy B: Advance the design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of <i>Dede Road Extended</i> through the use of the County's CIP, state funding, and other financing tools, the development review process, and partnerships with the state, BMC, landowners, land developers, and other public-private partnerships.</p> <p>Strategy C: Coordinate with MDOT SHA to promote AM best practices along MD 140 by determining whether the 2009 AM Plan needs updating. If no update is needed, adhere to implementation strategies in the 2009 AM Plan. Inter-parcel connectivity should be promoted when AM is not achievable by service roads.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Maryland Dept. of Transportation, Baltimore Metropolitan Council</p>

Housing

This section focuses on the homes in which people in your community live and efforts which make it easier for them to find and stay in a place to call home.

Strengths, weaknesses and outcomes might focus on the following: affordability; increasing homeownership; increasing rental housing; diversifying the kinds of housing available; improving housing conditions (interior or exterior); housing programs; aging in place; preventing foreclosures; and reducing residential vacancies.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversity of housing opportunities are provided within the Corridor.• Small close lots provide opportunity for pedestrian connectivity amongst neighbors creating a neighborhood feel.• Some homeowners have made recent improvements to home exteriors.• 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With a mean lot size of 16,922± square feet, many homes are on small lots which is a challenge with a septic system.• Some of the housing stock is of poor quality in poor condition.• Limited to no pedestrian connectivity between houses or houses and businesses.• Older housing stock, many over 50 years old, would benefit from facade improvement grants.

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Encourage improvements to the aesthetics of homes.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of identified needs have been reduced.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Take an inventory of existing homes and conditions to determine specific needs.</p> <p>Strategy B: Encourage homeowners to utilize incentives and resources available for financial assistance.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Citizen Services, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Provide and connect homeowners and tenants with programs, incentives, etc. based on the identified needs.</p> <p>Progress Measures: A survey and responses, number of homeowners and tenants taking advantage of newly created and existing programs, and other resources.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Survey existing homeowner and tenants to determine specific needs.</p> <p>Strategy B: Create and implements programs based on the identified needs.</p> <p>Strategy C: Encourage homeowners to utilize incentives and resources available for financial assistance.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Citizen Services, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development, Planning, Health, Environment</p>

Community Health and Quality of Life

This section is concerned with public health, community culture, and the day-to-day life of community residents.

This category includes projects focusing on (but not limited to): improvement of public health including improving community design to promote healthy behaviors such as walking and strengthening community support and connectedness through health and wellness programs and facilities that create inclusive communities. These projects may include built environment, indoor spaces, outdoor environments such as increasing community gardens and access to services including educational facilities and programs; health and wellness facilities and programs that serve multi-generations; senior facilities and programs; youth facilities and programs; facilities and programs for the disabled; civic amenities, access to quality food options; collaborations with faith-based organizations; arts and entertainment education; and homelessness prevention, services, and facilities. Projects should include community engagement that includes participation in the selection of strategies and outcomes, progress reports, and evaluation.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four shopping centers located within the SC. • A United States Post Office branch location within the SC. • A new, state of the art library is less than two miles from the SC. • Three faith-based organizations are within or just outside the SC. • A handful of privately owned recreational opportunities, including the Roaring Run Lions Club Community Park just outside the SC. • Proximity to the Liberty Reservoir; natural landscapes promote physical and mental well-being. • High speed internet access. • Twenty-six sites within the corridor have been listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Place providing an opportunity for tourism. • Low property and violent crime rate compared to the state (as of 2021, the crime rate is 7 per 1,000 residents in the greater Finksburg area compared to 20 per 1,000 residents in Maryland, according to FBI data from neighborhoodscout.com). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation network could provide safer measures for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. • No community center and lack of civic amenities, lack of public spaces and gathering spots. • Community design does not promote improvement of public health. • Community offers very limited medical, retail, dining, service, arts and entertainment, cultural and education options and/or amenities.

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Foster a stronger sense of community.</p> <p>Progress Measures: An increase in public spaces, gathering spot, a community center, and community events, and a community sign.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Identify and create usable, inclusive, and friendly public spaces and gathering spots, and a center for the community.</p> <p>Strategy B: Collaborate with local business and organizations to sponsor or support community events, circulate information, etc.</p> <p>Strategy C: Identify a location for and construct a community sign to create a sense of place.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Finksburg Public Library, Maryland Dept. of Housing & Community Development,</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Attract, retain, and preserve community assets. A community asset can include, but is not limited to a park, library, historic property, business, natural landscape, etc.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The number of new, retained, and preserved community assets.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Promote community assets by strengthening their online and community presence.</p> <p>Strategy B: Involve residents, business and property owners in decision-making processes related to community assets. Seek their input, ideas, and feedback to ensure that their needs and preferences are considered.</p> <p>Strategy C: Foster partnerships with local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to share the responsibility and resources needed for asset retention.</p> <p>Stagey D: Offer incentives for businesses or individuals to invest in the community and attract developers and entrepreneurs interested in contributing to the community's growth.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc. Finksburg Public Library, Maryland Dept. of Planning</p>

Local Planning and Staffing Capacity

This section is concerned with a local government's ability to plan for the community's future and to meet the current needs of residents.

Strengths, weaknesses and outcomes might focus on the following: updating zoning ordinances or land use; updating municipal/local policies, taxes, fees, etc.; increasing local government staff capacity; and updating planning documents like sector plans or comprehensive plans.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● No municipal government; Finksburg is governed under Carroll County.● Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council Inc. (FPACC) meets monthly and is very active in the community.● Two County Comprehensive Planning staff are responsible for the SC and liaison to FPACC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● No municipal government; Finksburg is governed under Carroll County.● 2013 Finksburg Corridor Plan is due for an update.● 2013 Finksburg Design Guidelines are not codified.● Not enough properties with historical integrity to constitute a historic district.● Lack of public spaces and gathering spots.● Too many billboards cause visual pollution.

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Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures	Strategies and Action Items	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Form an inter-agency County team devoted to implementation of this action plan.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The formation of and participation on an action plan team.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Develop a team of implementation partners and identify roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Strategy B: Keep implementation partners updated and engaged.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Public Works, Economic Development, Citizen Services, Recreation & Parks</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Update, and in the meantime continue to implement the 2013 Finksburg Corridor Plan.</p> <p>Progress Measures: The number of Corridor Plan items that are implemented.</p>	<p>Strategy A: Transform the Corridor Plan into a piece that is more digestible and easier to envision by elected officials, the community, and ...</p> <p>Strategy B: Develop County code changes that will facilitate goals and recommendation of the Corridor Plan.</p> <p>Strategy C: Update the Finksburg Corridor Plan as part of, or following, the County Master Plan update.</p> <p>Strategy D: Create a more attractive corridor.</p> <p>Strategy E: Create a sense of place in the community.</p> <p>Strategy F: Incentivize streetscaping and landscaping.</p> <p>Strategy G: Inventory and 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 H: Maintain viewsheds and the visual connection to forests and open space.</p>	<p>Carroll County Dept. of Planning & Land Management, Economic Development, Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc., Maryland Dept. of Planning</p>

A full list of Implementation Partners includes:

Carroll County Department of

- Planning & Land Management
- Public Works
- Economic Development
- Citizen Services
- Recreation & Parks

Finksburg Planning & Citizens' Council, Inc.

Carroll County Chamber of Commerce

Carroll County Career & Technology Center

Carroll County Public Schools

Carroll Community College

Finksburg Public Library

Maryland Department of

- Housing & Community Development
- Natural Resources
- Planning
- Health
- Environment
- Transportation