

**NeighborSpace of Baltimore County**  
**Comments on Master Plan 2020 (August 2010)**

A. What we applaud:

1. "Policy: Development and redevelopment of under-utilized properties inside the URDL within Community Enhancement Areas [areas suitable for redevelopment that are compact, mixed use and walkable] will be encouraged. Actions: ... Examine the selected areas for ... existing and proposed open/civic spaces." (p. 37).
2. "Policy: The County should maintain a healthy balance between residential and non-residential land uses inside the URL. Actions: oppose land use proposals that do not contribute a healthy balance of residential and non-residential uses and open space." (p. 163).
3. "Policy: Promote redevelopment and revitalization inside the URDL to reduce pollutant loads and protect natural resources ... Actions: Include environmental policies and goals in community plans for the preservation and enhancement of functional open spaces such as greenways and wildlife habitat; the reduction of water, air and toxic pollution and solid wastes; and the promotion of neighborhood and environmental stewardship." (p. 180).
4. "Policy: Restore lost or degraded ecosystem functions, and foster environmental stewardship. Actions: ... Continue to implement multiple land preservation programs ... [and] Support and promote the efforts of the Maryland Environmental Trust and local land trusts to protect sensitive lands." (p. 210).

B. Where we see partnership opportunities:

1. Within Community Enhancement Areas (CEAs) (areas suitable for redevelopment that are compact, mixed use and walkable), we believe we can be helpful in the conversion of impervious surfaces to green spaces such as parks, greenways and public squares that will enhance the social and cultural life of neighborhoods and improve the quality of stormwater runoff. (p. 34).
2. The draft plan notes that the County has been acquiring parcels along the Red Run stream valley in the course of developing a bike and pedestrian network that would connect the area's residential and employment uses to the Owings Mills Town Center. The County now owns 250 acres and needs to acquire 100 more; and, we may be able to assist in this process. (p. 78).
3. The draft plan speaks to the creation of a Middle River Redevelopment Area (p. 81) and notes that "because this area drains directly into the Chesapeake Bay, there is heightened concern by local residents regarding storm water management and quality." (p. 92). We stand ready to work with DPRM and other agencies to acquire land in fee or by way of easements to help with innovative stormwater management practices.
4. With respect to the Waterfront area of the county, the plan suggest a need to "place into protective easements tracts of forest and wetlands that are otherwise highly susceptible to development pressures" (p. 101) and we stand ready to provide assistance in terms of working with local landowners in this regard to the extent that parcels in question are within the URDL.
5. To the extent that land needs to be acquired for gateways, we believe we can be helpful in – "enhancing gateway designations." (p. 117).
6. The plan speaks to the enhancement/creation of greenways as specified on the Greenways Map, which identifies land areas that must be preserved by dedication or easement. (p. 148). Many of the recreational and environmental greenways depicted on page 149 are within the URDL and we stand ready to work with landowners to acquire parcels that will help to complete greenways there.

7. The plan also underscores a need to “continue to prepare and implement Small Watershed Action Plans (SWAPs) and participate in studies to identify needs and opportunities for stream restoration, wetland creation and restoration, and stormwater management.” To the extent that these activities can be facilitated through the acquisition of easements or fee-owned lands, NeighborSpace stands ready to help. (p. 183).

### C. What Concerns Us:

1. Our greatest concern is the lack of specific recommendations about the amount of open space that will be required in the proposed Community Enhancement Areas. Will the County apply the existing LOS formula (a result that we would favor) or will the approach be one of applying a ratio of open space to impervious surface (a result that we would find objectionable unless the ratio results in a meaningful amount of open space)?
2. Goals of Master Plan 2020 (p. iii): Three goals are mentioned in the very beginning of the document, including (1) Continuing the Success of Growth Management; (2) Improving the Built Environment and (3) Strengthening Resource Conservation and Protection. Within the detail provided on each of these goals, there is no mention of increasing/enhancing open space within URDL though doing so is important to all three.
3. In the discussion about sustainability (p. 7), there is no mention of the role of open space in ensuring sustainability of communities within the URDL even though there is an avalanche of recent studies showing a clear relationship between positive health outcomes and improved property values, on the one hand, and the proximity of open space within one’s community, on the other. (See, e.g. <https://www.landtrustalliance.org/about-us/saving-land/spring-2010/nature-as-nurturer.pdf>). The County’s great success in protecting 55,200 acres of rural land (24% of the land outside of the URDL) over the last 30 years is laudable and is certainly a worthy and necessary undertaking. But a shift in focus is necessary. Ninety percent of the population lives within the URDL, many in older communities with little or no open space. More must be done to identify, protect and improve open space there if these communities are to be sustainable.
4. The draft plan notes that “[s]ignificant public funds have been invested in the permanent protection of cropland, pasture and woodland to maintain and foster a viable agricultural industry.” (p. 195). Comparatively few public resources have been targeted at preserving open space within the URDL for the benefit of the people who live there, and, as noted above, we believe the future sustainability of these communities demands a shift in focus.
5. The draft plan notes that “a key to the success of any proposal is the involvement of all stakeholders.” (p.56). What follows in subsequent sections seems to contradict the literal truth of this statement. To implement the plan, a Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) composed of representatives of all agencies having involvement in development policy and process in Baltimore County is proposed and this group is to develop strategies to carry out the policies and actions of the plan through intra agency projects, public private partnerships, etc. ....” P. 216. Stakeholders are to be involved by way of “semi-annual meetings.” P. 217. We take issue with this proposal. We believe that, to be involved in a meaningful way, we need to be at the table, involved in discussions when strategies and action plans are being developed. At the very least, we would suggest that the County create sub-area panels of stakeholders that would meet several times annually to make recommendations to the larger interagency group.

PAGE #	COMMENT	NOTE
iii	Goal One - add: Protect the character and economic vitality of the rural communities.	
iii	Goal Two, 1 <sup>st</sup> point revise: " Provide adequate open space and recreational opportunities and increase connections to nature by linking open spaces and parks."	
iii	Goal Two, last point revise to: Ensure integration between regulations and sustainability programs such as LEED.	
v	Update Table of Contents (add Rural Communities, expand Economic Vitality and Sustainable Environment)	
1	2 <sup>nd</sup> ¶ 4 <sup>th</sup> sentence Change to: However, in certain limited instances,...	
6	3 <sup>rd</sup> ¶ revise next to last sentence: Regulations and ordinances will be consistent with specific items in <i>Master Plan 2020</i> , in those cases where State law requires consistency.	
7	Add to Community paragraph: "The provision of appropriate and adequate open spaces for sitting, meeting or gathering is critical.	
10-11	Add the Regional Land Development Policy Map – SEE ATTACHED	
11	2 <sup>nd</sup> ¶: Add space between paragraphs 2 and 3.	
11	Chart 1: Add Population projection for 2020.	
12	2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph, last sentence revise to read: The household size has remained at 2.46 persons per household since 2000.	
19	Corrected and replaced Chart 16. (See attached)	
13	Revised Chart 5. (See attached)	
19 (approx.)	Added Chart 17. (See attached.)	
24	2 <sup>nd</sup> ¶ "inside the URDL, allow greater density, (Add) <b>reduces VMT and the generation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions,...</b> "	
24	Preserve Existing Communities: (Add) "Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, improve air quality, strengthen housing and economic resources by sustaining/encouraging walkable communities by reducing VMT."	
28	Add period after last paragraph, 2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence.	
29	Proposed Land Use Map: Corrections are to be made.	
29	Revise Proposed Land Use Map - T-1 at Aberdeen Proving Ground.	
29	Move Proposed Land Use Map to after page 33	
30-32	Describe T-3 R and T-3 V + add pg #'s for these pgs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T-3 R (Rural Residential) consists of large lot single-family detached housing. Plantings are informal. All setbacks are generally 50+ feet. Lots are deep to accommodate a larger backyard. Density varies between 2 to 5 acres per dwelling.</li> <li>• T-3 V (Rural Village) takes into account the rural villages of Hereford and Jacksonville. The sub-urban zone has a mix of smaller scale retail/office and some residential uses. T-3 V preserves the rural village character featuring an attractive and traditional pattern of houses, commercial establishments, open spaces and their relationship to roadways.</li> </ul>	
36	Add new paragraph: see attached.	
38	Add action: "(10) Develop standards to assure the provision of appropriate and adequate open spaces that meet the needs of new residents."	
41	Action #4 revise: Continue to administer community-based planning to ensure	

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	conformance with the Master Plan, and that the resulting plans and projects address community concerns, and are successfully implemented.	
41	Correct legend in Land Mgt. Areas Map 1. (APPA) 2. MRRA	
42	Add commas in 3 <sup>rd</sup> paragraph after "Essex-Middle River" and "Towson Plan".	
45	Add definition of "mixed income rental housing". Will be in Glossary.	
47	Use "OCC" for Office of Community Conservation.	
48	Specifically reference "LEED-ND"	
48	Revise Action #3: "Existing revitalization tax credits could be made available to property owners as incentives for owner-financed improvements and upgrades that result in at least a 20% increase in energy efficiency."	
61	Action #4 revise: "County's" to "County".	
63	Revise roads changed from funded to unfunded and vice versa. Correct status.	
73	Line 4: 2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph: revise "gives" to "give", add comma after "however".	
83	Land Use: 2 <sup>nd</sup> line: revise "center" to "centers".	
84 et seq.	Revise Genstar to LaFarge- SEE ATTACHED	
85	Table 4: correct "Locheed" to "Lockheed".	
87	Action #2 revise: Complete Phases II and III of the Route 40 East corridor study including a zoning, design Charrette.	
91	Correct "Route 70" to "Route 702".	
92	2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph, last sentence: revise: Environmental issues involve reduced energy consumption via programs such as LEED.	
92	Revise Action #1: "...Consider an environmental overlay district that establishes the Middle River Redevelopment Area as requiring utilization of programs such as LEED, and using Environmental Site Design, and best management practices to enhance water quality.	
94	Action #4: revise: "Construct buildings along the street no higher than..."	
95	Towson - Action #16: Re-add "streetscape improvements along Washington Ave and The Plaza in front of the Old Courthouse should be maintained and enhanced as the premier public space in downtown Towson"	
100	Correct 173 to 219 miles	
100	1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph, 3 <sup>rd</sup> sentence revise: "It is rich in the history, traditions, and lifestyle of the Chesapeake Bay".	
100	2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph, 2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence revise: "...Bowleys Quarters and extensive County and State parks."	
102	1 <sup>st</sup> Policy revise: Ensure infill development is compatible with the community (neighborhood) and develop appropriate zoning controls to regulate development in a way that achieves this goal.	
104	Recreation and Parks: 1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph, last sentence correct "it's" to "its".	
105	Correct last sentence: "...eight feet above mean high tide,..."	
107	Historic: See attached.	
107 (approx.)	Add: Rural Communities: Agricultural Priority Preservation Areas (moved from page 196), and Rural Residential Areas, Rural Commercial Centers, added from <i>Rural Areas Amendment to Master Plan 2010</i> . See attached.	
118	1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph, line 4: correct the word "Principles", and add period at end of paragraph. Also correct spelling of "outreach".	
118	2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph, last sentence revise: "...63 percent pursue higher education upon graduation."	
118	Outreach: 1 <sup>st</sup> sentence revise: "...how to identify and address potential home	

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	emergencies.”	
122	Add: Action (4) Support regional workforce development initiatives and public/private partnerships to improve the regional workforce.	
123	3 <sup>rd</sup> ¶ - Delete the first two sentences: Police “The core responsibility...” etc.	
131	1 <sup>st</sup> sentence revise: “In order to provide an even higher level of Public Safety education...”	
136	Add Action: (3) Continue coordination of community health assessments and programs with local hospitals.	
140	Correct the heading: “Social Services”.	
142	Revise Policy to add “...transit and...”	
142	Add Actions 5,6,7 regarding transit and transportation. (See attached.)	
144	Action #5 revise: “Include libraries with public meeting areas as part of the civic space...”	
148	Add Action: “(7) Continue support of the Neighborspace Program as a proven mechanism for preserving smaller neighborhood oriented open spaces.”	
152	Revise Action “(4) Continue to require the provision of appropriate and adequate open space opportunities within or in proximity to the County's proposed Community Enhancement Areas. Evaluate the required local open space requirements to ensure that these remain adequate.”	
159	Correct number of jobs to 515,000.	
163	Revise Action #8: “Work with Sevestal or any subsequent owner regarding the future use of surplus land.”	
164	Revise Heading: Commercial Revitalization Districts	
168	1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph, 1 <sup>st</sup> sentence correct: ...”\$1.97 billion...” and 2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence: “...\$15 million...”	
169	Revise Heading: “Sustainable Agricultural Industry”	
172 -	Format of Headings and Subheadings will be revised to be consistent.	
174	Delete the last 2 sentences.	
176	Last paragraph, 3 <sup>rd</sup> sentence revise: “Over 61 sites located on various streams have trout present.”	
184	Identify impediments to, and opportunities for tree plantings along streams on private properties, and work to plant more trees on private lands.	
187	OSDS: 1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph, last sentence revise: “Some rural communities...”	
187	OSDS: 2nd paragraph, last sentence revise: “An evaluation of OSDS problem areas and management solutions is presented in the 1999...”	
189	2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph, 1 <sup>st</sup> sentence revise: “...urban development.”	
192	1 <sup>st</sup> ¶: Beginning with sentence #2 through end of ¶, Replace with “Zoning densities have been reduced on properties that are undeveloped consistent with the Critical Area law. Efforts to permanently preserve these lands that are important to the health of the Chesapeake Bay have also included the designation of much of the Coastal Area as a Maryland Rural Legacy Area. The County has built upon early State efforts in this area to permanently preserve over 1,000 acres of sensitive land.”	
194	Create Action #13: Continue to provide easement programs that provide	

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	financial benefits and flexibility of use to farmland owners to permanently preserve their farms and forests.	
196-197	Add APPA Map – (Same as Land Management Areas Map)	
199	Create Action #7: As part of any update to this section of the Master Plan the County will: ·Determine progress towards meeting the goals of the MALPF; ·Evaluate any shortcomings in the County’s ability to achieve the goals of MALPF; ·Determine and implement actions to correct identified shortcomings.	
201	Action 1 revise: Recommend that the following guidelines apply in evaluating rezoning requests.	
206	Amend Action #11 to: Address forest pests, diseases, and other biotic stressors and continue cooperative projects for suppression of Gypsy moths and control of exotic invasive species.	
206	Add Action #14: Continue to implement and improve deer management measures to better protect forest resources. Evaluate and address the impact that deer browsing has on priority forest determinations.	
212	2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph, last sentence revise: “To the extent there are no conflicts with this Master Plan, existing community plans will be carried forward in Master Plan 2020.”	
221	Glossary: added definitions. (See attached)	
224	1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph, last sentence: Change “inform” to “help guide”.	
227	Add: “Other Adopted Plans and Studies – Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plans (7/3/06) and Water Resources Element (Pending Adoption in 2010).	