



Maryland Department of Planning

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Matthew J. Power
Deputy Secretary

September 15, 2010

Ms. Brenda Dinne, Chief, Bureau of Comprehensive Planning
Carroll County Department of Planning & Zoning
225 North Center Street
Westminster MD 21157

Re: Finksburg Corridor Plan

Dear Ms. Dinne: *Brenda,*

Thank you for submitting the draft Finksburg Corridor Plan to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) for our review.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Jenny King at 410.767.4500 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Peter G. Conrad, AICP
Director of Local Government Assistance

Enclosures: MDP Comments on the Finksburg Corridor Plan, MDP 2009 Finksburg Corridor Plan Comments

cc: Steve Horn, Director, Carroll County Planning & Zoning
Daphne Daly, Carroll County Planning & Zoning
Jenny King, Regional Planner
Rich Josephson, Director, Planning Services
Rita Elliott, MDP Clearinghouse
File



**Maryland Department of Planning
Comments on the Finksburg Corridor Plan
September 15 2010**

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) appreciates the plan's inclusion of community-based goals and Maryland's 12 Visions into the Corridor Plan. MDP also appreciates the Fiscal Implications section, outlining the potential funding sources and responsibilities for improvements recommended in the plan's goals. MDP's July 2009 comments are attached and should be considered where applicable in the revised 2010 Plan document.

Capacity Analysis

MDP appreciates the inclusion of a capacity analysis in the Finksburg Corridor Plan. This will enable the Town to plan for future housing and associated infrastructure demands. It appears the Town uses a 2.89 persons per household figure (based on 2000 U.S. Census) to estimate the Town's future population and housing demands. Please be aware that a persons per household figure is not a static number and that population estimates derived from this figure may not accurately represent future population growth. If possible, MDP recommends including persons per household data, both in the past (1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000) and in the future (2010, 2015, 2020, etc.) to get a better estimate of an average persons per household figure.

According to the table on page 20 which illustrates total acreage by land use, 568.98 acres represents 100% of the total corridor. However, on page 23, 569.64 acres represents 100% of the total zoning acreage in the corridor. Although a small difference, to help readers avoid potential confusion, it is important to maintain a consistent figure throughout the document.

Corridor Plan and the Carroll County Water Resources Element

The following comments are related to the consistency of the draft Finksburg Corridor Plan with the adopted Carroll County Water Resources Element (WRE):

- The Carroll County WRE should be revised to reflect the water and sewer demand and point and non-point source pollution expected from implementation of the draft Finksburg Corridor Plan (at build-out or through the planning period used in the Corridor Plan). If the forecasts will require different solutions to address water resource needs, then the Carroll County WRE should be revised to include those solutions.
- The Finksburg Corridor Plan should indicate whether or not the forecasts of water and sewer demand and point and non-point source pollution in the Carroll County WRE are adequate representations of the water resource impacts expected from implementation of the Finksburg Corridor Plan.
- The Finksburg Corridor Plan should indicate whether or not the solutions to address water resource needs listed in the Carroll County WRE will be adequate to support implementation of the Finksburg Corridor Plan.

Relationship to the Liberty Reservoir Water Quality

One of the most significant physical attribute of the Finksburg community that affects planning for future growth and development is its proximity to the Liberty Reservoir. Much of the development within the gateway area, as well as within the balance of the corridor, predates the creation of Liberty Reservoir. As a result, the lot sizes and the treatment technologies used present a high risk for contamination, since there is little land to replace failing septic systems. The entire study area drains to Liberty Reservoir, which is a major drinking-water source for the Baltimore metropolitan area. Carroll County is a party to the *2005 Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement* and is a full participant in the ongoing Reservoir Watershed Management Program.

The Plan notes on page 32 that the treatment of sewage in the southern end of the Finksburg Corridor poses a substantial potential hazard to the Liberty Reservoir. In the absence of a community sewage system that can be properly managed, the potential for ground- and surface-water contamination is elevated.

On page 32, last full paragraph, the draft plan notes that the *2005 Reservoir Watershed Action Strategy* contains specific “commitments” that affect how land use and wastewater treatment issues can be addressed in the Finksburg corridor. It then quotes commitment items all of which pertain to existing and new point-source discharges from both municipal facilities and industrial facilities within the reservoir watersheds. The Plan discusses how it meets the commitments.

In the “Recommended Actions” section of the draft plan, there is a section for “Environmental Sensitivity”(p. 48). The first item in this section says,

- “Explore the feasibility of and options for developing a community wastewater system to address existing problem areas, promote environmentally friendly redevelopment, and provide greater protection for water quality in the Finksburg area.”
-Because wastewater management is such an important issue...in the Finksburg corridor, a comprehensive approach to wastewater management along the entire length of the corridor needs to be developed. The first step should be to develop a comprehensive study of the entire corridor to assess the feasibility of implementing a community wastewater system(s) and determine the various options for the types of facilities to manage wastewater.”
- ...”A community wastewater system that is designed to serve existing properties located closest to Liberty Reservoir would alleviate many of the concerns about potential groundwater contamination and failing [septic] systems. In keeping with the [*2005 Action Strategy*] the capacity, individual allocations, and design specifications of any community system should be strictly managed to prevent unintended growth and development... (p. 48)

After a comprehensive study it is suggested that connection to the new system should be made available to commercial and industrial properties as an incentive for redevelopment, and also should be made available to residential properties that are in an area identified as having septic problems, small lots and limited soil capabilities.

Land Use Recommendations

The top of page 39 states that through the Plan development process, residents credited the rural atmosphere with being a major contributor to the quality of life in the community. On page 41 (under #9) the plan states that although the Finksburg corridor itself is not rural, it does offer

glimpses to the surrounding countryside that hint at the more rural context within which the corridor is situated. Consideration should be made to clarify for the reader that these two statements are saying the same thing.

The map on page 42 is difficult to see the insets. Consideration could be made to use photographs from the road bed to illustrate viewsheds.

Transportation Recommendations

Consideration should be made to incorporate Carroll Area Transit and how that service could benefit the Corridor.

Recommendation #7 (bottom of page 47) notes the Maryland Midland Railway and the need to consider additional freight transport. The Maryland Department of Transportation's Office of Freight and Multi-modalism could be contacted to discuss freight movement in Carroll County and how it fits within the context of Maryland's freight movement planning.

Transportation

MDP recommends managing land developments along the MD 140 corridor and developing a well planned local roadway network with frontage roads or rear roads to alleviate MD 140 traffic pressure. The Plan includes good recommended actions to address such issues.

In addition, MDP strongly supports to transform MD 140 into a controlled access roadway. In working with the Maryland State Highway Administration, the County should address strategies supporting consolidation of access points onto MD 140. For instance, limiting left turn movements may be good in some areas but may not be good in some areas. Within Finksburg, the strategies should allow left turns since it is a community that the County wants some growth and within PFA. Developing an intersection control plan that limits left turning movements onto MD 140 would be another good strategy to address traffic safety and circulation along MD 140.

It will be helpful in planning bicycle and pedestrian connections and mapping out the existing inventory of pedestrian and bike facilities on page 46. Not only new developments but also existing residential communities should have sidewalks/bikeways that connect neighborhoods to commercial/activity centers. The Plan should identify proposed locations and implement timeframes and funding sources for the proposed pedestrian and bicycle facilities.