

# Finksburg Corridor Plan



60-DAY REVIEW DRAFT

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Carroll County Planning & Zoning Commission

60-Day Review Draft

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

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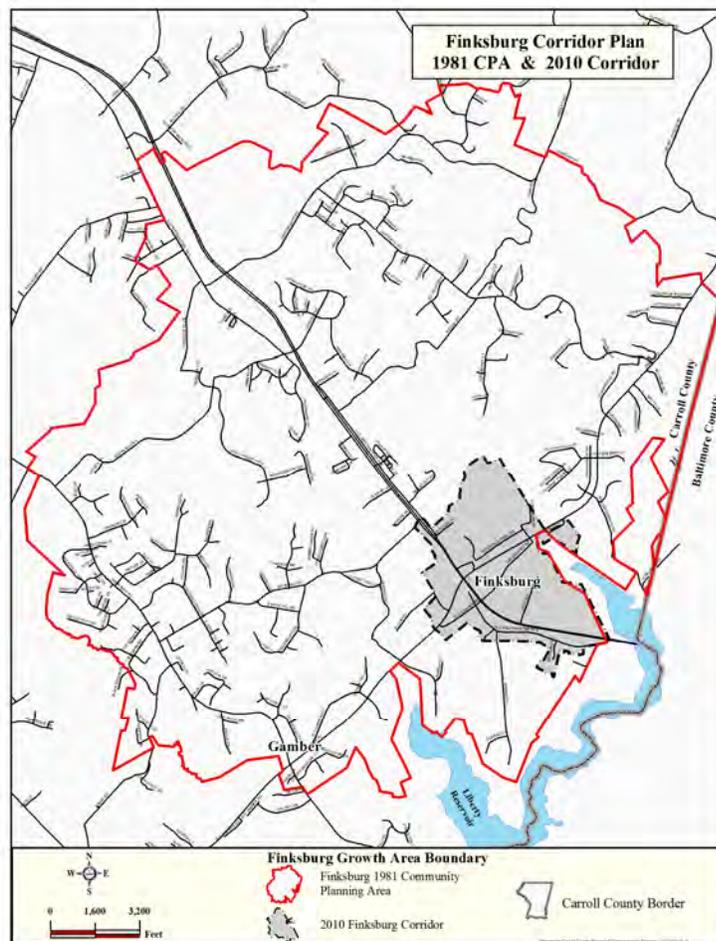
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# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### ❖ What is the Finksburg Corridor Plan?

The Finksburg Corridor Plan is a long-range planning document that will guide the growth and development of the Finksburg corridor, roughly defined as the area along the MD 140 corridor from the county line in the east to Kays Mill Road in the west. The effort began as a comprehensive update to the 1981 *Finksburg Area and Environs Comprehensive Plan*, a plan that covered almost the entire 4<sup>th</sup> election district. The area covered by the 1981 plan formed the “study area” for this plan, allowing for a survey and analysis of the area that would indicate the most appropriate extent for a new corridor. The policies and recommended actions within the Finksburg Corridor Plan are the culmination of staff research, various community participation opportunities, and direction from the Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission.



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## ❖ Community Input

In preparation for the update of the *Finksburg Area and Environs Comprehensive Plan*, several opportunities were taken to gather input from resident, business owners, and community leaders on the important issues facing the Finksburg area. Interviews were conducted with community officials and leaders to help identify critical planning issues relating to growth management, transportation, community facilities, economic development, and natural resource protection, among others. A community survey was mailed to all property owners in the 4<sup>th</sup> (Woolerys) election district to gather additional input on similar topics. The survey received a 32 percent response rate from the 5,300 that were mailed out. Four workshops also were held to define a vision and goals for the Finksburg comprehensive plan, and to provide input on proposed text and map recommendations. Finally, a follow-up survey was conducted to gauge support for the text and map recommendations. Of the 5,300 surveys mailed out, approximately 10 percent were returned. The results of the input received from the interviews, surveys, and community workshops were incorporated into a draft document that was circulated for public review in May 2009.

During the public review period, several community meetings were held and a public hearing took place on July 28, 2009. Approximately 100 written and oral comments were received on the plan. Those comments were incorporated into a revised draft of the plan that was presented to the Planning Commission for review in November 2009. Work sessions on the revised draft were held on January 19, 2010 and June 15, 2010. On July 20, 2010, the Planning Commission approved the plan for 60-day review.....[fill in remaining steps in process as they progress]

## ❖ Maryland's Twelve Visions

The Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 (the Planning Act) was based on eight "Visions," which were revised and expanded in 2009 as part of the Smart, Green, and Growing legislation. County and municipal plans are required to implement and establish a set of policies based on the Visions.

Making the Visions part of Maryland's planning and zoning enabling legislation gives local jurisdictions a concise statement of Maryland's priorities for their plans. The twelve visions are as follows:

- (1) Quality of life and sustainability: a high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water, and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment;
- (2) Public participation: citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals;
- (3) Growth areas: growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers;

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(4) Community design: compact, mixed–use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near available or planned transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archeological resources;

(5) Infrastructure: growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sustainable manner;

(6) Transportation: a well–maintained, multimodal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers;

(7) Housing: a range of housing densities, types, and sizes provides residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes;

(8) Economic development: economic development and natural resource–based businesses that promote employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State’s natural resources, public services, and public facilities are encouraged;

(9) Environmental protection: land and water resources, including the Chesapeake and coastal bays, are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources;

(10) Resource conservation: waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas are conserved;

(11) Stewardship: government, business entities, and residents are responsible for the creation of sustainable communities by collaborating to balance efficient growth with resource protection; and

(12) Implementation: strategies, policies, programs, and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, state, and interstate levels to achieve these Visions.

## ❖ Finksburg Community’s Vision

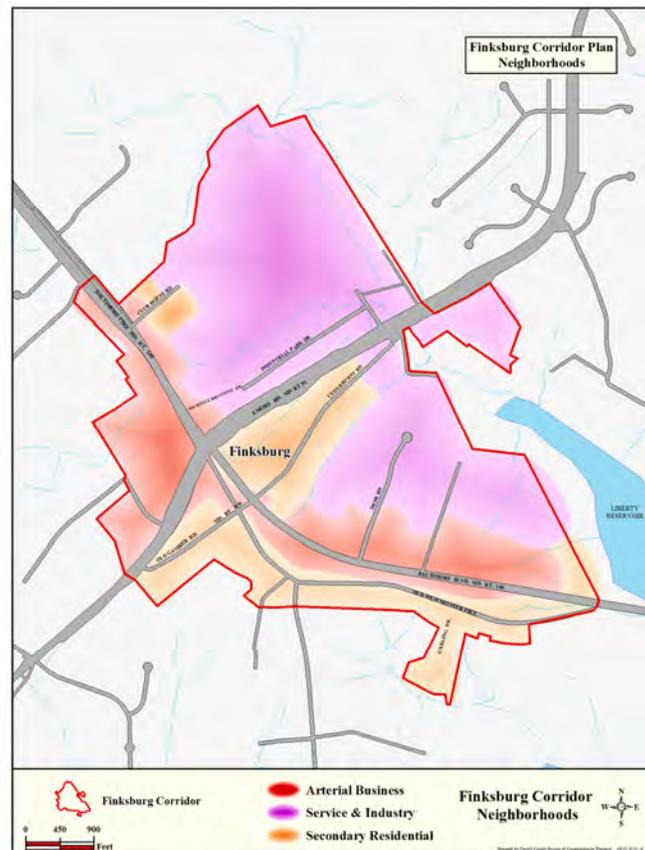
The following vision statement represents the preferred future for the community, as expressed by participants in the various community input opportunities. Future decisions and activities of the community will be consistent with this vision. Members of the community will strive to bring about the changes that will make this vision attainable.

*The entrance to the Finksburg community provides a welcoming gateway to Carroll County. The core of the community is a hub for local commercial and social activities. Traffic flows through the community safely and efficiently, integrating the*

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*characteristics of the activity center. The Liberty Reservoir watershed is a recreational and functional asset to the community that provides a clean water supply to the region. New residential development respects the heritage of the community and its conservation ideals. The Finksburg corridor is surrounded by preservation and protection of open space and agricultural and resource lands, which also showcase the finer qualities of the county.*

Additionally, individual vision statements were crafted for each of the three “neighborhoods” identified within the corridor area. These vision statements reflect the differing characters of each neighborhood and the unique future each has in the context of this plan.



## Arterial Business Neighborhood

*The Arterial Business area serves as the backbone of the Finksburg Corridor and an attractive gateway into Carroll County. It contains a variety of small-scale business, office and retail uses that meet the daily needs of the surrounding community while at the same time offering travel-related services to highway users. A sophisticated level of landscaping and site and building design create a welcoming gateway to the community and the county. Visual clutter is minimized and site lighting is subdued. The area provides opportunities for community events and social encounters at established gathering spaces. Many properties have been redeveloped, utilizing a variety of financial incentives and infrastructure improvements created to fulfill the vision for the area. Minimal access points along MD 140 and controlled turning movements allow for safe*

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*highway travel. Pedestrian and bicycle activity is directed away from the highway to the secondary roadways, where lower vehicle speeds and volumes provide a safe and pleasant environment. Care for the quality of the nearby Liberty Reservoir and surrounding natural features is reflected in priority being placed on low-impact site design, effective state-of-the-art stormwater and wastewater management, green building technologies and a net improvement in the quality of natural features throughout the area.*

## Secondary Residential Neighborhood

*The Secondary Residential areas balance the commercial and industrial components of the Finksburg Corridor with convenient, attractive residential neighborhoods. Community heritage preservation is a common goal. Respect for the historical buildings and community heritage is demonstrated through well-maintained older buildings, new buildings that respond to neighborhood patterns and building styles, and renovations or additions that are compatible with original structures. Community water and wastewater systems address existing or potential failure of private wells and septic systems. In the part of the neighborhood along Old Westminster Pike, the community systems support redevelopment efforts through the creation of a limited number of new residences that are compatible in scale with the surrounding historic neighborhood. This allows for a transition between the Arterial Business part of the corridor and the established residences on the old road. Residents are able to safely move through their neighborhoods on foot and bicycle through a network of sidewalks and paths. The roadways in the area are an integral part of an interconnected network of streets throughout the corridor. Concerns about “cut-through” traffic are minimized because visual and functional improvements to MD 140 and MD 91 have been made to make those roadways the preferred travel routes for non-local traffic. Water quality and environmental protection are supported through the retention of existing forest land, reforestation and planting of native species, low-impact site design, and green building technologies. A shared ethic of natural resource protection is found throughout the area.*

## Service and Industry Neighborhood

*The Service and Industry area provides local employment opportunities and convenient yet buffered locations for heavy service, manufacturing and processing operations. Commercial and retail establishments exist only to the extent they serve and are subordinate to the service and industrial uses in the area. This area is set back from the main arterial roadways. Structures and landscaping along MD 140, MD 91, and the secondary residential streets screen the Service and Industry area uses from general view and help to mitigate the impact of noise, fumes, and traffic, thereby supporting the vision for an attractive gateway to the county. Traffic generated by services and industries in the area can move freely and safely to and from their destinations because of circulation improvements made to MD 140 and MD 91. Similarly, circulation improvements eliminate the potential conflicts between service and industrial traffic, and traffic generated locally or by through traffic on the highway. The quality of water in Liberty Reservoir and its tributaries is protected from contamination through vegetative buffers on properties in the area, state-of-the-art stormwater and wastewater management systems, low-impact site design, and green building technologies.*

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## ❖ Finksburg Community's Goals

In addition to developing a unique set of visions statement within the community, a set of goals are also developed that are distinct to the needs of the community and that are more specific than the county-wide goals. The participants in this planning process identified the following priorities for the Finksburg community.

### Land Use

- To encourage redevelopment as a way to promote new small-scale business, office and retail activity within the corridor
- To provide opportunities for residential uses along secondary roadways that are compatible in design and density with historic structures and the existing community character
- To strengthen the boundaries of the corridor by supporting resource protection and land preservation on lands adjacent to the corridor

### Transportation

- To move traffic through the MD 140 corridor without disrupting the community's economic and social activities
- To spur transportation and design improvements in the MD 140 corridor to promote the gateway concept
- To create opportunities for non-motorized travel in the community and to provide additional recreational opportunities for all age levels

### Environmental Sensitivity

- To recognize and respond to the essential need to protect water quality in Liberty Reservoir and its tributaries
- To create development that provides positive environmental impact

### Gateway and Design

- To establish a visually appealing gateway that welcomes residents and visitors to Carroll County
- To provide incentives for redevelopment within the Finksburg corridor that creates community assets
- To provide flexibility in regulations and design standards to allow for the creation of the concepts desired in the community's core
- To create usable and friendly public spaces and community gathering spots
- To locate the appropriate needed public facilities in the corridor
- To enhance the feeling of public and personal safety

## ❖ Major Concepts & Intended Accomplishments

In examining the study area for this update (the 1981 planning area), a clear contrast was discerned between higher intensity uses focused on the gateway area and historic Finksburg community, and the lower intensity uses and zoning just beyond this area. Within the gateway area is found a concentration and intensity of transportation issues, aesthetic concerns, and environmental concerns related to the reservoir and its headwaters not found elsewhere in the study area. Much of the land covered by the 1981 plan that lies outside of the gateway area already has been developed as low-density residential subdivisions, though some pockets of

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agricultural and resource lands also exist. Outside the gateway, transportation concerns and aesthetic issues related to commercial and industrial uses are more isolated. Additionally, environmental concerns here are mitigated somewhat by the much lower intensities of land uses and zoning. Because of the highly differentiated character of these two areas, the *Finksburg Corridor Plan* culminates in the creation of a much smaller plan area focused on urban development and redevelopment issues. Lower density areas of the 1981 planning area are now addressed in the countywide master plan.

The *Finksburg Corridor Plan* represents changes in the policy of land use development that have taken place in the Finksburg area since the 1970's. The elimination of the Community Planning Area (now referred to as "Designated Growth Area") designation for the land outside of the Corridor boundaries affirms the concept that this portion of the county is best suited for lower intensity land use. The Finksburg Corridor area that remains is a mix of historic residential areas, contemporary retail uses, light and heavy industrial development, and scattered community institutions and uses. The urban nature of this corridor area and the need to focus redevelopment and revitalization efforts within it make the corridor suitable to remain a Designated Growth Area.

This plan focuses on balancing the mix of planned land uses within the corridor to promote the plan's vision.

- The Boulevard land use designation promotes retention and creation of business, office and retail uses that will serve both the local community and the highway user. Limited opportunities for residential development are also envisioned for the Boulevard area, particularly on land that lies between MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike. In this vicinity, opportunities are envisioned for highway-oriented business uses along MD 140 and residential or mixed uses along Old Westminster Pike, to create a more compatible character of development within the historic Finksburg area. Realizing this type of development, however, may require that community water and sewer service be available given the relatively small lot sizes.
- Existing Industrial areas are retained, with the exception of areas immediately adjacent to MD 140, where the Boulevard designation replaces Industrial in recognition of the plan's vision for the gateway and the predominantly commercial nature of the area already. No expansion to the Industrial areas is promoted, in response to the plan's emphasis on environmentally sensitive development and the need to protect water quality and improve the appearance of the gateway area.
- Residential land use designations respond to the historic community of Finksburg and the neighborhoods along Cedarhurst and Club House roads, providing opportunities for residential uses along secondary roads to blend more seamlessly with the existing community character.,

The importance of the MD 140 corridor to the vitality of Carroll County is clearly recognized within this plan through efforts to improve the functionality and appearance of the roadway. This can be accomplished best by allowing fewer access points along the highway and encouraging development that is in keeping with the nature of high volume traffic close to the corridor. In cooperation with the State Highway Administration, recommended improvements to the MD 140 corridor within the gateway area have been developed as part of this long-range plan.

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In addition to being a main thoroughfare for Carroll County, the MD 140 corridor within the gateway area serves as the focal point for many community activities. Balancing both the needs of the Finksburg community and the region as a whole is vital in developing an effective plan. As a result, continuing to build upon and improve the character of the Finksburg community is a primary goal of this plan. A Boulevard concept was developed to achieve the variety and intensity of land uses and quality of site design necessary to support the vision. The Boulevard designation replaces the Commercial designation and also applies in limited instances to some Industrial Restricted designated land.

This plan also recognizes the sensitivity of the adjacent Liberty Reservoir and the need to protect this valuable drinking water resource from the detrimental effects of high impact land uses, poor stormwater management, and outdated wastewater disposal systems, among other things. At the same time, it recognizes that much of the existing development occurred without the benefit of today's technology to control pollutants carried in wastewater and stormwater runoff. The only way to correct this situation will be to promote the redevelopment of the corridor, thus triggering the review of development proposals using current environmental regulations. One of the best incentives to redevelop would be the provision of a community wastewater system, which not only would provide the needed redevelopment incentive but also would address existing and potential environmental hazards posed by the preponderance of individual septic systems located in such close proximity to the reservoir.

## ❖ Demographic Characteristics

### *1 Woolery's (4<sup>th</sup>) Election District*

The Woolerys election district has experienced steady growth since 1930. The greatest increases have occurred since 1960, when the study area had a population of 4,368. While Carroll County as a whole has also been experiencing significant growth since 1960, the election district has grown faster than the County as a whole. Both Carroll County and the election district have been growing at a faster rate than the State of Maryland since 1960.

During the decade 1970 - 1980, the Woolerys election district grew by 73 percent from 6,532 people in 1970 to 11,296 people in 1980, as shown in the *Population Trends* table. The election district has grown at a faster rate than the County since 1930. In 2000, the election district contained approximately 10.8 percent of the entire Carroll County population. October 2009 estimates place the population for the Woolerys election district at 18,403 – an increase of 2,074 or 12.7 percent since 2000.

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## Population Trends 1930 – 2000

Year	Woolerys Election District		Carroll County		Maryland	
	Population	% Change	Population	% Change	Population	% Change
1930	2,629	N/A	35,978	N/A	1,631,526	N/A
1940	3,072	17	39,054	9	1,821,244	12
1950	3,757	22	44,907	15	2,343,001	29
1960	4,368	16	52,785	18	3,100,689	32
1970	6,532	50	69,006	31	3,923,897	27
1980	11,296	73	96,356	40	4,216,933	7
1990	13,992	24	123,372	28	4,780,753	13
2000	16,329	17	150,897	22	5,296,486	11

Source: U. S. Census Summary Tape File 1A

According to the 2000 Census, the Woolerys Election District had 16,329 people residing in 5,654 households. The average number of persons per household was 2.88. October 2009 estimates place the households for the Woolerys election district at 6,376 – an increase of 722 since 2000. The next table shows types of households for 1990 and 2000 for the Woolerys Election District, Carroll County, and Maryland. Family households consist of a householder and one or more persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. The number of households in the election district increased by 21 percent from 1990 to 2000. The number of persons per household is slightly higher for the election district than that of the County or State.

## Households by Type 1990 and 2000

Household Type	Woolerys Election District		Carroll County		Maryland	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Family Households	4,017	4,735	33,909	41,094	1,245,814	1,359,318
Married-couple families	3,574	4,189	29,476	34,936	948,563	994,549
Other family, male householder	129	190	1,197	1,808	65,362	84,893
Other family, female householder	314	356	3,236	4,350	231,889	279,876
Non-family households	648	919	8,339	11,409	503,177	621,541
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>4,665</b>	<b>5,654</b>	<b>42,248</b>	<b>52,503</b>	<b>1,748,991</b>	<b>1,980,859</b>
Persons per household	3.0	2.89	2.85	2.81	2.67	2.61
Group Quarters Population	0	8	2,915	3,581	113,856	134,056

Source: U. S. Census Summary Tape File 1A

In 2000, family households (2 or more related people living in one unit) represented approximately 84 percent of the total community. Approximately 88 percent of the family households were married-couple families, which accounted for 74 percent of the Woolerys Election District's total households. Non-family households (people unrelated to the householder, or those living alone) accounted for approximately 16 percent of the households in the community. The majority (79%) of these people lived alone, with seniors living alone accounting for 5.1 percent of the total households. In 2000, the majority (75%) of households in the election district contained 2, 3, or 4 people. Family households followed a similar trend. Most of the non-family households contained one person.

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The 2000 Census shows that the majority of households had an income ranging between \$50,000 and \$149,999. As shown in the following table, the median family income was slightly higher than the median household income for the election district. Countywide, the median household income was \$60,021, and the median family income was \$66,430 in 2000.

Household and Family Income 2000				
Income Range	Woolerys Election District		Carroll County # of Households	State of Maryland # of Households
	# of Households (5,682 total)	# of Families (4,768 total)		
Less than \$10,000	179	44	1,866	137,199
\$10,000 - \$14,999	112	73	1,865	83,328
\$15,000 - \$24,999	366	225	4,379	188,104
\$25,000 - \$34,999	430	278	4,663	212,135
\$35,000 - \$49,999	718	589	7,813	305,987
\$50,000 - \$74,999	1,510	1,308	13,603	427,180
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1,084	1,070	8,933	268,558
\$100,000 - \$149,999	993	922	7,259	230,285
\$150,000 or more	290	259	2,220	129,019
Median Household Income	\$67,500		\$60,021	\$52,868
Median Family Income	\$72,099		\$66,430	\$61,876
Per Capita Income	\$25,878		\$23,829	\$25,614

Source: U. S. Census Summary Tape File 3A

## 2 Finksburg Corridor Area

Within the Finksburg Corridor area itself, there are approximately 113 residences. Using the 2000 Census average household size for the Woolerys election district of 2.89 people, it is estimated that 327 people live within the Corridor area. The County's Buildable Land Inventory, which estimates potential lot yield based on zoning or land use designations and parcel acreage, indicates that approximately 152 additional residential units could be constructed in the corridor based on land use designations. This would equate to an additional 439 people. However, it should be noted that the densities typically associated with the Suburban Residential land use designation, which is the one indicated for many properties in the corridor area, likely could not be realized today without public water and sewer. The Suburban Residential designation typically is associated with R-10,000 zoning, which allows for approximately 4 units per acre. The minimum acreage required for a private well and septic system is at least one acre. As a result, a more realistic number of potential future residential units in the corridor area probably is around 38, or about 110 additional people.

Residences within the corridor area have a total assessed value of \$24,044,318, for an average value of \$212,782. The 72 properties in the corridor classified as commercial in use have a total assessed value of \$45,420,184. The 24 properties in the corridor classified as industrial in use have a total assessed value of \$28,622,820.

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## Chapter 2: Corridor Plan

### ❖ Goals

#### Land Use

- To encourage redevelopment as a way to promote new small-scale business, office and retail activity within the corridor
- To provide opportunities for residential uses along secondary roadways that are compatible in design and density with historic structures and the existing community character
- To strengthen the boundaries of the corridor by supporting resource protection and land preservation on lands adjacent to the corridor

#### Transportation

- To move traffic through the MD 140 corridor without disrupting the community's economic and social activities
- To spur transportation and design improvements in the MD 140 corridor to promote the gateway concept
- To create opportunities for non-motorized travel in the community and to provide additional recreational opportunities for all age levels

#### Environmental Sensitivity

- To recognize and respond to the essential need to protect water quality in Liberty Reservoir and its tributaries
- To create development that provides positive environmental impact

#### Gateway and Design

- To establish a visually appealing gateway that welcomes residents and visitors to Carroll County
- To provide incentives for redevelopment within the Finksburg core that creates community assets
- To provide flexibility in regulations and design standards to allow for the creation of the concepts desired in the community's core
- To create usable and friendly public spaces and community gathering spots
- To locate the appropriate needed public facilities in the corridor
- To enhance the feeling of public and personal safety

The Finksburg corridor is situated along MD 140 and includes adjacent lands that have the greatest potential to be affected by any new development and activity related to the corridor. The Current Conditions and Needs Analysis sections of this chapter provide background information about the entire study area, as well as more detailed analysis of the Finksburg community core. The Recommended Actions and Fiscal Implications sections focus primarily on the corridor area only, and provide steps that can be taken to achieve the community vision.

The Carroll County comprehensive plan covers many issues- such as schools, environment, heritage, community facilities, and employment - that also affect the Finksburg

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corridor. This chapter explores characteristics that are unique to the corridor and deserve special attention within this plan.

## ❖ Current Conditions

### *1 Historic Development and Cultural Resources*

From the beginning of colonization until the county's founding in January, 1837, the lands in and around Finksburg lay at the western edge of Baltimore County. Substantial colonial land grants and patents are recorded throughout the area, but they were often speculative holdings that remained undeveloped until well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the vast majority of the occupied parcels in the Finksburg area ranged between 50 and 200 acres. The relatively small size of the area's farmsteads reflected the constraints on available capital and labor typical of the time. It also reflected the preference for cultivating food crops such as wheat, rye and corn, which required less land and labor than the tobacco crops of the colonial tidewater estates.

The preference for food crops also reflected the growing existence of water-powered mills that used the many strong-flowing streams and creeks of the Piedmont to process grains and other products. It is estimated that by 1794 at least thirty-one mills were operating in what is now eastern Carroll County. Thus, the rural landscape around Finksburg evolved into a pattern of relatively small farmsteads and rural communities organized around an expanding network of water-powered mills and transportation corridors for moving products to market.

In an effort to improve travel conditions and commerce in the State, an 1804 State law was passed providing for the incorporation of three private entities that would be responsible for the construction of three turnpikes radiating out from Baltimore. One of these was to follow a route from Baltimore through Reisterstown to the Pennsylvania line towards Hanover, and through Westminster to the Pennsylvania line towards Petersburg. The latter of these routes became the Westminster Turnpike. As the turnpike was established, clustered settlements grew up along the route at crossroads or other geographically convenient points. These settlements provided goods or services for travelers and a centralized point for mail service. They also served as hubs for getting local products to market. The village of Finksburg and the settlements of Sandymount and Carrollton P.O. (Reese) are among such nodes.

Finksburg had its origins in the establishment of a tavern by Adam Fink in 1810 on 15 acres of land located along the turnpike. Development of the village followed soon after and consisted of residences and shops such as a blacksmith, a wheelwright, and other businesses that supported the local agricultural economy and the needs of residents in the area.<sup>1</sup> The map of Finksburg contained in the 1877 *An Illustrated Atlas of Carroll County Maryland* shows a tollhouse at the eastern end of the village, as well as a hotel, a tavern, a schoolhouse, two Methodist churches, the Mechanics Hall lodge and store, and about thirteen residences. About a

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<sup>1</sup> Finksburg Survey District (CARR-987) Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form; Joe Getty, 1985.

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dozen other residences and a copper and iron mine were located in the balance of the area defined in this plan as the Finksburg corridor.<sup>2</sup>

With the introduction of rail to the area in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, development patterns again began to shift. The Western Maryland Railroad reached Westminster in June, 1861 and later was completed to Hagerstown. Its route followed the course of the North Branch of the Patapsco River, entering Carroll County from the east at a point just north of Westminster Pike and the village of Finksburg. The line continued to follow the river to Westminster, where it continued west following tributaries of Double Pipe Creek. This entirely new transportation corridor prompted additional new settlements along its length. Among the villages that sprang up along the rail line were Patapsco and other nodes such as Gorsuch Station, Shamberger's Mill Station, Tank Station and a station that lay north of the village of Finksburg. The transportation advantages of the railroad encouraged commercial and industrial growth closer to the rail lines, as can still be seen in the industries located along the line north of Finksburg.

Despite advances in transportation and industry, growth in the area was comparatively slow until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1940, just over 3,000 people lived in the Woolery's (4<sup>th</sup>) election district, an area just slightly larger than this plan's study area. The population at that time exceeded the 1870 population for the election district (2,448 people) by only about 500 people. But while the 70 years between 1870 and 1940 yielded only about a 25 percent increase in population, the 70 years between 1940 and 2010 have yielded a 500 percent increase in population. Most of this growth occurred after 1960, at which time the election district still had not yet doubled in population from 1870.

A big contributor to the population growth in the study area after 1940 was another transportation improvement: the construction of MD 140. MD 140 (Baltimore Boulevard) was constructed roughly parallel to Westminster Pike, cutting off through movement along various sections of the road as the new highway intersected the old road's alignment. The more direct route of MD 140 and its bypassing of the more congested, urban environments of the Pike's villages, has redirected the vast majority of traffic to the highway. As a result, many of the historic villages and settlements have been eclipsed by late 20<sup>th</sup> century development patterns that favor low-density, highway-oriented uses. Likewise, the diminishing use of rail to transport passengers and freight has left many of the area's 19<sup>th</sup> century rail settlements to stand solely as reminders of a bygone era.

An influx of new residents have been drawn to the area over the last several decades by the appeal of the low-density countryside and easy automobile access to metropolitan Baltimore and its burgeoning northern and western suburbs. The rapidly changing cultural, social, and economic structure created by this suburbanization has reshaped the landscape of Finksburg and its surrounding area. However, vestiges of the old turnpike and many of the crossroads communities and rural agricultural patterns can still be found.

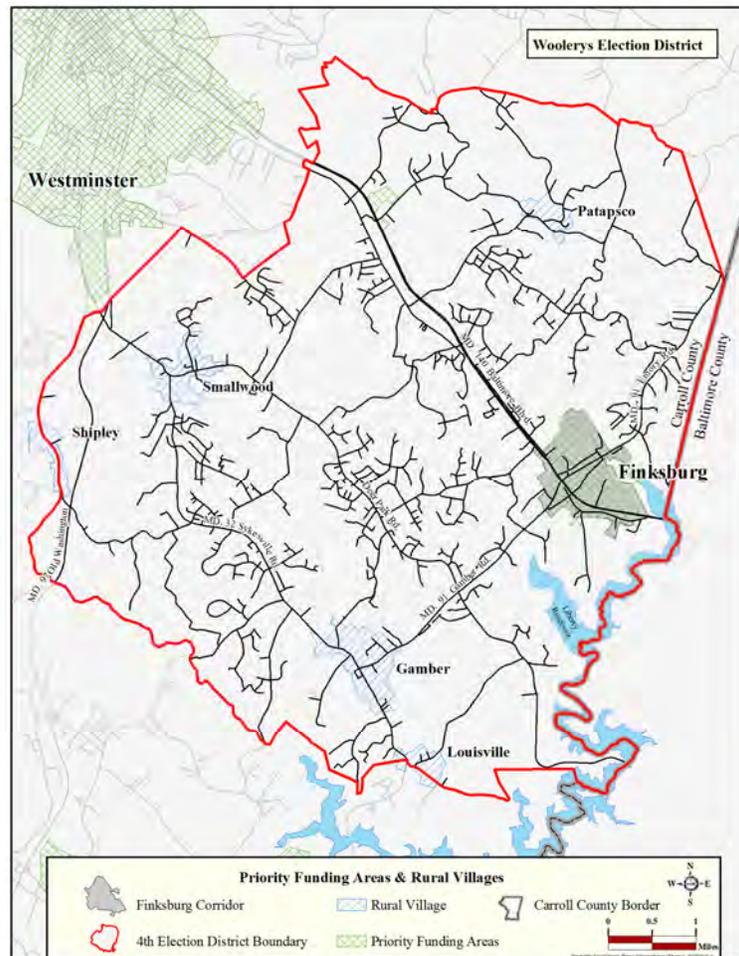
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<sup>2</sup> An Illustrated Atlas of Carroll County, Maryland; Historical Society of Carroll County, 1993 reprint.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## 2 Current Development Patterns

The residential portion of the Finksburg community is characterized by small lot sizes, a result of being developed prior to zoning and under health regulations that were much less restrictive than those of today. These lots may be poorly equipped to handle private septic systems due to limited land area for replacement systems. A significant amount of industry, as well as retail establishments, nearly surround this community. A historic church, sports park, and community shopping center provide many services to the immediate and surrounding neighborhoods. MD 140, which is a main traffic artery in the County, has a tremendous influence on this community. This neighborhood, as well as the surrounding business district, is located entirely within a State Priority Funding Area (PFA).

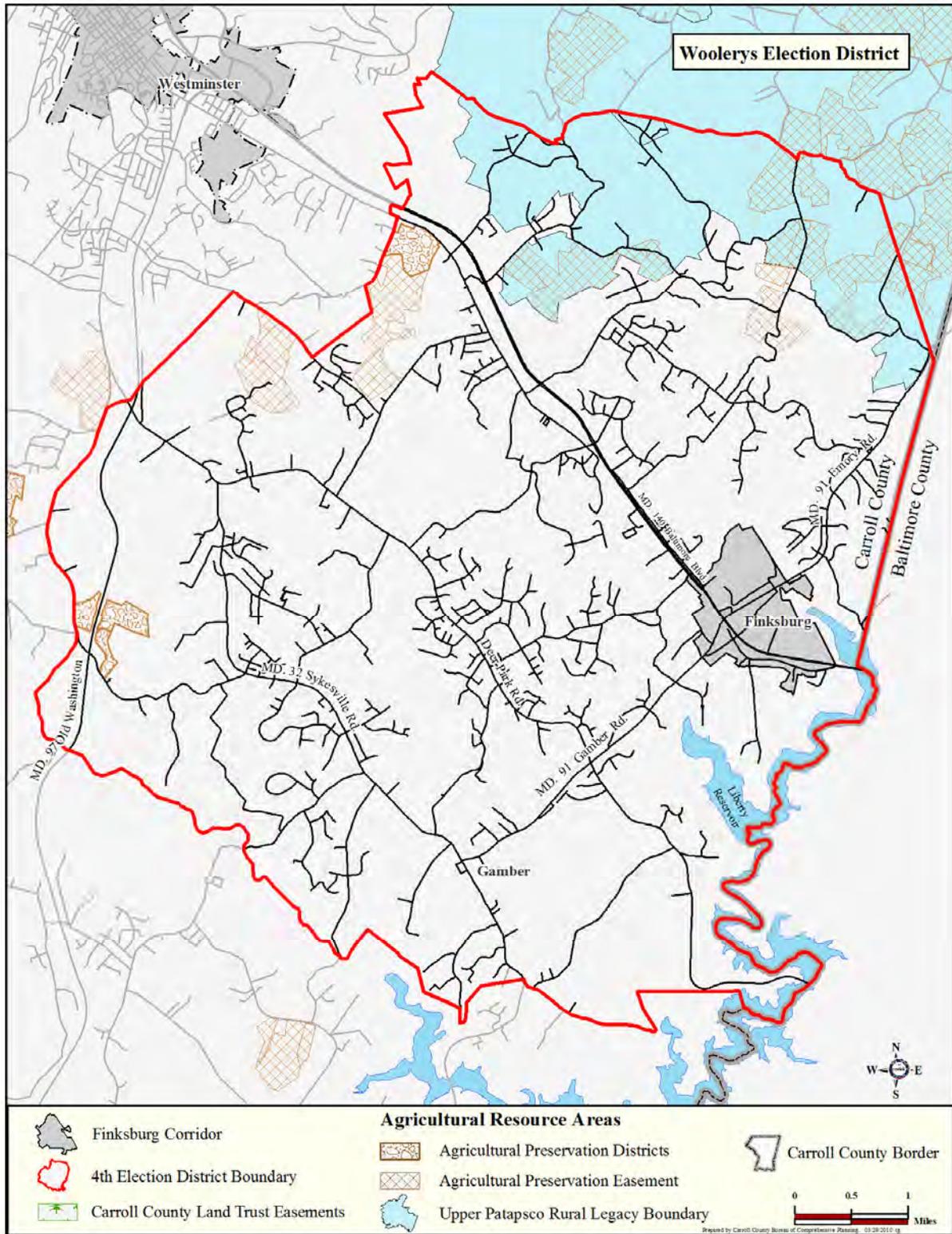


Within the election district as a whole, there are several fairly well-defined nodes of commercial development at the intersection of MD 140 and other roadways. Land surrounding the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91 encompasses the highest concentration of commercial uses in the Finksburg area. In this area, most retail and service-oriented businesses serve the local community.

Land that is currently used for industrial purposes within the election district is generally located near the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91. A portion of this land has railroad access available. Some light industrial use is also located on Bethel Road, just north of MD 140.

Much of the countryside that surrounds the Finksburg corridor is devoted to new, large-lot residential subdivisions that are an expansion of existing residential districts. At the outer edges of the Woolerys Election District, several large farms have been protected through land preservation programs, including the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, Rural Legacy, and the Carroll County Land Trust. The Upper Patapsco Watershed Rural Legacy Area reaches into the northernmost portion of the Woolerys Election District.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan



# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## ⇒ Corridor “Neighborhoods”

Three distinct “neighborhoods” have been identified within the Finksburg corridor. These neighborhoods are defined by their location and relationship to MD 140, as well as the dominant uses within the neighborhood and the vision for the future of the neighborhood as expressed in Chapter 1 of this plan.

The *Arterial Business* neighborhood is broadly defined as the area within the corridor that fronts directly onto MD 140 and is dominated by business uses. This area contains a mix of service-oriented retail uses, including auto-related services such as auto repair shops and gas stations, two retail centers (Walnut Park and Finksburg Plaza), a post office, and several restaurants, among other uses. Most, but not all, uses have direct access onto MD 140 and are not accessible safely by any means other than motor vehicles. The Arterial Business neighborhood is the one most closely associated with the Finksburg gateway, as it is the area that is most visible from the highway. It is also the area most often referred to with respect to the need to improve aesthetics and site design. Very few natural resources are found in this area, as it is nearly completely developed. All of the uses in this neighborhood rely on private wells and waste disposal systems.

The *Secondary Residential* neighborhood encompasses three separate areas adjacent to the Arterial Business neighborhood.

- On the south side of the MD 140 corridor, following Old Westminster Pike, lies the historic Finksburg community and its surrounding area. This neighborhood primarily consists of residential uses, along with community uses that include a church and park. Structures within this neighborhood generally were built in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Some properties within this neighborhood have frontage on both MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike, and may have commercial uses that lie within the Arterial Business neighborhood. Small areas of trees and isolated areas of steep slopes are the only natural resources that exist in this neighborhood, with the exception of a few more heavily forested parcels that lie close to the reservoir. All of the properties within this neighborhood have private well and septic systems.
- Another community within this neighborhood is situated on the north side of MD 140 along Cedarhurst Road. This community is dominated by residential uses that generally date to the early- to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. This neighborhood also contains a cemetery and two business uses with frontage on MD 140. Only the cemetery and a residence at the MD 140/MD 91 intersection have direct access to MD 140; all other properties have access from Cedarhurst Road, which connects to MD 140 and MD 91 at uncontrolled intersections. Lots are typically narrow and long, ranging in size but generally about ½ acre. Several lots are undeveloped. The properties that lie at the far eastern and western edges of this neighborhood contain forested areas, streams and steep slopes. All of the properties within this neighborhood have private well and septic systems.
- The third community within this neighborhood lies on the north side of MD 140 along Clubhouse Road. Six homes are situated in this neighborhood, as are the residentially-zoned portions of two properties occupied by a church and an

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

industrial use. Access to Clubhouse Road is from Old Westminster Pike, which has direct access onto MD 140 less than 100 feet to the south. Residential lots in this neighborhood are long and narrow, and generally between ½ to 1 acre in size. Most of the homes were constructed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. A large forested area exists on the residentially-zoned portions of the church and industrial properties; otherwise, no significant environmental features exist in this neighborhood. All of the properties within this neighborhood have private well and septic systems.

The *Service and Industry* neighborhood occupies the largest land area within the corridor, comprising almost its entire northern half. It is characterized by service-related businesses and processing and manufacturing operations. With the exception of the Congoleum plant that lies along MD 91 and the West Branch Patapsco River, the uses within this neighborhood are almost entirely screened from view along the major arterials. Access to properties is off of Dede Road, Cedarhurst Road, or Industrial Park Drive, except in the case of the CDJ Distillery property that has direct access onto MD 91 and a few properties in which the frontage lies along MD 140 within the Arterial Business neighborhood. The Service and Industry neighborhood contains a number of significant natural resources, including the West Branch Patapsco River and several of its tributaries, floodplain areas, areas of steep slopes, and wetlands. This neighborhood borders directly on the reservoir and the buffer lands surrounding it. All of the properties within this neighborhood have private well and waste disposal systems.

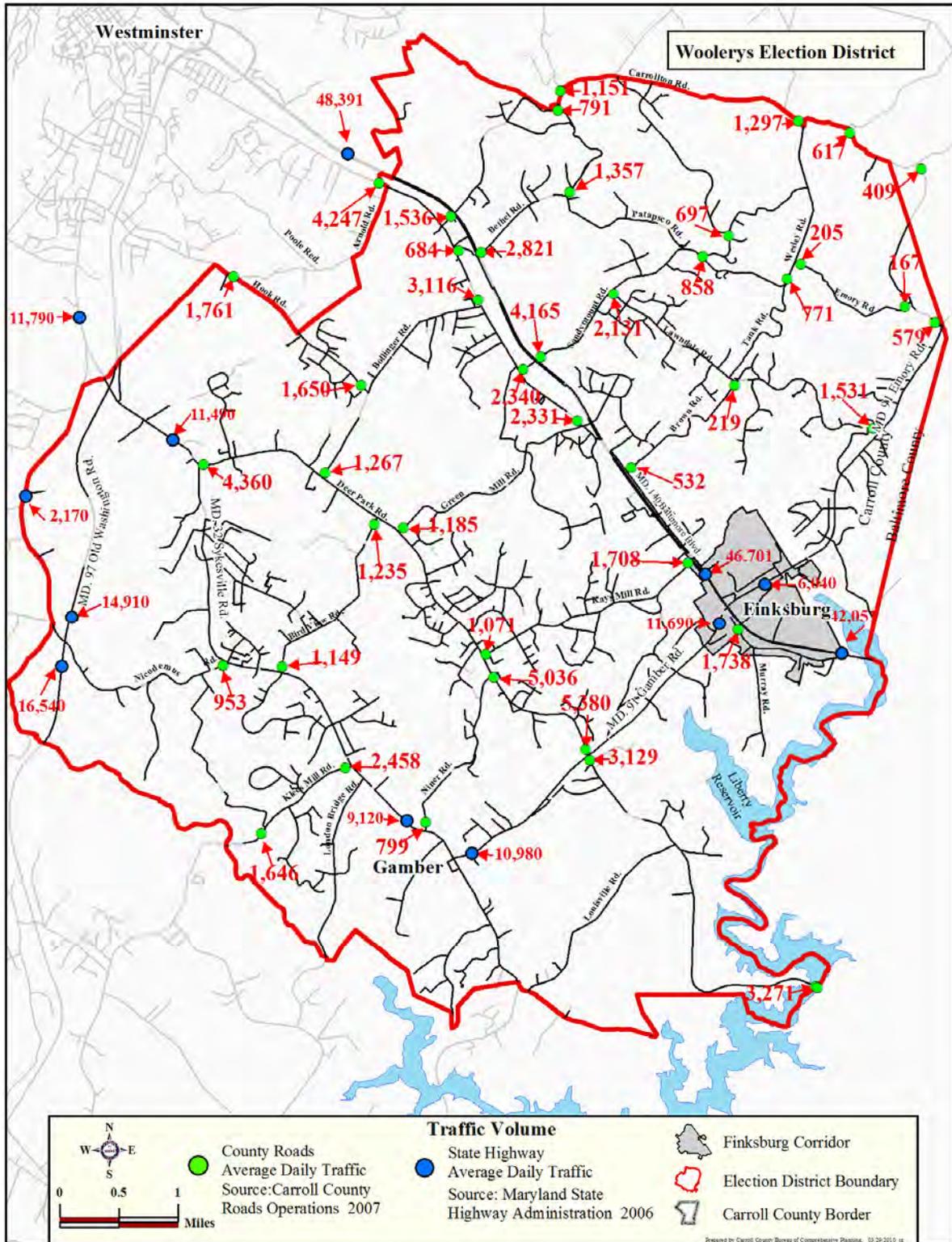
### 3 Transportation

The 1981 *Finksburg Area and Environs Comprehensive Plan* undertook a reexamination of the planned major streets that had been proposed in the 1970 Major Street Plan. Since 1970, the Agricultural zoning district had been created and there had been a greater recognition of the need to reduce densities and minimize non-point source pollution in the vicinity of Liberty Reservoir. As a result, the 1981 plan reduced the number of planned roads, emphasizing instead a system of local collector streets to move local traffic around the area and decrease congestion in the Finksburg and Gamber areas, in particular. Within the MD 140 corridor itself, the bulk of the planned roadways were proposed to facilitate movement to and around business locations once the planned median was constructed and various crossovers were eliminated. The 1981 plan also predicted the need to widen MD 140 to six lanes after 1999 due to increased traffic.

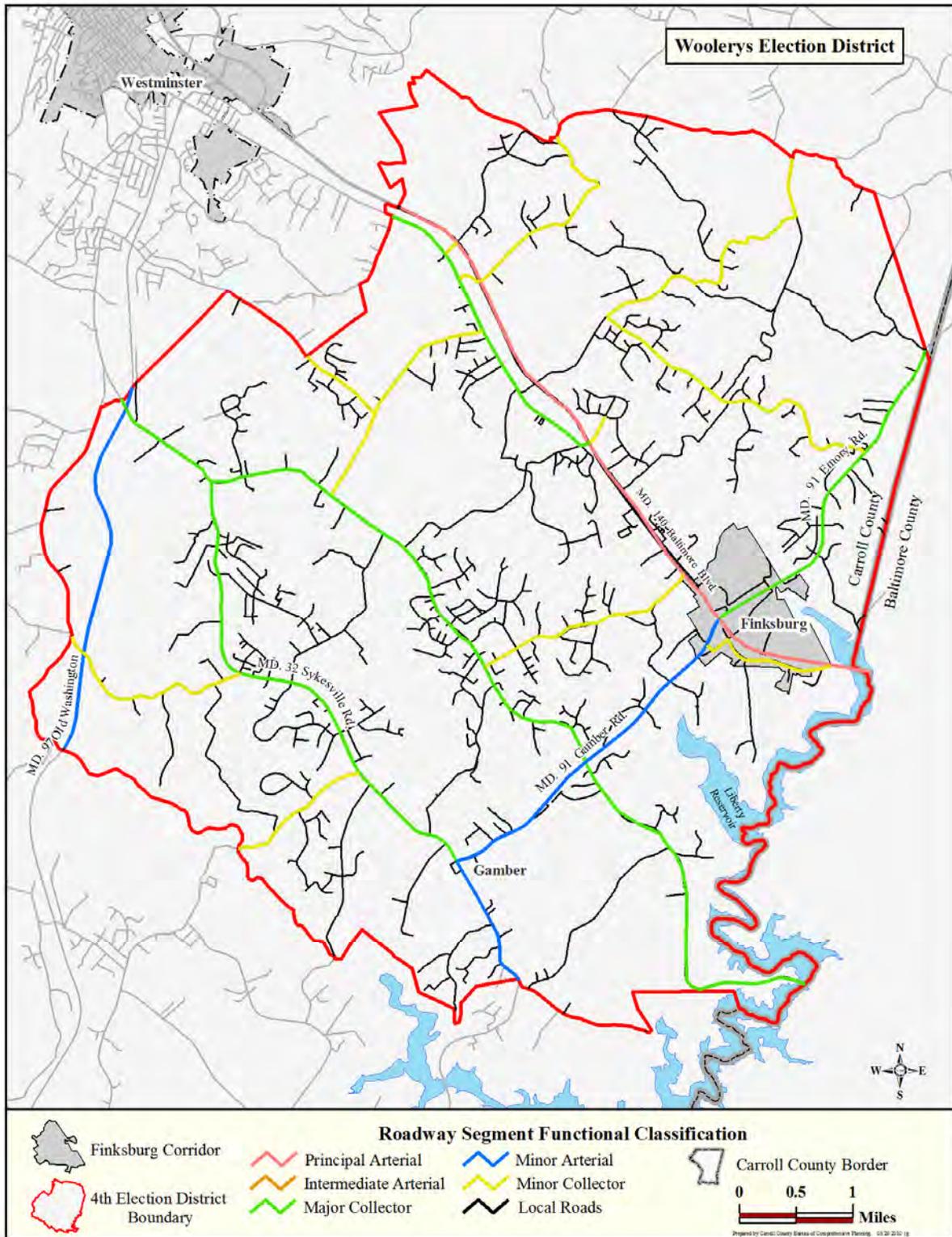
According to the 2007 State Highway Administration data, the MD 140 corridor handles approximately 46,700 vehicles per day within the Finksburg area. MD 140, from Westminster to Finksburg, is one of the most heavily traveled State roadways in the county.

Local countywide paratransit is the only transit system currently being utilized in the area. Rail and bus transit to downtown Baltimore originate from the Owings Mills and Reisterstown areas, respectively. A large portion of residents who commute to work in other counties travel by automobile, resulting in heavy volumes of peak-hour traffic on MD 91 and MD 140. Although a Park and Ride lot is available adjacent to Sandymount Park, it is underutilized during the typical workday.

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## 4 Inventory of Existing Use of Land

The comprehensive plan designates the land uses intended for properties within the area. These uses are controlled through the zoning of the property. However, not all uses are consistent with the zoning or land use designations because some uses were in existence prior to zoning or changes in zoning. If implemented effectively, the zoning should eventually be consistent with the land use designations.

During spring 2008, planning staff performed a “windshield” survey of actual land uses throughout the corridor. Staff viewed buildings, structures, and vegetation on each property to determine, as much as possible, the existing use of the land at that time. In some cases, residential subdivision plans and site development plans were reviewed to verify the approval status of the development. Property tax map information was also reviewed to determine the location of recorded (or platted) subdivision lots.

Existing use of land was inventoried according to the following categories: Mixed Use, Single-Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Agriculture/Resource, Public Use, Publicly Owned, and Vacant. The following table provides the total acreage of each category as identified in the Finksburg Corridor.

Use of Land	Finksburg Corridor	Percentage of Corridor (%)
Single-Family Residential	83.05	14.6%
Multi-Family Residential	6.90	1.2%
Commercial	137.19	24.1%
Industrial	244.62	43.0%
Agriculture / Resource	37.83	6.6%
Public Use	45.08	7.9%
Publicly Owned	2.59	0.5%
Rail	0.50	0.1%
Vacant	11.20	2.0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>568.98</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Carroll County Planning Department, 2010

### What is included in each category of existing uses of land?

**Single-Family Residential** ➔ Land that is primarily developed with single-family housing, including designated open space within a residential subdivision, undeveloped land with platted lots, and unplatted lots that are part of an approved subdivision plan.

**Multi-Family Residential** ➔ Any housing/residential area where there are 2 or more units attached or within one building, including duplexes, condos, and apartments.

**Commercial** ➔ Land currently used for commercial purposes, including undeveloped lots with an approved site plan.

**Industrial** ➔ Land currently used for industrial purposes, including undeveloped lots with an approved site plan.

**Agriculture/Resource** ➔ Land that is currently farmed in some way (livestock, crops, etc.), including accompanying farm houses and associated buildings. This category also includes large areas of environmental resources or woods. These are areas that could have potential for a more intense developed use if the zoning or land use designations were changed.

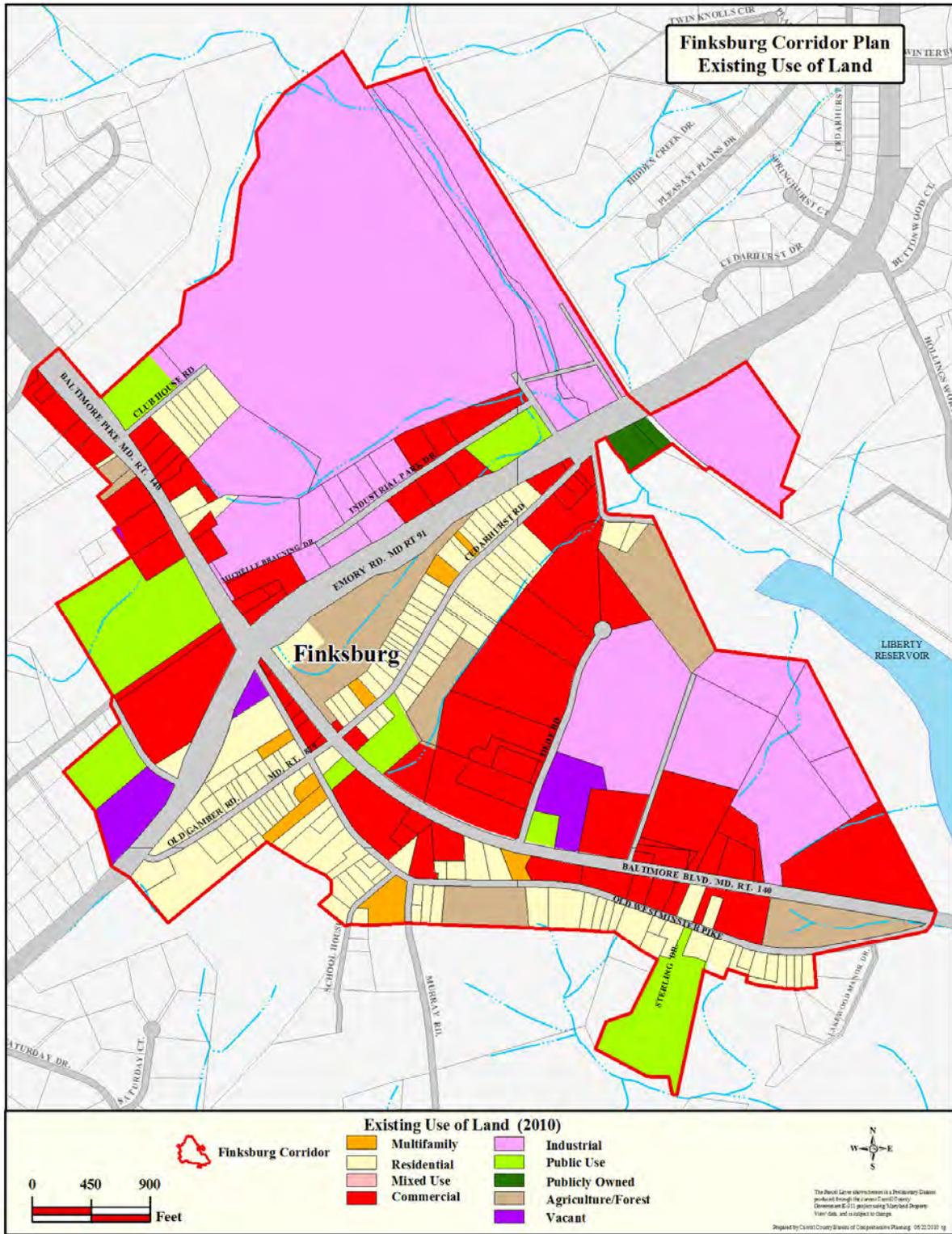
**Public Use** ➔ Land that is privately-owned and is generally open to the public, the public is invited to use, or is somehow used for recreational purposes; and that is not developed for residential uses. This category would include such things as churches, parks, golf courses, etc.

**Publicly Owned** ➔ All lands publicly-owned (i.e., town, county, state, federal).

**Mixed Use** ➔ Land that has a mix of both commercial and residential uses on it.

**Vacant** ➔ Land that is either unimproved/not developed but which has the potential to be developed. This includes land that has an abandoned building. It also includes land for which the building may be in good shape but is not being used.

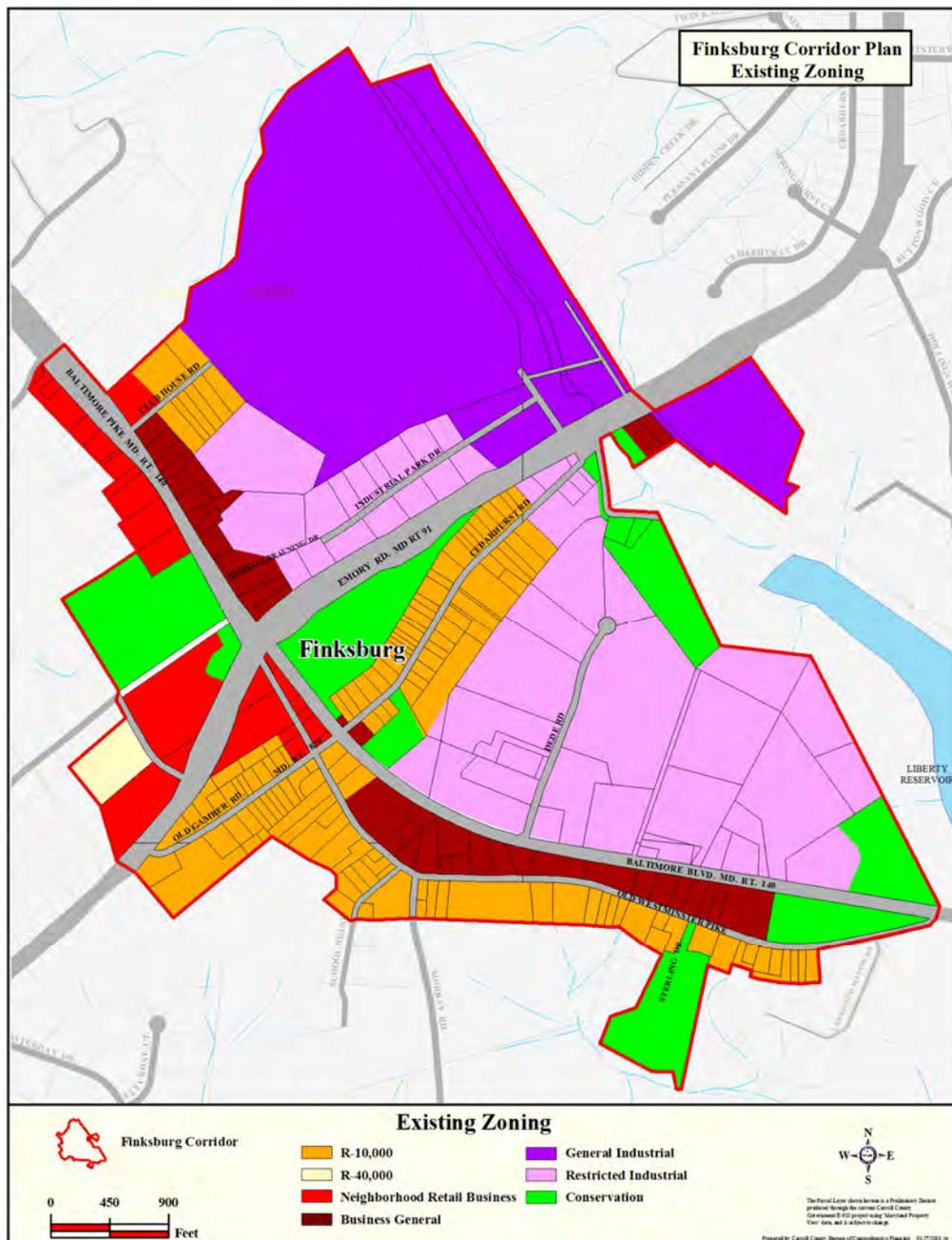
# Finksburg Corridor Plan



# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## 5 Existing Zoning

Current use of land and current zoning on a property do not always coincide. A property may be zoned residential but, if the owner does not choose to develop, it might remain in agricultural use indefinitely. Similarly, a property may have a use on it that predated the zoning so it is possible that a commercial use might exist in a residential zone. For this reason, the number of acres ascribed to particular uses of land in the previous table may vary from the number of acres for a comparable zoning designation. The following table provides a break down of the Finksburg Corridor by 2009 zoning; total acreage is given by each zoning district.



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Existing Zoning by Acreage 2010		
Land Use	Acres	Percentage of Corridor (%)
R-10,000	87.17	15.30%
R-40,000	4.76	0.84%
Neighborhood Retail Business	34.45	6.05%
General Business	35.63	6.25%
Restricted Industrial	170.75	29.98%
General Industrial	164.05	28.80%
Conservation	72.83	12.78%
<b>Total Zoning Acres</b>	<b>569.64</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Roads</b>	<b>71.46</b>	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>641.10</b>	

Source: Carroll County Planning Department, 2010

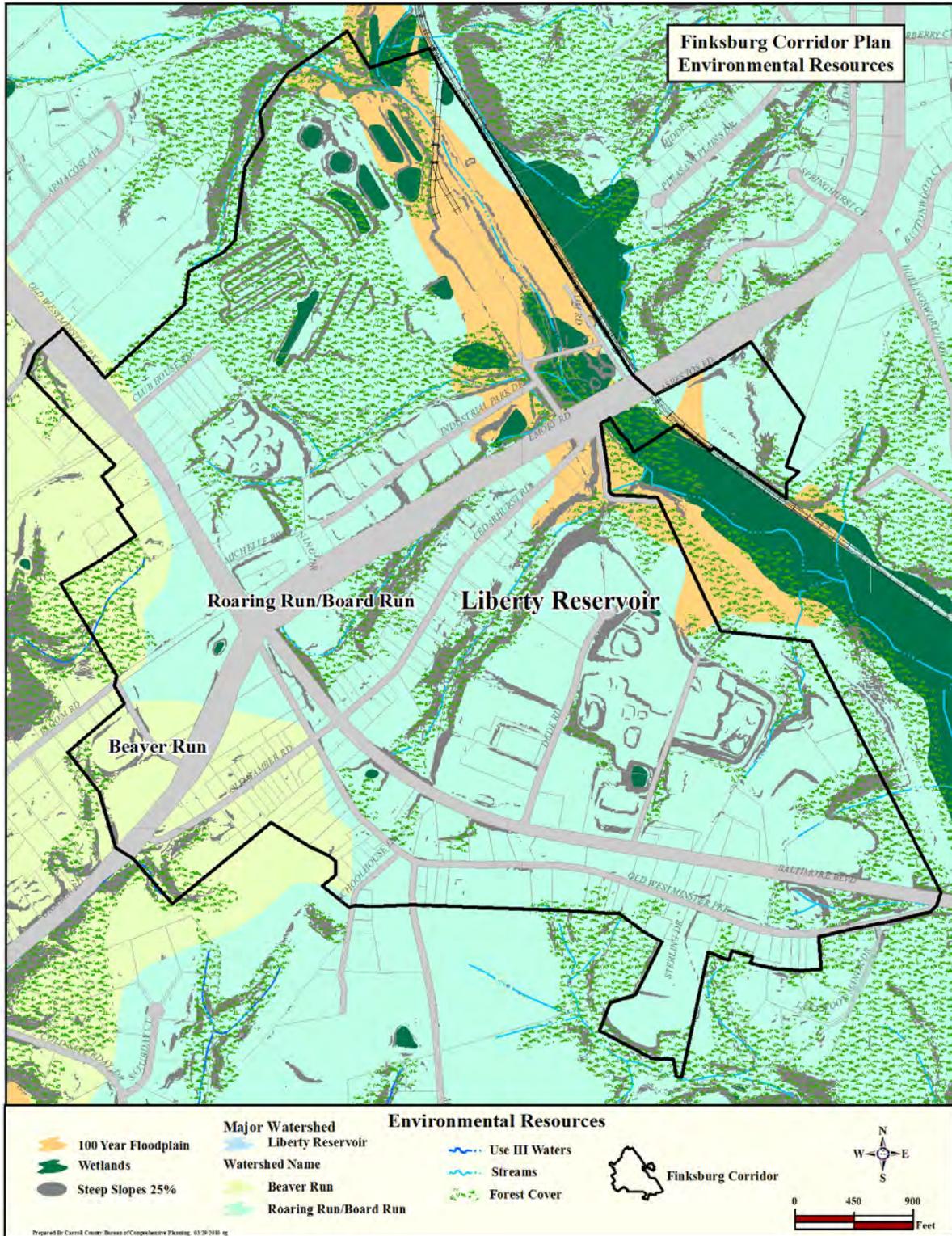
## 6 Environmental Sensitivity

The most significant physical attribute of the Finksburg community that affects the vision and planning for future growth and development is location and proximity to the Liberty Reservoir. The North Branch of the Patapsco River that runs through the Finksburg community is the primary tributary for the reservoir. Liberty Reservoir is a 3,100-acre lake, owned by Baltimore City, which was developed as a public water supply and completed in 1954. The community water system for the Sykesville-Freedom area of Carroll County is served from a direct withdrawal from Liberty Reservoir.

The Finksburg corridor is not served by any public water or sewer systems, even though the commercial and industrial core of Finksburg is located directly adjacent to the North Branch of the Patapsco River as well as Liberty Reservoir itself. All development within the corridor either has a private well and septic system or is served by a private well and a small community wastewater treatment system. Congoleum and Finksburg Plaza both have their own wastewater treatment systems. Much of the development within the gateway area, as well as within the balance of the corridor, predates the creation of the reservoir. As a result, the lot sizes and treatment technologies used present a high risk for contamination since there is little land to replace failing septic systems. The Cedarhurst neighborhood has been identified in the *Carroll County Master Plan for Water and Sewerage* as a community with septic problems, small lots, and limited soil capabilities.

The Carroll County Board of Commissioners has demonstrated a commitment to protecting the water quality within the Liberty Reservoir Watershed through participation with the Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement, first executed in 1979 and most recently reaffirmed in November of 2005. The Agreement establishes a cooperative program that was developed by local governments and key state agencies to monitor and facilitate improved water quality for Loch Raven, Prettyboy, and Liberty reservoirs, which are owned and operated by Baltimore City.

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The Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement is implemented by the partners through a series of Action Strategies that specifically outline land use and other measures that will ensure the continued protection and enhancement of the quality of water entering the reservoir. Additionally, in order to prevent further degradation of healthy streams, the State has set limits, called Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), on the amounts of certain pollutants that can enter various stream segments. The type of pollutant, amount allowed, and segment of stream affected by the TMDL varies depending on the specific characteristics of any given water body. Although it is already on the State's list of impaired waters, Liberty Reservoir has no TMDLs set for it at this time.

## 7 *Gateway*

Finksburg is best known as the crossroads community surrounding the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91, characterized by a small commercial center. MD 140, which is the county's most heavily traveled roadway, enters the county just southeast of the Finksburg commercial and industrial core. As a result, the majority of motorists who enter and exit the county do so by way of this part of Finksburg.

When heading west on MD 140 into Carroll County, just past the Liberty Reservoir, an observer will immediately notice the vast roadway which divides the Finksburg commercial and industrial area. A continuous left-turn lane is coupled with two travel lanes in each direction that were designed for high speeds. A speed limit of 50 miles per hour is posted throughout the Finksburg core. There are no provisions for pedestrian or bicycle traffic in this commercial node.

One very noticeable characteristic of the Carroll County, MD 140 gateway is the abundance of large-scale advertisements that shape the landscape within the corridor. As of January 2008, there were 20 large, off-premise signs within the 1.3-mile stretch of the MD 140 roadway between the Carroll County line and MD 91. These billboards are very prevalent and play a significant role in the remarkable change of scenery when entering and exiting Carroll County.

Lighting within the gateway is managed by individual property owners and is generally oriented to direct motorists' attention onto the businesses.

## 8 *Aesthetics and Design*

Due to the rolling topography of this region of the county, a number of scenic views are offered along the corridor. Some land located within a portion of the corridor is used for agricultural purposes, and a rural landscape is often evident just beyond some of the residential and commercial uses in this area. Woodlands that can be seen from the corridor are just a sample of those which contribute significantly to the heritage and aesthetic value of this region. The scenic quality of the less intensely developed portions of the corridor illustrates much of the character that is often cited as the most valuable trait of this area.

The gateway character described above generally characterizes commercial and industrial development in the balance of the corridor, though it is less intense in nature. Businesses are

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

generally small-scale and do not relate to each other. There is no common design theme, uniform setback or siting, shared parking or access. Institutional uses that include a church, a cemetery, and a private school also lack cohesive design elements. In many instances, pockets of residential development are interspersed with commercial uses oriented to the highway.

Residential development within the MD 140 corridor is principally characterized by post-World War II design, though the Finksburg community itself contains a number of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century historic buildings that follow a linear pattern of development. Most of the newer residential subdivisions that are located adjacent to the corridor follow a suburban neighborhood model, which consists of low-density housing comprised of single-family dwellings, large lawns, garages, and carports, curving streets, and cul-de-sac street design.

There are no facilities within the study area that promote pedestrian or bicycle travel. There is limited opportunity for cycling along state and county roadways within the study area. Although MD 91 and MD 140 have ten-foot shoulders, cycling is not practical due to the volume and speed of vehicular traffic. The use of county roadways for recreational cycling is much more practical because of lower speeds and traffic volumes. However, careless driving can easily lead to dangerous situations because bicycles and motorized vehicles must share the roadway.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## ❖ Analysis of Community Needs

Input from the property owner survey, community meetings associated with this plan, other Planning staff, and other public agencies was considered in identifying these needs.

### 1 Land Use

Clearly, the maintenance of productive agricultural lands within the areas that surround the Finksburg corridor is a leading concern with many residents and officials. The preservation of farming land and prevention of residential sprawl were leading concerns in the community input process for this plan. In the past, residential growth within the election district counteracted this objective. The amount of large-lot, single-family residential land use in the election district is second only to agricultural uses, and it is growing much faster than any other district. Because of the lack of public water and sewer systems, it is not possible to concentrate residential growth in existing, established communities. As a result, it is difficult to effectively preserve much of the valuable agricultural lands that surround the corridor and make up that balance of the 1981 plan area.

The continued characterization of the land beyond the Finksburg Corridor as a Designated Growth Area (DGA) is misleading. Substantial growth was no longer supported there once the area ceased to be planned for public water and sewer service. Although the DGA boundary is utilized for the primary purposes of mapping and long-range planning, it also carries the stigma of being characterized as an area in which growth and development is encouraged. The DGA designation also prevents properties within that area from being candidates in certain land preservation programs. At the same time, the area *within* the Finksburg Corridor boundary does remain the focus of redevelopment and revitalization efforts that are consistent with the DGA designation.

One of the major objectives of the *1981 Finksburg Area and Environs Comprehensive Plan* was “to avoid, where possible, strip business development along primary highways in the interest of traffic safety and efficient use of the roadway”. The plan additionally sought to maintain a spatial separation between Westminster and Finksburg, preventing unattractive, continuous business development. To accomplish this, portions of undeveloped land that were previously zoned for business use were designated for other uses when the plan was adopted. As a result, some nodes of commercial development are located along MD 140 amidst a residential and rural setting.

The historic village of Finksburg was bypassed with the construction of MD 140 in the 1950s, and while the area to the east, west, and north of the village continued to grow, the historic village itself has seen relatively few changes since then. A 1985 historic sites inventory delineated the Finksburg Survey District. It contains the entire area shown for Finksburg in the 1877 *Illustrated Atlas of Carroll County*. At the time, the survey district was deemed potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. However, with the passage of time, some buildings such as the toll house have been demolished and others continue to be modified or threatened by demolition or neglect.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

With development pressure expected to continue in the Finksburg corridor, community members may wish to explore ways to enhance an understanding of, appreciation for, and stewardship towards the area's heritage resources. A critical first step will be gathering information about the heritage resources that currently remain in the community, including their location, current condition and relative importance to telling the story of the community's heritage. Once these resources are demolished, the opportunity to understand, commemorate and celebrate their role in the evolution of the community is lost forever.

As Finksburg and Carroll County in general have consistently grown over the past several decades, demand for housing and business locations has consistently grown as well. This has been particularly true in Finksburg since it is directly connected to the Baltimore metropolitan region via the Northwest Expressway (I-795) and the Baltimore beltway (I-695). The opportunities for business development and redevelopment have been few, however. The absence of public water or sewer service has limited the intensity of commercial, office, and industrial uses possible. Additionally, the amount of undeveloped land devoted to these types of uses was comparatively small even in 1981.

As a result, today there is little land that is available for non-residential development and little incentive to redevelop without public facilities. Yet, the Finksburg corridor is a major gateway into the County and could act as a significant base for employment, professional services and retail.

## ⇒ Corridor "Neighborhood" Analysis

Each of the neighborhoods within the Finksburg Corridor Plan area has its own unique characteristics. The characteristics that have the greatest impact on the ability to achieve the vision for each neighborhood are described below

### Arterial Business

- Much of the development opportunity in this neighborhood lies in the redevelopment of businesses, since very little land is undeveloped;
- This neighborhood is the one most closely associated with the Finksburg corridor, since it is the most visible from the highway;
- The Arterial Business neighborhood forms the "gateway" to Carroll County at one of the county's most heavily traveled points of entry;
- The area frequently is cited as being unattractive because of sign proliferation, a lack of landscaping, and little in the way of modern updates to or new construction of buildings or properties
- Most properties in the neighborhood have direct access onto MD 140 from individual driveways, though some also use secondary roads such as Old Westminster Pike or Dede Road as their only or an additional access point;
- The majority of properties within this neighborhood are relatively small in size (generally under 8 acres; most 5 acres or less);
- Many properties were developed decades ago utilizing what are now outdated technologies for wastewater treatment and stormwater management;
- All properties rely on private water and wastewater systems.

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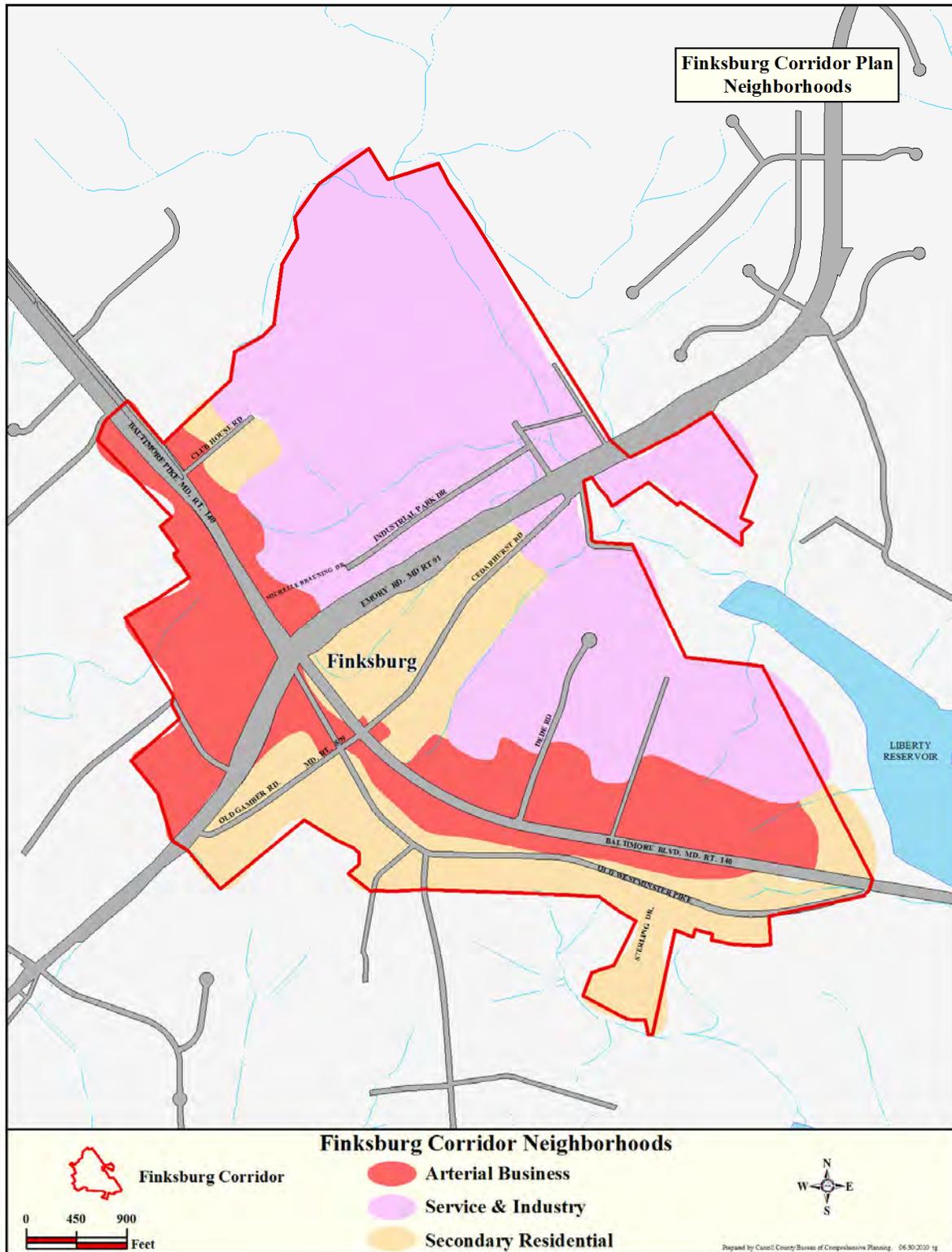
## Secondary Residential

- One of the subareas in this neighborhood contains the historic core of the Finksburg community, having been developed along what is now the “old” Westminster Pike. It contains a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial and residential structures that have been determined to be National Register eligible through a 1985 historic sites survey. A scattering of historic homes exist in the other two subareas of this neighborhood, though most of the homes in these areas were built in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century or later;
- The neighborhood holds some residential subdivision and redevelopment potential, depending on water and wastewater treatment options;
- A large number of residences in this neighborhood are owner-occupied, however, several properties along Old Westminster Pike and a few on Cedarhurst Road are rental units;
- Old Westminster Pike (in the historic area of Finksburg) and Cedarhurst Road are used to varying degrees during peak rush hour times by drivers trying to avoid the MD 140/MD 91 intersection. Residents have complained about the volume and speed of this “cut-through” traffic on what have become local, residential roads.
- Many properties were developed decades ago utilizing what are now outdated technologies for wastewater treatment and stormwater management;
- All properties rely on private water and wastewater systems.

## Service and Industry

- Much of the development opportunity in this neighborhood lies in the redevelopment of businesses, since very little land is undeveloped;
- The industrial character of the neighborhood predates the creation of the reservoir. However, the proximity of these uses so close to the reservoir and many other significant natural resources is a concern because of their potential impact on environmental features;
- This neighborhood is not very visible from the corridor’s main roadways, but contributes a good deal of traffic, particularly truck traffic, due to the types of uses found within it;
- Most properties in the neighborhood have access to MD 140 and MD 91 from secondary roads, including Dede Road and Industrial Park Drive;
- Properties range in size from about an acre up to 20 acres, though most are in the 2-10 acre range;
- Many properties were developed utilizing what are now outdated technologies for wastewater treatment and stormwater management;
- All properties rely on private water and wastewater systems.

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## 2 *Transportation*

The extension of Arabian Drive to Brown Road, improvements to Brown Road, and the creation of a “jug handle” service ramp between MD 140 eastbound and MD 91 are among the most significant portions of the planned major street plan that have been implemented since 1981. The business service roads proposed in the vicinities of Suffolk Road and Dede Road have not been constructed, nor has the median that was envisioned along MD 140. As a result, MD 140 continues to have a number of individual business driveways that enter directly onto the roadway rather than being channeled to a signalized intersection. The highway also retains the multiple crossovers that are necessitated by the unrestricted access points along the corridor. The State Highway Administration is in the process of drafting an access management study that will recommend points at which access could be consolidated and service roads that could be constructed to accommodate local traffic as a result.

As noted earlier, the MD 140 corridor carries approximately 47,000 vehicles per day through the Finksburg area. The number of vehicles traveling on this roadway is expected to increase as residential growth in the county and neighboring Pennsylvania expand and job centers in Baltimore City and Baltimore County continue to grow. It is also clear from the Community Survey that residents are greatly concerned about the challenges that increased traffic will bring to the Finksburg community. The County hopes to work with the State Highway Administration to initiate a feasibility study of alternatives for the MD 140/MD 91 intersection. The study would address circulation, safety and aesthetic improvements through the Gateway area. It also would incorporate recommendations for any new service roads or road closures that would be necessitated by the construction of the median along MD 140 from the county line to MD 91.

In July 2006, Carroll County participated in the Traffic Safety Summit organized by the State. This summit was aimed at developing priority strategies for improving safety on public roadways. The priorities were integrated into the Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan, a working document for the years 2006-2010 that contains measureable objectives for improving roadway safety. The plan’s main focus areas are to reduce impaired driving, improve information and decision support systems, eliminate hazardous locations, increase occupant protection, improve drivers’ competency, curb aggressive driving, and improve the emergency response system. Carroll County’s continued participation with this effort will help to improve traffic safety locally and statewide.

Regarding the portion of the overall transportation network that serves pedestrians, Finksburg has a severely underdeveloped sidewalk and pathway system. There is extremely limited opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle travel within the commercial center of Finksburg. Furthermore, traffic speeds and volumes along MD 140 make it inhospitable to pedestrians and an inappropriate place to encourage pedestrian activity through the installation of sidewalks. Additionally, very few neighborhoods within the study area offer sidewalks or designated pathways for pedestrian and bicycle travel. According to the Community Survey, participants felt that a bicycle and pedestrian pathway was by far the most needed recreational facility in the community.

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## 3 *Environmental Sensitivity*

Environmental sensitivity poses significant challenges to any commercial and industrial growth and development in this area. Finksburg's appeal for growth and development has to be balanced with the need for protection of an indispensable public water supply. The lack of public water and sewer service has required on-site waste management and wells. Residents have expressed deep concern for water quality and would like to see additional conservation efforts. This is consistent with the current Action Strategies of the November 2005 Reservoir Watershed Protection Agreement.

Currently, the treatment of sewage and stormwater 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.

Many of the well-established commercial and industrial enterprises within the Finksburg core were not constructed with effective stormwater management and wastewater controls. Additionally, current regulations that apply to new development would likely limit the extent and potential impact of these uses on the environment. Although County regulations were updated in 2004 and are considered to be very strong for this region, there may remain additional measures that can be taken within the corridor to decrease environmental impact with new and/or existing development and/or redevelopment, most specifically in the areas of stormwater management and landscaping.

However, the easiest and most effective way to bring about this change is through the development review process. If a property is redeveloped (or is being developed for the first time), it will be subject to site plan review and approval. Through this process, the County and State can require that certain improvements be made to the waste disposal and stormwater management systems, among other things. In this way, state-of-the-art technologies for reducing or eliminating the migration of pollutants into surface and ground water sources can be utilized. In order for this to occur though, there first must be an incentive for property owners to redevelop, and it is unlikely that this will occur if individual septic systems are the only options for waste disposal. This is due to the soil conditions in the area that make on-site disposal difficult and land-consumptive. As a result, redevelopment most likely will depend upon the provision of a community septic system.

At the same time, the Action Strategies that implement the Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement have significant impacts on how land use and wastewater treatment issues can be addressed in the corridor. The "2005 Action Strategy for the Reservoir Watersheds" document contains a number of strategies directly relevant to land use planning in the Finksburg corridor. They include:

### Section 2.0 Point Source Management

(2) Policy for **new** municipal discharges in the watersheds: The Department of the Environment (MDE), through its NPDES permit program, will discourage new

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

discharges exceeding 1,000 gpd, except as needed to correct failing septic systems. In those cases, MDE will encourage land treatment of the plant effluent.

(3) MDE, through its NPDES permit program, will discourage discharges from package sewage treatment plants intended to serve new residential communities and proposed to discharge in the reservoir watersheds.

(4) Policy for **existing** industrial discharges in the watersheds: MDE, through its NPDES permit program, will set a phosphorus limit of 0.3 mg/l effluent concentration when each permit comes up for renewal, if phosphorus is present at any significant level in the waste stream.

(5) Policy for **new** industrial discharges in the watersheds: MDE, through its NPDES permit program, will discourage significant phosphorus discharges to the reservoir watersheds.

(6) When a phosphorus loading goal has been established through the TMDL process (see item 1.2.1) for each reservoir, MDE, through its NPDES permit program, will not permit an increase in the total phosphorus load delivered to the reservoirs.

## Section 3.6 Land-Use Planning and Zoning

(3) Baltimore and Carroll Counties will maintain the current extent of conservation and agricultural zoning in the reservoir watersheds, insofar as possible.

(4) Baltimore and Carroll Counties will protect the reservoir watersheds by limiting insofar as possible additional urban development zoning within the reservoir watersheds.

Although some work has been performed, a continued need exists to assess and monitor the stream corridors within the community in order to determine potential contamination sources and consider mitigation strategies. The complexity of the issues surrounding redevelopment, point source pollution management, and overall land use in the Finksburg corridor makes it imperative that a comprehensive approach to wastewater and stormwater management be taken in this area.

The Finksburg Corridor Plan contains land use designations that maintain conservation and agricultural areas and limit additional urban development. The focus of the plan is on redevelopment opportunities on land already developed or planned to be developed. Further, the plan proposes to encourage redevelopment and eliminate potential septic failures through the limited use of community wastewater systems or other methods that would be targeted in scope and would adhere to Section 2.0 of the Action Strategies (see Recommended Actions section below).

## 4 Gateway

The community expressed, through the community meetings, surveys, and interviews, that Finksburg does not present a welcoming and attractive gateway to the county. Many feel that motorists gain the initial impression that the county is littered with large billboards and unattractive businesses. As the primary doorway to the county, Finksburg leaves many with a negative impression because of its unattractive landscape. An overwhelming number of the residents surveyed identified the Finksburg community with a rural atmosphere that is quiet and safe. This strong feeling of community pride is not well represented by the Finksburg gateway.

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A thriving, small-town ambiance with the feeling of a close-knit community built upon an agricultural heritage would more closely represent the nature of Carroll County and the atmosphere residents desire.

For the most part, the MD 140 roadway within the Finksburg area adequately serves its primary function of traffic movement. Movement through the area during rush hours can be difficult, however, with lengthy waits at signalized intersections. In order to provide for the needs of the community, and the surrounding region, the capacity and functionality of the corridor as a major arterial must be maintained and enhanced.

The MD 140 corridor, specifically the portion that is part of the Finksburg core, does not effectively provide a secondary function of community enrichment. The amount of paved surfaces and lack of quality landscaping and architecture on any given site detract from the reinforcement of the historic Finksburg community and its expansion and/or the creation of a contemporary corridor community. The nature of the roadway and the uninviting character of the gateway deter potential customers and businesses alike from this strategically located commercial center.

In 1999, McDearman Associates prepared a *Carroll County Situational Assessment* for the Economic Development Commission. This assessment outlines the strengths and weaknesses of business attraction and retention. In referring to the marketing aspect of potential firms, the report indicates that:

Primary gateways into Carroll County do not show well nor serve to present the impression that the County is suitable as a professional or high-tech business location. A prospect's first impression of the county entering via MD 140 is of billboards and haphazard retail development. While the townships and rural character outside of these gateways are typically pleasant, the first impression is often most lasting.

The existing character of the Finksburg gateway is not appealing to the most desirable and appropriate types of non-residential development which would otherwise be attracted to the many advantages of the area. It should be noted that in early 2009, the Board of County Commissioners approved the construction of two gateway monument signs to be erected in Finksburg and the Freedom area. The Finksburg gateway sign was erected in early fall 2009. The sign helps to create a more welcoming and attractive entrance to the County at one of its most prominent entry points.

The automobile is the only safe option for movement within this area. As a commercial area that offers a variety of retail goods and services, there is no opportunity for pedestrian movement. The area does not offer a shopping district with a variety of pedestrian circulation avenues that can significantly reduce automobile usage for adjacent parcel access. In order to ensure a viable retail sector, the opportunities for pedestrian movement must be strongly considered.

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There is minimal effort to provide landscaping or lighting control within the Finksburg commercial area to enhance the appearance of the MD 140 corridor. In general, businesses adjacent to MD 140, between the county line and MD 91, do not maintain vegetation that would provide screening or create some visual variety. During the nighttime hours, the Finksburg commercial area features haphazard lighting that diminishes any aesthetic appeal. Few measures are taken to soften or limit the impact on surrounding properties. As an effect of this disorganized and seemingly unregulated practice, light pollution within the gateway to Carroll County further contributes to the uninviting features of the area.

There are some structures within the gateway that have redeeming architectural and design features, although most buildings lack any distinguishing elements. Despite several historic buildings that could serve as precedent, the area lacks a building design theme or design standards that would serve to create a more attractive gateway as new businesses locate in the area. A recently enacted Gateway Renovation Tax Credit will allow property owners to obtain tax credits for enhanced landscaping or site features, and architectural or structural improvements. The tax credit program makes property improvements more financially realistic and entirely voluntary. Additionally, in April 2009, the Board of County Commissioners enacted a Green Building Tax Credit that allows for property tax credits of 25%, 50% and 75%, respectively, on property improvements certified as meeting LEED® Silver, Gold, and Platinum (or equivalent) standards. This credit should provide additional incentive for redevelopment that also is complimentary to the sensitive quality of the surrounding natural environment in Finksburg.

The relatively small area (approximately 400 total acres) of business and light industrial zoned land that is located near the intersection of MD 140 and MD 91 has tremendous potential for providing valuable assets to the community in an environmentally-friendly fashion. The area is located within close proximity to major regional thoroughfares and is, therefore, one of the most heavily traveled gateway communities in Carroll County.

## 5 *Aesthetics and Design*

Despite the fact that Finksburg is one of the county's major gateways, it is not known for its attractive or welcoming environment. On the contrary, it has one of the highest concentrations of billboard advertisements in the county, is exceptionally lacking in landscaping, and exhibits very little in the way of cohesive design. The historic community of Finksburg contains a number of attractive buildings, but design elements from these buildings typically have not been carried through to more contemporary construction. Nor have these more modern buildings been noteworthy in their own design. However, the area's newest buildings, including Smoker's Barbeque and Walnut Park Plaza, demonstrate that greater attention is starting to be paid to design. Additionally, the Board of County Commissioners' 2003 decision to restrict billboards to 32 square feet in area and 10 feet in height is evidence of a growing awareness about the need to address aesthetic issues in Carroll County.

When viewed as a group, businesses within the Finksburg corridor do not complement each other well. Other than being closely situated, there is little that unites the various businesses lining the highway. There are very few instances of joint access for businesses, and

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this disconnection can be confusing and uninviting. The lack of a well-defined, cohesive business destination within the community is likely deterring many potential customers.

Very little exists in the way of vehicular connectivity, and bicycle and pedestrian links are virtually non-existent. This results in a fragmented experience when traveling through the area or attempting to get from one place of business to another. It also means that the residential areas surrounding the corridor have no connection to the places where they shop and dine locally.

All of these conditions detract from any effort to create a “sense of community” in Finksburg. When there is little in the way of appealing destinations in the area, and those that are appealing are difficult to reach, it becomes very challenging to build an environment where people want to go and with which they want to identify themselves. It also does little to motivate property owners to update or enhance their properties, and does not encourage new investment either.

60-Day Review Draft

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## ❖ Recommended Actions

### Land Use

1. Remove the Designated Growth Area (DGA) designation from the Carroll County master plan for the area that was within the 1981 plan area but is now outside of the Finksburg Corridor area

Amending the Carroll County master plan to remove the DGA designation for land that was within the 1981 plan area but now lies outside of the Finksburg Corridor area will reflect the policies that have been in place that recognize that the area is not slated for significant growth. As a result, the DGA designation can be misrepresented during discussion and decision-making. This change to the Carroll County master plan will help to correct misunderstandings and present a clear picture that the area outside of the Finksburg Corridor is not supported as a significant growth area within the county.

The area within the Finksburg Corridor boundary will continue to be a Designated Growth Area (DGA), reflecting the recommendations contained in this plan for redevelopment and revitalization.

2. Implement the 2005 Action Strategy for the Reservoir Watersheds through compatible land use designations

#### Section 3.6 Land-Use Planning and Zoning contains the following strategies:

(3) Baltimore and Carroll Counties will maintain the current extent of conservation and agricultural zoning in the reservoir watersheds, insofar as possible.

(4) Baltimore and Carroll Counties will protect the reservoir watersheds by limiting insofar as possible additional urban development zoning within the reservoir watersheds.

The Finksburg Corridor Plan proposes very little change to the land areas already zoned for Conservation and Agriculture land uses. The changes related to areas currently zoned for commercial, residential and industrial uses will not significantly alter the existing urbanization potential. These areas already are designated and zoned for some type of development.

It is hoped that the land use changes recommended in this plan will encourage redevelopment, thereby presenting an opportunity to improve the environmental impacts of individual sites through the application of current regulations and policies.

3. Provide for a distinct separation between activity centers through zoning designations

It is a concern of residents of the community that the area between Westminster and the Finksburg community is developing in a way that would cause the two communities to eventually be contiguous, with no break of the built environment in between. Effective zoning designations between the communities would help to prevent this from happening.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

Additional measures to consider in this area could include the purchase of easements on property and the development of park land.

4. Explore with the community ways to enhance protection of the historic resources found in the corridor, including conducting a new survey of the Finksburg historic survey district and other possible thematic surveys, to determine eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places

The Finksburg historic survey district inventory was completed in 1985 – 25 years ago. It is known that some of the structures contained in that district have been demolished, while others may have been altered significantly. If the community wishes to initiate a process to list Finksburg on the National Register of Historic Places, it is likely that another survey will need to be conducted to determine the extent of such a district given current eligibility assessments.

There also is an opportunity to develop additional surveys based on specific settlement themes and development patterns, while the historic resources still exist. Themes might include a Westminster Pike survey district, a Patapsco Rural Legacy survey district, or a survey of mill and mercantile villages, railroad sidings and postal stops. Survey by theme provides a better contextual understanding of the remaining resources and their relevance to the larger surrounding community. Thematic surveys also provide the opportunity to link geographically disparate historic resources.

5. Encourage owners of historic properties to adapt and reuse historic structures. In the event that a structure(s) can not be adapted or reused, encourage property owners to document the structure(s) as part of the development process.

Many historic structures can be restored and adaptively reused to suit the needs of contemporary uses. Often, historic structures can serve as a starting point to shape the new development or redevelopment of the site. Owners of historic properties in the Finksburg corridor are strongly encouraged to explore opportunities for retaining historic structures when possible. The structures that would be most appropriate to retain include those that contribute to existing or future survey districts, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or have strong associations with survey themes in the community. The Sustainable Communities legislation (SB 285) enacted in 2010 expanded the applicability of preservation tax credits, making this incentive more accessible for projects focused on revitalization and economic development.

The documentation of historic structures prior to demolition, while not ultimately aiding in the preservation of the site or historic resource, would capture information about the community's heritage. For instance, the Finksburg survey district documentation provides information about some resources that have since been lost. These records will help bridge gaps in understanding of the community's past, as well as preserve a vestige of the property's former role in the community.

6. Support the nearby Upper Patapsco Watershed Rural Legacy Area to preserve farmland through the continued solicitation of State funding as well as locally donated easements

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Through the plan development process, residents credited the rural atmosphere with being a major contributor to the quality of life in the community. The County should continue to support the purchase and donation of development rights through the Rural Legacy program. Preserving land in the vicinity of the Finksburg corridor will protect its rural context and benefit the health of the Liberty Reservoir. Additionally, purchase of easements on eligible properties north of the corridor would help to maintain open space in that area of the county and ensure a distinct buffer between the Finksburg community and Hampstead. Each of these things would help to preserve the character of the broader community and its rural atmosphere.

7. Adopt a Boulevard zoning district to be applied in the area designated for Boulevard on the Corridor Plan land use designations map

The adoption of a new zoning district will be a major component of planning efforts and incentives to enhance the appearance and functionality of the corridor. Text for a proposed Boulevard zoning district can be found in the appendix. This district will provide additional regulatory controls to shape the location and character of new development and redevelopment. The new zoning designation will require specific enhancements and considerations as a part of site development.

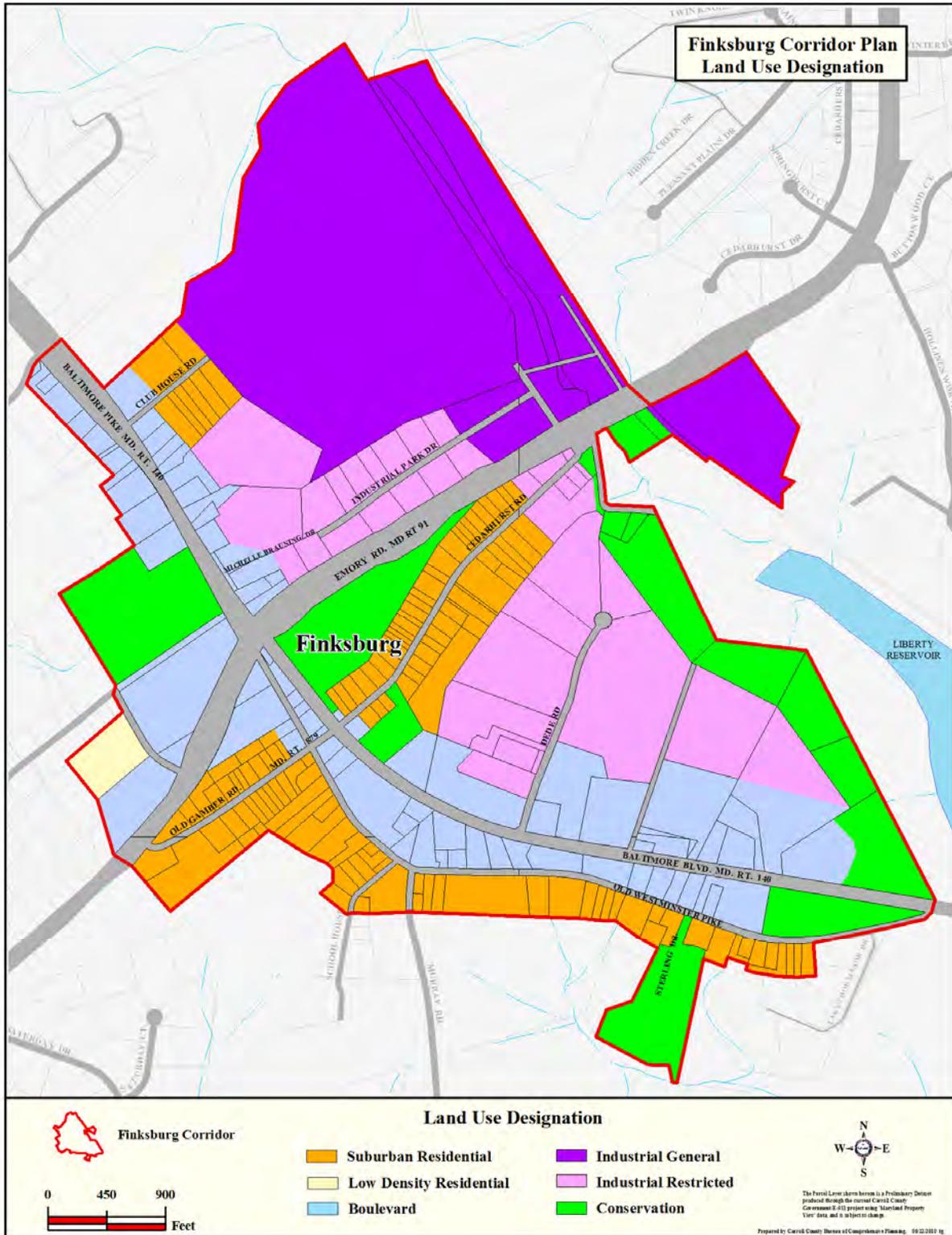
The Boulevard zoning district is designed to promote quality development that takes advantage of the many benefits associated with an active transportation corridor. The zoning district considers elements of site layout such as parking requirements and design, building setback and location, pedestrian accommodations, and site access. The district supports appropriately screened and landscaped parking areas that help to improve the nature of a parking lot. The district also places a high degree of emphasis on building placement and site layout that can play a significant role in strengthening community character.

Until such a time as the Boulevard zoning district is adopted, the existing zoning on the parcels designated Boulevard on the land use map will remain. Once the Boulevard zoning district is adopted, a comprehensive rezoning can take place to apply that district to parcels with a Boulevard land use designation.

<b>Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Finksburg Corridor</b>	<b>Percentage of Corridor (%)</b>
Boulevard	116.05	20%
Conservation	87.02	15%
Industrial General	164.05	29%
Industrial Restricted	112.61	20%
Low Density Residential	4.76	1%
Suburban Residential	85.31	15%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>569.8</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Carroll County Planning Department, 2010

# Finksburg Corridor Plan



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## 8. Implement design guidelines for the MD 140 Corridor

With assistance from the Finksburg community, design guidelines for the Finksburg Corridor have been drafted. Through renderings and photographs, the guidelines describe the preferred components and look of new development and redevelopment within the Finksburg Corridor. These guidelines provide developers and designers with a visual representation of the preferred development character, to achieve design and landscaping that will enhance the aesthetic quality of the corridor.

A copy of the draft design guidelines can be found in the appendices. The design guidelines complement the text found in the proposed Boulevard zoning district. However, the design guidelines are meant to be applied to new development and redevelopment not just in the Boulevard district, but also the Business General, Neighborhood Retail Business, Industrial Restricted, and Industrial General zoning districts in the Finksburg corridor.

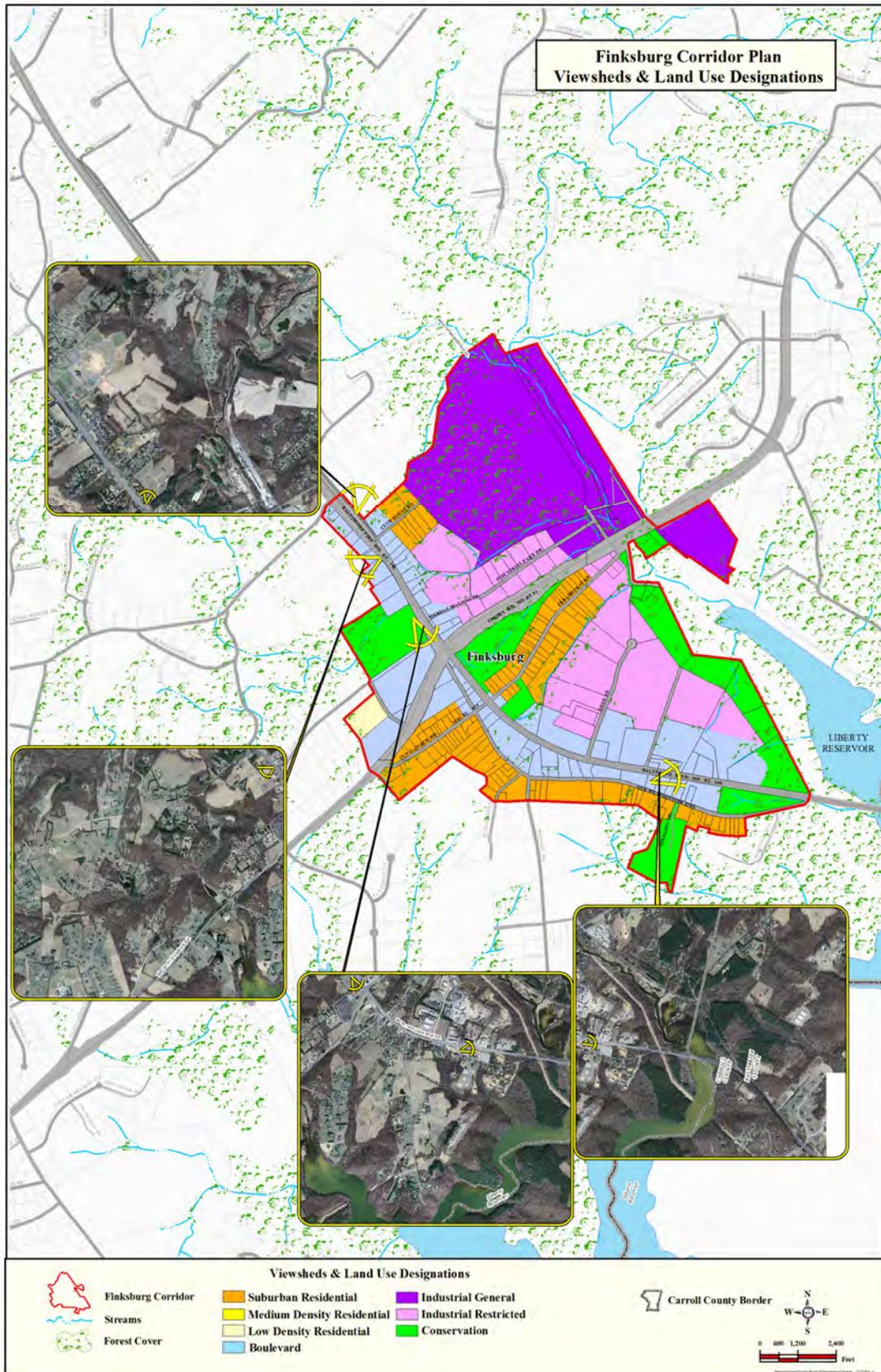
## 9. Maintain viewsheds and the visual connection to forests and open space

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 lies. Maintaining the long views to forests and fields will help to keep this context as a reference point for those moving through the area.

In order to retain the viewsheds shown on the following map and promote a connection to a more pastoral context, development projects within the corridor should:

- Use 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;
- Minimize the addition of paved surfaces by creating shared access and parking and internal circulation networks; and,
- Create opportunities to conveniently and safely access the surrounding area by foot and bicycle.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan



# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## Transportation

1. Coordinate with SHA to conduct an alternatives feasibility study of the MD 140/MD 91 intersection and to complete an access management study of the entire MD 140 corridor

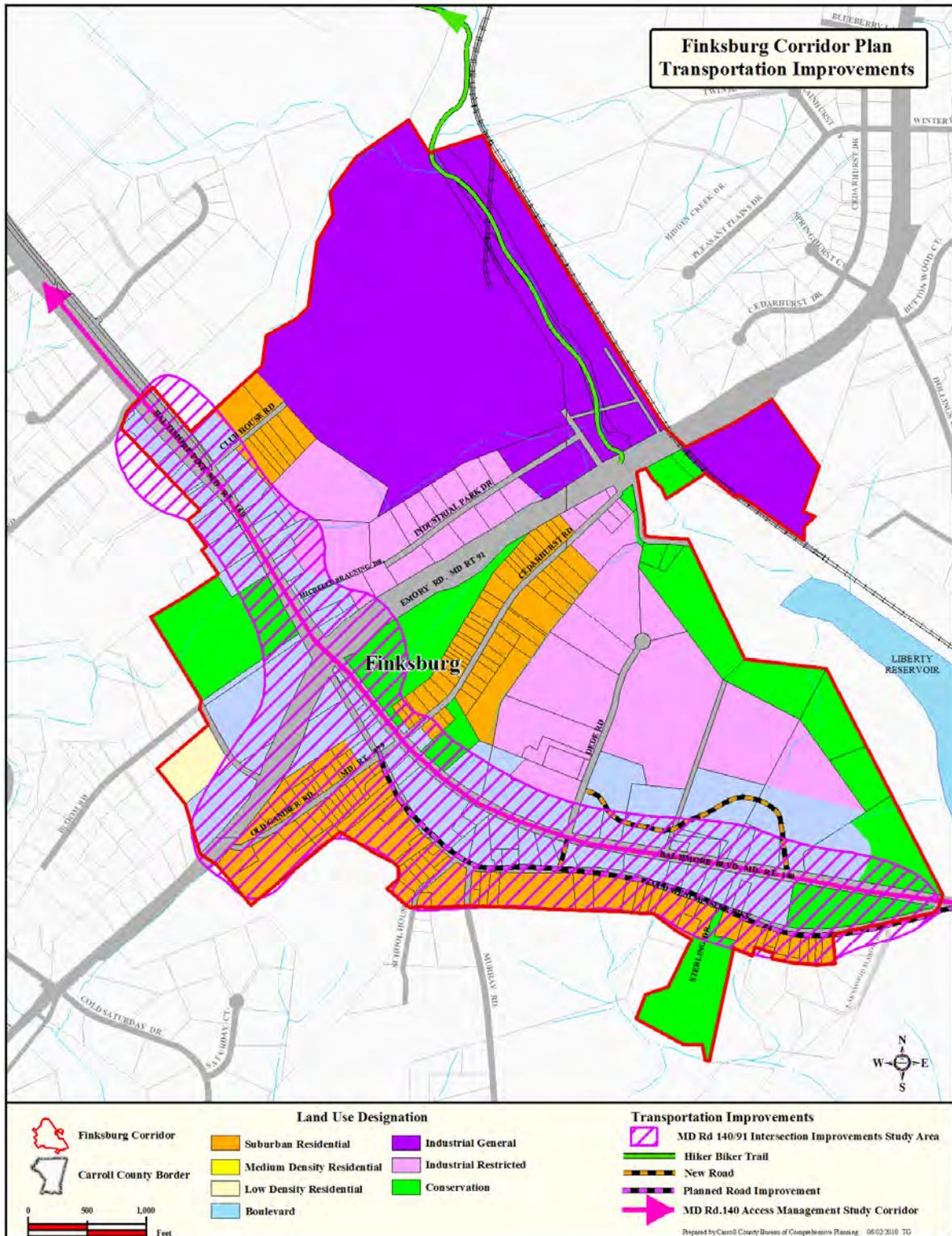
The County is in the process of developing a scope of work with SHA to conduct an analysis of various alternatives for addressing conditions at the MD 140/MD 91 intersection. The goal is to develop several alternatives for addressing traffic safety and congestion at the intersection, including the possibility of a grade-separated interchange. The study will take into consideration resulting modifications that may be required to local roads along the corridor from the Carroll County/Baltimore County line in the east to Kays Mill Road in the west. It also will take into consideration improvements planned as part of SHA's MD 140 Corridor Enhancements project. The hope is to have the study become the basis for a seamless transition between planning at the concept level and the implementation of specific projects. The desired end product is a document that will:

1. Identify several potential alternative intersection configurations, along with any associated secondary roadway modifications;
2. Recommend a preferred configuration and modifications;
3. Provide a list of constraints for the preferred location; and
4. Develop conceptual land acquisition, design/engineering, and construction cost estimates for logical project phases.

Additionally, the County should continue to coordinate with SHA on the completion of an access management study for the entire MD 140 corridor from the reservoir to Market Street in Westminster. This study will recommend points at which direct access onto MD 140 can be eliminated, as well as options for creating secondary access roads that would direct traffic to consolidated, signalized intersections instead. The objective is to reduce the potential for accidents and improve the overall flow of traffic along the corridor, both of which are compromised by the numerous individual driveways that access directly onto MD 140.

The access management study and the alternatives feasibility study are mutually supportive. Improvements to the MD 140/MD 91 intersection almost certainly will involve modifications to the access points in the immediate vicinity, which will have broader implications for circulation throughout the corridor. Therefore, conducting both of these studies so that they respond to each other is essential.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan



# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## 2. Implement the proposed roadway projects contained in this plan

Ever-mounting traffic volumes and concerns about traffic safety along the MD 140 corridor in Finksburg mean that a comprehensive approach to regulating access, flow and capacity is becoming critical. The roadway projects proposed in this plan will create essential connections that not only will improve traffic safety, circulation, and capacity, but also will be the impetus for redevelopment, particularly in the gateway area.

**Extension of Dede Road** – The purpose of this new roadway is to create a connection between MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike to facilitate the critical “rear access” condition needed to limit or close access points on MD 140 for businesses fronting on that road. The new road would align across from Dede Road at the signalized intersection on MD 140. It would be approximately 264 feet in length, closed-section, and would have sidewalk on both sides of the road. The construction of this road is envisioned as a publicly-funded capital project. Essential to the safety and effectiveness of this roadway project will be the concurrent analysis of traffic flow throughout the corridor and the implementation of access management strategies. This will be important to ensuring the safety of travelers on Old Westminster Pike and to minimizing undue congestion on this portion of the roadway.

**Walnut Park Internal Circulation Road** – The purpose of this new roadway is to create an internal means of circulation through the industrial/commercial area located on the north side of MD 140 between Liberty Reservoir and Dede Road. This would create greater opportunity for redevelopment, and would allow for an alternate means of access to properties fronting on MD 140 so that existing direct access onto that road eventually can be limited or closed altogether. The new road would have one point of access from MD 140 at its eastern terminus (preferably right-in/right-out), and would connect to Dede Road at its western terminus, allowing traffic to access MD 140 at a signalized intersection. This road would be approximately 2,640 feet in length, closed-section, with sidewalk on both sides of the road. Although an open-section roadway in this area could have benefits for stormwater management, this type of section would require a much greater right-of-way width that could limit the development potential of properties fronting on the road. An open-section road also makes it more difficult to locate sidewalk within the right-of-way. Sidewalk is envisioned for this area to promote pedestrian connections between individual sites.

**Improvements to Old Westminster Pike** – The purpose of this project is to make improvements to Old Westminster Pike that would enhance the functionality, aesthetics, and pedestrian accessibility of the roadway. This is particularly important given that it will function as a primary means of access to businesses if/when access directly off of MD 140 is limited. The project would include approximately 5,544 feet of roadway and consist of resurfacing and construction of sidewalk, curb and gutter.

**MD 140/MD 91 Intersection Improvements Feasibility Study and Access Management Study** – These studies are described in more detail above.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

3. Construct bicycle and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and between the commercial center, residential areas, and activity centers

To facilitate additional mitigation of traffic congestion, measures to promote alternative modes of transportation also should be implemented. In addition to providing a social connection between residential areas and activity centers, appropriate locations for bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be identified and constructed to provide residents with alternatives to driving to stores, neighbors' houses, and other destinations.

Pedestrian and bicycle paths could be constructed to connect existing neighborhoods both to each other as well as to the activity centers. Such facilities would provide connections for alternative modes of transportation as well as provide additional recreation opportunities. A strong local desire for these facilities is indicated in the community survey that was conducted during the winter of 2000.

In order for pedestrian and bicycle pathways to be utilized best, they should connect with other public facilities. This makes the pathway most accessible and also provides additional opportunities to take advantage of community facilities. A number of roadways in the area are well suited for the addition of bike lanes and/or separated pathways. There is a need to provide bikeways as a part of existing local roadways. This improvement would provide cyclists with safe recreation and exercise and increased access to the community activity centers, and would encourage non-motorized travel in the area.

One bicycle/pedestrian pathway is proposed to follow Roaring Run and a portion of the North Branch Patapsco River, connecting residential areas of Sandymount to MD 91. The path, estimated at about 19,000 feet (3.6 miles) long, would be a 10-foot wide macadam trail. Obtaining right-of-way for this project would best be accomplished through dedicated easements as new development occurs within the vicinity of the pathway alignment, though some portions of this alignment are already developed. Because of the trail's dependency on easements obtained through the development process, it is difficult to estimate precisely how or when this project may come to fruition.

4. Construct sidewalks to improve pedestrian access, circulation, and safety

Many areas of the community are not connected by sidewalks. Sidewalks connecting large residential areas and commercial areas are especially important. Areas where sidewalks could be constructed to help provide better circulation and access for pedestrians to these locations should be identified. While it may be difficult or impossible to install sidewalks in some of the large subdivisions that have already been developed, consideration should be given to requiring them in any new developments within the corridor. The Carroll County Public Schools specifically have indicated support for the construction of sidewalks on both sides of the road in new residential developments, as well as the creation of crosswalks at each intersection. This will allow for the safety of school children walking to and from school or the bus stop, though all pedestrians benefit from this practice. At the same time, cul-de-sacs that are located more than a half-mile from the main road should be large enough to accommodate school buses (at least 100 feet in diameter).

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At a minimum, easements for sidewalks can be required as part of the site plan development process for new commercial uses. Low impact design techniques could be considered for new sidewalks to encourage pervious pedestrian walkways and a more natural way for stormwater to be managed.

Many areas of the commercial center of Finksburg are not connected by sidewalks. Sidewalks connecting businesses will help to promote trip consolidation for customers and may also encourage increased pedestrian traffic. The construction of sidewalks can help to reduce traffic congestion and increase pedestrian safety.

Due to the speed and volume of traffic that is present along MD 140, the construction of pedestrian facilities is not recommended along the primary roadway. These facilities can be considered, however, for redevelopment that may be oriented toward Old Westminster Pike as well as any new access roadways.

5. Work with the SHA to conduct a traffic engineering study on MD 140 through the Finksburg community to analyze vehicle speeds and develop remedies for real or perceived speed issues

Driver behavior on MD 140 in the Finksburg area frequently involves excessive speeds and dangerous turning movements. In order to determine the best ways to address this situation, a traffic engineering study should be conducted that will examine the roadway environment, observation and analysis of vehicle speeds, review of the road's crash history, and review of potentially dangerous conditions that may not be apparent to the driver. The results of this study should indicate whether the posted speed limit is appropriate and should suggest ways to address both real and perceived issues. This study should be done prior to or in conjunction with the design and implementation of improvements to the MD 91 and MD 140 intersection and the access management study. This way, the results of the study will help to guide the transportation solutions being considered in these other projects.

6. Provide commuter service to the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas

As traffic volumes continue to increase, congestion will become more problematic. The provision of commuter services to employment centers has the potential to reduce the overall number of vehicles competing for space on the roadways. Further consideration should be given to providing additional options for travel to and from this community.

7. Promote the use of the Maryland Midland Railway by local industry

The rail line crosses beneath MD 91 just east of Industrial Park Drive. Any opportunities to utilize the resource for additional freight transport should be considered. The transporting of goods by rail may help to ease heavy truck traffic and can also serve as an economic development tool.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## Environmental Sensitivity

1. 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 for environmental protection and redevelopment potential 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. The results of this study would yield recommendations for the best types and locations of facilities based on specific land uses and environmental features, including soils.

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 systems. In keeping with the Action Strategies, the capacity, individual allocations, and design specifications of any community system should be strictly managed to prevent unintended growth and development. A community wastewater system that utilizes land treatment would not result in any new point source discharges. Connection to such a 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. The intent would be to only hook up those residences with identified problems. Homes currently with no identified problems should not be required to hook up, but could if they were identified as having the potential for problems. In this way, a community system would not support new residential development, but would encourage redevelopment that is more environmentally friendly. Any private septic systems that would serve new homes not connected to the community system should use enhanced denitrification systems.

Any community system, regardless of its proposed service area, should have its treatment area located as far away from the reservoir as is feasible. Large land areas to the northwest of the corridor should be considered as potential locations for treatment options. Because the development of such a system realistically would not occur through the piecemeal redevelopment of properties, the County likely will need to forward-fund such a project and recoup the investment over time.

Within the identified service area of any community system, an emphasis should be placed on attracting low water users to reduce the amount of wastewater discharge. Additionally, within the identified community system service area (as well as the entire corridor), green building technologies should be required that promote energy efficiency, low water use and water recycling, state-of-the-art stormwater management, the use of sustainable building materials, and planting of native plant species that are easy to maintain and thrive under regional water norms.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

2. Encourage the use of technologies, in new construction and retrofit projects, that employ water conservation measures that strive for zero stormwater and wastewater discharge

Due to the sensitive location of the Finksburg Corridor, extraordinary measures must be investigated to protect the integrity of the Liberty Reservoir. Considering the current zoning and existing uses within the corridor, many opportunities exist to significantly improve environmental impact through the use of advanced stormwater and wastewater technologies.

Opportunities for implementing stormwater management retrofits also should be explored to address existing sources of pollution. Most of the existing development that is located along MD 140 was built prior to the more restrictive environmental regulations that are currently in place. Additionally, nearly all of the development in this area occurred before further strengthening of local environmental regulations that took place in 2004. Designating areas of priority to utilize programs and initiatives that provide the mitigation and retrofitting of the existing built environment will significantly improve potential negative impacts to the natural environment.

3. Utilize local tax credits, federal and state grants and programs to promote redevelopment and new development to follow LEED<sup>®</sup> (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) construction standards

The U.S. Green Building Council has developed the LEED<sup>®</sup> rating system that certifies buildings that are designed and constructed to be environmentally friendly, often referred to as green buildings. Due to the environmental sensitivity of the Finksburg corridor, LEED<sup>®</sup> certified development and redevelopment would support many of the initiatives that are strongly favored by the community. The 2009 Green Building Tax Credit enacted by the Board of County Commissioners is a significant step towards making green building practices more affordable and establishing local examples of the benefits that green building can provide.

## **Gateway and Design**

1. Coordinate with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to construct a landscaped median on MD 140, from the county line to MD 91

The section of MD 140 from MD 91 to the county line is the only portion of the roadway within Carroll County that contains a continuous left turn lane. Not only is this an unattractive feature but it also presents a significant safety hazard for motorists. A landscaped median on this section of MD 140 would significantly improve the functionality and appearance of this roadway that is located in the center of the Finksburg community. This should be done in conjunction with access management controls and the intersection feasibility study noted in the transportation section.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

2. Utilize a combination of incentives and initiatives to guide the improvement of the Finksburg gateway

Gateways to the community provide people with a first impression of the area. Finksburg is the doorstep to Carroll County, and should provide an inviting and attractive impression that projects the image that the County would like to promote. The purpose of enhancing the Finksburg gateway then is two-fold. First, it is to improve the aesthetic appearance of the gateway for local and county-wide economic benefit and community pride. Second, it is to improve the functionality of the circulation system for safety and economic benefit. Achieving these purposes is meant to be a public/private effort. Public money and capital investment will be leveraged to generate private investment and redevelopment of one of the county's most prominent gateways.

In order to achieve this, a four-pronged approach is recommended. These four prongs are:

- land use and zoning changes;
- capital improvements;
- financial incentives; and
- aesthetic improvements.

Implementation of the following recommendations, some of which also are contained elsewhere in this plan, would produce a coordinated and comprehensive approach to redevelopment and reinvestment in the gateway area.

### *Land Use and Zoning Changes*

A "Gateway" designation should be created to identify the area within which initiatives will apply. The land use and zoning changes recommended in this plan, including the creation and application of a Boulevard zoning district would implement the Gateway concept.

### *Capital Improvements*

State and County agencies will need to become involved in initiating specific capital improvements that will spur private investment in the area. These might include:

- Improvements to MD 140, such as:
  - access control;
  - the creation of a grade-separated median; and
  - the creation of an interchange at the MD 91/MD 140 intersection.Discussions with SHA need to take place to refine their vision for this corridor.
- Local transportation system improvements, such as:
  - the extension of Dede Road to connect MD 140 and Old Westminster Pike; and
  - the creation of an internal access road in the northeast quadrant of the MD 140 and Dede Road area that would run behind the post office and other businesses and provide access to this area from MD 140 westbound.
- Other capital improvements might include the creation of a community septic system (see Recommended Actions for Environmental Sensitivity)
- Given that this is a gateway to the county, a tourism presence should be created here. Opportunities for creating this might include:
  - The development of a visitor's information center, which would involve:

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

- Capital funding appropriated to acquire land and construct the facility in fee, or
- Financial assistance for redevelopment provided in exchange for a long-term lease of all or part of the property for use as a visitor's center.

## *Financial Incentives*

Financial incentives would only be available within the designated Gateway area, and might include:

- Gateway Renovation Tax Credit
  - Passed by the General Assembly in 2007; ordinance approved by County in May 2008
  - Includes credits for landscaping, site features, and architectural/structural improvements
- Façade enhancement grants
  - Could be used to improve the appearance of existing structures
  - Could be supported by local banks
- Low-interest or revolving redevelopment loans
  - Also could be supported by local banks
- Property assessment freezes
- Stormwater management retrofit grants

## *Aesthetics*

Construction of the capital improvements and utilization of the financial incentives listed above will help to enhance the appearance of the Gateway area. Additionally, application of the Design Guidelines contained in the Finksburg Corridor Plan would improve upon the Gateway's aesthetics. Specifically, the following features would have the greatest impact:

- Sign amortization (in the designated Gateway area only)
  - Enhanced landscaping requirements for both public and private projects
  - Application of design guidelines that specifically address low-impact design and compatibility with existing residential uses (such as those along Old Westminster Pike)
3. Periodically, review and update zoning regulations for off-premise signs to protect and improve the aesthetic character of the corridor

The prevalence of billboards near Finksburg and along the MD 140 corridor is a concern of residents. Many feel that the large signs diminish the scenic qualities of the community and leave a poor impression on those visiting the county. One critical step toward improving the appearance of the corridor and establishing Finksburg as one of the welcoming gateways into Carroll County is to periodically revisit the regulations that pertain to off-premise signage to ensure that they remain current in the ways that they address the concerns related to this use.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## 4. Enhance landscaping as part of any corridor improvement project

A crucial component of improving the aesthetic quality of the gateway will be the provision of ample landscaping. As improvements, including highway projects, occur within the gateway, there should be a strong emphasis on enhancing the visual impact of development through landscaping. The effect of enhanced landscaping along the corridor will be to soften the highway corridor and provide a more positive and welcoming image. The design guidelines referenced in this plan will help to achieve this as individual parcels redevelop, but additional attention should be paid to landscaping during public projects as well.

## 5. Establish guidelines for lighting within the gateway

The illumination of businesses and commercial areas can play a significant role in the nighttime appeal of a community. It also can have a significant impact on adjacent properties and the street. The lighting guidelines detailed in the accompanying Design Guidelines document set minimum expectations for new development at the gateway to Carroll County. Pole height, overall brightness, shielding, and accent lighting are just some of the elements these guidelines consider as an aspect of site development.

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## ❖ Fiscal Implications

*The recommendations contained in this plan may be policy-oriented or action-oriented, and their implementation may be the responsibility of the County, other public agencies, private landowners and developers, or a combination of these. This section is designed to identify the potential fiscal impacts to the County of each of the recommendations. Expense to the County may also be covered, in whole or part, by staff time of current employees. The notation of “No Fiscal Impact,” means that the County would not incur direct or predictable expenses as a result of implementing the recommendation. When an “Undetermined Impact,” is indicated, there likely would be a cost associated with implementing the recommendation but that cost can not be determined at this time for various reasons. A “Fiscal Impact” may also be noted, which includes an estimate of the likely cost that would be incurred by the County if the recommendation were implemented. For recommendations that have an identified fiscal impact, the cost of implementing that recommendation is estimated to the best degree possible.*

## Land Use

1. Remove the Designated Growth Area (DGA) designation from the Carroll County master plan for the Finksburg area  
*No Fiscal Impact*
2. Implement the 2005 Action Strategy for the Reservoir Watersheds through compatible land use designations  
*No Fiscal Impact*
3. Provide for a distinct separation between activity centers through zoning designations  
*No Fiscal Impact*
4. Explore with the community ways to enhance protection of the historic resources found in the corridor, including conducting a new survey of the Finksburg historic survey district and other possible thematic surveys, to determine eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places  
*Fiscal Note: The cost to document and photograph structures as part of a new historic sites survey could range from \$2,000-\$5,000 per district or theme.*
5. Encourage owners of historic properties to adapt and reuse historic structures. In the event that a structure(s) can not be adapted or reused, encourage property owners to document the structure(s) as part of the development process.  
*Fiscal Note: No direct costs to the County. According to the fiscal note developed by the Department of Legislative Services for SB 285, the tax credit program would affect local highway user revenues as a result of any credits claimed against the corporate income tax. However, the amount is indeterminate and would depend upon the actual use of the credit within the corridor. Documentation costs would be the responsibility of the applicant.*
6. Support the nearby Upper Patapsco Watershed Rural Legacy Area to preserve farmland through the continued solicitation of State funding as well as locally donated easements  
*Undetermined Impact: While there would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, more information about how many acres*

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

would need to be preserved in these areas is needed before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.

7. Adopt a Boulevard zoning district to be applied in the area designated for Boulevard on the Corridor Plan land use designations map  
*No Fiscal Impact*
8. Implement design guidelines for the MD 140 Corridor  
*Undetermined Impact: While there may be a public cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, it is anticipated that much of the implementation of the Design Guidelines will occur through private investment and reinvestment. More specific project information is needed before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined for any public sector funding of projects related to the Design Guidelines.*
9. Maintain viewsheds and the visual connection to forests and open space  
*Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, implementation measures need more evaluation before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.*

## Transportation

1. Coordinate with SHA to conduct an alternatives feasibility study of the MD 140/MD 91 intersection and to complete an access management study of the entire MD 140 corridor  
*Fiscal Note: It is estimated that a thorough alternatives feasibility study for the MD 140/MD 91 intersection would cost between \$250-300,000. The access management study already is underway and is being funded through SHA.*
2. Implement the proposed roadway projects contained in this plan  
*Fiscal Note: The following cost estimates reflect an average roadway construction cost of \$1.25 million per mile, plus 15% for design and engineering. Land acquisition costs are not included. Curb and gutter costs assume an average of \$30 per linear foot. Sidewalk costs assume an average of \$5 per square foot, and assume the width to be 5 feet. Resurfacing was figured at an average of \$1.75 per square foot.*

Project Name	Length of Project	General Description	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source(s)
Extension of Dede Road	264 feet (0.05 miles) 26 feet wide	New road; sidewalk, curb and gutter both sides of road	\$62,500 construction \$9,375 engineering \$15,840 curb and gutter \$13,200 sidewalk <b>Total: \$100,915 plus land acquisition</b>	Carroll County
Walnut Park Internal Circulation Road	2,640 feet (0.5 miles) 30 feet wide	New road; sidewalk, curb and gutter both sides of road	\$625,000 construction \$93,750 engineering \$158,400 curb and gutter \$132,000 sidewalk <b>Total: \$1,009,150 plus land acquisition</b>	Carroll County, developers
Improvements to Old Westminster Pike	5,544 feet (1.05 miles) 22 feet wide	Resurfacing; sidewalk, curb and gutter both sides of road	\$213,444 resurfacing \$32,016 engineering \$277,200 sidewalk \$332,640 curb and gutter <b>Total: \$855,300 plus land acquisition</b>	Carroll County

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

3. Construct bicycle and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and between the commercial center, residential areas, and activity centers  
*Undetermined Impact: The cost to construct trails ranges from \$100,000 per mile for a 6' wide trail located on parkland to \$500,000 per mile (including acquisition, construction and shoulder widening) for an 8-10' wide trail located alongside a road. The proposed Roaring Run trail is approximately 19,000 feet (3.6 miles) in length and could, therefore, cost about \$2,000,000 to construct, with additional money for land acquisition needed if land cannot be gained in full from developers.*
4. Construct sidewalks to improve pedestrian access, circulation, and safety  
*Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, the project needs more development before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.*
5. Work with the SHA to conduct a traffic engineering study on MD 140 through the Finksburg community to analyze vehicle speeds and develop remedies for real or perceived speed issues  
*No Fiscal Impact*
6. Provide commuter service to the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas  
*Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, the project needs more development before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.*
7. Promote the use of the Maryland Midland Railway by local industry  
*No Fiscal Impact*

## Environmental Sensitivity

1. 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  
*Undetermined Impact: The cost associated with this recommendation could be two-fold. The first cost to be borne would be that of conducting the study to determine the appropriate users, size and location of a community sewerage system. Once that is determined, the second cost to be borne would be the actual construction of such a facility. Because so many variables that would be involved in this process are unknown at this time, it is impossible to determine the fiscal impact that implementation of this recommendation might have. However, the cost to conduct the initial study can reasonably be estimated at around \$100,000.*
2. Encourage the use of technologies, in new construction and retrofit projects, that employ water conservation measures that strive for zero stormwater and wastewater discharge  
*No Fiscal Impact*
3. Utilize local tax credits, federal and state grants and programs to promote redevelopment and new development to follow LEED<sup>®</sup> (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) construction standards  
*Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, the project needs more development before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.*

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## Gateway and Design

1. Coordinate with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to construct a landscaped median on MD 140, from the county line to MD 91  
*Undetermined Impact: While a preliminary cost estimate for design and construction of the landscaped median is \$15 million, the timing and funding coordination on this project will have significant implications on the County's fiscal impact.*
2. Utilize a combination of incentives and initiatives to guide the improvement of the Finksburg gateway  
*Undetermined Impact: While there would be a fiscal impact to the County associated with the implementation of this recommendation, it is nearly impossible to accurately estimate what that impact might be. Incentives such as the Gateway Renovation Tax Credit provide tax credits that are based on the percentage of a property improvement relative to the assessed value of the property. Because the credit available to any given property could vary based on the nature of the improvements made and when they were made, the fiscal impact of this recommendation can not be determined.*
3. Periodically, review and update zoning regulations for off-premise signs to protect and improve the aesthetic character of the corridor  
*No Fiscal Impact*
4. Enhance landscaping as part of any corridor improvement project  
*Undetermined Impact: While there likely would be a cost associated with the implementation of this recommendation, the project needs more development before a reasonable cost estimate can be determined.*
5. Establish guidelines for lighting within the gateway  
*No Fiscal Impact*

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## Appendices

60-Day Review Draft

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# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## Draft Boulevard Zoning District and Associated Definitions

**DISCLAIMER** – *This draft is incorporated into the Finksburg Corridor Plan. It is subject to further additions, deletions, and revisions by the Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission. Please note that this draft is also subject to the public hearing process and adoption by the Board of County Commissioners for Carroll County. The adopted version shall be the official version and shall supersede this draft upon the effective date of the ordinance adopting this new zoning district.*

### **§ 223-2. Definitions.**

**DAY TREATMENT OR CARE FACILITY** – A nonresidential facility which is licensed or certified by the State of Maryland to provide service including supervision, personal care, training or sheltered employment, during part of a 24 hour period, on a regular schedule, for two or more individuals in need of such services due to a medical handicap, physical or mental disability, advanced age, or addiction to drugs or alcohol. This term shall not include a child day care center, school, health care facility, or residential care facility as defined in this chapter.

**HEALTH CARE FACILITY** – A medical facility, office, or clinic providing outpatient services including ambulatory care, diagnostic and surgical services or dental care.

**OUTSIDE DISPLAY** – The exhibiting of one or more examples of goods and merchandise for sale or rent on the premises which is not contained within a building and where examples of goods and merchandise are not covered in packaging materials and do not require assembly by the customer.

**SPECIALTY STORE** – A retail business that offers a particular type or category of merchandise for sale or rental. Examples include but are not limited to stores specializing in art supplies, bicycles, books, cards, electronics, fabrics, flowers, gifts, hobbies, housewares, jewelry, luggage, musical instruments, news publications, optical goods, pets, photographic supplies, radios and televisions, sewing machines, sporting goods, stationary, video tapes, or works of art.

## **ARTICLE XXIII A, Boulevard (BLVD) District**

### **§ 223-xx1. Purpose.**

The Boulevard District (BLVD) is established to permit primarily small-scale business, office, and retail uses and limited residential uses. The uses are intended to support the service and retail needs of the surrounding community. The district also is intended to allow for those uses that can provide the basic needs of the regional traveler for properties with primary access to major state and local roadways. Development of properties within the BLVD will incorporate creative design elements, consistent architectural and signage themes, and improved access to adjacent commercial properties.

### **§ 223-xx2. Principal permitted uses.**

Principal permitted uses shall be as follows:

- A. Uses of a service or commercial nature:
  - Alcoholic beverage stores
  - Antique shops, art galleries, craft shops
  - Bakery shops
  - Banks, saving and loan institutions
  - Bicycle sale and repair shops

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- Blueprinting, printing, duplicating or engraving services
  - Clothing and apparel stores with goods for sale or rent
  - Coffee shops
  - Convenience stores
  - Dance and music studios
  - Day care
  - Day treatment or care facilities
  - Department stores
  - Dry cleaners
  - Fuel stations
  - Funeral establishments without crematoria
  - Furniture stores
  - Grocery stores
  - Hardware stores
  - Health care facilities, excluding hospitals
  - Health clubs
  - Office supply stores
  - Offices, professional and business
  - Personal service establishments, such as barber shops, beauty shops, day spas, opticians, photographers, tailors
  - Pet supply stores
  - Radio and television studios and repair shops
  - Restaurants
  - Service agencies, such as real estate offices, insurance and financial services, security services, messenger services, computer services, travel agencies and mailing services
  - Shoe stores and repair shops
  - Specialty stores
  - Sporting goods stores
  - Taverns
  - Veterinary clinics without outside runways
- B. Planned business centers, subject to Article XI of Chapter 103
- C. Schools, colleges and universities
- D. Religious establishments
- E. Single family, two-family, and semi-detached dwellings, provided however that direct access to an arterial roadway is prohibited, and constructed in accordance with the bulk requirements of § 223-89.

## § 223-xx3. Conditional uses requiring Board authorization.

Conditional uses requiring Board authorization shall be as follows:

- A. Automobile service centers
- B. Commercial parking lots or garages
- C. Funeral establishments with crematoria
- D. Car washes
- E. Self-service laundromats

## § 223-xx4. Accessory uses.

Accessory uses shall be as follows:

- A. Residential units of no less than 600 square feet and no greater than 1,000 square feet of floor area per unit in the same structure as an approved business use, subject to Planning Commission approval
- B. Uses customarily accessory to and incidental to any principal permitted or conditional use
- C. Outside display

## § 223-xx5. Prohibited uses.

The following uses shall be specifically prohibited within the BLVD district:

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

- A. Adult entertainment businesses
- B. Mini-storage facilities
- C. Outside storage of any type
- D. Commercial laundry facilities
- E. Vehicle repair shops

## § 223-xx6. Bulk requirements.

Unless otherwise modified by the Planning Commission, the following criteria shall apply to all new construction projects and all redevelopment projects that include improvements to over fifty (50) percent of the gross floor area of the existing buildings on site, but not including single family, two-family, and semi-detached dwellings.

### A. Site Layout.

#### (1) Buildings.

- (a) **Setbacks.** The front yard shall be a minimum of 10 feet and a maximum of 50 feet as measured from the edge of the road right-of-way. The side and rear yards shall be a minimum of 20 feet as measured from the applicable property line if adjacent to a different zoning district.
- (b) **Orientation.** All buildings, except accessory buildings, shall face the roadway with the highest functional classification in accordance with the Carroll County Functional Classification document and as determined by the Carroll County Department of Public Works.
- (c) **Service Areas.** No trash collection bins may be located in or face any portion of the front yard. No loading docks may be located in or face any portion of the front yard.
- (d) **Height.** No building may exceed 3 stories or 40 feet in height, except as provided in § 223-180.

#### (2) Parking.

- (a) **Setbacks.** All parking areas shall be located a minimum of 10 feet from the front property line.
- (b) **Spaces.** Parking requirements shall be calculated in accordance with Article VI, Chapter 103, but may not exceed 5 parking spaces for every 1,000 feet of floor area, except for eating establishments which may exceed the maximum.
- (c) **Distribution.** A maximum of 20 percent of the total number of parking spaces required may be located in the front yard.

### B. Architecture.

- (1) **Primary street facades.** A minimum of 3 of the following materials shall be used on building facades: brick; split-faced block; natural or cut stone; pre-cast concrete; glass; stucco-type finish materials; fiberglass if used for architectural features such as column covers, cornice details, and fascias.
- (2) **Walls.** No walls over 100 feet in length may be blank. Walls over 100 feet in length shall utilize at least 2 of the following: change in plane by recess or projection; public area such as outdoor seating or planting area with vertical plantings of trees or arbors; windows, arcades or canopies.
- (3) **Windows.** Windows shall constitute at least 30 percent of the front façade of the first floor of each building.
- (4) **360 degree architecture.** All sides of a building shall be complementary to the primary street façade in architectural design and materials.
- (5) **Entrances.** Each use or structure, as applicable, shall have at least 2 of the following main entrance features: canopies, porticos, arcades, peaked roof forms, arches, display windows, architectural details such as tile work or moldings integrating building structure and design.
- (6) **Roofs.**
  - (a) **Sloped.** Acceptable materials for sloped roofs include standing seam metal, dimensional shingles, and concrete, metal or clay tile.
  - (b) **Flat.** Flat roofs, if approved by the Commission, shall have a pitch of less than 3:12 and shall include a parapet or supporting walls that screen all roof top equipment. Environmentally friendly "green" roof construction is allowed.

### C. Traffic and accessibility.

- (1) **Access to adjacent properties.** All users fronting on arterial or collector roads shall provide at least one of the following to allow for access between existing and future uses on adjacent properties:

# Finksburg Corridor Plan

interior drives; rear access drives; frontage roads; cross access drives to provide for traffic flow in both directions.

(2) **Driveways.** New access points onto arterial or collector roads shall be at least 100 feet from other access points and wherever possible shall align with existing or proposed driveways or access points on the opposite side of the roadway.

(3) **Pedestrian access.**

(a) Pedestrian sidewalks shall be required on adjacent public streets and between each business and parking lot.

(b) Building perimeter sidewalks shall be placed along the front, rear, and sides of each building and shall be a minimum of 5 feet in width or otherwise in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. A building perimeter corridor shall be a minimum of 10 feet in width to include the sidewalk, landscaping and outdoor seating provided a clear path for pedestrians is maintained.

(c) Pedestrian walkways constructed of asphalt or pervious material paths or trails that serve the purpose of connecting adjacent uses, commercial businesses, or the community may be used as an alternative to pedestrian sidewalks.

(d) Pedestrian sidewalks and walkways shall be separated from adjacent parking lots and interior drive aisles by a landscaped median or planting area at least 5 feet wide and shall be distinguished by changes in pavement texture or color.

D. **Landscaping.** All development within the BLVD District shall be landscaped in accordance with Chapter 134 of the Code.

E. **Lighting.**

(1) **Building facades.** Lighting shall be located, aimed, and shielded onto the building façade and shall be designed to wash the façade with light. Spot lighting and floodlights are prohibited, except as provided in subsection (3).

(2) **Parking lots and outside display areas.** Lighting shall be full cut-off fixtures directed downward to parking lot surface and may not exceed 20 feet in height.

(3) **Security lighting.** Additional lighting, including spot lights or floodlights, may be approved by the Commission.

## § 223-xx7. Signage requirements.

A. A signage plan shall be submitted with the site plan. The signage plan shall outline:

(1) Size, type, and location of all signs at the entrance to the development.

(2) Size, type, and location of all stationary direction signs.

(3) Size, type, and location of all flat wall signs.

(4) Size, type, and location of all service entrance signs.

B. Exterior signage shall be for identification only and may not be used as an advertising device.

C. Sign locations shall be permitted as follows:

(1) For each single tenant building, one free-standing sign not exceeding 10 feet in height above grade of the adjacent roadway and one building mounted sign.

(2) For each multi-tenant building, one free-standing sign not exceeding 10 feet in height. Each tenant may have one building mounted sign.

(3) A corner lot may have two monument and building mounted signs.

D. Sign types shall be permitted as follows:

(1) **Free standing signs.**

(a) Maximum size shall not exceed 32 square feet on a 2-sided sign.

(b) The sign shall be constructed of durable materials, not including wood.

(c) The sign shall be mounted on a sturdy base.

(2) **Building mounted signs.**

(a) Sign location on the building shall be compatible with the architectural design of the building.

(b) No signs may extend above the roof or parapet line of the building.

(c) Illumination may be internal through a translucent letter face or opaque letters projected slightly off the wall and back-lit from a source concealed within the letter.

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- E. In multi-tenant buildings, the developer or owner is responsible for submitting a tenant identification system for approval.
- F. Each lot is limited to one temporary sign, which may be double-sided and shall be removed within 6 months.
  - (1) Maximum sign area shall not exceed 32 square feet.
  - (2) Signs shall be mounted on two 4-inch by 4-inch wood posts with top of sign a maximum of 8 feet above grade.
  - (3) Actual mounting height permitted shall be determined by sign proportions and location.
- G. The following are prohibited:
  - (1) Flashing or moving signs.
  - (2) Exposed neon or other exposed light source signs.
  - (3) Applied wood letters.
  - (4) Light Emitting Diode (LED) signs, except for fuel pricing at fuel stations.
  - (5) Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) signs.
  - (6) Electronic messaging signs.
  - (7) Pennants, ribbons, streamers, tethered balloons, clusters of flags, laser projections, inflatable devices, and similar objects.
  - (8) Vehicle-mounted signs.
  - (9) Roof-mounted signs.
- H. This section supersedes the signage requirements in § 103-52F for planned business centers within the Boulevard district and in Article XVIII of this chapter for all other uses within the Boulevard district.

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# Finksburg Corridor Plan

## Design Guidelines

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# Shaping The Finksburg Gateway

to Carroll County, MD



MD 140 Corridor at Finksburg

# DESIGN GUIDELINES

Carroll County Department of Planning

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The **FINKSBURG CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES** document was prepared through the contributions of the following agencies, organizations and individuals.

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# FINKSBURG CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES

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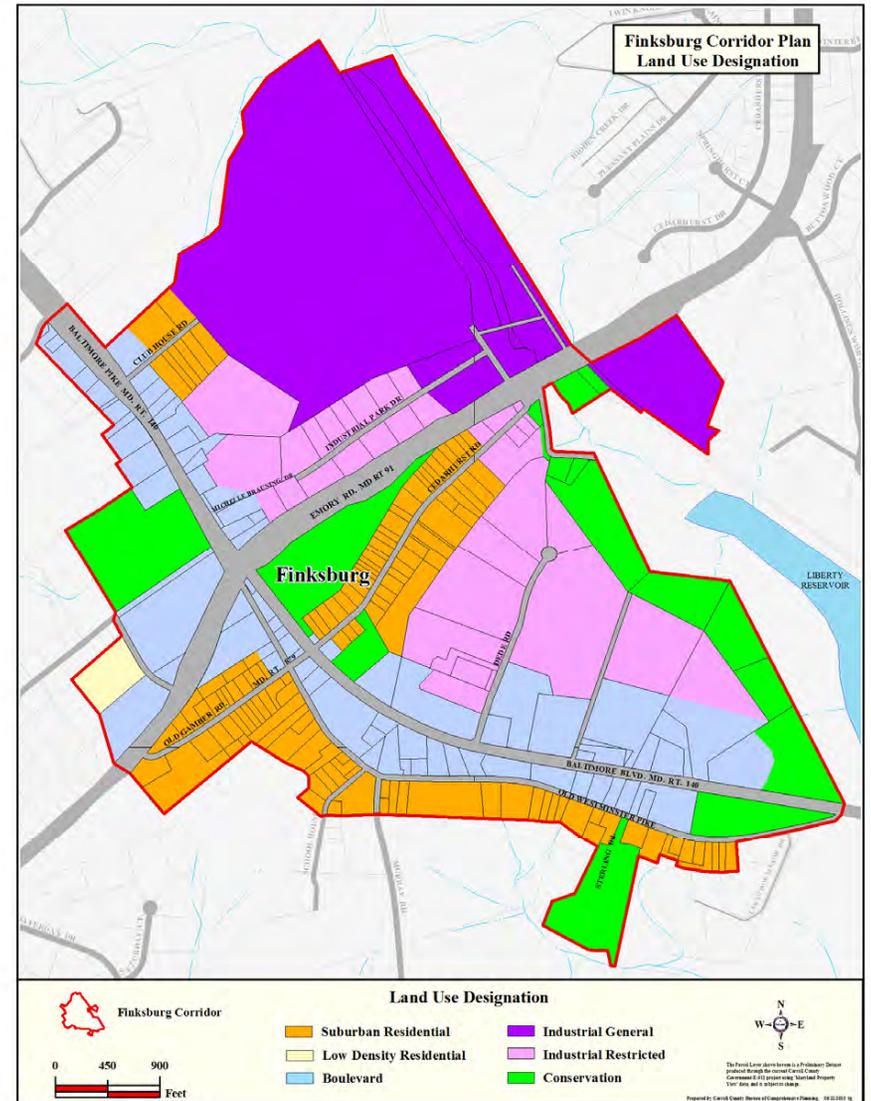
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## PREFACE

MD 140, the most heavily traveled gateway to the County, enters the county just southeast of the Finksburg commercial and industrial core. What travelers see along this route in Finksburg provides their first impression of Carroll County. Just like the rest of Carroll County, Finksburg's rural setting and convenient location has made it a desirable place to live and do business. Despite the tremendous amount of growth and development that has occurred here over the years, much of the Finksburg area retains its natural beauty and rural charm. At the same time, portions of the MD 140 corridor immediately adjacent to the roadway have suffered from poor development patterns. The result is that the Finksburg area essentially has "two faces:" one that is immediately perceptible to drivers traveling MD 140, and one that waits to be discovered just outside the corridor. Unfortunately, the image that most people have of Finksburg is from MD 140, and it is not an especially positive one. These Design Guidelines seek to change that – to bring about positive improvements to the built environment that will generate greater investment in the corridor, create a more pleasant environment in which to live and do business, and ultimately shape an attractive and vibrant gateway for the county that will leave a lasting and favorable impression on all those who travel the corridor.

This set of design guidelines is written specifically for new development and redevelopment within the zoning districts of Boulevard, Business General, Neighborhood Retail Business, Industrial General, and Industrial Restricted that lie within the Finksburg Corridor as defined in the Finksburg Corridor Plan. This area generally encompasses land adjacent to MD 140 from the Baltimore/Carroll County line to Brown Road.

Using the design guidelines to guide private development and redevelopment will result in a much improved visual appearance along the MD 140 corridor in Finksburg. A safer and more pedestrian-friendly environment, coupled with improved design of the street frontage, buildings and signs of properties, will project a more positive and inviting image for both Finksburg and Carroll County. The net effect will be a perception of Finksburg, and Carroll County in general, as a prosperous place to do business, a comfortable and safe place to live, and an enticing place to visit.



## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Design Guidelines

Although this set of guidelines provides specific guidance for site planning as well as site, building and signage design, it is not the intent of the Design Guidelines to dictate design. Instead, these guidelines are approaches to achieve basic design objectives that are identified in the Finksburg Corridor Plan and supported by the newly adopted Boulevard zone.

The Design Guidelines provide written guides, prototypical plans, illustrations, and photographs of good development that are envisioned in the zoning districts of Boulevard, Business General, Neighborhood Retail Business, Industrial General, and Industrial Restricted. The graphics and photographs are intended to help property owners, developers and residents better understand the design expectations of Carroll County. They suggest how development and redevelopment could occur differently from the existing development patterns, and provide guidance for improving properties and fulfilling the vision for the Corridor held by the citizens of Finksburg and Carroll County in general.

The main goal of the Design Guidelines is to enhance the image and function of the MD 140 Corridor through clearly articulated site planning/design and building design recommendations. The Design Guidelines also have guides for the treatment of the street frontage of properties adjacent to MD 140 and other intersecting streets, which significantly impacts the visual quality and function of these roads. The goals of the Design Guidelines are:

- a. Improve the overall visual appearance of the Corridor.
- b. Enhance the appearance and value of individual properties in the Corridor.
- c. Establish the desired design characters for the Corridor.
- d. Achieve better land use and function by using land more intensively and efficiently.
- e. Minimize the conflict of pedestrians and vehicular traffic to improve pedestrian and vehicular accessibility and mobility in the Corridor.
- f. Create opportunities for new economic development and for more concentrated multi-use development.

- g. Ensure improvements made for the redevelopment and expansion of existing businesses will result in high quality aesthetics for office, business, and industrial uses

### Design Guidelines Components

The Design Guidelines were prepared based upon the evaluation of the existing characteristics of the MD 140 corridor in Finksburg, issues and concerns of the community, development goals as set forth jointly by the Department of Planning and FPACC, and goals and objectives contained in the Finksburg Corridor Plan.

The Design Guidelines document is divided into four (4) sections, including guidelines for site planning, site design, building design and sign design. The Guidelines are applicable to properties outside of the public right-of-way.

**Section 1 Site Planning** addresses important site plan issues that have significant impacts on goals as set forth by the Guidelines, including topography, building location in relation to MD 140, parking, access to the property, pedestrian circulation and safety, green spaces, and stormwater management facility location.

**Section 2 Site Design** provides detailed design guidance related to street frontage, entrances, buffers/screening, parking, car display, drive-thru aisles, storage and service areas, landforms, universal design, lighting, site furniture, stormwater management, and town centers/community centers/shopping centers. These are all important design elements that have significant impact on shaping the development quality along the MD 140 corridor.

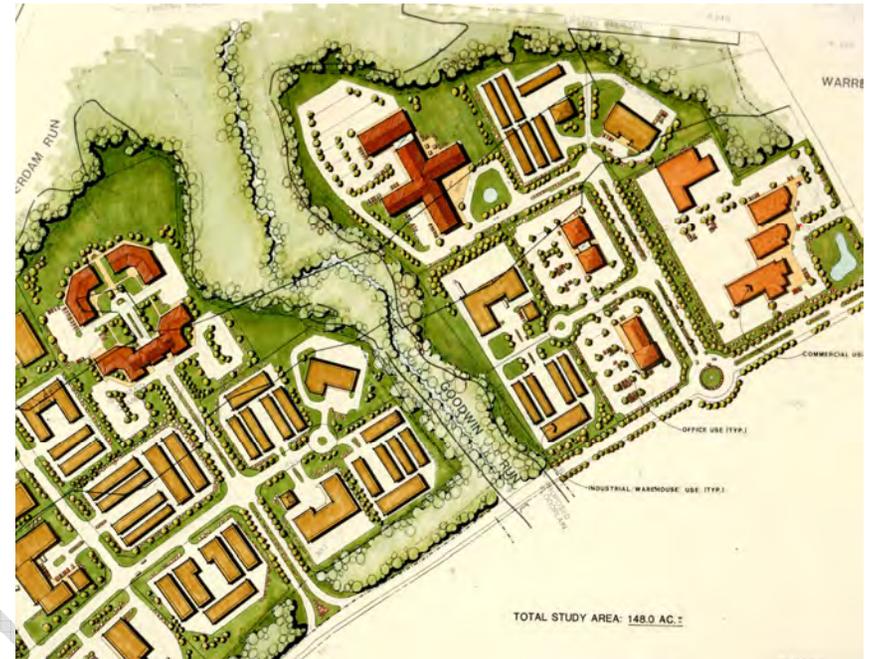
**Section 3 Building Design** includes design guidelines related to building mass, articulation, height, façade, walls/windows/doors, roofs, material and landscaping. The guidelines are for commercial, institutional, office, and industrial building. Residential uses are not included, except when they are part of a mixed-use development (as allowed by the Zoning Ordinance).

**Section 4 Sign Design** provides design guidance for signage related to color, letters and symbols, illumination, lighting, and placement. Issues related to billboards are not included in the Guidelines.

## GUIDELINES

### 1 Site Planning

A site plan is the development framework of a property. It has significant impacts on the proper function, visual quality, physical environment, vehicular and pedestrian safety, universal accessibility, and social environment of a proposed development. The Design Guidelines developed in this document address only the issues/problems pertinent to and prevalent along the MD 140 corridor, based upon the evaluation of the existing conditions. Common problems observed include excessive cut and fill, inconsistent building setbacks and low building height that diminish the definition of the corridor space, numerous curb cuts within a very short distance, inadequate pedestrian amenities, confusing interior vehicular circulation, inappropriate locations of utility features, storage, and loading, and stormwater management facilities, to name just a few. The Guidelines were developed focusing on these issues.



*(Above) A good site plan should be all encompassing, including natural features and creating open spaces. Circulation should be provided for vehicles and pedestrians. (P.E.L.A.)*

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1.1 Site Topography and Features

a. Objectives

- 1) Protect water resources within the Liberty Reservoir watershed.
- 2) Create a development pattern that is respectful of the existing land form/topography and environment.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas such as woods, wetlands, etc.
- 2) Make an effort to balance cut and fill within a property.
- 3) Use planted slopes in lieu of walls to accommodate grade change.
- 4) Preserve or restore any buildings of architectural significance on property.



*(Above) Planted slopes accommodate grade changes and help to soften the site features. (P.E.L.A.)*

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## 1.2 Building Locations

### a. Objectives

- 1) Locate buildings to preserve or enhance views.
- 2) Maintain the continuity of building-to-street and building-to-building setback relationships.
- 3) Use buildings to better define street edges.
- 4) Create physical or visual linkages among buildings in multi-building complexes.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Situate buildings on the property to take advantage of attractive views to and from the site
- 2) Orient building front entrance(s) toward public access streets.
- 3) As much as possible, maintain consistent building setbacks to frame the street and reinforce the spatial relationship between buildings.
- 4) Encourage buildings that are more than one story high to better define the street space and add affordable business and commercial space.
- 5) Use consistent architecture and landscaping, pedestrian walkways, interconnected parking areas, and building location to reinforce linkages when more than one building occupies a site.



*(Above) A commercial use with its front façade and primary entrances oriented towards the major arterial road. (P.E.L.A)*

### 1.3 Parking Lots

#### a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize adverse visual impact of parking lots.
- 2) Respond to existing topography
- 3) Ensure pedestrian safety in the parking lot.
- 4) Provide continuous links between parking lots of contiguous premises.
- 5) Maintain cohesiveness among adjacent properties.
- 6) Provide a clear sense of direction.

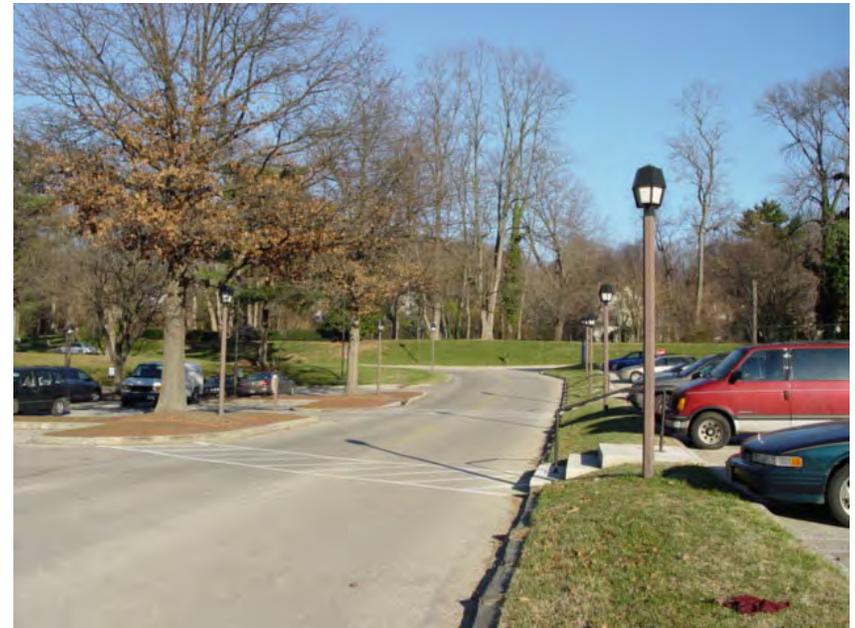
#### b. Guidelines

- 1) Where parking must abut a street, provide buffering and screening. Also see Section 2 Site Design and Carroll County Landscape Design Manual.
- 3) Place the majority of parking to the rear of the building to minimize the public views of parking lot.
- 4) Locate handicapped parking spaces near the building front entrance.
- 5) Provide crosswalks at designated crossing locations to allow safe pedestrian access from the parking lot to shops and offices.
- 6) Provide sidewalks that lead from the parking lots to the main building entrances.
- 7) Create a coordinated landscape scheme with cohesiveness among adjacent properties.
- 8) Use planting medians or islands to separate the entranceway and interior roads from the parking bays and to indicate the changes in aisle and parking bay orientation.



*(Above) A landscaped buffer separates parking areas from the main road. (P.E.L.A)*

*(Below) Pedestrian connections between parking areas and buildings allow for safe movement around the site. (P.E.L.A)*



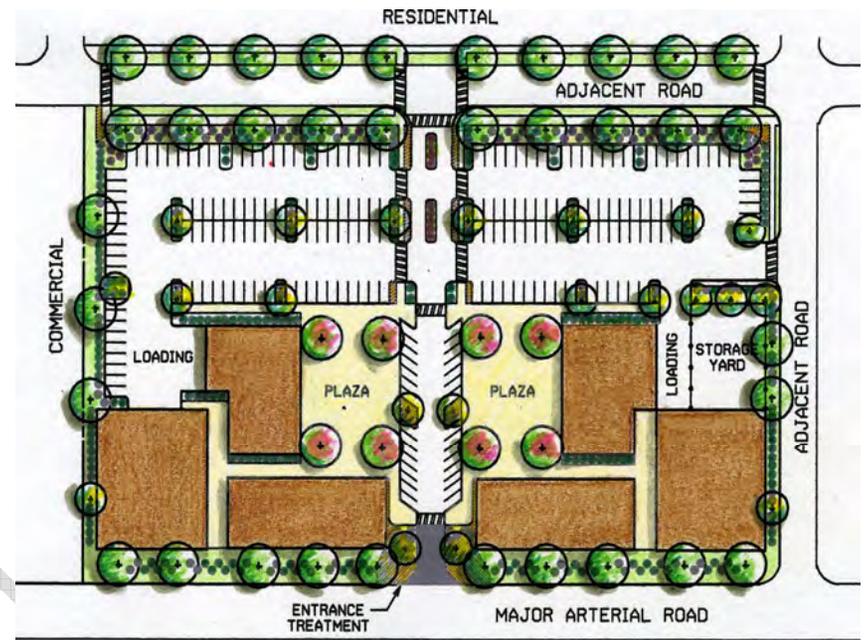
1.4 Vehicular Access

a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize the number of vehicular accesses onto adjacent streets.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Combine accesses for multiple premises where feasible.
- 2) Utilize the smallest number of access points possible, with no more than one driveway per street frontage



(Above) A single entrance can safely and attractively serve multiple buildings on a site. (P.E.L.A)

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## 1.5 On-site Vehicular Circulation

### a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a safe, continuous and easy to follow vehicular circulation system.
- 2) Clearly delineate vehicular and pedestrian travel ways

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide a simple and direct circulation pattern, making use of signs, striping, paving, medians and other visual cues to indicate the intended direction of traffic flow.
- 2) Clearly delineate the entranceway using planting, medians, signs, lights, etc.
- 3) Where space permits, provide pedestrian walkways that are separated from vehicular travel lanes.



*(Above) Paving materials of different types and colors help to distinguish pedestrian circulation from vehicular travel areas.*

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1.6 On-site Pedestrian Circulation and Amenities

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide outdoor spaces that create physical and visual connections between buildings and function as pedestrian amenities.
- 2) Maintain continuous connectivity and universal accessibility for all pedestrians.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Define a continuous accessible pedestrian route throughout the site: neighborhood to shops, parking lot to building, parking lot to parking lot, building to building, etc.
- 2) In multi-building complexes, design internal landscaped areas that connect the buildings. Accent the walks and open areas with landscaping that provides seasonal interest and color. Take maximum advantage of landscaping by providing outdoor eating areas and plazas between buildings for congregation or special events
- 3) Provide bicycle racks in all new retail and office developments to support multi-modal circulation.
- 4) Provide sidewalks in the right-of-way of secondary roads to link individual sites with a wider pedestrian network



*(Above and below) Safe pedestrian circulation and attractive on-site amenities create a pleasing environment for patrons. (P.E.L.A)*



1.7 Green Spaces

a. Objective

- 1) Minimize the impervious area of sites.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide pervious green space at a minimum of 20% of the property. Required buffers and unpaved stormwater management facilities (ponds, bio-retention areas, infiltration trenches, etc.) may be considered green space.
- 2) Enhance the attractiveness and ecological advantages of the green space through the use of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers.
- 3) Explore the use of pervious paving materials where appropriate, given anticipated use patterns
- 4) Use native and/or drought-tolerant plant species (per the Carroll County Landscape Manual) whenever possible.



*(Above and below) Raingardens can be used to help absorb stormwater runoff. (P.E.L.A)*



1.8 Utilities

a. Objective

- 1) Minimize visual intrusion of utilities

b. Guidelines

- 1) Place all electrical, telephone and cable television transmission lines underground or along the rear property line where feasible.



*(Above) An abundance of signs and utility poles adds to visual chaos. (P.E.L.A)*

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## 2 Site Design

Site design is critical to the visual quality, ambience and function of each property, as well as that of the MD 140 corridor as a whole through Finksburg. As stated in the Preface, it is evident that the development quality of the Corridor has not lived up to the expectations of the citizens and the County. Significant improvements must take place to ensure better quality development and re-development in the future. As expressed by the citizens and the County, a number of site design issues must be addressed in order to achieve the goals of these Guidelines and create a positive image of the county at this significant gateway.

A windshield survey of properties along the corridor reveals an uncoordinated and generally unattractive approach to building treatments, parking, signage, and landscaping. The predominate features of the streetscape include utility poles, unscreened parking areas, multiple curb cuts and obscured entries, chaotic signage, and little to no site landscaping. Buildings themselves tend to show little attention to design detail, quality of materials, or neighborhood context. Little consideration is given to pedestrian safety or comfort.

In order to address these concerns, the following site design guidelines were developed. Included in this section are guidelines for street frontages, entrances and entranceways, buffers/screens, parking lots, automotive display areas, and drive-thru lanes. Issues related to storage areas, loading areas, dumpsters and ground-mounted electrical/mechanical equipment are also addressed, as are slopes and embankments. In addition, design guidelines were developed for universal accessibility, site lighting, site furniture, stormwater management facilities, as well as town centers/community centers/shopping centers. These guidelines support the Carroll County Landscape Manual.



*(Above) Site design can be strengthened by deemphasizing parking areas and providing appropriate landscaping and buffering. (P.E.L.A)*

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## 2.1 Street Frontage

### a. Objectives

- 1) Create a continuous landscaped edge with a cohesive image along the street to better define the street, improve the visual quality along the right-of-way line and enhance the streetscape.
- 2) Present an attractive façade to the public realm.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide a minimum of 6' wide planting buffer along the right-of-way containing trees and shrubs per the Carroll County Landscape Manual.
- 2) Provide shrubs, low fences or walls to screen unsightly site features along the street frontage that can not be relocated.
- 3) Use the existing topography/land form along the street frontage to effectively screen the parking lot.
- 4) Integrate sidewalks into the overall design of the street frontage along secondary streets. For safety reasons, sidewalks are discouraged along MD 140 frontage.
- 5) Provide a well- designed front yard with landscaping, decorative paving, lighting, and signage



*(Above) Articulated facades, landscaping, lighting, and pavers make for a varied appearance. (P.E.L.A)*

*(Below) Plantings, low walls, and street trees provide good parking lot buffering when it is not otherwise available.*



## 2.2 Entrances and Entranceways

### a. Objectives

- 1) Ensure entrance design is compatible/respectful of the surrounding area and buildings to maintain cohesiveness.
- 2) Delineate clearly the entrance and entranceway.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide planting or planting island/median along the entranceway to enhance the sense of arrival.
- 2) At vehicular access points, provide a durable drive apron using concrete or decorative pavers to clearly delineate the access locations.
- 3) Use planting, lighting, bollards, signs and other features to enhance the sense of entrance.



*(Above) An attractive and well-landscaped entryway helps guide visitors to their destination and creates a sense of arrival. (P.E.L.A.)  
(Below) Lighting, landscaping, and distinctive paving help to emphasize entryways. (P.E.L.A.)*



2.3 Buffering and Screening

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide effective and compatible buffers, particularly between residential uses and other more intensive uses such as commercial and industrial uses.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Comply with screen planting requirements in Carroll County Landscape Manual, latest edition.



*A good parking lot buffer using a variety of plant material and a berm.*

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## 2.4 Parking Lots

### a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize the adverse visual impact of parking lots on public right-of-ways and adjacent residential uses
- 2) Provide shade and visual relief for parking lots through landscaping.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) See guidelines in 2.3 Buffering/Screening.
- 2) Provide interior planting as required by the Carroll County Landscape Manual.
- 3) Incorporate larger planting areas to allow planting in groves and into existing woods/planting areas, and preserve specimen trees.
- 4) Use planting slope in lieu of walls to accommodate grade changes.



*(Above and below) Landscaped buffers act to screen parking lots from view and to soften the internal environment within the parking lot itself.*  
*(above, City of Lynnwood, WA: [http://www.ci.lynnwood.wa.us/lmgs/parking%201\\_p3.jpg](http://www.ci.lynnwood.wa.us/lmgs/parking%201_p3.jpg);*  
*below, [http://www.smmgardens.com/transformations/posite/posite\\_after.jpg](http://www.smmgardens.com/transformations/posite/posite_after.jpg))*



2.5 Automotive Dealer Display Areas

a. Objectives

- 1) Provide visual relief from the number of automobiles and the expansive paved area.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide planting buffer along street frontage, as specified in Carroll County Landscape Manual, latest edition.
- 2) Provide wheel stops along the edge of the planting area and buffer/screen.
- 3) Comply with interior planting requirements, as specified in Carroll County Landscape Manual, latest edition.



*(Above) Car dealerships can add visual appeal to their sites through low landscaping that softens the “parking lot” effect while still allowing for display of the merchandise. (Toothman Ford: [www.toothmanford.com](http://www.toothmanford.com))*

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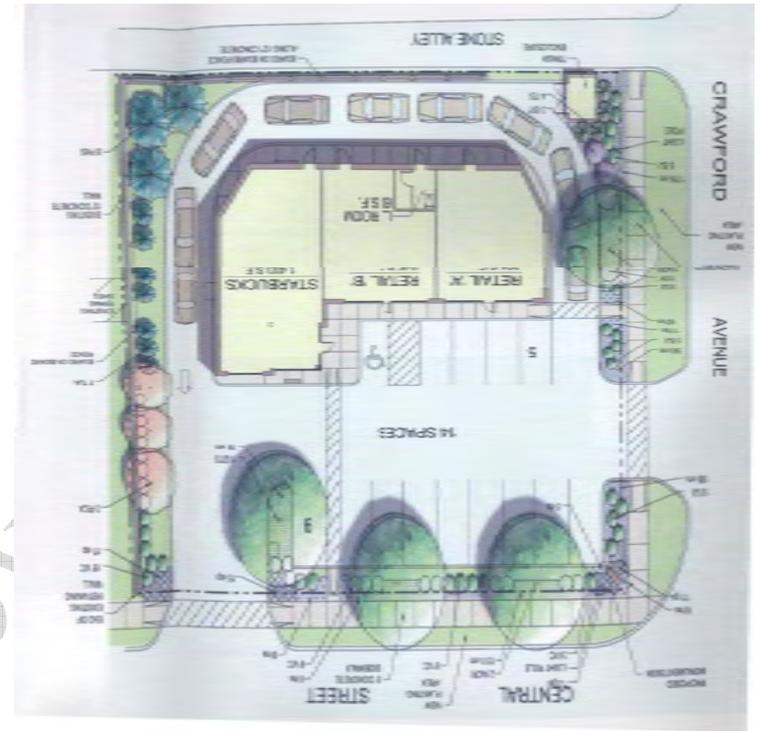
2.6 Drive-Thru Aisles

a. Objectives

- 1) Alleviate adverse visual impacts of service lanes on adjacent uses, especially residential uses.
- 2) Mitigate noise, fume, and light.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide effective buffering/screening between the drive-thru aisles and adjacent uses, without compromising safety and security.



*(Above and below) The queuing lane for this coffee shop's drive-thru does not interfere with the interior parking and is screened from view by the neighboring residential use.*

*(City of Evanston, IL*

*[www.cityofevanston.org/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/pdf/DGs\\_Final\\_000.pdf](http://www.cityofevanston.org/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/pdf/DGs_Final_000.pdf))*



2.7 Storage and Loading Areas ,Dumpsters and Ground Mounted Electrical/Mechanical Equipment

a. Objectives

- 1) Minimize the adverse visual impact of service area site features.
- 2) Minimize the conflict between parking areas and service area site features.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Locate dumpsters, loading areas, storage areas, utility and mechanical features in the rear of the building away from the public street,
- 2) Avoid direct sight lines into these features from adjacent roads and entrance drives. Make best use of existing topography or create earth berms with landscaping for screening.
- 3) Conceal these site features from all adjacent properties and public and private roads. Design enclosures to be consistent with the materials, color and design of the building.
- 4) Provide adequate screening of all service area site features, in accordance with the Design Guidelines.
- 5) Design site circulation to minimize conflict between loading areas, parking areas and pedestrian access.



*(Above and below) Utility areas, loading areas, and dumpsters are easily screened with walls using building materials similar to those of the building and with landscaping that is similar to that used throughout the site. (P.E.L.A.)*



## 2.8 Slopes, Embankments and Retaining Walls

### a. Objectives

- 1) Avoid extreme grade modifications that are visible from the public right-of-way and may impact on adjacent properties.
- 2) Use topography to enhance visual quality.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Terrace slopes, building and parking lots to reduce the height of embankments, especially along property lines.
- 2) Incorporate distinctive site features into site design.
- 3) Coordinate site grading with landscaping.



*(Above) Ground covers help to stabilize slopes while street trees in tree lawns provide shade and form.*

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## 2.9 Universal Design

**Universal design**, which is related to "inclusive design" and "design for all," is an approach to the design of products, services and environments to be usable by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or circumstance. Universal design is a relatively new term that emerged from "barrier free" or "accessible design". Barrier free design and accessible design provide a level of accessibility for people with disability

### a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a universally accessible environment in all new development.
- 2) Provide a universally accessible environment in all redevelopment/renovation, without creating an extreme financial hardship.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide stable, firm and slip resistant walkway surfaces.
- 2) Maintain a cross slope of 2% to 4% for any walkway surface.
- 3) Provide adequate clearance near the entrance door, planting beds and other site features.
- 4) Limit pavement edge heights to  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Use a slope of 2:1 and an elevation difference of less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ " on beveled edges.
- 5) Limit openings of drainage inlets or metal tree grates within any walking area to less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Orient the length of the opening to be perpendicular to the travel direction.
- 6) Leave the space between 27" to 80" above ground clear of obstruction.
- 7) Where possible, eliminate the curb at building entrances, use fully accessible sidewalk along building and use bollards and/or planting to ensure pedestrian safety.



*(Above) This shopping center demonstrates the application of universal design features, using a flush curb edge and bollards to create a safe and barrier-free pedestrian way.*

## 2.10 Site lighting

### a. Objectives

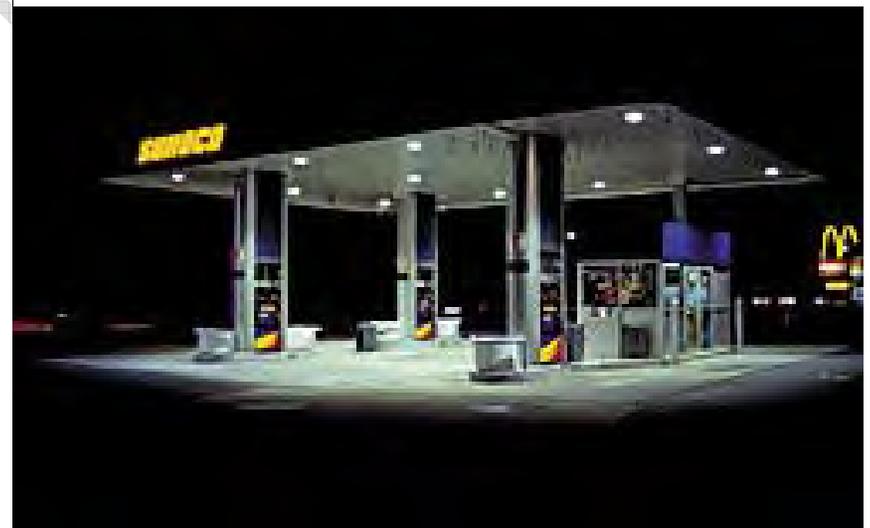
- 1) Provide a safe pedestrian environment.
- 2) Avoid light pollution. Keep the glare of lighting off public roadways and on the site.
- 3) Use light fixtures to maintain cohesiveness of the site design.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide adequate illumination to ensure pedestrian safety.
- 2) Select light fixtures that are compatible in design with the building and other site features, and use the same style of light fixtures throughout the entire site when possible.
- 3) Use full cut-off lights with flat lenses to reduce light trespass.
- 4) Refrain from the following lighting types: yard lighting, floodlights, gang floodlights, wall pack lights, non-cutoff shoebox lights, and cobra-head cluster lights.
- 5) Recess canopy lighting within the structure. Ensure that the edge of the canopy protrudes below the surface area of the light.
- 6) Refer to Carroll County's "Design Expectations" document for recommended lighting types.



*(Above and below) The incorporation of recessed, cut-off lights in canopies can make a significant difference in the amount of light glare and trespass. (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute via [www.skyandtelescope.com/resources/darksky/Bright\\_Lights\\_Big\\_nbsp\\_Problems.htm](http://www.skyandtelescope.com/resources/darksky/Bright_Lights_Big_nbsp_Problems.htm))*



## 2.11 Site furniture

### a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a comfortable and convenient environment for pedestrians, patrons, and employees.
- 2) Use site furniture to enhance the image and identity of a property or a town center.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide site furniture at proper locations such as by the building entrance, along the sidewalk, in the plaza, park, or sitting areas.
- 2) Select site furniture that is related to the character of the buildings.
- 3) Choose the same, similar or complimentary style for benches, trash receptacles, bollards, planters, fencing, newspaper corrals, and light standards.
- 4) Use the same site furniture style within a development.
- 5) Avoid cluttering a site with too much site furniture.



*(Above and below) Site furniture such as benches, trash cans, planters, and ornamental features help to create lively and comfortable pedestrian environments. (P.E.L.A.)*



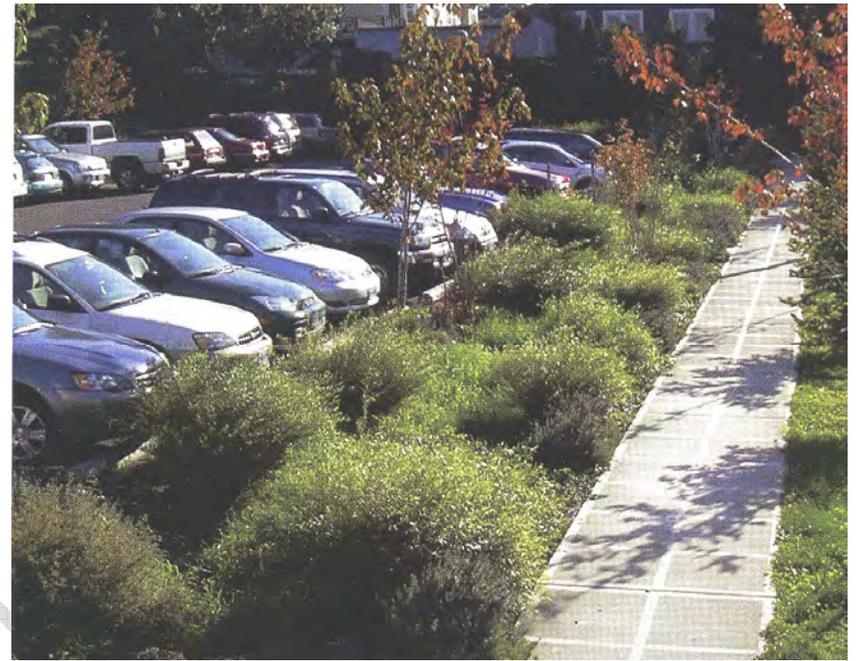
## 2.12 Stormwater Management

### a. Objectives

- 1) For redevelopment, increase pervious area where possible.
- 2) Incorporate stormwater management facilities into the landscape setting and as amenities.

### b. Guidelines

- 1) For redevelopment, provide planting areas where possible to increase pervious/landscape area and reduce the existing impervious area.
- 2) Consider conversion of planting islands into bio-retention areas/rain gardens.
- 3) Utilize stormwater management facilities as site amenities.
- 4) Utilize underground infiltration structures to reduce or eliminate surface stormwater management facilities.



*(Above) Raingardens allow for the infiltration of stormwater runoff and can be attractive landscaping elements in and of themselves. (P.E.L.A.)*

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## 2.13 Community Centers

### a. Objectives

- 1) Reinforce the development as a “community activity center” and gathering spot.
- 2) Provide a pedestrian-friendly environment within the center.
- 3) Minimize pedestrian and vehicle conflicts
- 4) Create a “main street” ambience and a unique sense of place

### b. Guidelines

- 1) In addition to sidewalks, provide amenity spaces with seating and landscaping between buildings, in front of building entrances, or any other locations within the Center for congregation, relaxation, or programmed festive activities.
- 2) Incorporate comfortable gathering spots such as plazas, seating areas, and green spaces into the design of the Center.
- 3) Provide sidewalks, trees, ornamental lights, and site furniture along the frontage of buildings to enliven the pedestrian area and provide separation from the vehicular areas.
- 4) Provide parallel or angled parking in front of buildings and locate parking lots to the rear of buildings
- 5) Provide a system of continuous walkways with crosswalks and adequate lighting within the Center to minimize vehicular and pedestrian conflicts and to ensure pedestrian safety.
- 6) Use two story structures to frame the street, create a “Main Street”-type atmosphere, and reduce the footprint of large buildings.



*(Above) Inviting and well-landscaped public spaces, with places of seating and other pedestrian amenities, help to create a sense of community and uniqueness.*

### 3 Building Design

Building design has a profound impact on the functionality and appearance of a property, street corridors, and the surrounding neighborhood. Building facades that provide visual interest, especially on the first floor, are important in pedestrian-oriented areas. A distinctive identity for a corridor can also be created through a common palette of materials, forms, height and features forging a coordinated and inviting ambience.

The Design Guidelines formulated in this section are not intended to restrict imagination or innovation, but to emphasize design principles that will lead to a more attractive and welcoming built environment.

The Guidelines promote new development patterns that allow for more intensive and efficient use of prime sites. The Boulevard zone's emphasis on multi-story buildings and greater pedestrian orientation is a departure from the current pattern found in both business and industrial zoning districts. Ultimately, buildings within the Boulevard zone should have a character that is compatible with that of the Finksburg community.



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### 3.1 Contextual Compatibility

#### a. Objective

- 1) Ensure the character and design features of buildings in either infill or new developments are compatible with adjacent buildings, the neighborhood and the Finksburg Community as a whole. Refer to the “Design Expectations” handbook for examples of regional architecture.
- 2) Discourage the use of the standardized “franchise”-style building by using vernacular architecture as a base.

#### b. Guidelines

- 1) Design buildings that respect the characteristics of adjacent properties. Avoid jarring contrast in building scale, forms, materials or styles when making transitions.
- 2) Strive to achieve the goals of the Guidelines rather than repeat inappropriate design features on existing buildings.
- 3) Apply the same guidelines to corporate or franchise design as are applicable to other buildings, while still allowing for corporate identity.
- 4) Integrate parking structures with their associated buildings. If the parking structure is freestanding, apply the same design concepts listed in the Design Guidelines.



*(Above) National franchise restaurants can be contextual while still retaining their brand identity.*

*(Below) This veterinarian clinic in rural Maryland uses color, material, form and scale to fit in with the surrounding area.*



### 3.2 Mass and Articulation

#### a. Objectives

- 1) Form a more town center/community center character at street intersections along the corridor.
- 2) Provide a well-coordinated architectural design.
- 3) Ensure a sense of harmony of building character along the Corridor.
- 4) Reduce the perceived volume or massing of the building and promote architectural interest.
- 5) Promote pedestrian friendliness.

#### b. Guidelines

- 1) Locate new, multistory buildings nearer to the streets of major intersections.
- 2) Pay special attention to the building's proportion, height and width, as well as the relationship of various design elements, such as windows and doors, to the entire building.
- 3) Achieve a balance of size and proportion between the proposed building and that of other surrounding buildings
- 4) Design new, multistory buildings with three distinct components: base, middle and top. Architectural details are important at the base. Define each component by horizontal and/or vertical articulation.
- 5) Articulate the corner on corner buildings. Treat corner entry architecture distinctively, to enliven intersections and facilitate pedestrian flow around the corner. Examples of treatments include angled or rounded corners, corner entries, towers, arches, and other architectural elements.
- 6) Articulate the building materials and openings. Carefully design the rhythm or repetition of

windows, columns, indentations or projections in the facade to create a cohesive pattern.

- 7) Avoid large expanses of highly reflective surface and mirror glass exterior walls, to prevent heat and glare impacts on the adjacent public streets and properties.
- 8) Avoid bright colors, particularly primary colors; limit them to trim and accents. Avoid bright white or off-white for buildings.
- 9) Use structural elements to lend the appearance of separate bays when commercial buildings have over 50 feet of building frontage.



*(Above) The varied roofline, corner tower, and gabled roof with dormers on this bank help to reduce the bulk of the building and break up the mass of surfaces.*

### 3.3 Height and Width

Multistory buildings help create and reinforce a street wall, thus better defining the street corridor space than lower buildings do. Multi-story buildings have traditionally been used to house many different uses in a compact area and therefore can make more efficient use of land.

#### a. Objectives

- 1) Encourage the construction of multi-story buildings.
- 2) Maintain consistent or compatible building heights and widths .

#### b. Guidelines

- (1) Encourage buildings with at least 2 stories. Steep rooflines, false fronts, clerestory windows or other such architectural devices can also be used to give the appearance of two-story height.
- 2) Dedicate at least 50% of the primary street frontage of a property to building frontage.
- 3) Respect the massing, height, and width of the existing neighborhood buildings when designing the height and massing of new buildings.



*(Above) Multi-story buildings help to establish a sense of enclosures along Main Streets, but they also provide for the vertical mixing of uses. (Jim Johnson)*

*(Below) Even the illusion of a second story helps to define space.*



### 3.4 Façade

Building facades that have variety and visual interest, especially on the first floor, are crucial in creating pedestrian friendliness.

#### a. Objectives

- 1) Promote thoughtful building façade treatment at ground/street level that is pedestrian friendly and inviting.
- 2) Highlight the building's main entrance.
- 3) Use various architectural elements to create visual interest and avoid blank walls.
- 4) Articulate the building facades of warehouses or other similar buildings with architectural design details.

#### b. Guidelines

- 1) Allow views to the exterior by providing windows on ground floor façades, visible from abutting street or parking lot.
- 2) Use open arcades to provide a pleasant, inviting pedestrian experience.
- 3) Use lighting, landscaping, porches, awnings, signs, arcades, etc. to highlight the sense of building entrance.
- 4) Use window design in terms of size, shape, type, and pattern to break up the sense of massiveness on the façade.
- 5) Use corners, belt courses, bay divisions, and variations in wall plane to enhance the visual interest of the façade.
- 6) If the building's function requires a basic, box-like building form, introduce exterior articulation such as changes in color, material or plane for facades that are visible from public streets.
- 7) If the façade is more than 100 feet in length, use recesses and offsets, angular forms or other features to provide visual interest.



*(Above) The varied roofline and facade help to break up the building plane and create a pedestrian-friendly experience.  
(Below) With adequate width and proper amenities, covered walkways can function as public space.*



### 3.5 Walls/Windows/Doors

#### a. Objectives

- 1) Use doors and windows to add to the attractiveness of a building, encourage pedestrian activity, enliven the streetscape, and make streets and buildings safer.
- 2) Make rear entrances as attractive and inviting as the front entrance

#### b. Guidelines

- 1) Provide street-oriented primary entrances. Dual entry areas are also acceptable, with entries oriented to the street and to parking at the back or side of the building.
- 2) Maximize transparency and windows on the ground floor for pedestrian interest. Use at least 40% of the building façade for windows or window display areas. Avoid windowless walls along the public street.
- 3) Establish recesses for entries and for outdoor eating or display areas. Besides providing gathering areas, these recesses can create visual interest along the street. Planters or landscaping may be incorporated into such recesses, but must not extend into the public sidewalk or right-of-way.
- 4) Use the same design guides above for the rear building entrance



*(Above) Rear entrances can be as welcoming as the primary ones.  
(Below) The public realm is enlivened when windows allow for the visual connection between indoors and outdoors. (P.E.L.A.)*



### 3.6 Roof

#### a. Objective

- 1) Design building roofs to be an integral part of the overall building design. They are an important element contributing to the visual interest of a building.
- 2) Design roofs to screen rooftop mechanical equipment.

#### b. Guidelines

- 1) Integrate parapets and roof screens into the roof design of new buildings and new additions. The material and color of roof screens shall appear identical to those in the roof or building
- 2) Break up long horizontal rooflines by providing articulations in roof design and the facades of new buildings. These articulations include change in the height or slopes of portions of roofs, or change in color, material, forms, etc.
- 3) Encourage the use of equipment wells for sloped or pitched roofs.
- 4) Consider the use of decorative roof elements, such as projecting cornices, to enhance roof edges, especially for mixed-use buildings and buildings that include retail uses.
- 5) Screen on-roof mechanical equipment by solid building elements. Wherever possible, cluster roof equipment and include in one screen.



*(Above) This pitched roof provides visual interest and is compatible with the architecture of the surrounding area.*

*(Below) Parapet walls can be used to screen rooftop equipment.*



### 3.7 Exterior Building Material

The finish of a building provides a statement for a particular business within and a visual interest for the Corridor as a whole. Quality building materials emphasizes a sense of pride for the corridor, the county, and its residents.

#### a. Objectives

- 1) Use quality building materials to create an identity for the Corridor and engender pride in its appearance.
- 2) Use building materials to enhance business image and identity and improve the visual quality of the site.

#### b. Guidelines

- 1) Use one or a combination of the following materials as a first choice within the Corridor:
  - Finish face brick.
  - Ground face and split face concrete block.
  - Natural stone
  - Stucco and simulated stucco finishes such as 'Exterior Insulated Finish Systems' (EIFS).
  - Horizontal or vertical cement board siding (or similar material) and natural wood siding.
  - Cement board shake siding (or similar material) and natural cedar shake wood siding.
- 2) Avoid the following materials within the Corridor:
  - Vinyl siding in any form.
  - Concrete block.
  - Painted concrete block or painted brick.



*(Above) Using a variety of quality building materials enhances the image of the establishment as well as the community as a whole.*

### 3.8 Awnings

#### a. Objectives

- 1) Encourage the use of awnings to create visual interest and provide shade.
- 2) Coordinate the design of the awning with the building in terms of placement, color, shape, and size.

#### b. Guidelines

- 1) Mount awnings in locations that respect the design of the building.
- 2) Avoid awnings that could obscure transom windows, grille work, piers, pilasters, and other ornamental features.
- 3) In openings with transoms, mount the awnings below the transom on the horizontal framing element separating the storefront window from the transom.
- 4) Design awnings to project over individual window and door openings (i.e., mounted in the reveals of openings).
- 5) Avoid awnings that are a continuous feature, extending over several windows, doors, masonry piers, or arches.
- 6) Mount awnings on the wood or metal framing within a door or window opening (and not on the wall surrounding the opening).
- 7) Use shed awnings, with no end panels, when possible. Shed awnings are visually lighter and simpler, and they are more traditional in appearance than convex (bull nose) or box awnings.
- 8) Use convex-shaped (domed) awnings for locations with round-arched window/door openings

- 9) Use simple horizontal valances on awnings. Scalloped or decorative valences are discouraged.
- 10) Use awnings with a single, solid color. Use awning colors that complement the colors of the building. Colors that call more attention to the awning than the building are inappropriate.
- 11) Install awnings that are retractable (or appear to be retractable), so they may be used seasonally and will appear as temporary features on a building instead of fixed architectural elements.



*(Above) These awnings reinforce the building design and product branding, but also contribute to a pleasant outdoor seating area. (P.E.L.A.)*

### 3.9 Landscaping

#### a. Objective

- 1) Use landscaping and hardscape treatments to soften the surface of structures and to add year-round visual interest

#### b. Guidelines

- 1) Use plant material and landscaping features to accentuate the principal entrance of buildings.
- 2) Use a combination of annual and perennial plants to lend visual variety to the site.
- 3) Create amenity spaces with hardscaping, water features, and plant material.



*(Above and below) Well-designed and maintained landscaping can transform the pedestrian realm.*



#### 4 Signage

The intent of signage design guidelines is to provide guidance for the ways signs are designed, constructed, and mounted. Signage plays a significant role in creating either a positive or negative visual image for the individual property as well as the corridor. A well-designed sign can be attention-getting and convey information about the business, while at the same time in keeping with the characteristics of Finksburg's rural and residential appeal.

The Route 140 corridor, being an older commercial and industrial corridor, has many freestanding, pole-mounted signs. Over time, the cumulative effect of these signs has created a chaotic appearance. The existing signage and billboards along the Route 140 corridor has a significant impact on the overall impression of the corridor as unattractive. Providing a more consistent placement and orientation of signage with better design quality would reduce the visual clutter as well as project a more positive image.

The following guidelines for signs are meant to provide additional guidance for the design and installation of signs within the Finksburg corridor that will be both functional and attractive. They are not meant to replace the sign regulations contained in the County Zoning Ordinance.



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#### 4.1 Design

##### a. Objectives

- 1) Achieve design consistency and harmony with the scale and architecture of the building to which the sign relates

##### b. Guidelines

- 1) Ensure that the size and shape of signs are appropriate for the building on which they are placed and the area in which they are located.
- 2) Design signs so that they are integrated with the design of the building. A well-designed building facade or storefront is created by the careful coordination of sign and architectural design and a coordinated color scheme.
- 3) Design signs in multiple tenant buildings to complement or enhance other signs on the building.
- 4) Limit the size of sign panels to the width of the architectural support elements of the sign.



*(Above and below) A uniform sign area can still allow for unique sign design and branding.*



## 4.2 Color

### a. Objective

- 1) Convey a positive and appropriate image of a business.
- 2) Attract viewer's attention without distraction or visual clutter.
- 3) Provide adequate and legible information to the viewer.

### b. Guidelines:

- 1) Selected colors that contribute to legibility and design integrity. Color contrast has significant impact on the legibility of signs. Provide a substantial contrast between the color and material of the background and the letters or symbols, to make the sign easier to read in both day and night. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible. Light letters on a dark background work best for both day and night time use.
- 2) Use small accents of several colors to make a sign unique and attractive. The competition of large areas of many different colors often decreases readability.
- 3) Use sign colors that complement the colors used on the building wall, adjacent buildings and the site as a whole.



*(Above and below) Allowing for a variety of colors can lead to visually exciting and creative signs, as well as subdued and sophisticated signs.*



#### 4.3 Letters and words

##### a. Objective

- 1) Ensure legibility of the information on sign.

##### b. Guidelines

- 1) Space letters and words for maximum readability. Crowding of letters, words, or lines will make any sign more difficult to read. Conversely, excessive spacing of these elements causes the viewer to read each item individually, again obscuring the message. As a general rule, dedicate no more than 75 percent of the sign panel area to letters.
- 2) Limit the number of lettering styles that are used on a sign in order to increase legibility. As a general rule, limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs.



*(Above) Legibility and simplicity of lettering styles helps readers identify with a product or business easily. (P.E.L.A.)*

60-Day Review

#### 4.4 Symbols and Logos

##### a. Objectives

- 1) Provide a distinct identity for the business.

##### b. Guidelines

- 1) Use symbols and logos in place of words whenever appropriate.
- 2) Use pictographic images that convey the nature and character of the business.
- 3) Use franchise logos, rather than extensive signage, to capitalize on regional or national recognition.



*Logos establish a brand identity that allows businesses to be recognized instantly.*

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## 4.5 Illumination

### a. Objectives

- 1) Provide adequate illumination and minimize the adverse impact of excessive lighting.
- 2) Enhance the architectural features of the building.
- 3) Avoid light trespass onto adjacent properties
- 4) Provide nighttime legibility.

### b. Guidelines:

- 1) Whenever possible, focus lighting down and inwards toward the sign to avoid light glare and trespass issues while providing maximum nighttime legibility.
- 2) If they are to be internally illuminated, design freestanding monument signs so that the sign copy is the only portion that is illuminated. Make the sign background or field opaque.
- 3) Use small, unobtrusive fixtures for external (projection) lighting. Avoid the use of oversized fixtures that are out of scale with the sign and structure.



*(Above) This monument sign makes good use of internal illumination for only the lettering portion of the sign.*

*(Below) Down lighting is simple, effective, and attractive.*



#### 4.6 Wall Signs

a. Objectives:

- 1) Use wall signs in a manner that reinforces facade rhythm, scale, and proportion and complements other building features.
- 2) Minimize the visual clutter of signs on walls.

b. Guidelines

- 1) On buildings that have a monolithic or plain facade, place signs so that they establish or continue appropriate design rhythm, scale, and proportion
- 2) Integrate wall and projecting signs into the building design to minimize visual clutter and help achieve a more consistent, attractive and pleasing view from public streets.
- 3) Mount signage to fit within architectural elements. Do not allow signs to hide or obscure building details or features.
- 4) Locate wall signs so that they emphasize elements of the façade itself.



*(Above and below) Wall signs should be compatible with and reinforce building facades and architectural elements.*



#### 4.7 Window Signs

a. Objective:

- 1) Allow for the use of windows for business identification and limited advertisement without obscuring the function of the window for light and display.

b. Guidelines

- 1) Avoid the use of window signs as the primary signage for the business.
- 2) When window signs are used, paint on the surface of the window and in a permanent nature. Generally follow the same design guidelines that apply to building mounted signs.
- 3) Avoid the use of temporary materials such as banners, cardboard or paper, and advertisements for specific products or brands sold on the premises.
- 4) Limit window signs to no more than 20% of the total window glass area of each business on the first floor facing the street.
- 5) Limit window signs to retail uses only; they are not appropriate for office and industrial uses.



*(Above) Window signs should be painted and allow for ample display of goods and visibility. (East End Salon, Philadelphia, PA – [www.urbanblight.org](http://www.urbanblight.org))*

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#### 4.8 Monument Signs

##### a. Objectives

- 1) Design monument signs to be compatible with the building design.
- 2) Provide adequate business information.
- 3) Enhance business identity.

##### b. Guidelines:

- 1) Limit monument signs to a maximum height of six (6) feet above road grade.
- 2) Design individual tenant sign panels to be uniform in size, recognizing that the major tenant or the name of the center may have a slightly larger sign panel.
- 3) Locate signage on the property of the business it relates to.
- 4) Coordinate materials and colors for freestanding monument signs with the materials and design elements/character of the principal buildings on the site. This helps enhance the identity of the building at the street edge.



*(Above) Monument sign materials can reflect regional character through the choice of materials. (P.E.L.A.)  
(Below) Monument signs should be compatible with the buildings they are supporting. This sign also reinforces the local sense of place.*



4.9 Discouraged Signs

LED/LCD signs.

Neon signs.

Revolving signs.

Sequential or continuous flashing light signs.

Pylon or pole-mounted signs.

Signs or lettering painted directly onto a building's façade.

Bulk pennants, banners, streamers, clusters of flags, propellers or strings of twirlers, or flares.

Tethered balloons or any inflatable signs.

Portable or "sandwich board" signs.

Roof signage.

Billboards / off-premise signs of any type or form.

Mobile or large movable signs.

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## APPLICATION OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

The majority of properties with business and industrial zoning in the Finksburg corridor have previously been developed. As a result, goals set forth by the Design Guidelines will be achieved over time by applying the Guidelines as uses are altered or expanded and properties are redeveloped.

These Guidelines augment the Finksburg Corridor Plan with respect to non-residential uses. Adherence to these Guidelines ideally will result in a more complete realization of the plan's vision for the Finksburg corridor. However, application of the Guidelines may be modified in cases of undue hardship or practical difficulties, or if the County determines that the purposes of these Guidelines may be better served by an alternate proposal.

### 5.1 Applicability

Any non-residential development activity requiring a site plan will be subject to review under the Design Guidelines.

### 5.2 Hardship

Applicants seeking a variance due hardship shall submit a written request to the Planning Commission specifying the section of this document they propose to fulfill through alternative compliance. The request must demonstrate that: strict compliance with the guidelines is not feasible or practical; or, would create an undue hardship.

### 5.3 Exemptions

Building repairs, repaving, resurfacing or restriping of parking areas, and other maintenance or repair that does not include the enlargement of a building/use.

## APPLICABLE COUNTY REGULATIONS, CODES, MANUALS AND STANDARDS

Properties subject to the Design Guidelines may also be subject to other County regulations, codes, manuals and standards.