



November 24, 2008

Ken Ulman
Howard County Executive
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Dear Executive Ulman:

On behalf the Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB), we would like to thank you for your outstanding efforts this year to promote a greener, healthier, and more sustainable County. The County has made substantial progress toward achieving many of the Commission on Environmental Sustainability's objectives and recommendations. A few of the notable successes include:

- ❖ Creating an Office of Sustainability and hiring a Director
- ❖ Completing an inventory of greenhouse gases and publishing a Climate Action Plan
- ❖ Reprogramming road project funding to support transit projects
- ❖ Completing an audit of pesticide use by the County and removing unused products to reduce overall inventory variety
- ❖ Initiating a successful countywide residential recycling program
- ❖ Replacing older diesel buses with cleaner hybrid vehicles.
- ❖ Using your bully pulpit to encourage others to be leaders in sustainability as well

The ESB also has had a productive year supporting the County's efforts and monitoring its progress toward achieving the Commission's goals. We testified before the County Council on several important sustainability initiatives, such as the hybrid bus initiative, and we have participated in a wide array of community events. Currently, we are planning an environmental sustainability summit to be held in conjunction with Green Fest in the spring. A near-term priority for the ESB will be to comment on GGP's General Plan Amendment and Zoning Regulation Amendment for downtown.

Most recently, we completed an inventory of the County's environmental and sustainability efforts, with the help of departmental staff. Based on this analysis, we are recommending the following priorities for 2009:

Air and Water Quality

- ❖ Publicize watershed maps to help families understand how they contribute to the region's water.
- ❖ Explore a tailored approach to enhancing buffer protections.
- ❖ Develop a comprehensive, countywide strategy to prioritize and develop funding sources for watershed projects.

Green Infrastructure

- ❖ Document the ecological significance of key green hubs and corridors, in preparation for the next General Plan.

- ❖ Develop a bike master plan. Begin by conducting a pilot to show the impact of running, bike, and bus routes to JHU's Applied Physics Laboratory.

Green Building

- ❖ Streamline the waiver process for green buildings and green neighborhoods as an incentive to developers while maintaining the more difficult, ad hoc waiver process for other "brown" projects.

Education and Outreach

- ❖ Establish Green Central Station to ensure that there is a central source of information and technical assistance for Howard County citizens, government, and the private sector. Identify and pursue funding opportunities to support the ongoing maintenance and expansion of Green Central Station. One option is to collaborate with other counties to fund a regional clearinghouse.

Energy Conservation

- ❖ Add an energy manager/consultant in the FY10 budget. We recognize that in the current fiscal environment adding such a position may not be feasible. It is quite likely, however, that the expense of this position would be offset by savings generated by their actions. The key responsibility of the energy manager would be to identify opportunities for such savings as a result of energy initiatives. There are many facilities in the private sector that are realizing substantial savings through energy conservation programs that can be emulated within County buildings. A model also exists within the Department of Defense whereby similar positions are funded solely through the savings they achieve.

Land Acquisition and Preservation

- ❖ Increase the resources and staff expertise within County government to put land acquisition and preservation on the "fast track."
- ❖ Advertise opportunities for sale of land to the County and expand educational efforts on the value of preservation easements.
- ❖ Allocate the \$600,000 in interest from the forest conservation fund for existing or new non-forest tree programs (e.g., stream relief program, tree preservation, tree plantings in community, schools).

Thank you for your commitment to the County's sustainability efforts. The members of the board are committed to helping you in any way we can to move this agenda forward. With your help and involvement Howard County will be a model sustainable community both in the state and nationally.

Sincerely,

Ned Tillman
Chair
Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board