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Kittleman announces plans to reopen Ellicott City to credentialed pedestrians, then to the public

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – Howard County Executive Allan H. Kittleman today announced plans to reopen Ellicott City's Main Street to credentialed pedestrians during daylight hours beginning Saturday, Sept. 17 and then to the rest of the public on Sept. 20.

Kittleman said the three-day window will allow merchants, building owners, residents and construction workers additional opportunities to finish cleanup projects and secure buildings before Main Street is opened to the public. Those with credentials will be able to take vehicles onto Main Street for drop-off and pick-up but there will be no on-street parking for those three days. Main Street will also be limited to one-way traffic.

"Every day we are making progress," said Kittleman. "We've heard from some property owners that they would like a little more time to finish some cleanup projects."

Kittleman said those who don't already have credentials can obtain them by visiting the Roger Carter Community Center, 3000 Milltown Drive in Ellicott City, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., daily through Sept. 20. Those with credentials can also obtain wristbands for one-day access for friends, helpers or volunteers to help during those three days.

Then at 5 p.m. Sept. 20, Kittleman said all of Main Street will reopen to the public for pedestrian traffic only. However, since the area is still an active construction zone, it has yet-to-be determined when vehicles will be allowed on Main Street. Re-paving work will begin on Lot "D" soon and is expected to be completed by Sept. 20.

"I've made this appeal before, and I'll make it again, please don't come to Ellicott City just to gawk," Kittleman said. "These folks are still putting back the pieces of their lives, and we need to show them some courtesy and respect for what they're going through."

As part of the reopening, Kittleman said that the bridge that spans the Patapsco River from Baltimore to Howard counties is expected to reopen at 7 a.m. Sept. 17 to allow two-way traffic to Maryland Avenue and St. Paul Street. It took longer to open the bridge, Kittleman said, because damage in that area was greater than first believed. At times, there will still be one-way traffic from the CSX bridge to Maryland Avenue when construction dictates.

Kittleman also announced that the county is in the process of hiring three consultants to help better understand what happened the evening of July 30.

The first consultant will interview members of the community in order to piece together how the various branches of water acted that evening. This study should take no more than three months.

The second consultant will perform a visual survey and document the stream/channel conditions with the Tiber/Hudson watershed following the flood. This survey will include mapping, written and photographic documentation of conditions that may have added to the flooding of adjacent properties or have contributed to additional stream instability.

The third consultant will conduct a thorough and extensive hydrological analysis of the Tiber, Hudson and New Cut branches, modeling various storms and the potential impact they would have on Ellicott City.

Kittleman also said that the Historic Ellicott City Recovery Community Advisory Group will conduct a series of listen and learn sessions with those impacted by the flood to assemble a list of proposed projects before the county begins a comprehensive planning process.

“But people need to understand that not all projects will be feasible from an engineering or economic perspective,” Kittleman said. “And it’s unlikely that there will be funds to complete all projects, so ideas will have to be prioritized by the largest benefit to make Ellicott City a more resilient town.”

In all, Kittleman said the overall process will take about a year to complete.

“That may seem like a long time, but we want to be thorough and comprehensive and we want to get the science in hand before we jump forward,” Kittleman said. “We want to do it right and avoid putting any more Band-Aids on this problem.”

Kittleman announced the reopening plan during an unveiling of a mural by Ellicott City artist Dee Cunningham who recovered her artwork in her damaged studio in the days following the July 30 Ellicott City flash flood. The painting was purchased for \$5,000 by Theo and Lisa Schlossnagle and donated to Howard County to be displayed at the George Howard Building until a permanent location in Ellicott City can be found. The proceeds of the sale will go to the Ellicott City Partnership recovery fund.

Video from today’s press conference can be found at <https://youtu.be/pXJdeD0PJAc>

Other several significant flood recovery events scheduled for this week include:

- This Sunday, the Department of Community Resources and Services will host a “Resident Return Preparedness Meeting” from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Ellicott City 50+ Center, 9411 Frederick Road. Panelists on hand will discuss a variety of topics, including landlord-tenant questions, parking, safety, environmental health, and resources to replace food, shelter, furniture and remediate mold.
- Main Street between Court Avenue and Forrest Street will reopen to pedestrian and vehicular traffic Monday, allowing more businesses to either reopen or to begin rebuilding efforts. Forrest Street, however, remains closed. Also, another

15 parking spaces will be available on Lot "F" which is located at the top of Main Street near Ellicott Mills Drive.

- An Ellicott City Recovery Town Hall meeting will be held Wednesday, Sept. 14 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Veterans Elementary School, 4355 Montgomery Road in Ellicott City. Kittleman will provide updates on recovery efforts as well as field questions from residents, businesses and property owners. Jim Robey, senior advisor for Community Recovery and Chairman of the Community Advisory Group, will attend, as will Council Vice Chairman Jon Weinstein, who represents Ellicott City and was appointed by Kittleman to chair the #ECStrong Recovery Fund Committee.

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