



Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan

Draft Master Plan Narrative

We Are Ellicott City.

Ellicott City is an emblem of the American experience. We are not a place built around a single event, contrived from a relic, or predictable in setting. We are a continuum of histories that connect the earliest geologic times through waves of settlement. We are indigenous people, early explorers, a center for agriculture, and a place where democracy and independence helped define a nation. We are the very birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. We are not merely a historic community; we are a community making history.

Ellicott City is defined by water, formed by the Patapsco and its tributaries. We have bridged the waterways since our founding in 1772. The relationship we've built leveraged the water to create our economy and continues to shape our community to the present day. The water invites discoveries, big and small; it crafts a place of ups and downs, ins and outs, among both built and natural settings.

Beyond the water, the larger environment envelops and sculpts our form. We are a city that's built to conform to the hills. The slopes, the rock, and the soil are as important to our setting as the buildings we occupy. We are not a place built in a modern era centered on cars, codes, and standards, but a place built through a creative response to the landscape. Ellicott City's relationship to the land and water is indeed precarious, offering challenges and opportunities unlike any other place in our region.

Yet our historic, environmental, community and cultural resources more than offset the steep slope of the hills, the rush of the waters, and the turn of the streets. We are not one size fits all. People come to Ellicott City to live, work, and play amidst our historic setting. We are a place where visitors are welcomed to explore our shops, our setting, our culture, and our past. Embracing our mills, the B&O Railroad, the National Road, landmark Ellicott City Colored School, and our rich architectural heritage, we leverage our history and our distinct setting as a place that embraces everyone through our culture and our connection to the land. Ellicott City is the legacy of many generations, and we nurture and grow this place to ensure it is truly special for future generations.

Ellicott City is a place of layers. We are not a city of grand icons, towering buildings, or broad parks; rather, a city molded by our environment and built in response to our setting—the hills, waterways, and streets. Most importantly, we are a place where people have come together over many generations, a place where our citizens have responded with resiliency to its challenges—a place where, together, we delight in the unpredictability of this setting and are eager to share with visitors and newcomers. We are stewards of this place, each individually crafting an anthology of time and place that will carry us forward.

We are Ellicott City, Maryland, Individually Crafted Since 1772.