Montgomery County Healthy and Sustainable Communities Workshop
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Universities at Shady Grove, Rockville, MD

Goal and Indicators Break-Out Session: Draft Notes

Draft Goal: Green Infrastructure: Preserve natural areas and features that are ecologically unusual or environmentally sensitive. Preserve and enhance a diversity of plant and animal species in self-sustaining concentrations. Increase and conserve forests and slow the growth of impervious surface.

Draft Indicators: Forest canopy, Impervious Surface

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Draft Goal: Green Infrastructure: Preserve natural areas and features that are ecologically unusual or environmentally sensitive. Preserve and enhance a diversity of plant and animal species in self-sustaining concentrations. Increase and conserve forests and slow the growth of impervious surface.

Proposed re-draft of Goal: Green Infrastructure: Conserve manage, and increase natural areas and wildlife habitat. Preserve and expand tree canopy and natural systems while reducing untreated impervious surfaces with a balanced approach.

Major Theme of Discussion on the Goal: Preserve and expand tree canopy and natural systems while reducing untreated impervious surfaces with a balanced approach.

Comments Related to Major Theme #1:

- We need to look at how much forest AND where it is in the County
- Some species are only found in large blocks of forest
- A definition of forest needs to be created:
    - Currently too many definitions
    - 5 acres or larger
    - We need a sustainable forest that will it be here tomorrow and provides the functions that we want

- 10,000 sq feet or more (state definition)
- Footprints- No one answer
- Benefits of Forest Canopy:
    - Preservation farm and forest
    - Clean air, wildlife, multiple environmental benefits
- How to develop and keep green canopy/infrastructure
- Goal- conservation management, not preservation.
- Forest cover should not be traded for tree cover.
- Look at the big picture- develop TDRs. Mandate community forestry management plans
- Goal should be to reduce impervious services, not slow the growth

Additional Comments on the Goal:

- Interrelatedness- green infrastructure & storm water management
- Old and new neighborhood issues
- Invasive species
- How do you meet housing demand and deal with impervious surface needs?
- I don't think we need to say "ecologically unusual or environmentally sensitive"- why not 'ecologically usual?'
- Preserve more than just "ecologically unusual or environmentally sensitive." Everything else is not expendable.
- We need quantitative goals for this effort
- The goal should relate to location and type of green infrastructure

Draft Indicators: Forest canopy, Impervious Surface

Major Theme of Indicators Discussion:

- Indicators need to be general enough and broad enough- Forest/urban tree canopy, pervious surface, non-tree impervious surface

Comments Related to Major Theme of Indicators Discussion:

- Don't trade forest cover for tree cover
- Impervious surface should be tracked by watershed
- Track an action- i.e. Acres or % of preserved green infrastructure
- Tree and land preservation need to be distinct and have different indicators
- Ratio between development and impervious surfaces
- Ratio between demand for housing and adequate public facilities with green environment
- Total storm water runoff should be an indicator
- Impervious surfaces tracked by watershed
- Measure cumulative impact of projects coming in (net loss)

- Percentage of continuous forest acreage, urban tree canopy, tree canopy- monitor how much, condition, and extent of
- Create tree canopy database
- Montgomery County Planning is developing a green infrastructure functional plan that will identify connected natural resources including forests, meadows, wetlands, unique habitats. Percent of this area protected could serve as a future indicator.
- Green Infrastructure is also the man-made things that can contribute to preservation and management of our natural resources, so indicators would be: green root cover, rain gardens, etc.- especially in urban areas. We need sustainable, forward-thinking, and risky indicators to make any progress!
- Data agenda: If we don't have data now on some indicator, it should still be on a future list of indicators- like acreage of meadows, wetlands, etc.
- This information is being developed as part of the Green Infrastructure Functional Plan
- Indicators need to be general enough- Forest/urban tree canopy, pervious surface, non-tree impervious surface
- Forest canopy only applicable to specific areas- need broader measurements
- % developed vs. undeveloped
- Need more data points

Prioritized Factors (overlapping, not independent):

- Lack of Education on efficient redevelopment
- Lack of Resident education
- Market Forces
- Regulation and Policy
- Conflicting Goals (affordable housing vs. environment)
- Economics (lack of incentives, developers, public investment, impact opportunities, individual issues)
- Development and Sprawl (type, smart growth, plan for high density vs. agricultural land use)
- Cultural Expectations & Demands

Factor #1: Lack of Education on efficient redevelopment
Potential Strategies/Actions: Educate homeowners or developers on efficient redevelopment

- Spread the word, person-to-person
- Get government/media/school system to spread word
- County Council has monthly recognition of homeowners whose 'rehab' led to largest reduction in energy consumption
- Home buying process: Realtors and Builders, home buyers, incorporating high efficiency products- creating pamphlets, website with 'green cookbook'
- High efficiency products
- High cost- rail

Key Players: Diverse group (people in this room)- media, County Council, utility companies

Factor #2: Development and Sprawl
Potential Strategies/Actions #2: Smart Growth

- Biking, rail, consolidating stops for buses

Key Partners with a Role to Play:

- Smart growth consultants
- Transit authority
- Consumers
- Planning Board and County Council
- County agencies

Factor #3: Lack of Resident Education
Potential Strategies/Actions: Widespread Communication of Message

- Education via utility bill reduction strategies
- Put visuals projected on walls (i.e. strip malls)
- Integrate in school curriculum
- TV commercials
- Greater public advocacy
- Information and resource sharing
- Developing new resources
- Make use of volunteers
- Image of sustainability- what does it look like? how we build? Preserve green infrastructure?
- Students pass an environmental competency test
- Weed Warrior program expanded
- Impervious surface tax and credit (tax reduced for mitigation)

Key Partners with a Role to Play: PSAs (via government agencies), people in this room, MCPS, non-profit conservation groups

Additional Factors, Strategies and Partners (as handed in on participant notes forms)

Factors that POSITIVELY influence the trend	Factors that NEGATIVELY influence the Trend
1. Protection of forest land 2. Using different, more pervious materials for surfaces(ex. Sidewalks, green roots) 3. Transit -oriented/walkable development 4. Planned communities/smart growth	1. New development and influence of developers 2. Age of existing surfaces 3. Cars and roads required for them-lack of affordable housing close to where people work 4. Parking requirements in current code

5. What we're doing right 6. Encourage forest stewardship 7. Sidewalk alternatives allow root growth 8. Need to set indicators and then gather data, rather then pick indicators based on what we know. Need a tree canopy database for example. 9. Retain existing forest 10. Take land out of potential development 11. High density, high quality communities 12. Good financial incentives for private landowners	5. Need for more housing 6. Redevelopment in existing communities 7. Zoning grievances, exceptions 8. Cutting down the forest 9. Development 10. Lack of regulation 11. Poor markets/Review TDR program

What are the most important FACTORS to address? What works?

Priority Factors	What Works (to do better)?
1. Education	• **Better, more integrated environment, economic education in public schools; clear communication to all (compelling facts); strategic use of media** • **Employer program**
2. Regulation & Policy	• **Incentives and restrictions** • **TDR, BLT programs- effects on both ends** • **Stronger forest conservation law** • **Reduce parking requirements- change minimum requirement to maximum requirement** • **'Smart Growth'- what does it mean in different areas**
3. Economics	• **More affordable housing, more efficient/far-reaching public transit, transit-oriented development**
4. Cultural Expectations & Demands	• **Campaigns for good choices through economics/education**

5. Market forces	
6. Conflicting Goals	• **Consider storm water runoff (watershed) in relation to impervious surfaces**
7. Development	• **Slower growth needed** • **Effects of new roads**

Partners who can contribute and assets they can bring to the table
1. Developers, zoners, planners, etc.
2. Media and other resource-providers- as outreach
3. Residents
4. Peer localities: comparable to MC w/experience/success in this area
5. Zoning Boards
6. Community members
7. TDR
8. Political leadership and govt. agencies
9. Other stakeholders need to be included
10. Land preservation programs
11. Land trusts
12. Rural forest landowners

Three Best Ideas on What Works (one no cost)
1. Putting forth 2020 sustainability image for home, work, community
2. Greater use of volunteers to push projects through
3. Extensive use of media for outreach
4. Dictionary of ecosystem terms
5. Financial Behavior Modification- tie cost to desired effect
6. Build on smaller footprint
7. Redevelopment already
8. Reduce impervious surface
9. More conservation funding
10. Partnering with Land Trusts, State POS, MALPF
11. Assistance to landowners (rural and forested)
12. Need more foresters- management