

# Sustainable Community Action Plan

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Essex

**Submitted by: Baltimore County Department of Planning**

**4/6/2018**

# Environment

(Environmental strengths and weaknesses can include but are not limited to quality of land, water, air, watersheds, tree canopy, risk of sea level rise, carbon footprint, energy conservation, access to local foods, green infrastructure, stormwater infrastructure/management, parks, trails and recreation, recycling, water and sewer capacity, etc)

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SC area falls within two watersheds: Middle River to the northeast and Back River to the south and west. Within those are three watershed planning areas in which Small Watershed Action Plans (SWAPs) have been developed: Middle River/Tidal Gunpowder, Upper Back River, and Tidal Back River SWAPs have assessed water resources, quality influencers, and opportunities for restoration within the area of interest.</li> <li>• Several potential projects to improve water quality were identified in the County’s SWAP, including stream restoration, stormwater conversion, stormwater retrofit, and tree planting. Additional opportunities are assessed for the possibility of citizen participation in restoration, such as rain barrel/rain garden installation potential.</li> <li>• The SC Area, being proximal to major water bodies, may result in a community that already feels a close connection with the water, allowing for greater citizen awareness and motivation for water quality improvement that may be realized from potential future action.</li> <li>• Multiple neighborhoods identified in the SWAPs have a high opportunity for environmental restoration actions.</li> <li>• Overall access to parks and recreation sites - 11 parks, including The Fields at Renaissance Park (and its Stembriage Community Center) and Cox’s Point Park (waterfront with water access – boat ramp)</li> <li>• Indoor and outdoor recreational facilities available at nine public school recreation centers</li> <li>• Community path has been established to connect several public sites within the Hawthorne peninsula, traversing parks, the Hawthorne Elementary School Recreation Center, and connecting sidewalks within this highly walkable neighborhood</li> <li>• Locally established Back River Restoration Committee – promotes stewardship, organizes volunteer cleanups, plants trees, marks storm drains, use of rain barrels and rain gardens; Manages the trash boom at the 695 bridge with a grant from Baltimore County (Have collected over 3.1 million pounds of trash since 2011</li> <li>• Working on using Best Management Practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area is vulnerable to coastal flood hazards from periodic weather events in addition to possible increases in flood hazards with projected sea level rise due to future climate change.</li> <li>• While monitoring points for tidal benthos do exist within the SCA, the water quality in the vicinity of the SCA will be largely influenced by inputs and activities in areas further upland in the Back River and Middle River watersheds and by tidal water flows from the Chesapeake Bay.</li> <li>• Out of the roughly 3,550 acres of land covered by the SCA there are only an estimated 393 acres (about 11%) draining to SWM facilities that provide water quality benefit. There is a notable absence of water quality SWM in the downtown area of Essex along Eastern Blvd.</li> <li>• Multiple neighborhoods identified in the SWAPs have a high potential for contributing pollution to waterways.</li> <li>• Toxic contamination of fish tissues make it unsafe to eat several species of fish caught in tidal Middle River (PCBs) and tidal Back River (PCBs and chlordane).</li> <li>• Aquatic wildlife in tidal Back River is impaired by excessive nitrogen and phosphorous pollution. In many non-tidal streams in Back River, aquatic wildlife is impaired by excessive sediment, chloride, and sulfate pollution, and by channelization of streams and loss of riparian forest buffers.</li> <li>• Low tree canopy covering</li> <li>• Lack of green infrastructure – LED lighting</li> <li>• Few upgrades/outdated park amenities at local recreation fields/parks</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenspace availability – Local parks</li> <li>• Baltimore County Single Stream Recycling Program</li> <li>• Access to food – 4 major grocery stores, approximately 10 varying types of food marts within area</li> <li>• Farmers markets &amp; local farms/farm stands within close distance to area</li> <li>• Rain barrel &amp; rain garden use</li> <li>• Solar programs</li> <li>• Adequate public water &amp; sewer</li> </ul>	
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<p align="center"><b><u>Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures</u></b></p> <p>Based on the strengths and weaknesses identify the strengths on which you would like to build and the challenges you would like to address. What outcomes are you trying to achieve? Where/ in what area do you want those changes to happen? →</p> <p>Progress Measure: Identify how you will know that you have achieved your outcome.</p>	<p align="center"><b><u>Strategies and Action Items</u></b></p> <p>Identify strategies that will help your community to achieve each identified outcome to the left. If applicable, break down each strategy into specific action items that outline different steps of the strategy. Specify how you are planning to achieve the desired outcomes. →</p>	<p align="center"><b><u>Implementation Partners</u></b></p> <p>Which community stakeholders need to be involved to realize each action step and strategy? Name specific public and/or private sector partners.</p>
<p>Outcome 1: Improve &amp; maintain County park areas</p> <p>Progress Measures: Provide additional benches, tables, grills, signage to enhance public experience</p>	<p>Strategy A: Catalog existing conditions and future needs of park amenities</p> <p>Strategy B: Research grant opportunities to help with costs of park upgrades/Hold fundraisers to raise money and awareness of parks</p> <p>Strategy C: Get group of interns/local Boy Scouts to aid in maintenance/cleanup of parks</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks; Back River Restoration Group; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Tree canopy – while some trees will be lost through development, increase tree plantings within the SC boundary and surrounding CDPs.</p> <p>Progress Measures: Measure tree canopy of the SC boundary when new land use data is available. It may take several years after trees are planted for them to be detected in the land use maps. Current tree canopy is 27.6% (determined using LiDAR and 2013 NAIP (Chesapeake Conservancy High Resolution Land Cover, 2016)</p>	<p>Strategy A: Tree planting – Redevelopment to add shade trees and other vegetation to areas that are lacking to the SC</p> <p>Strategy B: Determine if there are locations for other tree plantings</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability; Back River Restoration Committee; Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (for Middle River portions of SCA); BCPS; Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>

<p>Outcome 3: Improve water quality in the tidal waters that bound this community and in non-tidal streams within community</p> <p>Progress Measures:</p> <p>Progress on TMDLs: reductions in pollutant loads and/or progress on TMDL Implementation Plan actions.</p> <p>Reduced severity or elimination of water quality impairments.</p> <p>Increase in drainage areas of Stormwater Management ponds that provide water quality improvements in addition to water quantity management. (GIS analysis of County SWM pond drainage layers. Current coverage at ~11%)</p>	<p>Strategy A: It is expected that redevelopment of the area will allow for implementation of up to date SWM requirements. This may be especially impactful surrounding the main commercial zones along Eastern Blvd. in the Back River watershed.</p> <p>Strategy B: Local not-for-profit environmental organizations participate in a county-funded grant program to implement principles laid out in the County's Small Watershed Action Plans (SWAPs). These funds and organizations may be able to provide certain community-based support for best management practices.</p> <p>Strategy C: County agencies implement critical restoration projects, such as the Cox's Point Park shoreline enhancement and the Debbie Acres stormwater pond conversion, and operational projects, such as street sweeping and reductions in the quantity of road salt applied.</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability; Baltimore County Department of Public Works; Back River Restoration Committee; Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (for Middle River portions of SCA); Local community/business associations/civic councils; BCPS; Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
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# Economy

(Economic strengths and weaknesses can include but are not limited to regional accessibility, business attraction/retention, health of the business district and commercial vacancies, workforce/employment and economic drivers, local policies/regulations, marketing, tourism, cultural and historic assets)

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major institutions in the general area including the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) and Medstar Franklin Square Hospital, which provide a large number of high quality jobs and services to community</li> <li>• The Chesapeake Enterprise Zone, which extends to the Lockheed Martin complex (adjacent to the proposed SC boundary), offers incentives for major industrial investment and job creation in the area</li> <li>• The Commercial Revitalization District designation promotes new commercial investment in and along the commercial corridors (Eastern Boulevard, Back River Neck Road)</li> <li>• Light industrial and distribution employment center (in close proximity to SC area) that draws thousands of workers daily from nearby neighborhoods and the region – including diverse brands of companies including distributors, wholesalers, beverage brewing, and building suppliers</li> <li>• Excellent multi-modal transportation access, with immediate connection to I-695 and I-95, a Class I freight railroad, Martin State Airport, MARC regional transit, and just a few miles from the Port of Baltimore</li> <li>• Proximity to the Eastpoint American Job Center supporting job seekers and incumbent workers with resume building, training, and job placement</li> <li>• Higher paying jobs &amp; investment coming back to east side of County – due to Tradepoint, Greenleigh</li> <li>• Strong and well established marinas in area, local tourist attraction</li> <li>• Baltimore County Landmark Designation Program</li> <li>• Heritage Society of Essex and Middle River Museum</li> <li>• Chesapeake Gateway Chamber of Commerce &amp; Baltimore County Business Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher incidence of unemployment than the County as a whole. The Essex zip code 21221, which contains the Essex SC, has a 6.69% unemployment rate which is almost three percent more than the County’s 4.0 rate</li> <li>• Relatively low educational attainment with only 13.9% of Essex CDP residents having a bachelor’s degree or higher, versus 37% for County as a whole</li> <li>• Large number of vacant properties and storefronts along commercial corridor</li> <li>• Poor appearance of commercial areas (run down businesses and infrastructure)</li> <li>• Lack of large anchor tenants to generate shopping traffic</li> <li>• Absence of high quality businesses in commercial areas (Eastern Blvd./Back River Neck)</li> <li>• High commercial turnover</li> <li>• Need to maximize matching of local workforce with large employers in area</li> <li>• Most residents work outside of area</li> <li>• Negative perceptions of area (crime)</li> <li>• Lack of comprehensive survey to evaluate opportunities for historic designations on the County and National level</li> <li>• Commercial buildings lack architectural integrity to warrant landmarking on a County level</li> <li>• Museum operation dependent on volunteers</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures →	Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Decrease Essex unemployment rate</p> <p>Progress Measures: Employment numbers increase</p>	<p>Strategy A: Promote American Job Center services at community and faith-based organizations</p> <p>Strategy B: Partner with area businesses to plan hiring events</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Economic and Workforce Development; CCBC; Maryland DLLR; Essex community and faith-based organizations; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Decrease commercial vacancies along commercial corridors</p> <p>Progress Measures: Anchor tenants move into commercial areas; Pop up space available for start-up businesses</p>	<p>Strategy A: Create a business roundtable with specific short and midterm goals to improve appearance of storefronts; create a straightforward marketing strategy to marinas and residents, cross marketing, sidewalk events; and outreach to potential independent businesses</p> <p>Strategy B: Reach out to property owners and suggest pop up opportunities to occupy space</p> <p>Strategy C: Define and market “mini” destination clusters of specialty uses attractive to local community</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Baltimore County Department of Economic and Workforce Development; State Highways Administration; Private developers; Private investors; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Increase visitation at the Heritage Society of Essex and Middle River Museum</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increase in visitor numbers</p>	<p>Strategy A: Invest in infrastructure of the building including improved facilities and exhibit spaces</p> <p>Strategy B: Develop collaboration opportunities between museum and library to promote exhibits, develop programming, and expand museum offerings</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Property Management; Baltimore County Public Library; Baltimore County Office of Tourism; Historical Society of Baltimore County; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 4: Comprehensive survey of properties 50 years and older</p> <p>Progress Measures: Survey documentation</p>	<p>Strategy A: Windshield survey of properties</p> <p>Strategy B: Intensive level survey of properties that retain a high level of architectural integrity</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Maryland Historical Trust; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 5: Improve appearance of commercial districts on Eastern Avenue and Back River Neck Road</p> <p>Progress Measures: Improved streetscape and reinvestment in façade of commercial buildings</p>	<p>Strategy A: SHA develop and implement comprehensive streetscape plan for Eastern Boulevard</p> <p>Strategy B: Identify commercial node on Eastern Boulevard with reinvestment potential. Work with owners and use Architect on Call and Planning staff to create a realistic façade and streetscape image designed to distinguish the area. Explore modifications to Business Improvement Loan Program to incentivize reinvestment.</p> <p>Strategy C: Continue to apply for Baltimore County Commercial Revitalization Action Grants (CRAG)</p>	<p>SHA; Baltimore County Department of Planning; Baltimore County Department of Economic and Workforce Development ; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>

# Transportation

(Transportation strengths and weaknesses can include access to transit corridors, pedestrian safety and accessibility/sidewalks, alternative modes of transportation, such as bikeways and trails, public transit, such as bus and rail, carpooling, proximity to transportation centers, parking, road conditions)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial existing transportation network</li> <li>• Park &amp; Ride Lot – Encourages carpooling &amp; public transportation</li> <li>• Eastern Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Improvements – Hawthorne (Bike route signage, shared use paths)</li> <li>• Multi-modal transportation access, with immediate connection to I-695 and I-95, a Class I freight railroad, Martin State Airport, MARC regional transit, and just a few miles from the Port of Baltimore</li> <li>• Road conditions – good quality; well maintained</li> <li>• Traffic flow</li> <li>• Access to waterways, boating access</li> <li>• Eastern Baltimore County Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Plan</li> <li>• Baltimore County Revenue Authority parking lot</li> <li>• Currently adequate on street parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastern Boulevard streetscape in disrepair (poor sidewalk conditions, poor bus stop conditions, missing &amp; dead trees, tree pits in disrepair, brick planters falling apart, broken benches, light poles broken)</li> <li>• Lack of trails &amp; bike lanes in area overall</li> <li>• Traffic speed issues</li> <li>• Deteriorating sidewalks throughout SC area</li> <li>• No direct bus routes from Essex to Tradepoint Atlantic</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures →	Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Complete streetscape of Eastern Boulevard</p> <p>Progress Measures: Upgrades to streetscape completed as requested</p>	<p>Strategy A: Follow up with MDOT to get support &amp; funding to complete streetscape (This project has been mentioned in the annual priority letter to MDOT for the past 5 years)</p> <p>Strategy B: Inventory list of problem areas – provide pictures and documentation to state</p> <p>Strategy C: Develop and maintain inventory of streetscape maintenance issues</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Baltimore County Department of Public Works; State Highways Administration; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Implement further phases of Eastern Bike and Pedestrian Access Plan</p> <p>Progress Measures: Projects proposed for SC Area are completed</p>	<p>Strategy A: Prioritize projects in plan that are most important to community</p> <p>Strategy B: Petition Baltimore County to provide funding for priority projects</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Baltimore County Department of Public Works; State Highways Administration; Baltimore County Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>

<p>Outcome 3: Address poor bus stop conditions</p> <p>Progress Measures: Bus stops cleaned up and modernized</p>	<p>Strategy A: Create inventory of bus stops in SC area</p> <p>Strategy B: Prioritize list of bus stops in need of repair (trash cleanup, amenities, repair of existing)</p> <p>Strategy C: Work with MTA to get priority list addressed</p>	<p>MTA; SHA; Baltimore County Department of Public Works; Local Officials; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 4: Address traffic speed issues</p> <p>Progress Measures: Traffic calming measures completed</p>	<p>Strategy A: Prioritize list of areas of high concern (speed; pedestrian issues)</p> <p>Strategy B: Work with Police Department for increased speed enforcement</p> <p>Strategy C: Work with SHA/Baltimore County Department of Public Works to formulate plans for traffic calming measures</p>	<p>Baltimore County Police Department; SHA; Baltimore County Department of Public Works; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>



# Housing

(Housing strengths and weaknesses can include affordability, homeownership vs rental, housing stock diversity, housing condition and value, housing programs, foreclosures, residential vacancies, property values, home sale values)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse housing stock with WWII era bungalows, 1950s brick rowhouses, 1970 apartments, and new single family detached and large townhouses</li> <li>• Newly constructed housing - Renaissance Square, Devonport, Hopewell Point, Waterview (often taking advantage of waterviews)</li> <li>• Affordable home ownership opportunities with older homes in \$100-150,000 range</li> <li>• Waterfront &amp; water view properties available with many having piers</li> <li>• Housing opportunities for seniors to age in place in many single story houses and multi-family senior facilities</li> <li>• 2018 property assessments seem to indicate stabilization of values in Essex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging housing stock with many units constructed in 1930-1950s</li> <li>• Neighborhoods turning more transient due to less owner occupied housing and more rental housing</li> <li>• Homeownership rate declining (54.33% in 2013 to 51.1%)</li> <li>• Vacant homes and properties – Neglect; Absentee landlords (10.87% vacancy rate)</li> <li>• Median home values declined</li> <li>• Foreclosures (11.9% since 2013, compared to county-wide decline of 6.4%)</li> <li>• 37 (or 7.5% of County foreclosures) in Essex SC area – with slight clustering in Hawthorne and Middlesex</li> <li>• 2018 reassessments seem to indicate decline in values in Middlesex and Hawthorne</li> </ul>



Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures →	Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Rehabilitation of aging housing stock</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of completed rehabs</p>	<p>Strategy A: Define neighborhoods with housing stock and ownership that might best benefit from County’s Single Family Rehab Program</p> <p>Strategy B: Develop outreach program</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Develop plan to address absentee landlords</p> <p>Progress Measures: Absentee landlords contacted regarding code enforcement issues or neglect of property</p>	<p>Strategy A: Develop a GIS system to identify absentee landlords in Hawthorne and Middlesex neighborhoods, cross checking with Rental Registration and Code Enforcement</p> <p>Strategy B: Work with appropriate agencies to address issues</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Baltimore County Code Enforcement; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Increased homeownership</p> <p>Progress Measures: Number of participants in housing counseling workshops and SELP</p>	<p>Strategy A: Work with County’s Housing Counseling Agencies to promote and educate residents, home owners, local real estate professionals about the Settlement Expense Loan Program – Focus on Hawthorne and Middlesex</p> <p>Strategy B: Target outreach to renters in community for 1<sup>st</sup> time homebuyer</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning- Housing Opportunities staff; Belair Edison Neighborhoods Inc.; Eastside Development Corporation; Harbel Housing</p>

	<p>programs</p> <p>Strategy C: Work with community leaders in Hawthorne and Middlesex neighborhoods to promote homeownership and identify barriers</p> <p>Strategy D: Continue to educate community, financial groups, community representatives about services offered by Housing Counseling Agencies to prevent and deal with foreclosures</p> <p>Strategy E: Apply for CL/BRNI funding to help implement housing, Commercial revitalization strategies</p>	<p>Partnership; Diversified Housing Development Inc.; St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center; DHCD Staff; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 4: Marketing of neighborhood</p> <p>Progress Measures: Marketing materials and events</p>	<p>Strategy A: Work with local real estate professionals to provide positive information, testimonials, welcome packages, etc. Highlight unique attributes of waterfront neighborhoods.</p> <p>Strategy B: Promote neighborhood gatherings/events to foster sense of community</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Baltimore County Department of Workforce and Economic Development; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 5: Help lower income elderly remain in housing</p> <p>Progress Measures: Elderly residents able to age in place</p>	<p>Strategy A: Promote Housing Accessibility Modification programs to make housing accessible</p> <p>Strategy B: PILOT program for lower income homeowners</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>

# Quality of Life

(Strengths and weaknesses can include crime, socio-economic demographics, educational opportunities, museums, libraries, historic and cultural assets, civic amenities, faith-based organizations, economic health of households, sense of place, etc)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastern Baltimore County has long had strong ties to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, enjoying associated maritime and waterfront traditions and – in some cases - livelihoods. There are substantial lengths of shoreline within the Sustainable Community, along both Back River and Middle River along with public parks and fishing piers available to local citizens</li> <li>• Large quantity of places of worship</li> <li>• Senior Centers available</li> <li>• Baltimore County Public Library – Essex Branch (recently renovated)</li> <li>• Close proximity to Community College of Baltimore County – Essex &amp; Dundalk Campuses</li> <li>• Public Boat ramps available; Fishing Piers (Cox’s Point Park)</li> <li>• Marina/Boat Services readily available</li> <li>• Proximity to waterfront amenities – boating, restaurants, etc.</li> <li>• Educational opportunities/options other than public schools – Our Lady of Mount Carmel</li> <li>• Close proximity to Medstar Franklin Square and Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Centers</li> <li>• Heritage Society of Essex and Middle River Museum</li> <li>• Martin State Airport – Museum in close proximity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of cohesive architectural character in the community</li> <li>• Few cultural attractions</li> <li>• Rat Infestation Issues</li> <li>• Midge bugs infestation – affects waterfront establishments and residences</li> <li>• Code Violations</li> <li>• Overall crime rate increasing (Includes violent, property, and non-violent crimes – majority of crimes in SC area are non-violent; 60%)</li> <li>• Police Force Staffing (Perception; Not enough visual representation of police in area/response time issues)</li> <li>• Area’s median household income is far below the County’s median</li> <li>• Low performing schools</li> <li>• Overcrowded/Over-capacity schools</li> <li>• Opioid problems highly prevalent in area</li> <li>• Aging housing stock</li> <li>• Poor appearance of area – commercial corridor, some residential areas</li> <li>• Large number of vacant properties – Commercial (Costar report, 6.8% vacancy rate up from 4.9% 5 years ago); Residential (10.8% vacancy rate up from 10.22% 5 years ago)</li> <li>• Lost sense of direction/sense of place in area that should be thriving</li> <li>• Limited pedestrian activity in area</li> <li>• Lack of chain restaurants in area</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures 	Strategies and Action Items 	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Code Enforcement – Community Involvement &amp; outreach</p> <p>Progress Measures: Code enforcement violations in area decrease; better appearance of area as a whole (commercial and residential)</p>	<p>Strategy A: Community Associations meet regularly to discuss code violations in their respective areas</p> <p>Strategy B: Code enforcement sweeps are completed to encourage properties to comply</p>	<p>Baltimore County Code Enforcement; Local community associations; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>

	Strategy C: Community Associations will continuously check on problem properties in area to ensure compliance is being met	
Outcome 2: Address vacant storefronts Progress Measures: Storefronts are more attractive to public	Strategy A: Reach out to property owners to get ideas for dressing up vacant storefronts Strategy B: Develop partnership with local artists, schools, Boy Scout groups to create more appealing storefronts for vacant properties	Baltimore County Department of Planning; Local schools; Local Boy Scout Groups; Local Artists; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force
Outcome 3: Develop branding opportunities in Essex Progress Measures: Expanded role of community history at public events; Signage upgrades	Strategy A: Create opportunities for special community events that feature community history Strategy B: Create branding package for area – gateway signage, streetscape signage/branding to create sense of place	Baltimore County Department of Planning; Baltimore County Public Library; Baltimore County Office of Tourism; Historical Society of Baltimore County; Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) – Essex, Dundalk; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force
Outcome 4: Increase knowledge of community history Progress Measures: New exhibits and programs	Strategy A: Expand marketing opportunities for Heritage Society Strategy B: Increase support for public programming	Baltimore County Department of Planning; Baltimore County Public Library; Baltimore County Office of Tourism; Historical Society of Baltimore County; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force

# Local Planning and Land Use

(Strengths and weaknesses in the local planning and land use subject area include but are not limited to zoning, land use, policies, taxes and fees, historical patterns of development, lot sizes and shapes, etc)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two commercial spines of area – Eastern Boulevard/Back River Neck Road; designated Commercial Revitalization District with financial and technical incentives available for commercial revitalization efforts</li> <li>• Current reinvestment – block of properties along Eastern Blvd. recently revitalized (120-138 Eastern Blvd.); Abandoned used car lot transformed to Dunkin’ Donuts</li> <li>• Design Review Panel Review area – Essex is a Design Review Panel area which encourages design excellence in the commercial corridors of Eastern Boulevard and Back River Neck Road</li> <li>• Large areas of shoreline – offer waterfront amenities, unique view sheds</li> <li>• Critical areas preserved</li> <li>• Small pockets of Neighborhood Commons (NC) overlay district restricting future development, NC Zoning (32.5 acres)</li> <li>• Newly constructed housing types/opportunities in area (Villas at Devonport – SFA, waterfront; Renaissance Square - SFA, SFD, Senior Housing; Hopewell Point - Condos, SFD, waterfront; Waterview – SFD)</li> <li>• Fields at Renaissance Park – Large open space/area park centrally located within area created through reuse of land once occupied by substandard multi-family housing)</li> <li>• Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP) – Ability to request zoning change on any piece of property in County (2016 CZMP – 12 issues in area; 8 NC designations, others cleaned up zoning lines and restricted uses not favorable in area)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor commercial encroachment from commercial corridors into residential communities</li> <li>• Small creeks from Back River and Middle River “cut off” or separate residential communities from one another and limit connectivity</li> <li>• Underutilized commercial land along commercial corridors (Eastern Boulevard/Back River Neck Road)</li> <li>• Commercial development locating outside of area (Newer infrastructure)</li> </ul>

Desired Outcomes and Progress Measures →	Strategies and Action Items →	Implementation Partners
<p>Outcome 1: Increase awareness and use of Commercial Revitalization District Incentives</p> <p>Progress Measures: Increased number of programs being used</p>	<p>Strategy A: Expand marketing outreach of programs to business owners, real estate agents and investors</p> <p>Strategy B: Hold meeting within community for residents/business owners to spread awareness of programs</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Department of Workforce and Economic Development; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Reinvestment in older shopping centers</p> <p>Progress Measures: Country Ridge redevelopment, Middlesex Shopping Center &amp; Hawthorne Plaza upgrades</p>	<p>Strategy A: Outreach to property owner – promote incentives</p> <p>Strategy B: Expand outreach to investors</p> <p>Strategy C: Contact commercial real estate agents to attract uses to area</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Department of Economic and Workforce Development; Private Developers; Private Investors; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Reinvestment in commercial corridors</p> <p>Progress Measures: Anchor tenants locate along Back River Neck Road, Eastern Boulevard</p>	<p>Strategy A: Outreach to property owners – promote incentives available</p> <p>Strategy B: Expand outreach to investors</p> <p>Strategy C: Develop survey to evaluate types of uses wanted in area</p> <p>Strategy D: Contact commercial real estate agents to attract uses to area</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Department of Economic and Workforce Development; Private Developers; Private Investors; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>
<p>Outcome 4: Study possible zoning changes along commercial corridors</p> <p>Progress Measures: Make zoning changes if needed to attract different types of uses to area</p>	<p>Strategy A: Study zoning along Eastern Boulevard and Back River Neck Road</p> <p>Strategy B: Conduct survey of uses wanted in area; suggest possible zoning changes needed to achieve along commercial corridors</p>	<p>Baltimore County Department of Planning; Property Owners; Private Investors; Eastern Baltimore County Task Force</p>