
BARRY GLASSMAN
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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Harford County Creates Green Infrastructure Vision Plan for Gunpowder River Watershed

BEL AIR, Md., (Nov. 2, 2016) - Working with community stakeholders, the Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning, in cooperation with the American Planning Association, has created a Green Infrastructure Vision plan for the Gunpowder River watershed in Harford County. Green infrastructure involves streams, wetlands and trees in an interconnected network of green spaces that protects natural ecosystems and provides community benefits such as clean air and water. Green infrastructure also adds value to private properties and maintains economies related to forestry, farming, recreation, and tourism.

With grant funding from the Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition, the administration under Harford County Executive Barry Glassman is taking a proactive approach to green infrastructure planning.

“Green infrastructure increases our resilience to natural disasters and helps us become more strategic and cost effective with our preservation and restoration efforts,” said County Executive Glassman. “This strengthens our communities, and develops a green asset that can help increase property values and attract new investments.”

Community input on the Gunpowder watershed project came from a workshop held in June at the Harford Glen Environmental Education Center. The workshop drew approximately 40 participants and focused on identifying and prioritizing opportunities for green infrastructure to

enhance resilience in two sub-watersheds: the more rural Upper Little Gunpowder Falls and the more urban Lower Gunpowder River. Community members were encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas on creating a successful regional green infrastructure network.

“I would like to thank everyone who attended the workshop, and all those who have shown interest in this initiative” said Harford County Environmental Planner Bryan Lightner, who is leading the county’s efforts. “It’s nice to know there are folks out there who think this is a good idea and are willing to get involved to help improve their communities.”

Following the workshop, a vision plan with conceptual recommendations and implementation strategies was developed, using the community input and data gathered. The document can be viewed online at <http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/7871>.

Key recommendations include demonstration projects such as tree plantings, meadows/low mow zones, rain gardens, and living shorelines, created by individuals, agencies and community groups. Also recommended was the identification of funding resources to incentivize these practices, and rewarding businesses and institutions that create them, along with an audit of current zoning codes for compatibility with green infrastructure planning.

Next steps for Harford County government will include leading by example with demonstration projects on county-owned property, and further mapping analyses and interdepartmental coordination to develop a formal Green Infrastructure Plan as identified in the countywide master plan, HarfordNEXT.

Those who were unable to attend the workshop may continue to provide input to Bryan Lightner, environmental planner in the Harford County Dept. of Planning and Zoning, at bclightner@harfordcountymd.gov or (410) 638-3103 ext. 1386.

For more information about green infrastructure planning and detailed maps of the study area, please visit:

<http://harfordgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=01cfea9905674f0ba32419b7524a2565>.

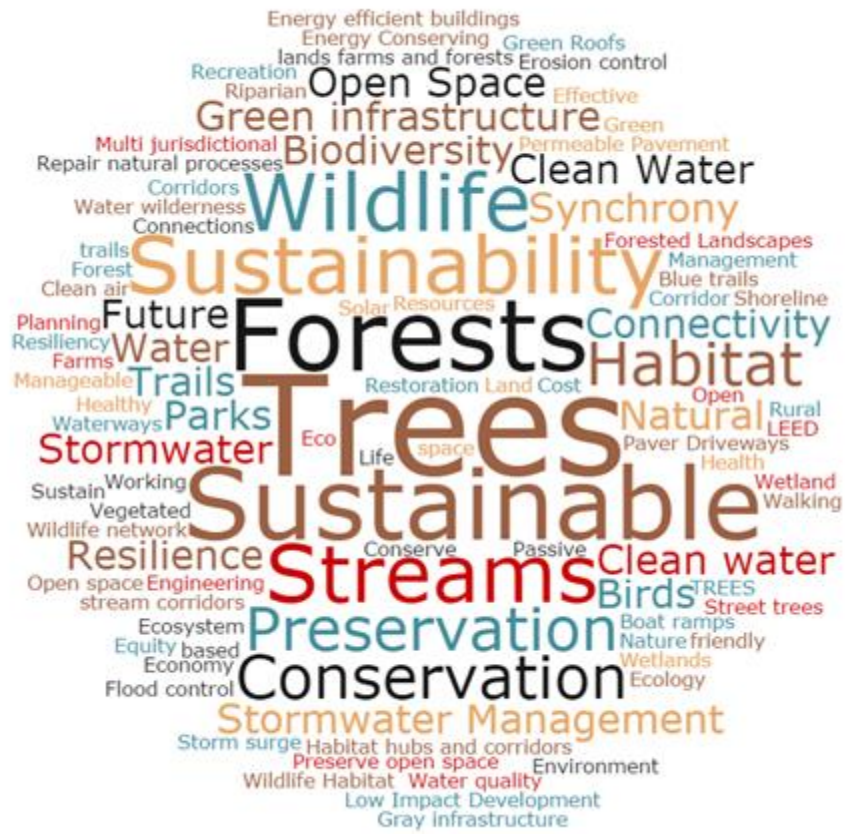


Image caption: The word cloud showing responses to the workshop question, “What three words come to mind when you hear ‘Green Infrastructure’?”

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