



Presents

Green Platform for Baltimore County 2019–2022

November 26, 2018

Baltimore County finds itself at a crossroads, with new leadership. At stake is its long-term success as a healthy, safe, beautiful, liveable environment. From our abundant experience as advocates for that vision, we offer the following necessary action items and urge the new County Executive and Council to distinguish themselves as environmental stars in reversing the long period of neglect and active eco-destruction, replacing it with responsible stewardship of our beautiful County. Environmental sustainability is a key determinate of quality of life. Quality of life influences where people and businesses choose to locate, which impacts our tax base and budget. It would be our pleasure to share details on this bipartisan platform with the Transition Team, new Administration, and new Council.

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The Green Towson Alliance unites Towson Area environmentalists to achieve a greener, healthier, and more beautiful community through collaboration and activism.

Environmental Sustainability Solutions

Baltimore County needs a strategic plan to make its climate and sustainability policies state-of-the-art. The need for change is immediate and dire.

NOTE: ✓ Indicates action item suggested for next 6-12 months. † indicates legislative actions.



Sustainable Energy

- ▶ Require 50% non-polluting, renewable energy sources by 2030 †
- ▶ Develop land-use policy to increase renewable energy generation †
- ▶ Provide incentives, education, and assistance for small business and residence conversion to renewable energy for structures and vehicles
- ✓ Reduce use, increase efficiency and generate renewable energy at county facilities



Stormwater Management

- ✓ Use natural landscape systems (green infrastructure) first for on-site SWM and incentivize beyond state minimums †
- ✓ Incorporate green infrastructure into public works projects



Tree Policy

- ▶ Create urban forestry program: preserve and maintain existing trees, immediately replace dead or diseased trees, manage invasive plants, and increase the canopy inside the URDL
- ✓ Update Landscape Manual emphasizing tree survival and other environmental benefits
- ✓ Shift spending from removal of healthy street trees to tree maintenance and sidewalk alternatives
- ✓ Coordinate all county agencies to protect trees



Transportation

- ▶ Increase mass transit, car-pooling, walkability and bicycling
- ▶ Create Safe Routes to Schools
- ▶ Create and connect community greenways



Green & Healthy Buildings

- ✓ Mandate minimum green building standards and incentivize beyond minimums †
- ✓ Incentivize net-zero and net-positive energy building †
- ✓ Prioritize redevelopment †



Watershed Policy

- ✓ Create a county-wide citizen watershed program
- ✓ Pesticide/herbicide policy that supports pollinators, biodiversity and human health †
- ✓ Improve water quality monitoring: post online and post health warnings along impaired waterways immediately after all major rainstorms
- ✓ Minimize environmental impacts from the use of road salt



Waste Stream

- ▶ Require zero solid waste to landfills by 2030 †
- ✓ Perform independent audit of DPW sanitary sewerage planning
- ▶ Minimize greenhouse gas generation
- ✓ Ban plastic bags and polystyrene †



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Land Use: Planning and Development Solutions

These actions will help rebalance stakeholder interests and benefit the environment.

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Define and Defend the Public Interest

- ▶ Solicit and address community and environmental concerns in planning efforts and land-use decisions
- ✓ Reserve Planned Unit Development (PUD) process for true collaboration between communities and developers and never if environmental hazards are involved †
- ✓ Strengthen URDL protection; eliminate legislative loopholes
- ✓ Protect and preserve productive agricultural land †
- ▶ Honor community goals in Towson
 - ▶ Update and complete Walkable Towson Plan
 - ✓ Amend Downtown Towson Overlay to provide the desired outcome of walkable, green, mixed-use development with ample civic space †
 - ✓ Provide early DRP review of site design and later review of landscaping, sustainability and architectural details



Protect and Improve Quality of Life

- ▶ Increase parks and open space; preserve public lands
- ▶ Ensure adequate public facilities and funding thereof
- ✓ Strictly prohibit development of sensitive environmental sites †



Redefine the Role of the Planning Department

- ✓ Lead and referee the development process with highly qualified Director
- ▶ Lead a collaborative update of the Master Plan and Community Plans
- ✓ Uphold the Master Plan, community plans, zoning ordinances and design guidelines
- ✓ Make waivers and variances rare exceptions

Good Government, Transparency and Accountability Solutions

Improving County government practice and policies will protect public health, the environment and livability.

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Environmental Policy

Create a County Office of Environmental Integrity

- ▶ Recommend and implement environmental best practices
- ▶ Coordinate department efforts toward common goals, data collection and analytical tools. Identify redundancies
- ▶ Provide small watershed/sewershed level details for public works projects.
- ▶ Report annually on progress toward benchmarks and achievement of goals

Reform the Fee-In-Lieu System

- ✓ Develop and disseminate fee formulas
- ✓ Publish online accounting of each fee
- ✓ Allow fees-in-lieu only if no other means of meeting obligation can be achieved
- ✓ Reform legislation that allows private amenities to be credited against fees †

Improve Enforcement of Environmental Regulations

- ▶ Verify that removed trees are replanted per the MD Roadside Tree Bill
- ✓ Remediate violations of the Forest Conservation Act
- ▶ Improve compliance with Clean Water Act by coordinating 2005 Sanitary Sewer Consent Decree and MS4 Permit
- ✓ Eliminate waivers of tree buffer zones
- ▶ Create a 5-year maintenance plan for stream restorations: replant dead trees, remove invasive plants, and continue progress toward reducing run-off pollutants
- ▶ Improve monitoring and enforcement of Sediment and Erosion Control
- ▶ Appoint an environmental ombudsman for citizen complaints



Best Practices

Organizational Alignment

- ▶ Restore funding to Planning Department, Parks and Recreation and DEPS
- ✓ Ensure highly qualified Directors for each department
- ✓ Maintain equitable balance of authority among Directors to protect and preserve the environment

Access to Information

- ▶ Provide Interactive and up-to-date County website
- ✓ Amend County PIA regulations to agree with the Maryland Public Information Act, increase compliance, allow photos or scans "at the counter" and minimize cost to the public
- ✓ Hold Council work sessions in the evening

Improve Public Notice of Legislative and Executive Actions

- ✓ Publish amendments 7 days before vote on legislation †
- ✓ Publish financial agreements 30 days prior to Council approval
- ✓ Schedule votes that impact communities away from holidays and summer vacations †



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