

## **Town Center Enhancement Area Plan**

### **Introduction**

Of all of the towns and urban centers in Maryland, Glen Burnie has one of the best locations. Situated just south of Baltimore in Northern Anne Arundel County, this community of 38,900 people is immediately adjacent to Baltimore-Washington International Airport and lies in the heart of one of the nation's major regional economic centers, the Baltimore-Washington Corridor. Along with location, Glen Burnie has well-established residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, industrial areas, and access to bus and light rail systems. The area is also connected to the airport and to Annapolis by a seventeen-mile hiker-biker trail that goes through the middle of town.

Because of its great location and existing urban fabric, the area stands poised to capitalize on its potential to become a regional destination for working, shopping, and living. Indeed, community planning efforts have been underway for years to make this a vision a reality and to shape a "heart" for Glen Burnie in its town center. Through efforts by the County, the community, the Town Center Committee, and the Gateways Committee, much has been done to put into place an urban renewal plan, a community vision, urban renewal and revitalization laws, and design guidelines. Most importantly, the Town Center is already blessed with an active public gathering space, places to live and shop, street trees, and a strong visual presence.

However, in order for the Glen Burnie Town Center to reach its true potential, more work needs to be done. New businesses need to be established and urban spaces created in its underutilized lots and vacant storefronts. New markets, services, and economic strategies need to be discovered to attract additional businesses. Better connections to existing roads, trails, and neighborhoods need to be made to bring residents, shoppers and visitors into the town center area. The image of the Town Center needs to be strengthened, with the history of the area used as a stepping stone to its future. Stronger design guidelines need to be established to create a more distinct sense of place for the area. Finally, commercial revitalization laws need to be bolstered to help encourage downtown stability and growth.

The Town Center Enhancement Plan is the tool to begin planning these efforts, and most importantly, to help define Glen Burnie's future position in the economy of the region. Included in this planning effort are the need to establish new boundaries for the Town Center Enhancement Area, and to plan for future land use, transportation, parking, urban design, and streetscape in a way that is complimentary to the existing structures, and the future goals, of the area. Most importantly, the Town Center Enhancement Plan will help ensure that the promise of Glen Burnie as a thriving community - a place where people can live, work, shop, and play in one unique place - becomes a reality.

### **Goals for the Plan**

Based on the information learned through the analysis of existing conditions, through interviews, and in response to the concerns and expectations expressed by the Advisory Committee, the following goals were established for the Town Center Enhancement Area:

- Strengthen the relationship between the Town Center and the commercial and residential areas surrounding it.
- Ensure that the appearance of the corridors leading to the Town Center enhance its image.
- Develop a plan that will attract more people and businesses to the Town Center area. Create a vital “sense of place” in the Town Center and its surrounding area.
- Strengthen the sense of community, and community presence, in the Town Center area.
- Maximize pedestrian connections to the Town Center area to encourage those of all ages to use the Town Center, and to minimize the impact of vehicles in the area.
- Build upon the area’s assets to enhance its image. These include the “hometown” character of Glen Burnie, the vital and growing presence of the Community College, the strong demand for residential development, existing open spaces and trails, and several key opportunity sites.

The plan that is described below specifically addresses these goals in a variety of ways.

## Description of the Plan

### *Urban Design Framework*

The portion of Glen Burnie delineated for study has been defined as two important component segments of the Town Center area: a **Town Center Enhancement Area** component, and a **Town Center Community** component (Figure 32). Both of these contribute to, and benefit from, the functional and aesthetic qualities of the Town Center in different ways:

- The **Town Center Enhancement Area**, encompassing the major corridors leading to and from the Town Center core, serves as the gateway to, and an extension of, the activities occurring in that core area. The Town Center Enhancement area, therefore, has a significant impact on the image of the Town Center, and on the kinds of businesses and people the Town Center area will attract. As such, the Concept Plan has focused specifically on both land use and design issues within the Town Center Enhancement Area.
- The area defined as the **Town Center Community** comprises those well-established neighborhoods surrounding and adjacent to the Town Center and the Town Center Enhancement Area. Part of the success of the Glen Burnie Town Center lies in its ability to strengthen the sense of identity and connection with these communities. A successful Town Center is one that can attract not only those from outside the area but, perhaps even more significantly, those who live near the center and could use it

on a frequent basis. In the assessment of existing conditions, those interviewed often stressed the lack of strong, well identified, attractive, and safe connections between the Town Center and the communities adjacent to it. Therefore, for the Town Center Community area, the Concept Plan has focused on making those connections; the guidelines proposed focus on enhancing linkages between the Town Center and its surrounding residential communities.

### ***The Concept Plan***

The Concept Plan recognizes, and builds on, the existing assets of the area, including its open spaces, trails, history, land uses, and ability to attract residential development. This plan presents recommended actions for improving the Town Center area, recognizing that change will be gradual. As such, the Plan establishes a vision for the future that should be used to guide new development and renovation occurring within the Town Center Enhancement Area. The overall vision for the Concept Plan (Figure33) includes:

#### **Maximizing connections**

- a. Creating an awareness and appreciation of existing open space areas through the creation of a new streetscape loop (“Park Street”) that would connect surrounding open space areas to the Town Center through a lovely, green pedestrian and vehicular corridor. This Park Street loop provides an attractive entrance to the broader Town Center “core,” connects with the Baltimore and Annapolis Trail, and encourages pedestrian connection between the Town Center Communities and the Town Center core. In addition, it links the community assets provided by the open space areas surrounding the Town Center to those within the Town Center itself.
- b. Creating a safe and pleasant pedestrian loop within the heart of the Town Center core. This inner loop connects parking, shops, offices and residential areas, and allows safe, convenient and attractive access across both Baltimore and Annapolis Boulevard and Crain Highway.
- c. Defining safe and attractive opportunities for crossing the major roadways surrounding and traversing the Town Center area, including Ritchie Highway, Crain Highway, and B&A Boulevard. These roadways currently provide inaccessible barriers to Glen Burnie’s Town Center, discouraging both pedestrians and vehicles from entering or stopping in the area.
- d. Providing sidewalks and streetscape amenities along all streets within the Town Center Enhancement Area to ensure safe, comfortable, and attractive access.

#### **Enhancing the Town Center image**

- a. Establishing design standards that will build upon, and reinforce, the bustling small town character of Glen Burnie, rather than encouraging the more suburban character now prevalent in the corridors leading into the Town Center core. The elements that

will contribute to this small town quality include: building to existing lot lines with parking to the side or behind buildings; on-street parking; sidewalks and well-maintained streetscape elements such as trees and landscaping, attractive paving patterns, and coordinated signs; and public use areas (such as the Glen Burnie Improvement Association's open space, the plaza in front of the Arundel Center North building, and a proposed Farmers' Market site) that will attract the community to the Town Center core.

- b. Establishing Crain Highway and B&A Boulevard as the Town Center "Main Streets" through implementation of design guidelines that include a comprehensive program of streetscape improvements, building infill to lot lines, and a coordinated signage program.
- c. Creating consistent and attractive entrances to the Town Center Enhancement Area to signal that one has arrived in a special place, as well as a visual and functional hierarchy (going from lower to greater density, and from a lower to a higher diversity of uses) between arrival in the Town Center Enhancement Area to arrival at the Town Center core.
- d. Creating an arrival "gateway" to the downtown "core" at the intersection of Crain Highway and B&A Boulevard through landscape/streetscape amenities that signify entrance into the area.

**Creating a lively "downtown" core**

- a. Maximizing community use of the Town Center area through increased accessibility, and a greater number of public events in existing and planned plazas and open spaces.
- b. Creating a Town Center environment that has a more comfortable pedestrian scale, through infill of buildings to prevalent lot lines, streetscape amenities, landscaped areas, and on-street parking where feasible.
- c. Encouraging private redevelopment of the "waterbed site" at the corner of Crain Highway and B&A Boulevard for both office and retail uses. The redevelopment should serve as an important, positive entry image to the downtown "core" area.
- d. Encouraging the development of additional residential units in and adjacent to the Town Center area.
- e. Exploring the potential for development of a hotel complex in the Town Center area.
- f. Creating an environment rich with a variety of use opportunities in order to encourage those already within the Town Center to stay for longer periods and to enjoy diverse uses.

**Preserving and honoring Glen Burnie's history**

- a. Incorporating the proposed Town Center “historic district” into the urban design concept in order to celebrate the history of the community.
- b. Creating transition zones between the “older” and “newer” parts of the Town Center in order to provide a graceful blending of these zones and to respect the historic qualities of the older sections.
- c. Maximizing the use/reuse of potentially historic and other old structures in the Town Center area (e.g., the First Avenue School and the library) to meld the “old Glen Burnie” character of Town Center with its newer elements.

**Specific Opportunity Areas**

The Concept Plan identifies specific potential opportunity sites within the Town Center Enhancement Area and the downtown “core.” Each of these sites is numbered on the Concept Plan (Figure 33) and is described by corresponding number below.

***1. Key corner/former “waterbed site”***

This important opportunity site comprises the commercial area bounded by B&A Boulevard, Crain Highway, Central Avenue, the Baltimore/Annapolis Trail and Oak Lane. It is important to note that any recommendations regarding this site will require cooperation and leadership on the part of the site's private sector owners. This key location is, however, appropriate for land assembly and improvements that will allow for retail ground floor uses and office upper floor uses to be consolidated around a central portion of the Downtown Pedestrian Loop. The design concept proposed for this site includes:

- The retention and renovation of three existing retail/office buildings, with infill development of new retail-office structures. The proposed new structures would maintain a “main street” building line along both Crain Highway and B&A Boulevard, and could have retail on the ground floor with 1-2 stories of office space above.
- The site could allow for a mid-size retail chain (22,000 SF) to occupy a key portion of the site.
- The proposed office space component could accommodate a variety of institutional, public, or private users. One possibility is at least partial use by Anne Arundel Community College which appears to be expanding its programs in the Town Center area. The plan shows office space linked at the second level (with second floor bridge elements) into two office complexes, each with common lobby and service functions. There is the potential to develop this site in phases over time, as the demand for office space increases in the Town Center area.

- The parking for the area would be located behind the buildings in a large County-owned parking lot, with additional on-street parking in the existing alley to the west of Crain Highway. This largely-pedestrian alley would be open to vehicles for parking only (not for circulation).
- The plan for this site also proposes the incorporation of a public Farmers' Market within the pedestrian alley.

## ***2. Historic Reuse at Crain Highway***

Medium density condominium residential infill is proposed at this location to complement the adjacent historic neighborhood. The design concept includes:

- Most of the existing residential structures to be retained with alleys used as opportunities for access between the Town Center and the adjacent residential area. Emphasis would be placed on pedestrian activity given the presence of the Downtown Pedestrian Loop in the area.
- Reuse of the First Avenue School as a key residential component. (Note that this will require cooperation/participation of the owner of this private property.)
- Possible new office or residential development facing Crain Highway.
- Upgrade of the existing brick structures facing Central Avenue for retail uses to complement the proposed development at the former "waterbed site."

## ***3. Crain Highway South***

The concept plan encourages commercial infill along the Crain Highway "Main Street" sidewalk edge with parking provided both on the street and behind/to the sides of buildings. Building entrances would be provided from the front sidewalk or front corner as well as from the rear parking areas.

## ***4. Hotel and Commercial Site***

Combine the existing catering facility on this site with the adjacent State-owned surface parking to create an opportunity area for hotel and associated commercial uses. The concept plan includes:

- A possible shared parking structure.
- Redevelopment to face the Glen Burnie Improvement Association's Carnival Site and Greenway; this development will need to be compatible with the adjacent historic neighborhood.
- Provision of a setback from, and landscaped buffer to, Ritchie Highway.

- Provision of internal open space links to the street ends within the historic neighborhood across Greenway.

#### **5. *Baltimore-Annapolis Boulevard: “Main Street” West***

Encourage the assembly and renovation-redevelopment of existing residential and commercial buildings. The plan includes:

- Encouraging land assembly with shared parking behind structures.
- Closing Maple Lane, between the north and south alleys and B & A Boulevard, to protect adjacent residential neighborhoods and utilizing the existing right-of-way for shared parking access.
- Encouraging a ‘cottage’ style of architecture (for both commercial and residential uses) to complement the adjacent neighborhood.

#### **6. *Possible Community College Expansion***

The plan recommends that consideration be given to use of this existing, privately-owned structure as a potential expansion site for the Community College while, at the same time, maintaining the commercial storefront character of this block.

#### **7. *Medium Density Residential Area East***

A potential residential opportunity area adjacent to Glen Burnie High School, long term use of this privately-owned site might include:

- Creating primary access off Amberly Road with some residential uses directly facing onto that road.
- Providing buffers and secondary access points facing Baltimore and Annapolis Boulevard.

#### **8. *Crain Highway Commercial North***

This site comprises a commercial opportunity area on a vacant car dealership site. The plan includes:

- Creating strong pedestrian links to the surrounding neighborhood from the site.
- Locating parking to the rear or side of the commercial structure.
- Creating a small central public green to eventually link with a proposed green space across Crain Highway (Site #9).

### ***9. Crain Highway North: Potential Office Zone***

This area of private properties presents a long-range opportunity for future office/retail uses. The plan for this area includes:

- Providing open space connections across Crain and Ritchie Highways that include pedestrian crossing signalization.
- Creating a plaza or green open space with a civic focus complementing opportunity area #8 across Crain Highway.
- Establishing ground floor retail within all office development that fronts on Crain Highway.
- Providing setbacks and landscaped buffers to Ritchie Highway.
- Limiting the height of the buildings to be compatible with surrounding uses and to meet (but not exceed) the need for office space in the area.

### ***10. Medium Density Residential***

The concept plan encourages medium density residential development on these existing underutilized commercial sites to complement existing low-density residential uses in the directly adjacent neighborhood.

### ***11. General Low Density Residential Infill***

The plan emphasizes the importance of ensuring that there is appropriately-scaled residential infill on empty or underutilized lots within existing Town Center Community neighborhoods. This recommendation is critical to retaining the character and value of these communities.

### ***12. Town Center Gateway Park***

This open space opportunity site has been identified to improve the sense of arrival to the Town Center, and to complement the adjacent neighborhood and existing bike trail. Since this site is privately owned, implementation of this suggested use will require agreement and action by the owner of the site.

### ***13. Open Space Link***

The plan proposes public park development in this area to connect and strengthen the open space system surrounding Town Center, provide an attractive gateway for Glen Burnie, and serve as an open space amenity for adjacent neighborhoods.

#### ***14. Neighborhood Park***

The plan calls for development of this site as a passive public park. This site would serve as an important link in the proposed Park Loop (see below) and would be an important pedestrian amenity for the adjacent communities.

#### ***15. Park Loop***

One of the key features of the concept plan is the creation of a “Park Loop” circulation system that would help define the Town Center area, would link adjacent open spaces to the Town Center, would encourage safe pedestrian and bicycle linkages from surrounding residential areas, and would more strongly connect these communities to the Town Center area. To accomplish this, the plan calls for improving existing residential streets, as indicated, to visually and functionally link existing parks, schools, and other open spaces surrounding the Town Center area. The Park Loop would take on distinct visual and functional characteristics where it crosses Ritchie Highway to enforce this safe and attractive pedestrian connection across the busy roadway. Since one segment of the proposed Loop is currently one-way for vehicular traffic, this issue will need to be carefully considered during implementation of the Park Loop design.

#### ***16. Downtown Pedestrian Loop***

Utilizing mid-block timed pedestrian crossings and existing public rights-of-way, develop a pedestrian loop system to link key activity areas with the immediate downtown core area. This path would be defined by special streetscape/paving treatment that would be attractive, would encourage use, and would tie together the downtown core. The loop would bring pedestrians to and from the public parking garage, allowing for safe and convenient crossing of B&A Boulevard, providing access to retail areas, to the Community College facilities, and to the County Courthouse facilities. Close coordination with Maryland SHA will be required in order to implement the mid-block/timed crossing concept.

#### ***17. Town Center “Main Streets”***

Both Crain Highway and B&A Boulevard would serve as the Town Center “Main Streets”. For many visitors and Glen Burnie residents, these Main Streets provide the most significant impression of the Town Center area – and encourage people to stop and look around, or simply drive through. As such these opportunity corridors should be upgraded to provide an inviting, lively, attractive small “downtown” image for the area. This can be accomplished with the provision of wide, walkable sidewalks; on-street parking; streetscape/landscape design; less visible parking lots, and so on. Some streetscape improvements along both of these corridors have been developed through the Maryland State Highway Administration’s Neighborhood Conservation Program. Additional design guidelines are found in subsequent sections of this plan.

### **18. Outer “Main Streets”**

The outer Main Street opportunity areas are those stretches of both Crain Highway and B&A Boulevard that serve as important entrances to the Town Center area, but where the overall land use and development patterns are expected to remain largely as they currently exist. These areas include Crain Highway from 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Aquahart Road (south of the Town Center) and from Georgia Avenue to 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue (north of the Town Center); and B&A Boulevard from just east of Governor Ritchie Highway to its intersection with Route 10. In these areas, it will be critical to upgrade the appearance and functioning of these roadways through a variety of recommendations. Some streetscape improvements along both of these corridors have been developed through the Maryland State Highway Administration’s Neighborhood Conservation Program. Additional design guidelines are discussed in more detail in later sections.

### **19. The Ritchie Highway “Boulevard”**

Both sides of Ritchie Highway, from 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South to 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, are included within the TCEA; however, the guidelines provided in this Plan for the eastern side of this thoroughfare related solely to streetscape/roadway improvements. Ritchie Highway currently serves as a major barrier for pedestrians to access Town Center, and it presents a “high speed” opportunity to bypass the Town Center area altogether. Therefore, the Concept Plan calls for the redesign of Ritchie Highway between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South to 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue North as a “Boulevard” to provide a compatible entrance and linkage to the Town Center. New design elements would include street trees, sidewalks, and landscaped buffers to create a softer, more boulevard-like streetscape appearance. Specific recommendations are described in later sections of this plan.

## **Town Center “Core” (Urban Design Detail)**

The Concept Plan includes a more detailed strategy for the Town Center “core” area (see Figure 34). The actions proposed focus on addressing current issues of image, access and circulation, parking, and low intensity of use. The proposed core plan builds upon the strong built elements already in place within the Town Center area, and enhances these in the following ways:

- A major new development is recommended for the existing “waterbed site,” as described in detail above (Site #1).
- The existing alley running through the new “waterbed site” development would be closed for a period of time during weekends to provide space for a community Farmers’ Market. (Note that, since a portion of this alleyway is in private ownership, the County will need to work with the owner to allow use of this area during the times designated for the Farmers’ Market.)
- A Downtown Pedestrian Loop would be created around the Town Center core area. This is described in detail under Site #16 above and is illustrated in Figures 34, 34A, 34B and 34C.

- A new gateway entrance to the Town Center core area is proposed for the four corners at the intersection of Crain Highway and B&A Boulevard. This gateway would consist of coordinated landscape treatment and a proposed trellis feature on all four corners, creating a sense of arrival and welcome as well as the impression that one is entering a special area.
- In order to enable this new gateway plan, and to provide a greater sense of privacy for the residents of the senior housing facility located on the northwest corner of the intersection, the plan proposes that the senior housing open space be redesigned to create a garden space that residents could enjoy, defined by and separated from the gateway intersection by a low wall.
- Finally, the core area plan proposes a pleasant green arrival space in the Town Center core for those travelling on the Baltimore/Annapolis Trail. This destination place would be located near the proposed Farmers' Market/Pedestrian Loop and would add to the experience of biking or walking to the Glen Burnie Town Center.

### ***Town Center Illustrative Plan***

An illustrative plan depicting the recommended vision for the Glen Burnie Town Center Enhancement Area is shown in Figure 35.

## **Implementation Recommendations**

The Plan for the Glen Burnie Town Center Enhancement Area will be implemented over time as development-related needs arise and as funding for public improvements is made available. The Plan is, therefore, intended to be viewed as a long term concept that will help shape decisions regarding the direction of both future development and public improvements. It provides a vision for the evolution of the Town Center area over time. The more specific implementation recommendations described below serve as the structure upon which this vision can be built. As such, they deal with issues of urban design, zoning and land use, economic development, and possible legislative changes to existing regulations that may be needed in order to ensure implementation of the vision set forth in the plan. As noted earlier, implementation of these guidelines on privately-owned properties will require the cooperation of these property owners.

### **Urban Design Guidelines**

#### ***Town Center "Core" Area***

The architectural style, height, massing, setback, and orientation of buildings throughout the Town Center "core" area impact both its character and its operational efficiency. To achieve the vision depicted in the Concept Plan, the following urban design guidelines are recommended:

- New parcel development, as well as infill development and renovation, should be constructed to the property line with either no setbacks or minimal setbacks (Figure 36).
- Building materials should be compatible with the existing character of the Town Center area.
- Building entrances along the core area’s “Main Streets” should front on those streets or their front corners; however, secondary access from rear parking areas could be also be provided.
- Parking lots should be discouraged in front of buildings; rather they should be located at the sides or rear of all buildings in the core area. Parking lots should be shared by property owners where possible (Figure 37).
- On-street parking should also be provided throughout the area to slow traffic and provide convenient short-term parking for shoppers and other visitors (Figures 36 and 37).
- In order to preserve the smaller town character of the Town Center, building height in this area should not exceed 3-4 stories in the core area.
- In the transitional areas (i.e., those located between commercial and residential uses), density should “step down” as appropriate in order to maintain compatibility with the adjacent residential community. Within these areas, architectural style, materials, and scale should also respect the adjoining residential uses, and landscape buffering should be required to soften the transition from one type of land use to another.
- A comprehensive streetscape program should be established for all “Main Streets” and secondary streets within the core area. This program should be coordinated with the State Highway Administration’s (SHA’s) Neighborhood Conservation Program plans for B&A Boulevard and Crain Highway. Design guidelines may be different for these “Main Streets” than for the area’s secondary streets, but should address the following:
  - Sidewalk widths
  - Sidewalk and crosswalk paving materials
  - Street tree species, size, location, and planting specifications
  - Coordinated signage
  - Coordinated lighting
  - Standards for awnings and banners
  - Landscape treatments
  - Street furniture

- A clearly defined enforcement program should be established in coordination with the County to ensure that all of the guidelines established for the Town Center core area are adhered to.
- The process of nominating historic buildings in the Town Center core area to either the National or State registers should be initiated in order to preserve and build upon the rich history in this area.

### ***Downtown Pedestrian Loop***

- Working with SHA, develop a second tier of stop lights at the Downtown Pedestrian Loop Road crossing points. Lights would be coordinated with the existing Crain Highway and B&A Boulevard intersection traffic lights. This new signalization system would decrease pedestrian walking distance from major desire points, would increase safety, and would enhance the convenience of the existing public parking structure.
- Define a consistent, attractive surface treatment suitable for pedestrians and automobiles to be used throughout the Downtown Loop.
- Encourage the shared use of the loop for pedestrians and parallel on-street vehicular parking wherever possible (Figures 38 and 39).
- Develop coordinated design standards for the Downtown Loop to include street trees, landscape elements, lighting, street furnishings and signage. The design should be compatible with streetscape standards developed for the core area's "Main Streets" and should be in keeping with the standards developed as part of SHA's Neighborhood Conservation Program for Glen Burnie.

### ***Park Loop***

- Establish the identity of the Park Loop through the development of consistent, specific streetscape standards for sidewalks, lighting, planting, and possible trail inclusion along the entire length of the Loop (see Figure 40). Design of the Park Loop should be compatible with standards established as part of SHA's Neighborhood Conservation Program, yet should employ a consistent planting concept in order to "read" as a single, coherent loop system.
- Develop and implement special design recommendations for Park Loop crossings at major roadway intersections to address paving and landscape issues, the need for medians in some locations, and possible signalization at the more dangerous crossings.
- Establish a Park Loop signage program, which could include interpretive signs as relevant.

- Connect the Park Loop to Sawmill Creek Park.

### ***Outer “Main Streets”***

The guidelines recommended below apply to the areas of: Crain Highway from 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Aquahart Road (south of Town Center) and from Georgia Avenue to 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue (north of Town Center); and B&A Boulevard from just east of Governor Ritchie Highway to its intersection with Route 10.

- Maximize use of sidewalks, with on-street parking (where possible) throughout these corridors (see Figure 41).
- Develop coordinated street tree and street furnishing programs that will be of a comfortable scale for pedestrians but will also buffer commercial properties from the road. These should be consistent with the plans developed for these corridors through SHA’s Neighborhood Conservation Program.
- Allow parking between the sidewalk and building entrances but ensure that clearly defined pedestrian paths are maintained between the sidewalk and building entrance ways, through parking areas.
- Require that a 36” minimum height evergreen hedge should be maintained between the sidewalk and all parking areas to buffer the visual impact of these areas. This height will need to be adjusted at intersections in order to allow adequate sight-lines for traffic safety.
- Establish a clearly defined enforcement program in coordination with the County to ensure adherence to all of the guidelines established for the area “Main Streets”.

### ***Ritchie Highway “Boulevard”***

- Specify an appropriate range of street trees to be planted along Ritchie Highway.
- Install street trees with an initial height of 16’ to 18’ (i.e., 4” caliper) and an open area between the ground and the first limbs of at least 6’ to 7’ to allow for immediate open views of adjacent businesses (Figure 42).
- Install sidewalks and pedestrian crossings within this zone at key streets as indicated on plan (see detail in Figure 43). Define design standards for all pedestrian crossings, to include paving, lighting, possible “neck downs,” and medians as appropriate.
- Require installation and maintenance of a 36” height evergreen hedge between the public right-of-way and all parking areas. This height will need to be adjusted at intersections to allow adequate sight-lines for traffic safety.

- Establish a clearly defined enforcement program in coordination with the County to ensure that all of the guidelines established for Ritchie Highway Boulevard are adhered to.

## Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

Successful implementation and continued enforcement of the vision for the Town Center Enhancement Area will require that consideration be given to the expansion of the boundaries of the Town Center zone as indicated below, in addition to the establishment of a new Town Center Enhancement Area as described in the following section. These changes would allow for the kinds of mixed use opportunities needed to increase the liveliness and diversity of the Town Center area, and would permit greater oversight with regard to architectural review and enforcement, as established in the Glen Burnie Urban Renewal laws.

Several uses proposed in the Concept Plan deviate from current zoning and/or land use designations and are recommended for change as noted below:

- Land Use Map changes are recommended for some areas directly north of the current Town Center zone. These areas, which currently are designated for commercial use and have predominantly C3 and C4 zoning designations, are recommended for a Town Center designation on the Land Use Map. This change will support property owners who may want to rezone their property to TC in the future, and will promote the long term goal of redevelopment to integrate this area into the Town Center “core.” The areas include:
  - Property on the west side of Crain Highway, starting at Georgia Avenue (the current Town Center boundary) and extending north following the rear of the current C3 and C4 zones up to Glen Oak Lane. This encompasses Area #8 on the Concept Plan.
  - Additional properties along the west side of Crain Highway between Glen Oak Lane and Virginia Avenue. This encompasses Area #10 on the Concept Plan.
  - Property on the east side of Crain Highway extending north from Georgia Avenue to Sixth Avenue, and from Crain to Ritchie Highways. This includes Area #9 in the Concept Plan.
- The area bounded by Oak Lane, Greenway, Central Avenue and A & B Streets is planned for residential use. It is recommended that only the residential portion of this area be rezoned from TC to R5. Note that this change does not include the building at the corner of Central Avenue, A Street and Greenway which would remain zoned as TC.
- The area along Ritchie Highway from the existing town center line at the District Court south to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Post 40 Road, returning to the existing Town Center line, is recommended to be included in the designated Town Center and rezoned as TC.

- The southeast corner of Ritchie Highway bounded by B&A Boulevard and O Street should be rezoned from C4 to C3 in order to preserve appropriate uses at the “gateway” to the Town Center.

In addition to rezoning specific parcels to a TC zoning designation, the County’s recently adopted Commercial Revitalization Bill (No. 69-02) will allow for an expansion of conditional uses within C-3 and C-4 commercial zoning districts (“Commercial Revitalization Areas”). This new legislation should be useful in helping to implement the changes proposed within the overall TCEA, specifically within areas currently zoned C-3 and C-4.

## **Recommended Legislative Changes/Updates**

### ***Glen Burnie Town Center Boundaries***

As noted above, establishment of a new Town Center Enhancement Area is recommended in order to fully implement this Plan. Currently, the review authority of the Town Center Committee is constrained by the existing, limited Town Center boundaries, in spite of the fact that land use decisions on adjacent and nearby properties have a direct effect on the Town Center area. The new boundary should include those portions of the Town Center Enhancement Area (TCEA) defined above and illustrated on Figure 32.

These changes will require some amendment to the Anne Arundel County Code (“Code”). For example, while the Plan recommends retaining the existing Urban Renewal laws for Glen Burnie with regard to the area specified in the Code, it also recommends expanding Article 24, Subtitle 3 to create a TCEA with boundaries that coincide with those indicated in this Plan. In addition, the Plan suggests that the authority of the Advisory Committee be expanded to encompass the new TCEA area and to ensure that all improvements within that area are consistent with the Plan. The existing Town Center Committee is perfectly placed to continue serving this Advisory Committee function as the review authority that makes recommendations to the County’s Planning and Zoning Officer. Some expanded authority, however, may be needed to implement the specific elements of the Plan, as described below.

### ***Additional Design Review***

This Plan establishes new design guidelines that conform to its goals and vision (see Appendix for recommended modifications to *Exhibit E. Design Objectives of the Glen Burnie Urban Renewal Plan*). The Town Center Committee should be given “design review” of all projects (new construction or significant renovation) within the TCEA to ensure the architectural compatibility of the proposed projects with the goals of the Plan and that the public projects do not conflict with the architectural standards for private property.

### ***Glen Burnie Enhancement Area Foundation***

An additional approach might be to empower one of Glen Burnie’s existing Town Center organizations (e.g., the Friends of the Central Plaza, the Glen Burnie Improvement Association, or the Chamber of Commerce) to enable them to accept charitable donations in order to provide the resources for improvements to the public resources and spaces, including but not limited to

items such as benches, street trees, street lights, signs, paving of sidewalks and a variety of improvements to the parks and open spaces. A campaign could be mounted by such a Foundation to ask private donors/businesses to “adopt” a bus stop, or a street corner, or the like. The private donor could pay for the improvement, receive a public acknowledgement (plaque, sign, etc.) and receive a tax deduction from its income taxes. This would be a vehicle that could channel philanthropic resources to the Town Center with no cost implications to the County or Glen Burnie. Such a foundation would also be eligible to receive grants from large philanthropic foundations such as the Ford Foundation and the Fannie Mae Foundation which have particular interests in community redevelopment.

### ***Zoning Amendments: Article 28***

There are a number of core amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance that could be made to help implement the Plan. First, the Town Center Zone will need to be expanded to include the parcels indicated earlier in this chapter. This may be implemented through the County’s comprehensive zoning process. Second, revisions to the County Zoning Code (Article 28) are recommended as listed below. Specifically, Title 6, Subtitle 3 (TC Districts) should be revised to allow more flexibility in site requirements and to incorporate some of the “new urbanism” design criteria that have been included in the County’s recently adopted Small Business District and Mixed Use Development District zones. However, since Town Center Zoning is not restricted to Glen Burnie but is in place elsewhere in the County, it may be necessary to revise the Code so that these design criteria will be specifically tailored to, and applied to, the Glen Burnie Town Center Enhancement Area. This may best be accomplished by amending Article 28 to include a Title 1D: Glen Burnie Town Center Enhancement Area, similar to those code sections for the Parole and Odenton Town Center Growth Management Areas. This would allow the development requirements suggested in this Plan to be adopted specifically for application within the Glen Burnie Town Center Enhancement Area, such as:

- more flexibility with regard to minimum lot width (§6-306);
- a “build-to” line;
- allowing adjacent parcels to “share” open space to encourage larger, more usable areas;
- a requirement of a certain amount of green space in all parking lots (§6-309);
- a requirement for ground floor, pedestrian user-friendly retail;
- the provision of a more flexible system of set-backs (§6-310);
- density incentives for preferred uses (in addition to the current open space incentives) (§6-311);
- broader discretion for the Planning and Zoning Officer to reduce parking requirements (§7-103(c));

- flexibility to allow the Office of Planning and Zoning to reduce loading requirements (§7-103(b));
- the minimization of curb cuts;
- a requirement that accessory parking be located only in those areas recommended in the Plan;
- stronger design control of signs;
- broader discretion in the consolidation of parking requirements between different parcels (§7-103(d));
- environmental protection (see §1C-106);
- allowing multiple structures on the same parcel with less separation than currently permitted (§6-310);
- traffic circulation and roadway standards (see §1C-105);
- additional open space;
- incentives as to density, height, yards for furthering a Plan, goal or objective (see §1B-104);
- incorporation of some provision of the SB – Small Business District Zone, i.e. conversion of residential to commercial on the ground floor of residential buildings (in certain areas), a prohibition on outside storage; and
- incorporation of some of the incentives/restrictions in the Mixed Use Development (M&D) Districts such as the optional method of development, design performance standards and development flexibility for use in the new Town Center Zone.

For example, where a commercial property abuts a residential property, it might be prudent to have an open space buffer between the uses (as recommended in the urban design guidelines above), whereas there might be no requirement for a side yard or a rear yard between commercial properties. Such an ordinance could encourage a reduction in parking since one of the goals of the center Plan is to encourage pedestrian traffic. Currently the Planning and Zoning Officer has limited discretion to allow parking reductions and consolidations. The revised code could grant the Planning and Zoning Officer similar discretion with regard to loading requirements. The Town Center Enhancement Area could allow greater opportunity for the various uses on different lots to combine their respective parking requirements (across lot lines) so that the a parking requirement can be absorbed on a nearby lot without creating excessive amounts of driveways, curb cuts and pavement.

In addition, zoning incentives could be provided to encourage certain uses by granting density bonuses for these, much as there are currently density bonuses for open space. A property owner could achieve a higher density on his/her property by providing a “preferred use” or a public improvement (enhanced streetscape, public art, etc.) or a street level “active” use. Similarly, parking requirements could be reduced and/or consolidated among the different properties so as to reduce the cost of the provision of the parking and the land utilized for such.

## **Economic Development Recommendations**

Based on the economic issues and opportunities identified earlier, the economic development recommendations for the Glen Burnie Town Center are as follows.

### ***Marketing and Promotion***

The establishment of a management entity, such as a Business Improvement District (BID), for the Glen Burnie Town Center is key. BIDs are special taxing districts implemented to generate revenue for improvements within a designated, defined geographic district. Funds generated are used for services such as business retention and recruitment, professional management, marketing, improved maintenance, enhanced safety and physical improvements to the district.

BIDs have been successfully established throughout the country in large and small towns and in neighborhood commercial areas. In many cases BIDs have helped to enhance the vitality of these defined districts. They allow local businesses to control, and ensure, a coordinated approach to physical improvements of public spaces; provide joint, coordinated marketing for an area; and place the BID area on the public’s “radar screen” as a place with opportunities for shopping, living, and locating a business. Typical BID legislation allows for an additional tax of a few cents per dollar to the tax base of the commercial properties in the defined area. These additional revenues are earmarked for the BID and controlled by its Board of Directors who can spend them on a variety of capital projects or special needs and events to further the BID’s mission. The levels of assessment and core missions of BID’s vary greatly—the mission of a given BID can focus on just one or two of the services noted above. BID’s are typically self-imposed organizations, usually requiring participation agreement from a majority of property owners and tenants.

Establishment of a BID in Glen Burnie is the most critical initiative to be undertaken. With a management entity in place, the recommendations listed below can be carried forward. Initially, this may require volunteer efforts from the Chamber of Commerce and/or individual merchants. Ideally, within three years, through small assessments to property owners with County support, paid staffing should be in place for this management entity. The specific recommendations are:

- Build upon existing promotion efforts—banners, decorations, etc. This will help to reinforce a positive visual identity. (Many communities use logos, repetitive placement of particular colors, designs to “imprint” identity.) Visual identities send the message that the community is a distinct, organized and desirable place to be.

- Work with Community College to determine appropriate vehicles to encourage students to patronize businesses (e.g., coupon books, small student discounts, special promotions at particular times or seasons, etc.). Implement measures on a trial basis, and then test these to demonstrate to both the college and local merchants the effectiveness of these efforts. (For example, in order to use coupons and discounts, students could be asked to fill out five line survey on what they would patronize and what they would buy or use, if services, if available in the Town Center.).
- Promote special events at retail establishments in area built around use of the ice rink and evening concerts on the plaza. Develop posters, flyers and joint promotions (such as discounts, small free items to ice rink/concert patrons). Use of the same design and color identifiers established in banners also serves to reinforce a positive message about Glen Burnie as a successful Town Center.
- Achieve 100 percent merchant participation in special events and evening plaza activities through the implementation of extended hours of operation. If businesses are open predictably and reliably during evening plaza use and other special events (such as the Carnival), the appeal of these activities will be enhanced. Moreover, the ability to keep patrons of such events in the area minutes or hours longer will translate to more dollars spent per patron in the Town Center. Implementation of the promotions and the extended hours together will greatly improve the chances of success for both measures.
- Coordinate with the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation on a regular basis to identify upscale businesses that would attract customers from a wider geographic area than the Glen Burnie area alone.

### *Development*

- Seek funding from Community Legacy program for physical elements detailed in this plan. Community Legacy funding can be used for capital and non-capital projects such as streetscape improvements (sidewalks, lighting, benches, etc.), establishment of special loan funds (e.g., façade improvements fund, upstairs use programs, etc.) and partial use of community use structures (e.g., recreation centers).
- Implement, as part of Community Legacy program, a façade improvement program (with financial assistance through available business development loan programs) in the Town Center area.
- Ensure that property owners within the TCEA are aware of the provisions under the recently passed Bill No. 97-01 (Finance and Taxation – Community Revitalization). This legislation provides property tax credits for up to five years for commercial and industrial properties in designated revitalization areas, including the areas with the purview of the TCEA Plan.

- Work with local commercial brokers and the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation to compile and continually update listings of available office space in Glen Burnie area (Town Center and beyond). Office/daytime use expansion in the area is positive for Town Center businesses.
- Work with Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation to compile information on large retail vacancies/sites in the area that can potentially be adapted for other uses.
- Explore opportunities (in the medium-term) to do in-fill housing in the Town Center area including townhomes, condominiums and upscale apartments (at a level of quality at or above Glen Burnie Town Apartments). Given current conditions, in the next five years, it is estimated that 100 townhomes or condominiums could be absorbed into the market as well as an additional 80-100 high-quality, market rate apartment units.
- Prioritize the re-use of the movie theater space. Possibilities include community college space, community meeting/conference facilities, senior center uses, health facility uses, etc.
- Encourage the rehabilitation/updating of existing office buildings to accommodate new demand from North Arundel Hospital and small flex users. This includes improving/expediting the permitting process for priority areas, such as Glen Burnie.
- In general, various governmental approvals such as building permits, certificates of use and other licenses for projects that comply with the Plan's goals and include certain benefits called for in the Plan, could be "fast tracked" through the permit/licensing systems in order that, under the theory that time is money, they can be effectuated much more quickly by the property owners and/or business. Building permit and license fees could also be reduced or waived for uses that are preferred or encouraged.
- Assuming that a portion of existing spaces will be upgraded to improve their marketability, it is estimated that an additional 50,000 square feet of office space could be absorbed into the vicinity of Glen Burnie Town Center in the next five years. The Concept Plan has identified several potential locations for such space, including the former "waterbed site."

### ***Parking and Access***

- As noted in the plan, restoration of more convenient pedestrian access across Baltimore-Annapolis Boulevard from parking facility to Town Center will encourage greater use of the public garage as well as a better flow of traffic to the shops adjacent to the Town Center plaza.
- Support the County's efforts, already in place, to establish time limits for prime parking spaces through strict enforcement of this policy. Better enforcement will allow for quicker turnover of parking, thereby increasing availability for "pull in/pull-out" users.

This type of parking amenity is critical to encouraging use of the retail facilities in the Town Center area.

## **Next Steps**

The Plan for the Glen Burnie Town Center Enhancement Area will not be accomplished in the next few years --- it is a more gradual strategy that relies on the short-term development of the infrastructure needed to achieve the longer-term area-wide vision. Therefore, in the first five years following the adoption of this Plan, the following actions should be taken:

- Revise the underlying land use and zoning designations for the area, through the Small Area Planning process, to allow for the changes recommended in the TCEA Plan.
- Work with the Town Center Committee to clarify roles and responsibilities under the expanded regulations, and ensure that this group has a clear understanding of the Plan and its accompanying guidelines.
- Develop more detailed designs for the two “loop” circulation systems (i.e., the Park Loop and the Downtown Pedestrian Loop). Work with SHA and the County to begin implementation of these designs.
- Work with SHA on implementation of the streetscape improvement plans for the Town Center “core” area, the outer “Main Streets” and the Ritchie Highway “Boulevard.”
- Work with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Division of Neighborhood Revitalization on expanding the boundaries of the Glen Burnie Designated Neighborhood to include the newly defined TCEA.
- Establish the Business Improvement District within the Town Center Enhancement Area.
- Seek the assistance of the Anne Arundel County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) in identifying potential tenants for the former “waterbed” site. In addition, the EDC might assist private property owners within the TCEA to market potential development opportunities in this area.
- Provide educational opportunities (e.g., training sessions, written materials, web-based information) for property owners within the TCEA to learn about programs available for property improvement. These include:
  - Business development loan programs that may be available, dependent upon funding, through the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development or the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development.
  - The Finance and Taxation – Community Revitalization Bill (No. 97-01) which provides property tax credits for up to five years for commercially or industrially zoned properties in designated revitalization areas, including those areas within the TCEA.

- The Zoning – Commercial Revitalization Bill (No. 69-02) that provides for conditional uses in C-3 and C-4 districts known as “commercial revitalization areas,” (including those areas within the TCEA) and establishes performance standards and a site plan review process for development in these areas.

The Town Center Enhancement Plan provides a long-term approach to enhancing the overall image and economic viability of the Glen Burnie Town Center. It offers a vision of the Town Center that builds upon existing efforts to create a strong, coherent and accessible community “place” and to provide a successful regional destination. Moreover, it defines a blueprint for helping Glen Burnie realize its potential as a thriving, multi-faceted community of significance in Anne Arundel County.