Odenton-Severn
Sustainable Community Action Plan

Application Submitted to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

June 2014
This Action Plan is a requirement of a Sustainable Communities Application submitted to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development for the purpose of receiving designation of the Odenton-Severn community as a Sustainable Community. This new designation will identify Odenton-Severn as a community eligible for a variety of State revitalization resources. Sustainable Communities will be targeted or given enhanced consideration for assistance through the following State programs: Community Legacy Program; Neighborhood BusinessWorks Program; Maryland Sustainable Communities Tax Credit Program; Job Creation Tax Credit Program; Sidewalk Retrofit Program; and MDOT Transportation Investments.

The shared mission of these programs and initiatives is reinvestment and revitalization of existing communities while protecting environmental resources and promoting growth of a vibrant economy and job base. This Action Plan will serve to further that mission.

A. Supporting existing communities and reducing environmental impacts

1) Approach to Smart Growth to encourage reinvestment and growth in existing communities

The Odenton-Severn Sustainable Community or portions thereof has received several official designations allowing eligibility for assistance under various Federal, State and County programs related to economic development and Smart Growth initiatives. These include:

- a targeted Neighborhood Revitalization Area in the County’s Consolidated Plan prepared for the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development;
- a State Priority Funding Area (MDP);
- a State Designated Neighborhood and Community Legacy Area (DHCD);
- a County Commercial Revitalization District; and
- a State Designated BRAC Zone.

Federal, State and County governments have already made significant investments in the area including public improvements, housing rehabilitation, and commercial revitalization. Significant private and public funding has contributed to new development as well as redevelopment in the Odenton Town Center. Recent private investments have been made to rehabilitate some older retail properties and businesses, with some funding assistance from the County. A new regional transit agency has been formed to provide bus transit services within the BRAC-impact area. More details on recent State and local investments in the area and their outcomes may be found in Section II – Baseline Information.

The Odenton-Severn area already meets many of the State’s Smart Growth goals. It contains a planned pedestrian-oriented activity hub currently in development in the Odenton Town Center, a mix of land uses which provide a variety of housing opportunities and choices, and a good network of community facilities. It is served by both bus transit and rail transit options. Strong community and stakeholder collaboration already exists as well as strong partnerships with non-profit organizations.
The County’s approach to Smart Growth in this community is to continue to encourage new investment and reinvestment in the community using all available resources including public-private partnerships; CDBG and other HUD funds; State funds through Neighborhood Business Works, Community Legacy, and similar programs; and continued participation in the Commercial Revitalization Tax Credit and Arundel Community Reinvestment programs administered by the County.

Use of these resources will focus on:

● creating new housing and mixed use opportunities using infill opportunities and redevelopment in strategic locations;
● focused business attraction efforts in the Odenton Town Center and Commercial Revitalization District;
● promoting revitalization in the commercial corridor along MD 175;
● promoting retention and expansion of existing businesses through financial assistance and other incentives;
● increasing the use of public transit in the area;
● continued rehabilitation of existing residential properties;
● increasing the supply of quality workforce housing; and
● funding capital projects to provide stormwater management retrofits.

2) Major investments in community infrastructure needed to improve readiness or competitiveness of the area for private investment and compliance with TMDL regulations

Much of the infrastructure needed to support investment in the Odenton-Severn Sustainable Community area exists with sufficient capacity. This includes a good road network connecting the community to major area and regional hubs, public transportation, public schools, a library, senior center, and public water and sewer service. Recently executed developer agreements have allowed for needed water, sewer and road infrastructure to be completed in the Odenton Town Center. The County and the SHA, with the assistance of a Main Street Design Grant, improved the intersection at MD 175 and Sappington Station Road by constructing a traffic circle along with decorative sidewalks and a landscaped, walled center garden area with OTC gateway signage.

The primary investments in infrastructure that are still needed to meet development and revitalization goals are:

● completion of design and construction of highway improvements along MD 175 from MD 32 to Sappington Station Circle including pedestrian and lighting improvements.
● development and financial strategies to allow redevelopment the Odenton MARC Station TOD-TP3 site as a new TOD project incorporating parking structures, mixed use development, and public space. This requires approval of a final Master Development Agreement between MDOT, the County, and the private developer consortium working in partnership.
● completion of the Odenton Town Center Core Grid Streets program. Funding has been requested in the County’s FY15 Capital Program for acquisition, engineering design and construction of this road network within the OTC Core. Some roads sections exist but are not
improved to meet the OTC Master Plan standards, and other road sections are not currently in place.

- planning and construction of a central public common within the Odenton Town Center.
- pedestrian amenities to improve community connections, such as crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, and continuous sidewalks between area neighborhoods and key community facilities and shopping areas.
- redevelopment or revitalization such as building façade enhancements in some older retail sites and shopping centers to improve their appearance and enhance economic vitality.
- stormwater management retrofits and/or stream restoration projects to reduce pollutant loads to the Severn River watershed.

Both public and private initiatives will be required as well as partnerships. Some improvements such as sidewalks, street lighting and pedestrian amenities can be accomplished using SHA programs such as the Community Safety and Enhancement projects, and the County will continue to seek funding assistance through such programs. Improvements such as enhancing building facades, and retrofitting stormwater management facilities are often implemented during private redevelopment of a site, but can be leveraged with public incentives, tax credits, loan programs, grant funds, and capital programs. Some improvements will be regulatory requirements, such as compliance with the County’s latest SWM regulations adopted in 2010 for all redevelopment sites.

The County will strongly promote and market its incentive and loan programs which, in combination with State incentive and revitalization programs, will provide future opportunities to redevelop and revitalize the area.

3) Policies, initiatives, or projects that the community will undertake or expand in order to reduce impacts on the environment

The primary initiatives and projects that will help to reduce environmental impacts in the Odenton-Severn area are related to watershed restoration and stormwater management (SWM) improvements to reduce pollutant loads to local waterways.

As described in Section II- Baseline Information, the County updated its stormwater management program in 2010 to comply with new State requirements. Adopted policies and code provisions focus on Best Management Practices, cluster development, environmental site design, reductions in impervious areas, and incentives for redevelopment. Collectively these provisions will reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff, soil erosion and sedimentation, flooding, and pollutant transport.

In its FY14 Capital Budget and Program, the County established a new capital projects Class B (WPRP), with funding supported by the Stormwater Remediation Fee and new Watershed Protection and Restoration Fund adopted in 2013. Within the Odenton-Severn community, the County has proposed several capital improvement projects over the six year program. These projects will implement water quality enhancements to eroded outfalls using step pool conveyance systems, stream restorations using in-stream weirs and seepage wetland creation, and stormwater pond retrofits (dry pond conversions to wetlands or wet ponds) to realize water
quality benefits from nutrient and sediment load reductions. The projects were identified from information collected during the Severn River watershed assessment in order to achieve compliance with the Chesapeake Bay TMDL requirements and the County’s NPDES MS4 requirements. If all projects funded during the six-year capital program are implemented, the County will accomplish approximately 29 outfall restorations, 7 stormwater management pond retrofits, and 14,800 linear feet of stream restoration.

Other County programs to reduce environmental impacts through recycling, energy conservation, and renewable energy are discussed in Section II- Baseline Information. These initiatives may lead to future implementation projects specific to the Odenton-Severn area. For example, as part of both the Property Rehabilitation and Acquisition and Rehabilitation Programs, residential homes will be eligible for energy retrofits which will, in addition to decreasing utility costs, have a positive affect on the overall environment.

B. Valuing Communities and neighborhoods – building on assets and building in amenities

1) Key assets on which the Action Plan will build

The Odenton area is well served with public infrastructure and community amenities. It has the advantage of being a community where many residents can walk to public transportation, community facilities, and local services. More detail about major community assets may be found in Section II- Baseline Information.

The key assets of the community that the action plan will build upon include:

- the strategic location within the Baltimore-Washington metro area and close proximity to Fort Meade, NSA, BWI Airport, National Business Park, Arundel Mills and surrounding employment opportunities;
- access to public transportation via the MARC Commuter Rail and regional bus transit service, which are within walking distance for many area residents;
- a variety of commercial retail and service uses that provide the surrounding neighborhoods with a range of goods and services;
- overall good retail market conditions given the density of residential development and the significant middle income population;
- a Town Center that will combine residential, retail and office uses to create an urban core for the area;
- a variety of housing types and an affordable housing stock;
- multiple community facilities including a regional library, senior center, local schools, and hiker-biker trails;
- a historic district that provides a strong sense of place among local residents; and
- a local community with an affirmed interest in improving and revitalizing the area.

2) Policies, initiatives or projects that reuse or enhance the historical assets, traditional business districts and cultural resources (sense of place and character) of the community
The railroad has played a significant role in the growth and development of this area, a role that continues today. The first rail station was established in Odenton along the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad line in the 1860s, providing rail service between Baltimore and Washington. The town of Odenton continued to grow into the 20th century, aided in large part by the establishment of Fort George G. Meade in 1917 just west of Odenton. Due to the town’s expansion, diverse infrastructure began appearing and a village-like community formed around the rail station.

The community retains many historic buildings and landmarks recalling the community’s past links to its transportation and farming roots. That original community is today designated as the Odenton Historic District. It surrounds the Odenton MARC Station and includes several historic structures listed on the MD Inventory of Historic Places as well as a larger number of structures deemed as “contributing resources” under County historic preservation guidelines. Odenton’s historic structures reflect the influence of the late 19th century and early 20th century architecture, including the Queen Anne, and the American Four Square, Bungalow, and other Vernacular styles. The Odenton Heritage Society is very active in supporting preservation efforts in the community.

The Odenton Town Center Master Plan provides design and historic preservation standards to help ensure that any new development will complement the traditional architecture and street character and that a strong sense of place will be retained. During the 2014 OTC Master Plan update, the County is targeting some of its outreach efforts to the stakeholders within the Historic District. This will determine whether development controls and preservation guidelines and standards need to be strengthened or otherwise revised to accomplish the community’s preservation goals. The County is planning to incorporate in the Master Plan specific architectural design standards to better protect and enhance the district.

In addition, designation of this area as a Sustainable Community will provide leverage for the County to encourage property owners in the historic district to take advantage of the MD Sustainable Community Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program, in order to provide needed home renovations while maintaining the significant historic features and character of the community.

3) Policies, initiatives or projects that will increase community access to green spaces, parks and other amenities

There currently are not a large number of parks and green spaces within the Sustainable Community boundary, with the exception of local elementary school recreation areas and the Meade Village Park. Based on the limited inventory of undeveloped properties, opportunities for planning or acquisition of additional passive park areas are limited. However, there are some significant park areas of both passive and active uses in close proximity to the area, including the Severn Run Natural Area, Odenton Natural Area, the Horizon Organic Dairy Farm Park and Education Center, Severn-Danza Park, and Provinces Park. Future plans funded for the Dairy Farm Park include paved pathways, community garden plots, a kitchen garden, berry garden, composting exhibit, and educational story boards on topics such as bio-retention, composting, and reforestation. The County is also currently conducting a property search for a suitable
location to plan a West County Athletic Complex and indoor sports facility, which could also serve the Odenton-Severn area.

New development and redevelopment projects within the Odenton Town Center will provide opportunities for additional green space and open areas. The OTC Master Plan requires new development projects to include both public activity areas and open space areas. These requirements are often met by the provision of smaller-scale amenities such as pocket parks, playgrounds, or picnic areas, but collectively they will provide a range of amenities within the OTC community. As part of the 2014 update to the Master Plan, an inventory and gap analysis of public amenities planned or provided is being prepared in order to identify additional needs. The County will then pursue agreements with private developers in the OTC to provide needed amenities to fill the gaps.

The establishment of a public common or gathering place centrally located in the OTC, near the MARC Station and the OTC Core Subarea, would be a significant enhancement to the greater community. This could be in the form of a public plaza or park, with green spaces, trees and landscaping, benches and picnic areas, fountains, or other features. Ideas for community use could include a seasonal farmer’s market, arts and crafts festivals, summer concerts, performances, picnics, or other special events. The County is considering potential locations and planning concepts for a public common during the 2014 update to the Master Plan. Partnerships with private developers to plan and fund this feature are being explored, including the potential for including such a feature in the redevelopment plans for the State and County owned MARC parking lots.

In addition, two hiker-biker trails serving the area are in various stages of planning or construction. The South Shore Trail will run along the abandoned WB&A rail line between Annapolis and Odenton. When completed, the trail will be a component of the East Coast Greenway and the American Discovery Trail. The WB&A Trail, sections of which are completed and operational, will extend along the WB&A rail line south of Odenton and will link the South Shore Trail with the Patuxent River and an existing rail trail in Prince George’s County. The total cost of both these projects is estimated at nearly $18 million, with over $8 million approved in the County’s Capital Program to date.

C. Enhancing Economic Competitiveness

1) Economic development and business initiatives and incentives to invest in small businesses and key economic sectors

One of the County’s ongoing policies is to maintain a favorable climate to attract and retain diverse businesses and industries, to support sustained job and income growth, and to maintain a strong tax base.

The County has identified a select set of industry targets toward which its marketing efforts will be concentrated. These targets were selected based on their compatibility with County attributes, their potential for retaining, expanding and attracting new operations, and the outlook for the
industry. These industry targets, all in close proximity to the Odenton-Severn Sustainable Community, include aerospace and defense, science and technology, professional and technical services, health care, manufacturing, and construction.

The Action Plan will seek to improve economic competitiveness in Odenton and Severn by:

● actively promoting retention and expansion of existing businesses through financial assistance, employee training and other incentives.
● focusing economic development and business attraction efforts in the Odenton Town Center and in the MD 175 Commercial Revitalization District.

The principal financial assistance programs that will be used to offer incentives to businesses include:

● Arundel Business Loan Fund -- offers SBA-guaranteed loans up to $300,000;
● Arundel Community Reinvestment Fund – offers zero interest loans up to $50,000 and other services for businesses.
● Commercial Revitalization Tax Credit Program – provides a property tax credit for the increased assessment value for improvements of $100,000 or more to businesses in a revitalization district. This tax credit can be very beneficial for redevelopment projects along the MD 175 commercial revitalization district in Odenton, resulting in substantial savings in property taxes. The planned Meade Center retail and office project is one example.

In addition, AAEDC will assist new and expanding businesses in the Odenton area in applying for other financial assistance offered through the State DHCD and DBED programs, such as the Neighborhood Business Works program that provides gap financing to small businesses, or the State Small Business Credit Initiative.

Several County initiatives are planned or in progress to promote business development in the Odenton area:

● the Chesapeake Innovation Center (CIC), the County’s tech incubator, is moving to Odenton in mid-June. The location was selected to be adjacent to Fort Meade and to invest and create energy in the Odenton Town Center. AAEDC is partnering with the building’s landlord to build a training room that will be available for public and private sector rental. Anne Arundel Community College has shown a strong interest in utilizing the space to bring some of their classes and training to Odenton.
● AAEDC is also partnering with the landlord to build executive office suite space in the building, which is lacking in West County. Part of the reason for this strategy is to bring more synergy to the Seven Oaks office building in the OTC which has been vacant since it was completed nearly three years ago. Interest in leasing in the building has grown tremendously since the CIC announced they are moving to Odenton.
● Redevelopment of the Odenton MARC Station parking lots is aimed at enhancing economic competitiveness in Odenton. With major retail concentrations already located nearby, Odenton is striving to carve out a niche of small and unique businesses and restaurants. The Odenton MARC station development would bring additional residential density and quality retail space that would increase the chances of attracting such uses.
● The County has recently hired a consultant to evaluate parking garage options on County owned land around the MARC Station.
● The County is currently evaluating the use of a Tax Increment Financing district to leverage more private sector investment in Odenton.

2) Workforce development policies and initiatives to increase access to jobs and economic opportunity

Although total employment is projected to increase countywide over the upcoming years, many lower income persons cannot easily gain employment because they lack the appropriate training or employment readiness skills. Furthermore, while low wage employment is the first step into the workforce for many, it seldom pays enough to fully lift a family into economic independence. Recognizing this difficulty, the County will continue to support employment readiness and training programs.

There are a variety of agencies in the County whose mission is to develop job ready candidates who possess the basic knowledge, technical skills and behavioral attributes needed to gain meaningful employment in Anne Arundel County. These agencies offer a variety of programs designed to meet the needs of low income, unemployed and underemployed residents, as well as the population in general.

Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC) partners with the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation to offer a variety of programs to meet the workforce needs of County businesses. These include:
● Recruitment services – including employer recruitment events, applicant prescreening, pre-employment skills assessment, and applicant searches in Maryland Workforce Exchange.
● Job Fairs – AAWDC hosts several job fairs each year, often in partnership with entities such as Fort Meade and Anne Arundel Community College. In addition, AAWDC facilitates job fairs in each of the county’s public high schools in the spring to connect businesses and summer job seekers. AAWDC also provides custom job fairs for businesses.
● Training – AAWDC works with partner agencies to identify other training solutions for businesses and employers. Funds for worker training may be available, with recent focus on training in cybersecurity and green building techniques.

Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC) also works in partnership with AAWDC and Anne Arundel Community College’s Center for Workforce Solutions to provide a link between workforce development and economic development. AAEDC manages a Business Outreach Program through which it works with County employers to identify workforce needs and issues. AAWDC conducts recruitment fairs and job placement services to assist in industry-specific recruitment needs. In addition, AAEDC’s Workforce Training Partnership provides grants to eligible companies for technical training and skills development with assistance from the Center for Workforce Solutions.

Arundel Community Development Services (ACDS) provides CDBG funds to support public services designed to develop job ready candidates who possess the basic knowledge, technical skills and behavioral attributes needed to gain meaningful employment in the County; as well as provide them with the social support needed for successfully maintaining employment. Services include programs such as education and job training, behavioral skills training, English as a
Second Language courses, job placement assistance to unemployed and underemployed low income residents, as well as related services including affordable child care and transportation.

Over the next five years, the County will set a goal of providing training or employment related services to 500 unemployed and underemployed low income residents. The County anticipates using its limited Federal CDBG public service dollars to leverage other Federal, County, State and private dollars available for such programs. Special efforts will be made to target the Odenton-Severn Sustainable Community.

3) How proposed initiatives will address BRAC related growth

The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) brought many new positions to Fort George G. Meade military base in Anne Arundel County. This relocation effort has brought both additional jobs and households to the County as well as to the region in general. To address this BRAC-related growth, the Action Plan recommends:

● workforce preparation and occupational training, and
● establishing Odenton-Severn as a workforce housing initiative target area.

Fort Meade has been the site of relocation and consolidation of several Department of Defense organizations. The Federal Application and Security Clearance Training process was completed in 2011 and resulted in thousands of direct jobs being moved to the Fort Meade base. Job growth surrounding Fort Meade is continuing through supporting positions with the federal government and positions from new and expanding defense contractors.

A large portion of the Odenton Town Center was designated by the MD DBED as a BRAC Zone in 2009. The anticipated economic growth from BRAC translates into employment opportunities for local residents, especially if appropriate workforce development programs assist in linking residents to jobs. Because of BRAC, the area is viewed as a priority area for certain local, State and federal initiatives.

With a grant from the US Dept. of Labor, Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation is assisting dislocated workers, veterans and transitioning military personnel in the County with workforce preparation training. Through use of workshops, employer panels, and information seminars, AAWDC can assist participants seeking BRAC-related occupations with Federal and security clearance applications, short term job training or on-the-job training to prepare them for BRAC-related jobs.

The BRAC Housing Study documents the need for BRAC-related workforce housing. The study predicted that the segment of workers earning between $45,000 and $70,000 per year will have difficulty finding suitable housing near Fort Meade. With rental prices for new apartments in the Odenton Town Center starting around $1400 per month and new townhome sales starting around $225,000-275,000 much of the newer housing options in the area are not obtainable for workforce families.
Existing and new financial incentives for developers to construct workforce housing will need to be targeted toward expanding the workforce housing stock in the Odenton area. As one successful example, HOME funds in the amount of $463,000 will be appropriated to the Rental Housing Production Program which provides gap financing loans to developers for the acquisition, rehabilitation and/or new construction of rental housing for households earning at or below 60 percent of the area median income. During Local Fiscal Year 2015, these funds will be used, along with $349,353 in HOME funds allocated the previous year, to support the development of Berger Square. The project is located in the Odenton Town Center and will consist of 48 units of affordable rental housing serving low income families. The project developer recently secured a Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) allocation for the project, which is expected to break ground in 2015-16.

Arundel Community Development Services (ACDS) also administers an acquisition/rehabilitation program in the Reece Road and Pioneer Drive area that should continue and expand. Additional funding for this may be available through DHCD’s Neighborhood Conservation Initiative Program. ACDS’s efforts have improved several properties in some of the Severn neighborhoods but should be expanded to have more substantial impact.

D. Promoting equitable access to high quality affordable housing

1) Initiatives to expand housing choices and address current housing needs

Action Plan initiatives to expand housing choices and promote better access to high quality affordable housing include:

- develop new strategies to improve the area’s current stock of affordable rental and homeownership housing, especially in the aging communities of Stillmeadows, Pioneer Drive and Spring Meadows.
- create affordable multi-family rental opportunities through new construction in the Odenton Town Center area where low income residents will have access to jobs, better schools and transportation opportunities.

The County will continue to partner with Arundel Community Development Services, Inc. (ACDS), the Housing Commission of Anne Arundel County, and private developers to meet affordable housing needs in the area. Strategies may include acquisition/rehabilitation programs, homeowner rehabilitation programs, innovative homeownership programs, rental housing financing programs to create or preserve affordable rental housing, and the promotion and expansion of the Housing Choice Voucher Program and other rental assistance programs. ACDS will also continue to work with the community associations in the older neighborhoods within the Sustainable Community to provide technical assistance and build capacity of the community associations. ACDS will also continue to market its homeownership counseling, downpayment and closing cost assistance, and foreclosure prevention programs to neighborhoods within the Sustainable Community area.
The Stillmeadows, Pioneer Drive, and Spring Meadows communities contain a large number of townhomes which are aging and in need of extensive repairs. While there are several well maintained and uniformly managed affordable rental housing developments also located in the Pioneer Drive area, the majority of town homes are individually owned condominiums which do not fall under one ownership entity. Routine and uniform maintenance and upkeep has been lacking. The condominium associations continue to struggle to maintain condominium fee collections and repair for commonly owned elements, such as roof repair. Nevertheless, ACDS has been working with two associations in the area and they have made improvements in the last two years, including building reserve for replacement funds, improving condominium fee collections, paying off past debts and conducting a roof assessment and repair plan.

Surrounding this area are a variety of townhouses and single family homes which enjoy a high rate of homeownership and neighborhood stability. Furthermore, the nearby Odenton Town Center is growing with an increase in new, market rate apartments with retail services and access to transit and other transportation options. The quality of schools is also better compared to the older, targeted communities of Stillmeadows and Pioneer Drive. Because of its high score in areas of housing, income, and education, the Odenton Town Center area has been designated as a MD DHCD “Opportunity Area,” garnering it priority as part of DHCD’s rating and ranking process for the award of competitive State Rental Housing Production Program funds and federal Low Income Tax Credits (LIHTC). Recently, a nonprofit developer was successful in securing an allocation of LIHTCs for a 48 unit rental community that will provide affordable housing for low income families in Odenton, giving these families the chance to live in a high “opportunity area.” ACDS is working on behalf of the County to commit County HOME funds and secure a PILOT to support the project and will continue to support similar affordable housing development in the area. Finally, the County is exploring ways it can ensure affordable housing is developed in conjunction with upcoming transit oriented development in the area.

2) How will housing initiatives increase access to transit or community walkability

Many Odenton-Severn neighborhoods have good access to public transit and walkability to the Odenton Town Center, library and schools, and shopping centers. MARC Commuter Rail and Connect-A-Ride bus services through the area provide access to employment centers in Baltimore and Washington and links to MTA Light Rail, BWI Airport, and Arundel Mills.

Several initiatives will provide more opportunities for residents to utilize public transit and pedestrian amenities in the Odenton-Severn area.

● The OTC Master Plan promotes a significant amount of new multifamily residential development, much of which is and will be within walking distance of the MARC station and/or bus transit routes.
● The OTC Master Plan also includes road and streetscape design standards that incorporate right-of-way provisions for sidewalks on all roads and for bike lanes on some roads. As the OTC continues to build out, the pedestrian connectivity will continue to improve.
● Future redevelopment of the MARC Station TOD site may include a mixed use concept that could incorporate townhome or multifamily units including some workforce housing units adjacent to the MARC Station.
Preserving and revitalizing the existing affordable housing stock in the Pioneer Drive and Reece Road area will ensure that households of modest means, which tend to lack private transportation options, have access to the area’s public transit alternatives.

Additionally, the County’s Office of Planning and Zoning is in the process of preparing a Transportation Functional Master Plan (TFMP) to assist in identifying corridor enhancements and improved transit opportunities for the County including the Odenton-Severn area.

3) Local goal for number of units to be created of affordable workforce housing

Over the next five years, the County will work with Arundel Community Development Services to develop 48 units of affordable housing in the “Opportunity Area” of Odenton Town Center that will be available to low income families. The County will continue to identify and facilitate the development of affordable units in this high growth area. At the same time, ACDS will continue its work to stabilize the older areas of the Sustainable Community through technical assistance to community groups and the marketing of homeownership programs.

To date, utilizing a combination of County funds, CDBG dollars, and State NCI and Community Legacy funds, ACDS has acquired and rehabilitated 17 townhomes in the Stillmeadows and Spring Meadows communities. Of those units, nine are currently being rented to low and moderate income households. ACDS will continue to manage and maintain these high quality rental units and monitor the market to determine whether future acquisitions are beneficial.

In addition, ACDS has utilized federal CDBG and HOME funds, leveraged with funds from the MD Dept. of Housing and Community Development’s Special Loans Program, to provide financial assistance for home renovations to 37 households in the Stillmeadows and Spring Meadows communities. ACDS will continue to offer incentives that will encourage homeowners to invest in their community by upgrading and modernizing their homes. ACDS will also continue to market its Homeownership Counseling and Foreclosure Prevention Programs to residents in the Severn area.

E. Support transportation efficiency and access

1) Strategies to strengthen the transportation network, provide transportation choices and promote efficiency

The County’s transportation planning approach focuses on seven key elements:

- Maintenance of the existing transportation facilities inventory to protect public investment in facilities and to support redevelopment and revitalization of the County’s neighborhoods and commercial areas;
- Expansion of the transportation facilities inventory to meet the increasing travel demand;
- Emphasis on improving safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists;
- Provision of alternative means of mobility through increased transit service;
- Implementation of travel demand management strategies;
● Inclusion of emergency management principles in transportation plans; and
● Expansion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Action Plan recommendations to enhance transportation efficiency include:

● In the Transit Development Plan required by MTA for transit funding, identify areas currently underserved and recommend priorities to deliver transit service.
● Combine management of the fixed route County-operated services with the demand-response and specialized transit operated by the Department of Aging and Disabilities. This action will improve the coordination of services and reduce duplication of effort.
● Tailor transit services to the areas they serve and augment the services provided by MTA with circular routes connecting neighborhoods with desired employment, transit, and activity centers.
● Continue to promote rideshare, carpooling, and van pooling strategies to support transit use and offer options beyond the use of single occupant automobiles for mobility.
● Increase employer and resident awareness of rideshare programs, strategies, and opportunities.
● Require use of TDM strategies to reduce vehicle trips generated by new development as a condition of mitigation provided by new development projects to meet adequate public facilities requirements.

One initiative in progress is a partnership between Anne Arundel and Howard Counties to form a new Regional Transit Agency of Central Maryland (RTA). Prince George's County and the City of Laurel are also slated to participate in the newly created RTA which will ultimately combine the administrative and management activities previously performed by Central Maryland Regional Transit Corporation (CMRT) with the operational activities of First Transit/Elkridge (for the Connect-a-Ride and Howard Transit services). In addition to eliminating unnecessary redundancies and drastically improving communication and coordination, the creation of a single entity to manage and operate these services will reduce funding requirements by $1.3-$1.8 million per year.

A Memorandum of Understanding between Anne Arundel and Howard Counties has been entered into and becomes effective July 1, 2014. Service to public transit passengers should not be impacted. Over the next three years, the RTA will result in an overall savings of 10-15% (approximately $600,000) to Anne Arundel County.

In addition, the County’s Office of Planning and Zoning is currently preparing a Transportation Functional Master Plan which consists of several components:
● a Corridor Management Plan which identifies activity centers, corridor enhancements and improved transit opportunities for the area.
● a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan which identifies potential connections in the existing pedestrian and bicycle network that will create a more viable and competitive network, potentially reducing vehicle demand.
● a Complete Streets pilot study which will be used to establish County policies for future road building, retrofits, and improvements that look beyond moving traffic efficiently to accommodating pedestrians, bicycles, and transit in ways that meet the needs of adjacent communities and land uses.
The Action Plan will promote any additional recommendations that result from these planning studies. Implementation strategies will be developed for each and funding opportunities will be pursued.

2) Connection to transit centers and opportunities for Transit Oriented Development, and strategies to reduce reliance on automobiles

Many Odenton-Severn neighborhoods have good access to public transit and walkability to the Odenton Town Center, library and schools, and shopping centers. MARC Commuter Rail and Connect-A-Ride bus services through the area provide access to employment centers in Baltimore and Washington and links to MTA Light Rail, BWI Airport, and Arundel Mills.

The Odenton Town Center is the principal opportunity for new transit-oriented development as development controls in the OTC allow for mixed use development at a relatively high density at a location served by commuter rail and bus transit. Much of the new residential development recently completed (nearly 1,000 units over the past few years) or in the pipeline in the OTC is within walking distance of the MARC station and/or bus routes.

The OTC Master Plan also includes road and streetscape design standards that incorporate right-of-way provisions for sidewalks on all roads and for bike lanes on some roads. Many pedestrian amenities are in place although the pedestrian network does not have complete connectivity. As the OTC continues to build out, the pedestrian connectivity will continue to improve.

Future redevelopment of the MARC Station TOD site represents a key opportunity for the OTC. Redevelopment concepts to date include new parking structures to provide up to 4,900 garage parking spaces which would replace the existing 19 acres of surface parking lots containing 2,100 parking spaces. The redevelopment concepts also include townhomes, rental apartments, and neighborhood retail and restaurants. A Memorandum of Understanding has been executed between the County, MDOT, and a private developer consortium, and the partnership is working to devise a Final Master Development Agreement which would then be adopted by the County Council and the MD Board of Public Works. Financial commitments and market constraints continue to be the primary issues however the team continues to explore various financing strategies and incentives to facilitate the process and the outcome.

The SHA has planned road and streetscape improvements along MD 175 through the Odenton Town Center from MD 32 to Sappington Station Road. Preliminary engineering has been completed for the section from MD 170 to the Sappington Circle, but funding for all final design and construction has not been allocated to date. When completed, these improvements will include additional pedestrian amenities that will further improve connectivity within the OTC and around the MARC Station.

Completion of two regional hiker-biker trails in the area will provide additional connections to the OTC transit center. The South Shore Trail will run along the abandoned WB&A rail line between Annapolis and Odenton. When completed, the trail will be a component of the East Coast Greenway and the American Discovery Trail. The WB&A Trail, sections of which are completed and operational, will extend along the WB&A rail line south of Odenton and will link
the South Shore Trail with the Patuxent River and an existing rail trail in Prince George’s County. The total cost of both these projects is estimated at nearly $18 million, with over $8 million approved in the County’s Capital Program to date.

The planned Odenton Trail will connect the South Shore and WB&A Trails. This trail will be a combination of on-road and off-road segments and it will extend along the existing Town Center Boulevard and its planned extension. The trail is being partly funded by the County and partly by private developers through the site development process.

**F. Coordinating and Leveraging Policies and Investments**

1) **Coordinated policies and funding streams to remove barriers to investment**

The County Office of Planning and Zoning, ACDS, Inc., AAEDC, and AAWDC work as a team to promote the County’s sustainability goals. As a result, established policies are coordinated and build upon one another. Governing plans as adopted reflect these collective goals and policies.

Current barriers to investment in the Odenton-Severn community include constrained capital funds for infrastructure improvements, lack of pedestrian connections and streetscape improvements, disinvestment in older commercial corridors, a need for specialized job training, and a lack of quality affordable housing.

The Sustainable Community workgroup will bring to the table their respective areas of expertise to address these barriers. The Office of Planning and Zoning will continue to pursue developer agreements that contribute toward infrastructure and public amenity needs in the OTC. The Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC) will analyze the market and identify appropriate services and businesses that could provide employment for residents of the area. Once identified, the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC) will coordinate with AAEDC to provide appropriate training opportunities to meet the needs of area employers. The County and MDOT will work together to ensure that adequate public transportation exists and that planned road and streetscape improvements can be accomplished so that these newly trained workers will be able to access the jobs for which they have been trained. AAEDC will identify new users to occupy the vacant offices and storefronts which will also create new employment opportunities. Arundel Community Development Services, Inc. (ACDS) will continue to use available resources to create opportunities for new quality workforce housing and to rehabilitate existing affordable housing stock using available Federal, State and local funds.

2) **Is the Sustainable Community Plan consistent with other existing community or comprehensive plans?**

The Odenton-Severn Sustainable Community Action Plan is consistent with the vision, goals, and objectives established and adopted in all of the County’s principal planning documents. Some of these are listed below.
Goals from the Odenton Town Center Master Plan (2009):
- Create a compact mixed-use urban core that serves as a destination for shopping, employment, entertainment, education and other public services.
- Capitalize on access to regional public transit by creating development that promotes transit use by both residents and employees.
- Create a strong sense of place for the Odenton Town Center that draws upon Odenton’s heritage and its historic resources.
- Provide community spaces and ensure accessibility in the Town Center for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users.
- Expedite quality land uses to support expanded growth associated with Fort Meade.

Goals and Policies from the General Development Plan (2009):
- Encourage mixed-use development with jobs, housing, shopping, transportation and other services within walking distance.
- Promote retention and expansion of businesses through financial assistance, employee training, and other incentives.
- Focus economic development and business attraction efforts in Town Centers, Mixed Use Districts, Commercial Revitalization Districts, and areas with transit access.
- Enhance commercial hubs and corridors to create thriving and attractive centers that serve both local communities and regional needs.

Strategies from the Consolidated Plan (FY 2011-FY 2015):
- Expand programs to acquire and rehabilitate homes to improve and stabilize the housing stock and increase affordable housing options.
- Offer a variety of programs and incentives that will encourage homeowners to invest in their community by upgrading and modernizing their homes.
- Support programs and efforts which seek to improve quality of life for local residents, such as after school and child care programs, elderly services, health services, and job training opportunities.

Other policies and objectives cited in the Action Plan are derived from the Transit Development Plan (2010), the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (2013), the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (2013), and other local plans.

3) How the Action Plan will leverage more private sector investments

Existing incentive programs will collectively serve to leverage private sector investments in Odenton-Severn. These include the range of development incentives, tax credits, loan programs, grant funds, and capital programs discussed in the Action Plan. Some of these programs are already targeted toward this area through its designations as a BRAC Zone, a Commercial Revitalization District and a Neighborhood Revitalization Area.

For example, commercial property owners may be eligible for assistance to make improvements to their properties through the Commercial Revitalization Tax Credit Program, the Arundel Community Reinvestment Fund and other financial incentives.
By pursuing the range of business assistance programs available through the State DBED, private business investment can be further encouraged. The Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation will continue to focus on the Odenton Town Center to identify new businesses and attract new investors into the area. The State’s Sustainable Communities Tax Credit will also offer another incentive for private investment.

Public-private partnerships have been crucial in providing expanded road and utility infrastructure to support new development within the Odenton Town Center, which has in turn leveraged more private investment. The County will continue to forge partnerships, and allowances for developer bonuses and proffers in the OTC Master Plan will also be used to attract private investment in the area.

Continued focused efforts toward increasing the workforce housing inventory and residential property rehabilitation by ACDS, Inc. can also instigate private investments, particularly by targeting neighborhoods where there is a high concentration of aging and deteriorating housing structures. Actions to increase homeownership in the area will lead to more private homeowner investments.

The County will use all public incentive tools available to facilitate more private sector investments in the Sustainable Community in a manner that addresses the goals of this Action Plan and invites new retail and employment uses to the community.

**G. Stakeholders Responsible for Action Plan Implementation**

The core partnership within the County includes staff in the Office of Planning and Zoning, Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC), and Arundel Community Development Services (ACDS). Additional County resources are provided by the Dept. of Public Works, Dept. of Recreation and Parks, Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation, and other departments as needed.

The Odenton Town Center Oversight Committee is a citizen advisory committee appointed by the County Executive to assist the County in promoting and facilitating development of the Odenton Town Center in accordance with the adopted Master Plan. Although membership is on a rotating basis, the committee has been in place for a number of years and holds open meetings on a regular monthly basis. The Committee meetings provide an opportunity both for developers to discuss projects planned in the OTC as well as for area residents to stay informed and provide input with regard to community needs.

The West Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce (WAACCC) is also very active in supporting existing businesses and attracting new ones to the western County, particularly the Odenton Town Center. The Chamber works closely with the developer community to promote the vision of the OTC Master Plan and to assist with real estate and development information.
The Odenton Heritage Society also actively participates with the County in planning for the Odenton Town Center, with a particular focus on preservation of the Odenton Historic District as well as promoting the area’s important historic resources.

Arundel Community Development Services routinely partners with the local neighborhood associations in the Severn area such as the Stillmeadows I, Stillmeadows II and Spring Meadows Condominium Boards. These boards govern the common ownership townhome communities and ACDS has worked with them to develop and approve design standards for its owner-occupied rehabilitation program and to build the financial and operations management capacity within the Boards.

This County partnership will continue to work with the stakeholders to develop new initiatives, identify specific implementation tasks needed, identify grant and other funding opportunities, develop outreach and marketing strategies, track progress, and provide coordination among the key stakeholders. The County will also continue to partner with MD SHA, DHCD, and DBED in a variety of initiatives and projects in support of the Sustainable Community.

**H. Progress Measures**

1) **List specific outcomes that the Action Plan will produce, and the benchmarks that will be used to measure progress**

**Outcome 1:** The Odenton Town Center has developed into an attractive and vibrant mixed use center and activity hub serving the western County.

**Benchmark 1-1:** A final development agreement will be executed among the State, County, and private developer partnership with a financial plan to accomplish redevelopment of the properties adjacent to the MARC station into a TOD center.

**Benchmark 1-2:** The County in coordination with private developers will complete acquisition, design and construction of the local grid streets that will complete the road network in the Odenton Town Center core.

**Benchmark 1-3:** The County will identify feasible location(s) and prepare planning concepts to develop an attractive and multi-use central public common in the Odenton Town Center.

**Benchmark 1-4:** Complete an inventory and assessment of existing and planned public amenities in the Odenton Town Center, identify additional needs and develop a plan for implementation.

**Benchmark 1-5:** Using developer agreements and additional funding strategies as needed, complete additional pedestrian amenities as recommended in the Odenton Town Center Master Plan to provide full pedestrian connectivity throughout the OTC.
Outcome 2: A successful and competitive business community and increased employment opportunities in the Odenton Town Center.

Benchmark 2-1: Employ existing and new business attraction strategies to increase commercial retail and office uses in the Odenton Town Center.

Benchmark 2-2: Conduct regular outreach and marketing events in Odenton to promote participation in the Arundel Business Loan Fund, Arundel Community Reinvestment Fund, Commercial Revitalization Tax Credit Program, and other financial incentive programs for local business retention and expansion.

Outcome 3: Outdated, deteriorating and/or underutilized commercial properties along the MD 175 corridor have been revitalized and the commercial corridor is attractive and thriving.

Benchmark 3-1: Update local development regulations to include additional incentives for redevelopment in Commercial Revitalization Districts including the MD 175 corridor.

Outcome 4: Historic homes in the Odenton Historic District have been maintained and renovated such that they contribute to the unique character of the original town center.

Benchmark 4-1: Establish new policies and design standards governing retention and preservation of existing structures, renovations and new construction for properties in the Odenton Historic District.

Outcome 5: High quality affordable housing units will be available in Odenton-Severn, linking low income families to better schools, transportation, and employment opportunities.

Benchmark 5-1: Forty-eight units of affordable housing for families will be constructed in the Berger Square development project in Odenton.

Benchmark 5-2: Incorporate stronger incentives or provisions for workforce housing units to be included in development or redevelopment projects in the Odenton Town Center.

Benchmark 5-3: Target available funds through the HOME and Low Income Housing Tax Credits programs for construction of additional new workforce housing units in partnership with private developers.

Outcome 6: All residents, regardless of income, will have better access to high quality health and community services.

Benchmark 6-1: People’s Community Health Center will complete development of a Federally Qualified Health Center and Community Center in the Meade Village/Pioneer Drive area utilizing a combination of State, federal and local funds.
**Benchmark 6-2:** The County will continue programs to support the quality of life for low income residents with Community Development Block Grant funds, including programs like the Boys & Girls Clubs and Extended Care Head Start offered in the Severn and Meade Village communities through the Community Action Agency.

**Outcome 7:** Increased transit ridership in the area with better connectivity to the local and regional transit network.

**Benchmark 7-1:** Complete development and launch the start of the new Regional Transit Agency of Central Maryland serving the Odenton-Severn area and western County and connecting to key destinations in Anne Arundel and Howard counties.

**Benchmark 7-2:** Implement additional bus transit service alternatives recommended in the 2010 Transit Development Plan to improve efficiency and service between Odenton-Severn and area employment and service centers.

**Outcome 8:** Improved stormwater management and reduced pollutant loads from stormwater runoff.

**Benchmark 8-1:** Complete the watershed restoration projects in the Odenton-Severn area funded in the Capital Budget and Program.

**Benchmark 8-2:** Incorporate environmental site design features in all redevelopment projects.