

## Randallstown NAACP's Task Force on Revitalization of Liberty Road



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## **Acknowledgments**

Both personally and on behalf of the Randallstown NAACP, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all the task force members. Also, the task force would like to thank Senator Cardin, Congressman Ruppertsberger, Congressman Mfume, Speaker Jones, Senator Sydnor, Senator Brooks, Delegate Ruth, Delegate McCaskill, and Councilman Patoka for their participation on the task force.

The task force also appreciates the contributions and support of Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski, his administration and departments. In addition, Kirk Mitchell for his role in the process, as well as, for participating in the task force.

The Randallstown NAACP hopes that the comments and recommendations provided in this report make a valuable contribution to the redevelopment of the Liberty Road Corridor and vicinity. We encourage the Baltimore County Planning Department to inform us of new developments associated with this project and allow us to participate in the future should the need arise.

**The Randallstown NAACP Task Force Members on the Revitalization of the Liberty Road Corridor:**

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US Senator Ben Cardin

Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger

Congressman Kweisi Mfume

Speaker Adrienne A. Jones, District 10

Senator Delores G. Kelley, District 10

Senator Charles E. Sydnor III, District 44B

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**Purpose and Objectives:**

The Liberty Road Corridor has, for years, seen disinvestment and several attempts at revitalization. Today, new opportunities have appeared and aligned that signal a unique moment to thoughtfully bring equitable, community-led investment to the neighborhood.

Creating a task force that consists of elected officials, county government officials, civic, business, faith leaders, and neighbors to be a catalyst to foster redevelopment to enhance the area. The end goal is to finally and immediately get some movement and improve the way of life on liberty road.

In 1978, the Baltimore County Executive appointed 95 local residents to meet to evaluate the social and economic problems impacting Liberty Road. The objective of this task force was to identify issues, which were detrimental to the corridor and develop a comprehensive program to address them. Two important results occurred: 1) the preparation of the Liberty Action Plan and 2) the creation of the Liberty Communities Development Corporation (LCDC), which has evolved into the Liberty Road Business Association (LRBA). The Liberty Action Plan provided analysis and recommendations in the area of transportation, commercial design, and development, human services, and image. Adopted by the County Council in 1980, the plan designated the nine-mile Liberty Road Corridor from the city line to Deer Park Road a revitalization area.

The 1990 Baltimore County Master Plan, adopted by the County Council, formally recognized the Liberty Road Communities as both an Enhancement Area and a Community Conservation Area. In 1991, an Action Plan Update was prepared by LCDC and adopted by the County Council. The update identified additional key concerns regarding land use, design, and signage, and urged implementation of an effective strategy for improving the Liberty Road corridor. The Liberty Action Plan and Action Plan Update were created and designed to address the needs of a changing older

community. Importantly, they recognized the need to maintain a healthy, attractive, commercial corridor. However, while the plans recommended ways of improving the Liberty Road corridor, no formal implementation occurred.

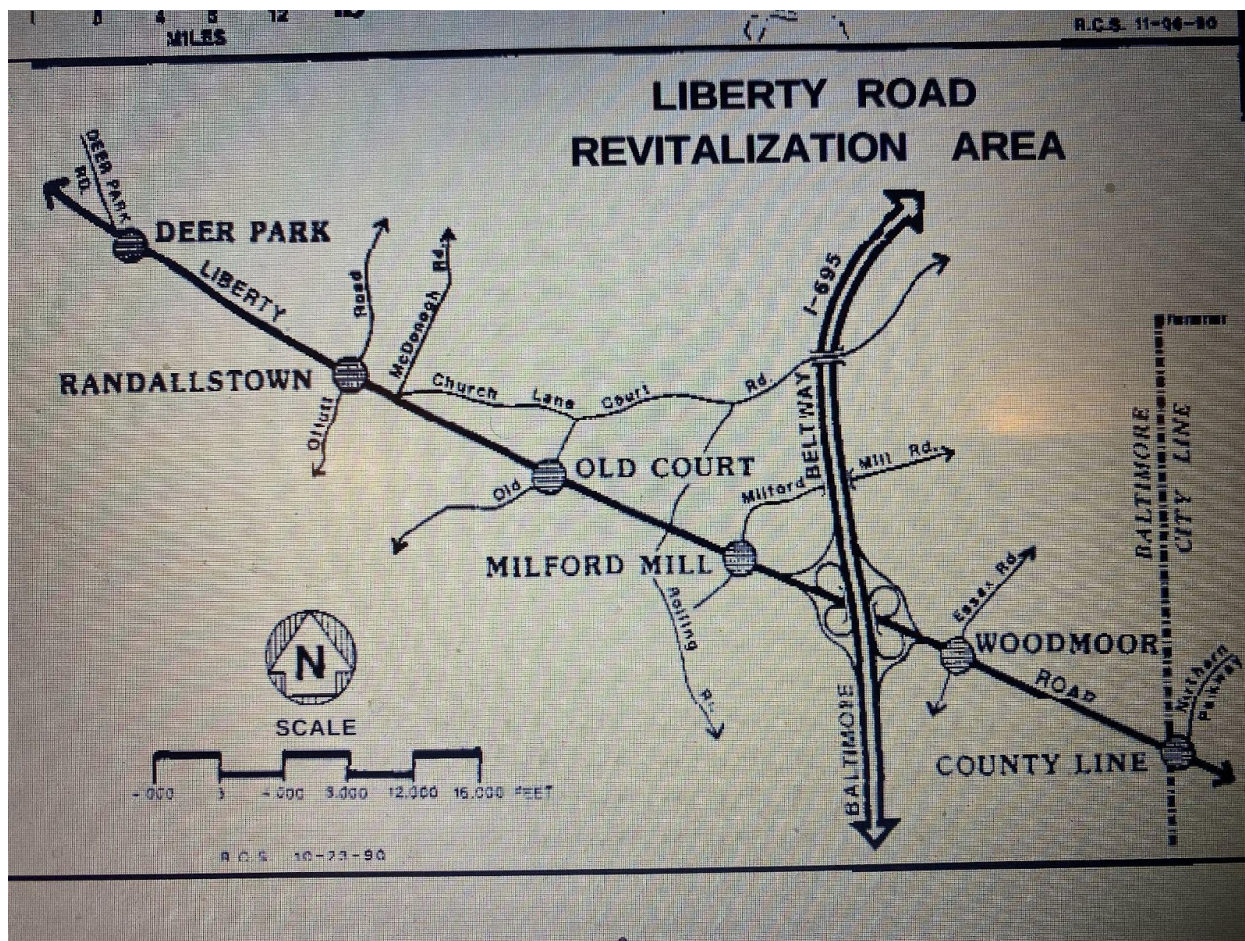
In 1994, Councilman Kevin Kamenetz orchestrated a task force to develop an implementation plan for the commercial corridor. The task force consisted of Councilman Kevin Kamenetz and his staff, representatives from the County's Planning Office, Office of Community Conservation, Department of Economic Development, business owners, and residents. In June of 1995, this task force completed the Liberty Action Plan Preliminary Implementation Guide.

There have been many different plans to address liberty road dating back to 1978. However, the implementation of these plans have not happened. This calls for new strategies and actions to address long-standing problems and concerns whose solutions remain elusive. The problem of neglect and disinvestment of certain shopping centers and areas requires serious and creative action. The overall appearance of the road needs continued improvement from both the public and private sector. Our communities' image continues to need enhancement to residents, consumers and investors.

This report attempts to present a plan designed to improve Liberty Road's competitive position into 2023 and beyond. The revitalization momentum should be continued, refined and expanded through cooperative and mutually beneficial actions. The Department of Planning and the Department of Economic Development should coordinate actions which include planning and marketing efforts, development controls and incentives, public services, infrastructure improvements and the continued commitment of the private sector.

### **Deteriorated or deteriorating structures**

Throughout the plan area there are a number of aging and deteriorating buildings and structures that are in need of repair, rehabilitation and in some instances removal. Many of these buildings appear to need updating in order to be considered safe and functional for occupancy. Many structures were observed to have crumbling or deteriorating facades, broken windows and deferred maintenance. As some of the oldest neighborhoods in the County, the Liberty Road Corridor community has transformed and evolved over time.



The commercial area inside the Beltway is the area in most need; but outside the Beltway is not faring much better. There are neglected buildings and vacancies through the Liberty road corridor. These "urban problems" require solutions based upon much greater public sector involvement in the area's future.

The task force recognized that the length (9 miles), diversity, physical needs and image were obstacles that hampered past efforts to improve all of Liberty Road at one time. Node 1, or Liberty road inside the beltway, has been ignored by most redevelopment plans. This report will include a start to the redevelopment of Node 1 which is the gateway to Baltimore County.

## **Node I**

County Line Node SouthSide Liberty Road, City Line west to Kelox Road. NorthSide Liberty Rd City Line west to approximately 180 ft east of Kelox Rd to 695.

### **Gateway to Baltimore County**

The textbook definition of gateway is “an opening or a structure such as an arch, framing, entrance or passage that may be closed by a gate. Something that serves as an entrance or a means of access.”

This is an attempt to build a “community brand” , encourage economic growth in a location by improving the visual impact of the landscape and a welcoming point for people entering Baltimore County.

This project will consist of multi sites to create the Gateway to Baltimore County. We systematically lay out the gateway sites below:

### **Pocket Park**

The gateway to Baltimore County will begin on the City of Baltimore side and flow into Baltimore County. This pocket park will be located at the corner of Liberty Road and Flannery Lane. This pocket park will act as a scaled-down neighborhood park, but still often try to meet a variety of needs. Functions can include small event space, play areas for children, spaces for relaxing or meeting friends, taking lunch breaks. etc. This can be a refuge from the bustle of surrounding urban life and offer opportunities for rest, relaxation and set the table for entrance into Baltimore County.





### **Streetscape Improvements**

This project sought to balance the needs of diverse users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists) to shape an environment that ensures access, safety, and enjoyment of Liberty road.

### **Liberty Center**

This report describes a proposal for a two story office building to be developed at 6025-6029 Liberty Road. The focus of this office will be health & wellness. The proposed building should provide 15,000 rentable square feet of office space on top of 15,000 rentable square feet of ground floor retail, with an additional 12,000 rentable square feet of below grade retail. The plan will need 70 parking spaces at the rear of the building as well as take a first step at revitalizing an otherwise unusable pedestrian experience along Liberty Road.



Potential Tenants Medical Offices: 1. Lifebridge/NW Hospital 2. Park West Medical Health System 3. UMMC 4. Johns Hopkins 5. Medstar 6. Chiropractic care provider 7. Physical therapy 8. Dialysis center

Wellness Focused Retail: 1. Health food stores 2. Mental health professionals-Bizzell Clinical Services 3. Vision Services-Kimberly Williams Bolar, O.D. 4 Dental Offices- Kira Evans, DDS, Dr. Winfred Booker, DDS. 5. Yoga studio FINELLI – GWYNN OAK 6.. Pilates Studio 7. Daycare facility 8. Juice bar 8. Coffee Shop

Fitness Center/Health Club 1. Crunch Fitness 2. Anytime Fitness 3. LA Fitness

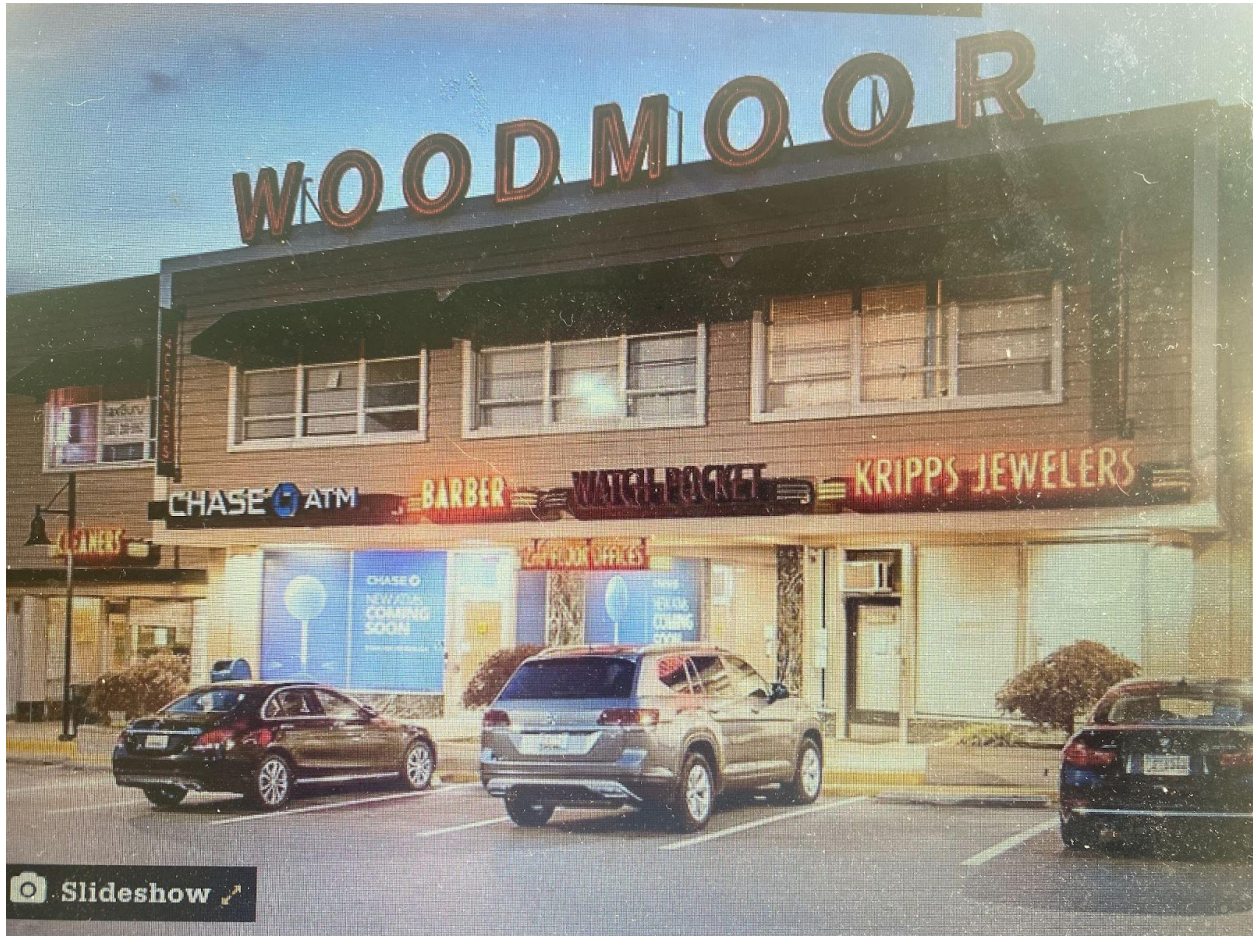
The goal will be 50% of the tenants are African Americans.



### **Gwynn Oak Post Office**

Redevelopment plans for the corridor include renovation of the Gwynn Oak Post Office. This post office has not been renovated for over 70 years. In addition, this post office was dedicated to Congressman Parren Mitchell. The current state is insufficient to honor this great man.

## Woodmoor Shopping Center



We believe that the Woodmoor shopping center must be turned back into a neighborhood center which offers day to day needs including groceries, convenience items, personal services, snacks, pharmaceuticals, and other health related items. The report requests the following anchor tenants: black owned grocery store, or a farmers market, or Sprouts type store, drug store and bank. According to the International Council of Shopping Centers, over 50% of neighborhood centers are anchored by a grocery store. One third of neighborhood centers have drugstore anchors.

## Sedgemoor Rd Park

The area at the corner of Sedgemoor rd and Marston has been an eyesore for years.



The plan is to transform this area into a park or other community fixture.



## Recommendations

- 1. To utilize funding from Baltimore City and Baltimore County to fund the pocket park. To work with the Delegations in 41, 44B and the 10th on floating bonds or utilizing cross jurisdictional grants. The lead agency will be the Baltimore County Department of Recreation.**
- 2. To work with the federal delegation and Baltimore County to renovate the Gwynn Oak Post Office.**
- 3. To solicit consulting services through competitive negotiation to create a transformative process that will lead the redevelopment of Liberty Center, provide the vision for private development and investment, and improve the connections without and within the study area.**
- 4. To solicit consulting services through competitive negotiation to create a transformative process that will lead the redevelopment of Woodmoor Shopping Center, provide the vision for private development and investment, and improve the connections without and within the study area.**

## Node II

695 North to McDonogh Rd. west to Ann Hathaway Drive.

### **8212 Liberty Road- Old Shoppers**

United Natural Foods Inc. in January 2020 closed the store on Liberty road and sold the other four( 5600 Alameda, 6500 Eastern Avenue, 5722 Ritchie Highway and Waldorf. The medium income in Milford Mill is higher than all four locations sold to other grocery chains. The main difference is the other municipalities had an active role in securing another grocery store. On November 7, 2021, the Shoppers on 2801 Smith Avenue closed. On November 7, 2021 a Safeway opened up in the same spot.



## **Randallstown Town Center**

The report transforms Liberty Court Shopping Center into the Randallstown Town Center. The Town Center is intended to be a vital economic core for the community in addition to being the Town's heart and gathering place.

The Town Center area land use pattern is intended to be different from that of the majority of the community. Higher residential densities and a greater variety of commercial development will be encouraged in order to create a vibrant and active space. To accommodate a greater variety of commercial development, the Committee has recommended approval of a combined Town Center Mixed Use definition that includes a quantifiable standard for a mixture of uses. Each use (office, commercial or residential) can occupy up to 50 percent of the total project, but the combination of two of the three cannot exceed 75 percent.

### **Ring Concept**

The Land Use Plan features a "ring concept" to the development pattern. This pattern encourages smaller scale, slower paced activities at the very center of the planning area and scale and intensity of uses increase as you move north away from the core area.

### **Municipal Center**

The municipal center in the southern portion of the Town Center is critical to the dynamics of the area and anchoring the south end. The municipal center will house the Randallstown Library, CCBC-Randallstown and a Cultural Center/ Museum . This will create daytime activity and provide amenities for public uses. It will also continue to encourage the historical pattern by residents to come to the Town Center for governmental activities and day-to-day business.

### **Mixed-Use Development Theme**

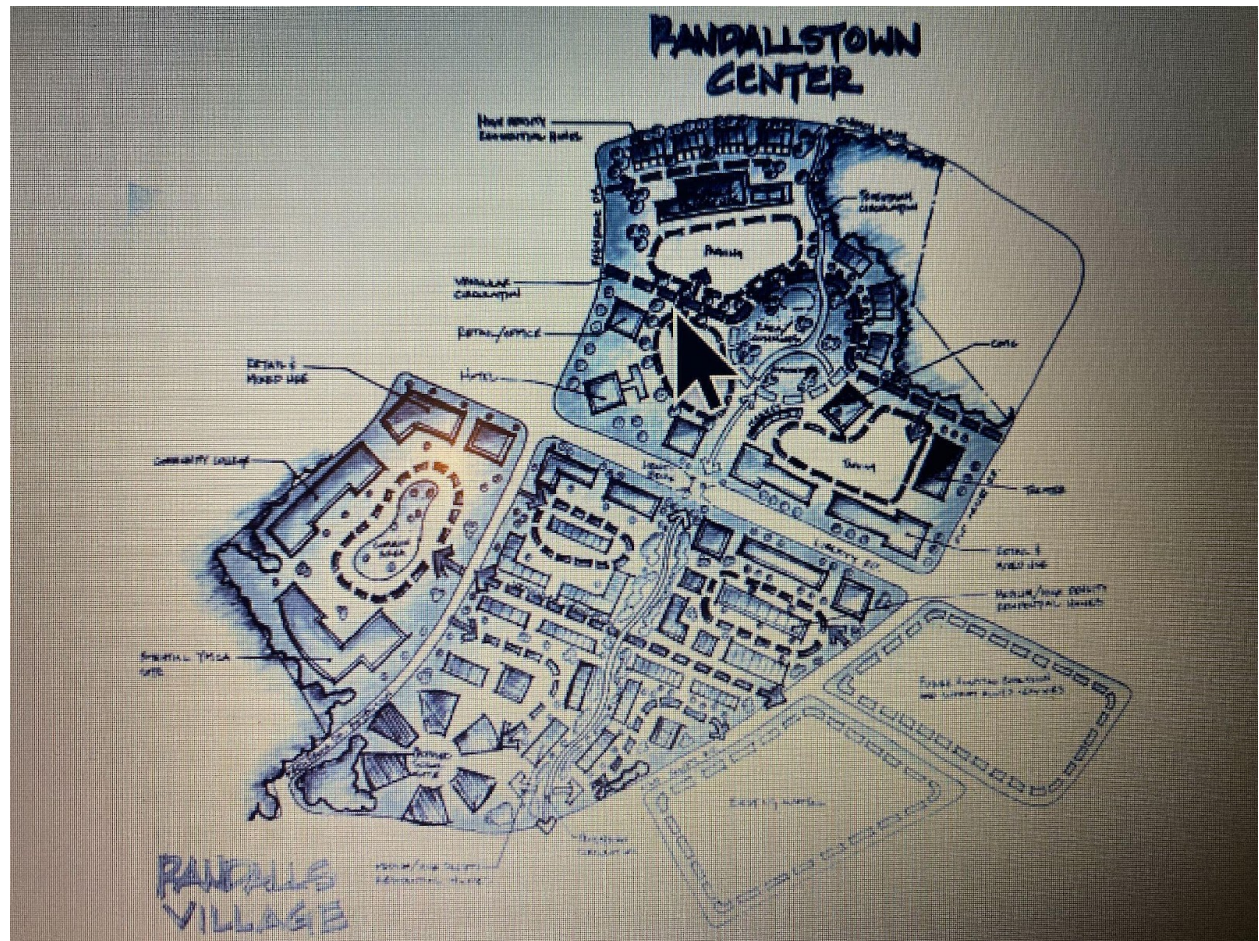
Areas in the interior of the Town Center that feature small scale commercial, office and residential development – mixed-use developments. These areas promote small business development and employment opportunities to promote the development and expansion of Town Center activity and commerce. The community and employees at Northwest Hospital are interested in casual sit down restaurants, grocery stores, gift stores and bookstores.

Larger Scale Commercial Development in the northern portion of the Town Center planning area and on the periphery will include joint parking facilities and larger scale shopping and commercial opportunities. Larger chain and department stores are intended to be located in these areas.



### Community Gathering Place

A site for a special gathering place for events and entertainment has been identified adjacent to the governmental complex. The "Community Gathering Place" is an important element for establishing a unique identity for Randallstown. It will also serve as a regional attraction bringing activities and people to the area on a regular basis



## **Randallstown Village**

The report proposes transforming Northwest Crossing Apartment Homes and Brenbrook Apartments into owner occupied homes called Randallstown Village. Opportunities for increased residential development densities compared with the rest of the community are provided. Increased densities can provide a critical mass of people and activity that is key to the nonresidential investment and cultural success of the Town Center. Randallstown Town Center will be connected by a pedestrian bridge to Randallstown Village.

### **Education**

We know quality education is a cornerstone of a just and equitable society, and that it can change the trajectory of children's lives. One way we are working to improve education is by supporting high performing schools in African American communities. Doing so gives students access to schools that deliver excellent educational outcomes, and helps these students achieve their fullest potential. Randallstown Village must have access to quality schools to be an effective and desirable location. Therefore, this report recommends a new elementary and middle school in the Randallstown Village footprint. These schools would be whole magnet school programs. Students from Randallstown Village will have automatic admission and others would have to utilize the admissions criteria. A new whole magnet high school will be constructed for northwest Baltimore County. Until that time Randallstown High school will become two separate schools with one being a whole magnet school. Lastly, this report recommends Sudbrook Middle Magnet School utilize some academic criteria for admissions. The public can no longer wait for incremental change with our schools that never materialize.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. The Department of Planning and Department of Economic Development continue work on attracting a grocery store, Main Events or Dave and Busters at the Old Shoppers grocery store site.**
- 2. To solicit consulting services through competitive negotiation to create a transformative process that will lead the redevelopment of Randallstown Town Center & Village, provide the vision for private development and investment, and improve the connections without and within the study area.**

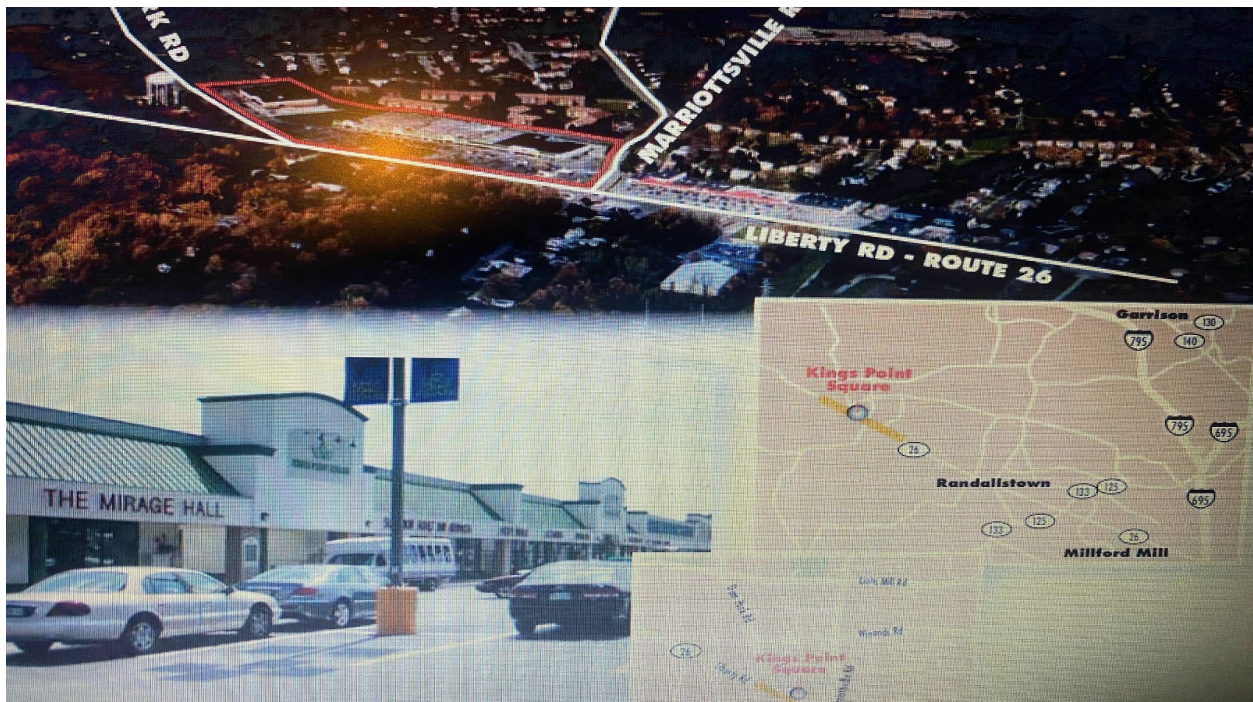
3. For BCPS to immediately use academic criteria for admissions into SMMS. To immediately look into creating a feeder schools pattern (whole magnet school from elem, middle and high school ) for Randallstown Village. To evaluate the possibility of creating a whole magnet school inside Randallstown High School.

### Node III

McDonoghRd to Carroll County line.

### Kings Point Square

Strategically positioned next to the rapidly expanding Owings Mills growth area in northwest Baltimore County, King's Point Square is a convenient service oriented strip and professional center. This center is located in a strong demographic area just 10 minutes west of the Baltimore Beltway (1-695), easily accessible from Carroll County, Howard County, and Baltimore City. With several thousand homes under development adjacent to it, King's Point Square is poised to be a major service center for the fast growing Owings Mills/Randallstown area. Currently, the Kings Point Square is severely underutilized and has endless potential.



## Recommendations

1. **For the Dept of Planning Dept to investigate the feasibility of transforming Kings Point Square into an Outlet mall.**
2. **The Department of Planning and Department of Economic Development continue to try to attract a grocery store at the Old Giant Site on Offutt road. Note CCBC will be moving to the Randallstown Town Center.**

## Zoning

Zoning should be used as a tool to both attract desirable businesses to Liberty Road and to curtail the proliferation and concentration of uses which inhibit the necessary mix of a healthy economy. In the years ahead we would like to see a reduction in the number of gas stations, dollar stores and storage facilities and a corresponding increase in more compatible and less intensive projects such as office parks and more diversified retail. It is clear that traditional zoning through residential, commercial, and industrial districts is not sophisticated enough to address complicated growth and development issues on Liberty Road. To fill this void, the Baltimore County government can create zoning approaches with increased flexibility, aimed at more specialized targets and intended to solve problems identified in this report. One of these tools is the overlay zone. The overlay zone is, as the name tells us, a special zone placed over an existing zoning district, over part of a district, or over a combination of districts. Put another way, the overlay zone includes a set of regulations that is applied to property within the overlay zone in addition to the requirements of the underlying or base zoning district. This would be similar to the 43 MD and Towson overlays-§ 259.1.

## Development Incentives

As a nine mile linear highway Liberty Road is one large Revitalization Area with related but distinct commercial parts; County Line and Woodmoor, Milford Mill, Old Court, Randallstown and Deer Park. Its overall continued revitalization will require additional Catalytic Actions, some of which will be applicable corridor wide and others which should be targeted at particular areas.

Revitalization activities corridor wide should be promoted through a series of development controls and incentives designed to foster business retention, expansion, improvement and attraction. Existing County zoning and building regulations along with

the proposed new zoning overlay districts incorporating design and maintenance standards, should be coupled with County revitalization incentives designed to facilitate improvements. Existing, as well as new businesses, should be provided with technical assistance on site selection, financing and governmental approvals. Economic and market data and information should be regularly maintained and distributed as a means to attract new businesses. Liberty Road's image to both the consumer and investor should be strengthened through an aggressive and professionally assisted marketing and promotional campaign. Public improvements including roadways, facilities and amenities should be provided as a means to support and encourage private projects. All new private commercial developments should be examined through the County Review Group (CRG) process for adequate security measures.

### **Landscaping**

The provision of landscaping is designed to beautify and soften the corridor as recommended in the Master Plan. Landscaping projects, both public and private, are already in place at numerous locations. Landscaping should be provided throughout all of the commercial areas, beginning at key designated locations. Resources should be made available for the maintenance of public landscaping.

### **Section 14-125 - Nuisance actions within Baltimore County.**

The Office of Law and the Chief of police will work with the following places of Business that could be in violation of Section 14-125:

8601 Liberty Road  
 Marathon Gas Station 9802 Liberty Rd  
 Exxon Gas Station 9835 Liberty Rd  
 Carriage Hill Apts 3456 Carriage Hill Cir  
 Marriottsville Plaza 9830 Liberty Rd  
 Woodridge Apts 3901 Noyes Cir  
 Liberty West 3526 Langrehr Rd  
 Northwest Crossing Apt Homes

The task force hopes that these businesses will take steps to be in compliance with Section 14-125 and create a safer environment. However, if these businesses are unable or unwilling we request that the Baltimore County government use any and all means to ensure compliance.

## **Other Concerns**

The community continues to describe businesses on Liberty Road not offering the same customer service experience and products as in white neighborhoods. The community working with Baltimore County Government to ensure the same retail experience at Walmart, Home Depot, Food Lion and Marshals. Note: Walmart's wait times, lack of self check machines and parking lot safety adversely affects the store profitability and image.

## **Implementation**

The original designation of Liberty Road as a Revitalization Area was the direct result of a partnership between Baltimore County and the local community. It signified a mutual commitment to a revitalization process. This plan is a synthesis of twenty years of experience along with months of solid planning and analysis. This report's recommendations are realistic and achievable goals which are in the best interests of Liberty Road and Baltimore County.

## **Overall Recommendations**

- 1. Hire a consulting firm to create a development plan for Liberty road. This development plan will cover the planning, design, financing, construction and resident engagement to revitalize the Liberty Road Corridor through a holistic development of a diverse, healthy and vibrant community.**
- 2. Creation of a Liberty Road zoning overlay district designed to control uses and establish standards for maintenance, design, signage, landscaping and lighting. The Liberty Road Overlay Zone would also lead to land use, building height, density, affordable housing, public benefit points, design, and public open space.**

## **Conclusion**

This plan recommends how to best utilize these resources along Liberty Road. Successful implementation of the plan will require the continued support of the Administration and County Council along with a working cooperation between the branches and agencies of government and the local community.