



Sustainability Strategy for Baltimore County/ Baltimore County Sustainability Network (BCSN)

Baltimore County has been a leader in the management of its natural resources and growth for over 40 years. The establishment of the Urban Rural Demarcation Line (URDL) forty years ago, down-zoning of thousands of rural land and setting a goal of the protection of 80,000 acres of agricultural land, funding land preservation programs, programs to insure that streams are buffered, stream and shoreline restoration programs, invited participation in the Montreal Process to create and implement a sustainable forestry strategy, and an impressive list of laws, programs and initiatives have maintained Baltimore County in that leadership position.

As the worldwide concern for the wise and sustainable management of our resources has grown, citizens, the private sector, non-profit conservation organizations and governments have begun to look at the broad range of programs necessary to manage for today and the future. This interest has accelerated over the past few years as the cause and effects of global climate change have been acknowledged, as local implications are more fully understood. Global climate change in the abstract means many different things to many different groups of people. Taken in isolation from the comprehensive management of resources; cultural, economic, and environmental, it is difficult to understand and even more questionable as how to manage, especially at the local level. Developing strategies to address global climate change taken out of context of daily lives, economic vitality and other natural resource systems will not comprehensively address the challenges that future generations and we must confront. In short, the isolated management of any natural or cultural resource, climate change, water quality, is not sustainable.

The Baltimore County Administration, working with the Baltimore County Council has established an initiative to develop a Sustainability Strategy for Baltimore County. The strategy will provide the organizing framework for the work accomplished by the County and identify future areas of interest and need to ensure that today's generation maintains our quality of life without diminishing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

To give direction and oversight to this effort, through a Joint Resolution, the Council and the Administration have established a Baltimore County Sustainability Network (BCSN)

or Network). The group is made up of representatives of major conservation organizations, the private sector and departments in Baltimore County involved with growth management, operations and the built environment. The group is charged with developing a guidance framework for a sustainability strategy for the County that must address three primary areas:

- Management of our natural resources,
- Operations of County facilities, and
- Our built environment.

The framework document is to be available in a draft form within six months of the organizing meeting of the group. Upon concurrence with the document's elements, plans for implementation for the various sections of the document would be identified, tasks assigned and timelines set. The framework will comprehensively identify programs and projects that already exist, are underway, or that may need to be undertaken. It is also anticipated that the Network will review state and national information as it pertains to government options and with technical assistance, develop priorities for implementation. Additionally, the Network is charged with giving direction to a public education and outreach element of the strategy to give citizens guidance on greenhouse gas emissions reductions and energy conservation and protection of our resources.