



*Listening and Examining*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most critical components of a successful and sustainable plan is an open and inclusive public participation process, from issues and assets identification through visioning and implementation. The input of community residents, business owners, and government officials ensures that aspirations and concerns of all segments of the community are incorporated into a shared vision for the future.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Early in the process, the consultant team conducted a series of interviews with community leaders, business owners, property owners, and town and county representatives. During a series of interview sessions in September 2007, the consultants spoke with more than 30 stakeholders. Conversations were designed to gather information on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing the town. The input helped to determine the most effective way of conducting the public process and anticipating the questions that the Upper Marlboro community would want addressed at early public meetings.

### PUBLIC MEETINGS

A series of three public meetings, four advisory committee meetings, and a Town Hall meeting organized by residents took place during the planning process. The first public meeting was held in October 2007. Approximately 50 residents participated in a two-hour session with the EDSA team and M-NCPPC. The

main purpose of this meeting was to inform residents about the composition and expertise of the consultant team and the timeline and objectives of the plan, and to request their active involvement and input. Participants divided into small groups to discuss one of four topics: urban design, economic development, transportation, and historic preservation and heritage. All comments gathered at the first community meeting are included in the appendix.

At the second public meeting, the consultant team shared a series of conceptual ideas with the community. The attendees split into three groups to further discuss and evaluate the ideas presented. Through a priority voting exercise, participants identified favorable design ideas and initiatives. The full range of the conceptual ideas presented and the community's responses are presented in the appendix.

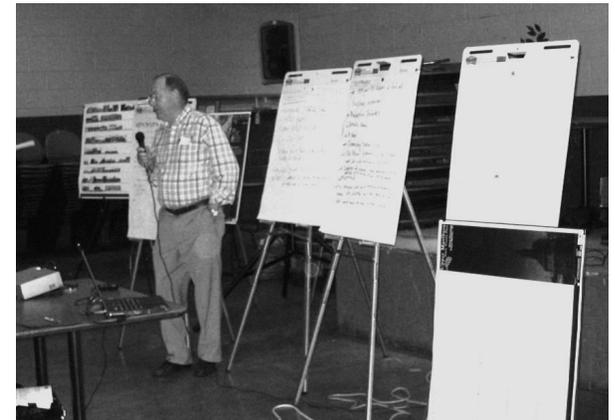
At the final community meeting, the consultant team shared the final vision plan and an array of supporting initiatives in an open house format. Participants had the opportunity to visit three stations and speak one-on-one with consultant team members about the final plan and initiatives.

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK SESSIONS

In addition to the public meetings, a series of four advisory committee meetings took place between October 2007 and March 2008. The purpose of these meetings was for a representative group of Upper Marlboro residents, business owners, and government officials to review the conceptual ideas in greater detail.



1st Public Meeting—Community Discussion



1st Public Meeting—Community Reporting



1st Public Meeting—Community Presentation

## COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

At the public meetings, participants generally agreed on the need to protect and preserve the following assets:

- The historical small “country” town character
- Quiet residential streets, with buffers between residential areas and commercial development
- Community diversity
- Existing cultural assets and landmarks, such as the Old Marlboro Academy, Darnell’s Chance, etc.
- The low crime rate that Upper Marlboro currently enjoys
- The town’s strong and sound financial record
- Activity and revenue generated from the county and court facilities
- Low traffic volumes
- Show Place Arena events and activities

According to public meeting participants, the biggest issues adversely impacting the town are:

- The absence of evening and/or weekend population
- The lack of restaurant and entertainment venues
- The reputation of being unwelcoming to nonresidents
- The major presence of county offices and courts in the town core



2nd Public Meeting—Community Discussion and Voting



2nd Public Meeting—Community Discussion and Voting



3rd Public Meeting



3rd Public Meeting—Open House



3rd Public Meeting—Plan Presentation

The future growth of the town was also a major issue for meeting participants. Many residents feel that the town should maintain its status as a small, quiet, rural community at all costs. This would include limiting development that has the potential to attract new residents. Others recognize that the town could benefit from well-planned, high-quality development that creates fiscal growth, including new investment in the town core. Many noted the potential to better serve residents and town core workers with niche business uses and additional public amenities. In addition, some respondents indicated that strong growth in and around the town will increase the market potential of the area.

- Public meeting participants identified the following items as key issues that need to be addressed in the Action Plan:
- Plan for missing pedestrian connections, especially ones that link the edges of town with the core. Include bike paths and safe sidewalks and increase the ability to walk to all parts of the town.
- Enhance the town core character by improving maintenance and appearance.
- Introduce new signage design that contributes to the character of the area.
- Provide passive recreation and more children’s play areas.
- Improve public access to the Western Branch.
- Enhance the appearance of surface parking lots, streetscapes, and vacant properties.
- Retain existing businesses and attract a variety of new businesses to the town core.

- Create a sense of place in the community and introduce a social gathering place, which may include a farmers market.
- Balance day and night uses. Provide for night restaurant opportunities.
- Construct a senior citizen center.
- Encourage village-type retail and office infill.
- Ensure appropriately scaled new residential development.

## COMMUNITY VISION

The public meetings resulted in the development of a new vision for the town that draws upon principles established in the 1993 master plan. This vision statement reflects what residents, business owners, workers, and visitors value about the Town of Upper Marlboro and their aspirations for the town’s future. The vision statement shown in the Action Plan is intended to set direction for commercial revitalization, residential expansion, environmental enhancement, historic preservation, and transportation improvements in Upper Marlboro for the next ten years and beyond.



Darnall’s Chance



St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church



Schoolhouse Pond Boardwalk

## Town of Upper Marlboro 2008 Vision Statement

“The town core is the **historic heart** of Upper Marlboro. In the future, it will be an attractive and vibrant place to **work, dine, shop,** and **enjoy the town’s natural beauty.** While still a small town, Upper Marlboro will be known throughout the region as a pleasant **historic village** with a strong reputation as a **family-friendly community.** The town’s water and natural amenities will create opportunities for **passive recreation,** new **residential living,** and **community-based activities** that celebrate the town’s heritage. Upper Marlboro will also be a place where local residents and visitors will be able to **enjoy the town core,** whether browsing the local shops, relaxing at a café, attending a community function at the Old Marlboro Academy building, or meeting friends for an evening meal and walk along the pond. In the future, a new **town/county partnership** will help address long-standing issues and give Upper Marlboro residents a greater stake in the future of their community.” [Emphasis added]



Prince George’s County Administrative Building Civic Mall



Prince George’s County Courthouse Entrance Plaza



Prince George’s County Old Courthouse

