southwest visions
FOUNDATION

October 30, 2026

The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier
Baltimore County Executive
400 Washington Avenue
Mezzanine Level
Towson, Maryland 21204

Dear County Executive Klausmeier,

Southwest Visions Foundation - SWVF, a 501(c)3 organization was established to address the economic development and sustainability of Southwest Baltimore County. Our Board of Directors partners with County and State officials plus other stakeholders to achieve grants and facilitate improvements that benefit the community.

We recognize the many competing needs for all areas of the County and we acknowledge the capital improvements that have been made in Council District 1 over the past few years.

As you begin the determination process we are pleased to offer the following for your consideration:

- Baltimore County has many beautiful parks and recreational sites. Among these, Southwest Area Park stands out for its proximity and direct access to the Patapsco River. It is a sizeable property and among the present uses are a dog park, athletic fields, and an open area used often by model airplane pilots. However, it has been underutilized and as a result is often a site for illegal dumping of debris and vehicles. Over the past year, we have met with representatives from Baltimore County Recreation and Parks to discuss how this might be changed by adding programming such as a Nature Center to the property. This would allow for daily staffing, bring more people into the park, and become another source of quality recreational programs that has been lacking south of the Benjamin Banneker Park in Oella.

- Baltimore County, with funding from the State of Maryland, recently opened its newest high school in Lansdowne. The project has now moved into the second phase which will bring an athletic complex to the campus. Nearby, Hillcrest Park could benefit from a comprehensive approach that would allow for a safer and more accessible trail system to connect the Lansdowne Library and Senior Center to the Lansdowne High School site. The existing facilities at Hillcrest Park are outdated and difficult to safely maintain. Conversations with Recreation and Parks have provided a basis for our next request.

- Lansdowne Library is a very small, outdated facility. During the Hayden administration the library was closed for over 18 months and when it was reopened there was no effort to renovate or expand it, despite the growth within the community, and the needs of the residents many of whom are new Americans. The Arbutus Library, opened in 2010, was the

result of a study that identified the various needs of the community (recreation center, senior center and library). A similar study would be beneficial in development of a newer, larger facility and potentially with expansion of the existing senior center. At present, seniors from throughout Lansdowne, Riverview and Baltimore Highlands have limited opportunities to connect. The Southwest Recreation Center (formerly Leadership Through Athletics) has a walking club but other recreational activities are limited by the size of the facility and commitments to other organizations.

- Traffic circle planning and development at Sulphur Spring and Shelbourne Roads: the County is aware of ongoing concerns with the intersection of the two roads at the site of the historic Cowdensville AME Church. The church has incurred significant damages over the years as a result of vehicular accidents. While a three-way stop sign arrangement has improved the situation to a small extent, the better long term solution is the installation of a traffic circle. The circle would move the intersection slightly farther west and onto UMBC's property (which we have been advised they are amenable to doing) allowing for both better traffic flow and the installation of sidewalks along Shelbourne Road leading to both the university and Arbutus Middle School.

- Lansdowne Traffic Island – Hammonds Ferry and Hollins Ferry Roads: the community has requested that Traffic Engineering consider rounding the edges of the triangular traffic island on the site. Southwest Visions has assisted the neighborhood in obtaining a new flagpole, fencing, and border plantings at this gateway to the community. This area has significant truck traffic and the island's curbs are often broken by trucks making turns that impact the island due to the projection of the "points".

- With the support of the former County Executive the Arbutus Sustainable Community was expanded to encompass the Lansdowne/Riverview/Baltimore Highlands communities. SWVF believes that we can offer assistance in obtaining grant funding for various projects within the enlarged area. Some years ago a study was conducted on the needs and challenges specifically facing the Lansdowne area which revealed multiple concerns that remain unaddressed. In 2025 we engaged Impact Principals to conduct a series of listening sessions which reinforced many of those concerns as well as new considerations:

    - The need for a larger, more modern fire department location. In 2022 the County engaged a third party evaluation of fire and EMS. The Executive Summary noted that there is a lack of adequate capacity to address both the current and projected demands on the system. We are particularly concerned about this in southwestern Baltimore County. We have faced the closure of one volunteer company, while two others suffer from inadequate facilities. With the planned move of the Catonsville career fire station to a location another mile away from Arbutus, the pressure will increase on Halethorpe's career department (also operating from an older facility) and the local volunteer departments: Arbutus, Lansdowne and English Consul. In addition to the physical plants, the study noted that the BCoFD "had extremely limited resources for community risk reduction activities". We

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believe that this is a critical function of the agency and deserving of as much support as is possible.

- Likewise, Precinct One, Baltimore County Police Department, while being enlarged and reconstructed on site at Walker Ave., has an area of coverage that is both large and dense. It includes multiple commercial and business districts, and multiple areas including at least one that was designated as a "Hot Spot", that require more resources than others. There are no substations in the SW area and although this precinct adjoins Baltimore City, Anne Arundel and Howard counties, no locations where department staff could interact.

➢ We seek your continued support for the efforts of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's effort in establishing the Patapsco Regional Greenway Trail from Elkridge to the Southwest Area Park. We see many opportunities for economic growth, environmental improvement, and historical preservation and interpretation in this project. The system of trails envisioned in this section of the larger system could be incredibly important to the health of the Patapsco and the Bay while bringing tourism and other needed economic activity to the southwest county. It is our understanding that the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board has handed over their data to Baltimore County but it seems that the project has not advanced. Meanwhile, the other parts of the regional trail system are moving forward in Howard and Anne Arundel counties and Baltimore City.

Comprehensively, we ask in conclusion that the Department of Planning is funded for the Community Improvement Grant program. This allows communities throughout the County to access monies for capital improvements through the work of nonprofits.

Again, we greatly appreciate the opportunity to offer our suggestions and comments. Thank you for your work in making County government accessible and transparent to the citizens.

Best regards,

Paula W. Wolf
President

John "Jay" Dillow
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable Patrick Young, Councilperson, District 1