

# Finksburg Planning and Citizens' Council

To Promote a Finksburg Community Whose Objective is to Preserve the Fundamental Quality of Life Where Farms Families and Businesses May Coexist in a Manner Beneficial to All.

David P O'Callaghan  
President, Finksburg Planning Area Citizens' Council  
2704 Appleseed Rd  
Finksburg, MD 21048

Tuesday, April 15, 2008  
RE: Gateway tax credit 2008

Lawrence (Larry) F. Twele  
Director, Carroll County Department of Economic Development  
225 N. Center St., Suite 101  
Westminster, Maryland 21157

Dear Director Twele,

The Finksburg Planning and Citizen's Council is looking forward to having you as our guest on Thursday April 24, 2008 to discuss the gateway tax credit. This ordinance which has been proposed for the Maryland Route 140 Corridor through Finksburg is very exciting and important to our community.

This is a great opportunity for the existing businesses to make improvements and get an additional benefit of a tax credit.

As proposed we have a few areas that need clarification or are areas of concern. The ordinance would have its greatest impact if priority or even exclusivity would be given to properties that are in the gateway. We are for improvement of all business in the county but including those properties that sit outside the "gateway" may be a drain on our limited resources at the expense of the businesses in the gateway. (those properties that are directly adjacent and contiguous to the properties with direct road frontage onto Maryland Route 140.)

The second area that needs clarification is what constitutes "improvement of appearance" or "improved use of the property". "Improvement of appearance". This needs to be clearly defined, or at a minimum state how and who is going to establish the criteria or make the decision. Likewise, "improved use of the property" seems overly broad and could extend the tax credit to any parcel improvement, where it should be limited to improvements affecting the appearance of the property. Our recommendation is that criteria and guidelines should be established in coordination with the Planning Department and adoption of the Finksburg Boulevard Plan(s) and in concordance with and adoption of the Rt. 140 Design Guidelines.

A third area is that we believe it should be for existing business or at a minimum strongly favor them. As referenced below it would strongly favor new construction on empty parcels, as the percentage of improvement to assessment value would be greatest in that case and eligible for the maximum 75% tax credit.

**FINKSBURG PLANNING AND CITIZENS' COUNCIL  
P.O. BOX 70  
FINKSBURG, MARYLAND 21048**

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## ARTICLE XII – Gateway Renovation Tax Credit.

### § 209-37. Definitions.

**GATEWAY** – Maryland Route 140 Corridor through Finksburg from the Baltimore County line to the east side of the intersection of Suffolk and Green Mill Roads and Maryland Route 140 including those properties that have direct road frontage onto Maryland Route 140 and those properties that are directly adjacent and contiguous to the properties with direct road frontage onto Maryland Route 140.

### § 209-37 – Definitions

**IMPROVEMENTS** - Also, development of commercial or industrial uses on a parcel in the Gateway zoned Business-General, Business – Neighborhood Retail, Industrial – Restricted, or Industrial-General.

### § 209-38. Eligibility and Amount of Credit.

(c) A property tax credit may only be granted for improvements made to a property that significantly improve the overall appearance or use of the property.

(d) The amount of property tax credit available shall be based on the percentage of improvement cost compared to the assessed value of the property. A 75% tax credit for a period up to 5 years shall be available if the improvement costs spent on the property are in excess of 25% of the assessed value of the property. If the improvement costs spent are 25% or less of the assessed value of the property, the credit available is 50% for a period of up to 5 years.

The Finksburg Planning and Citizen's Council is a strong proponent of a Gateway Renovation Tax Credit. We recommend that the ordinance should clearly state its objective or purpose. It should also refrain from generalities and specifically state that the credit can only be for improvement to existing businesses for façade, layout, signs, etc., that adhere strictly to the design guidelines. Furthermore we strongly urge you to consider the inclusion of the Planning Dept., the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Rt. 140 Design Guidelines as you craft this ordinance.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting you at the April 24<sup>th</sup> general meeting.

Sincerely,



David P. O'Callaghan  
President, Finksburg Planning Area Citizen Council

Cc Steve Horn, Director, Carroll County Department of Planning shorn@ccg.carr.org  
Cc Julia W. Gouge, President, Board of County Commissioners jgouge@ccg.carr.org  
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