

Task Force on the Future for Growth and Development in Maryland
June 5, 2008 / 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
The Maryland Department of Planning
Baltimore, Maryland

Meeting Summary

Attendance

Members: Jon Laria (Chair), David Beall, Karl Brendle, Joan Carter-Conway, Asuntha Chiang-Smith, Sandy Coyman, Jan Gardner, Carol Gilbert, Richard Hall, Frank Hertsch, Brigid Kenney, Gerrit Knaap, Caitlin Rayman, Dru Schmidt-Perkins

Attendees: Marty Baker (MDOT), Tom Ballentine (NAIOP), Jamie Bridges (Baltimore Metro Council), Les Knapp (MACo), John Landback (MDOT), Michael Lee (DLS), Katie Maloney (MD State Builders), Susan Mitchell (MD Realtors), Sandi Olek (DNR), John Papagni (DHCD), Izzy Patoka (Governor's Office), Jim Peck (MML), Frank Principe (Baltimore Co. Gov't), Ron Spalding (MDOT-OPCP), Ann Stanley (URS Corp), Ashley Valis (Governor's Office), Helga Weschke (DBED)

MDP Staff: Kiman Choi, Amanda Conn, John Coleman, David Costello, Nicole Diehlmann, Larry Fogelson, Linda Janey, Jenny King, Stephanie Martins, Nery Morales, Matt Power, Sharon Reichlyn, Eric Schmitt, Shelley Wasserman, Bihui Xu

Questions: MML, MACo and MDP

The Chair, Jon Laria, opened the meeting to discuss the questions posed to MML, MACo and MDP. It was suggested to go around the table for feedback from the membership. In particular, Mr. Laria asked for any comments regarding the question of PFAs and their proficiency.

Ms. Chiang- Smith noted that from a BRAC perspective, a concern is having ample housing especially around the Aberdeen Proving Ground area. There will be a struggle with people who want to live close to the military bases but due to various constraints such as, transportation or housing restrictions, people will not always be able live where they desire. This issue, for example, is demonstrated through the limited water capacity in the vicinity of Aberdeen Proving Ground. Those who currently reside in Maryland for the most part understand the PFAs, their restrictions and capabilities, yet the challenge lies with those new to Maryland. The new Maryland residents will not necessarily understand the PFA concepts. Therefore it really is our job and opportunity to educate the public about the importance and reasons behind PFAs.

Marty Baker, MDOT, pointed out that the PFA legislation has not proven to be very effective at guiding the State's investment. She also mentioned that the current PFA law

and the way it is written presently does not establish how to set up a PFA or a better way to implement transportation options.

Frank Hertsch discussed his experience with PFAs. He stated that when PFAs were developed the assumption was that policy decisions would direct growth to PFAs. It was not imagined that PFAs would have such short comings in directing growth areas. At the time PFAs were created Maryland made a commitment to provide public facilities to serve these areas, however, this has not been upheld.

Mr. Hertsch also mentioned that given the low densities within the PFAs it tends to create shortages of housing opportunities. The result is the home industry serves the most profitable opportunities. This outcome pushes people to drive to counties such as Cecil County or out further from growth areas. If the Task Force wants PFAs to produce the desired effect these moves need to be discouraged.

Mr. Hall generally agreed with Mr. Hertsch's comments yet pointed out that one of the problems in getting the desired density is that the supply of land in PFAs is being squandered due to low densities. Outside of PFAs there tends to be an abundance and overflow of density that should remain within the PFAs. It is important to gain growth in the projected area. Pre-PFAs it was very hard to have a discussion about growth, smart growth, etc. at least now there is a map that shows the agreed areas where growth should be directed.

Ms. Schmidt-Perkins pointed out that the current growth problems are eradicating all the gains on the Bay, which is in an EPA study. She went on to say that, the fuel economy of our cars is improving yet the amount people that continue to commute long distances and just generally driving more is eradicating all the fuel economy gains. All of these habits continue happening despite some fights about steering State dollars to PFAs more efficiently. Further it is difficult to marry steering State dollars with good incentives to entice those at the local level. The problems with the PFAs have been weak standards, limited dollars, poor design and the authority capacity. She further noted that all growth could fit within a half mile of transit.

Ms. Carter-Conway inquired whether the group intended to change legislation, or what the next steps the group would take. In looking at the previous meeting summary, she noted that there should be an agreement on the definition of smart growth.

Mr. Laria responded that answering her question was part of the Task Force charge.

Mr. Coyman noted that on page 2 of the county responses, fourteen jurisdictions stated that PFAs further smart growth while ten said no. Others jurisdictions suggested more flexibility because one size does not fit all. Funding seems to be the forgotten promise for smart growth.

Mr. Hertsch mentioned that infill runs head on with community preservation, for example, by bringing in new development/homes to old communities, the landscape and

the architecture of community changes. This change can become problematic for the community that was originally there therefore creating some cultural issues. He also noted that there are some people that would like to transfer development rights but that's not possible without density and right now there is no market for TDRs.

Ms. Gilbert suggested to the Task Force that one thing to think about is looking at old shopping centers and reevaluating them for mixed uses.

Mr. Hertsch replied to Ms. Gilbert that although that is a great idea there is a huge demand on shopping centers and that they tend to get sold and redeveloped very fast. He also suggested that the group may have to come up with totally novel solutions to bring to local zoning commissions.

Mr. Beall stated that this Task Force already had the PowerPoint presentation showing the smart growth and current growth scenarios. He noted that this Task Force is a great and rare opportunity and although some of the results of the Task Force might upset some people it is important for the Task Force to identify and attempt to change what is wrong.

Mr. Coyman stated that there is a consciousness that PFAs have development implications. It certainly has people thinking of how development and PFAs are interacting.

Ms. Gardner noted that PFAs are a good concept. However, one problem is annexations by municipalities that take non-PFA land into a municipality developing what were once rural lands.

Mr. Beall stated that the State needs more "teeth". As a side, he noted that Maryland should not allow well and septic systems.

Ms. Kenney stated that she thinks it is important to redefine and re-district some PFAs.

Ms. Carter Conway wondered if there was a State Planning Commission and how it would be structured.

Mr. Laria stated that the job of this Task Force is to investigate all these questions and clearly articulate the answers, which may in some instances be that there is not enough money, but in others solutions may require additional funds. The Task Force should focus on both.

Mr. Hertsch noted that the Task Force knows there is not enough money, yet the question remains how to move forward with less than enough money. Questions such as, how important are the PFAs, will determine if it succeeds or fails.

Ms. Schmidt-Perkins commented that when a major developer comes in with a project the locals often do not have the planning capacity to do the work associated with evaluating the project. Further the lack of planning experiences can lead to a breakdown

in educating the public about such a project. On the issue of citizens, we need to broaden our scope and our level of education to the citizens.

Ms. Gilbert stated that the State really needs to focus investment, in order to focus growth. She made the correlation between investment, resources, and growth.

Ms. Chiang-Smith mentioned that as energy costs rise the public is looking to the State for guidance. This is a prime opportunity to “fix” our growth and development practices.

Mr. Knaap commented that septic systems were another topic that needs to be focused upon.

Ms. Schmidt-Perkins mentioned that early in her career she learned that there are two types of septic systems, those that failed and those that are failing. She also commented that along with septic systems, transportation funding also needs to be evaluated.

Infrastructure Assessment Workgroup

Ms. King gave the Task Force a brief update of the Workgroup meeting. The Workgroup discussed adequate/inadequate infrastructure and will be examining the 2004 Infrastructure Survey results.

MDOT Presentation

In the context of identifying appropriate content for the State Transportation Plan, Ms. Rayman presented a PowerPoint on current programs of the Maryland Department of Transportation.

Mr. Ron Spalding, MDOT briefed the Task Force about Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and their relation with MDOT. MPOs do not report to MDOT. MPOs are bound by federal requirements but they do encompass the goals and objectives of local governments. MPO plans drive a Transportation Improvement Program (TIPs) which includes State and local priority projects.

Ms. Bihui Xu, MDP explained that the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) has a long range plan which is consistent with smart growth and comprehensive plans. Mr. Jamie Bridges, BMC, explained the criteria used when ranking a project. Ms. Rayman noted that MDOT’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) notes the smart growth status for each project. She further noted that a project can easily take six years to implement.

State Development Plan Blueprint

Mr. Hall distributed an enhanced State Development Plan blueprint. Mr. Laria asked all Task Force members to be prepared with comments at the June 30, 2008 meeting.

Final Comments

Mr. Laria reminded the group of the upcoming meetings-June 30, July 15, July 28 and August 12. June 30th is the next Task Force meeting and the Infrastructure Workgroup and Terrapin Run Workgroup will submit preliminary reports and the Task Force will review the State Development Plan blueprint.

Mr. Coyman suggested that the group start working on a preliminary outline for the final report.

Ms. Gilbert commented that through all these discussions a format and structure to the report is emerging.

Mr. Laria asked Ms. Rayman for a narrative summary of her presentation.

Public Comments

Mr. Jamie Bridges, identified himself as staff to the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB). Adding to the earlier conversation on the long range transportation plan for the Baltimore region, he noted that the BRTB's long range plan was crafted to meet federal transportation funding requirements, such as air quality standards. Upon extensive public input in response to the draft long range plan, the Board amended the plan to include more transit and less road development. The elected officials of the Board now seek to expand the focus of the traditional planning process- through investigating the link between transportation and land use planning.