

PLANNING



SPECIAL SECTION
NATIONAL PLANNING AWARDS

It's Frack or Bust in the Northeast
Madison's Hotel NIMBY
Small Towns, Big Dreams



Applause for Slow Growth

ACCORDING TO state planners in Maryland, “it took three centuries to develop the first 650,000 acres in Maryland—and 37 years to develop the next one million.” Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley, the recipient of this year’s National Planning Leadership Award for a Planning Advocate, thinks it’s time to slow that breakneck pace, and directed planners to craft the newly completed—and the state’s first—comprehensive plan for sustainable growth and development, called Plan Maryland. Further, the governor, who is the former mayor of Baltimore, has a new vision for Maryland: Smart, Green & Growing, where human and natural environments fit together hand in glove.

Affordable housing is concentrated in walkable communities enriched by a sense of place and served by both public transportation and modern infrastructure. Business is located in areas already developed or on Smart Sites, which are areas targeted for investment. Those actions and others work to help protect clean air and natural resources, namely the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland’s

forests, farmland, open space, and coastal waters.

His multifaceted plan integrates new regulation, targeted development sites and zones, funding directives, and public outreach. It depends on coordination at every level, working with local governments, the federal government, developers, and citizens, involving them in public meetings and online, in social media, and in interactions like Game-PlanMaryland, a game that allows users to rank planning and land-use priorities then reveals what the state would look like in 2035 under various scenarios.

The governor is a confirmed technocrat. StateStat and Bay-Stat give timely, interpreted feedback on how state agencies meet goals during two-year measuring cycles. One recent success: Maryland has surpassed its latest goal for reducing nitrogen pollution from urban areas.

Before Smart, Green & Growing, Mary-

land Gov. Parris Glendening fostered Smart Growth. If Smart, Green & Growing has an edge over its predecessor program, it may be in the detail it spells out. “The original Smart Growth policies and programs of 1997

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—Gerrit Knaap

largely failed to meet their goals,” according to Gerrit Knaap, executive director of the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education of the University of Maryland. On the other hand, says Knaap, “The array of policies and programs under the Smart, Green & Growing umbrella are reinvigorating smart growth efforts in Maryland.” Success is not assured, however. Gov. O’Malley and local leaders in Maryland are contending with antigovernment sentiments and complaints that the governor is waging war on rural Maryland.

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