

Fall 2010 Maryland Planning Directors Roundtable
Thursday, October 14, 2010
Banneker-Douglass Museum, Annapolis

Welcome & Introduction

[Rich Josephson](#), Director of Planning Services, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that today's meeting included a pretty full [agenda](#). He then asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves.

The Latest on PlanMaryland

Rich Josephson talked about one of the latest MDP [PlanMaryland](#) booklets entitled: "[PlanMaryland: What we're hearing](#)." This book is compiled of comments heard at the public forums held around the State. This was the first big public outreach. Participants were asked to select the planning visions that felt most important. Some of which included: sustainability; quality of life (#1 vision); transportation; housing; and the environment. Rich said community design ranked up there with the other visions.

Right now, Rich said, MDP is talking to the sister state agencies and sharing issues heard at the forums, and asking for feedback. We would like to know – how can [PlanMaryland](#) help you as a State agency? How can your programs help with PlanMaryland; and how do we accommodate the growth in future years?

Rich said that after he has heard back from the other State agencies, he will be talking again about this at a future Planning Directors meeting; possibly in early spring. He also advised the group to use the website for updates on the Plan or feel free to call someone in the Department. It was noted that public input is very critical. Andy Ratner said he was very impressed with the forums and also advised that [PlanMaryland also has a facebook page](#).

GrowthPrint

[Stephanie Martins](#) explained that GrowthPrint is an informational tool for redevelopment. MDP staff has been working on this for about a year now. It began with existing priority funding areas and developing a map of an overlay of all the programmatic areas. Stephanie said we would like to have local input. A letter was sent to the planning directors and several responses were received, but would appreciate any additional input. The next steps include continuing with local input; working with sister agencies and getting their input; and looking for additional input from local planners.

Main Collaborative Session

Areas of Critical State Concern

[Shawn Kiernan](#), MDP regional planner for the Upper Eastern Shore, presented a [PowerPoint](#) the background, history and previous designations of “**Areas of Critical State Concern**” (ACSC). He said the purpose is to discuss ACSC as a potential tool for [PlanMaryland](#). Shawn said he will provide some background and history and then in conclusion will ask for some feedback.

Presentation: ACSC Background, History and Previous Designations

The legislation authorizing the preparation of the State Development Plan includes a requirement that the Plan identify all areas designated by the Department of Planning as Areas of Critical State Concern. ACSCs would be recommended for designation by counties and adopted by the State only after coordination with all affected political subdivisions. Regulations were promulgated in 1976 after an extensive and inclusive process, which established guidelines for designation of ACSCs. After receiving nearly 250 recommended areas, only 27 were formally designated in 1980 – all in Maryland’s Coastal Zone. The 27 areas include important tidal and non-tidal wetland complexes, major coastal bay systems, and rail corridors.

The State Development Plan was intended to provide special protection to the ACSCs and enhance protection and collaboration through state, county and municipal governments. However, in the absence of a State Development Plan, the benefit of designating these areas is unclear. As the State prepares PlanMaryland, the opportunity exists to revisit the Areas of Critical State Concern and re-examine the designated sites, the designation process, and value of designating new places throughout the State.

Following Shawn’s [PowerPoint](#) presentation, the 32 attendees assembled at 6 table groups to engage in a discussion about Areas of Critical State Concern guided by the three questions below. Staff of MDP facilitated these discussion and recorded notes. Each table was assigned a volunteer to report back the table’s comments to the full meeting.

1. What do you think ACSC should be used to accomplish?
2. How can we use the ACSC to accomplish mutual State and local goals and objectives?
3. What issues do you anticipate with the designation of new ACSC?

Rich Josephson led the discussion and each table gave their feedback. Rich told everyone he appreciated their thoughts and the idea was to get everyone’s sense as to where they are on this issue.

The Following is a Summary of the Table Comments as recorded by MDP staff

1. What do you think ACSC should be used to accomplish?

- To promote alternative energy resource areas such as premier wind and solar energy locations.
- As an overlay tool for things like Transit Oriented Development, such as at the confluence of transit hubs.
- Can acknowledge the overlap of State and local importance for locations of State significant cultural and natural resources.
- Little because the existing designations provide no additional funds for needed infrastructure, so there appears to be little reason for another designation.
- Could protect Ridgelines over 2,000 ft. which are being considered for “industrial wind power”.
- To protect Important Transportation Corridors that is needed for Economic Development, both rail and highway.
- To benefit unique areas where local ordinances and regulations do not currently address.
- Could be beneficial for major land uses that affect the regional economy, such as BWI or the Port of Baltimore.
- To designate undesignated Civil War Battlefield such as Folck’s Mill in Allegany County.
- Could provide formal designation to Rails to Trails corridors such as the Great Allegheny Passage in Western Maryland and southwest Pennsylvania.
- Could protect water resources for future community water supplies, aquifers and recharge areas.
- Designate those areas being affected by sea level rise.
- Transportation networks that affect a regionally significant economic generator, such as roads that lead to the Aberdeen Proving Ground.
- Federal installations and places identified as part of BRAC.
- Fiber optic networks and other infrastructure based corridors for business and growth.
- Could designate priority Bay tributaries.
- Should protect economic vitality, jobs and quality of life.

2. How can we use the ACSC to accomplish mutual State and local goals and objectives?

- Can help the State decide where to spend its resources.
- Any program utilizing the ACSC designation needed to provide the incentive of directing dollars to that area.
- Could align State and local government prioritization – when the State and local governments are aligned it is good.
- Could help to define the role of the State as a mediator and facilitator in local issues with a regional or state-wide impact. Local governments can sometimes behave selfishly.

3. What issues do you anticipate with the designation of new ACSC?

- ACSC could be redundant with other existing designations, i.e. PFAs, Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas, etc., and could potentially diffuse the effectiveness of those programs and efforts.
- There will need to continue to be a local government process in any future designations - It is critical that ACSC nominations be made local governments.
- It will be important to establish a collaborative effort between local governments and the State in the nomination and designation of ACSCs.
- There should be a local option to participate in the ACSC designation process and local governments should be able to opt out.
- If it becomes another layer of reporting, budget constraints would play into the ability to do the extra work.
- The list of sites would have to be few in order to be meaningful.
- There would need to be criteria and ranking system and some form of quantification for these sites.
- Designations would need to match stated growth priorities.
- Political will and influence may prove a challenge in implementing these designations.

Other Comments

- Designations need to be associated with additional resources, additional protections or improved efficiencies to have real benefit.
- Would State regulations follow in the wake of ACSC designations as part of PlanMaryland?
- If regulations follow, would they be passed to the local governments to enforce?
- ACSCs should also be included in local comprehensive plans.
- The SDP should be more than land use and should be used to draw together other State Agencies.
- ACSCs might have different priorities and might achieve different goals at different levels of government.
- There remains a question about why is it necessary.

Secretary's State Planning Update

[Secretary Hall](#) thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting and stressed he thought the meetings have been very meaningful.

Secretary Hall announced the first [Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission](#) meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 25th. Jenny King will continue to be the lead staff person, as she was when it was first formed as the Task Force on Growth and Development. Brigid Kenney said she felt the Commission greatly increased the relationship with the MD Department of Environment. Secretary Hall advised the membership has now expanded. [Mayor Victoria Jackson-Stanley](#) will be the Vice Chair and [Jon Laria](#) will continue as Chair. These will be open meetings. If interested in attending, please send [Jenny King](#) an email letting her know. [Future events](#) will include a smart growth bus tour and another meeting in December.

Secretary Hall said the office has received positive feedback on the [Planning Commissioners and Boards of Appeals Education Course](#). The Course can be found online and live training has been provided. Another training session is scheduled at the [October 28th Maryland Citizen Planners Association](#) meeting. Rich Josephson added that out of 1,400 planning commissioners, and board members, 900 have said they completed the course. Plans are in the works for something on the Eastern Shore later on. Rich Josephson said that they have had people who are not required to take the course, take it.

Secretary Hall said that with regards to [HB 1141](#), few jurisdictions have been wrapping up their requirements. Rich Josephson said letters were sent out this week reminding people that if you haven't adopted a plan with a WRE in it, please do so. The deadline was October 1st. This information will need to be reported to the General Assembly in January. Only a few have not submitted anything. Rich Josephson thanked [Alan Girard](#) for the one-day workshop on HB 1141.

[Cory Kegerise](#) of the [Maryland Historical Trust](#) said they are working on the development of the State Historic Preservation Plan. They are concentrating efforts on what is next, and have also formed an advisory group which kicked off a couple of weeks ago. Cory said they will be looking to the Planning Directors to provide feedback. Several issues will include looking at how State and local resources will be spent and stumbling blocks to get projects done. Upcoming public forums and surveys are in the works and will be shared with community organizations and local officials.

Roundtable wrap-up

Rich Josephson introduced a couple of new MDP staff. [Jim Cannistra](#) oversees MDP's Planning Data Services division and one of his main tasks includes [parcel mapping](#). [Chuck Boyd](#) is assigned to work in MDP's Planning Services unit and is a huge asset working on the [PlanMaryland](#) effort.

Rich Josephson also thanked [John Coleman](#) for his hard work in getting this meeting together.

The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.