

## The Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission

Established by the Maryland General Assembly in 2010, the Sustainable Growth Commission makes recommendations on growth and development issues and celebrates smart growth achievements. Commission members, who represent local and state government, business and nonprofit organizations, consider how to help implement laws and regulations concerning Maryland's growth and development.

The Commission held its first Sustainable Growth Forum on February 5 in Annapolis, with



*The Downtown Columbia redevelopment plan was a 2013 Sustainable Growth award winner.*

a focus on economic opportunities created by smart growth. The Commission recognized seven individuals, organizations and projects that have contributed to sustainability and smart growth in Maryland. Christopher B. Leinberger, an author on sustainable growth and walkable urban places delivered the keynote address, "Economic Growth through Smart Growth: How Smart Growth Makes Economic Sense for Maryland."

Throughout 2013, the Commission worked to expand the appeal and interest of the annual forum and awards ceremony. The education working group developed the Sustainable Growth Challenge, a collegiate competition engaging students from across the state in planning and sustainability issues. The Commission received a dozen undergraduate and graduate submissions from student teams conducting community planning exercises that analyze economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable growth and develop creative solutions for communities.

The Commission continues to investigate metrics to quantify the outcomes of smart growth. To develop a comprehensive set of indicators to track progress toward achieving smart growth goals, the commission's concentrating growth working group has coordinated this initiative among state agencies, local governments and the Center for Smart Growth. MDP and the Center for Smart Growth are developing a suite of indicators that will gauge the shorter-term incremental progress of state and local programs toward achieving smart growth and conservation objectives.

The concentrating growth group is working with Urban Land Institute's Baltimore District Council and MDP on a number of strategies to streamline the development approval process in smart growth locations. An assessment of practices in Maryland jurisdictions is underway to identify how they might streamline development in targeted growth areas.