



Maryland Department of Planning

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Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor

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Press Release

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Maryland planning agency to receive national award for planning excellence

Maryland Department of Planning recognized for advocacy, education and statewide growth initiatives

BALTIMORE, MD – The American Planning Association today announced the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) as recipient of the 2015 National Planning Excellence Award for a Planning Agency. The association, which represents the field of city and regional planning in the United States, made the announcement at its Washington, D.C. headquarters. The Planning Excellence award annually recognizes one public sector agency with a consistent history of superior programs whose efforts have promoted the cause of planning—creating communities of lasting value.

The honor comes to MDP for its more than 50 years of advocacy, education and initiatives encouraging statewide growth and improving quality of life for Marylanders.

“I applaud the Maryland Department of Planning and its staff for receiving this national recognition,” said Maryland Governor Larry Hogan. “As one of the few states to have a cabinet level state planning agency and one frequently cited as an example of sound land use management policy, we appreciate this national award from the APA.”

“MDP is honored to receive this award and gratified by the recognition it provides to the state of Maryland,” said David R. Craig, Maryland Secretary of Planning. “For more than 55 years, state planning staff have worked with Maryland towns and counties and other stakeholders to design and implement innovative programs with a long-term perspective to make Maryland communities the greatest places in which to live.”

As the only legislatively created cabinet-level planning department in the country, MDP was founded in 1959 to advocate for and provide tools to help direct growth, preserve natural resources, and strengthen communities across Maryland. MDP routinely works with state and local decision-makers to identify obstacles to sustainable growth and capitalize on opportunities to implement innovative solutions. It partners with diverse stakeholder groups and brings technical assistance and programmatic resources to address a range of issues related to how Maryland grows. MDP also functions as Maryland’s State Data Center, providing statistics, forecasting and analysis across the state and serving as the state’s partner to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Some of MDP’s primary accomplishments in recent years include

- Completion of a state development plan, named PlanMaryland. This statewide growth plan sets the course for growth and revitalization that protects and enhances the unique features of Maryland’s diverse localities and improves coordination of resources and targeting of funding across state agencies.

- The 1997 Smart Growth Act, which has more effectively managed growth by setting aside priority funding and rural designations for the state's growth and protection areas, respectively.
- The 2009 Smart, Green & Growing (SGG) legislative package to encourage sustainability, sound growth, and consistency in statewide policies to strengthen local planning and zoning, grow green jobs, improve transit, and revitalize communities.
- Passage of the 2012 Smart Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act that limited the proliferation of low-density residential development in areas not served by public water and sewer
- Technical assistance and visioning exercises to spearhead revitalization of neighborhoods in areas such as Baltimore and the City of Salisbury.
- Protection of the Chesapeake Bay through work to protect productive farm and forest lands, ensure efficient use of growth capacity within existing towns and communities, and target new development toward state-of-the-art wastewater treatment service areas.
- Grants and technical assistance to protect historic and cultural resources throughout Maryland through the Maryland Historical Trust, the state historic preservation office, a division of MDP.

"MDP's tireless efforts have made Maryland a leader in smart growth and planning," said W. Shedrick Coleman, APA 2015 Jury chair. "Through its cutting-edge analysis tools, MDP has helped Maryland to achieve its growth goals and preserve its diverse natural environment."

The Maryland Department of Planning will be honored at the 2015 National Planning Awards luncheon April 20, 2015, at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle, Washington, and will be featured in the April 2015 issue of *Planning* magazine.

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