



# Indicators Workgroup Report

July 25, 2011

**To:** Jon Laria, Task Force Chairman

**From:** Sandy Coyman and Frank Hertsch

**Date:** July 20, 2011

**Re:** Indicators Workgroup Status and Next Steps

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## Background

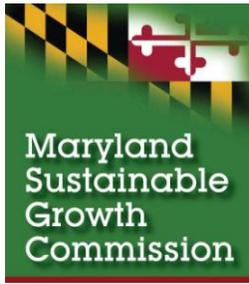
The passage of Senate Bill 276 and House Bill 295 – Smart, Green, and Growing – Annual Report – Smart Growth Goals, Measures, and Indicators and Implementation of Planning Visions in the 2009 General Assembly Session, among other things, required the Task Force to make further recommendations on additional measures and indicators.

In the spring/summer of 2009, the Indicators Workgroup of the Task Force identified additional smart growth measures and indicators and reported to the full Task Force at its July and September meetings. From this the workgroup evaluated many indicators in terms of relevance to smart growth, availability of data, and the practical ability to collect information about the indicator on a regular basis. A letter was sent to the General Assembly in November of 2009 recommending a cautious approach to the adoption of additional mandatory indicators and recommending that any potential indicators be fully studied and vetted before new indicators are legislatively imposed.

Based on this recommendation the work group designated a technical team to “test” the indicators presented on the “List of Potential Smart Growth Indicators.” This group met in Spring of 2010 and assigned group members to test specific indicators. A matrix was developed providing feedback on each of the proposed indicators. In December of 2010, this group presented 15 specific indicators (see below) for consideration by the Growth Commission. The group again recommended to the General Assembly a cautious approach towards adopting additional mandatory indicators. While the team feels that the collection of these indicators would be useful to assess smart growth successes and effects, and feels that collecting the data required by each indicator will not be an onerous task for those charged, their usefulness still needed to be proven “in the field.”

## What We Have Done

To further “test” the usefulness and feasibility of collecting the fifteen specific indicators proposed to the Commission, a Beta Testing group has been formed. This group currently includes representatives from four jurisdictions: Kathleen Freeman (Caroline County Planning), Kathleen Maher (City of Hagerstown Planning), Pamela Dunn (Montgomery County Planning), and Lynn Thomas (Town of Easton). The Beta Testing group met for the first time on July 13, 2011. At this meeting a brief history of the workgroup was given, followed by a discussion of the indicators to be tested and the process for collection. The group was sent a matrix including the fifteen indicators with a series of questions about each indicator. Questions include data availability, source information, feasibility of collecting indicator if not currently available, and thoughts on proposed indicators and potential source recommended by technical team.



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The fifteen specific indicators recommended for consideration by the Growth Commission include:

1. Housing Choices, including affordability:
  - a. Housing Vacancy Rate
  - b. Housing production / growth
  - c. Rental and Owner Affordability
  - d. Home Sales and Affordability
2. The Impact of Growth on the Environment, including Land, Air, & Water:
  - a. Development on septic systems
  - b. Percentage of new development served by public sewer
  - c. Acres of open space in permanent protection and the means of protection
  - d. The amount of forest acres cleared, conserved, and planted
  - e. Wastewater treatment plant capacity and reported flow
  - f. Land Use Change - loss of agricultural resource lands
3. The Job and Housing Balance:
  - a. Jobs-Labor Force Ratio
4. The Impact of Transportation on Growth:
  - a. Mode shares of transit, walk and bike for work or non-work, telecommuting
  - b. Transit ridership rates
  - c. State major transportation investment inside or outside PFAs
5. The Impact of Growth on Cultural and Historic Resources:
  - a. Number of projects reviewed for compliance with federal and State

## Next Steps

The next meeting for the Beta Group will occur in early August. Once data and completed matrices are received from the beta jurisdictions a meeting will be scheduled with the larger workgroup to evaluate the findings and determine the feasibility of collecting each indicator. At this meeting additional recommendations to the General Assembly will also be determined. The workgroup will report to the Commission at the September 26, 2011 the findings of the Beta Workgroup and make additional recommendations for consideration to the General Assembly.