



To: Jon Laria, Chair, Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission  
Maryland Sustainable Growth Commissioners

From: David Carey, MSGC PlanMaryland Workgroup Vice-Chair

Subject: Status Report on MSGC PlanMaryland Workgroup Review of Revised Draft  
PlanMaryland (September)

The Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission (MGSC) PlanMaryland Workgroup met on September 14<sup>th</sup> to begin its review of the recently released Revised Draft PlanMaryland document. The following are initial Workgroup comments on the revised Plan:

- Workgroup members generally felt that the revised draft was much easier to read and understand; the document is shorter and more concise than the previous draft. However, the Plan still needs to address variations in the knowledge base of the reading audience by providing more summaries and illustrations of the Plan components and processes, particularly at the beginning of the document to better orient the reader.
- Workgroup members also commented that the revised draft addressed to some degree, all of the recommendations found in the Workgroup's report to the Sustainable Growth Commission.
- Designation authority and whether the State (Smart Growth Subcabinet) should have the final say remain concerns of the Workgroup members. There is also some uncertainty on how the designations and implementation strategies will be used by State agencies. It was acknowledged by the members that the revised draft Plan does state what PlanMaryland does and does not do, as well as note that the Plan states in several parts of the document that it does not create new laws but works within existing rules and regulations. Workgroup members also recognized that the Plan does provide for a six month assessment process in order for State agencies to evaluate existing programs and identify how the Place/Special Area designation process could be incorporated into funding, programs, and procedures prior to the beginning of the local designation process. However, members of the Workgroup remained concerned and felt that this issue would be a major focal point for further discussions by the group.
- Some Workgroup members are uncertain whether the Plan adequately articulates the benefits of the Plan to State agencies and local governments. The Plan will also need to effectively communicate what will be expected of local governments.
- The Workgroup expressed concern about the additional work at the local and State level associated with the review and designation of Places and Special Areas, particularly if all counties and municipalities would apply. The same work load concern is also true for development of Implementation Strategies. The Plan implementation schedule will need to be evaluated closely to determine if the timeframes are realistic and the process can be managed to ensure it is fair to all (local governments and State agencies).

The PlanMaryland Workgroup has scheduled three meetings – September 28<sup>th</sup>, October 12<sup>th</sup>, and October 26<sup>th</sup> – to complete its review and prepare recommendations on the revised draft Plan. The Workgroup anticipates providing the Commission its full report and recommendation on the Plan at the November 14<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting.