

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

From: Derick Berlage, Chairman, Concentrating Growth Workgroup

Subj: Workgroup Activities

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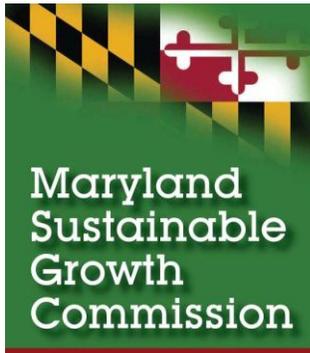
This report is current through November 14, 2013, the date of our most recent conference call. The Workgroup is continuing to pursue initiatives using three subcommittees. We are also monitoring other study groups working on similar issues, and looking for ways the Sustainable Growth Commission can be helpful.

### **Financing Smart Growth**

1. The Commission has previously endorsed a goal of the General Assembly appropriating at least \$35 million per year to fund “core smart growth programs.” A list of the nine core programs and their appropriation history was provided to you in September. In FY 2014, the General Assembly came just short of the \$35 million goal. As Chairman of the Workgroup, I will be asking the Commission to formally endorse an FY 2015 goal of \$40 million. Three of the core programs receive applications for funding that far exceed the available funds: Community Legacy; Neighborhood Business Works; and the Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund. Increasing the goal to \$40 million would allow these worthy programs to do more.

2. S.B. 965 created the Smart Growth Investment Fund Task Force, which will report to the Governor next month. Our Workgroup will analyze that report, and advise you at a future meeting as to whether you should consider endorsing some or all of the report’s recommendations.

3. Several initiatives are underway to strengthen the State’s Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). The Casey Foundation, the Federal Reserve and DHCD have been sponsoring quarterly meetings among CDFIs. Boston Community Capital has introduced its Saving Urban Neighborhoods (SUN) program into Maryland to assist homeowners with



underwater mortgages. The Western Maryland Appalachian Regional Commission is creating a pool of funds to assist CDFIs. For additional information please consult these websites:

[http://www.cdfifund.gov/who\\_we\\_are/about\\_us.asp#](http://www.cdfifund.gov/who_we_are/about_us.asp#)

<http://www.bostoncommunitycapital.org/what/foreclosure-relief>

<http://www.arc.gov/about/index.asp>

4. The Local and Regional Transportation Funding Task Force appointed by the Governor is exploring the concept of a state infrastructure bank, something our Workgroup recommended several years ago. We will review the Task Force’s report and apprise you of any recommendations you may want to adopt. For more information:

[http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/Office\\_of\\_Planning\\_and\\_Capital\\_Programming/Transportation\\_Task\\_Force/Index.html](http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/Office_of_Planning_and_Capital_Programming/Transportation_Task_Force/Index.html)

### **Sustainable Growth Status Check**

MDP and the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland are still working on identifying useful indicators for a sustainable growth “status check.”

### **Streamlining the Development Approval Process in Smart Growth Locations**

Our Workgroup, the Urban Land Institute’s Baltimore District Council, and MDP are working in partnership to collectively address this issue. We anticipate the following approach:

1. Prepare an assessment of current practices in Maryland jurisdictions, identifying what jurisdictions do or don’t do to streamline development in targeted growth locations.
2. Identify an appropriate forum to brainstorm with senior officials who regulate land development at the State, county and municipal level.
3. Prepare a “Best Practices” publication.

We believe one area of opportunity is differential fee structures. There already are a few examples at the State and county level where development within a targeted growth area pays a lower fee than development outside targeted growth areas. This could be an important incentive to get the type of growth we want. It is a simple concept to explain, and could be implemented in jurisdictions no matter what their development approval process looks like. Of course, it has fiscal implications.