



## Education Work Group Report September 23, 2013

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TO: Jon Laria, Chair, MD Sustainable Growth Commission

FROM: Calvin Ball, Chair, Education Workgroup

SUBJECT: Progress Report

DATE: September 23, 2013

The Education Workgroup has much to be excited about for Fall 2013. We have officially launched the Sustainable Growth Challenge, are expanding our social media reach, collaborating with the Realtors to integrate continuing education classes, and looking for ways to improve upon educational programming for members of Planning Boards and Commissions. Below you will find details of our progress.

### **Sustainable Growth Challenge**

We have finalized the Sustainable Growth Challenge framework and completed our outreach to potential participating institutions. I'm delighted to report we have nine teams at six institutions on board: University of MD, College Park, Allegany College of Maryland, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Morgan State, Montgomery College and Towson University. We are pleased that we have participation from various regions in the state as well as both two year and four year institutions.

Some of the teams have already selected their projects while other teams are still identifying a specific focus for the teams. Staff will be working during the month of September to finalize the projects and identify team needs for technical assistance and speakers.

Kick off meetings have occurred with some of the teams, and the Workgroup is busy scheduling meetings with the remaining teams. Early project themes include working with the Town of Oxford on climate adaptation for a pocket park, analysis of Marcellus Shale in a western Maryland community, and other potential larger view community planning challenges in Central Maryland.

As the semester gets into full swing, we will make our Workgroup available to the professors and/or students. We may need to call upon the Commission for your expertise or for subject matter experts to present before the class should the professor like to explore this option. We welcome a list of individuals you feel may be qualified. Once all the final projects are selected, a list will be submitted to the Commission so we determine subject matter experts who may be

best suited to present.

As you are already aware, we have established a website for the <http://planning.maryland.gov/YourPart/773/SGChallenge.shtml>. Our projected timeline is as follows:

- November 18, 2013 - Student materials due
- December 13, 2013 - Presentations before a panel of judges
- February 5, 2014 - Awards given at the Smart Growth Forum

The workgroup is also currently searching for potential sponsors for awards for the winning teams and for food offered during the presentation day in December. A donation is greatly appreciated.

## **Review of the Education Requirements for Members of Planning Boards and Commissions and Boards of Appeals**

MDP is developing a workplan to update and enhance the content as well as integrate use of additional media into the educational program. The workplan will include periodic updates and opportunities for feedback with the Education workgroup, the Maryland Planning Commissioners Association and other interested stakeholder groups.

## **Collaboration with Realtors to Promote Smart Growth**

We continue to make progress on this project. Our first step is to create an outline that must to be submitted to the Real Estate Commission for approval for Continuing Education Credits. Mike Paone has completed a first draft of the CE content and is currently working with the Howard County Association of Realtors® (MD Real Estate Commission Education provider) to create an outline type format which can be used for continuing education approval submission. We anticipate a draft format to be ready over the next couple weeks.

We will submit the outline to the Commission for feedback prior to its submission to the MD Real Estate Commission as it's important that we have the support of the Commission before advancing with this venture. We anticipate this process could take approximately up to 90 days.

Once we receive the approval from the Real Estate Commission, we will then approach each of the individual schools with the approved outline. There are approximately 30 schools in Maryland and our plan of action is to start in Howard County. Throughout the process, we will share our progress and welcome any feedback Commissioners may have on possible classes we should offer. Our goal is to ensure the classes are tied to PlanMD and 12 visions.

In addition, we welcome any Commission members who may be interested in and available to be an instructor. This person would meet with Jim Hyatt to coordinate the outline which will be submitted to the Real Estate Commission.

## Social Media Marketing

As a result of Workgroup discussions, Maryland Department of Planning staff has created a twitter account that we hope Commissioners and friends will follow. The twitter account is named “SustainableGrowthMD” and will be another channel of communication for the Education Workgroup.

In order to populate the new twitter account and the existing LinkedIn account with relevant and appropriate information, Maryland Department of Planning staff will also be sending blog posts from the Smart Growth Maryland blog on the Department of Planning website. Any blog posts that contain the #SustainableGrowthMD can be searched and will automatically be forwarded to Twitter and LinkedIn.

Recent posts that will appear in these various channels of communication include information and promotion of the Sustainable Growth Awards and other relevant SGC activities such as the location of Commission hearings and news.

Our LinkedIn account now has 75 followers and we will continue to expand our reach. Special thanks to Valerie Berton and John Coleman for their assistance.

### ***Smart, Green & Growing:*** **A Proposed Marketing Campaign to Engage All Marylanders in Achieving Smart, Sustainable Growth**

Over the summer, we focused on getting up to speed on various state agency campaigns to raise awareness of and support for sustainable growth. The Education Workgroup's goal is to help coordinate inter-agency communications efforts and provide any assistance we can. Following our initial meeting with MDP's new communications director, Valerie Berton, she spoke with DNR staff who are in charge of the State's *Smart, Green & Growing* campaign to learn more about SG&G and to share MDP's efforts.

Ms. Berton has since agreed to present MDP's communications goals and strategies at an upcoming Commission meeting this fall. In the meantime, she shared several suggestions and updates with the Education Work Group, including:

- The Work Group should plan for a presentation on the Smart Growth Challenge at the 2014 Maryland Sustainable Growth Forum and Awards Ceremony on Feb. 5.
- MDP encourages Growth Commission members to contribute posts on timely growth issues to its blog, which is very big-picture in its coverage. Commission members are invited to email in any ideas and/or a set of brief bullet points, and MDP staff would be happy to turn that material into a blog post.
- MPD is looking to turn the spotlight on PlanMaryland and its implementation. The message will be big-picture, in nature, and MDP's communications staff will be able to update the Commission on that campaign.

- Another upcoming issue is the Sustainable Communities Tax Credit, which sunsets this year. MDP is developing its plans to raise awareness of the need to reauthorize that program in the next General Assembly session.

The Education Workgroup will continue to offer its assistance in coordinating state agency communications efforts, with a particular focus on finding points of collaboration between MDP's priorities and DNR's work on the *Smart, Green & Growing* campaign.

Our goal is twofold: To better connect the MDP and Smart, Green & Growing campaigns and to continue meeting with them to identify how our Workgroup can assist their collaboration.