

# Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission Meeting

March 24, 2014

Department of Housing & Community Development  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, Maryland

## Meeting Summary

*Members:* Jon Laria, Marty Baker (for MDOT), Derick Berlage, Greg Bowen, Dan Colhoun, Cheryl Cort, David Costello, Sandy Coyman, Charlotte Lawson Davis, Alan Girard, Rich Hall, Frank Hertsch, Matt Holloway, Gerrit Knaap, Steve Lafferty, David Lever, Mary Ann Lisanti, Robb Merritt, Sandi Olek, Ursula Powidzki, Dru Schmidt-Perkins, Ray Skinner, Bryce Turner, Stan Wall, Duane Yoder

*Attendees:* Carol Gilbert, Christine Shenot, Ashley Valis

*MDP Staff:* Jenn Aiosa, Chuck Boyd, Amanda Conn, Peter Conrad, David Dahlstrom, Arabia Davis, Rich Josephson, Linda Janey, Karen Kennedy, Jenny King, Kristen Mitchell, Pat Russell, Joe Tassone

### **Administrative Matters and Updates**

Mr. Jon Laria announced the appointment of three (3) new members to the Commission. They are Daniel Colhoun (former Chair of MALPF), Matt Holloway, President of the Wicomico County Council, and Stan Wall, Director of Real Estate and Station Planning at WMATA. Mr. Laria also announced the recent Commission resignations from Kelly Cartales, as the Housing Representative, and Russ Brinsfield, as the Eastern Shore Representative. Mr. Laria also added there is one Washington-Metropolitan slot still open. Mr. Laria would welcome any suggestions on possible candidates for these three (3) openings.

Mr. Laria and Mr. Richard E. Hall introduced Kristen Mitchell, Director of Smart Growth Design & Development who recently joined the Maryland Department of Planning. Ms. Mitchell's interests in redevelopment and real estate issues fit nicely with the Commission's new initiative on infill, redevelopment and revitalization.

Mr. Laria referenced everyone to the 2014 Meeting Schedule (copy in today's packet) and noted that the Commission will continue to host meetings around the State to gain a better perspective on growth and development issues in Maryland.

Mr. Laria noted that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Forum and Awards Ceremony was an outstanding event. He offered a few suggestions concerning possible changes to future events, such as holding the event at the Miller Senate Complex instead of the Governor Calvert House. While the Calvert House is an outstanding venue the Commission probably could garner more participation from the Legislators if it were to be moved to the Miller Senate Complex. Mr. Laria also sought

feedback from the Commission on whether the Awards Ceremony and the Forum should be held as two (2) separate events. Many of the members were supportive of Mr. Laria's suggestion to change the meeting location. A number of Commissioners, however, did not see a need to separate the Awards Ceremony and the Forum.

Mr. Greg Bowen proclaimed that it was a great evening for planning. Mr. Bryce Turner suggested one possibility would be piggybacking the forum with another conference, e.g. APA. Ms. Mary Ann Lisanti recommended that the Commission make an effort to distinguish the target audience. She also would like to see the Commission engage in more outreach to garner a more diverse group of attendees.

### **Sustainable Communities Update**

Mr. Raymond Skinner briefed members on the Sustainable Community designation process. He advised members that the process for application review involves a collaborative inter-agency review among a number of Smart Growth Subcabinet representatives, working in close consultation with the local government. Once the application evaluation is complete, the candidate communities are then submitted to the Smart Growth Subcabinet for the final review and designation. To date, around 80 or so areas have been designated as Sustainable Communities. Mr. Skinner's goal is to make sure the ones that are selected are really serious about implementing a revitalization plan that is viable.

With regards to the Sustainable Community benefits, Mr. Skinner noted that the Community Legacy Program and the Neighborhood Business Works, which were initially implemented by former Governor Glendening, are part of the suite of programs target resources toward Sustainable Communities. Mr. Hall explained that the Sustainable Community area is a subset of the jurisdiction's Priority Funding Area (PFA). He stated that PFAs often include stable residential neighborhoods, but the Sustainable Communities designation enables the state to focus on that portion of the PFA that needs redevelopment and revitalization.

### **2014 General Assembly Session**

Mr. Skinner reported on three departmental bills for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) (handout in packet). The bills include HB 453 – Multifamily Rental Housing Programs Efficiency Act; HB 553 – Energy-Efficient Homes Construction Loan Program; and HB 451 – Financial Assistance for Food Desert Areas. The Food Desert Bill requires DHCD to establish an Interagency Food Desert Advisory Committee to recommend on ways to reduce the number of food deserts and promote healthy food access for Maryland neighborhoods. Mr. Skinner also mentioned that based on the Governor's proposed budget DHCD will be getting \$51 million in capital funds for its housing programs.

Mr. Hall spoke to the Maryland Department of Planning's interest in HB 510 – Sustainable Community Tax Credit and mentioned that at the time of this reporting the Bill had passed the House and was awaiting a Senate hearing date.

Mr. David Costello mentioned that two bills amending provisions of the Bay Restoration Fund are moving along. He also mentioned MDE has drafted a Zero Waste Plan that centers on a

number of progressive solid waste reduction, reuse, recycling and energy recovery goals, and policy reforms.

Ms. Marty Baker noted that MDOT had quite a legislative year last session, so there are not too many bills promoted by MDOT this year. They have supported a bill that came out of the Electric Vehicle Council, which recently passed the House. There are a series of bills regarding highway user revenues that MDOT is monitoring

Ms. Ursula Powidzki talked about the Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise (RISE) Zone Bill and noted that it could be significant. She said that, while this bill looks like other “enterprise zone” programs, it is different because it is tied to commitments from higher education institutions. The purpose of the program is to access institutional assets that have a strong and demonstrated history of commitment to economic development and revitalization in the communities which they are located.

Mr. David Lever noted that there were a few bills that would significantly increase the public school construction program under consideration. He stated that it is very likely that a study group will probably be formed to examine the proposed bills.

Ms. Sandi Olek briefly noted two bills of significance to the Department of Natural Resources. The first is the Designation of New Wildlands bill, which proposes the expansion of 14 wildland areas and the addition of 9 wildland areas under the State wildlands preservation system. The second DNR bill is entitled the Coast Smart Council, which establishes a Council to develop specified “Coast Smart” siting and design criteria to address sea level rise and coastal flood impacts on capital projects.

Ms. Dru Schmidt-Perkins noted that her organization has been closely monitoring the Program Open Space funding and the reform of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC).

Mr. Stephen Lafferty elaborated a little more on the BMC bill, adding that the bill will change the membership of the BMC and broaden its responsibilities. The bill expands on BMC’s role to include facilitating coordination and collaboration among local jurisdictions and organizations in the Baltimore region to foster regional economic growth and development in areas that include regional transportation, housing, workforce development, and renewable energy projects and usage.

Mr. Laria introduced a copy of the letter he received from Speaker Busch regarding owner-occupied neighbors affected by the financial crisis. Mr. Skinner said this is actually a follow-up to the Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative. Mr. Skinner was confident that the task force that is being created can follow-up on this initiative to see what type of legislative updates may be needed. Mr. Laria asked members to please indicate if they are interested in participating in this effort.

### **Update on Smart Growth Infrastructure Fund and the Maryland Economic Development Corporation's role in Smart Growth in Maryland**

Mr. Laria introduced Mr. Robert Brennan, MEDCO's Executive Director. Mr. Brennan provided a brief introduction on the role of MEDCO, which he stated was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1984 to help attract new and retain existing businesses in Maryland through ownership, leasing and helping with the cost of acquisition and revitalization of a project. The MEDCO Board is represented by both the Departments of Business and Economic Development and Transportation. Mr. Brennan stated that MEDCO has done a lot with the local governments and in the future a number of projects are going to be set up as Private, Public Partnership (P3) projects. Some of these new projects may include use of the enhanced Tax Increment Financing legislation passed last year. He mentioned that MEDCO is involved in the P3 project at the Owings Mills transit-oriented development and will likely participate in one or more P3 projects along the Purple Line.

Mr. Brennan said MEDCO will examine the best ways to position the Smart Growth Investment Fund to achieve success in attracting private investment to Sustainable Communities. There are a lot of questions that will need to be answered before the fund can be set-up. He is working with other stakeholders to help come up with a comprehensive financing strategy focusing on Sustainable Communities. To date, Mr. Brennan has met with Delegate Rosenberg and others to discuss slots revenue and the various opportunities that may be available to use the revenue to reinvest in Baltimore City.

Mr. Laria thanked Mr. Brennan for undertaking this very important effort. Mr. Laria thought that the briefing on MEDCO would be beneficial for the members of the Commission and that he looked forward to continuing to build on this very important partnership.

### **Discussion on Infill, Redevelopment and Revitalization (IRR) Initiative**

Mr. Hall began the discussion on Infill, Redevelopment and Revitalization by referencing the letter disseminated at the January 2014 Growth Commission Meeting from Governor Martin O'Malley and Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown. This letter asks the Commission to recommend ways to build on existing infill, redevelopment and revitalization efforts in Maryland's existing communities. Mr. Hall directed Commission members' attention to the proposed work plan included in today's meeting materials. Mr. Hall explained that this draft work plan is his initial thoughts on the best way to move forward to meet the established August 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. From his perspective, one of the biggest challenges will be developing a strategy to best engage Marylanders to identify the most important and effective strategies that will promote infill, redevelopment and revitalization in our existing communities.

The members were advised that the final work product from this effort is not intended to be a forum but rather a report to the Governor and Lt. Governor. Mr. Laria suggested that the members consider: 1) doing an outreach event to engage experts in a variety of fields that can suggest new strategies; 2) inventorying existing programs and tools used at the state and local level that address infill, redevelopment and revitalization; 3) examining best practices from throughout the country that could be adopted by Maryland; and 4) developing recommendations that have actionable items the Commission can take up. Mr. Laria added he recognizes that some state agencies may have more programs geared to this issue than others, but it is

practicable for all of the agencies, local government representatives and other constituencies on the Commission can play an active role in this effort.

Mr. Laria opened the meeting up for feedback and ideas from the Commissioners:

Mr. Turner felt this is a great topic for the Commission to address in promoting Smart Growth in Maryland and indicated there was great potential promoting redevelopment in our communities. The questions that he would like answered include – how do we encourage redevelopment; how do you attract some of these larger institutions to invest in our more blighted communities; how do we promote workforce development and job training; and how do we get different organizations involved in this conversation.

Mr. Bowen expressed concern that the infrastructure in many communities is tapped out and, as a result, redevelopment opportunities may be impeded. He encouraged the Commission to examine why certain areas are not growing and if it is attributable to infrastructure constraints.

Ms. Schmidt-Perkins cited a few examples of other states: the San Francisco area looked at 12 communities; there is a greater neighborhood redevelopment program in Massachusetts; and there are suburb alliances in Michigan and New Jersey. Ms. Schmidt-Perkins also advised the Commission of an upcoming conference in May being sponsored through the federal government, entitled “Reinventing Old Communities in Philadelphia.” Ms. Schmidt-Perkins said that she will get more information on this.

Ms. Powidzki would like for this initiative to focus more on housing.

Mr. Gerrit Knaap suggested a more place specific exercise because a generic infill / redevelopment discussion will not be helpful.

Ms. Cheryl Cort commented that some of our infrastructure investments promotes sprawl development and that we need to redirect resources to address impediments to development around train stations and adjacent sites.

Mr. Derrick Berlage said we need to recognize that sprawl still eats up financial resources. He is hoping through this process to identify new ideas.

Mr. Stan Wall encouraged the Commission to find ways to prioritize infill, redevelopment and revitalization opportunities. He suggested that diagnostic tools may be needed to help evaluate areas to better understand issues such as affordable housing and market conditions. Once the problems are understood, then solutions can be identified.

Ms. Olek noted that green spaces need to be considered in promoting redevelopment efforts. DNR has developed some new tools that can help evaluate the availability of green space when trying to plan redevelopment projects.

Ms. Baker questioned “how the State leverages the tools already in place, particularly in the area of transportation and housing assistance?”

Mr. Sandy Coyman felt that the intent of the letter from the Governor and Lt. Governor is for the Commission to look at this from a statewide perspective because one-size does not fit all. Identify what are the successes? He said we need to take a broader perspective looking outside of the state and then seeing how this information can be used in a Maryland approach.

Mr. Colhoun voiced concern that the tax transfer is not going to the right area or that is the perception. This should be examined as part of this effort.

Mr. Holloway said the inter-jurisdictional TDR program is something that should also be considered.

Mr. Alan Girard encouraged the Commission to focus on the gaps and try to be inclusive.

Ms. Schmidt-Perkins said we need to comment on the pipeline and legacy development projects -this should be considered. Developers need to use the approvals they have or lose them.

Ms. Baker also would like the Commission to focus on certain types of redevelopment areas, i.e. brownfields, greenfields, TOD, etc.

Mr. Laria stated we need to quickly sit down and see what the next steps look like and get something out to the Commission.

### **Workgroup Reports**

Mr. Laria indicated the reports are ready for members to review. Mr. Laria asked members to take a look at the Indicators Report (copy in packet). This will be discussed at the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Yoder advised that he can no longer be the Chair for the Rural Economies Workgroup. He does not think he can provide the time that is needed for this group given his other obligations. He asked that members look for someone else and he will support whoever has the time for this commitment.

### **Public Comments**

None

Chairman Laria adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

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\*Next Commission meeting – **May 12, 2014 – Baltimore City**