



To: Jon Laria, Chairman, Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission
From: Greg Bowen, Sustainable Growth Award Selection Committee Chair
Subject: 2015 Sustainable Growth Award Recommendations
Date: November 24, 2014

The 2015 Sustainable Growth Awards will be the third annual recognition of smart and sustainable growth leadership and initiatives by the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission. The process began back in July of this year with a broad outreach effort for nominations for the three categories of Growth Awards:

- **Leadership and Service:** Awards presented for leadership and service recognize individuals, organizations, agencies, and institutions for laudable activities or accomplishments in Maryland that advance the public's appreciation, understanding and/or involvement in promoting smart growth and sustainable communities at the local, regional, or state level.
- **Smart Growth Communities:** Awards presented for smart growth communities recognize outstanding achievements by individuals, organizations, government agencies, and other entities for projects and activities of all sizes, scopes, and on all types of properties.
- **Preservation / Conservation Projects:** Preservation/Conservation Project awards are presented to individuals, organizations, government agencies, and other entities for their accomplishments in protecting or improving farms, forests, natural resources, and the waters of Maryland.

By the close of the Growth Award nomination period in September, a total of 18 nominations were received – some of which were recommend for more than one category. The Selection Committee began its review of the nominations in October. The Selection Committee, consisting of (Greg Bowen, Karl Brendle, Charlotte Lawson-Davis, Jon Laria, Dru Schmidt-Perkins, and Bryce Turner) had two conference call meetings to review the nominations and develop a slat of Growth Award candidates for recommendation to the full Growth Commission. The following table lists the recommended 2015 Growth Award Candidates.

2015 Maryland Sustainable Growth Award Recommendations

2015 Sustainable Growth Award Recommendations
Leadership and Service
Greater Homewood Community Corporation
Spike Gjerde, Owner and Chef of Woodberry Kitchen
Smart Growth Communities
Farm Alliance of Baltimore City
Homewood Community Partners Initiative
Alice Virginia and David W. Fletcher Branch of the Washington County Free Library
Ocean City Façade Improvement Program
Preservation/Conservation Projects
Evergreen Heritage Center

The following is a short description of each of the recommended Sustainable Growth Award candidates:

Leadership and Service Awards	
Greater Homewood Community Corporation	<p>Founded in 1969, Greater Homewood Community Corporation (GHCC) uses a multifaceted approach to strengthen neighborhoods in north central Baltimore City. They focus in lower income and middle market neighborhoods to improve the overall quality of life. Their strategies include improving public schools, facilitating private and public investment in neighborhoods and commercial corridors, community organizing and developing neighborhood leadership.</p> <p>The Greater Homewood Corporation serves as a catalyst for positive change in neighborhoods where community involvement is necessary to ensure that low-income and moderate income families are afforded with the opportunity to: safely reside in quality affordable housing; learn new skills that would make otherwise unemployable residents employable; design and construct school facilities that are conducive for learning; and provide accessible recreational resources that will hopefully provide deter youth living in the community from joining a gang or selling illegal narcotics.</p>
Spike Gjerde, Owner and Chef of Woodberry Kitchen	<p>An axiom of land preservation efforts is that the best way to preserve farms is to preserve farmers. One way farmers stay in business is through sales to local residents and restaurants, which pay retail prices directly to growers for fresh, high quality fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, seafood, and other products. Maryland is fortunate to have a number of prominent chefs who serve in their restaurants food raised primarily in Maryland. One of these chefs is Spike Gjerde, who owns and operates the Woodberry Kitchen in Baltimore.</p>

	<p>In addition to serving locally-raised, seasonal food, Mr. Spike Gjerde is also a prominent advocate for Maryland farmers and local agricultural economies. Mr. Gjerde has been a strong proponent of historic preservation and has located many of his businesses in restored industrial buildings. Woodberry Kitchen and Artifact Coffee are part of former industrial complexes that were reborn through imaginative adaptive reuse.</p>
<p>Smart Growth Communities Awards</p>	
<p>Farm Alliance of Baltimore City</p>	<p>Farm Alliance is a membership network of urban farms in Baltimore City committed to increasing food access, creating viable farms, revitalizing vacant lots, and building vibrant urban communities. The current use of the properties operated by the ten members of the Farm Alliance is primarily food production with an additional focus on uses such as education, neighborhood development, stormwater management, economic development, community greening, and more. Each site has a distinct mission, model, layout, and organizational structure, but they all share the goal of producing food in the urban environment and supporting the urban agriculture movement. Each site acts as a hub for their respective neighborhood, hosting community events and educational tours while producing some of the freshest food around. Most of the parcels where the farms are located are owned by Baltimore City Government.</p> <p>Most of the current farm sites began as trash-strewn vacant lots that were the site of frequent dumping, crime, drug use, tall weeds, and general complaints. Many founding farmers removed enormous amounts of trash and debris in order to clear the land where they are now growing. All have tested their soil for lead and other contaminants, and they proceeded with a management plan to mitigate risk and improve soil quality. Several sites had to bring in water lines, import significant amounts of compost and soil, build sheds and gathering pavilions, create refrigeration, beautify the borders with flowers, develop rainwater management plans, and more. These significant infrastructure investments have improved the neighborhood and also contributed to long-term farm viability.</p>
<p>Homewood Community Partners Initiative</p>	<p>The Homewood Community Partners Initiative (HCPI) encompasses 11 neighborhoods in central Baltimore. Loosely bound by University Parkway to the north, Greenmount Ave. to the east, 36th St. to the west and the MICA and University of Baltimore campuses to the south. The aim of this initiative is to address urban blight, generational poverty and social struggles that have afflicted (drug addiction, gang activity, prostitution, homelessness, etc.) a number of neighborhoods in Central Baltimore. The vision of the Homewood Community Partners Initiative is to improve the quality of life and sustainability of impacted communities by encouraging public participation and working closely with government agencies.</p> <p>The collaborative HCPI development process enables the 61 partners to not only agree on an ambitious revitalization agenda, but also to see a role for themselves in achieving it. Therefore, it has the support of businesses, property owners, neighborhood associations, non-profits, city government,</p>

	<p>and the community's anchor institutions. Representing and comprised of private citizens, key organizational stakeholders within the target area have made formal commitments to collaborate in funding and implementing the agenda. Together, the \$60 million plan is expected to be the catalyst for well over \$1 billion of future development over the next decade.</p> <p>While far from complete, the HCPI has already begun to yield quantifiable results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more than \$770 million in development investment since 2007; and • more than 1500 units of housing (about 30% of which is affordable to low- and moderate-income households).
<p>Alice Virginia and David W. Fletcher Branch of the Washington County Free Library</p>	<p>The Alice Virginia and David W. Fletcher Branch Library serves as the main library for the Washington County Free Library system and is also the headquarters of the Western Maryland Regional Library which provides an equity of library service to the three rural counties of Western Maryland. The new 84,000 SF library is regarded as a major anchor in the downtown Hagerstown and is a LEED Silver building. Portions of the old building were recycled including the concrete outer walls. A rain water catchment was installed for use in cleaning library vehicles including the bookmobile. Native plants were selected for planting in keeping with the regions native habitant.</p> <p>The new library is part of the revitalization strategy for downtown Hagerstown that promotes a walkable downtown and connects to the surrounding neighborhoods. The outside facade of the library was designed to harmonize with the surrounding street scape. The entrance to the library at street level presents to the City's square and has been considered so esthetically beautiful that high school art students are assigned to come to the library to study its perspective and to draw the view from the front steps. Washington County citizens now have an outstanding community educational and cultural asset that is beautiful and harmonious with the downtown streetscape. Funding for this project was provided by State of Maryland, City of Hagerstown, Washington County and through private donations.</p>
<p>Ocean City Façade Improvement Program</p>	<p>The Ocean City Development Corporation (OCDC) Façade Improvement Program has helped to improve the physical appearance of a number of buildings in the downtown area. One of the goals of the façade program was to offer a more attractive experience for pedestrians by complementing the design standards codified for the area by the Ocean City.</p> <p>Prior to the commencement of the OCDC Façade Improvement Program in 2002, it was stated that many of the buildings in downtown Ocean City were looking in disrepair and in need of renovation. Downtown Ocean City did not have sufficient older buildings to qualify as a historic district, and the owners of the few buildings that would qualify for such designation were generally not interested in pursuing this designation. For many years there had been a lack of reinvestment in many of the older buildings and businesses in the downtown area of Ocean City.</p> <p>The Façade Program has been very instrumental in promoting the architectural significance of some of Ocean City's older buildings. Although</p>

	<p>the downtown area is not classified as a historic district, there are several outstanding older buildings located in it. The Façade Program has assisted many of these older buildings. If not for the Façade Program, these structures would have continued to deteriorate.</p> <p>The OCDC's Façade Improvement Program has been a tremendous success for the downtown area as it has been extremely useful in leveraging private investment in renovation projects. In the OCDC's 155 completed façade projects under the OCDC Façade Program, the ratio of total funds to public funds has been over 6:1. In the past year the OCDC has completed 20 façade projects with a continued high leverage ratio. This façade program has provided over \$5 million of private investment for the downtown Ocean City area since its commencement.</p>
<p>Preservation / Conservation Awards</p>	
<p>Evergreen Heritage Center</p>	<p>Located on 130 acres of “Federal Hill” in the heart of Allegany County, the Evergreen Heritage Center (EHC) is an historic Maryland farm that predates the Revolutionary War. The property has been on the Maryland Historical Trust inventory of properties since 1976 and is slated to be added to the National Register in 2014. EHC features a six bedroom farmhouse and barn originally built in the late 1700s, plus over 100 acres of managed forest, gardens and fields. The Center promotes best practices in environmental conservation and provides a living example of how to “live off the land’ while protecting it for future generations.</p> <p>The EHC offers multiple programs for the community, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environmental field classes for Allegany County children from pre-school to grade twelve; • a Healthy Living outreach program for community organizations to learn about organic gardening; • an experiential learning opportunity for college students, providing 200 to 300 students every year real-work experience; • professional development workshops for educators to learn how to integrate experiential outdoor activities into the curriculum; and • hands-on workshops on best practice in sustainable agriculture and forestry.