

# Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission Meeting

November 24, 2014/1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

## Queen Anne's County, Department of Planning & Zoning 160 Coursevall Drive Centreville, MD 21617 Meeting Summary

**Members:** Jon Laria, Greg Bowen, Karl Brendle, Boyd Campbell, Diane Chasse, David Costello, Howard Freedlander, Alan Girard, Rich Hall, Carol Gilbert for Clarence Snuggs, Don Halligan, Frank Hertsch, Gerrit Knaap, Sandi Olek, Dru Schmidt-Perkins, Bryce Turner, Stan Wall, Bruce Williams, Duane Yoder

***Elected***

***Officials:*** Bob Simmons

***Attendees:*** Steven Cohoon, Duane Felix, Jeff Fretwell, Les Knapp, Kimberly Rennie, Gregg A. Todd

***MDP Staff:*** Chuck Boyd, Amanda Conn, David Dahlstrom, Rich Josephson, Jenny King, Kristen Mitchell, Joe Tassone

### **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Chairman Jon Laria thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and extended his appreciation to the staff of the Queen Anne's County Planning & Zoning Department for hosting the Commission meeting. He announced that the Community Development Network of Maryland recognized the Growth Commission's work with its Lorraine Sheehan Memorial Advocacy Award on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Laria also informed the Commission that Calvin Ball has submitted his resignation due to his obligations on the Howard County Council.

Mr. Laria pointed out a recent article in the Washington Post about downtown Frederick City that highlighted many of the issues the Commission is advocating for in the *Reinvest Maryland* report. He encouraged Commission members to read the article and noted that the National Center for Smart Growth was involved in several student projects in Frederick. Gerrit Knaap explained that Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability (PALS) is a campus-wide initiative that harnesses the expertise of UMD faculty and the energy and ingenuity of UMD students to help Maryland communities become more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable. PALS is working with Frederick to tackle projects ranging from assessing climate change impacts on the City's watershed to creating design alternatives for the City's surplus properties and engaging minority communities in the revitalization effort. In total, the University is undertaking 30 projects with the City of Frederick covering planning and development, energy and the environment, and social issues.

Mr. Laria then introduced the Queen Anne's County Administrator, Gregg Todd, who welcomed the Commission to Queen Anne's County. Mr. Todd introduced Steven Cohoon and asked him to provide the Commission with an overview of Queen Anne's County.

### *Overview of Queen Anne's County*

Mr. Cohoon started his presentation of Queen Anne's County by orienting the Commission to the size and character of the county. In 2010, the county's population was 47,798 - with most of the people living in outside of the eight incorporated towns (which totaled only 7,317). Most of the county is rural, only 5% of the land area is in a Priority Funding Area (PFA). However, 99% of all business growth has occurred within PFAs. Queen Anne's County has the lowest unemployment rate of any county on the Eastern Shore. The county's economic development incentives direct businesses to locate in PFAs and Designated Growth Areas. Partnering with state agencies, the county has received Main Street and Sustainable Community designations for Centreville and an Arts & Entertainment District designation for Historic Stevensville.

The county has major transportation corridors that connect the county's PFAs and serve as critical links for commerce and the movement of people on the Eastern Shore. Much of the commuter and vacation traffic on the Eastern Shore comes through Queen Anne's County. The county has strong agricultural and open space preservation programs with 31% of the county's land under some form of preservation easement. Mr. Cohoon noted that Queen Anne's County is in full compliance with the Septics Bill. The county has not adopted a Growth Tier Map at this point, which means that only minor subdivisions on septic systems are allowed for 88% of the County's land area.

Mr. Cohoon informed the Commission that the county has been successfully collaborating with several state agencies, particularly MDP and MDE, to address the long standing problem on Southern Kent Island. This part of the county has subdivisions that were recorded in 1950s prior to septic regulations. Given the high groundwater table, the poor soil conditions, and the relatively small lots, many of the existing homes have failing septic systems and the owners of the vacant, recorded lots have not been able to develop them. In accordance with state law, if the county provided public sewer to the failing septic systems, all the adjacent vacant lots would be eligible to connect to the system - potentially adding an additional 1600 housing units on Southern Kent Island. The resolution of this problem is extend public sewer service to 1,518 existing homes and a maximum of 632 vacant lots. The county is requesting a State Revolving Fund loan and Bay Restoration Fund grants to help pay for the infrastructure improvements. With the passage of HB 11 in 2014, the county is now able to request Bay Restoration funds outside of PFA to address failing septic systems. Working with the state, the county has been able to keep this project affordable for existing residents and still limit growth and infill through lot consolidation.

### *Approval of 2015 Sustainable Growth Awards*

Greg Bowen reported that the Selection Committee, consisting of (Greg Bowen, Karl Brendle, Charlotte Lawson-Davis, Jon Laria, Dru Schmidt-Perkins, and Bryce Turner) held two conference call meetings to review the 18 nominations for 2015 Sustainable Growth Awards under the categories of Leadership/Service, Smart Growth Community, and Preservation/Conservation. The Committee recommended the following a slate of Growth Award candidates for consideration by the Commission:

<b>2015 Sustainable Growth Award Recommendations</b>
<b><i>Leadership and Service</i></b>
Greater Homewood Community Corporation
Spike Gjerde, Owner and Chef of Woodberry Kitchen
<b><i>Smart Growth Communities</i></b>
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
<b><i>Preservation/Conservation Projects</i></b>
Evergreen Heritage Center

Howard Freedlander made the motion to affirm the Selection Commission’s recommendations for the 2015 Sustainable Growth Award; seconded by Don Halligan. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Laria mentioned that we are still working to confirm the keynote speaker, location and date. It is our hope to have the schedule for the forum and award ceremony set by early December. We are look at dates in late January or early February at this point.

**Update on the 2015 Sustainable Growth Challenge Student Competition**

Sandi Olek reported that seven classes registered for the Fall 2014 Sustainable Growth Challenge. This includes Morgan State University with 3, University of MD College Park with 2, and one each from Baltimore County Community College, Johns Hopkins University. Group submissions will be due on December 12. Finalist presentations will occur on January 22. Growth Commission members are invited to be review panelists for this event.

**Update on the Neighborhood Stabilization & Homeownership Workgroup**

Carol Gilbert, filling in for Clarence Snuggs, reported that the Neighborhood Stabilization and Homeownership Workgroup has been meeting monthly since July in response to House Speaker Michael Busch’s request that the Sustainable Growth Commission study the impact of the financial crisis on historically owner-occupied neighborhoods and identify resources, strategies and recommendations to preserve the stability of and promote homeownership in these neighborhoods. To get more input on the problem and possible solutions, the Workgroup also convened a series of four focus groups with lenders, realtors, housing counselors and local government partners. Ms. Gilbert stated that the Workgroup is reviewing a first draft of the report that identifies eight goals and 23 strategies. The Workgroup will be refining the goals and strategies during December and will have a final report on recommendations to submit to the General Assembly in January.

**Briefing on the Purple Line Compact**

Mr. Laria introduced this agenda item by first asking Don Halligan to report on the current status of the Red and Purple Line projects.

Purple Line - Don Halligan provided an overview of the Purple Line project in Montgomery and Prince George's County:

In March 2013, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) determined that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act have been satisfied for the Purple Line project. The Preferred Alternative is a 16.2-mile east-west light rail transit (LRT) line between the Bethesda Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metro station in Montgomery County and the New Carrollton WMATA Metro station in Prince George's County, Maryland. The transitway will be at grade except for one short tunnel section and three sections elevated on structures. It will operate mainly in dedicated or exclusive lanes, providing fast, reliable transit operations. System elements also include 21 stations, two storage and maintenance facilities, 20 traction power substations, 14 signal bungalows, and other ancillary facilities. The Purple Line would provide a direct connection to the Metrorail Red, Green and Orange Lines. The Purple Line would also connect to MARC Train, Amtrak and local bus services. Cost estimates for the project are reported to be \$2.45 billion.

MDOT and the Maryland Transit Administration have solicited a public-private partnership that would promote the successful delivery of the Purple Line. On July 28, 2014, MDOT/MTA issued a final request for proposals to shortlisted teams. Proposals are to be submitted on March 12, 2015. MDOT/MTA will select a preferred partner and recommend the final agreement to the Board of Public Works for its review and approval.

Red Line - Don Halligan provided an overview of the Baltimore Red Line project:

In February 2013, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) determined that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act have been satisfied for the Red Line project. The Preferred Alternative consists of a 14.1-mile light rail transit line from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in Baltimore County to the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center campus in Baltimore City. The FTA is the lead federal agency for this project, while the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is serving as the project sponsor. Cost estimates for the project are reported to be \$2.9 billion.

Gerrit Knaap then briefed the Commission on the Purple Line Coalition and the draft Compact being prepared. The Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC) is a partnership of regional stakeholders across Montgomery County, Prince George's County and State Leadership, working to ensure that investments in the Purple Line will offer the maximum economic, social, and environmental opportunities to the residents and businesses along the corridor. Formed in 2013 by the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth (NCSG), the PLCC seeks to identify methods for preservation and economic growth, revitalizing and stabilizing neighborhoods, preserving community assets, supporting small businesses, connecting workers to jobs and creating healthy and vibrant communities.

Mr. Knaap explained that officials from the State of Maryland, Montgomery and Prince George's County have joined forces with the Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC) and stakeholders to

develop a Purple Line Community Compact. The Purple Line Community Compact will articulate a collective vision for vibrant economic and community development along the 16-mile corridor, strategies to achieve that vision and a commitment by a variety of project stakeholders. It represents an opportunity to leverage the Purple Line investment to achieve benefits throughout the communities along its route, including:

- Revitalizing and stabilizing neighborhoods
- Supporting small businesses
- Connecting workers with jobs
- Creating healthy and vibrant communities

Mr. Knaap reported that a draft compact is in its final stage of development, but at this time it is uncertain who should be the signatories and when it should be signed.

The Commission then discussed the future of these two transit projects and what role the Growth Commission should play. Boyd Campbell stated that he felt the Commission should advocate for the Purple Line project with the new Administration. He indicated that the Purple Line would help to support smart growth along the corridor and provide much needed access to jobs for lower-income and transit-dependent populations. Bruce Williams also indicated his support, noting that his town would be sending a letter to Governor-elect Hogan in support of the Purple Line. Secretary Richard Hall pointed out that the Purple Line project would help to strengthen community revitalization along the corridor, which is a priority of this Commission.

The Commission members discussed whether to officially support the Red and Purple Line. Mr. Bowen stated that normally on matters like this the Commission is provided background information and a draft position paper before taking an official action. He recommended that the Commission get a full briefing on this matter at the January meeting, at which time an official position could be taken. Mr. Laria stated that staff would continue to investigate this issue, and this agenda item would be on the January meeting for consideration.

### **Reinvest Maryland**

Mr. Laria reported that the final version of the *Reinvest Maryland* document has been prepared and directed the Commission's attention to the flier that MDP produced summarizing the report and pointing people to the Growth Commission's webpage where the full report can be downloaded. Mr. Laria said that the Reinvest Maryland recommendations would be part of his talking points when discussing the Growth Commission with the Transition Team.

Mr. Laria distributed the recently completed Urban Land Institute and the National Trust for Historic Preservation report: *Building on Baltimore's Heritage: The Partnership for Building Reuse*. He stated that there are several recommendations made about reuse of buildings in Baltimore that have applicability throughout Maryland.

Mr. Laria also mentioned that the Urban Land Institute: Regional TOD Product Council is an organization the Commission could use to help promote TOD efforts throughout Maryland. Members of this group met with MDOT and some Commission members during the investigation of the TOD questions identified in Governor O'Maley's infill, redevelopment, and revitalization

letter to the Commission. Mr. Laria indicated that the ULI's Regional TOD Product Council will be a resource that the Commission should continue to utilize moving forward.

### **Workgroup Updates**

Mr. Laria noted that Workgroup Reports were included in today's agenda packet. He asked if the Workgroup Chairs wanted to highlight particular aspects of their report.

### **Adequate Public Facilities Workgroup**

Frank Hertsch noted that MDP's David Dahlstrom prepared for the APFO report, which the Workgroup reviewed. This report includes the calendar year 2013 APFO Reports submitted by local governments. In general, as in previous reporting years 2011 and 2012, there continues to be few APFO restrictions within the Priority Funding Area reported. There are currently fourteen counties in Maryland with adopted APFOs. Of those, nine submitted reports and seven counties noted some APFO impacts on development.

### **Rural Economies Workgroup**

Greg Bowen reported the Rural Economies Workgroup met on November 18 to begin developing a comprehensive work program of issues to address over the next couple of years. The Workgroup had excellent participation and is making good progress in developing its work plan. The next meeting will be in December.

### **Concentrating Growth Workgroup**

Joe Tassone reported that eight members of the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission so far have completed the Indicators Survey in its entirety, and eight more have completed part of the survey. Mr. Tassone stated that generally the people responding to the survey were supportive of the proposed indicators.

Mr. Bowen noted that he completed the survey, but recommended that some indicators are needed to measure programmatic changes (at the state and local level) rather than just report on the status of certain physical or socioeconomic characteristics. Given the cumulative nature of things and time required for conditions on the ground to change, the current set of indicators does not measure recent efforts to advance smart growth policies.

Mr. Knaap stated that he like the direction these indicators were going. These indicators are much better than the initial "thumbs up or down" approach. He did acknowledge that more work is needed.

Duane Yoder asked for more time, so Commission members to take the survey.

Dru Schmidt-Perkins expressed concern of whether we are getting accurate and timely information about smart growth conditions.

Mr. Freedlander stated he like the direction this effort was going.

Alan Girard suggested that some indicators on pollution load may be useful to consider.

Mr. Tassone concluded by saying that he would resend the invitation and the survey link to the Commission members.

**Public Comments**

Queen Anne's County Commissioner Bob Simmons thanked the Growth Commission for coming to Centreville and wished that more people would have attended. He suggested for future meetings greater outreach and communication is needed with the sponsoring community to increase public attendance/participation.

Chairman Laria adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.