

To: Susan Summers, Chairman, Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission

From: Greg Bowen, Rural Economies Workgroup Chair

Subj: Status Report on Rural Economies Workgroup Activities

Date: October 5, 2020

The Rural Economies Workgroup met on September 11th to review the progress of its subcommittees (Sustainable Food and Food Production, Sustainable Forestry, Land Preservation and Protected Open Space, Rural Development and Recreation, and Sustainable Fisheries). See below the “Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document” that summarizes the status of each subcommittees’ efforts. The next meeting of the full Workgroup is November 6.

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document	
Meeting Notes For:	Rural Economies Workgroup
Date and time:	September 11, 2020 @ 1 pm
Called by: Chuck Boyd	Facilitator’s Name: Chuck Boyd
Attendance:	Marty Baker, L.J. Bennett, Amy Blessinger, Chuck Boyd, Elliott Campbell, Deborah Herr Cornwell, Charlotte Davis, Jason Dubow, Joe Griffiths, Steve McHenry, Dan Rosen,
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd
Agenda and Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance – 11 members attended in person or by conference call. 2. Mr. Boyd briefed the Workgroup on the status of Growth Commission and its upcoming scheduled meeting on October 5, which would be conducted virtually. Mr. Boyd stated that given the Growth Commission is sunsetting at the end of 2020, he was hoping for the Rural Economies Workgroup to provide recommendations to the Commission on possible organizations to take on some of the priority issues being worked on by the Rural Economies Workgroup 3. Status Report on the five (5) Subcommittees by each facilitator highlighting items discussed and future actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Elliott Campbell facilitators) <p>Jason Dubow reported that MDP staff (Boyd and Dubow) met with Anne Hairston-Strang from DNR and Alberto Goetzl, Chair of the DNR advisory group, the Sustainable Forestry Council, to discuss the possibility of transitioning the recommendations of the Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee to the Council. The Chair appeared receptive to the</p> 	

prospect and invited Mr. Dubow to discuss the idea with the whole Council at its September 22 meeting.

Mr. Dubow also reported on following information from Dan Rider:

- The federally funded EDA Economic Adjustment Strategy for Maryland's forest industry is proceeding with draft reports that are under internal review, expected to be released this fall. They include excellent data and analysis of opportunities and challenges for expansion of Maryland's forest industry.
- Regarding the MDE-DNR MOU, October 1 still appears to be the likely start to Maryland Forest Service involvement in field visits to offer technical assistance to loggers, landowners, and agency enforcement staff regarding sediment and erosion control measures. Field trainings were held in August for Maryland Forest Service staff on the new procedures, database, and triggers for notifying enforcement personnel with MDE or county. 19 of 24 Soil Conservation Districts have produced revised forms that grant DNR permission to access sites for field review of sediment and erosion control BMPs.
- The Forest Action Plan should be available soon for public comment. It is due to the U.S. Forest Service by the end of the year. The MD Forest Service Annual Report from 2019 was recently released and is available on our home page:
[https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Documents/2019-MFS Annual Report.pdf](https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Documents/2019-MFS%20Annual%20Report.pdf)

B. Rural Development and Recreation Subcommittee (Deborah Carpenter facilitator)

Mr. Boyd reported that he discussed with Charlotte Davis the potential of the Rural Maryland Council and its committee possibly taking up some of the areas of interest the Rural Development Subcommittee. Ms. Davis reported that she discussed the proposal with the RMC Executive Committee on September 10. Ms. David noted that many of the Subcommittees interest align with the work plan items of the RMC. Ms. Davis said they would be discussing this at the upcoming full board meeting.

C. Sustainable Food and Food Production Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)

Dan Rosen reported the Subcommittee has not met for a while, but he noted the Subcommittee has continued to work on the Community Kitchen Directory project, but will hold off developing a final list of locations until after the COVID-19 pandemic is over to confirm whether the community kitchens are still open.

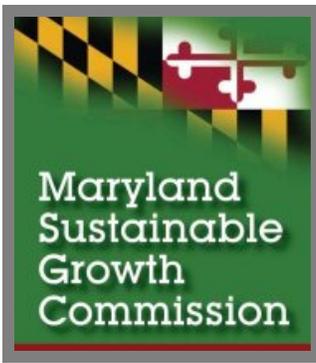
Mr. Boyd stated that the work of the Sustainable Food Subcommittee closely aligns with the work of MDA's GICA Program. It was agreed that staff should contact GICA's Coordinator Cassie Shirk. Steve McHenry also mentioned that MDA is working on updating GICA's Toolkit for Local Communities, and the work of this Subcommittee appears to fit nicely with GICA's mission.

D. Land Preservation and Protected Open Space Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)

Mr. Boyd recommended the concerns of this Subcommittee appear to be best addressed through DNR's Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) development process, which is supported by staff of DNR, MALPF and MDP.

E. Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee (Chuck Boyd facilitator). Mr. Boyd reported that no Subcommittee efforts took place.

4. Next Workgroup meeting is November 6, 2020 at 1 pm at MDP's Olmsted Conference Room in Baltimore.



To: Susan Summers, Chairman, Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission

From: Greg Bowen, Rural Economies Workgroup Chair

Subj: Status Report on Rural Economies Workgroup Activities

Date: July 27, 2020

The Rural Economies Workgroup met on July 10th to review the progress of its subcommittees (Sustainable Food and Food Production, Sustainable Forestry, Land Preservation and Protected Open Space, Rural Development and Recreation, and Sustainable Fisheries). See below the “Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document” that summarizes the status of each subcommittees’ efforts. The next meeting of the full Workgroup is September 11.

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup Agenda and Notes Document	
Meeting Notes For: Rural Economies Workgroup	
Date and time:	July 10, 2020 @ 1 pm
Called by: Chuck Boyd	Facilitator’s Name: Chuck Boyd
Attendance:	Marty Baker, L.J. Bennett, Amy Blessinger, Chuck Boyd, Elliot Campbell, Deborah Herr Cornwell, Charlotte Davis, Jason Dubow, Joe Griffiths, John Papagni, Dan Rosen,
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd
Agenda and Notes:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance – 11 members attended in person or by conference call. 2. Mr. Boyd briefed the Workgroup on the status of Growth Commission and its upcoming scheduled meeting on July 27, which would be conducted virtually. He mentioned that since the Growth Commission will be sunseting at the end of 2020, there is a need to identify organizations that can assist in continuing the coordination and collaboration related to rural economies that this workgroup has served for nearly 10 years. 3. Status Report on the five (5) Subcommittees by each facilitator highlighting items discussed and future actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Sustainable Forestry Subcommittee (Jason Dubow/Elliott Campbell facilitators) Jason Dubow reported from Dan Rider’s June report of the Economic Adjustment Strategy (EAS) for Maryland’s Forest Products Sector effort, which is attached. Elliot Campbell gave a status reported of DNR’s multi-state climate alliance project this is modeling forest management alternatives. 	

- B. Rural Development and Recreation Subcommittee (Deborah Carpenter facilitator)
Chuck Boyd reported that the Subcommittee met on June 11. See attached report.
 - C. Sustainable Food and Food Production Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)
Dan Rosen reported the Subcommittee has not met for a while, but he noted the Subcommittee has continued to work on the Community Kitchen Directory project, but will hold off developing a final list of locations until after the COVID-19 pandemic is over to confirm whether the community kitchens are still open.
 - D. Land Preservation and Protected Open Space Subcommittee (Dan Rosen facilitator)
Jason Dubow reported Planning recently completed its quarterly update of the state's land preservation dashboard – see <https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/Of3ffd3350b24b17bd3b8e1705af3df5>
 - E. Sustainable Fisheries Subcommittee (Chuck Boyd facilitator). Mr. Boyd reported that no Subcommittee efforts took place.
4. Next Workgroup meeting is September 11, 2020 at 1 pm at MDP's Olmsted Conference Room in Baltimore.

Economic Adjustment Strategy for Maryland's Forest Products Sector**STATUS REPORT****for the MARBIDCO Board of Directors****Monday, June 29, 2020**

Maryland's approach to retaining the forest products over the last 30 years has not resulted in acceptable results. And that defines the overall purpose for the EAS: to define a course of actions for what should be done to revitalize this important industry.

The EAS acknowledges that the entire supply chain of forest industry is vitally important to retain as highly significant contributor to our economy, is necessary for meeting our environmental challenges, and supports in many different ways the quality of life for every Marylander.

We're looking at the existing and future forest base, the existing industry, and market sectors to recruit into Maryland. The goal is to determine what specific sectors will Maryland command an especially advantageous position. This involves assessing the regulatory climate, infrastructure, economic development support, labor, and the other issues that these analyses typically require.

The Western Maryland RC&D Council is administering the effort. ACDS, LLC of Columbia, MD was selected to conduct the EAS from a pool of very well qualified responses submitted by firms from New England, the South and Washington DC. They were chosen for the quality and success of similar work history, their understanding of the suite of circumstances unique to Maryland's business climate, their familiarity with Maryland's forest products sector and for their approach to synthesizing the research and analysis into actionable items.

Rather than producing a written report as the only final product, ACDS is generating a series of "issue memos" that identify the problem or opportunity, any barriers present, and needed next steps to advance the desired outcome. These will be released as they are developed. A final report will also of course be produced and delivered by October 2020.

Another co-product of the EAS is a web-based GIS platform depicting the forest in relation to existing industries, transportation, and other infrastructure. This is interactive, allowing the user to conduct basic research on the availability of specific forest products (e.g., hardwood sawtimber) and understand where competitors are located (or absent), existence of support services (e.g., loggers) and markets.

Many partners are involved in the effort. MARBIDCO committed early, to everyone's appreciation. Other key partners include Commerce, DNR, Maryland Forests Association, Association of Forest Industries, Maryland Forestry Foundation, SMADC, MDA-Marketing, and Allegany Soil Conservation District. It should also be noted that each of the five economic development councils (i.e., the Tri-County Councils are committed and active with this work).

PROGRESS

Analysis of forest base is complete. Understanding the current conditions of the forest and its availability (or not) is obviously fundamental. In particular, analyzing the current volume of timber, species composition, tree sizes, location and tree quality are paramount to identifying opportunities for manufacturing goods. But also needed is the understanding of what the forest resource will look like in the near and long-term. This is complete.

Survey of Existing Markets. Maryland's forest products sector is highly diverse. Further, the supply chains do not end at the State line. ACDS has personally interviewed representatives from the logging, sawmilling, preservative treatment, paper mills, paper products, panels, furniture, pallets, and millwork sectors. Seeking their insights on current barriers and opportunities and their outlook for the future revealed sentiments common to many resource-based industries in Maryland: it's tough to do business here and easier in neighboring States; the smallness of the industry results in low political influence and thus too easily impacted by unfavorable policy-making; supply of raw material is not a problem but accessing that supply is impeded by regulatory barriers that do not exist in neighboring States; etc. Labor can be scarce and expensive when found. Zoning rules restrict growth to parcels prohibitively expensive. There's plenty more to summarize, but none of it is unfamiliar. Encouraging is that much of the primary processors serve niche markets that are insulated from outside competition. And, there's clear demand for more production in these niche markets. Secondary processors such as furniture, millwork and paper products enjoy a tremendous advantage of having close proximity to very large consumer markets.

Emerging Markets. There are many things that can be made from wood, and not all of them require vast acreages of low-cost timber to profitably produce. Some examples of those being evaluated include Mass Timber (e.g., CLT and glu-lam), and thermally modified wood as a substitute for chemically preserved wood. Other examples include products that are mainstays elsewhere but just not prevalent in Maryland, such as export products.

Regulation. No need to describe the work accomplished on regulatory issues in depth here. Suffice it to say that bringing consistency and clarity to regulations is needed. This is especially observable when comparing our systems to those of competing neighboring States. A very frequent comment from out-of-state industry representatives is "why come to Maryland when it's clear that Maryland doesn't want us?"

UPCOMING

In addition to refining the value-propositions of specific markets, the coming weeks are focused on reviewing the many policies that affect or could affect future industry sectors. These range from the obvious such as economic development support and tax treatment, but also include transportation, energy, and zoning.

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission – Rural Economies Workgroup - Rural Development & Recreation Subcommittee Minutes	
Meeting Notes For:	Rural Development & Recreation Subcommittee
Date & Time:	June 11, 2020
Called by: Chuck Boyd	Facilitator’s Name: Chuck Boyd
Attendance:	LJ Bennett, Amy Blessinger, Chuck Boyd, Alex Butler, Colby Ferguson, Joe Griffiths, Les Knapp, Jim Mullin, Joe Rogers
Notes Taken By:	Chuck Boyd
Minutes:	
Old Business	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The meeting began with updates on Sustainable Growth Commission’s May 18 meeting and A Better MD implementation progress. Mr. Boyd also mentioned that Planning staff has updated the Reinvest Maryland cases studies to include local contact information. He encouraged Subcommittee members to visit the site. The next meeting of the Sustainable Growth Commission will be held in July. 2. Mr. Boyd then recapped Action items from the last Subcommittee meeting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mr. Boyd reported that MDP staff have researched the shortage of Agricultural Marketing Professionals (AMPs) in the Eastern Shore and determined the main reason is limited funding at the county level for this service. This is local decision based on competing financial interests and obligations. No further action was recommended at this time. b. Joe Griffiths provided an update on MDP’s Reinvest MD education/training and outreach efforts regarding ‘Overcoming Barriers to Infill and Adaptive ReUse’. He mentioned that MDP staff have been working with Charles County Planning staff on potential application of the Reinvest MD training for the Waldorf area. c. Mr. Boyd reported that no additional research has occurred regarding the Trail and Park Development information provided by Caroline Green of MDA. 	
New Business	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Boyd reported that the Growth Commission will be sunseting at the end of December 2020, and there will need to be some transition of its Workgroup activities, particularly the Rural Economies Workgroup that has made significant progress on various initiatives over the past few years. The Subcommittee discussed possible organization or groups that could continue the work of the Rural Economies Workgroup. Colby Ferguson suggested seeing whether the Rural Maryland Council would be good fit with the activities of the Rural Economies Workgroup. Alex Butler offered to see if MACo Rural County Coalition would be logical organization to take up the work of the Rural Economies Workgroup. Chuck Boyd agreed to reach out to both organization for follow-up discussions. 2. Les Knapp reported on his efforts with St. Mary’s County investigating utility scale solar facility siting. 	
The next meeting will be held on August 13, 2020	
Key Actions to be taken prior to next meeting	Describe action and indicate when action is due
1. Transition of Rural Economies Workgroup	Chuck Boyd will contact Charlotte Davis of the MD Rural Council and Alex Butler of MACo to discuss potential transition of Rural Economies work to those organizations.