Southern Maryland/Capital Region Planning Directors Meeting
July 26, 2007
La Plata Police Department
101 LaGrange Avenue
La Plata, MD 20646

Attendees:

DeAnn Adler, Greg Bowen, Denis Canavan, Tony Chinyere, Wayne Clark, Sarah Daines, Catherine Flerlage, Robert Harrington, Michael Hinchy, John Hoffman, Daniel Mears, Laschelle Miller, John Ratliff, Terry Schum, David Umling, Jeannelle Wallace,

This was a make up meeting for the statewide Planning Directors meeting held on May 22, 2007 in Annapolis. Since many of the Southern Maryland planners were unable to attend due to their own planning meeting held on Tuesdays. It also coincided well with Governor O'Malley's second "Capital for a Day," also held in La Plata and gave everyone the ability to meet the Governor and his cabinet prior to the meeting. Planning Directors' meetings will be held twice a year; the next one will be in October at a location yet to be determined.

John Ratliff discussed ideas that he believes are important to the Governor. Growth, development, and energy issues are some of the most important things on the Governor's agenda. The Governor has a vision for pushing Maryland forward and making it a leader; his agenda includes being bold.

Introduction by Secretary Hall:

While we have been growing, there are now more constraints than ever in terms of land, water and sewer availability and our desire to maintain our natural and cultural resources. Another significant issue for SMD is that many people commute outward of SMD.

Population Trends in Maryland, 2000 to 2006: Presentation by Mark Goldstein

Question: Why has population decreased?

Response: Some of it is probably based upon building permits

Question: How does the complexion of family make up affect the change—like multi-families living in one house?

Response: It is something we need to look into further.

Question: Are more people looking and considering King George County (Va.) because of the cheaper prices there?

Response: At least as of yet, it's not significant enough to show in the data except for the gain we are getting from Fairfax County—although it will probably show up eventually.

Question: Marylanders retiring to Florida—are they affecting the decrease population in Maryland?

Response: In the initial presentation I had that in there, but it was hard to prove or to gather that data—so we just left it alone; Delaware is also a big recipient of retirees

Question: The average lot size within Priority Funding Areas is getting larger- that is bad for Smart Growth. PFAs are spreading out, does that mean they are filling up?

Response: From a Smart Growth perspective, it is not a good indicator. The one thing we try to do in our agency is connect this data with practical land use policies. This data is not just our findings; the Board of Public Works also picked up on this data. It is about looking at our tools and evaluating how well they are working! Please do some thinking about where we are, and where we are going. We have just started and we do anticipate working hard to make Maryland a leader in Smart Growth (again).

Question/Comment: The trends you are talking about are not limited to Maryland. Sprawl is really driven by people's expectations. Housing prices are just reinforcing those expectations by driving housing prices up and moving them into the suburbs. It is up to us to change our regulations but people will only accept so much. We really need to find ways to change people's expectations.

Rich's response: as planners, we have to be optimistic. A few things to keep in mind:

1. Think broad scale: bring more people into this, and make sure to take baby steps. If you want a rural landscape you have to have less density in neighborhoods
2. Get a consultant to come in and start talking to people.
3. We want to help local government look at the bigger picture, without panicking or automatically opposing new ideas.
4. Working together is always beneficial.

Education is key when discussing future growth in Maryland. If we teach students to be environmentally conscious, they will grow up thinking about protecting the Chesapeake Bay and other important lands, and take that into consideration as Maryland grows. We really need to think of ways to connect with our teachers, and the Department of Education.

Overview of Significant Planning Issues from the 2007 Legislative Session

Departmental

- SB613/ HB598 Maryland Heritage Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program
- Planning Legislation

  HB773 Task Force on the Future for Growth and Development, December 1, 2008 added to the deadlines. Working to get it staffed up and meetings will start this fall.

Department of Planning Updates

- Models & Guidelines #25 and 26 published (on the webpage as well; we are always interested in feedback, please let us know of things that should be added)
- Budget/Office of Smart Growth: Have a proposal to fund 5 positions, but they are not available until October.
- SB110/HB136 BRAC Sub-cabinet: Meeting every two weeks, Lt. Gov. has been very aggressive in this arena. Will provide lots of jobs and about 20,000 households; it is a great opportunity to highlight some of the growth in Maryland.
- SB102/HB137 State Stat: There is a focus within this administration on accountability and measures. Need your help in participating in what we do, helping us with information and data analysis. We will be under much more pressure to do much more stats—working together would help to get stats as accurate as possible.
- Maryland Department of Planning Transition Report: Making Maryland the National Leader in Planning and Smart Growth. Pretty diverse group, almost every agency had a work group on the transition team. We were tasked by the Governor to review 58 recommendations and deem them "doable or not doable." Our transition report was very visionary. We view the transition report as a strategic document that will ultimately become the SG Strategy report.

MDP: Discussion of major land use and planning issues

- HB 1141 Update (connected Comp planning with annexation)
- *Water Resources Element* and *Municipal Growth Element* Models and Guidelines are available.
- Reprint of Article 66B to reflect updates through 2006 (you can download this from our website.)
- HB 1354: Certification of County Priority Preservation Areas (a continuation of HB 2 from 2006) Joe Tassone is the lead on this—very strategic approach.

PFA and Comp Plan Reviews:

A quick note that we are keeping better track of the Comp plans (when last updated, checked, etc…). You do not have to necessarily update or create a new plan but you do have to revisit your comp plan every six years.

Comment: We started the update 2003 but didn't complete it as 2006 so is the update 2010…

Response: General rule of thumb just have a letter every six years reviewing your status (it may be fine, it may need to be updated, or it may need to revamped entirely. The purpose is to review your comp plans and double-check your status while keeping us in the loop. But as many of you know with HB 1141, there will most likely be changes done to your comp plans.

Question: As far as assistance from the state, can I anticipate having more flexibility on extending the PFA?

Response: We have a link to it on the website! The PFA Expansion provision is fairly simple, as long as you meet criteria. We are working on having the most up-to date information. MDP is getting more scrutiny about our comments to the Comp plans. Our agency has not been focused on reviewing annexations and sometimes municipalities didn't notify us, but because of 1141, we ask that you work with us …

Terrapin Run: is the special exception the County permitted and it was opposed because of its large size- 4300 units. It is has gone to Maryland's highest court. We are concerned with the project itself but also the viability of the Comprehensive Planning process; we think this might set an unfortunate precedent if the court's ruling stands, namely that "in harmony" is considered the same as "consistent." MDP filed an Amicus Brief. We won't know the outcome for another year or so.

Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program. Good list of addresses, local update census address—contact Jane Traynham for more information at 410-767-4500 jtraynham@mdp.state.md.us

Question: La Plata has annexed as much as it will… for a while at least. We have about a 10% growth for the next 15 years. The Comp Plan is due in 2008; can I come to MDP for advice on it? I don't have any history with Comp Plans and what is done is done. I have very few believers, I can't sell it to the public but I don't know if I have state support either.

Response: Your annexation is done, so that's it. So 1141 isn't going to affect you too much, because it's not new municipalities. Big annexations drove 1141 (such as Cambridge) they were tripling in size, but weren't keeping their resources in mind. Keep your plan updated and we will definitely help out in planning your land use. We do provide technical assistance on occasion and provide as much support as possible.

We appreciate everyone coming! Thank you!