

Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission's

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH CHALLENGE

2016-2017

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- What is the Sustainable Growth Challenge?

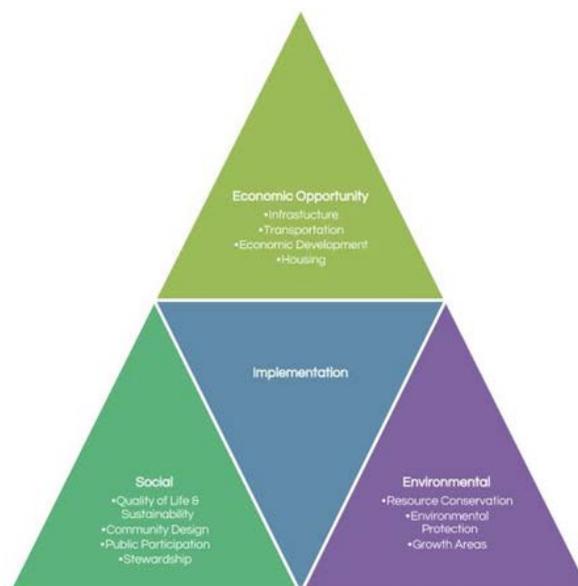
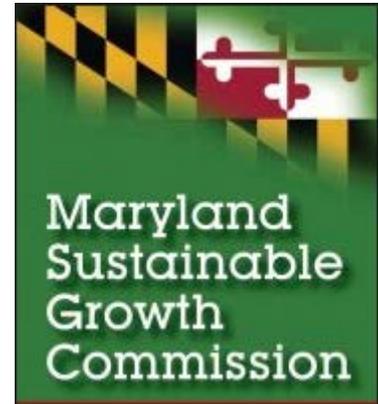
The Sustainable Growth Challenge, sponsored by the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission ("Commission"), is an interdisciplinary, intercollegiate exercise designed to engage college students in local and regional planning, sustainability and reinvestment issues. As part of an on- and off-campus studio exercise, students will analyze the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable growth and develop creative solutions for actual community challenges. The competition provides opportunities for students to interact with local leaders and engage in community planning processes. This fall will be the fourth year of the program.

- What is this year's theme, and what does it mean?

This year's theme is again Reinvest Maryland, which is based upon the fundamental premise that by reinvesting in existing buildings and infrastructure, the state can strengthen communities while also maintaining a healthy natural environment.

In 2014, the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission issued a report, [Reinvest Maryland](#), with a set of strategies to improve quality of life and assure economic prosperity in places where people already live, which complements land preservation and natural resource protection efforts. The idea is that economic, social and environmental goals must be pursued concurrently in order to achieve success.

Reinvestment is economically and environmentally responsible, and it is relevant to older urban neighborhoods, suburban communities and towns throughout Maryland. But it is difficult to accomplish and must be



undertaken with care to achieve the desired results. The goal is a functional and visually appealing community, with a strong economy, a healthy environment, and social equity.

Each project must demonstrate this triple-bottom-line approach and how the elements relate to one another within a coherent whole, as represented in the image above. The economic, environmental and social elements should be integrated, and each project proposal should articulate an implementation strategy that links all three.

- Who is eligible to participate?

Teams from any degree-granting institution of higher education in the state of Maryland are eligible to submit a proposal. The teams can be comprised of undergraduate or graduate students from any discipline connected to sustainability, including urban planning, architecture, public policy, economics and environmental studies.

- What type of deliverable is expected?

The final product can include renderings, presentations, websites or blogs, and written material detailing how the project supports triple-bottom-line reinvestment in Maryland's existing communities.

- Do the teams' approaches have to be inter-disciplinary?

Not necessarily; each team determines its membership. In the real world, however, the planning and design process requires cooperation among diverse entities and stakeholders, so projects benefit from an inter-disciplinary approach and representation.

- Can more than one team enter the Challenge from a single institution?

Yes.

- Are teams required to have a faculty sponsor?

Yes. Faculty support is important throughout the project's duration, from helping to identify projects to connecting students with community leaders.

- Can students who participate in the Challenge get class credit?

The institution and the faculty advisor make this determination.

- Are the projects pre-defined or can teams find their own project?

Teams and faculty members are responsible for defining their projects, but they can get recommendations and assistance from the Commission.

- Does the project have to focus on a real, on-the-ground undertaking defined by an actual client, or can it be theoretical?

Both are acceptable; however, it may be easier for students to research and brainstorm around an actual, on-the-ground project.

- How will the projects be scored?

Project scoring consists of four equally weighted criteria. Three quarters of the total score will be based on how well the project addresses the three elements of sustainability's triple bottom line, with economic growth, social equity and environmental stewardship each accounting for 25 percent of the total score. The remaining 25 percent of the score is based on the overall quality of the project – reflecting community engagement, plan for implementation and feasibility – and the students' presentation.

- What is the schedule? This schedule is based on past experience but is subject to change.
 - September 18, 2016 – Deadline for committing to participate
 - October 2016 – Discuss projects with Education Work Group members (upon request, an Education Work Group member will attend a class)
 - December 4, 2016 – **Deadline for submitting final project**
 - Late December 2016 – Education Work Group members notify teams that have been selected to advance to the presentation stage
 - January 2017 – Team presentations
 - February 2017 – Awards
- Where do we send the final projects?

Information about electronic submission of all materials will be shared in Fall 2016, most likely through Dropbox or Google Drive. These materials must be delivered electronically by December 4, 2016, for preliminary review by the Sustainable Growth Commission.