

Planning Commission, Planning Board and Board of Appeals Education Course

Developed pursuant to Section 1-206 of the Land
Use Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Module Five: Maryland's Smart Growth Vision of the Future



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Welcome!

I am pleased to welcome you to the online Planning Commission, Planning Board and Board of Appeals Education Course, which was developed by the Maryland Department of Planning so that members of planning boards or commissions and boards of appeal can fulfill their education requirements under Section 1-206 of the Land Use Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. This requirement first came about through passage of Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009, which implemented the requirement that, within six (6) months of appointment, members of local planning boards or commissions and boards of appeal complete an education course concerning certain aspects of land use planning.

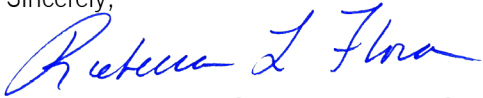
This education requirement applies to the non-charter counties and municipalities that exercise planning and zoning authority, and to charter counties, including Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The law provides that the course must include education on (i) the role of the comprehensive plan, (ii) proper standards for special exceptions and variances, as applicable, and (iii) the jurisdiction's zoning, planned development, subdivision and other land use ordinances and regulations.

This course was developed with input from 2007's Task Force on the Future of Growth and Development, and your partners in planning policy and implementation including the Maryland Association of Counties (MaCo), Maryland Municipal League (MML), Maryland Planning Commissioner's Association (MPCA) and others. This joint effort has resulted in the course you are about to take, and we hope you find it informative, useful and beneficial in your important role as a planning official.

Our goal is to provide good information to help you make even better informed planning decisions for your city, town or county. I welcome and encourage your feedback on this course, and if you have any suggestions after completing it, please feel free to pass them along.

Enjoy the course!

Sincerely,



Rebecca L. Flora, AICP, LEED ND/BD+C
Secretary, Maryland Department of Planning

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Module Five: Maryland's Smart Growth Vision for the Future

Maryland's Smart Growth Vision for the Future: Smart Green & Growing Maryland has long been a national leader in progressive land use, from the creation of the first state planning commission in 1933 to the well-known Smart Growth legislation of 1997. More than a decade after the advent of Smart Growth, however, we continue to face significant land use challenges.

Maryland is a wonderful place to live, and is expected to experience a rapid population growth in the coming years. This growth promises increased pressure on farmlands, forests, and waterways, including our precious Chesapeake Bay and the window of opportunity to confront and solve these challenges is shrinking.

Smart, Green & Growing is Maryland's long-range, multi-agency initiative focused on protecting Maryland's precious, yet limited, air, water and land resources in every region of our State, so our families and children will someday be able share these natural treasures with their own kids in the same way that our parents and grandparents shared them with us. Sound land use planning, from State smart growth programs to local government and citizen actions, is a critical piece in this *Smart, Green & Growing* strategy. By reducing sprawl development and concentrating new housing in our existing communities, we will protect irreplaceable forests and farmland and continue to improve the health of Maryland's Chesapeake and Coastal Bays.

Smart, Green & Growing Planning Laws

The Smart, Green and Growing legislative package from the 2009 Maryland General Assembly session strengthens and reinvigorates the fundamental tools of smart growth. The three planning bills enacted into law comprise the most significant achievements in smart growth in more than a decade.

The most far-reaching achievement of these new laws is the *Planning Visions* act which resulted in 12 modernized Planning Visions that will impact the future growth in Maryland for generations to come.

The new Planning Visions express the State's vision for sound growth and development and will enhance local comprehensive plans by reflecting a greater connectedness between where we live, where we work, and the quality of life we enjoy.

The *Smart Growth Goals, Measures, and Indicators and Implementation of Planning Visions* act established a statewide smart growth goal for Maryland first time in history. Local governments must also develop their own smart growth goals. Consistent with the Governor's Stat approach, Maryland jurisdictions will now report on a uniform set of indicators in order to provide better information to influence better planning policy decisions.

The *Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009* clarified that local jurisdictions must implement and follow the comprehensive plans they adopt. This law protects the investment that citizens make in their comprehensive plans and thereby enhancing the role of these plans for smart growth. This bill also established this course for planning commissioners.

The Seven Themes of Smart Green & Growing

Smart, Green & Growing is an initiative that advances the State's shared vision for a healthy environment and healthy natural resources that support a strong economy and an exceptional quality of life. Today State agencies are actively working with local governments, legislators, grassroots organizations and businesses large and small to protect our air, our land, our water and our people. Smart, Green & Growing brings the State's sustainability efforts together under seven themes. These are:

- Restoring the Bay
- Preserving Land
- Revitalizing Communities
- Green Jobs
- Improving Transit
- Conserving Energy
- Climate Change

Smart, Green & Growing Themes

Theme: Restoring the Bay

From recycling to carpooling, from properly disposing of pet waste to planting a tree, every Marylander has a role in – and responsibility for -- improving water quality in Maryland's rivers, streams and creeks, and the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays.

Tools for Local Governments

The Chesapeake and Coastal Bays Trust Fund

The Chesapeake and Coastal Bays Trust Fund provides financial assistance to local governments to for pollution control projects, such as reducing stormwater runoff.

Maryland's Coastal Program, established by executive order and approved in 1978, is a network of state laws and policies designed to protect coastal and marine resources. The program strives to achieve a balance between development and protection in the coastal zone. Maryland's coastal zone includes the Chesapeake Bay, coastal bays, and Atlantic Ocean, as well as, the towns, cities and counties that contain and help govern the coastline. It encompasses two-thirds of the state's land area and is home to 67.83% of Maryland's residents. Through partnerships and funding to local governments, state agencies, non- profit organizations, and universities, the Coastal Program addresses a variety of coastal issues including provision of public access, nonpoint source pollution reduction, coastal hazards mitigation, habitat and living resources protection and growth management. The Department of Natural Resources is the lead agency for this program. For further information on the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays Trust Fund, please visit the [Maryland Department of Natural Resources website](#).

National Coastal Zone Management Program

In 1972, Congress recognized that planning and management were needed to conserve coastal resources while accommodating growth. To help do this, Congress enacted the Coastal Zone Management Act to "preserve, protect, develop and, where possible, to restore and enhance the resources of the nation's coastal zone for this and succeeding generations." The key feature of the Act is the creation of a partnership among federal, state, and local governments that assures consultation and cooperation as they seek solutions to problems caused by competing coastal pressures. Congress realized that the best way to meet these goals was to encourage states to exercise their full authority over their own lands and waters. It provided two incentives: funding to allow state and local governments to manage coastal resources, and a promise to carry out federal activities, or actions authorized by a federal permit in a manner consistent with a state's plan. These two features help coastal states bring competing coastal users into a cooperative arrangement. For further information on the National Coastal Zone Management Program, please visit the [National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration website](#).

Water Quality Grants and Loans

Water quality grants and loans are available to help local governments fund access to safe and plentiful drinking water, upgrades to wastewater treatment plants, improvements to stormwater systems, and local stream and wetland restoration projects.

Maryland's Stormwater Management Program

Maryland's [new stormwater program](#) and regulations will help counties, communities, and individuals reduce runoff of trash and pollution that occurs during rainstorms.

Opportunities for Citizens

Cover Crops and other on-farm best management practices

Cover Crops and other on-farm best management practices (BMPs) prevent soil erosion, manage nutrients and safeguard water quality in streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

Marylanders Grow Oysters

Through Marylanders Grow Oysters, waterfront property owners are growing oysters that will eventually become part of local oyster reefs.

Maryland Tributary Team

Maryland Tributary Team volunteers are addressing pollution at the local level in 10 major tributary basins of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Bay Restoration Fund

Through the Bay Restoration Fund, Marylanders with septic systems can receive a free upgrade and five years of free maintenance to reduce nutrient pollution loads.

Marylanders Plant Trees

Plant and be counted with this \$25 coupon from Marylanders Plant Trees.

Theme: Preserving Land

By redirecting our growth patterns and preserving our open space, we are protecting human health and well-being along with the very foundation of Maryland's social and economic prosperity: productive farm land, critical habitat for fish and wildlife, opportunities for recreation and tourism, our culture and our history.

Land Conservation Programs

Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

The [Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation](#) permanently preserves farm land through purchase of development rights to protect the environment and local food supply, strengthen rural communities and help direct development into areas with existing built infrastructure.

Planning Tools for Local Governments

Transit Oriented Development

The State of Maryland is working closely with local governments to realize [Transit Oriented Development](#) (TOD) at key rail transit stations across the State.

Statewide Freight Plan

Maryland will release its first [Statewide freight plan](#) in 2009 that will be one of the first freight plans to include a Smart Growth component.

Building Coast-Smart Communities

To protect Maryland's people, infrastructure, and investments from the impacts of climate change, we are taking action now to ensure that our [coastal communities](#) are ready, adaptive and resilient.

Theme: Revitalizing Communities

What does it mean to live in a revitalized community? Of course, we believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to live and work in prosperous and secure communities. We want to provide access to affordable housing, job opportunities, community services and transit.

Preventing sprawl, promoting economic development, and protecting our environment means that future generations of Marylanders will have an improved quality of life. By combining affordable housing, business assistance, downtown beautification, green building, and transit-oriented development initiatives, we can ensure that Maryland's communities not only survive, but grow and thrive, ensuring a better future for our children and families.

Tools to Assist Maryland Communities

Community Legacy

[Community Legacy](#) provides funding for local economic development activities that stimulate reinvestment and strengthen neighborhoods throughout Maryland.

Neighborhood BusinessWorks

[Neighborhood BusinessWorks](#) provides below market loans to small business that locate or expand in target revitalization areas, bringing new services, jobs and vitality to their surrounding communities.

Community Development Block Grants

[Community Development Block Grant](#) funds help strengthen Maryland's communities by expanding affordable housing opportunities, creating jobs, stabilizing neighborhoods and improving overall quality of life.

Community Investment Tax Credits

[Community Investment Tax Credits](#) support 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations by awarding allocations of state tax credits to use as incentives for business contributions.

Main Street Maryland

[Main Street Maryland](#) helps strengthen the economic potential of the state's traditional downtown business districts by helping them improve the economy, appearance and image using the principles of Smart Growth and sustainability.

Transportation Enhancement Program

The [Transportation Enhancement Program](#) (TEP) supports communities in developing transportation projects that improve the quality of life in the community.

Context Sensitive Design

[Context sensitive design](#) is a collaborative approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources.

Theme: Green Jobs

Maryland is looking ahead by designing and implementing a strategic plan to promote green jobs and better position Maryland for long-term sustainability. Key initiatives include attracting and growing

Green businesses, fostering green job creation; growing Maryland's green workforce; promoting green practices and encouraging energy & resource efficiency.

What are Green Jobs?

A Green Job is any job that helps promote sustainability and grow the green economy in Maryland. This includes a wide range of jobs in energy efficiency, energy conservation, renewable energy production, alternative energy production, waste management or environmental stewardship.

Many of the jobs that will contribute to the green economy already exist, such as engineers, HVAC mechanics, and construction workers. Others have yet to emerge.

Theme: Improving Transit

When people choose to ride public transportation, transit puts Families First by decreasing the number of cars on the road, reducing emissions in the air and creating a healthier environment. The state is committed to addressing the growing demand for public transit and is dedicated to making this highly cost-effective and environmentally-conscious mode of transportation as readily available as possible to the people of Maryland.

Getting There Smarter

Transit-Oriented Development

[Transit-Oriented Development \(TOD\)](#) leverages transit investments by bringing to life dense, mixed-use development near rail transit stations across the State. This approach promotes transportation choices and can provide a major resource for accommodating future growth in the state. TOD is Smart Growth, as it can help cut the costs associated with the ownership and operation of cars, reduce sprawl by providing development opportunities in areas that are walkable, and take advantage of existing infrastructure. A number of TOD projects are expected to break ground during the next two to three years.

Maryland's Next Generation of Transit

[Maryland's Next Generation of Transit](#) is the state's aggressive approach to creating new transit initiatives designed to meet current and future demand in both the Washington and Baltimore regions. These projects include the Purple Line and the Corridor Cities Transitway in the Washington region and the Red Line in the Baltimore region. The transit initiatives are now in the planning stage and represent Maryland's next generation of transit.

MARC Growth and Investment Plan

[MARC Growth and Investment Plan](#) is a multi-phased, multi-year plan to triple the capacity of MARC, Maryland's commuter rail system. MARC is a key component of Maryland's commuter network providing rail service for more than 30,000 commuters a day traveling between Washington's Union Station and northern, central and western Maryland. The MARC Growth and Investment plan establishes a series of improvement milestones for 2008, 2010, 2015, 2020 and 2035.

Learn More about Smart, Green & Growing

You are encouraged to learn more about Maryland's Smart, Green & Growing initiative and the seven themes by visiting the website: <http://green.maryland.gov>. The Smart, Green & Growing website includes a number of important tools to help Maryland communities grow and develop smarter in the future:

Important Links and Resources

Links to Websites

Maryland Association of Counties

www.mdcounties.org

Maryland Municipal League

www.mdmunicipal.org

Maryland.gov

Maryland.gov

Smart, Green & Growing

green.maryland.gov

Maryland Department of Planning

Planning.Maryland.gov

Maryland Department of the Environment

Maryland Department of the Environment

Maryland Department of Transportation

mdot.maryland.gov

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

dhcd.maryland.gov

Maryland Department of Agriculture

<http://www.mda.state.md.us>

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

dnr.maryland.gov

Maryland Energy Administration

energy.maryland.gov

Module Five: Review Questions

1. The Planning Vision Act of 2009 updated the State's planning visions to:
 - A. Eight modern Visions.
 - B. Negotiable visions selected by local governments.
 - C. Twelve modern visions.
 - D. Ten new visions and a couple of optional ones.
2. The Chesapeake and Coastal Bays Trust Fund does which of the following?
 - A. Provides financial assistance to local governments to for pollution control projects.
 - B. Is a voluntary fund that has no restriction for use by trusted local governments?
 - C. Is to be used strictly to restore bay grasses or oysters.
 - D. None of the above.
3. The Maryland Coast-Smart Communities program is aimed at?
 - A. Increasing school test scores in coastal counties.
 - B. Protecting Maryland's people, infrastructure, and investments from the impacts of climate change through assisting our coastal counties to be ready, adaptive and resilient.
 - C. Stopping all development along Maryland's coast except where subdivisions were approved prior to 1997.
 - D. None of the above.
4. The Maryland Main street program goals are to:
 - A. Strengthen the economic potential of the state's traditional downtown business districts.
 - B. Helping downtown business districts improve their economy.
 - C. Improve the appearance and image of downtown business districts using the principles of Smart Growth and sustainability.
 - D. All of the above.
5. With the "The Smart Growth Goals, Measures, and Indicators and Implementation of Planning Visions act" for the first time local governments:
 - A. Must also develop their own smart growth goals.
 - B. Develop their planning maps at the same scale.
 - C. Are required to report on a uniform set of indicators in order to provide better information to support better planning policy decisions.
 - D. A and C.

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