

Maryland Smart Growth Policy Collaborative

Revised version, 12/17

I. Preface

The Collaborative recognizes the short and long-term values of a program to manage growth that is a function of state and local government and recommends that the new Administration pursue the goals of smart growth by continuing the implementation of and by building upon existing smart growth related policies. The Collaborative supports the continuing fundamental concept of targeted growth areas, affordable housing, revitalization of existing communities, and simultaneous efforts to protect the state's natural resources and rural communities.

II. Specific Recommendations

The recommendations below are grouped by topic. Those areas that include a recommendation for an increase in state expenditures or involve a fee or tax to fund an activity are highlighted with an asterisk.

A. New Development and Revitalization

1. The state should reexamine aspects of Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) to reflect an ongoing 20-year growth horizon, incorporate density targets above 3.5 units/acre where appropriate, infrastructure and greenspace needs, and sufficient job/housing balance, consistent with public participation.
2. The state should provide technical support and guidance to local governments to develop model ordinances and best practices and encourage public participation. The state should provide this technical assistance early in the planning process, as a matter of courtesy to and cooperation with local governments. The state should provide incentives to adopt smart growth ordinances or other tools.
3. The collaborative supports state programs and investments that assist local governments and advance the smart growth goals of revitalization and land preservation. The Administration should continue to fund these programs and investments and even expand those that prove to be most effective.*
4. State and local governments should prioritize projects within PFAs to streamline and expedite permits in order to reduce time and costs for the development community, while meeting environmental standards and providing for citizen input.

5. The Administration should provide funding to state and local governments to develop a land inventory in PFAs based on Maryland's land use needs. This inventory should include land available for new residential development, infill and redevelopment, parkland and other protected greenspace, transportation and other infrastructure needs, and commercial and industrial use. The inventory should begin in those jurisdictions experiencing the greatest pressure of growth.
6. The state should work to insure that city, county, state, and Federal growth policies are coordinated with the plans of other affected jurisdictions.
7. Local jurisdictions should provide a variety of housing at a range of income levels to accommodate current and future employment growth.
8. Abandoned and underutilized property is causing blight. The Collaborative recommends the following steps to address the issue:
 - The state should facilitate brownfields cleanup and redevelopment through supporting improvements to Maryland's Brownfields Program.
 - State and local governments should create new mechanisms for parcel assembly within the restrictions of zoning and subdivision laws.
 - Local governments should clarify and specify the appropriate criteria for eminent domain procedures by developing clear guidelines on their use in revitalization projects.
9. The State and local governments should provide new market incentives to revitalization, focusing on ways to encourage development within designated growth and PFAs.
10. Maintain state funding sources and incentives for redevelopment, historic preservation, and revitalization in urban, suburban, and rural PFA communities.
11. The State should encourage the development community, government, citizens, and other stakeholders to work in collaboration to prepare a handbook that identifies and describes effective tools to promote revitalization and target new growth.*

B. Transportation and Air Quality

12. To improve transportation and air quality consistent with smart growth principles, the Collaborative recommends that the Administration:
 - Recognize that the availability and use of public transit is critical to successful smart growth. This has two components: improvement of existing service and

access to transit facilities. Transit must be improved to satisfy demand relative to access, frequency, travel time, span of service (hours of operation), and coverage.

- Provide incentives to encourage transit-oriented development.
- Increase awareness among Maryland businesses and the general public of existing federal and state commuter choice programs.
- Take appropriate action to reduce the impact of out-of-state air pollution on Maryland's air quality and transportation plans.
- Recognize the interrelationship between land use, transportation, and air and water pollution. The zoning within PFAs should provide people with the opportunity to work and access activity centers near where they live so that the travel distances can be reduced.

C. Environment and Natural Resources

13. Land use directly impacts water quality of Maryland's bays and rivers. The state should:

- Implement the goals and commitments of the Chesapeake Bay 2000 agreement and the Coastal Bays Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan.
- Protect water quality and quantity by protecting reservoirs, riparian buffers, and aquifer recharge areas.
- Maintain state dedicated funding sources for land protection and encourage local governments to create dedicated funding sources.
- Pursue federal funding for land preservation and smart growth programs.
- Pursue state, federal, and private funding sources to utilize the latest technologies when expanding and upgrading major wastewater treatment plants.
- Promote cost-effective design techniques such as green building and energy efficiency concepts in all State and locally funded projects.

D. Agriculture and Forestry

14. To conserve Maryland's agricultural and forest industries, the State should:

- Maintain dedicated funding sources for agricultural and forest land preservation and support the work of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation Task Force on program improvements.

- Form a task force of stakeholders to explore the issue of Transferable Development Rights.
- Provide incentives and assistance, including federal funds, to strengthen the agricultural industry by increasing agricultural economic development and helping retain the necessary infrastructure, thereby benefiting both rural and urban communities.
- Work more effectively with the agricultural community to target state resources and efforts to establish best management practices that reduce nutrient pollution from agricultural lands.

E. Education and Public Outreach

15. The state should provide financial support* to

- Enable local governments to create visioning processes in communities to involve citizens in master plans and comprehensive zoning at the early stages as well as inter-jurisdictional planning.
- Educate the public about smart growth principles, activities, and programs through print and other media, both commercially and through public service announcements, with a goal to increase public knowledge of smart growth and to communicate the importance of matching the State's anticipated future growth to housing, transportation, infrastructure, preservation, and quality of life needs.
- Continue and expand programs to educate students at all levels and develop appropriate curricula and teacher training programs concerning smart growth principles, activities, and programs.
- Develop program specific and broad-based evaluation tools to determine short term and long-term efficacy of smart growth activities and programs.

16. The State should encourage more meaningful community / citizen involvement in development decisions by providing a system for developers to voluntarily consult with affected communities and citizens about specific projects.

17. The State should work with the building, real estate, and the development / financing communities to offer workshops, courses, or other information on specific smart growth issues such as: financing of smart growth projects; how to obtain approval for mixed use projects; development of "gray fields" how to make more efficient use of land in greenfield development.

III. Final Recommendation

The Collaborative supports the creation of a commission or task force of stakeholders to evaluate the current smart growth program, to review areas such as overlapping provisions, establishing a point of coordination for state programs and agencies, cost saving measures, flexibility in funding distribution, possible consolidation of program components, and suggestions for evaluating PFAs.