

*Jon Laria, Chair*  
Suite 1101  
301 West Preston Street  
Baltimore Maryland 21201

December 1, 2015

Honorable Larry Hogan  
Governor, State of Maryland  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: 2015 Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission Annual Report

Dear Governor Hogan,

Pursuant to the §5-707 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Finance and Procurement Article (SFPA), please find attached the *2015 Report of the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission*.

The Commission has completed its fifth year and has made significant contributions helping advance smart, sustainable growth in Maryland. In accordance with the Commission's charge, as outlined in §5-706 SFPA, we look forward to working closely with your Administration to advise on growth issues during the coming years.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 410.528.5506 or [laria@ballardspahr.com](mailto:laria@ballardspahr.com) should you require any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Laria".

Jon Laria, Chair

cc: The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of Senate  
The Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates  
The Honorable Senator Joan Carter Conway, Chair, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
The Honorable Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chair, House Environmental and Transportation Committee  
The Honorable David R. Craig, Secretary, Department of Planning

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**2015**

**Report of the**



**Maryland  
Sustainable  
Growth  
Commission**



Established by the Maryland General Assembly in 2010, the Sustainable Growth Commission makes recommendations on growth and development issues and celebrates smart growth achievements. Commission members, who represent local and state government, business and nonprofit organizations, consider how to help implement laws and regulations concerning Maryland's growth and development.

Much of the Commission's attention in 2015 focused on the implementation of the recommendations from the Commission's report on *Reinvest Maryland: Accelerating Infill, Redevelopment & Community Revitalization*, and from the Neighborhood

Stabilization and Homeownership Workgroup report to the General Assembly. Both efforts are intended to spur reinvestment into our existing communities. Additionally, the Commission's Rural Economies Workgroup made significant progress investigating local food production opportunities, enhancements to Maryland's forestry industry, the needs for continued state land preservation efforts, and reducing impediments to rural development.

The Commission held its third annual Sustainable Growth Forum on February 24 in Annapolis, with a focus on infrastructure and the connection between well-functioning public services and community revitalization. The Commission recognized eight individuals, organizations and projects that have contributed to sustainability and smart growth in Maryland. Edward G. Rendell, (Governor of Pennsylvania 2003-2011; Mayor of Philadelphia 1992 – 2000), delivered the keynote address "Reinvesting in Infrastructure, Rebuilding Communities." The Commission also recognized three teams from the dozen undergraduate and graduate submissions from student teams conducting community planning exercises.

The Commission continues to investigate metrics on community data that can provide decision makers a comprehensive view of their community profile. The Commission's concentrating growth working group has coordinated this initiative among state agencies, local governments and the Center for Smart Growth.



The 36-member Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission meets bi-monthly at various locations around the state. Pictured above the Commission held its May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Donaldson Brown Conference Center in Port Deposit (Cecil County)

## 2015 Sustainable Growth awards

The Maryland Sustainable Growth Awards celebrate significant achievement by individuals, businesses, organizations and local governments. The awards promote exemplary work that represents or inspires collaboration, innovation, conservation, community impact and quality of life. The Commission recognized the following for their 2015 awards:

**Karl Brendle (1954-2014)** – Leadership & Service Award for a lifetime of service and commitment to smart growth

**Greater Homewood Community Corporation, Baltimore** – Leadership & Service Award for leadership in strengthening neighborhoods in central Baltimore

**Spike Gjerde, Owner and Chef of Woodberry Kitchen** – Leadership & Service Award for commitment to local farmers and supporting the rural economy

**Farm Alliance of Baltimore City** – Smart Growth Communities Award for helping transform neighborhoods and bringing life and purpose back to often-forgotten parts of the community

**Homewood Community Partners Initiative, Baltimore** – Smart Growth Communities Award for focusing on solutions to urban blight, generational poverty and social struggles by collaborating on projects such as erecting homes on former vacant lots to planning community festivals

**Alice Virginia and David W. Fletcher Branch of the Washington County Free Library** – Smart Growth Communities Award for choosing to rebuild and renovate a 50-year-old building in the heart of downtown Hagerstown contributing to the continued success of its revitalization

**Ocean City Development Corporation Façade Improvement Program** – Smart Growth Communities Award for reversing the trend of demolishing dilapidated structures and converting to surface parking lots, providing incentives to renovate buildings with a focus on their public face

**Evergreen Heritage Center, Frostburg** – Preservation/Conservation Award for providing an example of how to live off the land while protecting it, providing environmental education and healthy living programs, experiential learning for college students and workshops in sustainable agriculture and forestry



Karl Brendle



The Alice Virginia and David W. Fletcher Branch of the Washington County Free Library receives the award



Evergreen Heritage Center

## 2014-2015 Sustainable Growth Challenge Collegiate Competition Winners

The Sustainable Growth Challenge, an annual collegiate competition hosted by the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission, engages students from across the state in planning, sustainability and reinvestment issues.

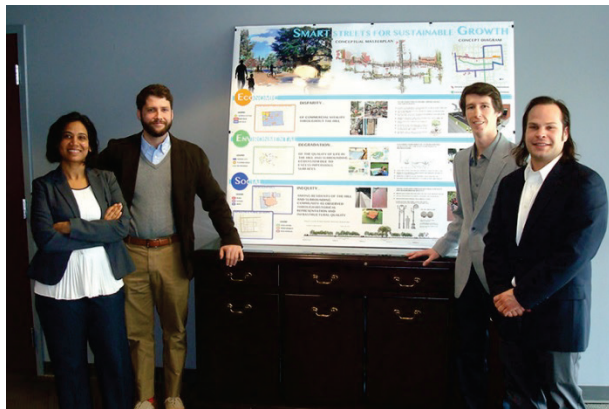
The competition enables teams to conduct community planning exercises, analyze economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable growth and develop creative community solutions. The competition provides students the opportunity to interact with local leaders and engage in their own community planning processes.

Following a rigorous jury selection process, the Commission presented the following teams with top honors in the 2014-2015 Sustainable Growth Challenge:

**Morgan State University Landscape Architecture Program** – First Place for “Rethinking Street Typology for Social Equity, Environmental Stewardship and Economic Revitalization: A design intervention in the small-town historic context of Easton”

**Community College of Baltimore County-Catonsville Department of Geography** – Second Place for “The WALL: A Watershed Analysis Model on a Local Level”

**Johns Hopkins University Global Environmental Change and Sustainability Program** – Third Prize for “Wilson Park Aquaponics”



Morgan State University Team



Community College of Baltimore County-Catonsville Team

Johns Hopkins University Team