



PlanMaryland Draft Plan

Executive Summary

April 2011

Maryland
Department
of Planning

A Message from the Secretary



The PlanMaryland draft is the culmination of more than three years of collaborative effort between the Maryland Department of Planning, other state agencies, local governments and the public. An extensive outreach process has involved more than 50 stakeholder organizations and feedback from more than 2,000 people representing a diverse cross-section from throughout Maryland.

PlanMaryland provides a framework, process and actions for furthering Smart Growth and for implementing the 12 Planning Visions that Governor O'Malley signed into law in the Smart, Green & Growing Legislation of 2009. The three primary goals of the plan are centered on growth, preservation and sustainability. The "growth" goal is to concentrate development and redevelopment in towns, cities and rural centers where there is existing and planned infrastructure. The "preservation" goal is to preserve and protect environmentally sensitive and rural lands and resources from the impacts of development. And the "sustainability" goal is to ensure a desirable quality of life in our communities and rural areas while preserving the significant natural and cultural resources that define Maryland.

The draft plan's framework lays out policies to guide state agencies more toward smart growth. It establishes clearly defined geographic areas where growth and preservation will be treated as highest priorities. It also provides predictability and direction for local jurisdictions by identifying state policy areas for growth and preservation. Local jurisdictions will be asked to review and consider the PlanMaryland geographies when updating their own plans and will be provided opportunity to designate local areas that are consistent with State planning areas.

During the 120-day public comment period through Sept. 1, 2011, MDP will host a number of PlanMaryland Open Houses to inform people about the plan and provide opportunity for feedback. The schedule and more information are available at Plan.Maryland.gov. After the draft is refined following the public comment period, I will present the plan to Governor O'Malley. We are grateful for all the public input that has shaped the draft to this point. And we look forward to hearing from more of you as we move to fulfill an idea enacted long ago to create a growth plan for the long-term well-being of this great state.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard E. Hall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Eberhart Hall, AICP
Maryland Secretary of Planning





Blueprint for a Smart, Green and Growing Maryland

For more than 40 years, a State Development Plan for Maryland has been authorized in law. Until now, one has not been created and implemented. What began four decades ago as the seed of a good idea is now a necessity. Stated simply, the world has changed.

Recent data indicate that we are not substantially reversing the trends of sprawling development and resource consumption of the last 60 years. The impacts on land resources, communities, greenhouse gas emissions and rural and natural resources are serious and growing - and to the detriment of quality of life for the current population and future generations.

These trends are compounded by a rapidly expanding and aging population, sea level rise and other threats from climate change, global economic realities and the challenges of a post-petroleum era that is just beginning. The State is projected to grow nearly 15 percent over the next 20 years with an additional 900,000 people. These forces require of us a new approach to how we use our limited land and resources in the future.

It is virtually impossible for the State and local governments and the private sector to address these intertwined challenges without first embracing a unifying comprehensive strategy. It must set in motion procedures to establish how and where the State will develop, determine the resources it must protect and how, and set proactive roles that the State and local governments and the private sector must play during the 21st century to make it possible. PlanMaryland is a blueprint for such a strategy.

Throughout this plan, “sustainable” means that as we develop land and conduct business, we maintain and enhance quality of life into the future without diminishing the land, water, air and natural and cultural resources that support it. Sustainable communities must be created by all of us—government, business and residents. We must work collaboratively to balance efficient growth with land and resource conservation. Our success will depend largely on whether development, infrastructure, public transportation and resource conservation are planned strategically in ways that minimize consumption of fossil fuels, emissions of greenhouse gases, overuse of water supplies, production of waste and degradation of our natural and water resources. This vision and strategic plan seeks to address Smart Growth not just as a suburban/exurban issue but to emphasize sustainability across all corners of our great state.



How the Plan is Set Up

To develop the blueprint, PlanMaryland reminds us of the history of efforts in Maryland to plan for and manage development and conservation of our land and resources and the importance of public involvement in **Chapter 1**.

Chapter 2 reviews where we have been and where we are headed with respect to development patterns, resources and sustainable quality of life.

Chapter 3 proposes a set of goals that include those already established and supplemented by others that have been lacking for a comprehensive State plan for sustainability.

They are:

- Concentrate development and redevelopment in towns, cities and rural centers where there is existing and planned infrastructure.
- Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive and rural lands and resources from the impacts of development.
- Ensure that a desirable quality of life in Maryland's metropolitan and rural communities is sustainable.

Chapter 4 proposes a substantial shift in the way we go about achieving these goals through a set of policies and procedures for which all parties – the State and local governments and the private sector – will be responsible.

Chapter 5 provides recommendations and options that might be employed through the course of plan implementation.

Chapter 6 describes how implementation of the plan will be managed and how the State will be accountable for its responsibilities under the plan.

Understanding the Challenges

“The edge of town” is a concept that resonates in imagination but is hard to locate on the ground. If someone asked you to picture the edge of your town, could you say where it is? Or is it lost somewhere in a maze of residential streets, commercial strips and shopping centers?

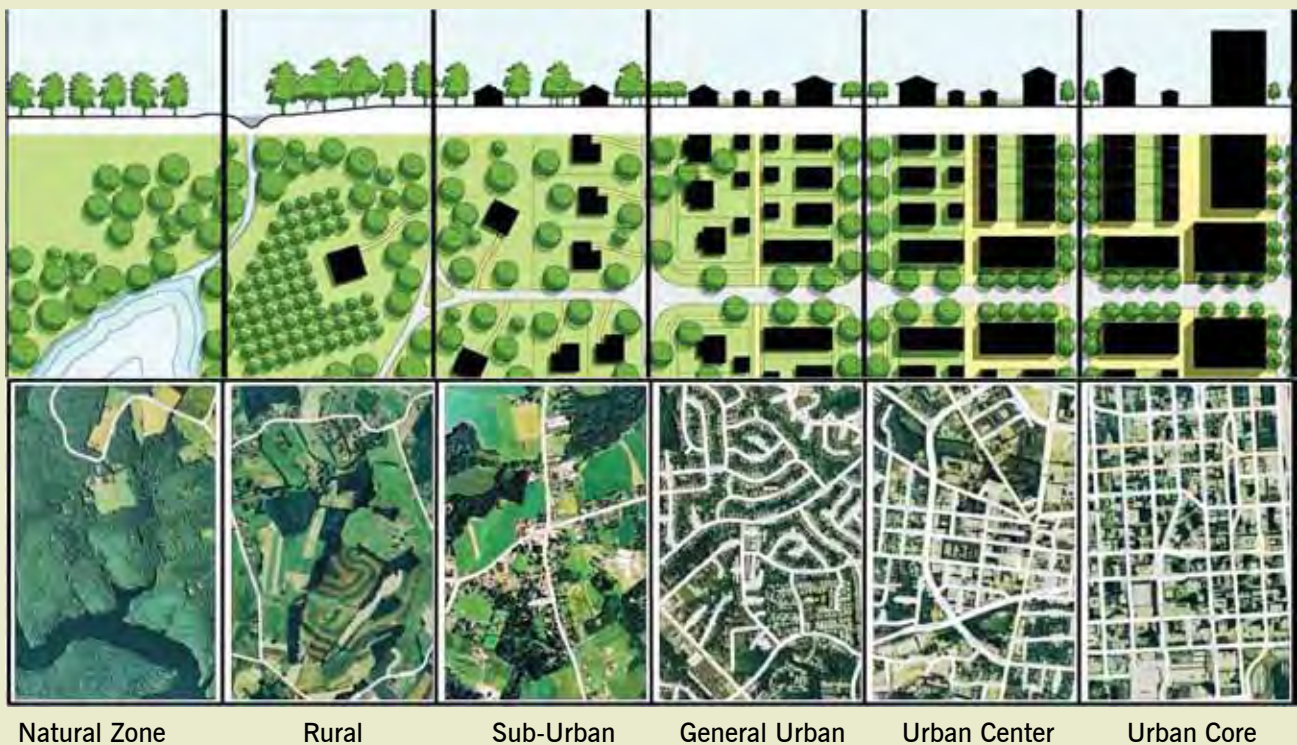
The continuum pictured below is often called a land use “transect.” Sixty years ago, if you travelled from Baltimore to Westminster, for example, city row houses and avenues of stores would give way to greener streets with fewer houses on the outskirts, then farmland and forest. The continuum would reverse as you approached Reisterstown, and the pattern would repeat again as you left Reisterstown and traversed farmland, until you got close to Westminster. Now the edges have been blurred and many of the rural parts of this transect have been filled in by suburban sprawl. This is obvious if you compare aerial views

of 60 years ago and today. Of most concern, this pattern of blurring or obliterating the land-use continuum continues, spreading to areas that were once relatively remote from the metropolitan core of the State.

The current array of state and local tools to protect landscape and resources and support vibrant, prosperous communities are not fulfilling these needs effectively and, as population expands, are likely to fall increasingly short in the future. Although some goals are being achieved in some places, ongoing trends in growth and development are increasingly compromising the majority of these public goals.

This situation does not result from a lack of trying. State and local governments in Maryland have a long history of effective and progressive land use planning and management, in addition to equally

Source: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company



The transition from natural zones to the urban core defines a land use continuum or transect, of which Maryland has many existing examples.

impressive accomplishments in land preservation, environmental protection, infrastructure, economic development and employment opportunities. Despite that record, much of our development increasingly degrades the resources fundamental to the quality of life that Marylanders have historically enjoyed. Forces that include global climate change and soaring energy costs threaten not only the lifestyle of Marylanders, but the very essence of the state's identity. These threats are of a nature and scale greater than anything experienced previously. To meet these challenges, Marylanders must fundamentally change their approach to how they accommodate future growth. That is the purpose of this plan.

Three closely related challenges must be met to reverse current trends and make it possible to realize a sustainable future:

1. The vast majority of residential and business development that occurs in the state must be accommodated in desirable, compact, sustainable communities that provide the high quality of life reflected in the goals of the plan for developed environments.
2. Critical agricultural, water, natural and living resources necessary to sustain resource-based businesses and employment and support quality of life must be identified and protected.
3. The spread of dispersed low-density residential development and the associated costs to the public and the environment must be minimized.



What the Plan Proposes

This plan does not presume to take precedence over previous efforts but to build upon and better coordinate them through the following actions:

- Based on the goals of the plan, establish clearly defined Designated Places for development, conservation and sustainable quality of life. These places are based on GrowthPrint, GreenPrint and AgPrint, three existing planning and preservation tools that will help state agencies and local jurisdictions focus limited resources most efficiently and effectively to meet the broader goals for growth and preservation. These areas will be defined jointly as priorities by State and local governments through a collaborative process. The process will establish common geographies for State agencies and local governments to focus and coordinate their efforts.
- Realign and focus State capital spending and noncapital plans, programs and procedures that significantly affect realization of the goals of the plan. Under the auspices of the Governor's Smart Growth Subcabinet, develop departmental and functional implementation strategies to guide programs, in each agency and across agencies respectively. Each strategy will describe how the programs and procedures of an agency or a group of agencies will maximize support for the goals of PlanMaryland -- in a manner that complements and respects

other departmental statutory goals and public obligations. The strategies will also serve as a framework on which local governments and the private sector can plan their own actions to take advantage of State support.

- Designated Places and implementation strategies will establish shared commitments for State agencies and local governments. To ensure that these commitments are sustained, the Smart Growth Subcabinet will oversee a PlanMaryland Consistency Process. State agencies and local governments contemplating actions that might contradict established goals and commitments will be responsible for bringing the actions to the Consistency Process for review. The process will seek to ensure two outcomes: (1) that the actions support the goals of the plan and (2) that State commitments to target limited capital and non-capital resources continue to contribute most effectively to the achievement of plan goals.



New Governance to Guide Smart Growth

The proposed approach of PlanMaryland differs considerably from current ways of doing business. First, it recognizes that the goals for development, conservation and sustainable quality of life are interdependent and cannot be achieved through the independent initiatives of the State and local governments and the private sector. For example, rural resource lands cannot be sufficiently

protected from development through the State's preservation programs unless local zoning and related tools limit adjacent development consistent with the programs' objectives. Similarly, greenhouse gas emissions from mobile sources cannot be effectively controlled if the majority of the workforce can reach their jobs only by driving from homes so widely dispersed that they cannot be served by public transportation. Development patterns that were based on levels of energy use and pricing of the mid-to-late 20th century are unsustainable in the long run.

The second major innovation of the proposed approach is that it makes State agencies and local governments jointly responsible for managing the relationships between these goals by coordinating their largely independent responsibilities. Implementation of this plan will make that joint responsibility explicit and create the three processes –Place Designation, development of Implementation Strategies and the PlanMaryland Consistency Process – through which this new shared responsibility will be exercised.

A third major difference is that this approach is based on performance. The proposed criteria for Designated Places, the guidelines for Implementation Strategies and the criteria for the PlanMaryland Consistency Process call for application of all means at the disposal of local government and State agencies to attain the goals. This differs considerably from the approach taken by Maryland's 1997 Smart Growth legislation to help address many of the same goals through designation of Priority Funding Areas (PFA), which is discussed in Chapters 1 and 3.

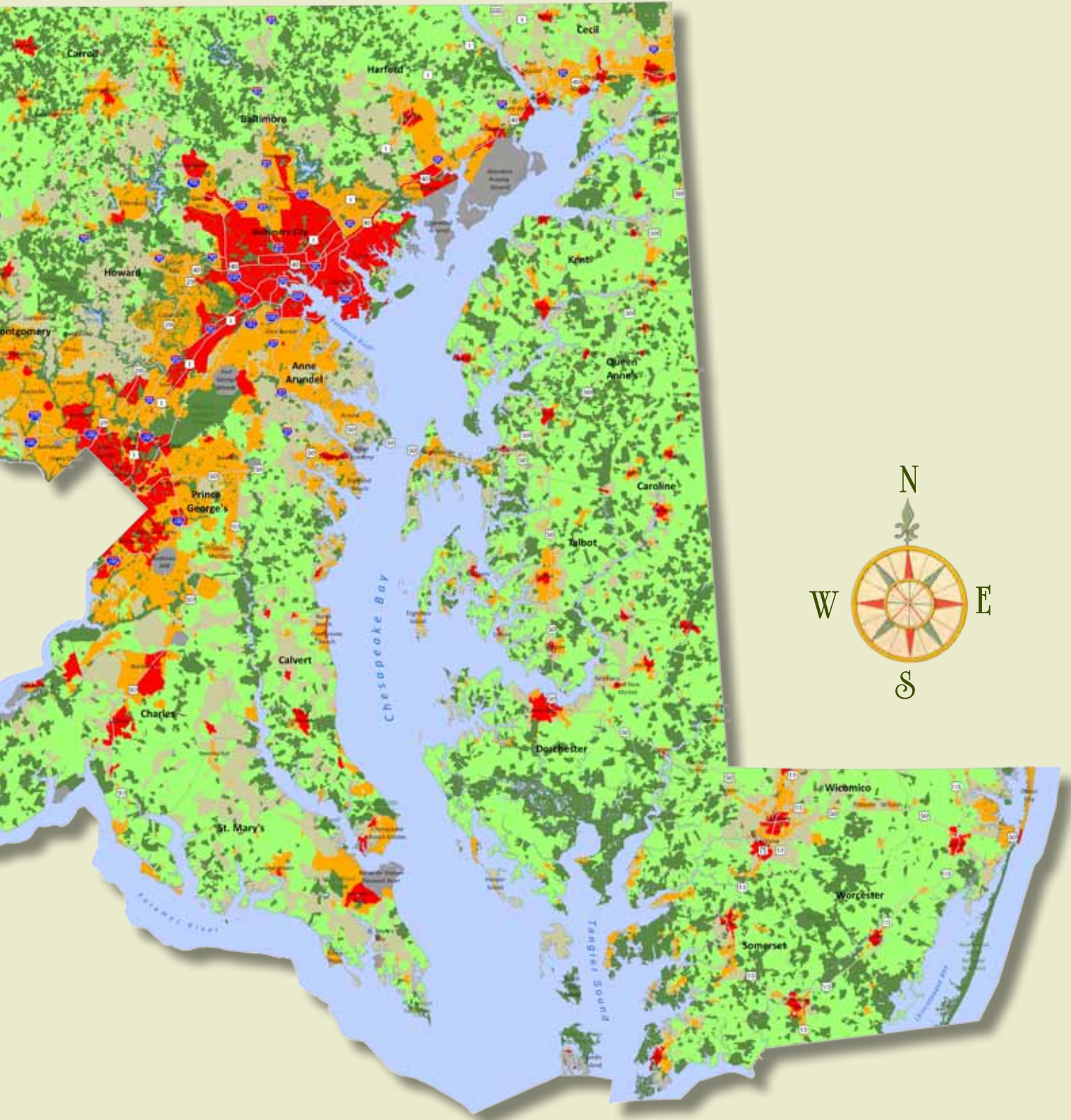
Since the 1997 law sought to encourage development in areas best equipped for it, more than three-quarters of residential growth in land area in Maryland has occurred outside those areas. The PFAs proved a laudable, but insufficient response to widely dispersed development. The plan seeks to focus state spending in more tightly defined areas in all 24 jurisdictions to discourage sprawl and strengthen traditional growth areas in and around towns and cities.



PlanMaryland

Planning Areas

-  Priority areas for land preservation and resource conservation (GreenPrint/AgPrint)
-  Publicly or privately owned lands under permanent conservation protection
-  Targeted growth and revitalization areas within Priority Funding Areas (GrowthPrint)
-  Established communities and land currently planned for development by local governments in Priority Funding Areas.
-  Areas that are not currently targeted by the State for growth, revitalization or resource conservation





One Maryland – One Plan

These new approaches to old and new problems will make it possible to better achieve important State goals for development, conservation and a more sustainable quality of life and position Maryland to thrive in the global economy for decades to come. But because these approaches are new, they will be difficult to put into practice.

As a result, it will fall to the Governor, his cabinet and staff to make the case to the public and to State and local decision-makers about why this is necessary, why it is in their interests to cooperate and why the State can no longer afford to continue the land-use practices of the past 60 years.

PlanMaryland must be the roadmap that will lead Maryland to that new, more affordable, sustainable, prosperous and economically viable destination.

You can access the draft plan at Plan.Maryland.gov. Comments from State agencies, local government and the public will help refine the draft through this summer. A final version of PlanMaryland will be presented to Governor O'Malley this fall.



Assist our State Growth Plan process at:
Plan.Maryland.gov

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Maryland Department of Planning
301 West Preston Street, Suite 1101
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
Tel: 410.767.4500 Toll Free: 1.877.767.6272
TTY users: Maryland Relay
or visit: Planning.Maryland.gov

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This report was written by staff of the Maryland Department of Planning, with graphic design provided by the Communications Office.

April 2011 Publication No. 2011-012



Smart, Green & Growing
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Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor



Maryland Department of Planning
Planning.Maryland.gov

Richard Eberhart Hall, AICP, Secretary
Matthew J. Power, Deputy Secretary

410.767.4500 Toll Free: 1.877.767.6272
TTY users: Maryland Relay