

Maryland

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# What is Smart Growth?

*Smart Growth* is a series of individual decisions that we all make together - from the length of our daily commute, to the price of a new home, to the condition of our neighborhood schools. What, where, and how we grow affects our health, taxes, traffic, the environment and our economic status.

*Smart Growth* ensures that we grow wisely, efficiently and fairly. Maryland has experienced tremendous population growth - over 30 percent between 1973 and 2002. Over this same period, we increased the amount of developed land by 98 percent, while decreasing agricultural and forest lands by 25 percent. Today, we are preparing for a huge influx in households brought about by the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process and the arrival of more than a 1.2 million new residents to Maryland by 2030. How we grow is more important than ever. Smart Growth is designed to steer development where it will have the least impact on our natural and fiscal resources.

*Smart Growth* is well-planned development, guided by sound principles, laws and practices that spur economic growth and enhance quality of life - while protecting the environment and minimizing infrastructure costs and household expenses.

*Smart Growth* produces safe, attractive, convenient, affordable neighborhoods that offer a mix of housing choices and price ranges. Smart Growth is about protecting the Bay and preserving Maryland's farms and forestland. Smart Growth is increased transportation options and walkable, amenity-filled communities that reduce dependency on the automobile.

*Smart Growth* is guided by a dialogue between citizens, developers, business interests and other community stakeholders to produce development decisions that work for everyone. It is not slow growth or no-growth. And it is never one-size fits all. What works in rural western Maryland may not be appropriate in southern Maryland towns or the state's more urban counties.

## A Decade of Innovative Smart Growth Policies in Maryland

In our haste to move up and out of central cities following World War II, we treated our natural resources as if they were unlimited and our older, established communities as if they were expendable. Sprawl consumed more and more open space, hastened the decline of our existing communities and required massive amounts of public funds for new infrastructure. Sprawl worsened traffic congestion, contributed to poor air and water quality, and destroyed our sense of community.

To curb the debilitating, sprawling growth patterns that had been predominant in Maryland (and in much of the United States) since the 1950s, the Maryland General Assembly passed the *Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act* in 1997.

This year, as we mark the 10th anniversary of that important law, we see a simple but profound shift in thinking about how we live, grow and accommodate future growth. The law created Priority Funding Areas (PFAs), which are the cornerstone of Maryland's Smart Growth efforts. They require that state spending be directed to existing communities and other areas where local governments want new growth to occur. PFAs provide target areas in which to more effectively focus state, local government and private sector land-use decisions and resources. PFA's are designed to ensure that the state does not subsidize sprawl.

Making Smart Growth happen is not going to be easy. The latest development trends show that 75 percent of all residential units are being built inside of PFAs. However, houses outside PFAs are built on large lots. Though comprising only 25 percent of all residential units, they consume 75 percent of the acres being converted to housing. Maryland must grow smarter.

## What's in it for *you*?

Citizen involvement is crucial to the success of Smart Growth. Increasingly, the citizens of Maryland are embracing the green, cost-effective, pro-growth principles and goals of Smart Growth. Please join us as we chart a new course, one that features a cleaner environment, strong and lasting communities, and a sustainable economic future.

The following principles, adopted in 1999 by the National Governors' Association during the Glendening administration, and accompanying examples, illustrate how Smart Growth is working in Maryland. They are meant to inspire all decision-making, large and small, that we as individuals make together in shaping a future that we will be proud to pass on to our children.

### Smart Growth Principles: Maryland's Building Blocks for Quality Communities

- Mix land uses
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

### Smart Growth Across Maryland

Desiring a higher quality of life, citizens and policy makers in communities across Maryland are adopting Smart Growth principles in their local development and landuse decisions. We are beginning to realize that the things we value most – our health, environment, economic well-being, and education are all affected by our development decisions. Here are some examples of how Smart Growth ideals are shaping Maryland's rural, suburban and urban landscapes.



*Smart Growth Principle:  
Provide a variety of transportation choices.*

### **Baltimore's West Side Renaissance: *Abundant Transportation Choices***

Smart Growth principles, planning and management are directing both public and private resources in the redevelopment of one of Maryland's most storied neighborhoods: Downtown Baltimore's west side. Over \$1 billion in investments are committed to revitalizing this 28-block area of the city:

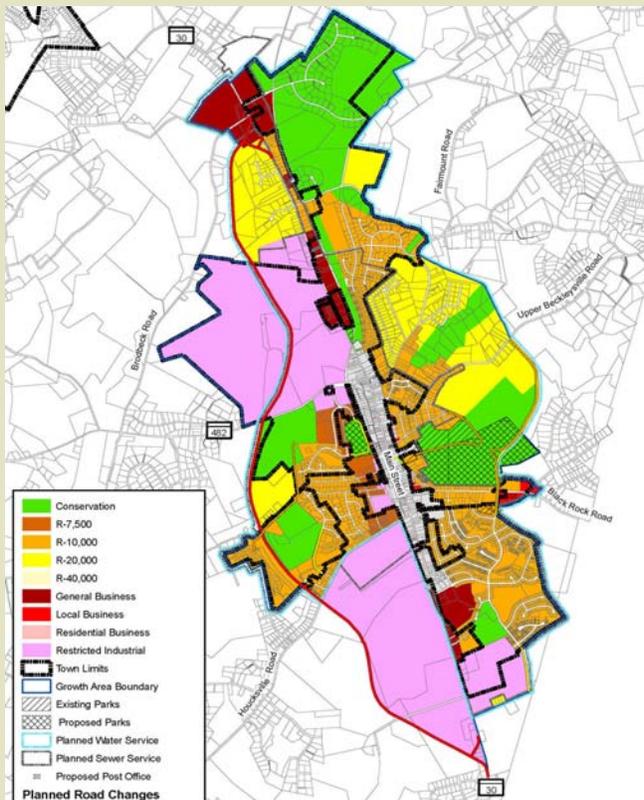
- Creating a dynamic, predominantly residential, mixed-use neighborhood;
- Restoring Baltimore's cultural and retail hub, with the Hippodrome Theater serving as a regional center for the performing arts;
- Preserving historically significant buildings and attracting a new generation of residents, workers, shoppers and visitors.

When complete, the new West Side will become a vibrant and exciting urban place, providing dynamic experiences for those who live, work and play there.

Importantly, the project includes a range of transportation options. A majority of residents can take advantage of nearby light rail, bus, and metro (subway) stations.

Others can choose to bike or simply walk to jobs, shopping, civic and cultural events. The area's proximity to the city center, in addition to its high potential, density, good mix of residential and retail choices, and abundant public transportation options make it an attractive place to be.

[www.downtownwestside.com](http://www.downtownwestside.com)



*Smart Growth Principle:  
Make development decisions predictable,  
fair, and cost-effective.*

## Carroll County: A Model of Interjurisdictional Cooperation

Carroll County and its eight incorporated municipalities have a long-standing tradition of interjurisdictional cooperation. The county and its municipalities routinely collaborate on the county's Community Comprehensive Plans and the annual renewal of Town/County Agreements.

This cooperation has fostered a productive culture of working in concert with each other on numerous initiatives. Community Comprehensive Plans provide residents with a cohesive planning document that covers each of the municipalities and the areas that adjoin them.

The Town/County Agreements, which are renewed annually and signed by the county and the municipalities, address such items as: the services to be provided by the county; review of subdivision plans, master plans, and

annexations; and the enumeration of pass-through funds upon execution of the signed agreement.

These agreements facilitate an open relationship between the county and the municipalities and provide ongoing regional collaboration that furthers the goals of Smart Growth.

Sharing information and developing a truly collaborative process allows everyone to maximize better growth options.

[www.ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/complan/default.asp](http://www.ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/complan/default.asp)



*Smart Growth Principle:  
Encourage community and  
stakeholder collaboration in  
development decisions.*

## Reality Check: *Envisioning Maryland's Future*

In the summer of 2006, a broad cross-section of Marylanders held a unique series of growth visioning exercises across the state.

Participants said they needed a community vision for the future, comprehensive plans that codify that vision, and zoning that faithfully follows those plans.

*Reality Check* participants in all four regions of Maryland expressed strong and consistent support for a pattern of development that is different from the pattern that current local zoning policies would allow in the future.

*Reality Check* participants broadly supported protection of the State's "green infrastructure" and its remaining agricultural lands, goals they said could be achieved largely by redirecting much of the new growth projected to come to the State to existing urban areas, both large and small.

Participants throughout the state expressed interest in finding ways to redirect some of the State's projected new growth to the city of Baltimore, which has lost about a third of its population over the last half century.

Participants in all four regions also expressed support for improved regional coordination and

use of infrastructure planning, for greatly expanded transit opportunities, and for an increase in the supply of housing for middle and lower income workers.

Participants from every region also called for renewed efforts to locate housing closer to where people work as a means of cutting back the time and expense of long-distance commuting. While there was general support for maintaining local control over land use decisions, many participants said they also recognized the value of more oversight by regional and state entities.

Following *Reality Check*, the Maryland Department of Planning participated in the *Scenarios Planning Project* as part of a larger effort to get agreement on direction for growth, and on state and local policy to move it in that direction.

(Excerpted from *Today's Vision, Tomorrow's Reality*, summary report of the "Reality Check Plus" Growth Visioning Exercises. John Frece, principal author.)

[www.uli.org/Content/NavigationMenu/MyCommunity/RegionalVisioningandCooperation/RealityCheckGuide/20e.RCP\\_Summary\\_Report.pdf](http://www.uli.org/Content/NavigationMenu/MyCommunity/RegionalVisioningandCooperation/RealityCheckGuide/20e.RCP_Summary_Report.pdf)

Photo: Lorie Schoettler  
Neighborhoods of Greater Lauraville, Inc. (NOGLI)



### **Greater Lauraville: A Walkable Community**

Lauraville is a community of attractive, quiet neighborhoods in northeast Baltimore, built between 1910 and 1930. Situated along Harford Road, which has long served as a link from Baltimore to Belair, the neighborhood is divided by what is now a six-lane commuter route. Harford Road had become an intimidating barrier to communities and businesses on either side.

Concentrating on the one-mile stretch known as the Lauraville Business District, Baltimore City set aside funds for the construction of a median in Harford Road to slow traffic, improve pedestrian safety, and beautify the landscape. Both the city and the state are funding infrastructure improvements - lighting, new sidewalks, bus shelters, and landscaping - that will create an architectural identity in the business district.

The Greater Lauraville Harford Road Streetscape project enhances walkability by helping to connect neighborhoods, schools, businesses, parks and open space as well as creating a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place.

[www.greaterlauraville.com/](http://www.greaterlauraville.com/)



### **Baltimore County's Rural Zoning: Preserving natural resources and productive agricultural settings**

Baltimore County uses a multi-faceted approach to preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and environmental resources. A steadfast urban-rural demarcation line (URDL), which limits the extension of urban services, helps concentrate development into the county's planned urban and suburban areas. Outside the URDL, a variety of "Resource Conservation" zoning districts allows development designed to preserve landscape and resources.

On land for farming, development is limited to two lots, plus one for each 50 acres above 100, while on watershed protection lands, one lot per five acres is allowed, lots must be clustered, and environmentally sensitive areas must be protected.

Baltimore County acquires conservation easements through numerous purchase of development rights programs, local land trusts, and five designated Rural Legacy Areas. It also leads Maryland in acres of easements donated to the Maryland Environmental Trust.

[www.co.ba.md.us/Agencies/environment/index.html](http://www.co.ba.md.us/Agencies/environment/index.html)

Photo: Town of Leonardtown



*Smart Growth Principle:  
Foster distinctive, attractive communities  
with a strong sense of place.*

### **Leonardtown Wharf: New Life for the Old Waterfront**

The Leonardtown Wharf Project, located at the end of Jefferson Street in Leonardtown, is a 5.5 acre waterfront redevelopment that includes a park, restaurant, and a mix of stores, office space and loft apartments. At buildout, this development will provide approximately 168 full-time jobs, and is a redevelopment effort consistent with Maryland’s Smart Growth policies. It is an example of a public/private partnership that has had a positive impact not only on the waterfront site but also on the entire downtown business district. Through its reorientation toward Breton Bay, Leonardtown is creating a hub of activity along its waterfront that has not existed for decades. <http://leonardtown.somd.com>



*Smart Growth Principle:  
Strengthen and direct development  
toward existing communities.*

### **Cumberland: A Model Main Street Community**

Cumberland is one of Maryland’s first Main Street communities, utilizing a combination of local and state resources to revitalize a downtown core composed of eclectic shops, quaint side streets, and turn-of-the-century architecture. Sustainable economic development strategies feature its unique place in America’s transportation history, supported by heritage tourism through Maryland’s Heritage Areas and Scenic Byways programs. The Historic National Road, Western Maryland Railroad and the C&O Canal all come together here, and Cumberland’s ongoing preservation efforts through the Canal Place Preservation District made it Maryland’s first Certified Heritage Area.

Designated by the state of Maryland as an Arts and Entertainment District, Cumberland has evolved into a thriving arts community, providing service organizations, galleries and activities designed to support artists. Downtown Cumberland has also been designated as a National Register Historic District, and the Washington Street Historic District provides an opportunity to explore significant buildings from the Victorian Era. [www.downtowncumberland.com](http://www.downtowncumberland.com)



*Smart Growth Principle:  
Take advantage of compact  
building design.*

### **Kentlands: Setting the Standard for Compact Development**

Kentlands, located in Gaithersburg, is considered the new suburban model for development by the building industry and sets the standard for new urbanist development in Maryland. New urbanist neighborhood design, based on traditional neighborhood settlement patterns, is intended to create a diverse range of housing and jobs to promote walkability, transit-oriented development, and encourage compact designs.

Kentlands includes 62 live/work units. One enterprising owner operates a restaurant on the street level while maintaining a residence in a three-bedroom home upstairs. It's all perfectly legal and encouraged at Kentlands live/work dwellings.

There are also single-family homes, townhomes, senior apartments and a town center in this neighborhood, located about 27 miles from Washington, D.C. Kentlands consists of 352 acres, 2200 residential units, about a third multi-family, a third townhouses and a third single family detached homes.

There are rental apartments, too, and lots of shared green space. The governing principle is simple. According to Mike Watkins, a leading new urbanist designer who worked on Kentlands, "Many of us prefer walking to driving, so it was deliberately designed as a place as a counterpoint to that — to offer an alternative to driving absolutely everywhere."

Kentlands has won numerous architectural, building, and development awards, including several Maryland Smart Growth Awards for compact design.

[www.kentlandsusa.com/kentlands/community.php](http://www.kentlandsusa.com/kentlands/community.php)



*Smart Growth Principle:  
Mix land uses.*

### **Carroll Creek Revitalization: *Making a Great City Even Better***

The Carroll Creek Park project is helping to rejuvenate the city of Frederick's downtown district by providing waterfront access to businesses and to residents or visitors walking or biking downtown.

The Carroll Creek project has generated over 250,000 square feet of office and 100,000 square feet of retail space, as well as over 1,000 full-time jobs and over 2,000 new structured parking spaces.

This mixed-use project is an outstanding example of Smart Growth because it is located in an area with existing infrastructure, and it has public transportation and pedestrian access throughout. This project includes both public and private partnerships that have generated millions of dollars in investment for redevelopment.

Originally the revitalization effort was expected to impact areas along the creek and areas within two blocks of the creek. This effort has been so successful that Frederick is now seeing the revitalization's impact on areas three to four blocks away from the creek.

[www.cityoffrederick.com/carrollcreek/pics.htm](http://www.cityoffrederick.com/carrollcreek/pics.htm)



*Smart Growth Principle:  
Create a range of housing  
opportunities and choices.*

### **Berlin's Cannery Village: *Making the American Dream Possible for All***

The town of Berlin is one step closer to bringing much needed affordable housing to Worcester County. In May 2007, the planning commission approved the final site plan for Cannery Village, which will feature workforce housing.

Plans call for the developer to make Cannery Village a larger, mixed-use development, with a small community center, businesses, (such as medical or insurance offices) and a parcel of land for civic activities. The 26-acre project, created by a partnership of the Berlin Community Development Corporation, New Beginnings Covenant Church, and the Federal Government, has been in the works for nearly three years.

The work force houses will be sold to buyers at prices based on their income levels. The market for the homes will include buyers such as teachers who are employed in the community but are priced out of the local housing market.

Cannery Village will be funded through assistance from state, federal and local grants.

[www.shoreprogress.com/index.php?SID=243](http://www.shoreprogress.com/index.php?SID=243)

# What's Next?

As we mark the 10th anniversary of Maryland's *Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act*, we see a profound shift in thinking by Maryland's citizens – we are asking for better decision-making about how we live and grow. Simply stated, Maryland's citizens are demanding more.

Governor Martin O'Malley recently charged Maryland's Smart Growth Subcabinet with developing a new strategy that revitalizes existing efforts, and brings Maryland, once again, into the forefront as a national leader in planning and Smart Growth. Planning Secretary Richard Eberhart Hall will lead this effort. The Subcabinet will develop a comprehensive strategy that will be shaped by the following five goals:

- Spurs economic and employment growth, while protecting Maryland's natural and cultural resources;
- Improves the quality of life for all Marylanders by fostering safe, convenient, amenity-filled communities that all of us can afford;
- Expands assistance to local governments to better aid in resolving local, growth related challenges and concerns;
- Maximizes the state's return on infrastructure investment – ensuring that high quality development is occurring in areas where infrastructure already exists or is readily available;
- Minimizes sprawl development patterns that have consumed precious open space, worsened traffic congestion, and destroyed our sense of community.

## What can you do to be part of Maryland's Smart Growth solutions?

Get involved. It's that simple. Working smart means working together - even the best minds in government can't work in isolation. It's our Maryland – One Maryland.

Contact your local government to see how you can help shape your community's future. Please use the following websites to contact your local government:

Maryland Department of Planning: [www.mdp.state.md.us](http://www.mdp.state.md.us)

Maryland General Assembly: [www.mdelect.net](http://www.mdelect.net)

Maryland State Government: [www.maryland.gov](http://www.maryland.gov)

Maryland Manual: [www.mdmanual.net](http://www.mdmanual.net)

Photo: Mark Praetorius



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[www.mdp.state.md.us](http://www.mdp.state.md.us)

*Maryland, Growing Smarter* Publication No. 2007-002 June 2007

*Maryland, Growing Smarter* was written by staff of the Maryland Department of Planning.  
Graphic Design was provided by staff of the Communications Office.





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