



# PlanMaryland

## What is it?



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Department  
of Planning

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*Cover photo: Carroll Creek Park, "In The Streets" festival, Frederick. Reprinted with permission of The Frederick News-Post and Randall Family LLC (as published 7/28/2008).*



# **PlanMaryland:** **What is it?**



*Maryland Department of Planning*



*Smart, Green & Growing*

*Over the next 20 years, there will be nearly 1,000,000 more people, over 400,000 additional households and over 600,000 new jobs in Maryland. Where will all these people live and work, how will they get to their jobs, and what benefits and impact will this have on our existing communities, our natural resources and our transportation systems? What role will the State and local governments have and how will a wide array of public, private and non-profit organizations all work together to plan for a sustainable future?*

*PlanMaryland, the State's first comprehensive plan for sustainable growth and development, is intended to answer these and many other questions . . .*



## ***Why Plan Now?***

Effective and efficient management of land use was a vision in the 1930s when Maryland created the first State planning commission in the country. It swelled into a pressing need by the 1970s, when the State legislature created the authority to develop a statewide development plan. And it has reached a critical point now that the pace of sprawl has continued its march despite curative efforts in recent decades.

Our strategies must establish where and how the State will develop, what resources it must protect, and the proactive role that the State and local governments and the private sector must take during the 21st century to make it possible. A commitment to fulfill the intent of the legislature 40 years ago to develop a statewide plan for growth, PlanMaryland, will be a blueprint for such a strategy.

Maryland created a framework a decade ago to steer development toward priority funding areas to try to ensure that new construction occurred near existing services and infrastructure. Scattered development far beyond areas with existing infrastructure wasn't abated, however, partly due to an unusually strong housing market. The programs put in place also proved insufficient to tame the sweep of development.

## ***Why Is It Important To Plan For The Long Term?***



Maryland is experiencing unprecedented challenges of population increase, loss of farmland and forests, impacts on natural and water resources, and deterioration of older communities

and infrastructure like roads and water supply. Development patterns heavily reliant on autos have contributed to a rise in heart disease and obesity in adults and children, made driving in congested traffic routine, and accelerated energy consumption. In combination with unprecedented national and global issues like climate change and soaring energy costs, these issues will increasingly influence how we manage land and development. Ineffective responses will allow further degradation of precious resources fundamental to quality of life in Maryland. These are a few reasons that we need better and more coordinated state, local and private sector strategies to chart a course for the long-term.

## ***What Has Been Our Pattern Of Growth And Development?***

Marylanders drove an average of 40 percent more in 2006 than in 1990. As the distance between homes and other destinations has increased, providing efficient transit services has become more difficult. Almost three quarters of all commutes to work in Maryland are by private car. Less than 7 percent of the population lives within a half-mile of premium transit services (ones that operate within their own right of way). Only about 17 percent of job locations are within a half-mile of such services. The Washington and Baltimore

metropolitan areas were, respectively, the 2nd and 22nd most congested in the nation in 2005, based on the average hours of travel delay. The costs of congestion totaled \$2.3 billion (\$545 per person) in the Washington area and \$1.1 billion (\$486 per person) in the Baltimore area.

All that driving is a consequence of a lack of mixed uses in our land-use planning. The places where people live, work and play should be adjacent or much closer to each other, not so far apart. Spreading out has also led to a stratification of real estate value, shrinking the amount of affordable housing throughout much of Central Maryland. Between 2002 and 2007, the percent of home sales affordable to Maryland's teachers, for example, was halved, to 19 percent from 41 percent.



In only four jurisdictions did more than 40 percent of sales meet the definition of affordable.

More sprawling development has also had a severe environmental impact – on land, streams, waterways, aquatic habitats,

living resources, and both surface and ground water supplies. For the first time, Marylanders are experiencing drinking water shortages resulting in building moratoria and competition between development and farming for the use of water supplies in rural areas. Clean-up of the Chesapeake Bay, a concern for more than a generation, has also been stalled by the smothering effects of sprawl on the nation's largest estuary.

At current development trends, about 560,000 acres, or an area roughly the equivalent of Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties combined, would be developed by 2030. Under a Smart Growth scenario, the impact could be limited to less than one-third of that, to around 163,000 acres, impacting many fewer watersheds, and much less agricultural and natural resource land.



## ***What Will PlanMaryland Do?***

PlanMaryland is all about the future. It proposes to build on existing State and local plans and programs toward a new level of accountability from State agencies and local governments. The focus is not on new programs, more money or more State control. Instead, a new emphasis would be placed on the ways in which individual State agencies and local governments coordinate and work together on their respective responsibilities and actions.

There are no quick fixes or silver bullets. These efforts will occur over time and will require some changes in the way we approach land use planning. PlanMaryland would establish targets for development and resource conservation that are consistent with common State and local goals. They would be supported by the plans and programs of both State and local governments. State agencies, through their capital and non-capital resources, programs, and procedures would place a priority on these common areas. State agencies and local governments contemplating actions that might contradict established goals and commitments will have to identify potential conflicts and resolve them.

PlanMaryland will emphasize planning that encourages us to be more efficient and less wasteful of valuable resources. It will require that we acknowledge limits to growth and development, be more mindful of costs and benefits, and assist us in making the necessary trade-offs to balance between growth, development and the protection of valuable natural, cultural and historic resources.

### ***How Will PlanMaryland Empower Local Governments?***

Rather than threatening the ability of local governments to control their own destiny, PlanMaryland will enhance their capacity to do so. Local jurisdictions currently may find themselves at a disadvantage with regard to the State controlling infrastructure investments and imposing regulatory authority without coordination across State departments, and without a clear focus. PlanMaryland will provide that coordination and focus with collaboration from local governments.

In some instances, such as with transportation, environmental and housing concerns, solutions to local problems or problems crossing jurisdictional boundaries require regional approaches. A Statewide plan that identifies those approaches and the roles of State and local governments can help resolve problems in an efficient and timely manner.





## ***How Will Plan Maryland Relate To The 12 Visions?***

The 2009 Smart, Green, and Growing Legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly outlined 12 Planning Visions toward a more sustainable, more livable, and less costly future. The Visions address quality of life, public participation, growth areas, community design, infrastructure, transportation, housing, economic development, environmental protection, resource conservation, stewardship and implementation approaches. Local jurisdictions are required to include the Visions in their local comprehensive plans and implement them through zoning ordinances and other

land development and preservation regulations. Improving planning coordination within State government and between the State and local plans would help accomplish the following:

- *Concentrate residential and business development in and around existing developed areas and strategically selected new areas*

- *Develop a variety of transit options to better connect residential, retail, educational, recreational, and employment opportunities without sole reliance on automobiles*
- *Increase affordable housing options*
- *Make neighborhoods and communities more walkable*
- *Ensure adequate water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business growth*
- *Better protect natural resources, such as the Chesapeake and coastal bays, forests, agricultural land and open space*
- *Reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions resulting from more efficient transportation choices*
- *Preserve community sense of place and historic character*

These are just some of the benefits that are possible through implementation of the Visions and improved coordination between the State and local governments.

## ***What Have We Learned?***

Nearly 75 years of land-use planning has demonstrated that goals for development, conservation and sustainable quality of life are interdependent. Independent initiatives by the State or local governments won't achieve the goals. Rural resource lands, including farms and forests, 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. Greenhouse gas emissions from mobile sources cannot be effectively controlled if the majority of the workforce can reach their jobs only by driving automobiles from homes so widely dispersed that they cannot be served by public transportation.



### ***What Are The Costs?***

The costs associated with land-use patterns as we know them are many. The pressure on taxpayers to pay for roads and utilities to serve an ever spreading metropolitan core is unsustainable, at a time when systems put in a half-century or more ago are coming to the

end of their useful life and need replacement. Concepts such as green living and energy conservation weren't part of the debate a half-century or more ago, but they're very much on the minds of people now. If we continue to consume land for new development without greater regard for the overall impact and at the current pace, Maryland is on track to add about 560,000 acres of new developed land by 2030.

## ***Why Do We Need PlanMaryland?***

PlanMaryland will help identify and build consensus around key issues of concern to most Marylanders and offer reasonable, common sense and attainable solutions to address these issues. From maintaining and improving quality of life, to protecting and preserving agricultural, historic, cultural, and natural resources, to providing more choices for people to live in communities where housing, jobs and services are more accessible and affordable. PlanMaryland is intended to address the following broad goals:

- 1. To encourage sustainable development and protect quality of life.**
- 2. To develop land more consistent with growth in population and housing.**
- 3. To strengthen existing cities and communities.**
- 4. To protect our farmland.**
- 5. To preserve our natural, historic and cultural resources.**
- 6. To reduce automobile dependency.**
- 7. To increase access to transit, walking and bicycling.**
- 8. To concentrate jobs in existing cities and communities and strengthen economic development.**
- 9. To increase housing affordability.**
- 10. To minimize residential land consumption outside of existing communities.**

## ***How Can You Be Involved?***

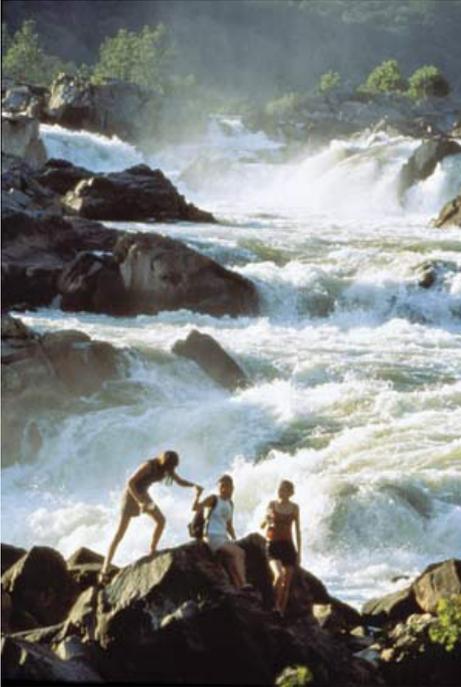
PlanMaryland is employing a variety of tools and methods to reach residents, businesses, and key stakeholders including nongovernmental organizations, representatives from environmental and agricultural organizations and others.

Stakeholders, residents, businesses, planning practitioners, and others who are interested in the PlanMaryland process can have input in a number of ways, including a series of community meetings, social media and other forums on PlanMaryland website accessible at [Planning.Maryland.gov](http://Planning.Maryland.gov).



A series of public forums throughout the State where participants will be asked to provide their input on a variety of topics, such as prioritizing the State's Planning Visions. The feedback will be used to help develop better ways to encourage Smart Growth, stimulate economic development and improve State coordination of growth-related resources.





## *Timeline*

A tentative timeline has been established to complete PlanMaryland. It will start with building support for the planning process through a variety of stakeholder outreach meetings, move into a more formal kickoff and then proceed with public forums to hear from people around the State. The planning process will culminate with a draft Plan in 2011. The entire process will be transparent and collaborative.

Fall/Winter 2009 and ongoing

Stakeholder outreach

Early 2010

Kickoff

Spring 2010

First round of regional public forums

Spring/Summer 2010

Phase 1  
Draft – Issues, Opportunities, Goals, Vision

Fall/Winter 2010

Second round of regional public forums

Late 2010/early 2011

Prepare Preliminary Draft Plan

Spring 2011

Third round of regional public forums (if needed)

Spring 2011

Prepare Final Plan

For More Information, go to the Maryland Department of Planning website at [Planning.Maryland.gov](http://Planning.Maryland.gov) or call 410-767-4500.

Notes:



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