



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

December 3, 2010

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
Governor's Office
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401-1925

Dear Governor O'Malley:

The Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission was created at the initiative of Governor O'Malley during the 2010 Legislative Session by Senate Bill 278 and House Bill 474. It succeeds the Task Force on the Future for Growth and Development in Maryland, which existed from 2007-10. At 36 members, the Commission is larger than the 21-member Task Force, with the addition of several additional state agencies and stakeholder organizations, as well as nine new regional representatives who represent the diverse areas of our State. Fortunately, many of the hard-working Task Force members have been appointed to the Commission, so we will have both continuity and the benefit of fresh perspectives from new appointees. A roster of Commission members is at [Tab A](#).

The Commission's charge is broadened from the Task Force, and a copy of the charge for your reference and review is at [Tab B](#). At [Tab C](#) is a copy of the State's economic growth, resource protection, and planning policy (known informally as the "Twelve Visions"), which is established by statute and provides the fundamental underpinnings for our work. You will see it referenced several times in the Commission charge.

Section 5-707 of the State Finance and Procurement Article requires that "[o]n or before December 1 of each year, the Commission shall report, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, on its activities and recommendations to the Speaker of the House; the President of the Senate; the House Environmental Matters Committee; the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee; and the Governor." This letter fulfills that mandate, though in an abbreviated form due to the recent start of Commission activities.

The Commission was formally appointed on September 2, 2010 and held its inaugural meeting on October 25, 2010 at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore. The meeting focused on organizational matters but, importantly, also provided a forum for members to outline their goals and expectations for the Commission and their own service on it. A summary of members' responses to a pre-meeting questionnaire is at [Tab D](#) and provides useful insight into members' priorities as well as their deep commitment to the issues facing the Commission and the State. The Department of Planning provided members with initial resource materials and provided an on-line "tour" of other resources available.

On November 4, 2010, the Commission participated in an informational bus tour of selected sites. The route began at State Center in Baltimore where members were briefed generally about Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the context of the State Center TOD Project. The Commission drove through the

Park Heights neighborhood in Baltimore City where members learned about planned redevelopment there, and were briefed on the 2010 Sustainable Communities Act. Next, we visited the Owings Mills TOD and surrounding area to hear about challenges with such developments.

The Commission then visited a farm operation in rural Baltimore County to learn about strong rural zoning, agricultural preservation and agricultural economics.

In Carroll County, the Commission was briefed about county/municipal cooperation on completion of a county-wide Water Resources Element, which was required by law to be included in local comprehensive plans by October 1, 2009. In the City of Westminster, the Commission visited the Carroll Arts Center where members heard about the positive impact of the State's incentives for revitalization, and then visited Union Crossing, an infill affordable housing project

Finally, we visited Liberty Reservoir and were briefed by MDE on water quantity, quality and protection issues at the reservoir and in the watershed.

The Commission is scheduled to meet again on December 13, 2010 in Annapolis, where it will hear from MDP Secretary Richard Hall about sustainable growth issues generally, and from the Department of the Environment about the State's Watershed Implementation Plan which is required by the EPA as part of expected TMDL requirements. We will also discuss a draft workplan for 2011.

We are firmly committed to holding Commission meetings in different areas of the State to the extent possible, and have already begun scheduling our 2011 meetings in different jurisdictions and regions.

We look forward to regular communication and dialog with you and your staffs as our agenda and workplan are developed. The Commission is off to a good start, and we appreciate your continued support, input, and engagement.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 410.528.5506 or laria@ballardspahr.com should you require any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Laria', with a large, stylized flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Jon Laria
Chair

