Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission

Education Work Group Report
January 28, 2013

TO: Jon Laria, Chair, MD Sustainable Growth Commission

FROM: Calvin Ball, Chair, Education Workgroup

SUBJECT: Update on Progress and 2013 Goals

DATE: January 28, 2013

In response to feedback received from Commission members during our December meeting and the most recent meeting of our Education Workgroup, below is our progress report.

Sustainable Growth Challenge
We are still anticipating a Fall 2013 launch and will be coordinating with Universities and Community Colleges that would like to participate. Sandi Olek and Peter Conrad will be the point of contacts for the Growth Challenge and we've updated the flyer to reflect the changes. At this time, we have secured University of MD, College Park to launch the Challenge.

We have sent out a round of invitations to Universities that have planning degrees or offer planning courses, based upon a scan of degrees from a few years ago. We will send another round out shortly and also include Community Colleges that offer similar degrees and/or courses, as well as other programs at universities.

Students will participate in a semester long studio project. By the Summer, we will need to identify regional issues at the local level that can have elements of environmental, design and economic impacts for the students to undertake. We would like to enlist the help of the Commission to submit ideas the Workgroup could use for the Challenge.

As part of the Challenge, we have discussed the idea of inviting the students to present at a Commission meeting or in Annapolis. We would like to illicit feedback from the Commission on this matter.

We would like to extend an invitation to interested Commission members to sit on the panel.

Our next step is to develop a rubric and FAQ as well as training for panelists/judges. We have identified the following Workgroup members to assist: Calvin Ball, Sandi Olek, Peter Conrad and Brian Bieretz. We will also need to identify local partners, funding needs and potential funding sources.

We would like all institutions to have registered and be online by August 2013.

Youth Sustainable Growth Commission
We have discussed the need to maintain constant communication with the Maryland Association of Student Councils (MASC) as they have expressed an interest in using their voice to help our Workgroup in furthering the charge of the Commission.

At the last MASC conference, Calvin Ball presented ideas to collaborate. Both the Workgroup and the students feel that a significant training component would be needed to provide constant education to the students so they can make informed recommendations.

We are currently looking at their future upcoming meetings to identify opportunities to engage with them this Spring. We would also like to explore inviting them to an upcoming Commission meeting.

Review of the Education Requirements for Members of Planning Boards and Commissions and Boards of Appeals
The Education Workgroup will be offering feedback on the Planning Commissioner Training Assessment. This is a component of our Commission's legal charge. We hope to receive a draft for our review by early April so that we can begin our review and offer comments. Below is a status of the Report at this time.

Status of Report
Laws and programs in other states

Status: 8 other states profiled, detailing requirements of their laws and implementation. Several successful nonprofit training groups are also profiled. Most research complete and section is nearly drafted.

Overview: Most states with laws required 4-6 initially and 3-4 hours annually. Topics covered in orientation and continuing education ranged from the basics (master plan, roles and responsibilities, development process, etc.) to the complex (watershed management, telecommunications infrastructure, etc.). Most states use a mix of local training, statewide nonprofits (such as MPCA), state agencies, and private trainers to provide training. Most states have some online content ranging from written materials to videos to interactive training platforms.

MPCA Online Survey

Status: Online survey completed. 167 responses were recorded. Responses have been coded and tables constructed. Data is in the process of being analyzed and findings drafted.

Preliminary Results: The course topics considered my important were: Planning Law, Comprehensive Plans, Zoning Code, Variances and Special Exceptions. Most online respondents expressed a preference for self-study, particularly online. Fifty-four percent said online materials and webinars were the preferred delivery platform. Furthermore, seventy-one percent expressed both a comfort and willingness to complete trainings online)

PDR survey results and comments

Status: Online survey completed. 52 responses were recorded. Responses have been coded and tables constructed. Data is in the process of being analyzed and findings drafted.

Preliminary Results: The course topics more recommend were: Zoning Code, Variances and Special Exceptions, Comp plans, Development Process. Sixty percent of planning directors reported providing some form of training. Most local trainings are ad hoc for new members or upon request. Planning directors frequently created courses in response to local or statewide legislative issues or for special development cases currently before the planning commission.

MPCA Paper Survey action plan

Status: All survey materials are currently drafted and awaiting approval from MPCA board members before survey is sent out. The first round of surveys should be sent out by the end of January with follow-up reminders sent to non-respondents 2 weeks and 4 weeks later. The first round of reminders will include an additional survey.

Integration/Expansion of Planning Degrees/Courses into MD Community Colleges or Institutions
Jim Farley at Chesapeake College will serve as a consultant with the Education Workgroup. He provided a list of Universities and Community Colleges that offer specific courses and degrees in planning that we may be able to

We have also had conversations with the Superintendent of Schools in Cambridge to identify ways to connect with high school students.

Collaboration with Realtors to Promote Smart Growth
We have had discussions with Realtors and Realtor Organizations including the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and the Howard County Association of Realtors (HCAR) to identify what education is being offered and ways the Education Workgroup can provide assistance.

For the past few years, NAR has used its resources to develop education resources on Smart Growth but primarily focus on consumer protection. They promote education through the Real Estate Commission. We anticipate assisting by putting together an outline on ways our Workgroup can provide assistance to them.

We have floated ideas to connect realtors and planning commissioners through the idea smart growth. NAR has conducted preference surveys and trends for consumers. Increasing numbers of individuals and families want to live in walkable communities so we feel the connection of realtors and planning commissioners is an important element.

Create a Public General Campaign About Smart Growth
Smart, Green & Growing: A Proposed Public Campaign to Engage Marylanders in Promoting Smart, Sustainable Growth
In our last meeting, we discussed the importance of collaborating with the Commission to ensure the Education Workgroup is aligning to the needs of the Commission on this goal. If the Commission members would like our Workgroup to move forward, we would like to identify stakeholders that would be a part of this campaign.

Below is a summary of what we had previously discussed and how this campaign could be formulated.

Maryland's Sustainable Growth Commission provides a statewide forum for stakeholders to discuss growth and development issues and policies. The Commission interacts with state agencies as well as representatives of local jurisdictions and the general public, addressing such issues as land use, transportation, farmland preservation, economic development, Chesapeake Bay restoration, school overcrowding and infrastructure needs.

Among its responsibilities, the Commission has been charged with developing and assisting in the implementation of education and outreach on smart and sustainable growth. While these efforts can -- and do -- take a variety of specific forms, the Education Workgroup also sees the need to develop an overarching public campaign, one that distills the state's commitment to sustainability into a clearly enunciated, concise set of values, goals and strategies. And one that reaches the broadest possible audience via a variety of media, events and activities.
Above all, the campaign should seek to create a well-defined, widely shared understanding of what the state hopes to accomplish with sustainable growth policies and programs, and of their benefits to all stakeholders.

By developing some basic branding and messaging for the campaign, the Commission can better shape its overall outreach to residents, students, municipal and county officials, private sector leaders and other stakeholders. As new initiatives emerge, they can then be associated with objectives and priorities tied to specific campaign themes. But the campaign, while simple and straightforward, must be more than a set of slogans. The goal is to share and reinforce some consistent ideas about how to define and create, in the words of Governor Martin O'Malley, "a stronger economy, a healthier environment and a greener, more sustainable future for all Maryland families."

It's a way to draw clear connections among the wide variety of new and ongoing programs and policies within state agencies and at the local level. The campaign also can help integrate other initiatives proposed by the Education Workgroup, such as the establishment of a Youth Sustainable Growth Commission or the idea of creating a Sustainable Growth Challenge for professors and college students who compete to earn a "Smart, Green and Growing" Award. The campaign should use a multi-media platform to target diverse audiences, settings and events with everything from op-ed pieces to YouTube clips. It must, in other words, speak to all Marylanders.

Build on Smart, Green & Growing

A framework for this public campaign has already been well developed with the launch of the *Smart, Green & Growing* initiative in 2009. The phrase itself provides a foundation for broad-based public education efforts that can build on both statewide and local activities. The vehicle for engaging the public might be anything from a marketing plan for farmers' markets and Main Street programs to competitive annual awards at high schools and colleges and community recognition events in which local leaders share their success stories with a statewide audience. In some cases, the Commission could use the campaign to launch an entirely new outreach initiative, while in others, the goal might be to simply extend the *Smart, Green & Growing* moniker to existing programs or materials, such as the newly revised Smart Growth Teachers Resource Guide. The campaign also could be employed to better promote an existing *Smart, Green & Growing* concept, such as the "Idea Bank" featured on the website's home page and on its "Become a Partner" tab.

Again, the goal should be to give Marylanders a clear-cut association between specific policies and programs and what's happening in their own neighborhoods. When they hear "Smart, Green & Growing," it should translate to a concrete picture of quality of life improvements, housing choices, job growth, air and water quality and/or other elements of sustainability, as well as to existing models and examples on the ground.

Just as important, the Campaign should integrate all of the state's other outreach and education efforts around a consistent set of goals and a shared vision for smart and sustainable growth.

Proposed Launch

As the starting point for this campaign, the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission could develop a *Smart, Green & Growing* "branding initiative" in 2013.

The Education Workgroup recommends an opportunity for the Commission to appoint and convene an advisory group of individuals representing state and local government, public schools and institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, developers and business leaders, and other relevant stakeholders as a first step toward launching the full-blown public education campaign by September. In convening the advisory group for the first time, the Commission should outline specific goals and priorities for the Campaign and a timeframe for achieving them.

Maryland's Smart, Green and Growing website provides an excellent starting point and set of templates to build a public education campaign, and the Commission can easily draw from its own ranks in establishing a Campaign Advisory Group.

First Steps

1. **Take stock.** The Advisory Group for Maryland's *Smart, Green & Growing* Education Campaign should begin by compiling a comprehensive list of the many substantive education and outreach activities already under way at the state and local level. The purpose would be to look for ways to complement these efforts and to identify critical elements that are missing and should become Commission priorities.

2. **Set Goals/Priorities.** The Advisory Group should consult a broad cross-section of stakeholders in its initial work to develop consensus around specific goals, timeframes for achieving them, and who should be engaged in developing the individual Campaign elements. Following are some examples of sustainable growth elements that might yield specific goals:

Economic Development
Green Jobs Growth
Targeted Workforce Training/Education at High School and College Levels
"Buy Local" Campaigns
Employer Participation in "Live Near Work" and other Sustainability Initiatives
Main Street Programs
Mixed-Use Zoning

Land Preservation and Environmental Protection
Chesapeake Bay Cleanup
Healthy Fisheries
Natural Resources Protection
Green Infrastructure for Stormwater Management
Farmland Preservation
Air and Water Quality

Land Use and Development
Urban Revitalization
Redevelopment of Brownfield Properties
Infill Development
Pedestrian-Friendly Community Design
Transit-Oriented Development
Historic Preservation
Urban Agriculture and Food Security

Public Facilities
Transportation Choices (Complete Streets, Pedestrian and Bike Facilities, Transit
    Service)
School Siting in Walkable Communities
Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrades
Community Parks and Other Public Space

Housing
Diverse Housing Types
Mixed-Income Housing
Green Building and Energy Efficiency Standards
Compact Neighborhood Design
Innovative Housing Affordability Strategies (e.g. inclusionary zoning, "granny flats")

Other Policy and Planning Priorities
Climate Change – Emissions Reduction and Adaptation Planning
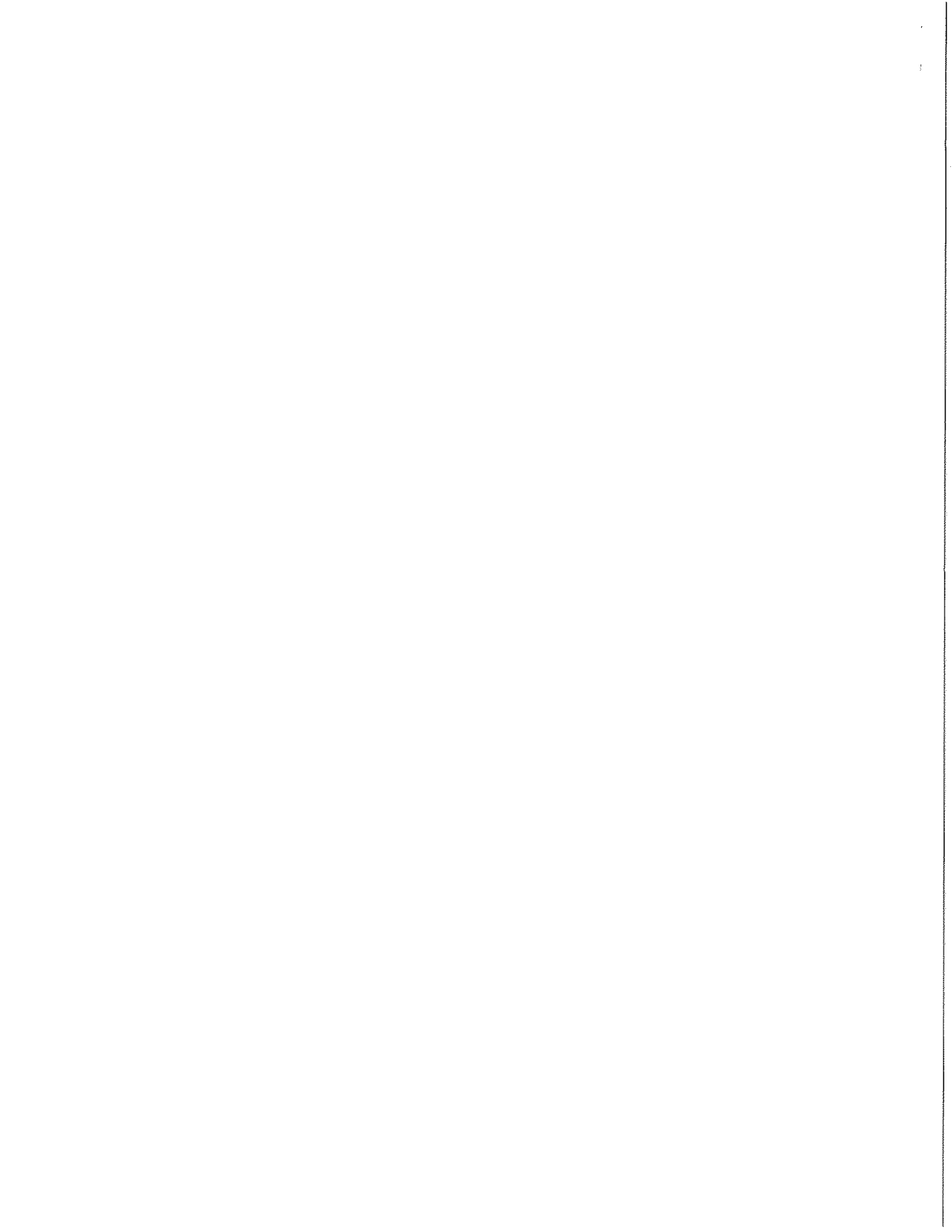Innovative and Inclusive Public Engagement
A Role for School Officials and Public Health Professionals in Community Planning

3. **Identify Success Stories and Models.** A critical step in making the Sustainable Growth Campaign comprehensible to a lay audience will be to identify success stories and best practices emerging across the state. The Advisory Group should take stock of Sustainable Communities Tax Credit projects and talk to local leaders and developers to find other on-the-ground projects that can serve as models for development and community design, as well as policy successes that illustrate effective strategies to promote sustainable growth.

4. **Engage Stakeholders.** As mentioned above, the advisory group must identify all of the stakeholder groups that will be targeted with the Campaign's messages and develop strategies for how best to reach these diverse groups. Listed below is a sampling of stakeholder groups from different sectors and different geographic regions across the state.

5. **Engage Youth.** It's important to also consider how to work directly with high school and college students in particular. The Advisory Group itself should include at least one youth member. The energy, creativity and great stake in the outcome that he or she will bring to the process of developing this campaign will be invaluable. A college student also will be helpful in developing multi-media and social networking initiatives to promote different strategies and ways to address development conflicts and challenges.

Conclusion

The Commission's *Smart, Green & Growing* campaign should be designed to build on, rather than supplant, emerging and existing education efforts such as the newly revised Smart Growth Teachers Resource guide. The idea is to clearly "brand" Maryland's smart growth efforts in ways that enable citizens across the state to see how these policies and programs can be tailored to their communities and benefit their families wherever they live.

It's simply a matter of devising a common language to describe the challenges Maryland faces as it grows, as well as the strategies and solutions that will yield more sustainable growth and quality of life improvements. It's about bringing diverse education and outreach initiatives into the same framework, so that they all reinforce each other.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH CHALLENGE

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND 18 56

NCSG

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Maryland Department **MDP** of Planni

Quality Of Life And Sustainability

Public Participation
Infrastructure
Resource Conservation

Housing
Community Design
Stewardship

Implementation Growth Areas

Environmental Protection

Economic Development

Transportation

WHO SHOULD COMPETE

➤ Undergraduate/graduate students pursuing degrees in planning, architecture, engineering or other sustainability-minded concentrations

➤ Example projects might look at redeveloping vacant lots in an urban core, conducting community charrettes for a local planning issue, coordinating a green infrastructure and public access plan, preserving agricultural land, or managing storm water runoff in a coastal community

➤ Teams will present their final proposals to the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission in Annapolis for judging by a panel of leaders in the sustainable planning field

WHAT'S THE CHALLENGE?

THE Sustainable Growth Challenge is a collegiate level interdisciplinary exercise designed to engage students from across the state in local and regional planning and sustainability issues.

As part of an on and off campus studio exercise, students will analyze the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable growth and develop creative solutions for real community challenges. The competition will provide students the opportunity to interact with local leaders and engage in their own community planning processes.

The Sustainable Growth Challenge will be launched in the fall of 2013. To be eligible, a faculty-lead team will be established at participating universities. Projects will be defined by the students, but must address one or more of Maryland's Twelve Planning Visions (shown above) and sustainability's triple bottom line of economic opportunity, environmental protection and social justice.

The Challenge is being sponsored by the Education Workgroup of the Sustainable Growth Commission, and developed and managed by the University of Maryland, National Center for Research and Education and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

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