



Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission
Rural Economies Workgroup Report
November 24, 2014

To: Jon Laria, Chairman, Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission

From: Greg Bowen, Rural Economies Workgroup Chair

Subj: Status Report on Rural Economies Workgroup Activities

Date: November 20, 2014

Since the September report, the Rural Economies Workgroup met once on November 18 to begin developing a comprehensive work program of issues to address over the next couple of years. This was the Workgroup's first meeting in over a year. We had excellent participation with 11 people attending in-person at MDA's conference room and another 10 people on the conference call line. The following is a recap of the meeting.

Workgroup Chair, Greg Bowen, opened the meeting and provided the Workgroup with the background context on the proposed refocusing of the Workgroup's efforts and then oriented them to the draft proposal, which was previously circulated to the full Growth Commission in September. The Workgroup used this draft proposal as a starting point for the discussion, recognizing that this was an initial conceptual draft for the Workgroup to refine and augment. The Workgroup members provided a number of suggested revisions to the draft goal and objectives.

Early in meeting, a general consensus of the Workgroup was reached that the Workgroup should continue to address/explore "rural smart growth" issues that may impact rural economies and not totally refocus the Workgroup's efforts to sustainable agriculture, forestry and other rural resource-based industries. As part of this discussion, it was suggested that the Workgroup members should review the EPA report [Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities](#) and see if there are some specific strategies identified in this report that may be advanced by the Workgroup. Workgroup members were asked to send any specific rewording of the draft goal and objectives to Chuck Boyd by November 21 for inclusion in a second draft proposal that would be circulated by the end of November.

The Workgroup members were then asked to review the list of "Possible Strategies" included in the draft proposal and select the strategies that they would be willing to focus on. As each member reported out on those specific strategies they would work on, as a result several additional strategies were identified. Mr. Bowen asked that the members provide any suggested wording on the added strategies to Chuck Boyd by November 21, so they can be included in the next draft proposal.

Finally, Mr. Bowen asked the Workgroup members to identify any groups or individuals that are currently not part of the Workgroup but should be invited to participate. Any suggested new Workgroup members are to be sent to Chuck Boyd by November 21.

The next meeting of the Workgroup is tentatively planned for mid-December.