Aberdeen Transit Oriented Development District Form Based Code

Stacey Dahlstrom, AICP, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, Maryland Department of Transportation; David Dahlstrom, AICP, Maryland Department of Planning; Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning and Community Development, City of Aberdeen

Introduction

The Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and form-based codes have arrived in Aberdeen, Maryland, with their adoption into law by the Aberdeen City Council on February 24, 2014. The intent of the form based code for the Aberdeen TOD District is to foster built results consistent with the Aberdeen Transit Oriented Development Master Plan. Both the Master Plan and the TOD District code are designed to maximize the development potential of downtown Aberdeen within ¼ to ½ mile around the Aberdeen MARC Commuter Rail and Amtrak Station.

Aberdeen TOD Master Plan

In 2010, the Aberdeen station area was one of 14 station areas officially designated for transit-oriented development in Maryland. In keeping with statute, this designation allows MDOT and other state agencies to partner with local leaders to become more active in advancing TOD. Facilitation and development of the Aberdeen TOD Master Plan and creation of the TOD District Code occurred to support Aberdeen and its state TOD designation by providing an implementation plan and to serve as the basis for the City’s pursuit of a broader range of grant and local financing implementation mechanisms.

In 2011, the City of Aberdeen collaboratively developed the Aberdeen TOD Master Plan in partnership with MDOT, MTA, State Highway Administration (SHA), Harford County agencies (Planning, Economic Development, Aging, and Harford Transit), Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor, Aberdeen Proving Ground, the Army Alliance Amtrak, and CSX railroads. The TOD Master Plan was unanimously adopted by the Aberdeen City Council in May 2012. In addition, the MD Sustainable Communities designation to Aberdeen in 2011 has enabled the City to continue leveraging available grant program opportunities for the TOD Master Plan implementation.

Among the key recommendations that the TOD Master Plan identified was, “Amend City Code to envision, enable, and encourage development consistent with the concepts provided in this TOD Master Plan by developing and adopting a form-based development code for the Aberdeen TOD area.”
President’s Message

By Jackie Seneschal, AICP

Protecting the public health, safety, and welfare – isn’t that why we do the work we do and make the demands we make of developers, citizens, and ourselves? None other than the Acting Surgeon General of the United States invoked that obligation when he delivered the Opening Keynote for the 2014 APA National Conference last month. The way we design and build communities affects the physical and mental health of those who live, work and visit there. The Center for Disease Control has concluded: “Healthy community design integrates evidence-based health strategies into community planning, transportation, and land-use decisions.” Learn more about this national initiative and how it is affecting the debate in our local communities by visiting: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/.

Taking up this banner, the upcoming Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference focuses on how we plan for healthy and sustainable places. Join us in Newark, DE to learn more about this heightened understanding of our basic role as planners.

Also announced at the National Planning Conference are the results of the 2014 national poll by APA exploring how citizens view the role of planning in their local community. The survey finds that Millennials and Baby Boomers want communities to focus less on recruiting new companies and more on investing in new transportation options, walkable communities, and making the area as attractive as possible. The poll also showed the perceived importance of shared economies, high-speed internet access, and housing where they can live as they grow older. Isn’t this what we advocate for all the time? Read the full report at http://www.planning.org/policy/polls/investing/.

Bringing our focus to things here at home, the Maryland Chapter is moving ahead with new opportunities and activities. The Chapter has joined the Engineering Society of Baltimore as an Associate Society. In addition to providing the Chapter with access to the facilities and food service offered at the Garrett- Jac...
The Master Plan recommends that the form based code for the TOD address the following code issues:

- Pedestrian-friendly design that reinforces key streets;
- Building setback/build to lines;
- Parking requirements;
- Building height restrictions;
- Mixed-use development; and
- TOD and pedestrian-friendly storm water treatment strategies, changes and updates to landscaping, lighting, security features, and signs.

In November 2012, the City of Aberdeen and MTA/MDOT worked collaboratively with the Harford County Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor to update and further refine the concepts from a 2009 multi-modal transportation center study consistent with the Master Plan and provided a pre-preliminary engineering feasibility analysis for the Station Square Concept adopted in the Aberdeen TOD Master Plan.

**Aberdeen TOD District**

In the Spring of 2013, the City of Aberdeen was awarded a small demonstration grant through the Opportunity Collaborative for a Greater Baltimore Region to support the City’s partnership with MDOT, MTA and MDP. This grant award helped prepare a form based code and corresponding zoning code amendments to implement and enable TOD within the TOD concept areas identified in the TOD Master Plan.

The Aberdeen TOD District regulates development to achieve specific urban form identified through the Aberdeen TOD Master Plan areas including the Station Square, Festival Square, and Residential Square concept areas. The Aberdeen Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element Goals and Objectives specifically call for the adoption of development regulations to implement the TOD. The TOD Master Plan Land Use Concepts were utilized as the basis for establishing the TOD Districts. These provisions were further refined in the Aberdeen TOD Master Plan and are illustrated and codified in the adopted TOD District Form Based Code.

The adopted code provides for, among other subjects, the establishment of building type and orientation, site design, and other standards that apply to all development proposed to be constructed in the TOD District. The TOD District code is transect-based with a corresponding Regulating Plan that prescribes the appropriate permitted uses, building heights, site design, building type, building frontage types, pedestrian environment and streetscape in the TOD District, based on the parcel’s location and street frontage type.

The Aberdeen’s TOD District Form Based Code’s Regulating Plan is calibrated to Aberdeen’s TOD Master Plan concept areas. The intent is to promote a mix of vertical and horizontal land uses; emphasize storefronts and commercial uses at street level, promote wide pedestrian friendly sidewalks and multimodal streets; encourage upper story residential and office uses, park and open space bonus; and provide parking placement standards and access through rear alleys or side streets. The TOD District allows a a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses that may be permitted for properties within these areas.

The concepts developed in the TOD Master Plan and TOD District were guided by the following goals for redevelopment in downtown Aberdeen: making it walkable, accessible, and convenient; reinforcing a small town character; bringing added value; creating a sense of place; enhancing safety; and providing green space for recreation.
To accomplish the redevelopment and infill (refill) anticipated by Aberdeen TOD and to ensure long-term success of the Aberdeen TOD District area, the development of the TOD Master Plan and TOD District were guided by the following principles:

- Urban space and urban form in the area closest to the station can greatly influence a station’s effectiveness to attract and leverage transit-oriented development.
- The mobility benefits offered by a good transit system are enhanced when riders are provided with an environment in which they can get to their destination comfortably and safely as a pedestrian.
- Successful TOD in the commuter rail station context requires a network of streets that permit a range of access options for use by transit patrons.
- The challenges present at Aberdeen require a deliberate and coordinated agency collaboration to achieve TOD and will require endorsement and support from all levels of government and partner organizations.
- Successful realization of TOD is more likely when it has broad-based community support and engaged political leadership.

This form based code represents a unique opportunity for Aberdeen and surrounding local governments who may be more comfortable with traditional Euclidian zoning overlay districts. It sets a fine example of how form based codes developed according to a community vision can become useful implementation tools. The success of the TOD Master Plan and District Code exemplifies the effective collaboration among local partners, TOD advocates, state agencies and support and enthusiasm of the Aberdeen City Council.

The code was developed through a partnership between the City of Aberdeen, representatives from the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), as well as with consultation from the State Highway Administration (SHA), and assistance with graphics and expertise from the Aberdeen City Attorney for legal sufficiency, format, and procedures.

Additional information about the Aberdeen TOD including the adopted Transit Oriented Development District Code can be found at: [http://mdot.maryland.gov/Planning/TOD/Aberdeen_TOD.html](http://mdot.maryland.gov/Planning/TOD/Aberdeen_TOD.html)

**Andrea Wohlfeld Kuhn Recognized as new FAICP**

By Maryland Chapter of APA Editors

Congratulations to Andrea Wohlfeld Kuhn, AICP, who was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). This has been one of the highest honors that AICP bestows upon a member. Ms. Kuhn was recognized for her significant contributions to the planning profession. Currently a Senior Planner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, her planning contributions include serving as the Chair of the Federal Planning Division of the American Planning Association and successfully integrating sustainability into the fabric of Federal planning. She created Federal environmental justice training materials, developed new methodologies to assess impacts, and promoted local neighborhood improvements for low- and moderate-income residents. Employing a dynamic teaching style, Ms. Kuhn has educated a diverse audience in planning, from entry-level civilians to high ranking military officers, most recently through the U.S. Department of Defense Master Planning Institute. Ms. Kuhn was officially accepted as a Fellow (FAICP) at a ceremony during the American Planning Association conference in Atlanta on April 27, 2014.
Linking Planning and Economic Development

By Julie Herlands, AICP, Chair, APA Economic Development Division

A recent national survey released by APA indicates that the general public believes planners should facilitate job creation. What does that really mean for a planner? Is that a literal charge that planners should focus energies on business recruitment and retention? Or is it that planners should act more as a facilitator to bring parties together to identify the information and processes needed to support job creation? Or is it more indirect and intangible—such as developing plans and strategies that set the stage and lay the groundwork for business development and eventual job creation? We would argue that it is all of the above.

Linking planning and economic development can present its challenges. Planning can often be characterized as more regulatory in nature—that is, implementing and enforcing rules, while economic development can often be seen as navigating those rules to expedite and incentivize development. While not always mutually exclusive, these two perspectives have the potential to cause some conflict. Over the past year, the Economic Development Division of the APA has been convening discussions at National and Chapter Conferences on this topic. In our discussions with planners across the country, we have found that many view themselves as “conveners” to help facilitate economic development with a holistic view of their respective communities. However, many see room for improvement. One example identified is the importance of ensuring that Comprehensive Plans include economic development elements, market and economic analyses, and fiscal impact assessments. Furthermore, it has been noted that it is just as important for economic development plans to branch out into more typical planning topics such as housing and environmental issues.

Planning after the Great Recession has shone a brighter light on the market, economic, and fiscal forces at play in every community and the importance of understanding and planning for them. Regional and Local Plans without market, economic, and fiscal components may be thought of as incomplete—now more than ever. Many communities seem to be increasingly focused on understanding the economics of land use, not only to address the need for job creation but to ensure community leaders can make informed land use decisions for a balanced economic future. And these decisions include understanding a wide range of economic and fiscal implications including: identifying and understanding market realities for development potential of nonresidential land uses; the local and regional economic impact of those land use decisions; and the fiscal implications of those decisions, in particular the public operating and infrastructure costs to serve future development compared to its revenue generation potential. We would argue it is the role of planners to ensure these elements are addressed, understood, and incorporated into planning processes and decisions as part of a holistic view of a community.

This article was originally published in the Spring 2014 PAB Newsletter. To learn more about the Economic Development Division of the APA, please visit: http://www.planning.org/divisions/economic/

A State of Collaboration—Spring Update

By Peter G. Conrad, AICP, and Zachary Chissell, Maryland Department of Planning

In November 2013, the American Planning Association (APA)’s Regional and Intergovernmental Planning Division launched the National Collaborative of State Planners (“Collaborative”) to create a network for state planners in all 50 states. The Collaborative provides a venue to advance effective state-level planning through sharing ideas and success stories.

A survey distributed to nearly 350 state government planners throughout the United States yielded an unexpectedly high response rate and a wealth of meaningful feedback. The survey results validate that state government planners are indeed seeking a means for increased collaboration.

According to the survey, important issues include climate change, needs for outreach regarding the benefits of statewide planning, and integration of economic development with planning. Additionally, planning for public health is an emerging area of interest, to which has not been appropriately attended.

How to get involved:
Visit our website
Submit best practices
Take our survey
Join our mailing list
Attend our facilitated discussion at the APA National Conference

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Save the date…

25 years ago, a visionary developer called on revolutionary town planners to reimagine successful community design. With unflagging support and oversight from the tireless mayor, Kentlands was born in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Revisit that watershed moment with us, take stock of Kentlands after a generation of residents and businesses has called it home, and join a conversation about the future of this community, and new urbanism worldwide.

Kentlands 25th Anniversary Symposium
June 20-21, 2014

Schedule of Events
Friday at 7pm
Welcome Dinner on Kentlands Mansion lawn
Saturday Morning
Kentlands Walking Tour
with commentary from Founders
Saturday 1:30 – 6 pm
Symposium Event
“TED-Talks” and Panel Discussions
Participants confirmed to date include:
Andrés Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Mike Watkins, Jeff Campbell, Bob Gibbs, Colin Greene and John Torti

Registration Information
Registration will take place through the Urban Land Institute website, www.uli.org, beginning in April.
Survey results showed that with budget constraints, state government planners prefer a free online platform to share best practices, seek and provide feedback, and connect with one another. State government planners believe that the most valuable tools are periodic e-newsletters and webinars with an emphasis on state-level planning issues.

"Great idea for a state collaborative...It would be good to know what each state thinks it does best - this may be an entire program and not just a best practice." -- Rhode Island state planner

In response to the survey, the Collaborative planned to host its first webinar on April 11, 2014. The April webinar, Is Your State Resilient? Planning for Climate Change, explored how forward-thinking state policies could alleviate the impacts of climate change and how planning could address resiliency. Webinar presenters included Michael McCormick, senior planner and adviser of California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research; Zoë Johnson, program manager for climate change planning and policy with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and Julie Dennis, community program manager of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity’s Division of Community Development.

Sponsored by the Regional and Intergovernmental Planning Division, the Collaborative conducted a facilitated discussion at the APA National conference in Atlanta, Georgia in April 2014. This discussion, facilitated by Richard E. Hall, AICP, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Planning, emphasized the experiences that have helped state planning departments and other state agencies develop best practices in areas such as transportation, natural resources, and community revitalization.

Find more survey results on the Collaborative’s website, www.stateplannersus.wordpress.com, featuring a set of best planning practices from across the country. Initiatives, including the Massachusetts’ Ocean Management Plan, Delaware’s Strategies for State Policies and Spending, and statewide growth or land use council are highlighted in the survey results.

The Collaborative plans to follow its spring webinar in April 2014 with a second webinar in September 2014 (to be announced). The Collaborative welcomes you to share potential best practices of state level planning for the website or topics for the upcoming webinars. For more information: Peter G. Conrad, AICP – Division Director of Membership

Farmers, Regulations, and the Local Food Movement

Gregory A. Bowen, AICP, Maryland FarmLINK Director and President of Land Stewardship Solutions, LLC

Roughly 800,000 of Maryland’s 2 million acres of farmland has been preserved through state or county preservation efforts, making it one of the top states in the nation in terms of percentage of farmland preserved. However, many planners have come to realize that land preservation programs do not preserve farming, nor do they ensure that there will be a next generation of farmers.

On February 20th, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released preliminary 2012 agricultural census data for the states. They revealed that only about 5% of all principal farm operators in Maryland are 34 years old and younger. There are now seven times more farmers age 65 and older than 34 and younger.

Maryland is not alone. USDA secretary Tom Vilsack has been warning that there may not be enough farmers for the future in the U.S. The USDA estimates that roughly half of all farmers will retire in the next decade. The local food movement has given new hope to the farming community.

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Direct-to-consumer sales of vegetable, fruits, wines, beer, etc. improve profitability for Maryland farms which average just 166 acres vs. the national average of 434 acres. Local food distribution systems are beginning to sell to institutions such as public schools, hospitals, and colleges. As per U.S. Census Quickfacts, Maryland’s 2,138,806 households have an average income of $72,999. According to USDA estimates, Americans have been spending roughly 10% of their household income on food, which amounts to about $15.6 billion in food purchased by Maryland households. Maryland farmers have only just begun to tap into this huge market.

There are two major challenges for planners trying to help establish the next generation of farmers in Maryland. The first is access to land. Maryland farm-land is valued much higher than the national average. Beginning farmers typically lack capital and most who want to farm did not grow up on one. Preserved lands help ensure that land will be available for farmers, even if they don’t own it. Second, most beginning farmers wish to grow fruits, vegetables and/or livestock and these farming practices require access to a water source and housing. Planners may want to promote flexibility for housing farmers (especially on farms that they don’t own) and to help farmers get access to good water sources.

Likewise there are two major planning challenges to getting food to market in Maryland. The first is zoning regulations that restrict urban/suburban agriculture or value-added productions. Most county ordinances were written long before the local food movement took off and some counties are still reluctant to make their ordinances more farmer-friendly for fear that non-farming neighbors will complain. Montgomery County’s new zoning ordinance may be a good model for allowing farming in urban, suburban, and rural settings, with conditions matched to fit the circumstances. The second is assistance helping farmers learn whether or not their farming practices are consistent with zoning and land preservation easements which were not written for small scale value-added farm productions.

Maryland FarmLINK is a statewide resource to help farmers get access to land. At no cost, farmland owners can post their properties for sale or lease. The website includes mentorships and training opportunities for beginning farmers and tutorials and guides for learning about soils, zoning, and land preservation regulations. If you have suggestions for helping establish the next generation of farmers, please contact Greg Bowen, Maryland FarmLINK Director with the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission at 301-274-1922 ext. 1 or gbowen@smadc.com. For additional information about available resources, go to the website www.marylandfarmlink.com.
transportation stakeholders. The MTP incorporates not only state and federal policies and priorities, but also invaluable input from state and local agencies as well as the public. The new MTP builds on previous policies and functional plans. The MTP also identifies the State’s critical transportation needs over the next 20 years in order to advance transportation planning in a sensible way to support sustainable growth across Maryland.

The MTP starts by defining the key transportation challenges facing the State over the next 20 years. Maryland faces many transportation challenges. Low-density development and population growth bring pressure for new transportation infrastructure that can entail significant costs and environmental impacts. In the meantime, the State’s aging transportation facilities will become increasingly expensive to repair and maintain. Fuel taxes that once paid for transportation improvements no longer stretch as far because of a combination of construction cost inflation, shrinking federal support for transportation, declining per capita vehicle miles traveled and more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Maryland’s population is aging, becoming more diverse, and adopting new technologies. The demographic trends are changing the travel patterns, which will make the State’s transportation network look significantly different in the next 20, as compared to 20 years ago. Therefore, a long range transportation plan is essential for proactively responding to emerging changes and needs and guiding the State’s transportation investments for the future. To strengthen the transportation network, it is imperative to expand the capacity, while integrating transportation planning with land use planning, growth patterns, economic development, and environmental protection.

**MDOT’s Vision and Mission:**

Provide a well-maintained, sustainable and multimodal transportation system that facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers.

**2035 MTP Goals:**

**Safety & Security**
Enhance the safety of transportation system users and provide a transportation system that is resilient to natural or man-made hazards

**System Preservation**
Preserve and maintain the State’s existing transportation infrastructure and assets

**Quality of Service**
Maintain and enhance the quality of service experienced by users of Maryland’s transportation system

**Environmental Stewardship**
Ensure that the delivery of the State’s transportation infrastructure program conserves and enhances Maryland’s natural, historic, and cultural resources

**Community Vitality**
Provide options for the movement of people and goods that support communities and quality of life

**Economic Prosperity**
Support a healthy and competitive Maryland economy

**MTP Visions, Goals, and Strategies**

The development of the 2035 MTP included several outreach mechanisms that really helped to shape the plan’s vision, goals, objectives and strategies. They included:

- Four roundtable workshops held across the State
- Online outreach through a web page (www.mdot.maryland.gov/MTP), e-newsletters distributed to over 3,000 stakeholders and the use of social media (facebook, twitter, etc.)
- An online interactive survey in which 2,100 stakeholders and members of the public responded
- Numerous presentations to stakeholders, regional planning organizations and the public at key milestones, or upon request.

**Region-Based Framework**

So what is different about the 2035 MTP, as compared to previous long range transportation plans? This MTP introduces a new, region-based framework for transportation planning across the State.
From Western Maryland’s Appalachian mountains to Baltimore City, suburban counties surrounding Baltimore and Washington D.C., and across the Chesapeake Bay to the Eastern Shore, Maryland is a diverse state made up of five distinct regions (refer to the map below), each featuring different transportation system elements and needs.

The 2035 MTP acknowledges that the State’s transportation needs vary depending on the diverse land use, economic conditions, and demographic characteristics guiding the strategies for each of the five regions. This approach will help MDOT implement high-level statewide goals and objectives by providing the specific guidance on appropriate transportation strategies for different regions and locales. To achieve the goals and objectives of the transportation plan, and to support the O’Malley-Brown Administration’s broader statewide policy and planning goals, transportation “place types” are introduced in the 2035 MTP, within the context of “planning areas” identified in PlanMaryland, the State’s sustainable growth plan. PlanMaryland’s planning areas focus on policy objectives for different areas, while the transportation place types focus primarily on existing land uses that shape transportation needs. These place types will provide a framework for assessing transportation needs and appropriate strategies and investments.

### Transportation Place Types

**Urban Centers**

**Investment Direction** - *Renewal and reinvestment in transportation infrastructure for all modes*
- Principal centers for regional or national-scale activity
- Heavily built up, high density environments with mix of land uses
- Natural propensity to support robust multimodal transportation options
- Frequent congestion

**Natural Areas**

**Investment Direction** - *Maintain existing infrastructure*
- No centers for employment, commercial, social and civic activity and not in a Priority Funding Area
- Occurrence of natural lands such as forested areas, Federal, state or parks/forests or wildlife preserves
- Limited access to local and regional highways, no local transit and non-motorized system elements

**Towns and Suburban Centers**

**Investment Direction** - *Invest in multi modal transportation solutions to promote responsible growth*
- Satellites to urban centers with mostly built up, but medium density environment with scattered mixed use centers
- Often places where land development, population and employment growth pressure is greatest
- Frequent congestion

**Rural and Agricultural Areas**

**Investment Direction** - *Maintain existing infrastructure and limited growth*
- Modestly populated, low density regions that combine undeveloped, tourism, or agricultural land uses with local centers of activity
- No local, fixed route transit
- Rarely congested
- Rural areas near suburbs may experience development pressure

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By recommending a comprehensive, yet regionally-focused set of strategies for each “place type”, the 2035 MTP prepares Maryland to move forward to a more interconnected and multimodal statewide transportation system that can sustain a thriving economy, while enhancing and protecting Maryland’s communities and environmental resources. The initiatives and strategies in the MTP are based on a combination of public engagement, careful scrutiny of transportation needs, and open dialogue with all stakeholders.

Ultimately, the 2035 MTP sets out clear guidance on implementing principles and priorities for MDOT, and shares that strategic direction with local governments and other partners with respect to project assessment and selection in the future. Coupled with the passage of the Transportation Infrastructure Investment Act of 2013 and a new, streamlined process for public-private partnerships, Maryland now has all the pieces in place to strategically invest in transportation projects that will help grow the State’s economy and enable to build a 21st Century transportation system.

As it moves forward with implementation of the MTP, MDOT will continue to use these goals as guideposts to determine future projects and strategies. MDOT will also track the plan implementation through MDOT’s annual State Report on Transportation, which includes the six-year capital transportation budget (known as the Consolidated Transportation Program or CTP) and the annual Attainment Report on Transportation System Performance. The annual Attainment Report on Transportation System Performance benchmarks the goal achievement with reference to an established set of performance measures and targets.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning**

While developing the 2035 MTP, MDOT also updated the Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (www.mdot.maryland.gov/bikewalkplan) in a companion planning process. MDOT modal administrations integrate responsibilities for improving Maryland’s bicycle and pedestrian environment and promote coordination and partnership with other State agencies and local partners. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan emphasizes the policies and priorities identified in the MTP and Maryland’s Complete Streets policy.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan also provides a comprehensive framework for supporting biking and walking as transportation modes. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan guides focus on improving safety and comfort of walking and biking through engineering, enforcement, education and encouragement. The referenced plan also recognizes the strong relations between land use and biking or walking for achieving the community goals. Following the framework established by the 2035 MTP, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan acknowledges that the roles of biking and walking differ within the State and supports tailoring approaches for various regions and place types.

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**Mentor Match Program at The Delaware-Maryland Regional APA Conference**

_Lauren Good, AICP, Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning; Janelle Cornwell, AICP, Kent County Levy Court_

Are you an experienced professional planner willing to provide career advice to young planners? Would you like to share your advice about planning in Delaware or Maryland? Are you a veteran of the DE-MD Regional Conference and willing to share your expertise to emerging professionals? Are you new to planning in Maryland or Delaware, or to the planning profession in general? Is this your first DE-MD Regional Conference? Are you interested in learning the advice from other planning professionals who are willing to share their experiences?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, consider being a part of the upcoming Mentor Match Program taking place at the Delaware-Maryland Regional Conference in Newark, DE in October 2014! Unlike the traditional “shadowing” program, the Mentor Match Program encourages you to make the most of the time according to your conference schedule. The program will match the participants prior to the conference. During the conference, a designated area will be provided for both parties to meet and greet. Matches will be made based on the stated areas of interest.

Be on the lookout for detailed information and begin thinking about how you could be a participant, as the conference date approaches. In the meantime, if you have general questions about the program or ideas on how to make it better, please contact us:

Lauren Good, AICP, Long Range Planner II
Anne Arundel County, MD
860.461.3938 / laurengood.planning@gmail.com

Janelle Cornwell, AICP, Planner II
Kent County Levy Court
302.744.2471 / janelle.cornwell@co.kent.de.us
Making Great Communities Happen

National Center for Smart Growth Launches New University-wide Outreach Program

Uri Avin, FAICP, Research Professor, National Center of Smart Growth, University of Maryland at College Park

Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability puts the University to work for Maryland Communities

The University of Maryland’s National Center for Smart Growth (NCSG) announces the launch of the Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability (PALS), a new university-wide initiative that will pool the intellectual resources and ingenuity of the entire university to offer a fresh look at the specific challenges facing Maryland’s communities. PALS will officially commence this fall with a partnership with the City of Frederick, Maryland.

“We are extremely excited about this new program which will not only help Maryland communities become more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable, but will help provide a new generation of students with real-world experience in working with local communities,” said Gerrit Knaap, Director of the National Center for Smart Growth. “We can’t wait to begin work with our new partners in Frederick, Maryland.”

PALS is the first initiative of its kind for the University of Maryland (UMD). Created with support from the Provost’s Office, the Academy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and the UMD Office of Sustainability, the program’s mission is to offer students an active, “on the ground” learning environment by helping Maryland communities become more sustainable places to live, work, and play. Through targeted custom coursework and faculty engagement, the program enlists a host of disciplines to provide fresh solutions for individual partner communities.

Modeled after the University of Oregon’s City Year program, PALS offers affordable, useable, and high-quality advice for partner communities while providing valuable exercises in critical thinking, real-world problem solving and community engagement for UMD students. With coursework tailored to reflect specific community challenges, a variety of issues can be addressed, including water conservation, attracting new employers, creating health and wellness programs, leveraging social media, engaging immigrant and minority communities and much more.

“The Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability will be an ideal vehicle to showcase the talent and ingenuity of our students,” said University Provost Mary Ann Rankin. “It is an integral part of our responsibility as a land-grant university as well as our commitment to provide an active learning environment.”

Discussions have begun with City of Frederick officials and UMD faculty to assess the needs this coming fall. Meanwhile, a beta test of the program is currently underway in Salisbury, Maryland. The project, dubbed “Envision Salisbury,” has partnered 50 graduate and undergraduate students in architecture with the town’s residents, as Salisbury develops a master plan for downtown revitalization.

“This program presents a unique opportunity to address some of the issues facing The City of Frederick,” said Frederick Mayor Randy McClement. “The students’ multi-disciplinary approach will likely provide the City with fresh perspectives and unique options for this project. We are extremely excited to work with the University of Maryland National Center for Smart Growth on this and other projects in the future.” To learn more about PALS, visit the National Center for Smart Growth website http://www.smartgrowth.umd.edu/
Save the Date!

The First
Local Government Exchange for Planners in Central Maryland

Sponsored by the Maryland and National Capital APA Chapters and National Center for Smart Growth

June 10, 2014, Ellicott City, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

This is a day-long opportunity for planners in the Baltimore and Washington regions to share their recent successes in a broad range of planning initiatives and to learn from others about their successes (and, as important, failures). We are expecting a capacity crowd (up to 90 people) from the 7 regional counties and Baltimore City, as well as from the two MPOs and MDP.

This is an exchange - so while we will have a roster of stimulating speakers and discussants, the program is weighted towards interaction and sharing, not presentations. The broad topic areas to be covered in concurrent sessions are:

- Emerging demographic trends and implications for your community
- Transit and alternate commute mode planning
- Measuring access to opportunity and other equity concerns
- Commercial corridor revitalization
- The challenge of providing Workforce Housing: How and Where?
- Developing public-private partnerships
- Updating older, complex codes for suburban jurisdictions that are urbanizing to fit new comp plans and evolving market realities
- Economic and workforce development

The venue for this event will be Howard County’s new, state-of-the-art, Miller Library in Ellicott City.

AICP CM Credits will apply to this event.
The Rhythm of Baltimore Street Patterns

Archana Sharma, PhD, Assistant Professor, Morgan State University

What is the rhythm of a city and its streets? Are the streets safe for pedestrians? These are the questions that Bill de Blasio is most concerned about in the opening discussion of “Room for Debate” through The New York Times Editorial Op-Ed on February the 20th, 2014. In an increasingly human-centered view on cities, we ignore other species – plants or animals – that co-habit the environs with us. This expanding perspective promotes us to think about different paces and rhythms of walking in places used by these diverse species.

How can the cities be made more inclusive and safer for all the habitants, is the question that appeals most to me as a critical thinker on city design. I read about the works of Isaac Asimov and H. G. Well on cities, feeling delighted and frightened at the same time. Those stories tell us that the caves of steels have engulfed mankind and surveillance cameras record every human move. What stays to be visualized and narrated is how the other species reacted, evolved, and “used” those caves of steel and digital networks. The patterns of cities across the world as revealed through the graph overlay method fascinate me presently. The question is, what is the rhythm of the cities, streets, or green network patterns? I am oriented to think about the “rhythm for a safe pattern”.

There are few threads of investigation moving forward. First, I transposed the poetic meters on the city patterns to understand whether the cities are designed as a haiku, doha/ couplet, sonnet, renku or a rap. Second, I studied movement patterns of domesticated species, including humans to investigate whether their natural rhythms of movement are matched by the rhythms of the street patterns. Only proper and thorough investigation will confirm if the current city street patterns are like poetry with inapt meter or tone, missing in intellectual thought or aesthetic shape. The investigation will also verify whether the street networks are unnecessarily pressured by one transportation network rather than a sub-system of transportation trails facilitating public auto, individual auto, human only, dog-friendly, or horse or cow friendly. Each of these sub-systems interacts with the other only as desired through boldly or rather clearly designed interventions in the urban landscape.

This is not a novel idea, but taking the research on multi-modal transportation, urban design, biological conservation, island geography, landscape ecology, and greenways, so passionately pursued and advocated by many, most notably by Richard Forman, Naveh, Zonneveld, Ndubisi, Steiner, Spirn, Meyer, Little, Fabos, Treib and others, take it to another level offering a creative framework to conceive safe, inclusive, and poetic urban city design.

Ideas for the poetic urban city design include the re-development activities in west Baltimore featured by Natalie Sherman in The Baltimore Sun of February 20, 2014 and as illustrated by the recently kicked off project on North Avenue of re-development by the Baltimore Neighborhood Design Center under the stewardship of Laura Bowe and a team of responsible local citizens and advocates. Some helpful visual information on fatal car crashes and road traffic accident statistics on Citydata: http://www.city-data.com/accidents/acc-Baltimore-Maryland.html offers an indication of location of unsafe streets in Baltimore.

I am currently working on a book on Landscape of Rural India for the National University of Singapore Press, in addition to my continued investigations on city patterns for inclusivity and rhythm, and may be contacted at archana.sharma@morgan.edu.

Baltimore’s Disaster Preparedness and Planning

Kristin Baja, Climate and Resilience Planner, City of Baltimore, Department of Planning

The City of Baltimore is highly vulnerable to many natural hazards, ranging from coastal storms and flooding to extreme heat and high winds. It is evident that these types of extreme events will increase in frequency and intensity, in the future years. Baltimore’s climate has already been changing. In the past century, the City has experienced shifting trends in weather patterns and climate conditions. The increase in the occurrences of the natural disasters as a result of the climate change has significantly affected the City’s residents, businesses, infrastructure, and natural systems, which threatens regionally significant assets.

In 2000, President Clinton signed into law the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) in order to mitigate and reduce the damages associated with natural hazards.
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires that state and local governments develop and adopt an All Hazards Mitigation Plan (AHMP) as a condition of eligibility for mitigation and public assistance grant funds. While FEMA requires that local governments update their AHMPs every five years, Baltimore’s effort is much more than a routine update of the plan.

**Mitigation Planning Process**

**The Scope of Issues**

In compliance with the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, Baltimore has undertaken a thorough, forward-thinking approach to the hazard mitigation planning process for the development of the *Disaster Preparedness Project and Plan* (DP3). The planning process integrated research, outreach, and action to create a comprehensive and innovative risk-preparedness system for assessing existing and future impacts; integrating many of the City’s systems; and providing clear guidance to City government and citizens for taking actions that are wide-reaching and affect every aspect of planning and development. The plan focuses on mutually beneficial solutions that enhance existing systems, increase future resilience, and aim for economic, equitable, and environmental growth for Baltimore.

The plan development also included a vulnerability assessment of social, legal, economic, and environmental consequences of various hazards and conducted the climate modeling for current and predicted impacts. This allowed the City to identify strategies to help minimize the City’s vulnerabilities, reduce or eliminate loss of life and property damage, upgrade essential infrastructure and buildings, and increase overall resiliency to natural hazards.

**Citizen Participation**

A unique element of the DP3 process was the 40-person Advisory Committee that consisted of key agencies, institutions, businesses, and neighborhoods to collect essential data and draft recommendations. The Advisory Committee met five times as a full committee and multiple times as subcommittees throughout the winter and spring of 2013. The subcommittees were formed on the basis of the four main sectors identified in the plan (Infrastructure, Buildings, Natural Systems, and Public Services) as well as their specific areas of expertise.

The community input was essential in the development of DP3. The City held two town hall events and nine small interactive community meetings. These meetings educated citizens about the current and predicted hazards that may affect them and provided them with an opportunity to identify actions for the City and their community in mitigating and adapting to those impacts. The City also met with local businesses, the Port Administration, private sector constituents, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to gain support and integrate specific considerations. Engaging these stakeholders and community groups led to a much more comprehensive plan with a great deal of support and ownership by stakeholders.

**Mitigation Plan Adoption**

In October 2013, Baltimore City adopted the Disaster Preparedness Project and Plan as part of an effort to assess existing hazards while preparing for predicted hazards. DP3’s recommended strategies and actions directly relate to the Office of Sustainability’s seven areas of focus: cleanliness, pollution prevention, resource conservation, greening, transportation, education & awareness, and green economy. Baltimore is the nation’s first large city to integrate climate adaptation and predictive modeling into its All Hazards Mitigation Plan process. This demonstrates the Baltimore’s commitment to becoming a more sustainable and resilient city.

**Mitigation Plan Implementation**

**Database Establishment**

To successfully implement DP3, the DP3 team began by building a database that identifies overlaps with existing planning systems citywide, including the Sustainability Plan, Climate Action Plan (2012), Urban Agriculture...
Plan (2013), the Mayor’s Vacants to Values Initiative, and Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs). DP3 also takes into account the plans at the State level, private sectors, and NGO communities, which included the National Aquarium Master Plan and Waterfront Partnership 2.0 Plan. As part of the planning process, city staff also participated in regional work groups, national and international conferences, and hazard-related forums to integrate regional considerations and cooperation into DP3.

The database also incorporates lead agencies, stakeholders, timelines, and opportunities for funding. It prioritizes actions, recognizes opportunities for collaboration in implementation, and creates metrics for both short- and long-term success. Many of the 241 recommended actions in the plan are directly transferrable to development projects across the City, from energy solutions, incorporated onsite renewable generation, back-up energy solutions, stormwater management, to design guidelines. The goal is to protect developments from flooding and other natural hazards.

The Floodplain Ordinance
DP3 provides a comprehensive framework for all of Baltimore’s resilience and sustainability efforts moving forward. The Office of Sustainability, a division within the Department of Planning, has developed 15 key actions for implementation in 2014. Among the 15 actions, updating the City’s floodplain ordinance was a top priority.

After adoption of the DP3 in October 2013, city planners began drafting new language that increases the city’s freeboard requirement from one foot to two feet. Planners also developed a zone called the Flood Resilience Area that allows the City to continue regulating development and redevelopment to the new 500-year floodplain line, beyond the FEMA 100 year floodplain requirements. These are significant changes as Baltimore will now be adding two feet of freeboard to the 500-year event. The ordinance was adopted on April 2, 2014.

Community Resilience Awareness
Building upon the adoption of the DP3, the Department of Planning has generated a behavior-change campaign centered on preparedness and increasing community resilience. Natural disasters can happen any time and at times, without warning. Preparing for these disasters ahead of time will help Baltimore’s citizens deal with the potential negative outcomes, such as power outages, shortage of running water and electricity, and lack of phone services.

Please contact Kristin Baja at Kris-tin.baja@baltimorecity.gov for additional information or visit Baltimore’s resiliency website http://baltimorehazards.wordpress.com/

Coming Up:

May 30 at 10:00AM — MD APA May Board meeting, watch emails for more information and location

June 10 from 8:30AM—4:30PM — Local Government Exchange for Planners in Central Maryland at the Charles Miller Library in Ellicott City, Howard County. The Metro Region includes Baltimore City as well as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties.

June 20-21, starting at 7:00PM — Kentlands 25th Anniversary Symposium www.uli.org
Data Collection—Hazard Mitigation Practices by Jurisdictions

Walter Gillis Peacock, Ph.D. and Shannon Van Zandt, Ph.D., AICP, Texas A&M; Himanshu Grover, Ph.D., AICP, SUNY Buffalo

We are excited to announce our new study entitled “The Adoption and Utilization of Hazard Mitigation Practices by Jurisdictions along Gulf and Atlantic Coasts,” which uses an online survey to understand general land use and hazard mitigation practices by local and county jurisdictions. We’re writing you for some assistance in spreading the word about our data collection activities.

The devastation caused by floods, coastal storms, and hurricanes like Katrina (2005), Ike (2008), and Sandy (2012) underline the need for effective and safe hazard mitigation practices at the city and county level in coastal regions. The purpose of our online survey is to gather information and conduct research about the types of land use and development policies and actions being employed by jurisdictions near the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. For example, we ask about a variety of regulator and financial policies to address hazard risk such as: the use of subdivision ordinances, hazard setback ordinances, environmental impact statements, wetlands protection, density bonuses, special tax assessments for hazardous areas, and building retrofitting requirements. This project is funded by the National Science Foundation.

This data has not been collected in over 30 years. We will report back to all participants, the public, and all state APA chapters in the sampled areas about the results of our work. We hope this information will prove useful to your members as they work on various hazard-related planning activities.

We are currently collecting the data using an electronic survey program. We are calling on all jurisdictions that have a population of at least 2,500 people and are within the NOAA defined coastal zones. This area includes communities not directly on the coast but that still face potential inland flooding and wind damage during a tropical storm or hurricane. Over the phone, we invite them to participate in the online survey with the following introduction:

“Look forward to hearing from urban planners at Texas A&M University and University at Buffalo over the next few months. The two universities are teamed up on a National Science Foundation sponsored project called, “The Adoption and Utilization of Hazard Mitigation Practices by Jurisdictions along Gulf and Atlantic Coasts”. To understand what jurisdictions in the NOAA defined coastal zones are doing related to general land use and land use for hazard mitigation, the researchers are conducting an online survey with planners in small and large jurisdictions. The survey only takes about 10-20 minutes to complete, and it asks factual information about regulation and financial policies and practices such as: the use of subdivision ordinances, hazard setback ordinances, environmental impact statements, wetlands protection, density bonuses, special tax assessments for hazardous areas, and building retrofitting requirements. The data collected is all confidential and a report summarizing across all participating jurisdictions will be given back to each participating jurisdiction as well as presented at various professional conferences. If a student from one of these universities calls you, we hope that you will consider their request and join other jurisdictions in helping generate a comprehensive and accurate portrait of planning along the coasts.”

We greatly appreciate your time and help in this endeavor, and hope that our project can support your and your members’ missions. Please contact the principal researchers or our project manager, Michelle Meyer, with any questions or comments at 979-862-1414.

University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center
Department of Urban and Regional Planning

Texas A&M University
Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning