Greetings from the EDAB Chair

From Rooftops to Retail - Vision For Smart Growth

Fast Facts

Greetings!

This month’s e-news examines how Harford County communities are growing - from rooftops to retail. EDAB advocates and sets forth guidelines for local economic development and growth. Our Land Use subcommittee is constantly the "visionary" for this goal. The committee plans for smart growth for the county and its municipalities, keeping in mind State goals. You’ll read how they’ve addressed the need for communities that reflect quality of life and sustainability, resource conservation and infrastructure.

The Business Spotlight highlights Sci-Tech, a company whose innovative re-use and remodeling resulted in a sustainable “green” building. In Fast Facts, you can quickly see how the state of Maryland and the County will grow over the next 10-20 years and how that growth will be managed.

For more information on EDAB and its role in advocating for positive economic growth in the County, or to become involved in EDAB, visit www.harfordbusiness.org.

Best Regards,
Eric McLauchlin
Chairman
EDAB

Business Spotlight - SciTech Services, Inc.

SciTech Services, Inc. (SciTech), an engineering, environmental and technical services company, demonstrated efficient land use by reusing an existing building. Occupying the former Harford Duracool building at 2129 Pulaski Highway in Havre de Grace, SciTech remodeled to create a lean, energy efficient campus. Renovation helped to decrease the carbon released into the atmosphere by limiting the manufacturing and transportation of materials. The building now includes additional roof and wall insulation, resulting in smaller HVAC units and ductwork. Windows are larger with thermally broken frames and highly reflective glazing to use natural light more efficiently. Interior vision panels allow daylight to filter into interior offices. The lighting control system incorporates a combination of occupancy sensors, time clock and photocells and the light fixtures are a combination of high-efficiency fluorescent or LED.

SciTech Services Inc. located in Havre de Grace

SciTech has over 80 employees specializing in data acquisition, information technology (IT) systems applications, chemical and biological defense (CBD) research and technology, chemical munitions research, chemical agent analytical processes, demilitarization, training, energetics and testing.

Since its inception in 1990, SciTech has provided support and services to a variety of Department of Defense clients including U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command, Marine Corps Systems Command, U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center, Edgewood Chemical Biological Center and Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense.

SciTech received the Small Business Administration (SBA) "Administrator’s Award of Excellence." For more information, visit www.scitechinc.com.

From Rooftops to Retail - Vision for Smart Growth

W. Paul Thompson, Jr.

Plan Maryland, the state’s plan for sustainable growth and development, is coming down the home stretch for public input and revisions this month. It addresses how the state will handle population growth through the year 2035, anticipating one million more people, 400,000 more households and more than 600,000 new jobs. It set forth 12 “visions” from the 2009 Planning Visions Law that addresses sound growth and development, and these visions are expected to be reflected in any local planning.

Harford County’s Master Plan and Land Use Element Plans take into account the requirements of Plan Maryland and our County’s slice of those one million new residents, but a close look at activity shows much more. According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, the County’s 2010 population was 244,826 residents, and it is expected to increase to 292,620 by 2035. The majority of the population (58.3%) is now younger than 45 years of age and that demographic is expected to remain stable through 2035.

With that in mind, land use decisions for growth continue to focus within the established Development Envelope, where 76 percent of the County’s population will reside by 2035. Currently, about 16 percent live in three municipalities: Aberdeen, Bel
Air and Havre de Grace. While these areas are ripe for increased growth and vertical density building, so is the entire development envelope. Plans for 4,000 residential units are underway in Aberdeen and Havre de Grace. Fallston has 100 lots available next to wetlands. A community of 400 units is planned at Routes 7 and 543 in Aberdeen.

But creating careful, smart growth goes much further than building rooftops. With these communities must come an infrastructure of retail, transportation and recreation. The County Economic Development Advisory Board's (EDAB) Land Use Subcommittee, working closely with the Department of Planning and Zoning, has guided the development process by addressing the State's 12 Visions even prior to their formalization. Planners have focused on quality of life and sustainability; public participation; growth areas; community design; infrastructure; transportation; housing; economic development; environmental protection; resource conservation; stewardship; and implementation.

New mixed used communities are being encouraged throughout the County. As retail follows rooftops, we are seeing the commitment of new retailers throughout the area. The opening of the Boulevard near the Box Hill neighborhoods, Swan Creek Village office and retail complex near the Bulle Rock community, and even the Forest Hill Kroh's near the Forest Lakes residences are all examples of mixed used, walkable communities. They are more than just independent structures. Because of Harford County’s location, these major retailers and employers can draw not only from local residents, but also from the surrounding regions of southeastern Pennsylvania and the I-95 corridor.

With traffic and transportation improvements, people who work in the County will be more inclined to live here. The recent opening of the Rt. 24 and I-95 junction are doing great things for commuters and the economy there. The proposed comprehensive plans and Land Use Elements Plan will allow these arteries leading to Aberdeen Proving Ground and the roadways along the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor (CSSC) to foster mixed use and greater density communities. This gives developers more opportunities, resulting in revenue to help shoulder some of the road improvement burden.

If we are to encourage people to live where they work, then we must provide the services necessary to sustain their lifestyles. In addition to retail, transportation and schools, investments in natural habitats for recreation will benefit the under-45 aged demographic and the County as a whole. The Ma and Pa Trail extension lends value - both from a sustainability standpoint and an economic outlook. Likewise, the recent purchase by the County of the Graham property will provide a recreational park in the heart of the development envelope. A report commissioned by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation estimates that over $54 billion was spent nationally on trail-based activities, like equipment and clothing, travel and hotel costs and support services. Wildlife watching also netted over $134 million in additional revenue. The study noted that people choose to locate in areas where this type of recreation is readily available, and property values near passive parks had an average increase in value of almost 20 percent.

New residents choose homes with parks, school location and access to retail in mind. Harford County’s plans encompass a vision that supports these trends, and makes it a promising place for rooftops, employment and retail.

W. Paul Thompson, Jr. is president of ADW-Architectural Design Works, with offices in Bel Air and Towson. Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the company has developed many of the local residential and commercial communities. Thompson is the chairman of the EDAB Land Use subcommittee.

Fast Facts:

- Plan Maryland projects that the state has 560,000 acres of projected growth, equal to the area the size of 175 Anistiam National Battlegrounds, 40 Pataposco State Parks, 14 Assateague Islands, 112 Cunningham Falls State Parks, 84 Patapsco River State Parks, 144 Deep Creek Lakes.
- The smarter growth pattern for Maryland over the next 20 years would result in a potential savings of $29 billion in new road construction and associated new road maintenance costs and $496 million in water/sewer and school construction costs.
- Harford County has a land area of 440 square miles or 235,676 acres and is the 11th largest County in the state.
- Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) occupies over 39,000 acres.
- The primary land use in the County is agricultural (95%) followed by residential use (24%) and recreational uses (0%).
- The American Community Survey identified 30,248 housing units in Harford County, which is an increase of 12,102 units from the 2000 Census. Single family dwellings are the primary housing type (81%). There has been a 20% increase in the number of townhouses as compared to a 50% increase during the period from 1990 to 2000.

Sources: Plan Maryland - http://www.planmaryland.gov
Harford County Master Plan - http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/PlanningZoning/index.cfm?ID=865

David R. Craig, Harford County Executive

The Economic Development Advisory Board consists of a number of subcommittees - including technology, workforce development, finance, tourism and land use - dedicated to the positive growth and economic development of Harford County.