



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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The Maryland Department of Planning Broadens the Conversation on A Better Maryland Plan

Citizens Encouraged to Attend Upcoming Listening Sessions or Participate Online

(January 4, 2018) Baltimore, MD – The Maryland Department of Planning is currently engaging local officials, staff, and residents in the new State Development planning process, ***A Better Maryland***. Planning kicked off the effort in early November with a listening session in Garrett County followed by meetings in St. Mary’s, Wicomico, Somerset, Allegany and Worcester counties.

The purpose of the listening sessions and the larger statewide dialogue is to connect with stakeholders and solicit feedback about the ***A Better Maryland*** plan and how it can help local governments and state agencies better meet local planning needs.

“The initial six listening sessions have been well received and we look forward to hearing from all Marylanders, local planning staff and our elected officials at the future meetings,” said Special Secretary of Smart Growth, Wendi Peters. “It is critical for the State to listen to local needs and view issues from their perspective; only then can we provide the most valuable assistance.”

At the listening sessions, attendees view a short presentation and interact with planning staff and other stakeholders using an instant polling exercise and discussion questions.

The overall effort consists of a series of 24 outreach events in every Maryland county and Baltimore City through spring 2018.

As part of this initiative, a new website was launched – ABetter.Maryland.gov, where stakeholders can review the project purpose and methodology, find out about upcoming listening sessions, read summaries of session input, and complete a [survey](#) to participate in the ***A Better Maryland*** plan.

The survey will remain open throughout the listening session period and is an excellent way for citizens to become involved if they cannot attend a listening session or they want to provide an online comment. The outreach is designed to provide convenient and frequent access to make engagement meaningful and consistent.

“We are excited about the next series of meetings so we can continue to hear local issues that impact every corner of the state,” said Acting Secretary of Planning, Rob McCord.

The next listening sessions include Montgomery County on January 8, Washington County on January 9 and Kent County on January 30.

For additional information, including meeting times and locations, please visit www.abetter.maryland.gov. The website also includes notes and discussions from the prior listening sessions.

A Better Maryland is a two-year project which was initiated by [Governor Hogan’s Executive Order 01.01.2017.18](#) this past summer, with an anticipated completion date in July 2019. Planning is working closely with the public, local governments, state agencies and other stakeholders, the [Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission](#), the [Maryland Municipal League](#), and the [Maryland Association of Counties](#) to develop and maintain a productive dialogue throughout the effort.

For questions about ***A Better Maryland*** or to find out when Planning is visiting your community, please contact Chuck Boyd, Director of Planning Coordination, (chuck.boyd@maryland.gov) at 410-767-1401.

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