

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
NCSHA 2009 Awards

Category: **Rental Housing**
Sub-Category: **Preservation and Rehabilitation**
Entry Name: **Smart, Green and Growing**

“Building healthier communities and promoting smarter development statewide.”

Background:

Smart, Green & Growing is a multi-agency, statewide initiative launched by Governor Martin O’Malley to help Maryland achieve a more sustainable future by linking community revitalization, transportation improvements, economic development, smart growth and environmental restoration efforts.

The initiative has had a significant impact on a broad swath of Maryland life – from policy decisions focusing development around major transportation hubs to involving citizens in a statewide campaign to enhance the urban canopy by planting trees.

The Department of Housing and Community Development is an active participant in the Smart, Green and Growing initiative through its many programs targeting resources to support green construction standards for multifamily housing and by adopting guidelines that promote new construction, rehabilitation or preservation of multifamily housing in line with Maryland’s sustainable development goals.

As communities struggle to provide affordable housing opportunities with strained budgets, a worsening foreclosure crisis and shrinking private investment in the affordable rental housing market, the traditional belief is that there must be an inherent tension between equity, the environment, and the economy. Rather than accepting this assumption, Maryland has found it far more pragmatic and successful to consider these elements as complementary to one another. One example is affordable housing production “equity” as it relates to protecting the environment and supporting economic development.

Housing has substantial environmental and economic impacts for the individual householder and the entire community. With regard to equity, the aggregate cost of housing must be considered: beyond the rent, it should include energy expenses for the home and transportation costs. When energy costs escalate rapidly and unpredictably, the impact on overall housing expenses is severe. Alternatively, when housing choices are far from employment, the environmental consequences are compounded both due to construction impacts and additional vehicles on the road.

In order to foster successful equitable development and economic development, ideally there is a stable labor supply in close proximity to labor demand. Housing strategies that

provide opportunities for low-income families to live close to good schools and their work also promote economic development.

Smart, Green and Growing policies promote increased compact development combined with wiser community planning that result in people living within walking distance of their everyday destinations (work, shopping and schools). DHCD's Multifamily encourages “Smart” and “Green” growth with an emphasis on progressive, energy efficient construction standards, financial incentives for transit oriented development (TOD) and lastly, development in areas projected to be impacted by BRAC, thereby encouraging more housing opportunities in close proximity to employers.

Incentives to Guide Multifamily Housing Development

The Qualified Allocation Plan is revised each year to incorporate developer and local government comment, and to incorporate best practices to interpret public policy initiatives.

There is a 325 point maximum when projects are evaluated and scored during the Department's competitive application rounds. In 2008, fully 25 percent of the scoring was allocated to Smart, Green and Growing criteria.

- Projects located in “BRAC Impacted Counties” are eligible to receive additional points. These are for developments that are in the nine BRAC impacted areas (Baltimore City and Cecil, Harford, Baltimore, Howard, Frederick, Montgomery, Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties). Projects that provide housing in these jurisdictions may earn ten points for family projects; or five points for elderly projects if the local jurisdiction will state that the project will result in increased availability of affordable housing opportunities for the workforce in the jurisdiction.
- Sustainable Development points are awarded for projects that demonstrate environmental sustainability and energy conservation such as:
 - Transit Oriented Development,
 - Green Certification – using criteria from Earthcraft, Green Communities Program from Enterprise Community Partners, Green Globes, National Association of Homebuilders, Model Green Home Building Guidelines, US Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design,
 - Brownfield Site Development
- Additional points are awarded for projects that demonstrate environmental consideration in the selection of the site and choice of materials:
 - Layout of the buildings and improvements complements the environment,
 - Material selections are environmentally friendly, better quality, and designed for durability and long term maintenance
 - Design features contribute to energy efficiency and a sustainable healthy environment over the life of the project,

- Meets departmental Base Level Energy Certification Standards
- Meets departmental Base Level Green Certification Standards

The results are impressive for the first round of awardees under the new standards – 41% of the awardees committed to pursuing Green Certification either through the Enterprise Green Communities Program or Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED). Additionally, 68% of applicants committed to achieving at least a 15% improvement in energy efficiency over current model energy code requirements. Examples of green features that will be used in the approved projects include use of light colored energy star roofing, dark sky exterior lighting features, construction recycling and waste management plans, and reduction of impervious surfaces. Energy conservation measures range from the installation of efficient lighting and plumbing fixtures to completion of the Energy Star application process.