

# CCD BULLETIN

*Issues in Coastal Community Development*

## **FROM THE FIELD: VISIONING ON MARYLAND'S EASTERN SHORE**

As growth and population pressures in coastal areas increase, historically rural areas are often caught unprepared. Zoning ordinances and land use plans may provide legal routes for growth to continue, while failing to consider future implications on environmental resources and socioeconomic assets. In addition, the most crucial elements in the decision-making and plan-making processes are frequently bypassed: the community and its vision.

Visioning is a collaborative planning process in which residents develop a shared vision of their community's future that aims to proactively address growth and adapt sustainably to change. Input from community leaders, decision-makers, key stakeholders and other residents in the visioning process is a necessary precursor to successful planning. Visioning can be used to determine a community's strengths and weaknesses, and to assess the opportunities and threats it faces. The product of a visioning exercise may lead to revisions to comprehensive plans and zoning regulations, as well as strategies for addressing economic development, job training, education, housing and recreation needs.

In order to help communities work toward more sustainable futures, Maryland Sea Grant this year awarded a research grant to Washington College for a two-year project called "Visioning for Sustaining Rural Communities on Maryland's Eastern Shore." Three pilot study communities with distinct needs have been selected to receive assistance, including leadership training and technical training. The key elements of the project will be 1) visioning workshops and modules and 2) the development and implementation of a GIS-based toolkit, designed to allow visioning of alternative futures based on population growth, natural and agricultural resources, zoning laws, tourism and recreational assets, and other relevant data.



To further assist local communities to conduct visioning processes and achieve sustainable coastal growth, Maryland Sea Grant is engaging with several partners in a multidisciplinary ad-hoc group effort. "CLUE" (Collaboration for Land Use Education) was recently developed with University of Maryland colleagues and faculty with interests in land use, natural resources and coastal communities issues. Current participants include research and extension faculty from the National Center for Smart Growth, Center for Agro-Ecology, Environmental Finance Center, Cooperative Extension, and the departments of Agriculture and Resource Economics, Geography, and Landscape Architecture. Personnel with expertise in architecture, engineering, urban planning and historic preservation may soon be included as well. As educational and outreach needs are explored in various Coastal Community Development Program projects (such as the Visioning for Rural Communities project) and CLUE activities, this group will facilitate an ongoing, integrated approach to addressing land use issues with a focus on community well-being and environmental protection.

For more information, contact Vicky Carrasco at [vcarrasco@arec.umed.edu](mailto:vcarrasco@arec.umed.edu). Also, for more information on the Washington College Visioning project, see [http://www.washcoll.edu/wc/news/press\\_releases/05\\_01\\_26\\_sea\\_grant.html](http://www.washcoll.edu/wc/news/press_releases/05_01_26_sea_grant.html).



## COMMUNITY TOOL SHED

**Community Visioning Handbook  
How to Imagine---and Create---a Better Future**  
[www.state.me.us/spo/landuse/docs/visioning/visioning.pdf](http://www.state.me.us/spo/landuse/docs/visioning/visioning.pdf) \*\*

From the Maine State Planning Office, this guide discusses the rationale for visioning and describes how a community's vision fits into the planning structure. It also provides a step-by-step guide to conducting a visioning process, and presents a case study from one Maine community.

[\*\*This is a very big file – if you have trouble accessing it at the above link, go to: [www.state.me.us/spo/landuse/pubs/](http://www.state.me.us/spo/landuse/pubs/), scroll down to the third publication listed, and save the file before opening.]

**Farmland Protection Toolbox**  
[www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27761/FS\\_Toolbox\\_10-02.pdf](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27761/FS_Toolbox_10-02.pdf)

This fact sheet from the American Farmland Trust provides an overview of the tools and techniques that state and local governments can use to protect farmland, including programs that combine regulatory and incentive-based strategies.

**Farming on the Edge: Sprawling Development Threatens America's Best Farmland**  
[www.farmland.org/farmingontheedge/Farming%20on%20the%20Edge.pdf](http://www.farmland.org/farmingontheedge/Farming%20on%20the%20Edge.pdf)

Also from the American Farmland Trust, this outreach publication outlines the losses to farmland that are occurring due to poorly planned development. The 6-page fact sheet includes a map of the U.S. indicating which areas are suffering the largest losses to prime farmland due to sprawl, and explains what types of programs are needed to remedy the problem.



## RECOMMENDED READING

**Building Our Future: A Guide to Community Visioning**

From University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, this manual provides a detailed description of the visioning process, including workshops, data gathering and analysis, and development of action plans. It also contains substantive chapters on various types of projects for which visioning can be employed, including downtown revitalization, economic development, transportation, and natural resources conservation projects.

To download this document, go to:  
<http://cecommerce.uwex.edu/pdfs/G3708.PDF>

To purchase the book (\$45), go to:  
<http://cecommerce.uwex.edu/showcat.asp?id=29>

**Better Not Bigger: How to Take Control of Urban Growth and Improve Your Community**  
by Eben Fodor

*Better Not Bigger* makes the case for carefully considering the types of new development welcomed by a community, arguing for the importance of protecting the “commons” from exploitation by a few. The book explores the ways that rapid, unplanned growth has damaged communities throughout the country fiscally, environmentally, and in terms of quality of life issues.

This book is not available for download. To purchase online (about \$11), go to:  
[http://shop.ecoiq.com/acb/showdetl.cfm?&DID=23&Product\\_ID=1515&CATID=155](http://shop.ecoiq.com/acb/showdetl.cfm?&DID=23&Product_ID=1515&CATID=155)  
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[www.amazon.com/gp/product/0865713863/002-3704451-3460047?v=gance&n=283155](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0865713863/002-3704451-3460047?v=gance&n=283155)