

**Department of Planning  
OPERATING Analysis**

*Performance Analysis - MFR*

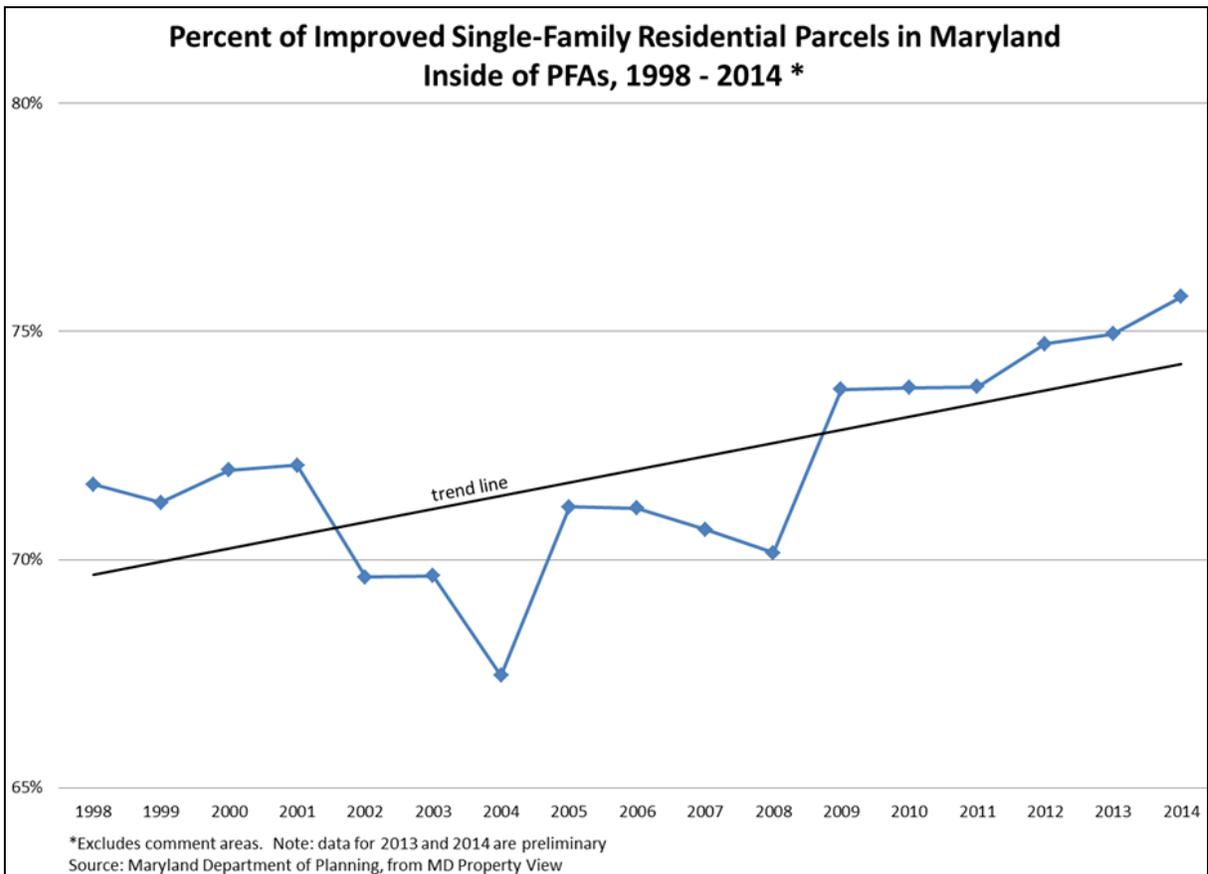
- 1. DLS recommends that MDP comment on how it plans to improve the consistency of the data and increase the level of participation.**

**Planning Response:** Planning does not view consistency of the data as an issue. We have increased our outreach and recently developed and made available streamlined reporting tools to facilitate the data reporting process. We have also made it a component of the training we provide at planning conferences. As part of Planning's continuing local outreach efforts, we provide guidance and education to local governments on the reporting requirements and the reporting thresholds to increase the level of participation.

**2. DLS recommends that MDP comment on the effectiveness of smart growth given the greater percentage of residential parcel acres being developed outside the PFA.**

**Planning Response:** The effectiveness of smart growth is not measured by any single set of indicators. The percentage of growth **inside** and outside of the PFAs reflects successful implementation by government and private sectors along with market response. The inverse relationship of **parcels** and **acres inside** and **outside** the PFAs continues to hold.

One indicator of success is that the percentage of single family residential **parcels** built **inside** the PFA's continues on an **upward trend** despite the real estate bubble and bust as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1**

Another indicator of success is reflected in the near mirror image in Figure 2 which shows the **downward trend** of the percentage of **acres** developed **outside** the PFAs.

It is likewise to be expected that the percentage of **acres** developed **outside** PFAs is high despite the relatively low percentage of **parcels** built **outside** PFAs because, on average, a single family home **outside** the PFAs occupies more **acres** (1.6 ac. avg.) than one **inside** a PFA (0.2 ac. avg). Furthermore, even though the average size of **parcels** developed both **inside** and **outside** of the PFAs is decreasing, the rate of decrease inside the PFAs is greater, showing more compact development.

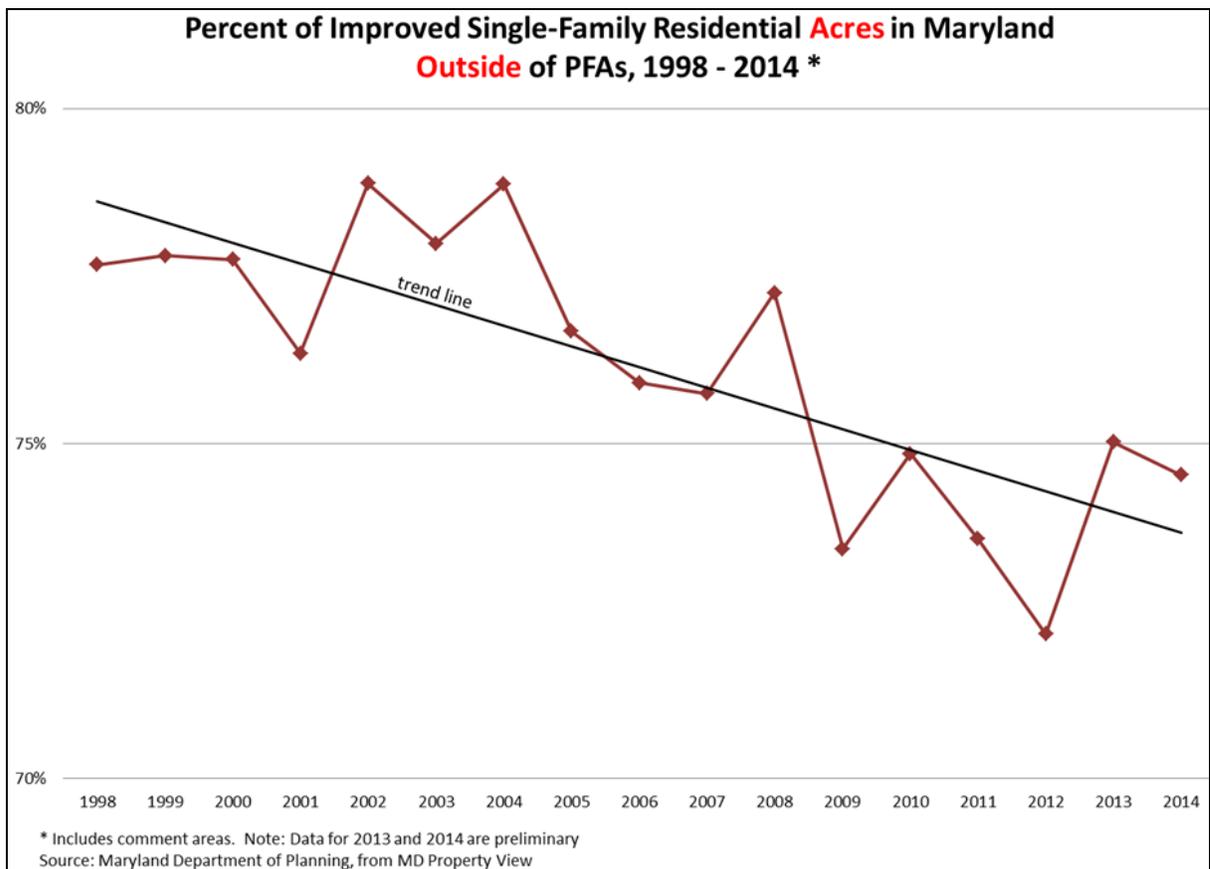


Figure 2

Figure 3 focuses on multifamily development and supports the idea that the development community and market responses are better supporting smart growth, and that future market responses may continue to do so. Multifamily housing, which is denser, requires the least land, and has shown a substantial increase in a market sector that may have long term implications. This trend is likewise going in the right direction and has shown an increase of more than 10 percent. If it is the beginning of a longer term trend in market preference, it will result in substantial progress toward smart growth outcomes as governments work with the private sector to meet this demand. Planning will continue to monitor this indicator and work with individual jurisdictions to encourage best practices and provide technical assistance.

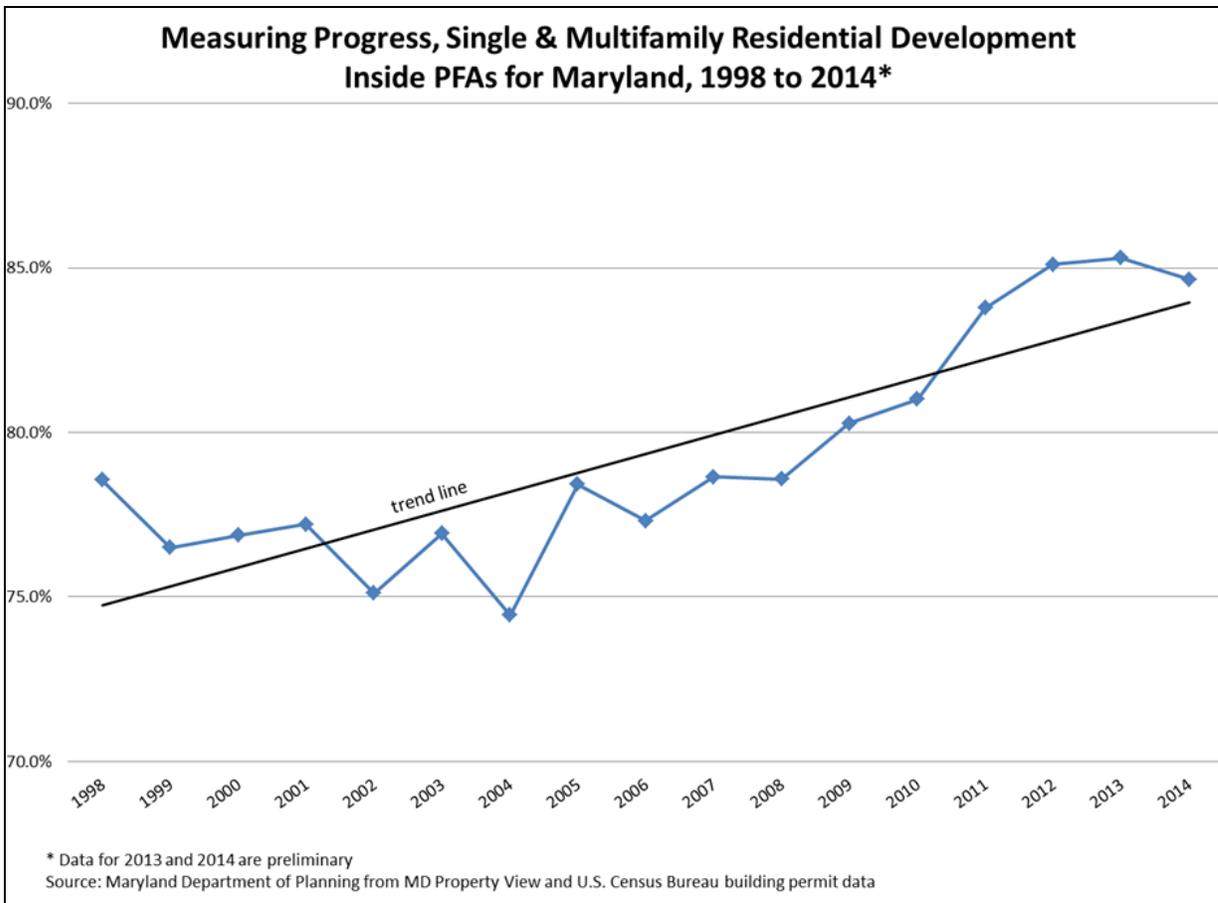


Figure 3

**3. DLS recommends that MDP comment on the role that imaging and other archival technologies might play in maintaining storage space at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory without requiring the retention of physical objects.**

**Planning Response:** There are economic, research and practical reasons why the cost and time spent on digital solutions cannot be justified and may place us further out of touch with the heritage we are charged to conserve.

Digital scanning of archaeological objects as a means of allowing deaccessioning of those objects (and hence opening up storage space in the MAC Lab) is not feasible for a number of reasons. These reasons are economic and practical, as well as research driven and include:

The time that would go into choosing the objects for scanning and the actual scanning process itself would be cost prohibitive. Set-up and scanning of each object requires from 45 minutes to 2.25 hours, with an average set-up and scanning time of 1.25 hours per object. Studies have shown that editing the noise from a digital scan can take from one to 6.5 hours per image, with an average of two hours per image. (Image noise is an undesirable by-product of image capture that adds spurious and extraneous information to an image thereby negating its value as a reliable source of study.) The various sizes of the digital files created are extremely large and the cost of storing the digital data would be cost prohibitive.

Digital files require a substantial investment in both staff time and actual monetary expenditures to ensure that they remain viable into the future. Migrating the files into updated or newer software would require hiring at least one full time position at the lab. Representatives of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) have reported that the cost of maintaining a digital file for ten years is five to ten times the cost of the initial investment in creating the digital file. The permanent curation of 3D scans would therefore require ongoing investment and the creation of new staff positions specifically devoted to the long-term curation of digital data.

Laser scanners currently have substantial limitations in terms of what can actually be scanned and the amount of detail that can be provided. Certain materials, like those with reflective surfaces (certain metals, glass) or those with dark surfaces, are not conducive to scanning because they do not interact well with the lasers. Laser scanners also have difficulty with items that are thin or have thin edges (which would be a large percentage of our prehistoric flaked stone tools, and all buttons and coins). Scanners also cannot record the interior surfaces of hollow objects, such as pipe bowls or ceramic containers. Color details and variations also cannot be recorded with sufficient accuracy.

Digital scans only record the surface (topological) attributes of a 3-dimensional object. Digital scans or even 3-dimensional prints of scanned objects would not allow material science tests to be conducted on objects that have been deaccessioned after scanning. In the last several decades, a number of material tests, like laser ablation and x-ray fluorescence, have been developed. Tests like these provide invaluable data about the objects, including raw materials sourcing and dating. The development of refinements to these testing methods, as well as the development of new tests for data yet unknown, will continue to occur. Deaccessioning of artifacts will forever negate the opportunity to gather this data. As an example, within the last decade, human DNA was extracted from chewed plant materials recovered from a cave in the American southwest. That DNA was the evidence that allowed a southwestern Indian tribe to gain recognition from the U.S. Government – a designation that has enormous financial implications for this group.

Historians, archaeologists, and scientists, can glean information from studying an object that they can never gain from studying a digital scan. A scan can never replace a 3-dimensional object. Artifacts are primary sources whereas digital scans will always remain mere secondary sources.

Most importantly, artifacts are essential to the fulfillment of Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum (JPPM)'s educational mission. We use artifacts with school groups, during public programs, at events, and in exhibits. Currently, JPPM has a traveling exhibit touring the state that includes artifacts from different parts of the collection.

Dozens of institutions from around the state borrow artifacts from the MAC Lab to create their own exhibits. Even if JPPM digitizes items in its collection, this does not present an opportunity for JPPM to deaccession the underlying artifact. Any effort to predict which artifacts will never again be of value for study or public display, essentially trying to guess the interests of researchers, museum professionals, and visitors 100 or 200 years from now, is dubious at best.

Many members of the JPPM staff have been involved with the public over the years as archaeologists and historians. Countless times we have seen the joy, pride, and understanding that come when people hold artifacts that connect them with their heritage, whether of their ancestors or the country in which they live. A digital file or a printed and painted plastic replica is not going to bring about that same connection with the past.

Archaeologists devote painstaking effort and significant expense to recover data from archaeological sites. But the most important reason that they excavate is to make the past available to the public. That real connection between the public and the past – made possible through interaction with authentic objects – is invaluable; the experience cannot be duplicated through accessibility to a digital file.

## *Issues*

### **4. Planning Data Services Shortfall: DLS recommends that MDP comment on alternative methods for handling the funding shortfall.**

**Planning Response:** A few years ago, the decision was made to discontinue charging for parcel mapping products. This resulted in a budget shortfall in special funds. This issue has been resolved in 2017 by replacing special funds which are no longer available with general funds.

### **5. Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grants Funding Restored by Existing Project Grants: DLS recommends that MDP comment on how a similar revenue shortfall situation can be avoided in the future and on the process by which it evaluates the opportunity to cancel encumbrances, withdraw funding from projects that have failed to move forward, and reconcile funding left over from completed projects.**

#### **Planning Response:**

- *Comment on how a similar revenue shortfall situation can be avoided in the future.*

A similar revenue shortfall situation can be avoided in the future because now the Historical Trust understands that if a negative deficiency for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) is included in the budget request, we must assume there is a revenue shortfall, and decide on appropriate action in response. Those actions might include submitting a deficiency request to offset the loss of special funds with general funds, as Natural Resources did in the last fiscal year.

- *Comment on the process by which MDP evaluates the opportunity to cancel encumbrances, withdraw funding from projects that have failed to move forward, and reconcile funding left over from completed projects.*

Currently Planning conducts quarterly financial reviews of the Maryland Heritage Areas Program and prepares a Financial Status Report for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. To more effectively and routinely track grantee performance and identify projects not moving forward satisfactorily, Planning also has implemented an online grants management software system that allows program staff to monitor project performance and to provide grantees with timely notices of approaching project deadlines and reporting requirements. The online system also allows grantees to provide information more easily to program staff when questions arise. Additionally, MHAA has implemented a bi-weekly grant program staff meeting to review the most recent status reports generated by the online system in order to more effectively identify under-

performing projects and determine when it is appropriate to withdraw funding from projects that have failed to move forward due to factors that cannot be addressed within a reasonable timeframe.

- 6. Preliminary State Development Plan Deliberations Underway: DLS recommends that MDP comment on the overall framework being considered for a State development plan, how all of the pieces noted above will fit into this framework, the related costs of development of the plan and more specifically the Local Government Planning Resource Center, and on how the Department of Natural Resources' Genuine Progress Indicator informs and could be incorporated into the Sustainable Growth and Conservation Indicators Status Check website.**

**Planning Response:** Planning is currently re-assessing the goals, objectives and implementation strategies of the former state development plan. Since the state development plan is an executive policy, it needs to reflect the priorities and direction of the current administration. Planning's website offers a wide range of land use and resource planning information and technical assistance for local governments and Maryland residents, including information about managing growth, conservation of natural resources, and impact of growth in Maryland. A mapping tool of local and state identified growth and conservation areas is being added to Planning's list of interactive maps to improve the coordination of planning at the state and local level.

Planning has made a concerted effort to reach out to local jurisdictions to assess what is working in their areas and what is causing concerns. We are also listening to what local and municipal governments want for their individual areas in the future. The process of evaluating components of these local plans and the feedback we are receiving from local elected and appointed officials is informing our view of how Planning can best provide assistance to local governments in achieving their goals and avoiding conflict with the State.

The planning capabilities and sophistication of each county and municipal government varies greatly. Planning has placed a renewed emphasis on the role of the regional planners and has offered technical assistance and the sharing of best practices throughout the state. We are also working on the best way to place the most requested and most valuable resources of Planning at the disposal of local government, whether physically or virtually, in what will become known as the Local Government Planning Resource Center.

Planning has had discussions with Natural Resources regarding the GPI and we will have continuing discussions with planning staff and the Sustainable Growth Commission concerning the appropriateness and applicability of the GPI indicators.

## **Recommended Actions:**

### **1. Abolish a regular position and funding.**

**Planning Response:** Reject.

DLS is proposing elimination of one of only two architectural historian positions in the state. The Trust's Office of Research, Survey and Registration (ORSR) is responsible for architectural survey activities throughout the state. The position is critical to the agency's ability to meet its State and Federally mandated responsibility to conduct identification and documentation activities, and to provide technical assistance to other state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations and individual property owners.

The main purpose of this position is to oversee the statewide survey program, and to supervise the inclusion of documentation into the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties from all survey projects. This position is responsible for administering survey activities conducted through grant-funded projects such as the Department of Natural Resources survey of parks affected by Hurricane Sandy, and oversight of all architectural surveys completed by Certified Local Governments. This position is also responsible for providing oversight and technical expertise to historic properties owned by the state, such as the multi-phase stabilization and restoration project of the Hessian Barracks in Frederick, Maryland. Additionally, this position provides technical assistance to individual property owners throughout the state. This position is critical to all of these efforts; without it, ORSR will have difficulties completing the duties it performs related to Federally-mandated survey activities as well as to continue to provide technical expertise to state-owned historic buildings.

Without this position, the Trust has been unable to aggressively pursue historic sites survey partnerships, undertake independent fieldwork, or undertake non-regulatory historic property survey and documentation efforts. We have been unable to support local governments in their survey activities or provide technical advice and oversight of rehabilitation projects involving significant resources in the state. For many years, this position assisted homeowners interested in preserving their properties. Without this position, we do not have the capacity to provide this type of technical assistance to the general public.