



MORE: Beth Offenbacker
Waterford, Inc.
703.933.0520, ext. 202 or 703.623.4811

John Frece
Univ. of Maryland, National Center for Smart Growth Research & Education
301.405.6799

Reality Check *Plus* Announces Dates for Four Regional Exercises Project Website Launched

February 23, 2006 (College Park, Md.) – A unique coalition of more than 100 organizations known as **Reality Check *Plus*** today announced dates for four upcoming regional exercises that are intended to explore Maryland's future growth. To be held throughout Maryland late this spring, the four **Reality Check *Plus*** exercises are designed to foster collective visioning about regional growth. A recently launched website, www.realitycheckmaryland.org, provides additional information about both the overall **Reality Check *Plus*** exercise concept and each respective regional effort.

The four regional exercises will take place on the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland, in Western Maryland and in Central Maryland (Baltimore/Washington Corridor). The results from each regional event will provide the basis for a statewide vision for growth, and a subsequent report will identify ways that vision could be implemented on either the state or local level.

The dates for the four regional **Reality Check *Plus*** exercises are:

- **May 25, 2006** – [Eastern Shore Regional Reality Check](#)
- **June 2, 2006** – [Western MD Regional Reality Check](#)
- **June 9, 2006** – [Central MD Regional Reality Check](#)
- **June 15, 2006** – [Southern MD Regional Reality Check](#)

Led statewide by the Urban Land Institute – Baltimore District Council, the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education, and 1000 Friends of Maryland, **Reality Check *Plus*** will bring together a diverse group of organizations and various stakeholders, including politicians, developers, environmentalists, and business and civic leaders to consider Maryland's future growth. Participation in the exercises will be by invitation, however the presentation of results from each morning's exercise and the post-exercise discussions will be open to the public.

A broad-based coalition of more than 100 sponsors and supporting organizations is guiding this effort, including the Home Builders Association of Maryland, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, St. Mary's College, the Citizens Planning and Housing Association, the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the Maryland chapter of the American Planning Association, the Maryland Center for Agro-Ecology, the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, the Greater Baltimore Committee, Westside Renaissance, the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and the Interfaith Housing Alliance, among many others.

A number of other jurisdictions around the country have already launched local or regional visioning exercises – Envision Utah in the Salt Lake City region; Blueprint in Sacramento, California; and Reality Check in Los Angeles, Dallas Ft. Worth and Washington, D.C. What distinguishes **Reality Check *Plus*** from previous visioning exercises in Maryland is that it is privately led, statewide and action-oriented.

For more information about **Reality Check *Plus***, contact Beth Offenbacker at 703.933.0520, ext. 202 or John Frece at 301.405.6799.

Determining Maryland's Future

Maryland, already the fifth most densely populated state in the nation, is rapidly becoming more crowded. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that Maryland's population will grow by 1.5 million people and 500,000 jobs by 2030 – just 24 years from now.

Where will all the 1.5 million new residents live and work? How do we accommodate these new residents and jobs in ways that will expand our economy but protect our environment?