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Duncan and O'Malley to Attend Reality Check *Plus* Central Region Event *Governor Ehrlich Invited*

BALTIMORE (June 7, 2006) - Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan and Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley both said today that they plan to participate in the Reality Check *Plus* growth visioning exercise to be held at the Baltimore Convention Center this Friday, June 9th. Governor Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. has also been invited to attend.

More than 200 participants from Baltimore City and seven counties within the Baltimore-Washington corridor (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, Montgomery and Prince George's) are expected to gather at the Reality Check *Plus* event, which is the third of four regional growth visioning exercises to be held throughout the state of Maryland in the past three weeks. The events are co-sponsored by the University of Maryland, the Urban Land Institute and 1000 Friends of Maryland.

"The participation of these public officials underscores the importance of growth and development issues in Maryland," said Dr. Gerrit Knaap, executive director of the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education at the University of Maryland and one of the three co-chairs of the event. "We still have a few seats available for this event and encourage citizens from the region who have a deep interest in these issues and have not already registered to do so."

Reality Check *Plus* is a series of events in which elected and government officials, business executives and leaders of civic, non-profit and advocacy organizations are invited to envision where the growth that is projected to come to their region of the state by 2030 should go. The Maryland Department of Planning estimates that the overall population of Maryland will increase from approximately 5.5 million today to 7 million by 2030, including another 582,000 jobs and 409,000 households in the Baltimore-Washington corridor alone.

Reality Check participants are assigned in diverse groups of eight to 10 people per table and asked to place on a regional map plastic blocks that represent the new increment of jobs and households projected to come to the region by 2030. A central goal of the exercise is to raise public awareness about the amount and rate of growth that is coming. The events will provide the foundation for continuing work toward a "blueprint" for future development and more extensive research and education as to the need for land use policy reform.

"This is really just the first step in what the co-sponsoring organizations hope will be a long-term discussion about the future development pattern in Maryland," said Dru Schmidt-Perkins, executive director of 1000 Friends of Maryland and another of the Reality Check co-chairs.

The first in this statewide series of visioning exercises was held May 25th in Cambridge and involved the nine counties on the Eastern Shore. The second event was June 2 in Hagerstown, and involved Maryland's four westernmost counties. The final event will be June 15 at St. Mary's College of Maryland and will involve the three Southern Maryland counties.

For more information or to register, go to www.realitycheckmaryland.org or call 410 889-4112 to nominate yourself as a potential participant.

"We're really hoping for a strong showing in Central Maryland," said Chris Kurz of the Baltimore District Council of the Urban Land Institute, the third co-chair. "Obviously, this is the area of the state where most of the new development is expected to occur and if we are serious about maintaining Maryland's high quality of life, we need to plan for it carefully."

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