

**EASE ON DOWN THE ROAD:
BALTIMORE DEVELOPMENT WORKGROUP TO FOSTER DEVELOPMENT**

By: Caroline L. Hecker

As any real estate professional knows, navigating the ins and outs of the development process in any jurisdiction can be a challenge. Local government bureaucracy, unpredictable requirements, and inconsistent decision-making can frustrate even the most patient of us. Recognizing that we all face the same issues when it comes to development in Baltimore City, the Baltimore Development Workgroup (BDW) has assembled an array of real estate professionals representing all aspects of the field, including developers, engineers, architects, attorneys, and planners, all of whom are engaged in the business of real estate development in Baltimore City.

The BDW's mission is straightforward: To ensure that laws, regulations, policies, and procedures affecting real estate development in Baltimore:

- Are equitably and consistently applied to promote quality development
- Foster a rational and predictable development process
- Create an efficient project review and permitting process
- Reflect best practices experienced in other jurisdictions by participants
- Recognize economic realities, risks, and other pressures inherent in development
- Avoid unintended consequences which could negatively affect development
- Enhance Baltimore's reputation as a desirable place to develop.

To this end, the BDW has organized itself into a series of committees, each focused on one facet of development in Baltimore, such as traffic mitigation, historic preservation, sustainability, inclusionary housing, and visitability, among others. Each committee has comprehensively examined the existing laws and procedures relating to its subject area, as well as the manner in which these laws and procedures are applied to

development projects in the City. With creative ideas and examples of best practices from other jurisdictions, the committees have developed solutions to some of the common issues faced by developers, and have met with City representatives to share their concerns and the solutions they have devised.

The City, for its part, has been receptive to the BDW's comments, and has demonstrated a genuine willingness to engage in meaningful discussions about the concerns identified by the BDW and to implement the solutions proposed. So far, among other things, BDW members have been actively involved in helping the City draft regulations to implement its Green Building Ordinance, which will go into effect this summer, and in working with the Department of Transportation to develop a more consistent and predictable traffic mitigation system. By sharing with the City the expertise of private developers and their consultants, the BDW offers a wealth of knowledge from which the City can only benefit.

The BDW is open to new members and welcomes the participation of all real estate professionals involved in development in Baltimore City. Stanley Fine and Caroline Hecker of RMG are actively involved in the BDW; Stanley is the Chair of the Transportation Committee and a member of the BDW Steering Committee. If you are interested in joining the BDW and participating in a committee, please contact Stanley Fine at (410) 895-1201 or sfine@rosenbergmartin.com. If you need any assistance with any of your other real estate needs, please contact an attorney in our real estate group:

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