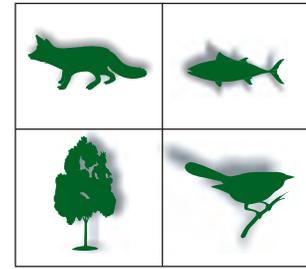


# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Green Infrastructure Plan is a comprehensive vision for conserving significant environmental ecosystems in Prince George’s County. It includes a map of interconnected sensitive habitats of countywide significance, along with implementation recommendations to help make the vision a reality.

Sensitive and important environmental features throughout the county have been identified and evaluated to provide a comprehensive interconnected system. A measurement of countywide significance<sup>1</sup> has been developed and is mapped as the Green Infrastructure Network (Map 1). The green infrastructure network has been divided into three categories:

1. **Regulated areas** containing environmentally sensitive features, such as streams, wetlands, buffers, the 100-year floodplain and steep slopes, that are currently regulated (i.e., protected) during the land development process.
2. **Evaluation areas** containing environmentally sensitive features, such as interior forests, colonial waterbird nesting sites and unique habitats, that are not currently regulated (i.e., not protected) during the development review process.
3. **Network gaps** comprising areas that are critical to the connection of the regulated and evaluation areas and are targeted for restoration to support the overall functioning and connectivity of the green infrastructure network.

The green infrastructure network covers approximately 168,000 acres, or 54 percent of the county; 32 percent of the green infrastructure network is in regulated areas, 52 percent is in evaluation areas, and 16 percent is in network gaps. The three areas delineated on the network mapping will be considered differently during plan implementation.

The identification of the green infrastructure network will allow land management and policy decisions to be made with a larger picture in mind. The Green Infrastructure Plan is intended to influence individual decisions to help realize a long-term vision for ecosystem preservation and restoration. The Green Infrastructure Plan will bring decision-making, land use policy, and infrastructure investments together under the umbrella of a guiding vision to help maintain critical corridors, and to target restoration and mitigation.

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<sup>1</sup> Countywide significance: Corridors 200 feet wide or wider in the Rural and/or Developing Tier; corridors of any width in the Developed Tier; gaps 600 feet or less; areas contiguous with downstream corridors, open bodies of water, or designated open space of adjacent jurisdictions.

The following guiding principles were used in developing the plan. The guiding principles were derived from the 2002 General Plan and the information brochure and the Goals, Concepts and Guidelines prepared for the Green Infrastructure Plan.

- Identify a contiguous network of environmentally important areas.
- Set forth strategies to preserve, protect, enhance, and restore the network.
- Support the desired development pattern of the 2002 General Plan.
- Adopt and/or support effective implementation mechanisms.
- Support the county’s Livable Communities Initiative.
- Ensure meaningful public participation.

The plan sets forth the following goal, objectives, and policies:

### **GOAL**

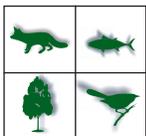
To preserve, enhance, and/or restore an interconnected network of countywide significant environmental features that retains ecological functions; maintains or improves water quality and habitat; and supports the desired development pattern of the General Plan.

This goal is a revised version of the goal contained in the Environmental Infrastructure Chapter of the 2002 General Plan.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The following objectives will be monitored and reported during the preparation of the Biennial Growth Policy Plan Update.

1. By the year 2025, ensure that 75 percent of the green infrastructure network acreage meets the definition of countywide significance (i.e., corridors 200 feet wide or wider in the Rural and/or Developing Tier; corridors of any width in the Developed Tier; gaps 600 feet or less; contiguous with downstream corridors, open bodies of water or designated open space of adjacent jurisdictions).
2. Ninety percent of the land acreage purchased for environmental preservation using public funds should be located within the green infrastructure network. If a portion of a property purchased is in the green infrastructure network and a portion is outside the green infrastructure network, for the purpose of this calculation, the entire acreage purchased will be counted toward meeting this objective.
3. In new subdivisions in the Rural Tier, and outside of approved growth centers and corridors in the Developing Tier, ensure that 100 percent of impacts to regulated areas are limited to unavoidable impacts, such as those for road and utility crossings.



4. By the year 2025, less than 25 percent of countywide *net* losses of woodland cover should occur within the green infrastructure network.
5. By the year 2025, improve the water quality in each major watershed to elevate the Benthic Index of Biological Integrity (IBI)<sup>2</sup> rating of the watershed by at least one category using as a baseline the 1999–2003 biological assessment of the streams and watersheds of Prince George’s County completed by the Department of Environmental Resources (DER).
6. By the year 2025, improve the stream habitat in each major watershed to elevate the habitat rating of the watershed by at least one category using as a baseline the 1999–2003 biological assessment of the streams and watersheds of Prince George’s County completed by DER.
7. Each year, strategically target 100 percent of off-site forest mitigation acreage into the green infrastructure network and/or adjacent to streams outside of the green infrastructure network. Fifty percent of the forest mitigation acreage should be targeted to improving water quality by establishing, enhancing, and/or restoring riparian forest buffers.
8. Each year, 100 percent of off-site environmental mitigation projects (wetland, forests, stream restoration, etc.) should be targeted to priority areas identified in the countywide catalog of mitigation sites. A minimum of 50 percent of the mitigation projects should be targeted to enhance water quality of the major watershed in which the project generating the need for mitigation is located.

## POLICIES

The following policies were developed to ensure that the stated objectives will be met. Each policy has related strategies, as detailed in Chapter 3.

### *Policy 1:*

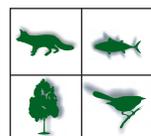
Preserve, protect, enhance or restore the green infrastructure network and its ecological functions while supporting the desired development pattern of the 2002 General Plan.

### *Policy 2:*

Preserve, protect and enhance surface and ground water features and restore lost ecological functions.

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<sup>2</sup> Benthic Index of Biological Integrity (IBI) is a method standardized by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for assessing the health of streams in Maryland. Benthic macroinvertebrates (i.e., “small bugs”) are sampled from the stream and the composition of the species present provides information on the overall health of the system based on their sensitivity to pollution.



***Policy 3:***

Preserve existing woodland resources and replant woodland, where possible, while implementing the desired development pattern of the 2002 General Plan.

***Policy 4:***

Promote environmental stewardship as an important element to the overall success of the Green Infrastructure Plan.

***Policy 5:***

Recognize the green infrastructure network as a valuable component of the county's Livable Communities Initiative.

The Green Infrastructure Plan includes a variety of implementation mechanisms including: legislative changes; policy guidance; development incentives; targeted public investments, mitigation and restoration; and environmental stewardship.

