

# **Section III**

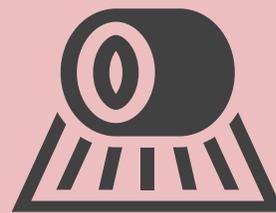
Agriculture Conservation Plan:  
A Countywide Functional Master Plan



# Agriculture Conservation Plan: A Countywide Functional Master Plan



Land preserved through conservation programs and regulations from 2010 to 2015: **9,958 acres**



M-NCPPC parkland in agriculture: **1,200 acres**



Size of the Priority Preservation Area: **74,769 acres** or **24% of the County**



## Our Vision for the Future

Plan 2035 contains a broad vision for our future. The following vision statement reflects how the implementation of the 2017 Agriculture Conservation Plan could shape the future in support of the healthy, vibrant, and connected communities envisioned in Plan 2035.

In 2035, Prince George's County provides a wide variety of sources for healthy food from local sources. Land conservation programs are self-sustaining and the agricultural and green economy benefits rural and urban residents alike.

The County has a well-functioning local food system from production to nutrient and waste management, and a healthy population educated about growing their own food and reflecting healthier lifestyle choices.

Prince George's County contains profitable working farms, growing a variety of crops at different scales, that sustain agricultural and rural economies.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Our Vision for the Future</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>Background</b> .....	<b>69</b>
Analysis of 2012 Priority Preservation Area Plan Strategy Implementation To-date.....	70
Conservation of Agriculture .....	71
Summary of Community Input .....	71
State Planning Mandates .....	72
<b>Plan Goals</b> .....	<b>73</b>
<b>Measurable Objectives</b> .....	<b>74</b>
<b>Policy Areas</b> .....	<b>78</b>
Conserving Agricultural and Forested Lands.....	78
Promoting an Agriculturally Based Economy .....	87
Supporting Urban Agriculture.....	88
<b>Implementation</b> .....	<b>89</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>94</b>
Appendix A: Documents Supporting the 2017 Agriculture Conservation Plan.....	94
Appendix B: Methodology for Determining the Priority Preservation Area in Prince George’s County .....	97
<b>Maps</b>	
Map 4. Technical Corrections to the Priority Preservation Area for Prince George’s County .....	82
Map 5. 2017 Priority Preservation Area for Prince George’s County .....	83
Map 6. Technical Correction to the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act Map for Prince George’s County.....	84
Map 7. Technical Correction to the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act Map for Prince George’s County .....	85
Map 8: 2017 Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act Map .....	86

## BACKGROUND

The 2017 *Agriculture Conservation Plan: A Countywide Functional Master Plan* (Agriculture Conservation Plan or ACP) is intended to address the growing demand for land for urban and rural agricultural enterprises throughout Prince George's County. The County lies in a region with a rapidly expanding population base and a dwindling supply of natural resource land. Indeed, every hour in America, almost 40 acres of farmland are lost to development, never to be farmed again. In addition, with climate change occurring at a faster and faster pace, there is a keen awareness of the value of keeping the ecosystem healthy and providing ample land resources for local food production.

This plan amends the related policies and strategies of previously approved plans, in particular the following:

- *Plan 2035 Approved General Plan*
- *2012 Priority Preservation Area Functional Master Plan*

There are three research studies that contain recommendations that contributed to the contents of this plan:

- *2009 Prince George's County Strategic Program for Agricultural Development*
- *2012 Urban Agriculture: A Tool for Creating Economic Development and Healthy Communities in Prince George's County, MD*
- *2015 Healthy Food for All Prince Georgians: An Assessment of Access to Healthy Food in Prince George's County, MD*



Early settlers began farming along the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers in Southern Maryland, the oldest region of the state, more than 300 years ago, even before the County of Prince George's was established. The decline of tobacco—prompted by the Maryland Tobacco Buyout program instituted in 1998—wounded the economic engine in Southern Maryland at the same time that the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area was becoming a fast-growing population center. In recent years, rural farmers have transitioned into more contemporary farming practices and are exploring niche markets that can be supported with lower initial costs for production materials and land. Urban farmers are growing in number and the need for healthy food sources close to our population centers has never been higher.

The Agriculture Conservation Plan also implements important Maryland legislation regarding agricultural preservation. This plan updates the 2012 *Priority Preservation Area (PPA) Functional Master Plan*, which established a goal of preserving 80 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the area set aside as the PPA, and sets the stage for continuing sustainable agricultural enterprises in the rural and agricultural areas of the County. The PPA boundaries are being corrected in this plan to reflect land use decisions made in other plans since the approval of the PPA in 2012. No changes to the boundaries are being proposed as part of this plan.

In 2012, the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Conservation Act (SGA) became law in Maryland. The act, known as the SGA or the septic bill, created

a requirement that counties prepare a tier map that restricts development in certain areas and allows development to continue at existing densities and with allowable building methods elsewhere. The areas where the regulations changed are called Tier IV areas, where subdivisions proposing more than seven

lots are no longer allowed. This law was implemented in the County with the passage of the SGA Tier Map in November 2012. The SGA Tier boundaries are being corrected in this plan to reflect land use decisions made in other plans since the approval of the PPA in 2012. No other changes to the boundaries are being proposed as part of this plan.

The ACP also incorporates recommendations from the 2012 study *Urban Agriculture: A Tool for Creating Economic Development and Healthy Communities in Prince George's County, Maryland*. In conjunction with traditional farming in rural areas, urban agriculture has progressed from its beginnings in the late nineteenth century in America to a thriving movement toward enhanced health and well-being, sustainability, and reliable access to nutritious food.

The purpose of the ACP is to provide broad countywide strategies and recommendations as a tool to guide future development activity and preservation, and to provide a foundation to achieve its stated goals. It should not be construed as superseding, or conflicting with, codified criteria for development.

### **Analysis of 2012 Priority Preservation Area Plan Strategy Implementation To-date**

During the pre-planning phase of this plan, the 2012 PPA Plan policies and strategies were analyzed to determine which ones have been implemented and to provide recommendations for updated policies and strategies. While approximately 70 percent of the PPA Plan's implementation strategies are ongoing, 2 important strategies have been completed. Prince George's County has received certification of its agricultural land preservation program through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and has strengthened the existing right-to-farm legislation.

Another important strategy that is currently being explored by a County Council-appointed work group is the option of developing a transfer of development rights (TDR) program. The implementation of this strategy from the 2012 PPA Plan has been difficult due in part to the lack of demand for development rights in areas that would typically be required to purchase those rights. While the desired development pattern is to build in designated Downtowns and other centers and corridors, these designated growth areas are already zoned for the density that is intended to occur there. To require purchasing of development rights to build in designated growth areas could dampen the market to develop there and not achieve the desired development pattern of *Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan* (Plan 2035). The transfer of development rights tool should continue to be explored as other strategies for land conservation are implemented.



This plan builds on the policies and strategies of the 2012 PPA Plan to achieve the County's long-term vision of a viable rural agricultural and forestry-based economy. The 2012 PPA Plan provided policies and strategies that only apply to the designated PPA. The 2017 Agriculture Conservation Plan, as the name implies, applies countywide and provides policies and strategies for agricultural and forestry pursuits at all scales.

## Conservation of Agriculture

The Section I: Overview of the Resource Conservation Plan provides a broad definition of Conservation that applies to all three plans and is restated in Figure 7. Each plan within the RCP contains a detailed definition of conservation as appropriate for that plan. Because this plan uses a broad definition of Agriculture that includes all aspects of growing food from urban to rural farms, the definition of Conservation is equally broad, and incorporates the conservation of land for growing food, conservation of fuel as a result of a shorter trip from farm to table, and the conservation of human health through the provision of healthy food choices.

### Figure 8. Definition of Conservation in the 2017 Agriculture Conservation Plan

As noted in the Section I: Overview, the word **conservation** can be defined as:

“...the action of conserving something, in particular:

- Preservation, protection or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, wildlife.
- Preservation, repair, and prevention of deterioration of archeological, historic, and cultural sites and artifacts.”

The Agriculture Conservation Plan seeks to provide healthy food choices, local sources of food and forest-based products, and the land to grow them on. It also provides guidance for the agricultural programs and people needed to bring sustainable food choices and forest products to all County residents and workers.

The definition of Agriculture is also broad within the context of this plan. It includes food, fiber and fuel; the growing of natural building materials; and all the infrastructure and programs that are needed for successful implementation. Where the PPA Plan focused only on rural agriculture within a specific area, the 2017 Agriculture Conservation Plan addresses the need for countywide policies and strategies to address production of goods at all scales. These Ecosystem Services that nature provides through agricultural and forestry pursuits have immense value in supporting healthy, thriving communities.

## Summary of Community Input

The 2017 Agriculture Conservation Plan is building upon the public input received during the preparation of Plan 2035 which envisions a shift away from large-lot residential subdivisions to focused development in areas where the necessary public infrastructure already exists (designated Downtowns, Regional Transit Districts, the Innovation Corridor, and Local Centers). The 2012 PPA Plan built upon the community input of a variety of ongoing discussions at the time regarding preservation of rural and agricultural land. The resulting plan in 2012 contained strategies that were focused on rural-scale agriculture and land conservation. The 2017 ACP addresses all scales of agriculture and forestry operations to support healthy communities.

As noted in Section I: Overview, the public input process consisted of three community input sessions where participants were asked what they wanted to see more of and less of in the three subject areas covered in the plan: green infrastructure, agriculture, and rural character. These sessions were followed by an open forum where a summary of the input to-date was provided and an opportunity to comment on draft maps. An input session was also held to focus on the issues of interest to municipalities.

The issues of interest to the most participants relevant to the ACP included:

- Provide a more systematic approach to supporting local agriculture at all scales and ensure consistent annual funding.
- Identify, preserve, and make available parcels suitable for urban agriculture, with a focus on communities most in need.
- Support smaller enterprises that are not eligible for programs that have large acreage requirements.
- Ensure the new Zoning Ordinance provides for a wide variety of uses.
- Encourage privately owned conservation easements and other land conservation methods.

During the development of the Resource Conservation Plan (RCP), public agencies came together to discuss the plan contents and future implementation. Each agency saw how their work was reflected in the plan and sought ways to participate in its implementation. Moving forward, just as the implementation of Plan 2035 will involve the coordinated efforts of everyone, so must the RCP seek to involve public agencies and nonprofits, places of worship and educational institutions, and businesses and volunteers in its implementation. The ACP implementation is especially dependent upon agencies and nonprofits with limited funding who support the agricultural economy. To continue progress in this area, one element that is missing is a dedicated funding source for personnel and programs.

For a summary of the public input provided for all three elements of the RCP, refer to Section I: Overview. Full summaries of all of the public input sessions are available in the RCP Technical Summary.

### **State Planning Mandates**

There are two areas where the Maryland Department of Planning helps to guide agricultural land conservation and support sustainable growth patterns. This plan addresses the requirements of both sets of state legislation and provides policies and strategies to ensure continued implementation into the future.

#### ***Priority Preservation Area***

The State of Maryland requires the preparation of a PPA Plan to identify lands with agricultural and forestry uses and to ensure their conservation and continuation (see HB 2 (2006), Section 3.05(a)(6)(ii)(8) of Article 66B of the Maryland Annotated Code, and in accordance with Section 2-518 of the Agriculture Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland).



The following vision adopted as part of the Senate Bill 273 2009 is also supported by the PPA designation and related policies and strategies:

- Ensure quality of life and sustainability.
- Concentrate growth in existing population and business centers.
- Improve environmental protection.
- Improve resource conservation.

The certification of Prince George’s County’s agriculture program in February 2014 by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) reflects the County’s commitment to agriculture as a viable, long-term, and necessary element of our economy.

### ***Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act***

The ACP also maintains compliance with the 2012 SGA, which limits the use of septic systems on large-lot residential development in order to reduce nitrogen pollution flowing into local rivers and streams and the Chesapeake Bay. On November 20, 2012, the County Council approved the first SGA map that shows four tiers (see text box).

As a result of this state legislation, major subdivisions (more than seven lots) are prohibited where public water and sewer is not available and where septic systems are utilized. Within the Rural and Agricultural Area (RAA) there are two SGA Tier designations, Tiers III and IV. As allowed by the SGA legislation, within Tier IV the definition of a Minor Subdivision is seven lots.

#### **Sustainable Growth Act Tiers**

**Tier I:** Public sewer approved (sewer categories 3 and 4).

**Tier II:** Public sewer planned (sewer category 5).

**Tier III:** Major subdivisions allowed on septic (sewer category 6).

**Tier IV:** Minor subdivisions allowed on septic (sewer category 6).

## **PLAN GOALS**

The goals of the 2017 Agriculture Conservation Plan are to support the desired development pattern of Plan 2035 by:

- Preserving, enhancing, and restoring priority agricultural lands and providing access to smaller parcels for farming countywide.
- Supporting an agriculture-based economy.
- Increasing opportunities and support for urban agriculture.
- Providing equitable access to healthy food options that support local growers.
- Improving overall human health.

The ACP provides guidance for decision-making at all levels of government, businesses, developers, nonprofits and associated organizations; provides the framework for conservation of agricultural land; and supports the creation of thriving, energy efficient communities. In summary, the ACP seeks to preserve and promote agriculture countywide by supporting all aspects of providing sustainable healthy food sources now and in the future.

## MEASUREABLE OBJECTIVES

The 2012 PPA Plan contains the state-mandated goal of preserving 80 percent of the County’s designated Priority Preservation Area as its expressed objective:

*“...to preserve 80 percent of the remaining undeveloped land within the priority preservation area while maintaining and enhancing agricultural and forestry production on already protected farm and forest lands.”*

The plan’s stated objective reaffirmed the 2002 General Plan objective to “protect a countywide average of 1,500 acres per year of agricultural, strategic forest, or other sensitive lands through the use of Rural Legacy Program, County-funded acquisitions, and other conservation programs.”

The goal and objective from the PPA Plan are being converted to measurable objectives in this plan so that they can be measured and reported on over time.

### **Objective One:**

*In 2035, we will have conserved an average of 1,500 acres of land countywide per year and, of this amount, an average of 20 acres of land will have been conserved for urban agriculture inside the growth boundary.*

Plan 2035, as well as the 2002 General Plan that came before it, contains an annual target for land conservation countywide of 1,500 acres per year. All types of land conservation programs are included in the total figure for this goal, as are the acres of woodlands preserved and planted as a result of implementation of the Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance. Between 2010 and 2015, the average acreage preserved annually was 1,638 acres, meeting the goal of 1,500 acres for the reporting period.

As shown in Table 3, between 2010 and 2015, the two County-driven programs are yielding approximately 85 percent of the total acreage of land preserved annually (HARPP is funded by the County and the woodland conservation acres are generated from a County ordinance). To meet state-mandated goals for land conservation, more assistance is needed to fund agricultural and land conservation at the local level.



**Table 3. Countywide Acres Preserved Through Land Conservation Programs and Regulations**

Method	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL	Percent of Total	Total To-date
HARPP	516	697	536	300	0	140	2,189	22	2,973
MALPF	511	0	170	0	163	109	953	10	1,651
MET	0	0	0	0	0	72.9	72.9	1	672
Rural Legacy	0	134	0	0	0	296	430	4	2,629
Program Open Space	54.7	0	0	0	0	0	54.7	1	8,654
WC (on-site)	552	842	613	1,189	1,612	467	5,275	53	21,263
WC (off-site)	15	212	54	220	241	241	983	10	9,701
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,594</b>	<b>1,866</b>	<b>1,373</b>	<b>1,709</b>	<b>2,016</b>	<b>1,253</b>	<b>9,958</b>		<b>45,543</b>

*Note: Acreage figures have been rounded to the nearest acre; woodland conservation acreages are subject to change in future years. Because of rounding the percentages, the total adds up to more than 100 percent.*

These programs are described in more detail starting on page 80.

**HARPP:** Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program.

**MALPF:** Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation.

**MET:** Maryland Environmental Trust.

**Rural Legacy:** A state program that provides funds for conservation of lands within a designated area.

**Program Open Space:** A state program that provides funds to counties for parks and open space.

**WC (on-site):** Designated areas of woodland conservation on an approved tree conservation plan that are within the boundaries of the development site that generated the requirement. Projects subject to the regulations that came into effect in 2010 are required to place conservation easements in the land records for on-site woodland conservation areas.

**WC (off-site):** Designated areas of woodland conservation that are outside the boundaries of the development site that generated the requirement on land that has conservation easements in the land records and is subject to the requirements of an approved tree conservation plan.

As demonstrated in Table 3, the target of an average of 1,500 acres of land conservation per year is currently being met; however, the types, needs, and availability of land moving forward are expected to shift. It is anticipated that fewer large farms will be available in the future for land conservation programs that have acreage limits such as MALPF and HARPP (50- and 35-acre minimums respectively). More support is needed to consistently fund both large-scale conservation programs in addition to providing assistance for smaller enterprises that are anticipated to form a growing percentage of the overall local food



suppliers over time. Large operations also need supporting infrastructure such as places to aggregate and process their products.

The goal of 20 acres within the growth boundary emphasizes the importance of urban agriculture endeavors on a smaller scale. Existing urban farms, community gardens, and school or institutional gardens have been identified, and these types of urban agriculture systems and many more can be replicated in places such as vacant lots and where other available acreage exists.

**Objective Two:**

*In 2035, we will have preserved 80 percent of the undeveloped land within the designated Priority Preservation Area.*

The Agricultural Stewardship Act of 2006 requires Maryland counties to preserve 80 percent of their designated Priority Preservation Area (PPA). Table 4 shows the calculation of 80 percent of the undeveloped land within the Priority Preservation Area, in order to determine the acreage goal for Objective Two.

The total acreage of the PPA (Line 1 in Table 4) represents the acreage in the 2012 PPA Plan minus properties removed from the PPA in 2014 as part of Plan 2035. This calculation does not include the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) or the Patuxent Research Refuge (PRR) properties. BARC and PRR are classified as institutional land uses, although they are primarily used for agricultural, natural resource, and wildlife habitat research. Any significant changes to the BARC properties require Congressional approval. The data in Table 4 include the PPA acreage in 2012 already protected plus properties preserved between February 28, 2011 and May 31, 2016. The acreages of developed and undeveloped properties (Lines 2 and 3 in Table 4) were also updated.

The remaining protection goal of 20,274 acres shown on Line 6 of Table 4 below was reduced from that reported in the 2012 PPA Plan primarily through an increase in Land Already Protected within the PPA. A small contributing factor to the reduction is the increase in acres identified as Developed as a result of an improved methodology for identifying developed properties and the removal of two properties from the PPA during the approval of Plan 2035.

This measurable objective will continue to be monitored and the supporting strategies will be tracked.

**Table 4. Priority Preservation Area Target Acreage Protection Goal**

(See descriptions of each line below the table.)

		2012	2016	Change
1	Priority Preservation Area	75,033	74,769	(-264)
2	Developed	17,258	18,238	980
3	Undeveloped (Line 1 minus Line 2)	57,775	56,531	(-1,244)
4	Target Acreage Protection Goal (80% x Line 3)	46,220	45,225	(-995)
5	Land Already Protected	21,451	24,779	3,328
6	Remaining Protection Goal (Line 4 minus Line 5)	24,769	20,446	(-4,323)

**Line 1:** Priority Preservation Area (total delineated area).

**Line 2:** Developed land has an improvement value greater than or equal to \$15,000 and is not within BARC or PRR; is not vacant; is not in an agricultural use. The amount of change detected is attributable primarily to a refinement in the methodology.

**Line 3:** Undeveloped is the acreage of land that does not meet the definition of Developed.

**Line 4:** Target Acreage Protection Goal is 80 percent of the Undeveloped acreage.

**Line 5:** Land Already Protected is land that is not included in the Protection Goal.

**Line 6:** Remaining Protection Goal is the result of subtracting out the Land Already Protected.

While the County has made significant progress toward meeting the state-mandated land preservation goal for the PPA, funding continues to be lacking within both state and County programs to meet these goals. The measurable objective of meeting the goal of preserving 80 percent of the undeveloped land within the PPA will continue to be monitored and the supporting strategies will be tracked.

### Objective Three:

*In 2035, the level of participation in our farm and forest conservation programs by owners of operations on 35 acres or less of land and participation by property owners of color has risen to at least 15 percent of the overall acreage preserved.*

Historically, agricultural uses have been conducted on a large scale with the associated need for large, expensive equipment. Farm preservation programs have targeted these larger farms as a strategy to preserve large landscapes and connect them to each other, keeping active farmland in production. Smaller farms supporting niche markets are on the rise. They support more manageable operations, require fewer inputs of infrastructure and equipment, and provide more opportunities for diverse crops. Between 2004 and 2015, only 3 out of 51 farms preserved during that time period were 35 acres or less in size (about 6 percent).

Few people of color have benefitted from the state and County land conservation programs to-date. To provide more equitable participation, marketing and mentoring are needed to assist people who want to pursue agriculturally based occupations. The primary points of contact for farmers are the Soil Conservation District and the University of Maryland Extension, Prince George's County Agriculture Specialist, both of which are in need of permanent funding sources to be able to continue to improve outreach efforts.

This measurable objective will continue to be monitored and the supporting strategies will be tracked.

### Purpose and Need for the Plan

The purpose of the Agriculture Conservation Plan is to update the vision and goals, objectives, policies, and strategies for agricultural and forestry uses and apply them countywide to ensure the future viability of urban and rural agricultural enterprises and support the County's certified agricultural preservation program. This can be accomplished by supporting the desired development pattern of Plan 2035 and by:

- Updating the 2012 *Priority Preservation Area Functional Master Plan* policies and strategies to address current issues.
- Amending the PPA and SGA designated boundaries to reflect previous approvals.
- Incorporating urban agriculture policies and strategies into a functional master plan, thus providing authority and guidance for implementation.
- Providing guidance for working with federal, state, and local agencies.

Part of the vision of Plan 2035 is to preserve all that we value. One of the three themes of the guiding principles stated in the plan is to “sustain our natural resources and rural areas by preserving our existing rural and agricultural communities, including our rural viewsheds, farmland, and the agricultural economy.” The Agriculture Conservation Plan expresses this and fulfills the plan's guiding principle to “protect and value our natural resources” including the conservation of agricultural forested lands and the programs needed to sustain these facets long-term.



## POLICY AREAS

### Conserving Agricultural and Forested Lands

Conserving agricultural and forested lands results in long-term benefits for all County residents and businesses. One of the tenets of Plan 2035 is to stop a growth pattern that has focused in the past on growing out onto forested properties or land used for agriculture. Its focus is to grow where public investments in infrastructure have already been made, and reduce pressures to build where precious agricultural and forestry resources occur. This shift in focus benefits all County residents and businesses because it results in fewer added costs to the government from maintaining new infrastructure—such as roads, schools, and police stations—in areas where few people live. Conserving agricultural and forested lands also results in health benefits such as cleaner air and sources of healthy food closer to home.

One of the trends in agriculture has been to produce food on smaller parcels, often in communities that are already built. Vacant lots and underutilized public spaces are ripe opportunities for creating food-related activities to strengthen and energize under-served communities. As the Agriculture Conservation Plan is implemented the broadening scope of agricultural uses must be considered.

#### *Land Conservation Programs and Funding*

Despite development pressures, population growth, and the consumption of previously undeveloped land over the last few decades, land has been preserved through a variety of conservation programs and through public ownership. Table 3 shows the acreages of land that have been permanently preserved countywide to-date using these methods. The programs noted in Table 3 are described below.

#### **Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program/Purchase of Development Rights**

The Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program and the Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program (HARPP) were both established to acquire conservation easements voluntarily offered by landowners, but they utilize different funding sources. To-date a separate purchase of development rights program has not been established; however, the HARPP program secured \$21 million in funding over a period of eight years. This funding has been used to fund the easement program and secure easements on 2,973.29 acres. This successful program does not currently have a secure source of annual funding. In order to continue to move forward, and continue to the success of HARPP, an annual, consistent funding source is needed.

#### **Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation**

The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) is one of the most successful agricultural land preservation foundations in the country. It functions within the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to purchase permanent agricultural preservation easements on productive farm and forest land that meet a specific set of criteria. Since 1977, the foundation has worked in every county, helping the State of Maryland to preserve in perpetuity over 290,000 acres on more than 2,000 farms, more

agricultural land than any other state in the country. Since 2004, Prince George's County has placed 1,651 acres under easement through MALPF. In 2010 alone, the MALPF program preserved 511 acres of the 1,594 acres preserved that year.

### **Maryland Environmental Trust**

The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), Maryland's statewide land trust and one of the oldest and most successful land trusts in the nation, is a not-for-profit corporation established in 1967 and designed to protect land from development. The MET has preserved approximately 919 acres in the County through protective easements and donated lands, and is dedicated to conserving and improving the aesthetic, scenic, health and welfare, and cultural qualities that are found in the natural environment. Through its training, technical assistance, administrative and project grants, the MET helps groups of interested citizens to form local land trusts. The MET and a local land trust may jointly hold conservation easements.

### **Rural Legacy Program**

Prince George's County participates in the Rural Legacy Program, which is a state program that provides the focus and funding necessary to protect large, contiguous tracts of land and other strategic areas from sprawl development and to enhance natural resource, agricultural, forestry, and environmental protection through cooperative efforts among state and local governments land trusts and willing property owners.

The goals of the Rural Legacy Program are to:

- Establish greenbelts of forests and farms around rural communities in order to preserve their cultural heritage and sense of place.
- Preserve critical habitat for native plant and wildlife species.
- Support natural resource economies such as farming, forestry, tourism, and outdoor recreation.
- Protect riparian forests, wetlands, and greenways to buffer the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries from pollution runoff.

Protection is provided through the acquisition of easements, purchases from willing landowners, the supporting activities of Rural Legacy Sponsors, and local governments. The Soil Conservation District took over the administration of this program in 2007.

The Patuxent River Rural Legacy Area, which stretches from the southern tip of the County along the eastern border north to US 50, includes the Patuxent River Park, Patuxent River Natural Resource Management Area, and the Merkle Wildlife Management Area at Jug Bay. Of the 34,984 acres in the Prince George's County Rural Legacy Area, 2,629 acres have been preserved (about 7.5 percent). Rural Legacy funding has waned recently for the County, which competes with other counties and private land trusts.



### **Program Open Space**

Established in 1969 by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Program Open Space (POS) is a nationally recognized program with two components—a local grant component for recreation land or open space areas, and a component that funds acquisition and recreation facility development by the State of Maryland. When a person buys a house or land, a percentage of the State Real Estate Transfer Tax goes into a special fund for POS. Program Open Space protected more than 352,000 acres of land statewide, and has preserved 8,654 acres in Prince George’s County. Regarding parks and open space acquisitions, the County expects to continue its long-term policy of acquiring land for recreation and natural resource protection as noted in Formula 2040. Throughout the County, DNR owns and manages 6,728 acres of state parks, state forests, natural resource management areas, heritage conservation fund sites, and natural areas.

In recent years POS dollars have been reapportioned and have become an increasingly unreliable source of funding for land conservation. More needs to be done at the local level to ensure that open space for active and passive recreation is available and accessible to the County’s growing population.

### **Woodland Conservation**

The acreages reported in Table 3 are a result of the implementation of the regulations on land development contained in the Maryland Forest Conservation Act. In the County the regulations are called the Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance (WCO) and can be found in Subtitle 25 of the County Code. The acreages reported in Table 3 for woodland conservation may change in the future if revisions are approved to tree conservation plans for previously reported projects.

On-site woodland conservation acres reported represent those areas planted or preserved on a development site in order to meet the requirements of the WCO. Woodland conservation on-site is credited at one acre of preservation or planting for one acre of requirement. Projects subject to the regulations that came into effect in 2010 are also required to place conservation easements over the woodland conservation areas used to meet the regulations.

If a project is unable to meet the woodland conservation requirements on-site, acreage credits can be purchased from an off-site woodland conservation bank. Banks are established using a conservation easement in the land records and an approved tree conservation plan. Woodland conservation off-site is credited at two acres of preservation required for each acre of requirement (as an incentive to preserve or plant on-site and to encourage planting off-site). If an off-site bank is planted with a new forest, the acreage can be used acre-for-acre to meet the requirement. Most woodland conservation banks encumber most of a forested parcel. To ensure future stewardship of the property, at least one acre of area is required to be kept free of the conservation easement for a future building site if a home does not already exist.

Woodland conservation banking supports agricultural land conservation by allowing properties whose main focus may be agriculture to place an easement over the wooded areas of the property to protect them in perpetuity. This allows property owners the opportunity to preserve the agricultural portion of their land using HARPP, MALPF or other mechanisms, and to preserve the forested areas on other portions of their property using the WCO off-site banking program.

For a robust conservation program, multiple sources of funding are needed from preservation programs that can address current and future trends. If most of the large parcels have been preserved, it would be prudent to have funding mechanisms that can address the needs of smaller parcels countywide, thus focusing on infill preservation, between and among already preserved parcels. To ensure that result, a targeted, annual funding source is needed to support innovative methods, including local food production in urban and rural settings. It is critical to work with federal, state, and local partners, including land trusts and nonprofits, especially when funding is limited, so that shared resources of time and money can be leveraged to the greatest benefit. Limited conservation dollars should be used to preserve as many acres as possible. Thus it is important to clarify the guidelines that allow multiple programs to be implemented on an eligible parcel, while remaining true to the conservation goal of preserving the maximum number of acres. In addition to strategic use of limited conservation dollars, when properties currently adjacent to, but outside of, the boundaries of the PPA receive conservation easements or some other form of preservation, they should be included in the PPA.

Determining the feasibility of easement programs and tools for small-scale agricultural enterprises is critical, so that local food security can be enhanced. Simultaneously, there is a need to minimize future development and address pipeline development in prime agricultural areas, and maximize it in areas planned for increased population density that can be served by existing and planned infrastructure. Other strategies to pursue include evaluating conservation subdivisions to discover their potential in rural communities for encouraging development of minor subdivisions that preserve greater percentages of land for agricultural endeavors, including equine-themed or community gardening amenities. The strategies under the Conservation of Agricultural and Forested Lands policy area also take into account restoring marginal agricultural and forested lands that have been abandoned or are underutilized, to increase the potential for viable enterprises on those sites.

While most of the preservation programs have a minimum acreage requirement of up to 50 acres, the ACP seeks to increase opportunities to support owners of smaller parcels (35 acres or less), and those owned by people of color who may not have benefitted from agricultural preservation programs in the past. This support is needed, especially with the popularity of urban agriculture as niche businesses such as small vineyards, cheese operations, or community supported agriculture (CSA) become more popular.

### ***Land Conservation Through State Programs and Legislation***

The 2012 PPA Plan has only been in place for a limited time, but the progress has been significant given the certification of the agriculture conservation program by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation in 2013 and other legislation that has been approved in recent years. The PPA boundaries are being amended as shown in Map 4 to address two technical corrections. There are no amendments to the PPA boundaries being proposed as a result of this plan. Map 5 shows the 2017 boundaries of the PPA.

The Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 (SGA) requires Maryland counties to designate and maintain four SGA tiers for the application of certain development restrictions. On November 20, 2012, the County Council approved the first SGA Tier Map. There are four technical corrections to the map that are being made in this plan. The technical corrections are shown on Map 6 and the final map is shown in Map 7.



### Map 4. Technical Corrections to the Priority Preservation Area for Prince George's County

#### 1. Sacred Heart Properties

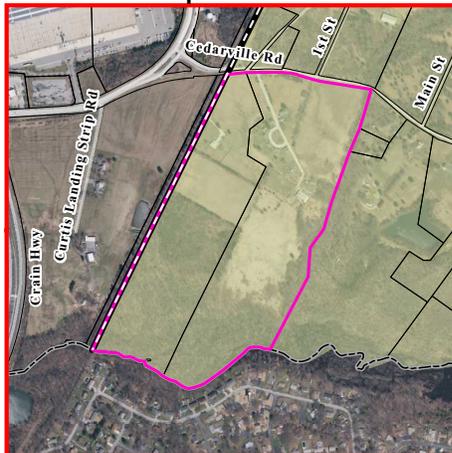


**2012 PPA Status:**  
In PPA

**2016 PPA Status:**  
Not in PPA

**2014 Plan Prince George's 2035:**  
Growth boundary expanded to include these properties.

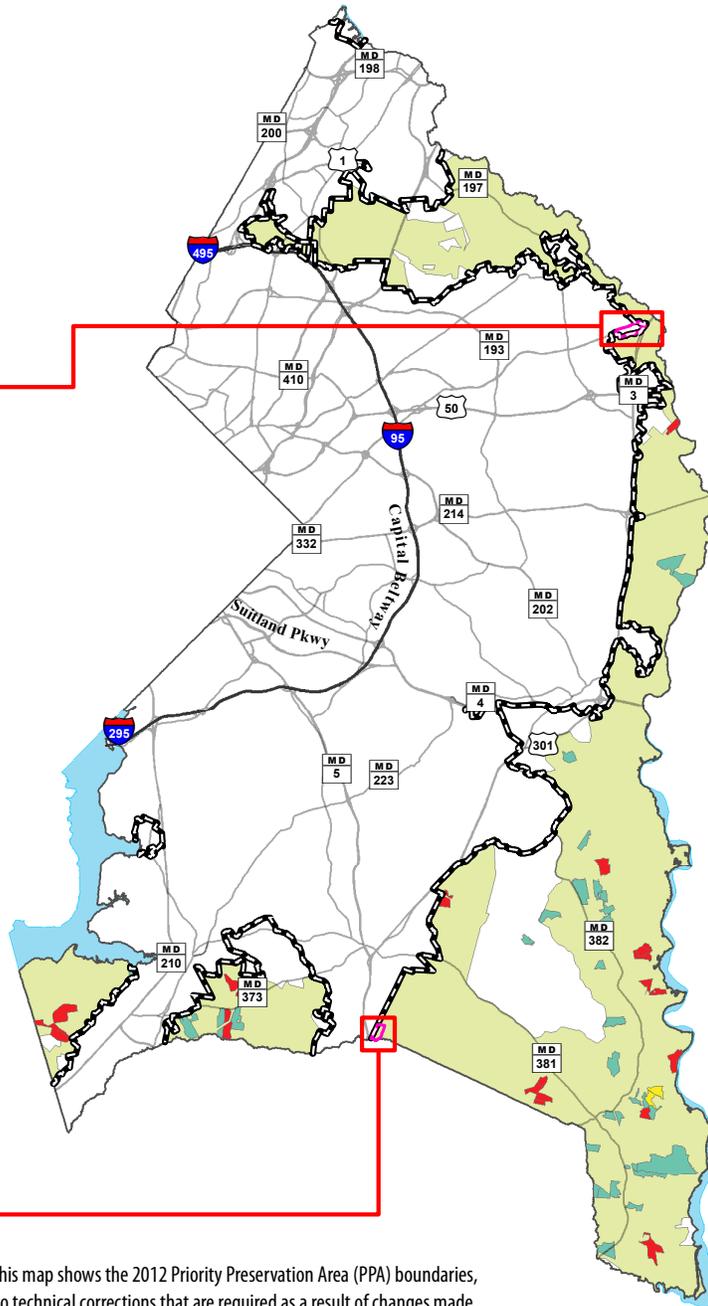
#### 2. James et al. Properties



**2012 PPA Status:**  
Not in PPA due to mapping error

**2013 Subregion 6 Plan:**  
Properties outside growth boundary; within PPA

**2016 PPA Status:**  
Properties continue to be in PPA



**Note:** This map shows the 2012 Priority Preservation Area (PPA) boundaries, with two technical corrections that are required as a result of changes made in other plans. None of the corrections proposed result from the preparation of the Resource Conservation Plan.

#### Preserved Farm Program

Historic Agriculture Resource Preservation Program

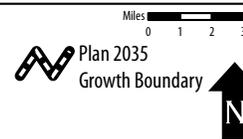
Rural Legacy

Priority Preservation Area

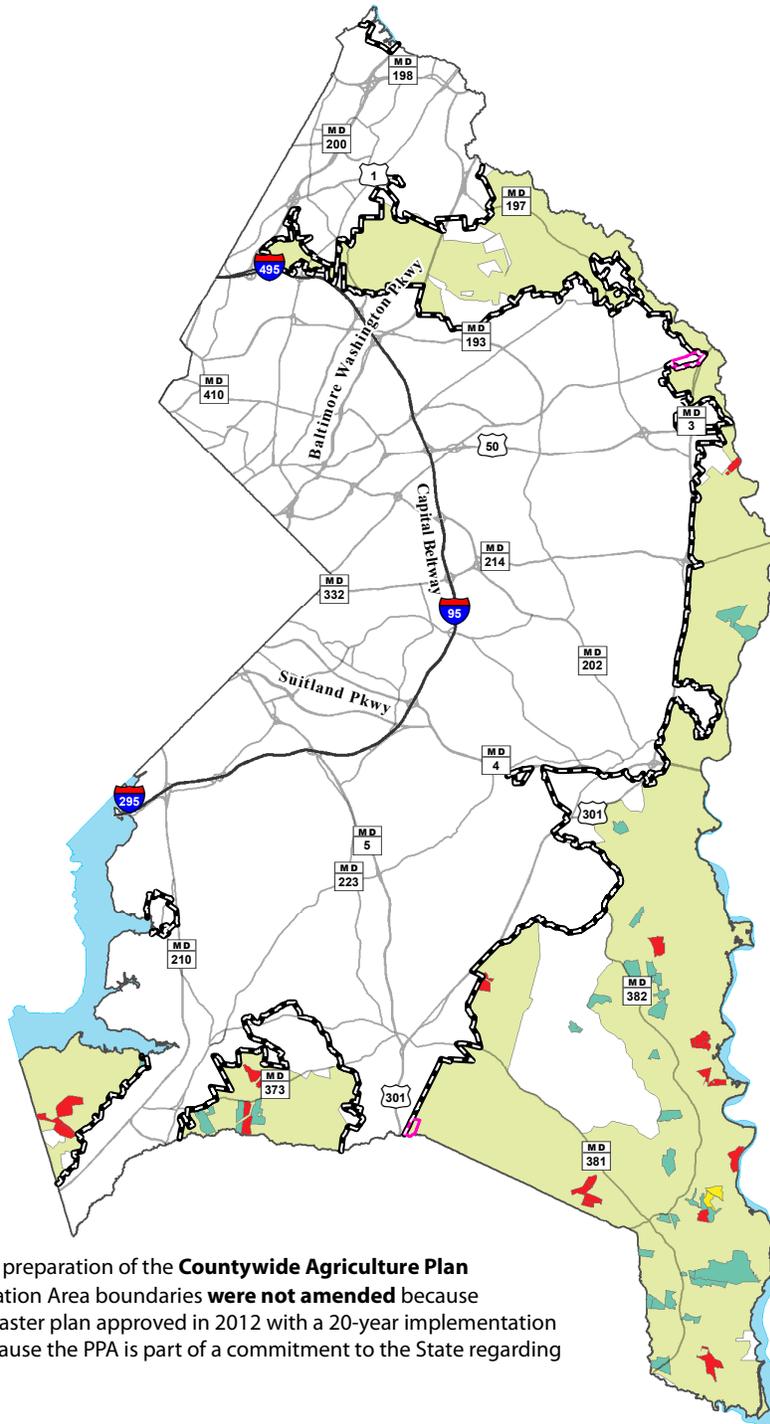
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

Maryland Department of Planning Maryland Environmental Trust Easement

Property Subject to Correction



Map 5. 2017 Priority Preservation Area for Prince George's County



Note: As part of the preparation of the **Countywide Agriculture Plan** the Priority Preservation Area boundaries **were not amended** because they are part of a master plan approved in 2012 with a 20-year implementation timeframe, and because the PPA is part of a commitment to the State regarding designated areas.

**Legend**

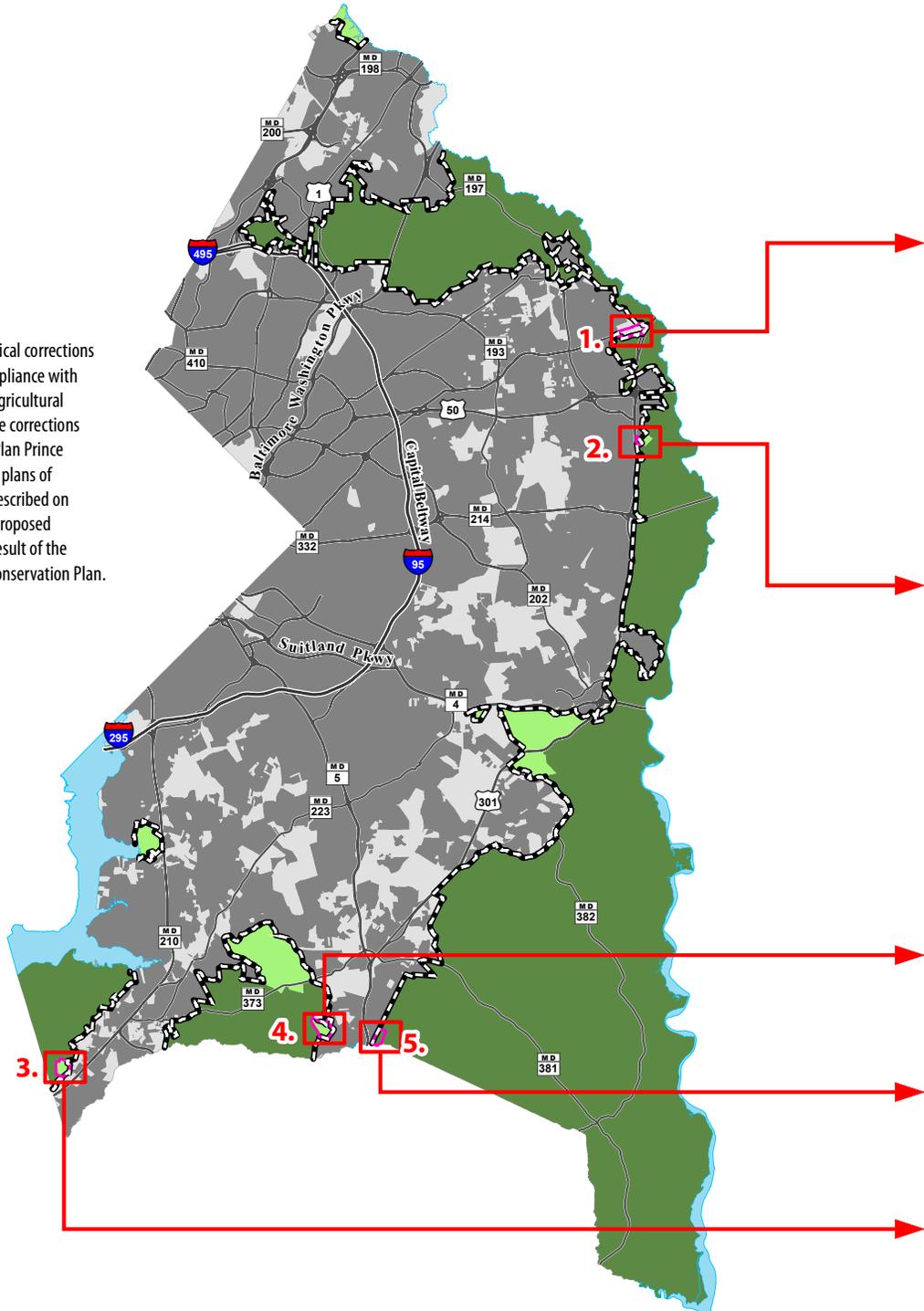
- Historic Agriculture Resource Preservation Program
    - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation
  - Rural Legacy
    - Maryland Department of Planning Maryland Environmental Trust Easement
  - Priority Preservation Area
    - Property Subject to Correction
- Miles 
0
1
2
3

Plan 2035 Growth Boundary

N

**Map 6. Technical Corrections to the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act Map for Prince George’s County**

This map highlights five technical corrections to the tiers established in compliance with the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act in 2012. These corrections result from changes made in Plan Prince George’s 2035 and the master plans of Subregions 5 and 6, and are described on the facing page. None of the proposed technical corrections are the result of the preparation of the Resource Conservation Plan.



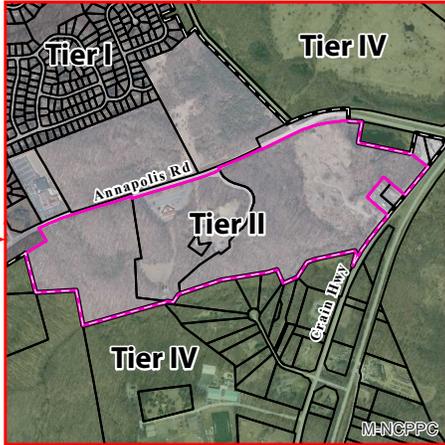
**SGA Tiers (2017)**

- Tier I (Sewer Categories 3 & 4)
- Tier III (Sewer Categories 6)
- Property Subject to Correction
- Tier II (Sewer Category 5)
- Tier IV (Sewer Categories 6)
- Plan 2035 Growth Boundary



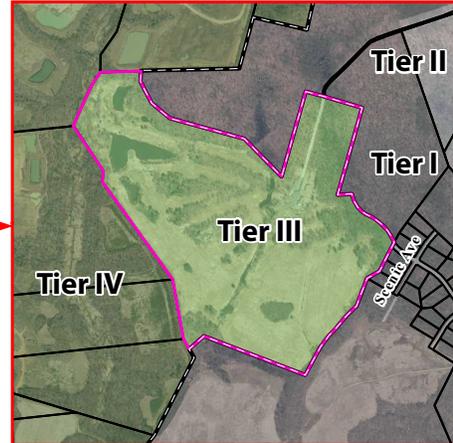
Map 7. Technical Corrections to the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act Map for Prince George's County (Continued)

1. Sacred Heart Properties



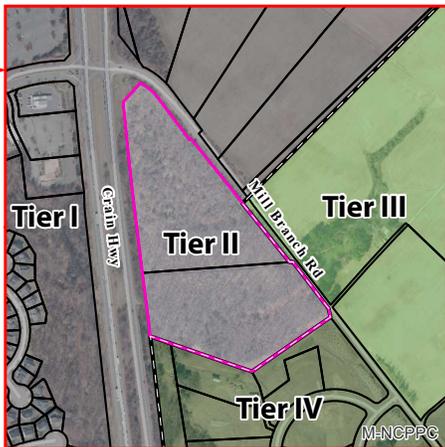
2012 SGA Tier: Tier III  
 2014 Plan Prince George's 2035: Growth boundary expanded to include these properties.  
 2017 SGA Tier: Tier II

4. Robin Dale Property



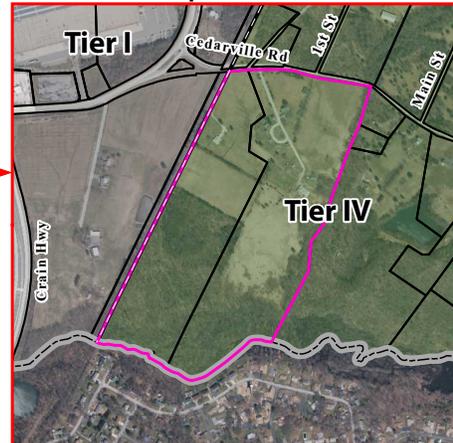
2009 Approved Subregion 5 Plan (later voided by court order): Property within growth boundary  
 2012 SGA Tier: Tier I  
 2013 Approved Subregion 5 Plan: Property outside growth boundary  
 2017 SGA Tier: Tier III

2. Storch Properties



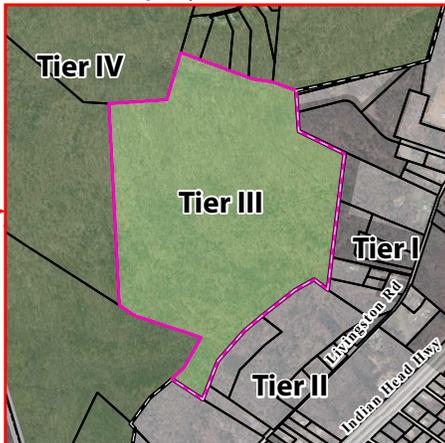
2012 SGA Tier: Tier III  
 2014 Plan Prince George's 2035: Growth boundary expanded to include these properties  
 2017 SGA Tier: Tier II

5. James et al. Properties



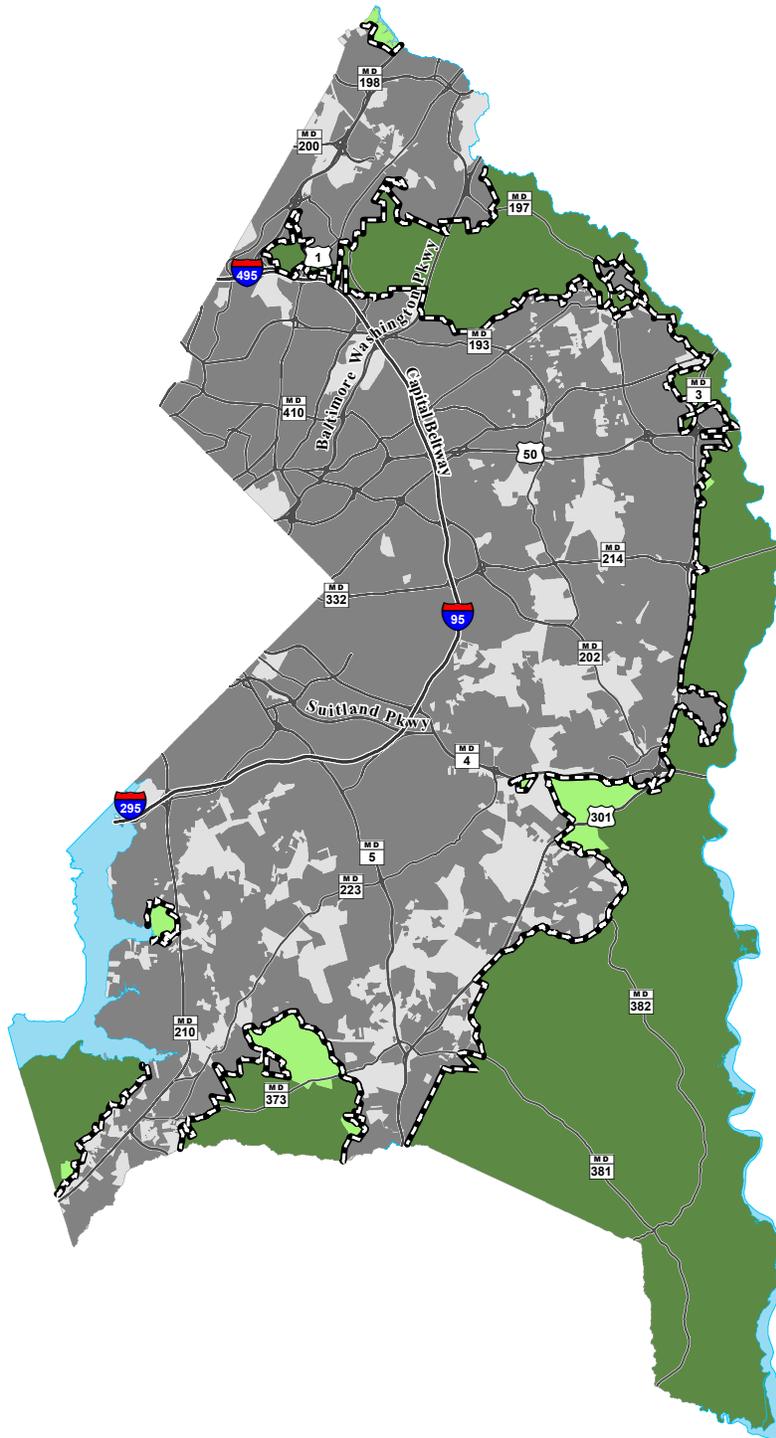
2009 Approved Subregion 6 Plan (later voided by court order): Property within growth boundary  
 2012 SGA Tier: Tier II  
 2013 Approved Subregion 6 Plan: Property outside growth boundary  
 2017 SGA Tier: Tier IV

3. Thomas Property



2009 Approved Subregion 5 Plan (later voided by court order): Property within growth boundary  
 2012 SGA Tier: Tier I  
 2013 Approved Subregion 5 Plan: Property outside growth boundary  
 2017 SGA Tier: Tier III

Map 8. 2017 Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act Map



**SGA Tiers (2017)**

-  Tier I (Sewer Categories 3 & 4)
-  Tier III (Sewer Categories 6)
-  Tier II (Sewer Category 5)
-  Tier IV (Sewer Categories 6)

 Plan 2035 Growth Boundary



## Promoting an Agriculturally Based Economy

In recent years there has been a concerted effort to define Agriculture and ensure that it is broad enough to encompass emerging markets and specific enough to ensure that adjacent properties are not adversely impacted. The current definition of Agriculture in the Zoning Ordinance provides a framework for the discussion of an agriculturally based economy:

“The business, science and art of cultivating and managing the soil, composting (to include the composting of regionally generated sewer sludge pursuant to a permit issued by the state), growing, harvesting, and selling crops, livestock and the products of forestry, horticulture, floriculture, viticulture, hydroponics, animal husbandry, i.e., breeding, raising, or managing livestock, including horses, poultry, fish, game, and fur-bearing animals, dairying, beekeeping and similar activities. Agriculture includes processing on the farm of an agricultural product in the course of preparing the product for market, which may cause a change in the natural form or state of the product. Agriculture includes equine activities and equine facilities. Equine activities includes teaching equestrian skills, participating in equestrian events, competitions, exhibitions or other displays of equestrian skills, and caring for, breeding, boarding, dealing, selling, renting, riding or training equines. Equine facilities include barns, stables, rings, paddocks or accessory buildings or structures used for equine activities. The term “Agriculture” shall not include the commercial feeding of garbage or offal to animals, the slaughtering of livestock for marketing (except otherwise permitted by law) or the disposal of sludge except for fertilization of crops, horticultural products, or floricultural products in connection with an active agricultural operation or home gardening.” (Subtitle 27-107.01(a)(9))

This definition is necessarily broad and also states the types of uses that are not considered agriculture. In the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations rewrite project, consideration should be given to keeping this definition, or one like it, to make clear what uses are and are not included. The description of the uses could be more broad, allowing for clarification as needed, and needs to consider urban agriculture both on individual properties and as a commercial enterprise.



Currently, the agriculture sector of the County’s economy is not linked to the economic development strategy promoted countywide. In order to compete with surrounding counties and sustain the agriculture economy, the County’s economic development framework needs to be engaged. Exploration of tax and other financial incentives is needed so that limited financial resources can be leveraged appropriately. New and expanding green markets need to be supported through a variety of tools such as incubators, grants, loans, and improving connections between producers and consumers.

Coordination is also needed between County agencies, agencies at all levels of government, and the business and nonprofit sectors to promote opportunities for

agriculturally based enterprises. The most critical position in this coordination is the Agricultural Market Specialist, currently funded year-to-year as a part-time position. The much-needed coordination of farm-related activities has occurred since 2009 and critical connections have been made that have resulted in many innovations and new programs. An annual, secure, and permanent funding source is needed for this position, or one like it, so that a full-time position can be created and even expanded into more people as the support for an agriculturally based economy increases in the future.

Promoting an agriculturally based economy also includes supporting various programs that can result in increased participation in this economic sector. Promoting forest stewardship and certification programs and the benefits of woodland conservation banking on private property can go a long way to assisting in meeting the preservation goals and reduce the pressure to use County, state, and federal funds to preserve critical lands.

Collaborating with economic development agencies and financial organizations in the County could make it easier for existing and new farmers to get information, technical assistance, and financial resources. Providing services to the farming community and responding to the needs in a convenient, one-stop format can facilitate expedited processes. This collaboration can ease the progress toward innovative technologies and forming profitable businesses in the agricultural economy that focus on the emerging technologies such as the biofuels industry or filling the need for renewable energy in the form of wind, biomass and solar enterprises. Innovative approaches to food security, such as farm-to-institution, farm-to-school, and farm-to-table programs, can flourish in Prince George's County, due in part to our proximity to a large and growing population base.

### Supporting Urban Agriculture

The policies and strategies under this policy area address the need to incorporate urban agriculture in land use planning and zoning, to increase awareness of and access to land suitable for urban agriculture uses and to collaborate with various County, state, and local agencies and institutions to support urban agriculture in its many forms. There needs to be an effort to identify land for potential urban agriculture enterprises in zones that are appropriate for such uses. Education is key, as well as developing an inventory of land that is appropriate for urban agriculture uses.

There is room for urban and suburban farming and before and during the process of establishing a priority preservation area, it has become clear that there is broad public interest in protecting agricultural enterprises inside the growth boundary of the County and wherever urban agricultural endeavors are appropriate. For example, establishing an urban agriculture incubator or establishing an educational farm on public land could be productive ways to inspire future generations of farmers to learn



about the industry and apply their special talents to excel in a field that contributes to a sustainable way of life. Supporting the existing programs, such as educational efforts of the University of Maryland Extension, maintaining funding for the County’s agricultural marketing specialist, and establishing a champion for urban agriculture in a new position or as a designated staff member with a County agency, can help expand the sources of locally grown, fresh foods. These efforts will contribute greatly to the overall health and well-being of Prince Georgians, who can improve their health greatly by adopting healthier eating habits and growing their own food.

Urban agriculture is an integral part of food system planning, thus fueling the launch of the Prince George’s County Food Equity Council (FEC), a local independent food policy council that aims to significantly improve public health and community well-being for all who live, work, study, worship, and play in the County. The FEC develops and supports policies, procedures, and initiatives designed to improve the local food system. By strengthening the economic viability of local food production, processing, and distribution enterprises, particularly among communities that are not benefitting from the current food system, the FEC helps to address food security issues uncovered in the 2015 study *Healthy Food for All Prince Georgians: An Assessment of Access to Healthy Food in Prince George’s County, MD*.

Creating awareness and taking active steps toward a thriving agricultural sector at all scales are important to ensuring future economic prosperity in Prince George’s County. The Agriculture Conservation Plan is a blueprint for supporting broad community efforts to create meaningful change in the local food system.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The following agriculture conservation policies and strategies provide the decision-making framework regarding agricultural and forestry land uses in the County. They are grouped by policy area and provide guidance for residents, nonprofits, businesses, and County agencies and commissions.

### **Conserving Agricultural and Forestry Lands**

#### **POLICY 1: Preserve, enhance, and where appropriate restore agricultural and forestry lands.**

- 1.1 Secure permanent and recurring County funding for land conservation programs that focus on the placement of conservation easements that support continued farming and forestry practices.
- 1.2 Increase the funding for a variety of programs to expeditiously preserve agricultural land and retain healthy forests, in private ownership, with preference being given to parcels that are adjacent to land that has already been preserved or adjacent to land that is eligible for preservation funds based on its characteristics.
- 1.3 Increase coordination with local land trusts and nonprofit organizations and support their roles in preserving land in the County.
- 1.4 Continue to update state certification of the agricultural land preservation program signifying the importance to the County of preserving high-value farm and forest land and supporting the agriculture industry.

- 1.5 Continue to allow multiple programs to preserve land on a single property, while ensuring that protections funded through separate programs do not overlap.
- 1.6 Continue to provide farming opportunities where appropriate on public land and seek additional options for public support of all scales of farming operations.
- 1.7 Restore where appropriate marginal agricultural and forested lands to improve productivity and economic viability.
- 1.8 Clarify the application processes for land preservation programs, coordinate the programs with each other, and coordinate and promote all the programs in a more efficient way.
- 1.9 Evaluate the feasibility of small-scale easements or other land acquisition programs as a method of securing land for urban, suburban, and rural food production.
- 1.10 Develop a work plan to provide complete information about agricultural and forestry preservation benefits, and to increase the participation of farm and forest landowners, with a focus on farms owned by people of color and those that are 35 acres or less in size.

**POLICY 2: Minimize development in areas of prime farm and forest acreage to preserve critical masses of the agricultural land base.**

- 2.1 Continue to implement, strengthen, and enforce the right-to-farm provisions in the County Code to demonstrate the County's commitment to an agriculturally based economy.
- 2.2 Evaluate the conservation subdivision regulations to determine if it is feasible to increase the amount of area required for conservation without affecting the allowable density.
- 2.3 Include non-PPA properties in the PPA if they contain productive soils, are within the Rural and Agricultural Area of the County and fill a gap between preserved properties.

**POLICY 3: Support preservation of 80 percent of the Priority Preservation Area.**

- 3.1 Seek available federal, state, local, and other sources of funding to preserve agricultural and forestry lands within the PPA.
- 3.2 Designate an annual, ongoing source of funding targeted for preservation of agricultural and forestry lands within the PPA, sufficient to preserve 80 percent of the PPA.
- 3.3 Continue to evaluate the policies and strategies of the Agriculture Conservation Plan that relate to the PPA every three years to allow regular opportunities to report on plan implementation.

**POLICY 4: Identify valuable mineral resources, seek methods to protect and manage access and reclaim these areas where possible for future farm or forest enterprises or agricultural support services.**

- 4.1 Enforce the reclamation requirements on sand and gravel mines including the implementation of the tree conservation plan, the grading permit and the restoration of the preserved topsoil.
- 4.2 Determine appropriate uses for previously mined lands including restoring the soil for agricultural purposes, forestry enterprises or other community or recreational uses.

- 4.3 Revise the Environmental Impact Report process to require applicants to provide the report and all required information regarding potential impacts of mining applications.

***Promoting an Agriculture-based Economy***

**POLICY 5: Seek opportunities to increase the value of farm and forest lands.**

- 5.1 Allow a broad spectrum of new uses on agricultural and forested lands, as long as those uses continue to focus on agriculture and forestry or related uses and do not take existing agricultural or forested land out of production.
- 5.2 Revise the Zoning Ordinance to allow appropriate agricultural and forestry uses in appropriate zones.
- 5.3 Promote forest stewardship and certification programs, landowner cooperatives, tree planting, and other innovative practices to increase land values and minimize forest loss.
- 5.4 Promote woodland conservation banking as a way to preserve and connect valuable forest patches on private properties.
- 5.5 Continue to adjust fee-in-lieu amounts as needed to support woodland banking as the less expensive alternative for meeting the woodland requirements.
- 5.6 Continue to evaluate options for establishing a transfer of development rights (TDR) program as market conditions evolve in the future.
- 5.7 Continue to utilize various programs, policies and regulations, such as the Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance banking program, to encourage the protection of prime agricultural and forested lands, secure carbon credits, and maximize carbon sequestration where appropriate.
- 5.8 Consider County tax credits as incentives for the establishment of conservation easements.

**POLICY 6: Strengthen agriculture as a viable economic sector.**

- 6.1 Add the economic viability of farm and forest enterprises to the County’s overall economic development strategy.
- 6.2 Evaluate appropriate financial incentives and tax credits for agricultural enterprises.
- 6.3 Complete efforts to create and launch a One-Stop Shop where farmers and producers can access services from the Soil Conservation District (SCD), University of Maryland Extension, and other local, state, and federal agencies that provide technical or regulating assistance.
- 6.4 Explore the viability of markets for bio-based renewable energy production, such as bio-energy and bio-based forest products such as fuelwood, timber, or pulpwood.
- 6.5 Develop grant and low-interest loan programs to support new and continuing agriculture enterprises, including both start-ups and maintenance and upgrades of existing operations.
- 6.6 Consider revising County procurement policies to require that County agencies give priority to County farmers.
- 6.7 Support farm-to-institution, farm-to-school, and farm-to-table programs, and connect farmers to schools, colleges, hospitals, and other institutions, and restaurants.

- 6.8 Promote and support direct marketing to consumers via farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), roadside stands, and on-farm sales and encourage creative ways to market locally grown foods.
- 6.9 Revise the Zoning Ordinance to allow food processing facilities and value-added activities in more zones.

**POLICY 7: Involve County and state agencies, municipalities, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations in the development of agricultural and forestry-related businesses.**

- 7.1 Continue and improve coordination between County agencies and all involved in the growing of healthy food.
- 7.2 Continue SCD coordination efforts of the federal and state activities with respect to best management practices, support services, and preservation activities with the various governmental entities and nonprofit organizations.
- 7.3 Secure permanent funding for the agricultural marketing specialist position in cooperation with the University of Maryland Extension.
- 7.4 Support the work of the Prince George’s County Food Equity Council and consider their policy recommendations.
- 7.5 Support the establishment of a food hub that includes agricultural distribution, processing, and support facilities, and a commercial kitchen. Partner with the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission and seek funding and technical assistance to support food hub development at the Cheltenham Warehouse Facility or other similar properties.
- 7.6 Collaborate with the Prince George’s County Economic Development Corporation and other business development entities to facilitate farmer training programs such as incubators, agricultural enterprise development and marketing, and connecting small food retailers with local produce providers.

***Supporting Urban Agriculture***

**POLICY 8: Include urban agriculture in land use planning and zoning.**

- 8.1 Evaluate opportunities for incorporating urban agriculture uses as land use plans are updated or created.
- 8.2 Consider setting aside land for community gardens and/or urban farms in all new development in residential, mixed-use, and comprehensive design zones.
- 8.3 Revise the Zoning Ordinance to:
  - a. Allow urban agriculture uses in all zones and in all growth policy areas, provided that different rules may apply to different types of agricultural and forestry uses in different zones.
  - b. Allow innovative urban agriculture practices such as rooftop farms and indoor warehouse farms where space exists or can be created.

**POLICY 9: Increase awareness of and access to land suitable for urban agriculture uses.**

- 9.1 Increase access to public land for urban agriculture uses.
- 9.2 Encourage edible landscaping in all projects, including in parks and along sidewalks, and other public rights-of-way, as well as on privately owned land. Future updates to the Landscape Manual should include a section on edible landscaping.
- 9.3 Create and maintain a publicly owned land inventory and identify land appropriate for a variety of urban agriculture uses.
- 9.4 Initiate a farmlink program for urban agriculture to connect farmers to property owners who want to sell or lease their land.
- 9.5 Create a vacant-lot cultivation program for abandoned properties in areas with limited access to healthy food.
- 9.6 Create a special urban agriculture easement program to preserve vacant or unused land for urban agriculture.
- 9.7 Encourage innovative designs to accommodate urban agriculture, including vertical farms and include growing food as part of multifunctional landscapes.

**POLICY 10: Involve County and state agencies, municipalities, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations in the development of urban agriculture.**

- 10.1 Establish a new position or designate a staff member within a County agency to act as an urban agriculture coordinator/food system coordinator and policy specialist to coordinate among local, state, and regional parties.
- 10.2 Support the programs and educational efforts of the University of Maryland Extension Service and partner with them on projects.
- 10.3 Build demonstration gardens for food production at government facilities and organize garden tours to educate the public.
- 10.4 Evaluate the feasibility of establishing more school gardens and an educational farm on public land.
- 10.5 Establish an urban agriculture incubator.
- 10.6 Consider the policy recommendations and implementation strategies provided in Urban Agriculture: A Tool for Creating Economic Development and Healthy Communities in Prince George's County, MD.



## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Documents Supporting the 2017 Agriculture Conservation Plan

This list contains the plans, studies, and documents that provided direction for the preparation of the 2017 Agriculture Conservation Plan.

Year	Document name	Document Summary
2002	<i>Approved General Plan</i>	Established the Rural Tier, now known as the Rural and Agricultural Area, with a vision for preserving agriculture, rural character, vistas, recreation, woodlands, and wildlife habitat. Set the goal of conserving an average of 1,500 acres of land per year.
2004	Southern Maryland Tobacco Barn Coalition (SMTBC)	The National Trust for Historic Preservation added the estimated 5,000 Tobacco Barns of Southern Maryland to America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in 2004. The SMTBC formed to support farmers' efforts to preserve and repurpose the barns. This intercounty coalition helped spark future preservation efforts and brought attention to the valuable cultural resources in Southern Maryland and Prince George's County. Participating counties included: Prince George's, St. Mary's, Anne Arundel, Calvert, and Charles.
2005	<i>Approved Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan</i>	Provided a countywide network of ecological lands that included working lands in rural areas. Policies and strategies support the appropriate use of natural resources.
2012	<i>Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act</i>	Also known as the SGA or SB 236, this statewide legislation required that localities designate septic tiers, or areas that either will or will not be allowed to connect to public sewer lines, in order to direct future development. The effect has been a reduction in development demand in portions of the RAA, indirectly preserving agricultural areas from development.
2012	<i>Priority Preservation Area Functional Master Plan</i>	Also known as the PPA, this plan fulfills the state requirement for each County to define a priority preservation area that supports profitable agricultural and forestry enterprises. Among the PPA recommendations are agricultural land preservation and minimization of development that could affect the viability of agriculture in the PPA. The County has since received certification by the Maryland Agricultural and Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), allowing many areas in the PPA to be preserved through MALPF funding and other programs. The PPA Plan helped lay the groundwork for minimizing the impacts of development in rural areas.

Year	Document name	Document Summary
2013	<i>Approved Subregion 5 Master Plan and Proposed Sectional Map Amendment</i>	The Subregion 5 Master Plan includes areas in the south and southwest of Prince George’s County. It outlines a vision for the Rural and Agricultural Area (RAA) that protects large amounts of land for environmental quality, recreation, agriculture, and preserving rural character and vistas. Recommendations for the RAA “...are intended to balance pressure for residential development and landowners’ equity with the desire to maintain rural character and sustainable natural environments.” Especially important are the Piscataway, Mattawoman, and Potomac watersheds, which are areas with significant environmental and historic value.
2013	<i>Approved Subregion 6 Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment</i>	Subregion 6 comprises the southeastern portion of the County, 70 percent of which is designated as being within the RAA. It is the largest contiguous rural area in the County. Subregion 6 Master Plan development policies echo those of the Subregion 5 Master Plan. They allow for limited residential development at low densities that can occur in ways that preserve rural character. These include employing conservation subdivision techniques and limiting the effects of lighting in rural areas. The plan also devotes a section to the subregion’s ample historic and cultural resources, which is aimed at protecting rural and historic character by safeguarding vernacular architecture and encouraging adaptive use of historic structures.
2014	<i>Plan Prince George’s 2035 Approved General Plan</i>	The most recent General Plan for the County specifically calls for implementation of the guidelines from the <i>Croom and Aquasco Scenic Byway Plan</i> and for the preservation of viewsheds and historic resources. It also establishes a growth policy that focuses on directing development to established communities, especially designated Local Centers and Regional Transit Districts, and away from rural areas.
Various dates	Prince George’s County Code	Sections of the County Code that address agriculture and forestry concerns include the Agriculture Ordinance in Subtitle 30, the Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance in Subtitle 25, and the Historic Preservation Ordinance in Subtitle 29.
Various dates	Prince George’s County Zoning Ordinance	The Zoning Ordinance applies countywide and contains the regulations that apply to land development in the various zoning categories. Recent efforts have updated the definition of agriculture to include more types of uses. The Zoning Ordinance is currently being rewritten.





## Appendix B: Methodology for Determining the Priority Preservation Area in Prince George's County

The methodology for determining the 2012 Priority Preservation Area (PPA) Plan's delineation of the PPA took into consideration state law and other criteria as noted below. The 2017 PPA boundaries were amended to reflect technical corrections required because of other plan approvals. The total acreage required to meet the 80 percent goal was amended to reflect the current acreages of developed and undeveloped land within the PPA as of May 2016. The identification of Developed properties was refined to insure a more accurate calculation. Refer to the ACP for more information regarding the acreages within the PPA in 2017.

When the PPA was created in 2012, the following methodology was used in its delineation:

Criteria for inclusion on the PPA is provided in HB 2, Section 3.05(a)(6)(ii)(8) of Article 66B of the Maryland Annotated Code, and in accordance with Section 2-518 of the Agriculture Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland which states that a PPA shall:

- Contain productive agricultural or forest soils; or be capable of supporting profitable agricultural and forestry enterprises where productive soils are lacking.
- Be governed by local policies that stabilize the agricultural and forest land base so that development does not convert or compromise agricultural or forest resources.
- Be large enough to support the kind of agricultural operations that the County seeks to preserve, as represented in its adopted comprehensive plan.
- Include the County's acreage goal for land to be preserved through easements, which shall be equal to at least 80 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the PPA, as calculated at the time of application for state certification.

Quality soils are important for determining the PPA, and a high priority is placed on the conservation, protection, and enhancement of soil, water, and other natural resources. In particular, it is critical to retain soil quality for agricultural uses, and not allow it to become depleted or eroded. Productive agricultural or forest soils were defined as being in the following categories based on the USDA soil layer (Class IV, Forest class soils, was based on the hardwood forest cover):

- Class I: Few limitations that restrict their use for agriculture.
- Class II: Moderate limitations for agriculture (reduce choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices).
- Class III: Severe limitations for agriculture (reduce choice of plants and/or require special conservation practices).
- Class IV: Very Severe Limitations for agriculture (reduce choice of plants and/or require very careful management).

The previously mentioned criteria set forth in HB 2 2006 were used to delineate the PPA. Other criteria used for determining the appropriateness of land for inclusion in the PPA, similar to the methodology used in Subregions 5 and 6, included:

### Primary Criteria

- Areas of Class I, II, and III agricultural soils.
- Land in the Rural and Agricultural Area.
- Agriculturally assessed properties for tax purposes.
- Areas in the zoning categories:
  - » R-A (Residential-Agricultural)
  - » R-O-S (Reserved Open Space)
  - » O-S (Open Space)
  - » R-E (Residential-Estate)
  - » R-R (Rural-Residential)
- Properties already permanently protected by MALPF, HARPP, or PDR preservation programs, Rural Legacy, Program Open Space, Maryland Environmental Trust.
- Land adjacent to areas already protected by HARPP, MALPF, and woodland conservation banks.
- Areas with parkland being farmed.
- Areas least compromised by development.
- Areas with forest resources, with special emphasis on existing or future potential hardwood resources.



### Supporting Criteria

- Areas within the green infrastructure network.
- Areas with mineral resources.
- Rational, simple boundaries following, where possible, natural features and roads rather than property lines.

### Definitions

The following definitions were used in the delineation of the PPA, distinguishing the categories of land that were considered in deriving the target acreage protection goal.

Agricultural Assessment: Land actively used for farm or agricultural purposes; Actively used means land that is actually and primarily used for a continuing farm or agricultural use; in addition, gross revenues derived from the agricultural activity are required to be \$2,500 or more.

Developed: Land that has an improvement value of \$15,000 or greater and is not within the BARC or the PRR; is not vacant; and is not in agricultural use. Calculation of this acreage by the Information Management Division is approximate and subject to change pending revisions of the land use layer and other datasets. The amount of change detected is attributable primarily to a refinement in the methodology.

Undeveloped: Land within the PPA that is not classified as Developed.

Total acreage protection goal: 80 percent of the undeveloped land in the PPA.

Permanently Preserved: Has a perpetual conservation or open space easement, or fee simple ownership, held by a federal, state or local government or nonprofit organization for natural resource, forestry, agriculture, wildlife, recreation, historic, cultural or open space use, or to sustain water quality and living resource values. Woodland conservation banking sites are considered permanently preserved and protected and, if relocated, incur a substantial penalty in increased acreage. The net tract area of established woodland conservation banks was used in this calculation.

Protected: For the PPA, same as permanently preserved.

Remaining protection goal: the difference between the 80 percent total acreage protection goal and the protected acres (subtracting protected acres); the remaining undeveloped land that is eligible for protection.

When doing this reporting in the future the table below should be used.

**Table X. Priority Preservation Area Target Acreage Protection Goal**  
(see descriptions of each line below the table)

		2017	20XX	Change
1	Priority Preservation Area			
2	Developed			
3	Undeveloped (Line 1 minus Line 2)			
4	Target Acreage Protection Goal (80% x Line 3)			
5	Land Already Protected			
6	Remaining Protection Goal (Line 4 minus Line 5)			

**Line 1:** Priority Preservation Area (total delineated area).

**Line 2:** Developed land has an improvement value greater than or equal to \$15,000 and is not within BARC or PRR; is not vacant; is not in an agricultural use.

**Line 3:** Undeveloped is the acreage of land that does not meet the definition of Developed.

**Line 4:** Target Acreage Protection Goal is 80 percent of the Undeveloped acreage.

**Line 5:** Land Already Protected is land that is not included in the Protection Goal.

