

Appendix C.

County Rural Protection Programs

Appendix C

County Rural Protection Programs

Anne Arundel County

MDP categorized the agricultural zone in Anne Arundel County to be “Moderately Protective”: 1dwelling unit per 20 acres (1:20), plus 1 for a remainder over 10 acres. Sites larger than 50 acres receive an extra 1:50, and 1 more for a remainder over 25 acres. This zoning took effect in 2006 and is much more protective than what it replaced: 1:20 with liberal family lot conveyances - even for subsequent owners—that raised the actual yield to approximately 1:8. Family conveyances comprised 55% of new lots approved in the RA zoned from 2000 through 2005.

Three designated conservation areas comprise almost 50% of the County. Development pressure is high. The County participates in MALPF and Rural Legacy, and runs its own PDR program. The Census of Agriculture shows a leveling off of the decline of land in farms between 1997 and 2002. Horticulture is strong, and the equine industry is growing. The County offers property tax credit on 10-year districts and easements, and agricultural business concerns are addressed by the County’s Economic Development Corporation.

Baltimore County

Baltimore County’s zoning is categorized by MDP as “Most Protective,” with agricultural land zoned 1:50 and much of the conservation zone 1:25. However, any parcel between 2 and 100 acres is allowed two lots, so many small parcels in the ag zone can be developed. Baltimore County has had the political will to downzone thousands of acres over the last decade from 1:5 to 1:50 or to the 1:25 conservation zone. The County has drawn an urban rural demarcation line (URDL), which has been rigorously protected. Inside the line (~1/3 of the County), urban services have been focused, maintained, and improved. In the rural areas (~2/3 of the County), a range of strong and effective rural protection tools have been employed with significant success. The County ranks 4th in the State in easement acquisitions—it is home to 5 Rural Legacy areas—has its own Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, a right to farm law, and a number of other farm assistance, forest protection, and rural protection measures.

Cecil County

Cecil’s rural zoning is categorized as “Moderately Protective”. In 2005 the County Commissioners rejected a proposal to downzone the Northern Agricultural Reserve (NAR) from 1:5 to 1:20 and in the Southern Agricultural Reserve (SAR) from 1:8 to 1:20. However, in 2006 the NAR was downzoned to 1:10 and the SAR to 1:20, in conjunction with the creation of a TDR program. Both take effect on January 1, 2007. (Sending densities in the NAR and SAR are 1:5 and 1:3, respectively.) Development pressure is high, and infrastructure in development zones has lagged behind demand. The County contains two Rural Legacy areas. A PDR program has been established but is not operating yet. The County has a right-to-farm law and offers property tax credits for easement. The County Office of Economic Development employs an agricultural coordinator.

Harford County

Harford’s rural zoning is categorized as “Least Protective: 1:10 plus family conveyances on each parcel for father, mother, brothers, sisters, sons, & daughters. There is no requirement that the family members actually take title to the lots before they can be transferred to a 3rd party.

The County contains two Rural Legacy areas, participates in MALPF, and runs the most effective local PDR program in Maryland. Development pressure, however, remains high. The County offers property tax credits on districts and easements, and there are two full-time positions in the Office of Economic Development to market local agriculture.

Howard County

Rural zoning in Howard County is categorized as “Least Protective”: 1:4.25, or 1:3 if clustered. Zoning allows on-site sales, agrotourism, value-added processing, horse breeding, horse riding. The County allows rural-to-rural transfers of development rights. The County participates in MALPF and runs its own PDR program, but both have been relatively inert in recent years. In 2006 the County raised the cap on local easements to \$40,000 per acre. Development pressure is extremely high, and the agricultural land base is severely fragmented. The County has an agricultural marketing program.

Montgomery County

Montgomery County’s rural areas are zoned as “Most Protective” 1:25. Its goal of protecting 70,000 acres of the 90,000-acre Agricultural Reserved should be achieved by 2010. The County’s TDR program is the most effective in the nation, and it runs its own PDR program as well as participating in MALPF and Rural Legacy. The agricultural land preservation program is part of the County’s Economic Development Office. The County offers property tax credits on land for donated conservation easements or conservation land owned by land trusts.

Prince George’s County

Rural zoning in Prince George’s County is categorized as “Least Protective”: 1:5 in the Open Space zone, 1:2 in the Residential Agricultural zone. Development pressure is high and the land base highly fragmented. The County started participating in MALPF just a few years ago, and relatively few acres have been preserved through that program and Rural Legacy. The County does not have its own PDR or TDR program. The *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* contains a farmland preservation acreage goal of 25,000 acres by 2022 (or about 1,500 per year from 2005-2020). The plan’s growth objective” is for just 1% of growth over the next 25 years to locate in the Rural Tier.” TDR and PDR programs are proposed.

TABLE of LAND PRES. and Ratio, tools to meet pressure

County	Acres Under Easement	Publicly-Owned Acres	Total Acres of Land Preserved	Ratio of Land Preserved to Land Developed (Statewide Ratio is 0.98)	Have Zoning & Other Tools Stabilized Land Use & Given Easements Time to Work?
Anne Arundel	13,646	21,677	35,323	0.32	No
Baltimore	41,828	32,647	74,475	0.49	Yes
Cecil	19,290	15,990	35,280	0.98	No
Harford	39,202	13,233	52,435	0.71	No
Howard	19,031	19,791	38,822	0.60	No
Montgomery	64,519	48,748	113,267	0.78	Yes
Prince George’s	1,723	52,450	54,174	0.42	No