

SECTION I:

Overview

This Technical Summary provides the research studies and analyses, and the web links to existing approved plans, that support the policies and strategies contained in the Resource Conservation Plan (RCP). They were completed over a period of several years leading up to the preparation of the RCP Preliminary Plan. Of particular interest are the analyses of the implementation of the policies and strategies of relevant master plans over the past 15 years.

All of these documents are or were available on the Prince George's County Planning Department's web page, PGPlanning.org.

SECTION II:

Public Input Summary

The Public Input Summary summarizes the five input sessions held from January through March of 2016.

Resource Conservation Plan For Prince George's County Summary of Community Input Sessions



County citizens and business owners gathered to provide input on the three elements of the Resource Conservation Plan (RCP) at five public input sessions held between January and May 2016:

- January 5, 2016
- January 6, 2016
- February 23, 2016
- March 30, 2016
- May 4, 2016

Community Input Sessions: In the first three sessions participants were provided an overview of the RCP and asked what they wanted to see “more of” and “less of” in the context of the plan’s three elements: green infrastructure, agriculture, and rural character. The comments have been summarized, grouped, and are provided below.

Open Forum: An Open Forum was held on March 30, 2016. Participants were given an opportunity to comment on the draft maps prepared for the plan and provide additional feedback on the results of the first three input sessions. The Open Forum results are provided on pages six, seven, and eight.

Municipal Forum: A Municipal Forum was held on May 4, 2016. This provided municipal representatives and citizens the opportunity to comment on the plan’s proposals. A presentation was given regarding how the plan fits with regional conservation efforts. Participants were asked how a countywide plan could best support their efforts at the local level. The Municipal Forum results are provided on pages eight and nine.

Results of Community Input Sessions

Green Infrastructure

Biological and Ecological Services:

- Acknowledge the importance of connecting wildlife corridors in urban areas to improve ecosystem services.
- Prioritize restoration and protection of green infrastructure inside the Beltway.
- Ensure larger riparian buffers.
- Restore and encourage pollinators.
- Identify a percentage goal for healthy County forest cover.
- Do not build “green stormwater infrastructure” in places that are forested (do not sacrifice forests for a stormwater management structure).
- Target forest conservation plantings to where they are needed most.
- Require that trees transplanted be native and conducive to habitat.
- Prioritize areas for preservation efforts/investments similar to General Plan focus on development.

- Track measurable objectives/ensure goals have measurable aspect.
- Evaluate status of gap and evaluation areas in the green infrastructure network.
- Improve water quality maps in Green Infrastructure Plan update.
- Understand the correlation between the amount of tree cover and water quality.
- Understand the causes of poor water quality along Patuxent River and other areas.
- Remove invasive plants.

Local, Regional and Inter-jurisdictional Coordination:

- Require the hubs and corridors and/or green infrastructure from neighboring jurisdictions and counties to be considered.
- Incorporate municipally-based green infrastructure plans and efforts.
- Identify specific goals for all development to result in net increase in ecosystem services (net positive result).
- Improve coordination between agencies and with citizenry.

Development Review Practices:

- Require developments to preserve/plant a greater percentage of trees on-site and/or within the same watershed.
- Keep the tree canopy in place.
- Grant fewer exemptions from the Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance requirements.
- Consider coastal and inland flooding when designing new projects and maintaining existing ones.
- Pay attention to aging grey infrastructure.
- Focus on specific/critical zones with specific impairments to have higher standards for development (example: green roof requirements where water quality is low).
- Practice better landscape management.
- Tighten water and sewer category change requirements.
- Use health impact assessment tool in land-use decisions.
- Exert stricter control over development/opening land before construction, such as by closing old permits/shortening the length of time they are valid.
- Improve grading practices.
- Account for groundwater and surface water removal.
- Reduce the amount of roads necessary in parks through better design.

Inspections/Enforcement:

- Monitor regulatory (conservation) easements.
- Inform people of the presence of regulatory (conservation) easements.
- Enhance enforcement by enabling citizens to bring violations to the County's attention through forming/allowing for third party/citizen inspection groups that can access development sites.

Zoning/Regulatory/Policy:

- Adopt restrictions on watering lawns from potable wells and the draw down level of aquifers.
- Adopt restrictions on fracking and other unsustainable energy sources.
- Revise parking standards to reduce impervious surfaces.

- Require Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) projects to meet environmental requirements.
- Consider making the Green Infrastructure network an overlay zone.
- Adopt stricter regulations on areas of highly erodible soils.
- Include solar in the definition of green infrastructure.
- Add policies at the County level to encourage solar power (large and small scale).
- Reduce solar setback requirements.

Incentives:

- More tax incentives for conservation in high-priority areas to restore/conservate more on-site.
- Work with farmers to protect larger tracts of land.
- Provide incentives for agricultural preservation so farmers do not have to sell their land to developers.

Agriculture

Rural Agricultural Preservation/Rural-Specific:

- Prohibit the use of public sewer within the Priority Preservation Areas.
- Preserve sites such as Glenn Dale Plant Introduction Station/Hospital, and private farms in that area.

Urban Agriculture/Urban-Specific:

- Support urban agriculture within the Beltway.
- Preserve and make available parcels suitable for urban agriculture in or near Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative (TNI) communities.
- Protect community gardens.
- Use green roofs as space for rooftop farming.

Local/Regional Coordination:

- Support food processing aggregation at agriculture research center or provide other locations for processing of agricultural products.
- Encourage privately-owned conservation easements.
- Create stronger partnerships with University of Maryland and other programs to investigate opportunities for urban agriculture.

Development Review Practices:

- Require developments to preserve/plant a greater percentage of trees to be preserved on-site.
- Sunset development plats on lots zoned for development, unless construction permits have been obtained.
- Use the health impact tool to consider health benefits of local agriculture.

Inspections/Enforcement:

- Provide more or better enforcement of maintenance of septic field/systems.
- Provide more enforcement of unauthorized tree cuttings (and greater fines).

Zoning/Regulatory/Policy:

- Preserve agricultural resources by changing the zoning of properties within the 2012 Priority Preservation Area to ensure ratio of septic to development stays adequately large.
- Provide more balance between canopy goals and farming (place more emphasis on farming).
- Make more public lands available for leasing for agriculture.
- Provide better protection of M-NCPPC-owned land that is being farmed (i.e., no more ball fields).
- Support backyard hens and beekeeping opportunities for individuals in neighborhoods and on larger farms.
- Provide the ability to connect agricultural fields via nonpublic roads (e.g., through park land).

Incentives:

- Provide a more systematic approach to supporting local agriculture businesses/cottage farming. It must be financially viable.
- Encourage the County's business operations (like school cafeterias) to first turn to products from County farms.
- Provide incentives—such as five acres of County-donated land to each municipality—to encourage urban agriculture.
- Allow for property tax abatement for land/building owners that lease space for urban agriculture ventures (refer to D.C. initiative).
- Support individuals, larger farms for community gardens through zoning and financial allocations and an inventory of potential sites.

Rural Character**Transportation Specific:**

- Provide special bike roadways and greater bike access and bike routes on existing roads and on other rights-of-way.
- Provide regulations for special roadways and protect viewsheds of scenic roadways.
- Lower posted speed limits.

Environmental-Specific and Parks/Trail-Specific:

- Ensure good wildlife habitat conditions such as wildlife crossing/underpasses and signage to alert drivers of wildlife.
- Provide biomass for birds.
- Map wildlife corridors.

- Provide meadows/grasslands.
- Promote the use/enjoyment of land, trails, and parks to increase number of people wanting to protect areas.
- Provide better access to trails.
- Ensure invasive species restrictions.
- Connect the Anacostia Heritage Trail to the Baltimore, Washington, and Annapolis Trail.

Agricultural-specific:

- Protect viewsheds of waterways, all historic structures, scenic byways, and cultural areas.
- Encourage agricultural tourism.

Local/Regional Coordination:

- Coordinate with our rural neighbors in Anne Arundel, Charles, Calvert, and Howard Counties.
- Coordinate with state trails and historic sites.

Development Review Practices:

- Protect viewsheds of scenic roadways.
- Require road and sewer maintenance by developers (for example: for 50 years or put money in a trust).
- Maintain current subdivision restrictions (must be conservation subdivision).
- Require greater adherence to dark skies guidelines.
- Provide better notification of the community of subdivisions and state projects.

Inspections/Enforcement:

- Provide more enforcement of land uses/businesses that are not following the rules.
- Provide greater enforcement and monitoring for carbon monoxide and other air pollutants.
- Improve roadway speed enforcement.

Zoning/Regulatory/Policy:

- Ensure improved preservation of public and private properties along/in the Rural and Agricultural Area (formerly known as the Rural Tier).
- Provide restrictions on dump truck traffic.
- Allow activities and uses such as bed and breakfasts, home businesses, “glamping” (glamorous camping), ecotourism, and value-added farming, flotillas, and marathons.
- Maintain or increase setback requirements for development along scenic roads.
- Maintain Rural and Agricultural Area (formerly known as the Rural Tier)—do not continue to shrink it.
- Allow for bike trails along utility rights-of-way.
- Include restrictions so that scenic and historic roads are maintained in their current configuration (not widened).

Incentives:

- Promote the use and enjoyment of historic sites, parks, trails, agricultural resources, and bikeways to increase number of people wanting to protect areas.
- Incentivize (young people) new farmers.
- Incentivize historic home renovation.

Results of the Open Forum

Comments received during the open forum are provided below. The dots indicate whether or not a participant marked it as being of high importance. Preference dots allocated to previous input session comments are also provided.

OPEN FORUM COMMENTS RECEIVED (3/30/16)	PREFERENCE
Consider addressing the causes of climate change/sea level rise/extreme weather events. Concerned about power plants constructed in the rural preservation areas and their long-term impact. Air quality should be included in this plan.	●
Consider looking into the aquifers to address water quality issues and concerns.	
Definitions are really important. Define urban agriculture. Have the impression that urban is inside the Beltway. Where does urban start and where does rural start?	●
Touch upon the differences between urban, suburban, and rural settings (comment in regards to agriculture).	● ● ●
Green infrastructure is shown as an element of, rather the basis for, all other plans.	
Would like to advance the concept of permaculture rather than only monoculture. How can these be constructed without so much need for additional external resources?	●
Consider incorporating permaculture into sustainability.	
Determine what considerations can be applied to the current barriers to increase food opportunities when looking from an agricultural or food production standpoint, what considerations.	
Controlled environment agriculture—current regulations have not considered soil-less and self-contained technologies.	
It is important to remediate landscapes. Should look into mycroremediation using fungi (oyster mushrooms, for example) when designing rain gardens and other green methods to help this effort after all of the cars have caused degradation.	
Soil fertility—we want to encourage it in urban areas, not just in rural. Richer soil retains and absorbs more water. Stormwater management plans do not capture this. We can ultimately study and include for regulatory improvements for stormwater retention.	● ● ●
For the woodland conservation ordinance, make sure that the process of evaluating sites does a good job of capturing all important elements and contributions (e.g., ensure the process captures trees smaller than champion trees that may be of significance).	●
For a property, partially in the CBCA, there should be a threshold where if over a certain percent of the property is in the CBCA, the entire property must meet CBCA requirements.	
Consider incorporating physical evaluations (field work) to confirm the green infrastructure network. At the least, this may be able to occur on the municipal level.	
Consider including a systemized approach of identifying the exact network rather than having to wait for parcels to come in for development review.	

OPEN FORUM COMMENTS RECEIVED (3/30/16)	PREFERENCE
Cheverly is an example of a municipality that is using a grounded approach to map the green infrastructure network. In most communities, there are some individuals who can help with network effort to create more fine-tuned maps (that are verified with field work).	
The green infrastructure network is missing an important element: the urban heat island effect is being studied, and we need to plan for addressing it. By increasing plant biodiversity, we will build more absorption.	●
Need to be aware of the timing of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite project and make sure the RCP comments are considered.	
Overindustrialization is a big threat to our rural character.	
Citizens are not adequately notified of state-approved projects (e.g., power plants). We lose out on the ability to comment. Suggest that the plan recommend that state-approved projects be required to follow the same public input procedures that local projects do.	
Require lands that have been used for sand, salt, and gravel mining to be restored to agricultural use or grasslands.	
The plan is a policy plan. Does it look toward changing some of the rules and regulations to support and strengthen them? (Answer was yes.)	

ABBREVIATED SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION COMMENTS: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	PREFERENCE
BIOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL SERVICES	
Acknowledge the importance of connecting wildlife corridors in urban areas to improve ecosystem services.	●
Prioritize restoration and protection of green infrastructure inside the Beltway.	●
Ensure larger riparian buffers.	●
Do not build “green stormwater infrastructure” in places that are forested (do not sacrifice forests for a stormwater management structure).	●
Require that trees transplanted be native and conducive to habitat.	●
Remove invasive plants.	
ZONING/REGULATORY/POLICY	
Adopt restrictions on fracking and other unsustainable energy sources.	●
Require WSSC projects to meet environmental requirements.	●
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PRACTICE	
Grant fewer exemptions from the Tree Canopy Coverage Ordinance requirements.	●

ABBREVIATED SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION COMMENTS: AGRICULTURE	PREFERENCE
URBAN AGRICULTURE/URBAN SPECIFIC	
Preserve and make available parcels suitable for urban agriculture in or near Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative (TNI) communities.	● ● ●
LOCAL/REGIONAL COORDINATION	
Support food processing aggregation at agriculture research center or provide other locations for processing of agricultural products.	●
Encourage privately-owned conservation easements.	●

INCENTIVES	
Provide a more systematic approach to supporting local agriculture businesses/cottage farming. It must be financially viable.	●
Support individuals, larger farms for community gardens through zoning and financial allocations and an inventory of potential sites.	● ●

ABBREVIATED SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION COMMENTS:	PREFERENCE
RURAL CHARACTER	
TRANSPORTATION SPECIFIC	
Provide regulations for special roadways and protect viewsheds of scenic roadways.	●
ENVIRONMENTAL AND PARKS/TRAIL SPECIFIC	
Ensure good wildlife habitat conditions such as wildlife crossing/underpasses and signage to alert drivers of wildlife.	●
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PRACTICES	
Maintain current subdivision restrictions (must be conservation subdivision).	●
INSPECTIONS/ENFORCEMENT	
Provide greater enforcement and monitoring for carbon monoxide and other air pollutants.	●
Improve roadway speed enforcement.	●
ZONING/REGULATORY/POLICY	
Ensure improved preservation of public and private properties along/in the Rural Tier.	●
Allow for bike trails along utility rights-of-way.	
INCENTIVES	
Promote the use and enjoyment of historic sites, parks, trails, agricultural resources, and bikeways to increase number of people wanting to protect areas.	●
Incentivize historic home renovation.	●

Results of the Municipal Forum

Participants used their knowledge of their neighborhood, their community, and the County to provide input on areas where there are challenges and where improvements could be made. Below is a summary of the comments provided.

General Comments:

- Incorporate language that recognizes that there may be the possibility of conflict between one set of planning element standards and another (e.g., green infrastructure versus agriculture).

Green Infrastructure:

- Incentivize making the three downtown areas identified in Plan 2035 attractive places so that there is less pressure to build in rural areas.
- Address ways to protect the natural areas from population pressures over the long-term. Examples include looking at sea level rise, wetland migration/something that is happening inland due to the changes, and connecting and preserving connections of ecological areas.

- Ensure wildlife is connected via waterways and corridors. That is something that does not get enough attention. Have to give wildlife a voice in this planning. Flora and fauna are absolutely necessary for each other.

Agriculture:

- No comments

Rural Character:

- Expand the Anacostia Heritage Area boundary.

Participants were asked: how can countywide conservation efforts support local and municipal conservation concerns? It was acknowledged in the discussion that it can be difficult to address site-specific concerns in a countywide plan. The group discussed the following options.

- When master and sector plans are prepared, more consideration should be given to the conservation priorities of municipalities and include them in planning efforts.
- Municipalities should continue to identify resources and areas that are priorities for conservation.
- Municipalities and planners should work together to address conservation concerns when possible during the land development process.