

# *Preserving Rural Character and Directing Growth to Designated Areas*

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## **Introduction**

The Calvert County Department of Community Planning & Building Department staff and the WSP|Parsons Brinckerhoff consultants are working on behalf of the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners to update the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

The intent of the Comprehensive Plan update is to ensure the visions for Calvert County are still valid, including the twin overarching visions of preserving the rural character while directing new growth to appropriate locations, along with the vision of building a strong local economy. The update will address the county's changing demographics and issues, including land use, environment, economy, housing, and transportation. In addition, the update will address new state land use requirements, including plan elements and the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act.

In the summer of 2016, informational meetings were held where the public could learn about the update process and share their ideas about the challenges facing Calvert County. In September and October four interactive workshops were held where citizens, staff, and the consultants discussed issues in small groups. The discussions at workshops helped set the stage for the current phase, discussing key issues that should be addressed in the updated Comprehensive Plan. Five workshops are being held in the winter and spring of 2017. Preserving Rural Character and Directing Growth to Designated Areas is the fourth in the series of issue papers and workshops.

For a history of Calvert County's planning efforts to preserve the rural character and to direct growth, see the appendix.

## **Current County Policies**

Calvert County has worked to preserve its rural character through a combination strategies intended to preserve agricultural, forest, and sensitive lands and to direct growth to suitable locations, promoting economic growth, and practicing stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land for over 30 years.

### **2010 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan**

The 2010 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan includes several visions, benchmarks, and strategies related to these ongoing goals. The visions were initially adopted in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, reaffirmed in the 2004 plan, and retained when the plan was amended in 2010.

### **Visions, Benchmarks and Objectives Related to Rural Preservation and Directing Growth:**

***Our landscape is dominated by forests and fields.*** Related benchmarks:

- At least 40,000 acres of farm and forestland are preserved.
- 90% of existing forest is retained.

**Our Town Centers are attractive, convenient, and interesting places to live, work and shop.** Related benchmarks:

- 35% of all new households are located in Town Centers or immediately around Town Centers.
- One ECTC [Employment Center/Town Center] office park is established in each election district by 2008.

**The Plan includes the following Land Use and Growth Management Objectives:**

- As an alternative to functioning primarily as a "bedroom community", adopt policies that will promote the county as a desirable location for high-technology industries, vacation destination, farming and aquaculture region, resource protection area (i.e., "greenbelt"), and retirement community.
- Manage the amount, location and rate of residential growth.
- Preserve the rural character of the county, its prime farmland, contiguous forests, historic resources, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Develop Town Centers as attractive, pleasant, and convenient places to live, work, and shop.
- Direct commercial and industrial uses to appropriate locations; provide necessary infrastructure.
- Direct residential growth to appropriate locations; ensure a wide range of housing opportunities for all incomes and ages; maintain and enhance the quality of residential communities.

### **Town Centers, Priority Funding Areas, and Priority Preservation Areas**

The 1983 Calvert County Comprehensive Plan called for the creation of Town Centers in order to accomplish several goals:

- Avoid scattered and/or strip commercial development along MD 2/4.
- Expand the choice of housing options by providing zoning and infrastructure for multifamily development, including low- and moderate-income and elderly housing.
- Reduce dependence on vehicles.
- Reduce growth within agricultural and forest areas.<sup>1</sup>

Town Centers are the county's primary designated growth areas, and they are also designated Priority Funding Areas.

Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) as defined by the Maryland Department of Planning are existing communities and places designated by local governments where they want state investment to support future growth or to maintain the character of the community.

In 2010, the county adopted amendments to the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and designated Priority Preservation Areas. This element was required in order for local jurisdictions to remain certified under Maryland's Agricultural Certification Program. The plan included the action to "Reserve the Farm and Forest District (Priority Preservation Areas) for farming and natural resource-related uses and direct residential growth away from these areas." (Action I-4, Page 6)

Priority Funding Areas, Priority Preservation Areas, and Town Centers are shown in Figure 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, Adopted 2004, Amended 2010, Page 7

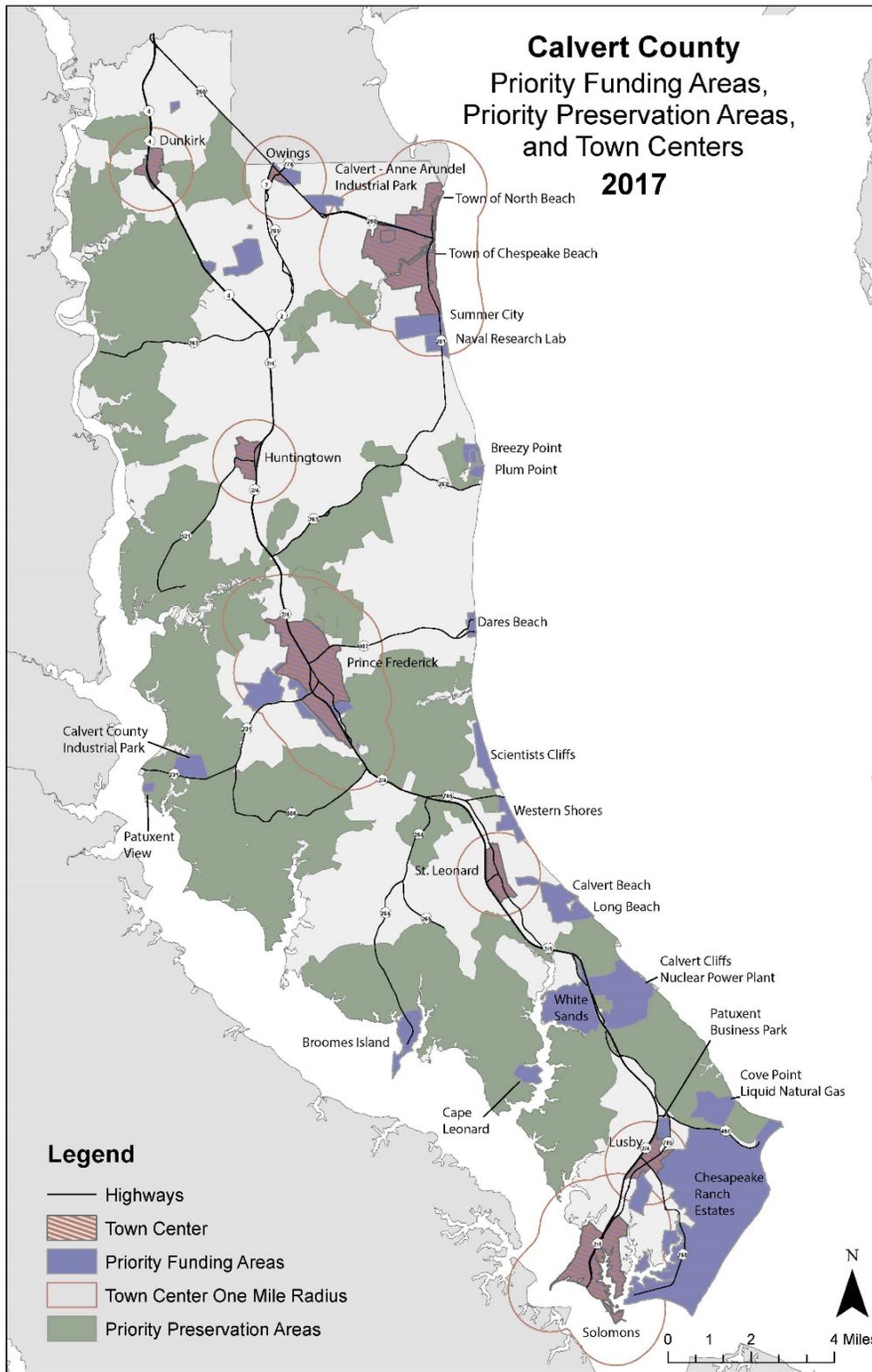


Figure 1 Calvert County Priority Funding Areas, Priority Preservation Areas, and Town Centers  
Source: Calvert County Department of Community Planning and Building

After the adoption the 1997 Comprehensive Plan that called for reducing the total build-out, the county adopted a program in 1999 to reduce the build-out that included a combination of zoning ordinance changes with new funding and new incentives for voluntary land preservation. The program set a target to reduce the build-out to 37,000 households, or approximately 100,000 people. This target required reducing the county's then-current growth rate, which was the highest of any county in the state. To meet the build-out target, the county adopted policies intended to slow residential growth and reduce overall housing potential. Additional build-out reductions were adopted in 2003. Figure 2 shows the projected growth in population and households included in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

Population & Households Projected in 2010 Comprehensive Plan <sup>2</sup>							
Year	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	Projected Build-out
Persons	20,682	34,638	51,372	74,563	90,700	96,000	100,000
Households	5,540	10,731	16,986	25,447	31,300	35,500	37,000
Persons Per Household	3.70	3.21	3.01	2.91	2.85	2.71	2.7

Figure 2 Total Population in Calvert County by Decades

Source: Calvert County Department of Community Planning and Building

### Recent and Projected Growth

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan policies has successfully reduced the county's growth rate, which has continually decreased since its peak in the 1970's. The growth rate is projected to continue to slow into the future (Figure 3 and Figure 4). As a result, Calvert County has gone from being the fastest growing county in Maryland to one of the slowest.

Total Population in Calvert County								
1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
9,528	10,484	12,100	15,826	20,682	34,638	51,372	74,563	88,737
Percent Change (By Decade)								
1930's	1940's	1950's	1960's	1970's	1980's	1990's	2000's	2010's
10.0%	15.4%	30.8%	30.7%	67.5%	48.3%	45.1%	19.0%	12.9% *

Figure 3 Total Population in Calvert County by Decades

Source: Maryland Department of Planning, 2014

\* Projected

Population Projections for Calvert County			
2015	2020	2030	2040
91,650	95,600	100,200	101,450
Percent change			
2010-2015	2015-2020	2020-2030	2030-2040
3.3%*	4.3%	4.8%	1.2%

Figure 4. Population Projections for Calvert County

<sup>2</sup> Comprehensive Plan, Calvert County, Maryland, 2010, page v.

Source: Maryland Department of Planning, 2014

\* Actual percent change

### Construction

In recent decades, Calvert County has constructed fewer residential units and fewer multi-unit residential buildings than surrounding counties. Housing construction in Charles and St. Mary’s counties has recently begun to increase while Calvert County’s construction has remained unchanged as shown in Figure 5.

The three Southern Maryland counties are constructing different types of housing. In Calvert County, almost all of the new residential construction has been single family homes. In comparison, Charles and St. Mary’s counties have developed more multi-unit housing structures.



Figure 5. Year to Year Residential Construction Permits Building and Total Housing Units

Source: U.S. Census

### Existing Residential Land Use

In Calvert County 20 percent of all residential development is inside the Town Centers or within their one mile radii. Figure 6 shows that residential development use is more scattered north of Prince Frederick, while residential development to the south is more concentrated, leaving larger areas with an open and rural character. Overall, 85 percent of the residential development in the county is categorized as low or very low density development (large lot single family housing).

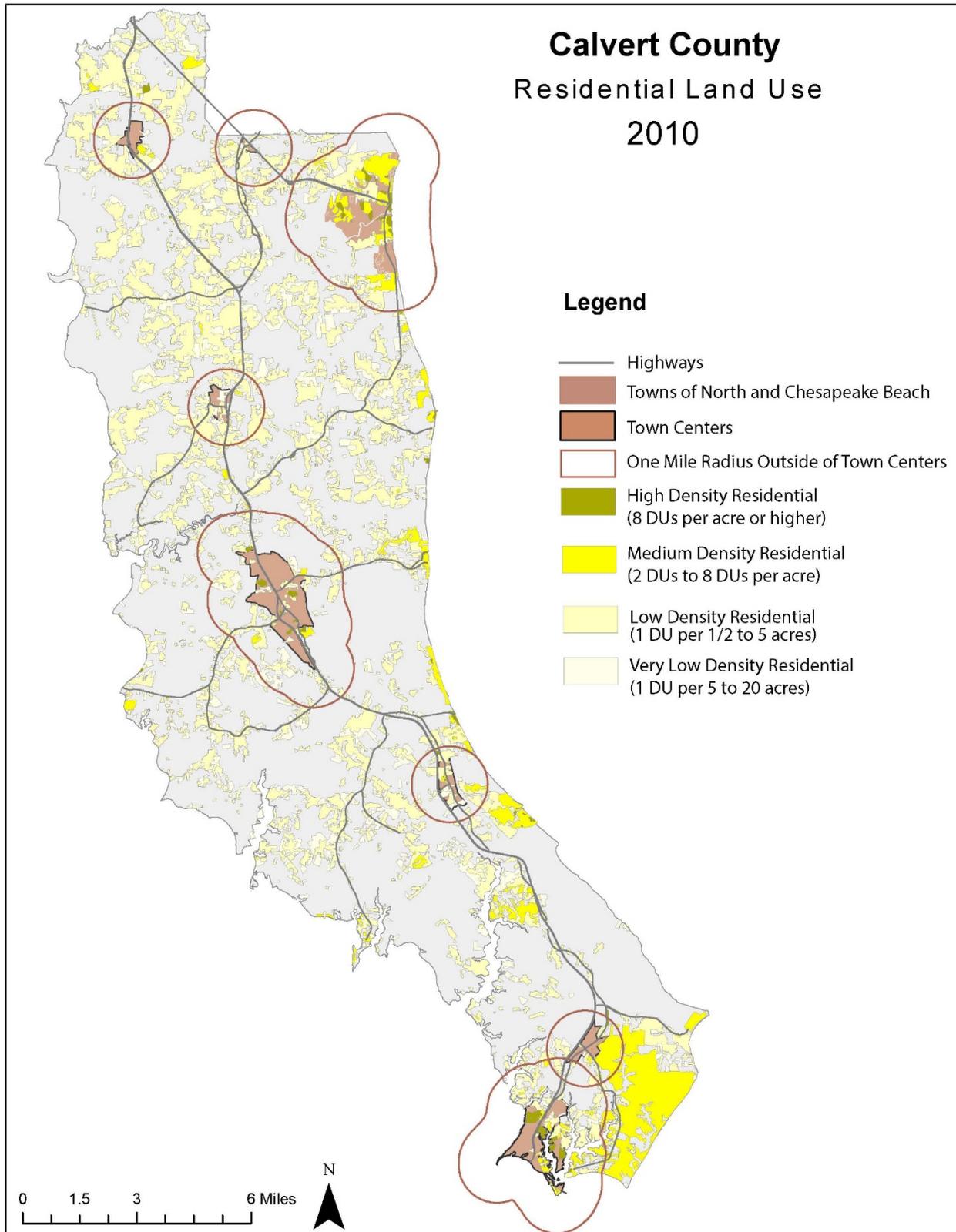


Figure 6. Residential Areas in Calvert County Map  
Source: Maryland Department of Planning

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan set a benchmark that 35 percent of new households locate in Town Centers or immediately around Town Centers. The county is achieving this goal. While the geographic areas of Town Centers and the one-mile radii are not exactly comparable to the Priority Funding Areas (PFAs), Figure 7 shows over the last five years, 41 percent of permits for new residential units have been constructed inside Priority Funding Areas.

**Percent of Residential Permits  
 (2010 to 2015)**

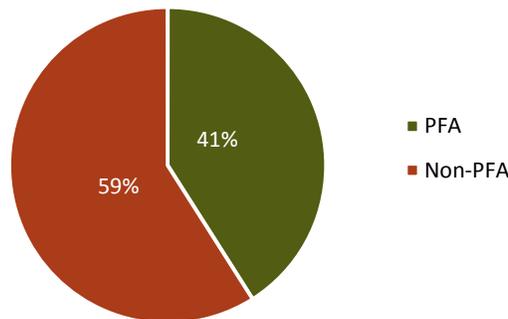


Figure 7. Percent of Residential Permits (PFA or Non-PFA)  
 Source: Calvert County Planning Commission Annual Reports

While this distribution of new households is consistent with the 2010 benchmark, it has not produced the development patterns envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan or by the Town Center Master Plans.

**Build-out Capacity Analysis**

The Maryland Department of Planning prepared a preliminary analysis of the build-out for the existing zoning pattern in Calvert County coupled with recent provisions in state law. The analysis projected that the current zoning can accommodate approximately 9,000 additional housing units, without the use of transferable development rights (TDRs) and approximately 15,000 additional housing units with the use of TDRs.

Year	2015	2020	2030	2040	Projected Buildout without TDRs	Projected Buildout with TDRs
Persons	91,650	95,600	100,200	101,450	108,000*	124,000*
Households	32,225	34,325	37,350	38,125	41,000	47,000
Persons Per Household	2.82	2.76	2.66	2.63	2.63*	2.63*

Figure 8. Projected Population and Households  
 Source: Maryland Department of Planning

\* Estimated based upon 2.63 Persons per household with no other considerations (vacancy rate, group quarters, etc.)

## Land Preservation Activities

Ever since the first Calvert County Comprehensive Plan was adopted, one of the county’s primary goals has been the preservation of its rural character. In 1978, the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board set a goal of preserving 20,000 acres. In 1997, Calvert County celebrated the enrollment of 20,000 acres of prime farm and forestland in County and State land preservation programs. A goal to preserve an additional 20,000 acres was adopted that year.

Calvert County uses several strategies to preserve agricultural, forest, and natural resource land. Almost 30,000 acres of land have been preserved through the combined efforts of state and local governments and land trusts.

Land in Preservation	Acres
County Agricultural Preservation Program	21,839
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)	4,542
Rural Legacy	1,636
Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)	713
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,730</b>

*Figure 9. Land in Preservation*

*Source: Calvert County Department of Community Planning and Building, March, 2017*

## Calvert County Agricultural Land Preservation Program

Calvert County adopted the first Transferable Development Rights program in the state in 1978. The county does not “acquire” easements but requires that covenants be recorded prior to the initial sale of developments rights. Property owners voluntarily apply for Agricultural Preservation District (APD) designation. The designation remains in effect for a minimum of five years.

Once the district is established, the owner may petition for the certification development rights, which can be sold to another party and transferred to a receiving area to increase the number of residential lots/units or to satisfy forest conservation requirements via a “forest” TDR. Owners of parcels of land enrolled in districts from which no development options have been conveyed may withdraw their land after five or more years by giving a one-month notice of such intent. There are three mechanisms for preserving properties in the county program: Transferable Development Rights (TDRs), Purchase and Retirement (PAR), and Leveraging and Retirement (LAR).

The County Department of Community Planning and Building estimates that there are approximately 9,500 TDRs currently certified and available for purchase and approximately another 3,000 TDRs that could be certified in APDs. In 2013 the county placed a moratorium on the creation of new APDs.

The market for TDRs has varied over time. Between 1978 and 2013, 14,442 TDRs were sold.

In 2013 a Calvert County Community Department Planning & Building review of the county’s TDR program concluded that TDR sales had averaged between 500 and 600 per year but that the Great Recession had a profound impact on the use of TDRs and “total sales went from 716 in 2003 to 72 in 2012....”<sup>3</sup> The same report recommends that the county purchase and retire about 200 TDRs per year while encouraging developer usage of approximately 300 TDRs per year.

By 2015, sales had rebounded, and 647 TDRs were sold for development. Zoning ordinance amendments adopted in November 2015 modify the TDR ratio in the Prince Frederick, Lusby, and

<sup>3</sup> *Proposal to Improve the Calvert County Land Preservation Program, 2013*

Solomons Town Centers, which have public water and sewer service. The changes are intended to increase the market for purchase and use of TDRs.

The most notable of the recent changes is that the number of TDRs required to increase density on a site varies based upon the location and the type of unit. Five TDRs are needed for each additional residential lot or dwelling unit in most areas of the county. In the Prince Frederick, Lusby, and Solomons Town Centers, three TDRs are required for additional small-lot single family dwellings, two TDRs for each attached dwelling, and one TDR for each apartment unit.

### **Purchase and Retirement (PAR) Program**

Currently the county has a Purchase and Retirement (PAR) Fund. Its purpose is to purchase and permanently remove (“retire”) development rights from the transferable development rights market. The development rights are retired rather than sold to transfer development elsewhere. Funding for the purchase of development rights has come from the agricultural land transfer tax, the recordation tax, local government funds, and matching funds from the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission and the Tobacco Buyout Fund. Owners may apply through PAR to sell a limited number of development rights from land in an Agricultural Preservation District. Owners of any APD from which no development rights have been sold to others may apply to sell additional development rights.

Since 1993 the County has purchased and retired 2,379 development rights through PAR at a total cost of \$9.7 million. The most recent data available is for 2015 when 265 development rights were purchased at a cost of \$993,750.

### **Leveraging and Retirement (LAR) Program**

The county also has a Leveraging and Retirement (LAR) Fund. The Leveraging Program is similar to the PAR Fund in that the Board of County Commissioners buys development rights from APD owners and permanently retires the development rights. The primary differences between the two programs include the amount of development rights that may be sold and the method of payment. The number of development rights that may be sold is not limited. The owner receives annual tax-free interest payments and a lump sum payment constituting the principal at the end of a 10, 15, or 20 year term. An installment purchase agreement is signed between the county and the seller.

Since the LAR Program began in 1999, the county has purchased and retired 2,597 development rights.

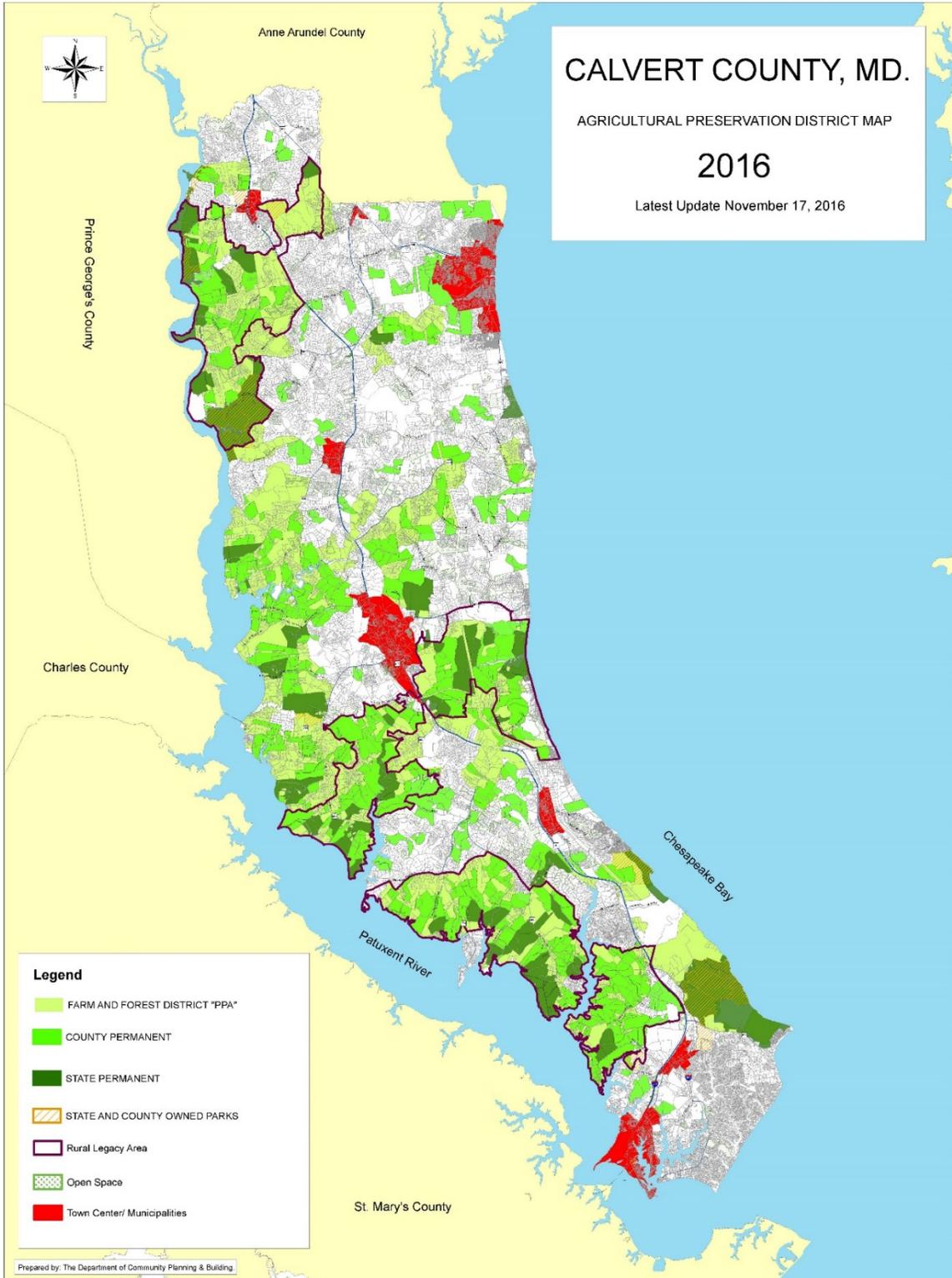


Figure 10 Calvert County, MD Agricultural Preservation District Map, 2016  
 Source: Calvert County Department of Community Planning and Building

## Community-Expressed Desired Outcomes

During public workshops, participants listed the following items as elements of Calvert's rural landscape and character: family farms; tobacco barns; beach communities; waterfront heritage; watermen; making a living from farming; forested and wooded areas; peace and quiet; Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River access; Calvert Cliffs; and the county's history, heritage, and historical sites.

The participants strongly support retaining the rural character of Calvert County. Some recommended connecting preserved properties together to create a more consistent, non-interrupted rural landscape. They believed that protecting the most productive farms should be the preservation priority.

Participants recognized that there is value in maintaining sensitive natural areas. It was noted that a rural lifestyle can be more expensive in both personal and government costs. Participants recognized the potential conflict between the preservation of rural character and continued economic growth and wondered how farm and forest could be saved while still maintaining economic viability.

Part of the discussion about preserving Calvert's rural character included the desire to make the Town Centers more attractive for development. Town Centers should be attractive so that individuals would want to live and shop there and businesses would want to locate there. Many participants said that infrastructure was needed to develop the Town Centers as dense and walkable. Participants said that additional Town Centers should not be designated until the existing Town Center areas are filled in. It was suggested that Town Centers not straddle MD 2/4 because it limits their walkability and accessibility.

Some participants thought that it was important to encourage the younger generation to stay. These citizens promoted affordable housing and a variety of housing types to keep young adults and households in the county. Others thought it was acceptable for young adults to leave during their early working years and return when they are able to afford market rate housing in the county.

Discussions about the TDR program focused on concern that it has slowed down and whether there is a need to re-incentivize it. Some participants felt that there are limited areas to sell TDRs, making it difficult for land owners who want to preserve their property. Some participants thought that requiring the purchase of TDRs to increase residential development raises the cost of housing, making it unaffordable.

Participants suggested that regulations be changed and incentives provided (infrastructure such as roads and sewer) so that developers build within the Town Centers rather than in the rural landscape. That is, make it easier for them to build what the County wants and where the county wants it built.

## Possible Strategies

### Directing Growth into Designated Areas

For over forty years, Calvert County has had policies to preserve its rural character by direct growth away from the rural areas. Existing policies to direct future growth to designated growth areas could be strengthened and new ones adopted. This section outlines possible strategies to consider for directing development and establishing clear boundaries between rural and developed areas. These strategies could encourage development in the designated areas, restrict development in rural areas, and buffer rural areas from growth areas in order to limit scattered residential development.

### Define Growth Boundaries More Clearly

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan designates Town Centers and their one-mile radius as growth areas. In practice there is little visible distinction between the designated growth areas and the surrounding rural

land. Better defining the limits of the growth areas through zoning designations, site selection for public buildings, utility extension policy, and road construction standards could create a greater sense of difference between areas proposed for development and those intended for preservation and protection.

#### Redefine Growth Areas around Designated Town Centers

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan defines a one-mile radius around each Town Center as a location for additional growth, limited primarily to single-family detached homes on private well and septic systems. These boundaries could be better defined based upon existing land use patterns, the size of the core community, the roadway network, utility extension policies, preservation priorities and environmental constraints. Redefining these boundaries would make future development in these locations more predictable and better identified with the associated Town Center. If the place-type Village is adopted in the Comprehensive Plan update, define growth areas for them.

#### Use Wastewater Infrastructure to Direct Development

Encouraging investment in sewer service inside Town Centers would allow the construction of new housing types and, possibly, more affordable housing that would better serve the needs of young and senior adults. The areas with existing capacity could be prioritized to support additional growth. This strategy can be effective at accommodating new development within existing systems and could increase the use of TDRs.

#### Create Appropriate Densities in the Town Centers

A strong course of action would be to require minimum densities in areas designated for growth where public water and sewer are available. This strategy could encourage development at the higher densities preferred in Town Centers.

#### Permit Increases in Commercial Intensity through the Use of TDRs

Allowing construction of larger or taller commercial structures if the developer uses TDRs would encourage the protection of rural land as a trade-off for more intense development.

#### Cluster Development to Transition from Town to Countryside

Clustering new lots created on parcels at the periphery of the Town Centers could help establish a clear distinction between growth and rural areas. Clustering would allow the property owner to concentrate development on one part of a site, the part nearest to the Town Center or Village (if Villages are adopted in the updated Comprehensive Plan). When the owner permanently restricts the rest of the property to open space or farmland, it contributes to the visual boundary at the edge of the growth area.

### **Preserving Rural Character**

Rural preservation strategies can protect the rural landscape, give preference to active agricultural operations and provide predictability for residents and landowners. The following strategies can be continued or initiated.

#### Continue to Fund the Purchase and Retirement (PAR) Program

Funding and pursuing the purchase and retirement of development rights in locations where there are active farms or in locations with particular value as open space would advance a number of policy goals. This strategy might include removing the restrictions on the number of development rights the county purchases from a single property. The greater challenge for this program is identifying funding. Sources could include county transfer taxes or similar local sources, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), local and state land trusts as well as the Department of Defense in order to reduce development that may negatively impact the Patuxent Naval Air Station and its operational mission.

### Require Development Rights be Used for Family Conveyance Lots

The family conveyance exception allows property owners to create additional lots over and above the current zoning limit as long as the lot is intended for a member of the owner's family. The number of conventional lots may be doubled through the use of family conveyance lots up to a total maximum of seven lots if the minimum lot size requirements can be met. Lots may be transferred out of the family after seven years; lots may be transferred out of the family sooner if five TDRs are applied to each lot. The creation of family conveyance lots allows creation of more lots in the rural area without any offsetting reduction in potential build-out of the county.

### Review Design Standards for Rural County Roads

Preserving the look and limiting the capacity of the rural roads may help to maintain the rural character of Calvert County. While still providing safe roads, people in many rural areas want to avoid conventional roadway design that can alter that character of the community and promote higher speeds. By using standards for local rural roads, engineers for the county and developers can respond to design standards that accommodate autos, bikes and, where appropriate, pedestrians, in a way that also recognizes the visual impact of roads on the rural character of select parts of the county.

### Create Green Corridors

Natural areas such as wetlands, wildlife habitat, beaches, and steep slopes are important from an environmental perspective, and they also help create the special character of rural areas. The county should look for opportunities to connect protected natural areas to create a connected network of green spaces (green infrastructure). Where appropriate, this network could include hiking trails to create recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. These greenways could provide real benefits to the local economy by bringing more tourism to the county while still supporting the environment, working farmlands, forests, and fisheries.

### Support Productive Agriculture

Identifying and supporting working agricultural lands can help reduce the financial pressure for conversion of farmland. Calvert County's ongoing efforts to support agri-tourism and to develop new markets for local produce could continue to protect a connected rural landscape.

### **Share Your Ideas**

1. Preserving farm and forest land has been a priority of Calvert County for over 40 years. What actions would you support the county taking to preserve even more land? How could those actions be paid for?
2. One way to protect farm and forest land is to direct growth away from them and into designated areas. What incentives would you support the county providing to encourage/attract/direct growth to designated areas?

## APPENDIX

### History of Calvert County Planning

**First Comprehensive Plan.** Calvert County's first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1967. A central focus of the plan was to retain the rural character of the County. Utilizing one of the few planning tools available at the time, the county adopted 3 acre zoning in an effort to minimize the impact of residential development on nearby farm operations and direct growth toward areas that were already developed.

**Pleasant Peninsula Plan.** In 1974, the County adopted its first update to the Comprehensive Plan. Referred to as the Pleasant Peninsula Plan, this plan emphasized the need to protect the natural environment, maintain the county's rural lifestyle and limit the demand for public services. A primary goal was to promote planned slow growth. Minimum lot sizes in rural areas were increased from three acres to five acres in a further effort to discourage development in these areas. This plan set a standard for encouraging strong public participation in the county planning process.

**Farm Preservation Programs.** By the late 1970's, Calvert residents recognized that while large lot zoning effectively reduced the number of households located within rural areas, it destroyed prime farm and forest land by taking it out of production permanently. To address this concern, Calvert led the state and much of the country in adopting the use of Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) to protect prime farms and forest land. The law enabled owners of prime land to sell their development rights on the open market. Shortly after the county adopted its Transferable Development Rights program, the State of Maryland adopted a Purchase and Retirement Program (PAR). This allowed property owners of prime land to sell their development rights to the State. In 1993, the County adopted its own PAR fund to supplement the TDR program.

**1983 Comprehensive Plan.** The County updated its Comprehensive Plan in response to two seemingly contradictory public mandates: to "protect rural character" and to "promote economic development". The primary means of fulfilling this mandate was to establish a series of Town Centers for the purpose of directing both commercial and higher density residential growth away from farms, environmentally sensitive areas, and highways and toward areas that could be provided with adequate infrastructure and services.

**Environmental Regulations.** During the 1980's, the county instituted strong conservation techniques to protect wetlands, flood plains and steep slopes. In 1989, the state mandated the establishment of the Critical Area, all land within 1,000 feet of the mean high tide line of tidal water or tidal wetland. The allowable density within most of this area was reduced to 20 acres per dwelling unit. The Forestry Management Act, adopted in 1993 and designed to protect large contiguous forested areas, was also mandated by the state.

**Adequate Public Facilities.** In 1988, the county adopted adequate Public facilities regulations to help ensure that schools and roads would be able to accommodate rapid growth. During the early 1990's, this ordinance effectively stopped the approval of most new subdivisions until new schools could be built to accommodate the growth in student population. An impact fee was imposed on all new developments to help pay for new school construction.

**Mandatory Clustering.** In 1992, large lot zoning again came under intense public review. Despite strong efforts and considerable success at preserving prime farms and forests, the county was leading the state in

the amount of farm and forest land being converted to residential use. To address the problem, the county adopted mandatory clustering together with the designation of three zoning overlay categories: 1) Farm Communities, 2) Resource Preservation Districts, and 3) Rural Communities. This new provision required that lots be clustered onto 50% of any given parcel within a Rural Community and 20% of any given parcel within a Farm Community or Resource Preservation District. Design standards were included to protect productive fields, forests and scenic vistas.

**Employment Districts.** In 1993, a new zoning category called Employment District was adopted. Employment Districts were designated for non-retail related uses and were required to be adjacent to Town Centers in order to avoid commercial sprawl.

**1997 Comprehensive Plan.** The central focus of the 1997 Plan was to establish measurable benchmarks to determine appropriate residential build-out. The Plan also established a set of visions with benchmarks to monitor progress on implementing the visions. The land preservation goal was increased from 20,000 acres to 40,000 acres.

**1999 Build-out Reduction.** After conducting a thorough analysis of the costs and benefits of reducing build-out and developing options for public review and comment, the county adopted a program to reduce build-out that included a combination of zoning ordinance changes with new funding and new incentives for voluntary land preservation. One of these incentives was the Leveraging and Retirement Program (LAR), which provided an additional means for the county to purchase and retire development rights.

**2003 Build-out Reduction.** The residential build-out issue was revisited in 2003 and further reductions were made to meet the build-out goals established in 1999. Changes were also made to the adequate public facilities regulations to further slow residential growth.

**2004 Comprehensive Plan.** After a two-year period of analysis and review of the progress in implementing the 1997 Comprehensive Plan and assessing the need for course corrections and additions, the revised Comprehensive Plan was adopted. All 10 visions from the 1997 plan were retained, with a slight modification to the environmental vision, and the benchmarks were updated.

**2010 Comprehensive Plan Amendments.**

Amendments to Chapter I of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan were adopted in 2010 to address changes in state planning law. The adoption was the culmination of a public review process initiated in 2008. The amendments addressed three state laws: Agricultural Stewardship (House Bill 2), Water Resources (House Bill 1141), and Smart, Green, and Growing (Senate Bill 273). The first two laws, adopted by the Maryland General Assembly in 2006, required new and expanded elements in all comprehensive plans, specifically a water resources element and a Priority Preservation Area element, which was required in order for local jurisdictions to remain certified under Maryland's Agricultural Certification Program. The third law, adopted in 2009, replaced the State of Maryland's eight planning visions with 12 new visions.