



The Future of Agriculture



in Prince George's County, Maryland



May 2005



The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
mncppc.org/pgco

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ABSTRACT: This document describes the transformation of agriculture and its potential in Prince George's County. After a brief overview and myths and facts about the county's agriculture, it portrays the characteristics of farms and farmland. The report provides information on farmland protection and profitable farming and lists opportunities for diversifying and marketing strategies for farmers. Following a discussion on challenges and benefits of farming at the urban edge, the report concludes with recommendations to transform agriculture into a viable industry.



“Planning for agriculture and protecting farmland provide flexibility for growth and development, offering a hedge against fragmented suburban development while supporting a diversified economic base.”

American Farmland Trust



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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bicounty agency, created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties: the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission has three major functions:

- The preparation, adoption, and, from time to time, amendment or extension of the General Plan for the physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District;
- The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system; and
- In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire county public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the county government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

The Prince George's County Department of Planning (M-NCPPC):

- Our mission is to help preserve, protect and manage the County's resources by providing the highest quality planning services and growth management guidance and by facilitating effective intergovernmental and citizen involvement through education and technical assistance.
- Our vision is to be a model planning department comprised of responsive and respected staff who provide superior planning and technical services and work cooperatively with decision-makers, citizens and other agencies to continuously improve development quality and the environment and act as a catalyst for positive change.

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County Council

The County Council has three main responsibilities in the planning process: (1) setting policy, (2) plan approval, and (3) plan implementation. Applicable policies are incorporated into area plans, functional plans, and the general plan. The Council, after holding a hearing on the plan adopted by the Planning Board, may approve the plan as adopted, approve the plan with amendments based on the public record, or disapprove the plan and return it to the Planning Board for revision. Implementation is primarily through adoption of the annual Capital Improvement Program, the annual budget, the water and sewer plan, and adoption of zoning map amendments.

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