Protected Natural and Agricultural Lands in Montgomery County

(as of 5/19)

This map was created to show the natural and agricultural lands in the County that are protected from future development as of May 2019. These areas include preserved and conserved natural areas and agricultural easements, and already developed properties in agricultural areas. Developed properties in agricultural areas were included in this mapping exercise because they typically retain agricultural land protected during the development review process (mostly through subdivision cluster options); a fact that is not obvious just looking at aerial photos.

Remaining undeveloped lands are protected as provided by the County’s Environmental Guidelines for Development, the forest conservation law, applicable master plans, and the development review process. Remaining undeveloped agricultural areas are afforded additional protections provided by the low-density zoning and other provisions of the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan, the County’s Ten-Year Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan, limitations on extending public sewer service beyond the current envelope, the County’s Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Building Lot Termination (BLT) programs, and the County’s agricultural easement programs. The Department of Parks, through its Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, continues to identify and add lands to the County’s park system. As a result, in the future, additional natural and agricultural areas will be excluded from new development by the protective measures provided by the County’s various regulatory, planning, and programmatic processes. This map can be periodically updated to add lands that come under protection in the future.

1. **Preserved and Conserved Natural Areas and Agricultural Easements**
2. Green Infrastructure Map “Regulated” Areas

(Areas that meet the definition for inclusion as “Regulated” Areas in the County’s green infrastructure map.)

“Regulated” Areas include environmentally sensitive features and their buffers, such as streams, wetlands (where mapped in GIS) and 100-year floodplains, that are protected during the land development process by laws, guidelines or regulations, and meet minimum criteria for inclusion in the green infrastructure network. In “Regulated” Areas, preservation is the principal focus and development is not generally permitted, except for necessary construction of road crossings and installation of public utilities.

Quotation marks in the “Regulated” Area category designation are used to indicate that these areas are only rough approximations of the areas that are regulated at a site-scale in the development review process. One reason for this approximation is that the network map is based on county-scale GIS data, which are less accurate than site-specific data. Because of this estimation, the Green Infrastructure Network Map is not a substitute for site-specific evaluations of natural resources, including those required for development review, and should always be used together with detailed field-verified data.

All the following (some of which may overlap with areas mapped under 1 above, or with each other).

1. Federal Parkland (and other Federal land)
2. State Parkland (and other State land)
3. M-NCPPC Parkland (Existing and Proposed)
4. Best Natural Areas
5. Biodiversity Areas
6. Stream Valley Parks
7. Neighborhood Conservation Parks
8. Managed Open Natural Areas within these Parks, such as meadows
9. Other M-NCPPC Parkland

(Some of this parkland may have some future additional recreational facilities added, but no residential, commercial, or industrial development, regardless of the underlying zoning.)

1. Category 1 Forest Conservation Easements including:
2. Category 1
3. Offsite (Category 1)
4. Bank (Category 1)
5. 100-Year floodplains (to cover residual 100-Year floodplain areas not included in 1 above)
6. Wetlands (includes mapped wetlands in GIS, not a complete layer)
7. WSSC Lands (used for source water protection)
8. Agricultural Easements
   1. RLP
   2. MET
   3. MALPF
   4. AEP
   5. BLT (Building Lot Termination)
9. **Already Developed Land in Agricultural Areas**

(This includes properties that are already developed in the AR, RC, RNC, and R agricultural zones. Developed properties were determined by identifying those that have a plat that has a preliminary or pre-preliminary plan associated with it. These properties are included in this mapping exercise because they typically have significant remaining open space that is no longer developable. For example, in the AR zone remaining agricultural land is preserved under TDR easements, in the RC and RNC zones land is preserved under cluster zone easements. Similarly, a significant amount of agricultural land is typically preserved when R zone properties develop.)