

Comments on the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan, December 2018 Draft
Additional Agency Comments through March 10, 2019

NAME	AGENCY	DATE RECEIVED	# OF PAGES
Cindy Carrier, AICP, Acting Deputy	Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning	2/27/2019	1
Peter Baker, CFT Treasurer	Calvert Farmland Trust, Inc.	3/8/2019	3

Harrod, Felicia R.

From: Cindy Carrier <pzcarr20@aacounty.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2019 1:39 PM
To: Planning and Zoning
Cc: Philip Hager
Subject: Draft Calvert County Comprehensive Plan

Dear Mr. Kernan,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Calvert County Recommended Draft Comprehensive Plan, December 2018. The The Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning has reviewed the Plan and does not have additional comments beyond those submitted in September.

Sincerely,

Cindy Carrier, AICP
Acting Deputy Planning and Zoning Officer
Planning Administrator, Long Range Planning
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Harrod, Felicia R.

From: Peter G. Baker <bpg7@erols.com>
Sent: Friday, March 08, 2019 6:16 PM
To: Planning and Zoning
Cc: Commissioners; Wilson Freeland; David Bourdon; Hagner R. Mister
Subject: Calvert Farmland Trust - Public Comment Comprehensive Plan
Attachments: CFT Public Comment to Kernan, Chair CC Planning Commission (03-08-2019).pdf;
bpg7.vcf

Please post the attached public comment regarding the draft Comprehensive Plan.

Peter Baker

CC: Board of County Commissioners

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CALVERT FARMLAND TRUST, INC

Comments submitted by email: pz@calvertcountymd.gov

March 8, 2019

Mr. Greg Kernan, Chair, Calvert County Planning Commission
Dear Chairman Kernan

On behalf of our members and Board of Directors of the Calvert Farmland Trust, I submit the following public comments to the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Calvert County.

By way of background, the Calvert Farmland Trust, founded in 1994, is a member supported non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve, in perpetuity, productive farm and forest land in Calvert County. To carry out its mission, the Trust serves as a bridge between the local and State governments and its citizens. We are proud of the County's preservation program, it is nationally recognized, and our organization heavily relies upon it in our community outreach and preservation efforts. Since inception, our organization has preserved, and resold to local farmers, nearly 20 farms. If not for the availability and market support provided by the County for Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) and related conservation programs, we would have preserved none of those farms. That said, our organization is concerned by the loss of what our members and conservation landowners believed to be a dedicated annual funding source for the Purchase and Retire (PAR) program. Our future outlook for conservation in the County is dire, given the lack of continuity in the current draft to the previous Comprehensive Plan; and the lack of new or expanded conservation initiatives in the draft Plan.

For perspective, the housing recession which began in 2007 continues to cripple the market for TDRs today, something must be done. Like the previous housing recession of the late 80's and early 90's, the Commissioners then serving started the PAR Fund. They recognized its importance to sustaining the TDR Program, supporting the market for TDRs, and achieving the County's land preservation goals established in the Comprehensive Plan. The Commissioners, at that time, also recognized their obligation to property owners who, having preserved their land, were holding TDRs with the expectation that supportive conservation programs would be ongoing.

Relying on the proven success of these prior practices and programs, our organization evaluated the current draft of the Comprehensive Plan, and has identified the following deficiencies:

- The draft Plan falls short on initiatives which revitalize or enhance land preservation programs including the PAR fund, the Leveraging Program (LAR). Without local government conservation program support, the goal of a "minimum 40,000 acres of prime farm and forestland preserved" is unattainable. The Plan needs to expressly identify and support initiatives whose purpose is to reach the preservation goal.

The Calvert Farmland Trust is a 501 (c) charitable organization.

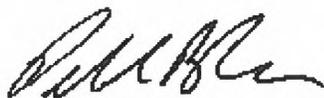
Direct correspondence to the Calvert Farmland Trust, P.O. Box 3448, Prince Frederick, MD 20678 or call (410) 414-5070

- The draft Plan reduces the need for transferable development rights in Major Town Centers due to an easing of the “houses per acre” metric from the current zoning requirement of one house per acre. Additionally, the Plan is noncommittal on the use of TDRs in the Rural Residential Districts. The Plan needs to stimulate overall demand for TDRs, and at the same time, direct growth towards Major Town Centers.
- The draft Plan removed language present in the existing Plan which states: “Continue to support the land preservation efforts of local, state, and national land trusts”. Additional language was removed which stated: “Continue to work with the County’s land trusts to identify and preserve farms that are critical to the protection of lands in Priority Preservation Areas.” The language should be reinstated; it is fundamental to our community outreach and role in helping the County achieve its preservation goals.

As the Planning Commission is well aware, there is strong support from Calvert County citizens for land preservation. With the express purpose of determining citizen priorities for the Comprehensive Plan, Smart Growth Maryland commissioned an Opinion Works poll, which rated “Protecting most agricultural lands from development” as the #4 Comprehensive Plan Priority, with 79% support among its citizens. Accordingly, the draft Plan should emphasize this priority by correcting the deficiencies identified above, and strengthening the Comprehensive Plan - Goals and Objectives in these additional areas:

- Annually fund and administer the Purchase and Retirement Program for transfer development rights with fees collected from the Recordation Tax, as originally intended. Additional funding sources are welcome.
- Insure that if TDR use and market is diluted, or in any way reduced, that landowners with TDRs have equal alternative markets or programs to raise funds.
- Require the use of TDRs to increase density in the event any property is rezoned to “Residential District” beyond the current zoning of 2018. Wherever possible, identify zoning opportunities to stimulate demand for TDRs.
- Continue to identify and implement means to direct residential growth away from the Farm and Forest District, including no increase to highway capacity within the Farm and Forest Districts.

Please help our citizens realize their comprehensive plan priority of “protecting agricultural land from development” and support our organization in carrying out its mission by providing a viable framework for land preservation through adopting the recommended changes to the draft Comprehensive Plan.



Peter G Baker, CFT Treasurer and Executive Officer

CC: BOCC