

**Amendment 110 to Council Bill No. 28 -2023**

**BY: Liz Walsh**

**Legislative Day 11**  
**Date: October 2, 2023**

**Amendment No. 110**

*(This Amendment makes the following changes to HoCo by Design Chapter 3 and Chapter 11 to:*

*Chapter 3: Ecological Health* - *Adds a new Implementing Action to EH-9 Policy Statement about new agricultural zoning districts; and*

*Chapter 11: Implementation* - *Adds a new Implementing Action to EH-9 Policy Statement about new agricultural zoning districts.)*

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3 In the *HoCo By Design* General Plan, attached to this Act as Exhibit A, amend the following  
4 pages as indicated in this Amendment:

- 5     • Chapter 3: Ecological Health: page 54.  
6     • Chapter 11: Implementation: page 21.

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8 Correct all page numbers, numbering, and formatting within this Act to accommodate this  
9 amendment.

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## ALPP Funding

Since its inception, the ALPP has been funded by a 25% share of local transfer tax revenues. This dedicated funding source has been critical to the success of the program over the years. The County initially compensated property owners in cash for their development rights, but in 1989 established the installment purchase agreement (IPA) method. The initial IPAs provided the property owner with small, incremental principal payments and twice-yearly tax-free interest throughout the length of the term, with a balloon payment of the remaining principal upon maturity of the IPA bond. After about 20 years, the County stopped using balloon payments and began paying the owner in equal amounts over the length of the term. The twice yearly tax-free interest on the remaining principal arrangement did not change. Howard County was the first jurisdiction in the nation to utilize the innovative IPA approach, the template of which has since been copied elsewhere in Maryland and across the country.

The County monitors the fund balance annually to ensure solvency and to anticipate future spending potential. A number of large final IPA payments will come due between 2019 and 2024, resulting in a significant decrease in the fund balance. However, given the waning number of annual acquisitions, the closure of final payouts, and reduced interest rates over time, the fund balance is projected to rebound quickly and significantly starting in the mid-to-late 2020s.

Given the limited amount of remaining land eligible for preservation, the County should consider repurposing a portion of the fund to assist the agricultural community in other ways and to enhance the County's efforts to improve ecological health, as discussed earlier in this chapter. There is precedent for using the ALPP Fund for other agricultural purposes besides acquisition, including support for the Howard Soil Conservation District and the Agricultural Business Development Program within the Howard County Economic Development Authority. However, any significant transition to non-agricultural uses would require legislation at the state level, since the funding is sourced from the transfer tax.

## The Future of ALPP

There are approximately 86 properties totaling just over 3,300 acres that are potentially eligible for the ALPP. Additional recruitment efforts to preserve remaining uncommitted land may prove successful as properties transfer to new ownership. However, it is unlikely that recruitment will result in a significant amount of additional preserved land, since the ALPP is well known throughout the community, given its 40-year operational history in Howard County.

PlanHoward 2030 recognized that uncommitted land was a diminishing resource and that, in addition to acquisition, the focus of the ALPP should shift to stewarding existing easements, and helping farmers confront challenges and embrace opportunities that they may face in the future. In the intervening years since the adoption of PlanHoward 2030, the ALPP has been active and successful in these endeavors. There have been 26 properties preserved, totaling 1,480 acres. As of this General Plan, two additional properties totaling 55 acres are in the acquisition pipeline. The ALPP established and implemented an easement stewardship program, whereby most properties received their first monitoring inspection in well over a decade. Monitoring helps determine whether the terms and conditions of each easement are being met, such as maintaining the agricultural suitability of the land. Lastly, ALPP staff continues to partner with the County's other agricultural agencies to provide financial incentives, technical assistance, and general support to the farming community as it grows and diversifies.

### EH-9 Policy Statement

Continue to promote agricultural land preservation, recognizing that uncommitted land in the Rural West is a diminishing resource.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Build on the successes of the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP) and continue acquiring land through the ALPP.
2. Continue to promote other land preservation options, such as the dedication of easements to the County through the subdivision process, the purchase of easements by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation program, and the donation of easements to nonprofit land trusts.
3. Continue to implement the Agricultural Land Preservation Program easement stewardship activities to monitor compliance.
4. [Define and apply one or more new zoning districts specific to agricultural use and preservation.](#)

### EH-10 Policy Statement

Expand the scope of potential uses of the Agricultural Land Preservation Program Fund.

#### Implementing Actions

1. Work with various stakeholders to identify areas for the most appropriate and effective potential uses of the fund, including support for environmental programs, while ensuring continued funding of the ALPP.

<b>Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix</b>		
<b>Policy and Implementing Actions</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Timeframe</b> (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
<b>EH-8 - Expand implementation of the Green Infrastructure Network Plan.</b>		
1. Integrate the Green Infrastructure Network Plan implementation actions into the relevant county plans and programs.	<b>DPZ</b> <b>DRP</b> <b>OCS</b> <b>DPW</b>	Ongoing
2. Consider use of an overlay zoning district or other regulatory measures to target resource protection measures for the Green Infrastructure Network.	<b>DPZ</b>	Mid-Term
3. Establish an easement or land purchase program to protect uncommitted parcels within the Green Infrastructure Network.	<b>DPZ</b> OCS	Mid-Term
4. Amend county design standards for roads, bridges, and culverts to facilitate safe passage for wildlife at county road crossings within the Green Infrastructure Network.	<b>DPZ</b> OCS <b>DPW</b> OOT	Mid-Term
5. Conduct studies of existing resource conditions and wildlife use within the network to enhance management of the Green Infrastructure Network.	<b>DPZ</b> OCS	Long-Term
6. Consider expansion of the Green Infrastructure Network to include smaller habitat areas that provide 'stepping stones' to the primary network.	<b>DPZ</b> OCS	Mid-Term
<b>EH-9 - Continue to promote agricultural land preservation, recognizing that uncommitted land in the Rural West is a diminishing resource.</b>		
1. Build on the successes of the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP) and continue acquiring land through the ALPP.	<b>DPZ</b> OCS	Ongoing
2. Continue to promote other land preservation options, such as the dedication of easements to the County through the subdivision process, the purchase of easements by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation program, and the donation of easements to nonprofit land trusts.	<b>DPZ</b>	Ongoing
3. Continue to implement the Agricultural Land Preservation Program easement stewardship activities to monitor compliance.	<b>DPZ</b> OCS	Ongoing
<u>4. Define and apply one or more new zoning districts specific to agricultural use and preservation.</u>	<u><b>DPZ</b></u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
<b>EH-10 - Expand the scope of potential uses of the Agricultural Land Preservation Program Fund.</b>		
1. Work with various stakeholders to identify areas for the most appropriate and effective potential uses of the fund, including support for environmental programs, while ensuring continued funding of the ALPP.	<b>DPZ</b> OCS	Mid-Term

<b>Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix</b>		
<b>Policy and Implementing Actions</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Timeframe</b> (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
<b>EH-11 - Encourage individual environmental stewardship in daily activities on private and public property.</b>		
1. The County should continue to provide leadership by incorporating environmentally sensitive site development and property management practices on county properties.	<b>DPW</b> DRP DPZ OCS	Ongoing
2. Continue existing and expand current outreach programs to promote and assist private property owners with the implementation of stewardship practices.	<b>OCS</b> DRP HSCD Private Property Owners	Ongoing
3. Increase opportunities for student participation in environmental outreach and education and stewardship practices on school properties.	<b>HCPSS</b> HSCD OCS DRP	Ongoing
<b>EH-12 - Commit to and support the County's designation as a Bee City USA.</b>		
1. Integrate pollinator-friendly practices into county policies, programs, and capital projects.	<b>OCS</b> DRP DPW DPZ	Mid-Term
2. Incorporate improvements to the County's pest management policies and practices as they relate to pollinator conservation.	<b>OCS</b> DRP	Ongoing
3. Develop and implement a program to create and enhance pollinator-friendly habitat on public and private land.	<b>OCS</b> DRP Private Partners	Mid-Term
<b>EH-13 - Continue to balance the potential for mineral resource extraction with other land uses.</b>		
1. Continue to allow mineral resource extraction as a conditional use in the Zoning Regulations in appropriate locations.	<b>DPZ</b>	Ongoing