

Amendment 124 to Council Bill No. 28 -2023

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Amendment No. 124

(This Amendment makes the following changes to HoCo by Design Chapters 5 and Chapter 11:

Chapter 5: Economic Prosperity - Amends the EP-9 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to consider consolidating resources supporting the agriculture community in a single location in the west and complete an Agriculture Master Plan within three years of adoption of the General Plan; and

Chapter 11: Implementation - Amends the EP-9 Policy Statement Implementing Actions to consider consolidating resources supporting the agriculture community in a single location in the west and complete an Agriculture Master Plan within three years of adoption of the General Plan.)

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

- 3 • Chapter 5: Economic Prosperity: 59;
- 4 • Chapter 11: Implementation: page 33.

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6 Correct all page numbers, numbering, and formatting within this Act to accommodate this
7 amendment.

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EP-9 Policy Statement

Promote and support modern farming initiatives that reflect the changing needs and economic drivers of agriculture in Howard County.

Implementing Actions

1. Support development of appropriately equipped and licensed commercial processing and kitchen facilities that can accommodate various agricultural and food processing needs for farmers and entrepreneurs.
2. Continue and expand business development services that can position agricultural enterprises for growth, innovation, and diversification.
3. Improve opportunities for the growth of e-commerce and last-mile delivery infrastructure, including integration of technological advances in customer delivery.
4. Encourage and enhance agricultural opportunities in the eastern portion of the County.
5. Enhance and expand the partnership between the Agricultural Land Preservation Program, the Howard County Economic Development Authority, the University of Maryland, and the farming community to assist farmers as agriculture continues to evolve and diversify.
6. Consider consolidating offices, services, and educational resources for supporting the farming agriculture community in a single location to better coordinate marketing and other programs, and support operators when interacting with government agencies. Ideally these functions would be physically located in the west in a location that also hosts the public for programs and activities to learn about and promote agriculture.
7. Complete an Agriculture Master Plan within three years from the adoption of HoCo By Design. The Plan should be focused on how to best position Howard County's agriculture industry to compete, grow and prosper. The effort should include a combination of local stakeholders and experts along with external experts.

EP-10 Policy Statement

Continue and enhance established technical and funding efforts to support the farming community.

Implementing Actions

1. Continue funding for the Howard Soil Conservation District to assist farmers with design and installation of best management practices (BMPs).
2. Consider expanding County assistance to fill gaps in cost share programs for agricultural BMPs.
3. Continue the Howard County Economic Development Authority's Agricultural Marketing Program, including its Agricultural Innovation Grants, business planning, and other financial and technical assistance.
4. Expand the Agricultural Innovation Grants by allocating additional resources and creating opportunities for urban agriculture endeavors in the East.

EP-11 Policy Statement



Support and encourage beginning farmers to build a diverse farming community.

Implementing Actions

1. Support the development of new and continue ongoing agricultural education initiatives that encourage students from a variety of backgrounds to consider agriculture as a career choice.
2. Consider establishing a financing program to help farmers purchase farmland.
3. Establish a grant program for beginning farmers.
4. Consider leasing county-owned land for start-up agricultural businesses.
5. Consider creating a program to loan or share farm equipment.
6. Enhance availability and access to community gardens that can be used by beginning farmers.

EP-12 Policy Statement

Reduce regulatory barriers to diversified agricultural operations in both the Rural West and the East.

Implementing Actions



1. Update the Zoning Regulations and other policies to promote agricultural expansion and diversification, especially for on-farm processing and other agribusiness opportunities.
2. Work with agricultural and community stakeholders to review and update the Zoning Regulations and other regulations to create more opportunities for agritourism.
3. Reduce barriers to the burgeoning demand for on-farm breweries, wineries, cideries, meaderies, and distilleries.

EP-13 Policy Statement

Review transportation planning and road development and maintenance standards to reduce transportation barriers to farming.

Implementing Actions

1. Improve rural road conditions by increasing overhead tree clearance and addressing passage at narrow bridges.
2. Reduce conflict between recreational, residential, commercial, and agricultural road uses.

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix		
Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
EP-9 - Promote and support modern farming initiatives that reflect the changing needs and economic drivers of agriculture in Howard County.		
1. Support development of appropriately equipped and licensed commercial processing and kitchen facilities that can accommodate various agricultural and food processing needs for farmers and entrepreneurs.	OCS HCEDA	Mid-Term
2. Continue and expand business development services that can position agricultural enterprises for growth, innovation, and diversification.	HCEDA OCS	Ongoing
3. Improve opportunities for the growth of e-commerce and last-mile delivery infrastructure, including integration of technological advances in customer delivery.	HCEDA OCS OOT	Long-term
4. Encourage and enhance agricultural opportunities in the eastern portion of the County.	OCS HCEDA DPZ	Mid-Term
5. Enhance and expand the partnership between the Agricultural Land Preservation Program, the Howard County Economic Development Authority, the University of Maryland, and the farming community to assist farmers as agriculture continues to evolve and diversify.	HCEDA OCS DPZ Private Partners	Ongoing
6. Consider consolidating offices, services, and educational resources <u>for supporting the farming agriculture community in a single location to better coordinate marketing and other programs, and support operators when interacting with government agencies. Ideally these functions would be physically located in the west in a location that also hosts the public for programs and activities to learn about and promote agriculture.</u>	OCS HCEDA	Long-Term
<u>7. Complete an Agriculture Master Plan within three years from the adoption of HoCo By Design. The Plan should be focused on how to best position Howard County's agriculture industry to compete, grow and prosper. The effort should include a combination of local stakeholders and experts along with external experts.</u>	HCEDA DPZ	<u>Ongoing</u>

Table 10-1: Implementation Matrix		
Policy and Implementing Actions	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Mid-Term five-year, Long-Term six+ years, Ongoing)
EP-10 - Continue and enhance established technical and funding efforts to support the farming community.		
1. Continue funding for the Howard Soil Conservation District to assist farmers with design and installation of best management practices (BMPs).	DPZ DPW OCS Elected Officials OOB	Ongoing
2. Consider expanding County assistance to fill gaps in cost share programs for agricultural BMPs.	HCEDA OCS	Mid-Term
3. Continue the Howard County Economic Development Authority's Agricultural Marketing Program, including its Agricultural Innovation Grants, business planning, and other financial and technical assistance.	HCEDA DPZ	Ongoing
4. Expand the Agricultural Innovation Grants by allocating additional resources and creating opportunities for urban agriculture endeavors in the East.	HCEDA DPZ OCS	Long-term
EP-11 - Support and encourage beginning farmers to build a diverse farming community.		
1. Support the development of new and continue ongoing agricultural education initiatives that encourage students from a variety of backgrounds to consider agriculture as a career choice.	HCEDA	Mid-Term
2. Consider establishing a financing program to help farmers purchase farmland.	HCEDA	Mid-Term
3. Establish a grant program for beginning farmers.	HCEDA OCS	Mid-Term
4. Consider leasing county-owned land for start-up agricultural businesses.	DPW HCEDA DPZ DRP	Mid-Term
5. Consider creating a program to loan or share farm equipment.	HCEDA	Mid-Term