

# *2010 Carroll County Master Plan: Priority Preservation Area Element*



**Approved by Planning Commission  
September 13, 2010**

**Adopted by Board of County Commissioners  
September 30, 2010**



*Copies of the adopted Priority Preservation Area Element are available...*

In hardcopy or on CD at:

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Westminster, Maryland 21157

On online (text and maps) at:

<http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/compplan/functional.asp>

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## Priority Preservation Area

The Agricultural Stewardship Act of 2006 (HB 2), passed by the Maryland General Assembly, requires certified counties to establish Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs) in their comprehensive plans and manage them according to certain criteria. There are two sets of requirements, relating to conditions in the PPA itself and the county comprehensive plan, respectively.

More specifically, along with modifying the existing agricultural land preservation certification program to include Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs), the legislation also established: an internship program; a task force to study the tax structure related to farmers; and, additional funding for several existing programs like the Maryland Agricultural and Resource Based Industry Development Corporation, Soil Conservation Districts, and the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost Share Program.

Beginning in FY 2009, certified counties will have to include a PPA element in their comprehensive plans in order to maintain certification. The legislation requires the PPA Element to be adopted by July 1, 2008.

The Priority Preservation Areas Element identifies areas of agricultural and forestry resource land that would support agricultural production and timber harvesting for the present and future. An estimated 92,909 acres of land are delineated within the Agricultural Land Priority Preservation Area. Within this defined area, the County's goal is to permanently preserve 64,589 acres of undeveloped land for agricultural production.

### Goal

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*Preserve 80 percent of undeveloped land in the Priority Preservation Area.*

### Agricultural Land & Forestry Definitions

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#### ■ Agricultural Land

"Agricultural land" means land used for all methods of production and management of livestock, crops, trees and other vegetation, as well as aquaculture. This includes the related activities of tillage, fertilization, pest control, and harvesting as well as the feeding, housing, training and maintaining of animals such as cows, sheep, goats, hogs, horses, and poultry. (Source - <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/met/model.html>) For mapping purposes, agricultural land is based on property data provided by the Maryland Department of

Assessments and Taxation. Specifically, property that is designated in the state database as agricultural in use is recognized as agricultural land.

### ■ Forestry

“Forestry” is the management of forested land, together with associated waters and wetlands, primarily for harvesting timber but also for conservation and recreation purposes. Modern forestry generally concerns itself with: assisting forests to provide timber as raw material for wood products; wildlife habitat; natural water quality regulation; recreation; landscape and community protection; employment; aesthetically appealing landscapes; and for atmospheric carbon dioxide. The science of forestry is built around the principle of multiple-use land management, though the harvesting and replanting of timber are the primary activities. The main objective is to maintain a continuous supply of timber through carefully planned harvest and replacement. The forest manager is also responsible for the application of other land controls, including the protection of wildlife and the implementation of programs to protect the forest from weeds, insects, fungal diseases, erosion, and fire. (Source: <http://www.answers.com/topic/forestry>)

## Agricultural Land & Forestry Descriptions

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### ■ Agricultural Land

Carroll County has been actively working to preserve agricultural land since the Maryland State Agricultural Land Preservation Program was developed in 1979. Since that time, other programs have become available and are also being utilized. As of July 2009, 54,858 acres of farmland throughout the county were permanently preserved through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), the Rural Legacy Program, Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), the Carroll County Land Trust (CCLT), and the County’s own Agricultural Land Preservation Program. The majority of easements are located in the northern half of the county, more specifically in the northwestern sector.

Since 1998, Carroll County has had a goal of preserving 100,000 acres of farmland. This number represents nearly 70 percent of the total land in the county that is currently used for agriculture. This goal is targeted specifically at maintaining the long-term viability of farming in the county, including the businesses that support that sector of the economy.

### ■ Forestry

The County issues roughly 30 to 40 permits per year for private timber harvest. The total amount of forest acreage affected by timber harvesting varies from year to year. These areas are generally not clear cut. Instead, selective harvest and maintenance cutting are the common methods, helping promote the overall health of these woodlands. If the root systems remain after cutting, the potential also exists for the cut trees to re-sprout or regenerate.

On County-owned land, an average of 10 to 15 acres is harvested each year, via standard public bidding process. Red, black, and white oak, chestnut, hickory, maple, and cherry represent 66 percent of what is generally harvested. These areas are identified for maintenance and health purposes and not for profit.

There are approximately 864 acres, located in the north-central area (Union Mills) and surrounding the Piney Run Reservoir, in the Tree Farm Program. The program is run by the American Forest Foundation, an organization sponsored by both grants from the Federal Government and through private donation. The program was established in 1946 to encourage land owners to grow and manage woodlands for timber harvest, watershed protection, soil erosion, aesthetics, and wildlife protection.

As an industry, wood manufacturing accounted for 648 jobs countywide and generated an average wage of \$3,000 per month, according to the U.S. Census. Currently there are approximately 29 licensed forest products operations in the county. They include 3 sawmills, 15 loggers, and 11 firewood producers. (Source: Maryland DNR Forest Service)

## ■ Soils

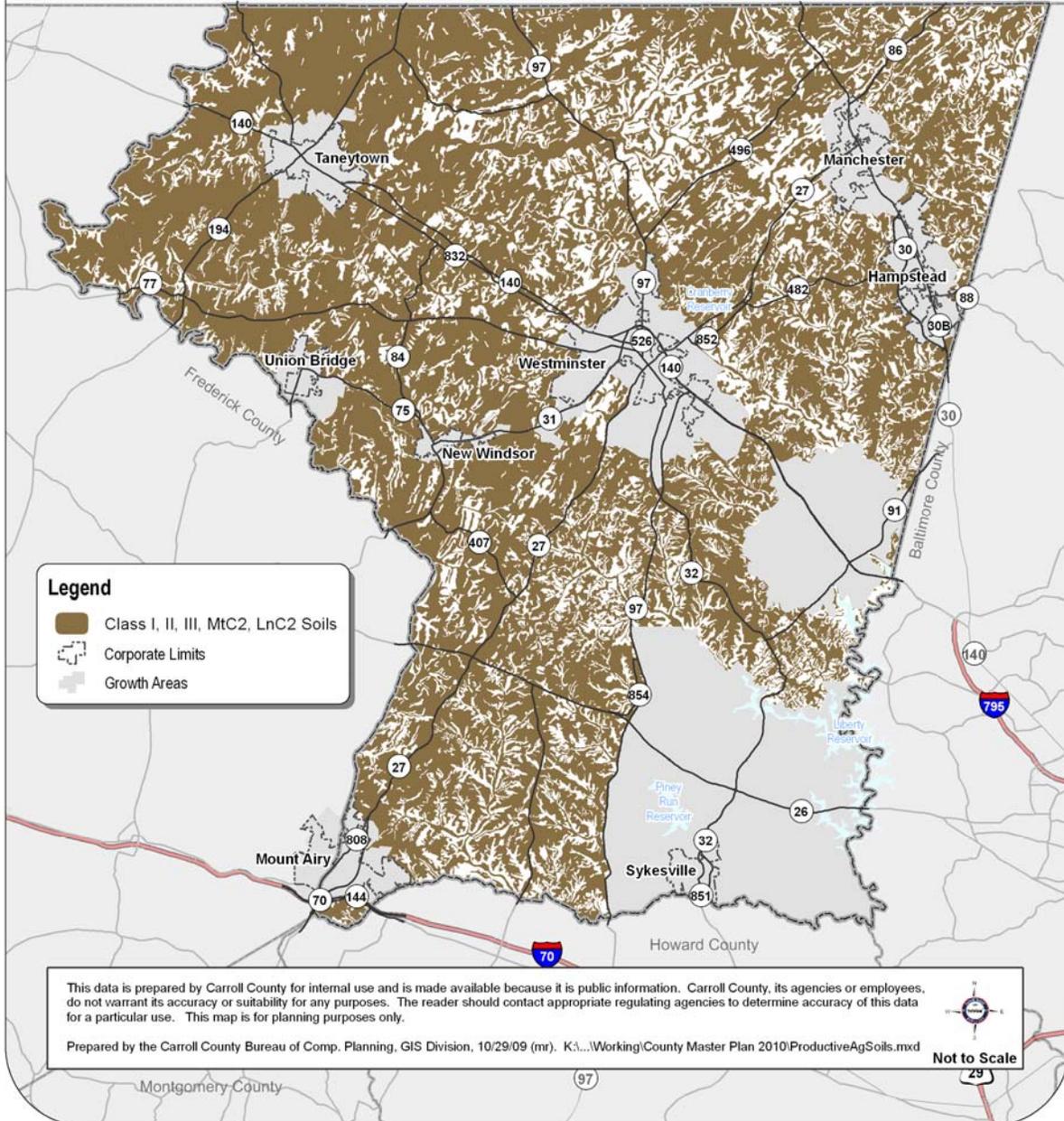
There are five major factors in the formation of soil – climate, living organisms, parent materials, relief (or slope), and time. Climate, whether cold, hot, dry or humid, influences the breakdown of minerals. Living organisms, both plant and animal, affect soils by what they either take from it or deposit in it. Parent materials are defined primarily by the weathering of rock formations and the movement of silt via gravity, wind, or waterway. Relief affects what remains on a particular soil based on runoff. Time demonstrates when these materials were laid down and how they have aged.

Soils are classified so that their more common characteristics can be readily identified. The current system has six basic soil categories; order, suborder, great group, subgroup, family, and series. Twenty-six different series of soils are identified in the *1969 Carroll County Soil Survey*. The USDA is currently updating the soil survey and anticipates completing this effort in 2010.

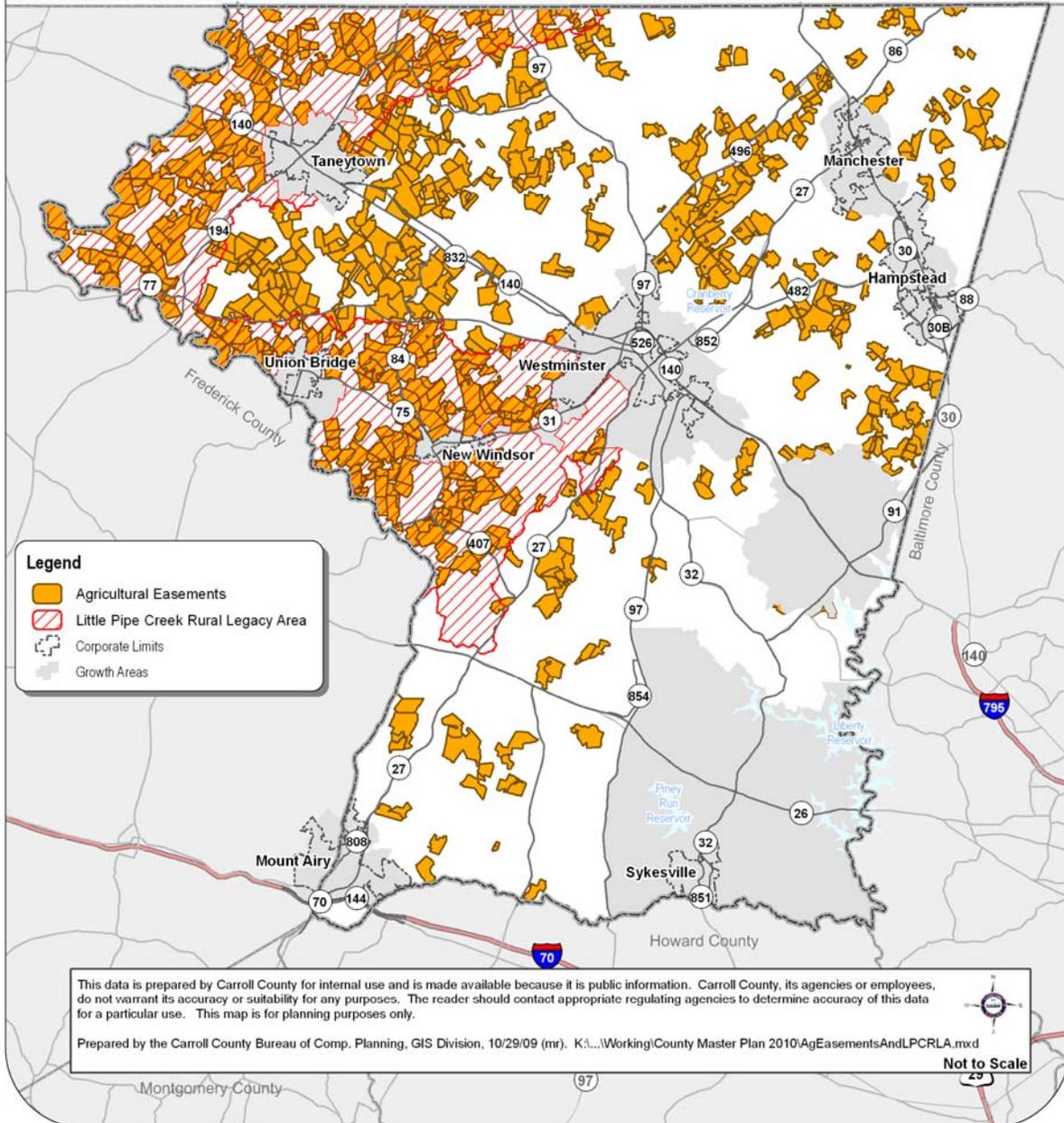
Class I, II, and III series soils are considered to be productive agricultural soils in Carroll County. These soils can be found in the following formations: Abbottstown, Bermudian, Birdsboro, Bowmansville, Bucks, Cardiff, Chester, Codorus, Comus, Conestoga, Delanco, Elioak, Elsinboro, Glenelg, Glenville, Hagerstown, Hatboro, Lewisberry, Linside, Linganore, Manor, Melvin, Mount Airy, Penn, Raritan, Rowland, Steinsburg, and Urbana (UrA). Not every soil contained in the series listed above qualifies as a Class I, II, or III soil, but sixty-six different soils fall within this range. Only two Class IV soils, Mount Airy (MtC2) and Linganore (LnC2), are considered to be productive soils for agriculture.

# Productive Agricultural Soils

## Carroll County Master Plan



# Agricultural Easements and Little Pipe Creek Rural Legacy Area Carroll County Master Plan



## **Preservation Program Evaluation**

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For the most recent program evaluation, please reference the “State of Maryland Program Certification Annual Report, Fiscal Years 2007 and 2008, Agricultural Land Preservation Program, Carroll County, Maryland,” and/or the most recent biennial recertification report.

## **Creation of Agricultural Land Priority Preservation Area**

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The Agricultural Land Priority Preservation Area (PPA) focuses on agricultural land and the preservation of agriculture in the county. Forestry represents a very small enterprise in the county and is considered insufficient in the county to warrant specific and separate identification and preservation. Forest land is included within the Agricultural Land PPA, but while it may not contribute directly to agricultural production, it does serve to enhance a rural environment that is necessary to support the target of agricultural production necessary for sustainability.

### Process to Determine Agricultural Land PPA Boundary

The Agricultural Land PPA contains an estimated 92,909 acres of land. This area was determined using the following steps:

- Step 1: Begin with the area of the county that is located outside the municipalities; designated Growth Areas for Taneytown, Westminster, New Windsor, Union Bridge, and Mount Airy; and the Priority Funding Areas designated as Rural Villages.
- Step 2: Within this initial area of the county, identify and map the following data:
  - All properties having a property assessment designation of agricultural use, as shown on the Agricultural Lands map.
  - All agricultural permanent easements, identified on the Agricultural Easements and Little Pipe Creek Rural Legacy Area map.
  - All productive agricultural soils (Class I, II, III, IV MtC2 and LnC2). The Productive Agricultural Soils map displays their locations.
  - The Little Pipe Creek Rural Legacy Area, which has been targeted through the Rural Legacy Program for enhanced agricultural, forestry, natural resource, and environmental protection. This area is depicted on the Agricultural Easements and Little Pipe Creek Rural Legacy Area map.
- Step 3: Overlay the mapped information delineated by the above maps, and define a PPA boundary based on the area containing the highest concentration of these mapped characteristics. The Agricultural Land PPA Boundary Map indicates the area to be designated as the Agricultural Land PPA.

### Preservation Goal

The sidebar below indicates undeveloped acreage by current zoning within the PPA. Undeveloped land, for purposes of this plan element, is defined as the combination of unimproved properties and improved properties comprised of 10 acres or more. Conversely, developed land is defined as the sum of improved properties containing less than 10 acres of land.

Properties deemed developed comprise an estimated 9,477 acres. Approximately 80,736 acres (86.7% of the total PPA) are considered undeveloped. The developed land (9,477) and undeveloped land (80,736) acreages combine to 90,213 acres, which is 2,696 acres shy of the total PPA acreage of 92,909. This discrepancy is predominantly due to the exclusion of public roadways from acreage calculations based on property data.

The majority of the Agricultural Land PPA (86,511 acres, of which 76,609 are undeveloped) is currently zoned Agricultural. Under current zoning regulations, residential development is restricted within this zoning district. A density standard of one residential subdivision lot per twenty acres of land is applied. This requirement is a strong regulatory barrier to the extensive loss of agriculturally productive land to residential development, the most prevalent type of development in the county. This deterrent to large-scale depletion of the agricultural land base gives the county a better opportunity to acquire easements before the land is pre-empted by development.

The creation of this PPA will help the County focus limited funds to achieve agricultural preservation. The County has had a longstanding goal of preserving 100,000 acres of agricultural land in order to maintain agriculture as a sustainable industry in the county. This goal applies to the entire county, not just the Agricultural Land PPA. To support attaining this overall goal, the remaining

undeveloped land within the defined PPA is targeted for preservation. The estimated acreage of the targeted land for preservation in the Agricultural Land PPA (64,589 acres) contributes to this 100,000-acre goal. In other words, of the 80,736 acres of undeveloped land within the PPA, 80 percent equates to 64,589 acres. Of this acreage, 37,986 acres are already under permanent easement, and 4,583 acres are designated “Remaining Portions” and are protected from further *residential* development, for a total of 42,569 acres. To meet the PPA preservation goal, it is the County’s objective to preserve the remaining 22,020 acres in the PPA for agricultural use and forestry through purchase of easements and zoning restrictions.

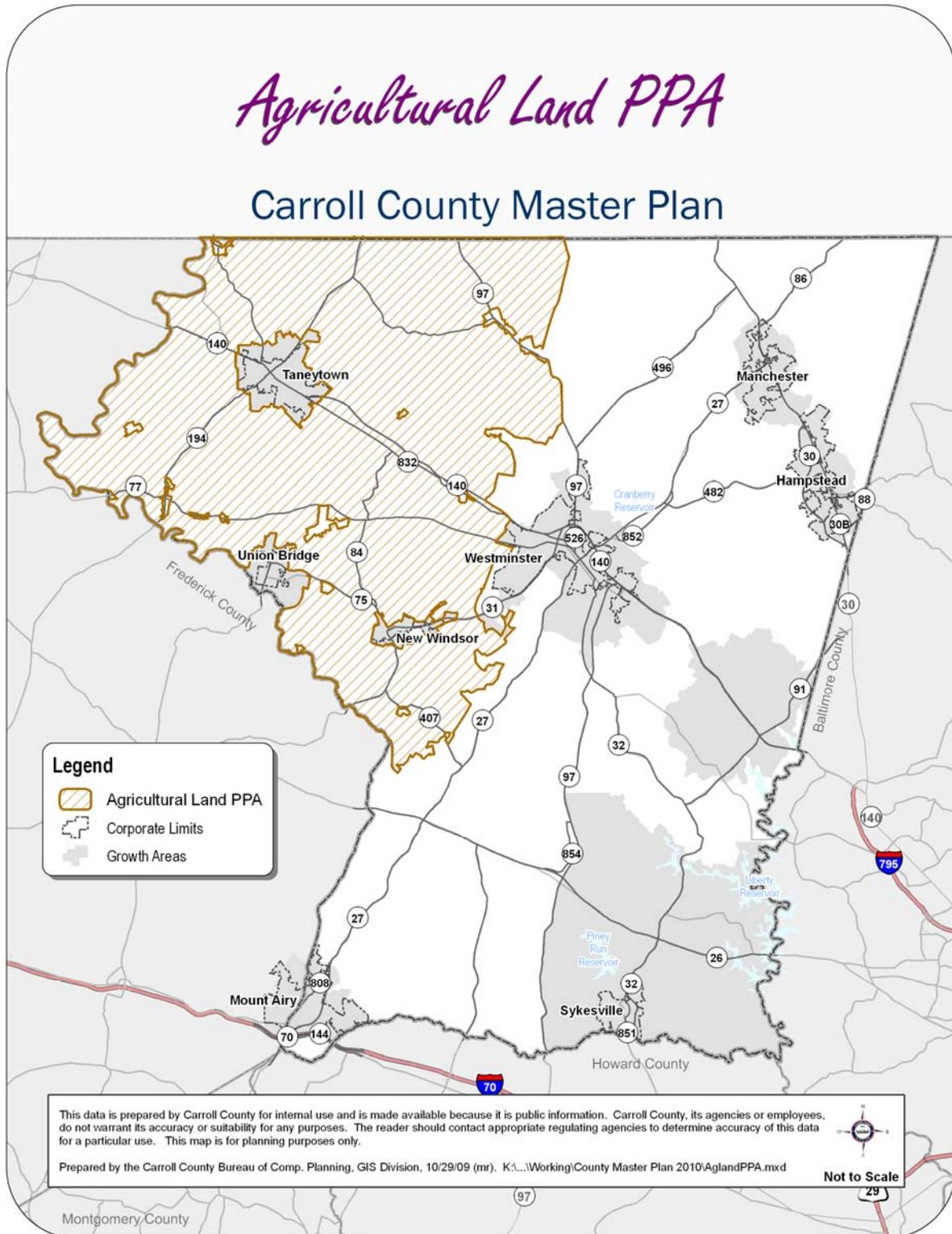
#### **Agricultural Land PPA Preservation Goal**

Total Undeveloped Acreage in PPA = 80,736 AC  
80% of Undeveloped Acreage = 64,589 AC

**Preservation Goal of... 64,589 AC**

Acres already preserved = 42,569 AC

**Remaining acres to preserve = 22,020 AC**



Note: This map can also be viewed at:

<http://ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/compplan/masterplan2010/default.asp>

Acreage located outside the Agricultural Land PPA is permanently preserved through agricultural land preservation easements. Additional acreage outside this PPA will need to be permanently preserved to reach the 100,000-acre preservation goal.

## **The Choice: Policies & Recommendations**

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### Recommendations

- A. Consider strategies to reduce rural residential densities, thereby decreasing future impervious cover, road impacts, water quality impacts, and demand for new, or improvements to existing, facilities
- B. Incorporate strategies identified through the Builders for the Bay process into the appropriate Code chapters, practices, and manuals
- C. Revise Chapter 103, Development and Subdivision of Land, to offer a preservation incentive lot in exchange for the placement of a permanent preservation easement on eligible remaining portions