



ALLIANCE
FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Green Infrastructure and Resource Sensitive Area Policies

New ideas for the new Plan2040 GDP



Popular support for a new Resource Sensitive Policy Area

The Plan 2040 Visioning followup survey showed strong citizen support for the designation of a new Resource Sensitive Policy Area in the new GDP. Many of the respondents seem to be aware of the fact that AACo leads the state in its rate of forest loss, has had numerous attempts to develop in the Critical Area like the once-proposed Turtle Run subdivision, suffers from storm water run off problems, and often struggles with other environmental issues. The proposed new policy area would provide guidance for addressing land use issues that impact valuable natural, cultural, and physical features of the County. A very important natural feature that has not received adequate protection in the past is our Green Infrastructure. Including it in any new Resource Sensitive Policy Area would be reasonable and desirable.

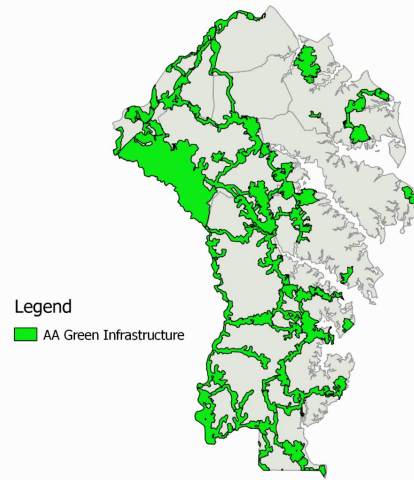
Improved protection of Green Infrastructure

The scattered pattern of modern development consumes an extensive amount of land and fragments the landscape, converting a once near-continuous stretch of forests and wetlands to small, isolated islands of habitat in a sea of developed land. In recent years Anne Arundel county has been shown to be one of the most egregious practitioners of forest clearing of all Maryland counties.

The Maryland DNR has mapped the most ecologically important lands remaining in the State and identified them as Green Infrastructure (see map at right). Green Infrastructure (GI) is a network of large blocks of intact forest and wetlands, called "hubs," linked together by linear features

such as forested stream valleys, ridge lines, or other natural areas, called “corridors.” An essential characteristic of Green Infrastructure is the interconnection of its features.

The County is in the midst of producing its Green Infrastructure Master Plan, which will likely include an updated map. Much of the Green Infrastructure in AA county lies in its western and southern portions. GI boundaries are currently well identified through DNR’s GIS maps. About half of the GI lands are protected from development by various kinds of easements or inclusion in the Critical Area, but about half are not. These ecologically important areas and the flora and fauna living there warrant increased protection and should be included in any Resource Sensitive Policy Area.



Green Infrastructure includes the most ecologically valuable portions of our forests and streams and, together with other important natural and cultural features, should be given the highest degree of protection from disturbance. ALC proposes adoption of policies for Resource Sensitive Policy Areas (RSPAs), including Green Infrastructure, that at the minimum:

- Establish an on-line GIS map of County-designated RSPAs
- Minimize development activities within the RSPAs
- Target land conservation funding to RSPAs

Anne Arundel Alliance for Livable Communities



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