

Winter 2020 Implementation Workshops



Workshop 1 – Taking Care of What We Have

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Ag and Natural Lands

Policy: *Preserve large, contiguous areas of agricultural and natural lands*

Why Focus on This Policy?

During our fall 2019 planning area meeting series, partners in 5 of the 6 planning areas placed the most emphasis on this policy. In our online planning area survey (Nov. 2019 – Jan. 2020), participants in every planning area agreed with that emphasis.

Purpose of Discussion

Identify areas of greatest priority for creating large, contiguous areas of protected agricultural and natural lands, and recommend how the *places2040* catalytic tools can be implemented to achieve that result.

Desired Outcomes

Places2040 provides some ways to measure our progress in achieving this policy:

Protected Agricultural Land

Agricultural (ag.) land preserved	▲	Increase total acres of ag. land preserved
Contiguous ag. land preserved	▲	Increase % of contiguous farmland preserved
Ag. land in effective ag. zoning	▲	Increase total acres of ag land in effective ag. zoning

Protected Natural Land

Natural land preserved	▲	Increase total acres of natural land preserved
Contiguous natural land preserved	▲	Increase % of contiguous natural land preserved
Natural land in effective conservation zoning	▲	Increase total acres of natural land in effective conservation zoning

Methodology

To identify opportunities to create large, contiguous areas of agricultural and natural lands, LCPC staff ran two analyses. The criteria and steps for these analyses are below:

Agricultural Lands Analysis	Natural Lands Analysis
<p>Step 1: Start with agricultural land use/land cover outside growth areas – some of the same data used to create the <i>places2040</i> agricultural character zones.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify farms already preserved by the Ag Preserve Board, Lancaster Farmland Trust, and the Brandywine Conservancy (shown in dark green). These, along with the agricultural land use/land cover, are shown on Map 1-A. We included quarries on the map because they are an important part of the rural economy.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify 10+ acre farm tracts that are not preserved and have at least 90% agricultural land use/land cover.</p> <p>Step 4: Narrow down the farm tracts in Step 3 to those within 100 feet of existing preserved farms. These represent the “priority areas for preservation” shown in yellow on Map 1-B.</p>	<p>Step 1: Start with countywide natural land use/land cover – woodlands, wetlands, and forests. This was some of the same data used to create the <i>places2040</i> natural character zones.</p> <p>Step 2: Identify existing natural/park lands owned or “protected” by the county, state, municipalities, and the Lancaster Conservancy (shown in dark green). These, along with the natural land use/land cover, are shown on Map 2-A. We included quarries on the map because they are an important part of the rural economy.</p> <p>Step 3: Identify 10+ acre tracts that are not already protected and have at least a 50% natural land use/land cover.</p> <p>Step 4: Narrow down the tracts in Step 3 to those within 100 feet of existing protected lands. These represent the “priority areas for preservation” shown in yellow on Map 2-B.</p>

Result of the Analysis

Countywide, the analysis identifies about 74,000 acres as a priority for agricultural preservation – about 33% of all unpreserved farmland (219,000 acres) outside growth areas and about 66% of total preserved farmland in the county (111,000 acres).

The analysis also identifies about 9,100 acres as a priority for natural preservation – about 10% of all natural land cover in the county (91,000 acres) and just under 60% of our current protected natural areas and parks (17,000 acres).

Applying the Catalytic Tools in *places2040*

The table below explores how the 7 tools in *places2040* can be used to preserve large, contiguous areas of agricultural and natural lands.

Ag and Natural Lands

Catalytic Tool	Description	Responsibility
Simplify Zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rezone (if necessary) land in ag preservation priority areas to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Effective agricultural zoning (agricultural areas) ○ Effective conservation zoning (natural areas) • Zone for higher density development within urban growth areas to reduce need to zone rural land for development 	Municipalities
Official Maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire lands in the natural preservation priority areas for future parks/open space 	Municipalities, authorities
Align Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus agricultural preservation efforts within ag preservation priority areas • Focus natural lands preservation efforts within natural preservation priority areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with electric utilities to acquire lands for natural preservation 	Ag Preserve Board, Lancaster Farmland Trust, Lancaster Conservancy