

Ag Land Pres Easements (P788911)

Category Conservation of Natural Resources
 Sub Category Ag Land Preservation
 Administering Agency Economic Development (AAGE06)
 Planning Area Countywide

Date Last Modified 11/17/14
 Required Adequate Public Facility No
 Relocation Impact None
 Status Ongoing

Total	Thru FY14	Rem FY14	Total 6 Years	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	Beyond 6 Yrs
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EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000s)

	Total	Thru FY14	Rem FY14	Total 6 Years	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	Beyond 6 Yrs
Planning, Design and Supervision	2,495	507	92	1,896	316	316	316	316	316	316	0
Land	9,579	2,010	2,576	4,993	1,935	557	580	608	638	675	0
Site Improvements and Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	30	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12,104	2,547	2,668	6,889	2,251	873	896	924	954	991	0

FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000s)

	Total	Thru FY14	Rem FY14	Total 6 Years	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	Beyond 6 Yrs
Agricultural Transfer Tax	3,380	1,432	269	1,679	241	253	266	284	304	331	0
Contributions	2,535	0	51	2,484	1,010	10	10	444	500	510	0
G.O. Bonds	882	575	307	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Investment Income	799	0	0	799	0	283	470	46	0	0	0
M-NCPPC Contributions	3,050	137	2,013	900	150	150	150	150	150	150	0
State Aid	1,458	403	28	1,027	850	177	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12,104	2,547	2,668	6,889	2,251	873	896	924	954	991	0

APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA (000s)

Appropriation Request	FY 16	873
Supplemental Appropriation Request		0
Transfer		0
Cumulative Appropriation		7,466
Expenditure / Encumbrances		2,552
Unencumbered Balance		4,914

Date First Appropriation	FY 89
First Cost Estimate	
Current Scope	FY 16 12,104
Last FY's Cost Estimate	21,961

Description

This project provides funds for the purchase of agricultural and conservation easements under the County Agricultural Land Preservation legislation, effective November 25, 2008, for local participation in Maryland's agricultural and conservation programs and through Executive Regulation 3-09 AM, adopted July 27, 2010. The County Agricultural Easement Program (AEP) enables the County to purchase preservation easements on farmland in the agricultural zones and in other zones approved by the County Council to preserve farmland not entirely protected by Transferable Development Rights (TDR) easements or State agricultural land preservation easements. The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) enables the State to purchase preservation easements on farmland jointly by the County and State. The Rural Legacy Program (RLP) enables the State to purchase conservation easements to preserve large contiguous tracts of agricultural land. The sale of development rights easements are proffered voluntarily by the farmland owner. The project receives funding from the Agricultural Land Transfer Tax, which is levied when farmland is sold and removed from agricultural status. Montgomery County is a State-certified county under the provisions of State legislation, which enables the County to retain 75 percent of the taxes for local use. The County uses a portion of its share of the tax to provide matching funds for State easements. In FY10, the Building Lot Termination (BLT) program was initiated. This program represents an enhanced farmland preservation program tool to further protect land where development rights have been retained in the Rural Density Transfer Zone (RDT). This program utilizes a variety of revenue sources that include: Agricultural Transfer Tax revenues, MNCPPC Contributions, Developer Contributions, and G.O. Bonds to purchase the development rights and the corresponding TDRs retained on these properties. The Department of Economic Development is developing a strategic plan for Phase II of the preservation program and preservation opportunities will be considered as they become available.

Cost Change

Accelerated funds to purchase easements critical to the preservation program in FY15. Remaining Crown Farm payments are now reflected in FY19 and FY20.

Justification

Annotated Code of Maryland 2-501 to 2-515, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation; Annotated Code of Maryland 13-301 to 13-308, Agricultural Land Transfer Tax; and Montgomery County Code, Chapter 2B, Agricultural Land Preservation, and Executive Regulation 3-09 AM.

Other

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FY15 estimated Planning, Design and Supervision expenditures are \$316,000: 1.0 FTE Sr. Business Development Specialist; 1.5 FTE Principal Administrative Aides; \$20,000 - Deer Donation Program; \$10,000 - Montgomery Weed Control Program; and \$50,000 for the Cooperative Extension Partnership. Appropriations are based upon a projection of Montgomery County's portion of the total amount of Agricultural Transfer Tax which has become available since the last appropriation and State Rural Legacy Program grant funding. Appropriations to this project represent a commitment of Agricultural Land Transfer Tax funds and State Aid to purchase agricultural easements. The Agricultural Transfer Taxes are deposited into an investment income fund, the interest from which is used to fund direct administrative expenses, the purchase of easements, and other agricultural initiatives carried out by the Agricultural Services Division. The program permits the County to take title to the TDRs. These TDRs are an asset that the County may sell in the future, generating revenues for the Agricultural Land Preservation Fund. The County can use unexpended appropriations for this project to pay its share (40 percent) of the cost of easements purchased by the State. Since FY99, the County has received State RLP grant funds to purchase easements for the State through the County. The State allows County reimbursement of three percent for direct administrative costs such as appraisals, title searches, surveys, and legal fees. Given changes to the Federal Program, new Federal Aid funds are no longer programmed in this project.

Fiscal Note

Expenditures do not reflect additional authorized payments made from the Agricultural Land Preservation Fund balance to increase financial incentives for landowners. Terms and conditions regarding contributions from the Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) will be specified within the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and MSCD.

The Executive asserts that this project conforms to the requirements of relevant local plans, as required by the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act.

Coordination

State of Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Landowners