



Agriculture

Montgomery County has a strong agricultural heritage and farming continues to be an important part of the County's physical and cultural landscape. In 1980, the County Council made one of the most significant land-use decisions in County history by creating the Agricultural Reserve, which encompasses 93,000 acres – almost a full third of the County's land resources – along the county's northern and western borders.

The Agricultural Reserve and its accompanying Master Plan and zoning elements were designed to protect farmland and agriculture. The new zoning code will maintain the existing zoning protections afforded to the Agricultural Reserve in addition to creating opportunities for urban agriculture in down county areas.



Current Code

Agricultural Reserve Zone: RDT (Rural Density Transfer). Any type of farming is allowed in this zone.

Uses: The broad, vague category of “agricultural uses” are allowed in all agricultural and single family residential zones. This use allows for most types of farming activity, including the keeping of any type of farm animals in any of these zones. However, in single family zones, a structure to house farm animals must be 25' from a lot line and 100' from a dwelling on another lot or parcel, making it impossible for many residents to have a chicken coop.



Proposed Code

Agricultural Reserve Zone: AC (Agricultural Conservation) is substantively the same as RDT.

Uses: New uses are designed to provide clarity and to encourage the appropriate scale of agriculture in each zone.

- **Crop Farm:** Growing and harvesting of produce and other plant-based agricultural products. Allowed in agricultural, rural and certain residential zones.
- **Livestock Farm:** Keeping and raising of livestock. Allowed in agricultural and rural zones.
- **Urban Farm:** Cultivation of plants and limited raising of fowl or bees. Allowed in C/R, employment and certain residential zones.
- **Community Garden:** Land gardened by a group of people for personal use or limited distribution. Allowed in most zones.
- **Animal Husbandry:** Accessory practice of breeding and raising small animals, fowl and bees. Accessory structures for housing animals or fowl must be behind rear building line and 25' from rear and side property line. Allowed in most zones.

