



THE ABC'S OF TDR'S AND RURAL ZONING IN CECIL COUNTY



WHAT IS A "TDR?"



A Transferable Development Right is a right to create a residential lot or build a house that can be severed from land in a "sending area", and transferred to property in a "receiving area". Sending areas typically are permanently preserved farm or natural areas, and receiving areas are typically part of towns or growth areas. Landowners selling TDR's still own and manage their land and can sell it for farming.



HOW MUCH IS A TDR WORTH?



The value of Transferable Development Rights varies widely among counties using them. In St. Mary's County, TDR's trade for about \$10,000 each. In Calvert County they trade for \$7,500 each. In Montgomery County, TDR's trade for about \$42,000 each. In Queen Anne's there are three separate types of TDR's with the most valuable, Critical Area TDR's, trading for more than \$250,000 each.



WHY IS RESTRICTIVE RURAL ZONING NOW PART OF CECIL'S TDR PROGRAM?



Counties with effective TDR programs have instituted these programs at the same time as enacting restrictive rural zoning. When coupled with a TDR program, restrictive rural zoning discourages sprawl subdivisions in farming areas, while also allowing farmers to receive cash for their current number of development rights.



WILL RESTRICTIVE RURAL ZONING IMPACT MY PROPERTY VALUES?



Contrary to popular perception, reducing the number of homes that can be built per acre on a section of land does not necessarily reduce the value of the land. According to a recent study by the Maryland Center for Agro Ecology, Inc., the value of land with restrictive zoning increased or experienced no change in four Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland counties. In addition, the new Cecil TDR program "grandfathers" current zoning densities by allowing TDR sales at these current densities.



IS CECIL COUNTY ALONE IN ADOPTING RESTRICTIVE RURAL ZONING?



Counties serious about farming utilize restrictive zoning as a primary tool for protecting rural lands. In Lancaster County, PA, every township has adopted rural zoning allowing only one unit per 25 acres. On the Eastern Shore, most counties have more restrictive rural zoning than Cecil, including one dwelling per 30 acres in Kent County and one dwelling per 20 acres in Queen Anne's, Talbot, Dorchester counties. Caroline County totally prohibits major subdivisions in rural areas while allowing these landowners to transfer TDR's to growth areas at a rate of one TDR per 15 acres.



Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, www.eslc.org

