AN ACT repealing and reenacting the Forest Conservation Act of Howard County; providing the purpose of the Act; defining certain terms to be used throughout the Act; requiring a Forest Conservation Plan for any person, or unit of local government, developing land 40,000 square feet or greater, subject to certain exceptions; requiring a Declaration of Intent for certain exemptions; setting forth the requirements of a Forest Conservation Plan; providing for the review process of a Forest Conservation Plan; requiring a Forest Conservation Manual to be prepared and adopted; requiring that the Manual include specific standards and guidelines; setting forth certain Forest Retention Priorities; requiring certain reforestation requirements and providing that reforestation shall be based on certain calculations; requiring certain afforestation and providing that afforestation shall be based on certain calculations; setting forth certain afforestation and reforestation location priorities and preferred methods; requiring certain site design; requiring certain financial security for afforestation and reforestation; authorizing a fee-in-lieu of afforestation and reforestation under certain conditions; providing for Forest Conservation Fund to keep the fee-in-lieu of afforestation and reforestation and providing for the use of monies contained in the fund; providing for certain enforcement and penalties; requiring mitigation by the County when land is developed in violation of the Act; providing for certain appeals; allowing for the grant of variances of the provisions of the Act, under certain circumstances; allowing the abandonment of Forest Conservation Easements under certain conditions; providing for the opportunity to create a Forest Mitigation Bank under certain conditions; and generally related to forest conservation in Howard County.
Section 1. Be It Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that the Howard County Code is amended as follows:

By repealing and reenacting:

Title 16. Planning, Zoning, and Subdivisions and Land Development Regulations


Section 16.1200. Short Title; Background; Purpose.

(A) Short Title: ThisSubtitle shall be known as the Forest Conservation Act of Howard County.

(B) Background: ThisSubtitle is pursuant to the requirements of the Maryland Forest Conservation Act of 1991, which requires units of local government to adopt, by December 31, 1992, a local forest conservation program which meets or is more stringent than the requirements of Title 5, Subtitle 16 of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

(C) Purpose: The purpose of thisSubtitle is to protect and maintain forest vegetation and forest areas in Howard County by requiring certain development projects to have an approved Forest Conservation Plan as a condition of approval of the development.


Except as provided in Subsection (ff) of this Section, words and phrases used in this Subtitle have their usual meaning unless defined in the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations as set forth in Subtitle 1 of this Title or as follows in this Section:

(A) Afforestation: "Afforestation" means the establishment of new forest on an area presently without forest cover, by planting in accordance with the practices specified in the Forest Conservation Manual.

(B) COMAR: "COMAR" means the Code of Maryland Regulations.
(c) **Critical Habitat Area**: "Critical habitat area" means a critical habitat for threatened or endangered species and its surrounding protection area. A critical habitat shall:

1. Be likely to contribute to the long-term survival of the species;
2. Be likely to be occupied by the species for the foreseeable future; and
3. Constitute habitat of the species which is deemed critical under Title 4, Subtitle 2A or Title 10, Subtitle 2A of the Natural Resource Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

(d) **Declaration of Intent**: "Declaration of Intent" means a statement signed by a landowner or developer certifying that:

1. A proposed development is exempt from the requirement for an approved Forest Conservation Plan; and
2. No activity requiring a Forest Conservation Plan will occur on the site within 5 years of the date of the completion of the exempt activity.

(e) **Department**: "Department" means the Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning.

(f) **Development**: "Development" means the establishment of a principal use of a site; a change in a principal use of a site; or the improvement or alteration of a site by the construction, enlargement, or relocation of a structure; the provision of stormwater management or roads; the grading of existing topography; the clearing or grubbing of existing vegetation; or any other nonagricultural activity that results in a change in existing site conditions.

(g) **Forest**: "Forest" means a biological community dominated by native trees and other woody plants covering an area of 10,000 square feet or greater that is at least 50 feet wide. "Forest" includes:

1. Areas with a cover ratio of 100 trees per acre with at least 50% of these trees being at least 2 inches in diameter at a height of 4.5 feet above ground; or
2. Areas meeting the criteria above that have been cut but not cleared.

"Forest" does not include orchards, tree nurseries, Christmas tree farms or other types of forest crops.
(H) **Forest Conservation:** "Forest conservation" means the retention of existing forest or the creation of new forest at the levels set by this subtitle.

(i) **Forest Conservation Manual:** "Forest Conservation Manual" means the technical manual approved by the County Council containing performance standards and guidelines for implementation of the Howard County Forest Conservation Program.

(j) **Forest Conservation Plan:** "Forest Conservation Plan" means a plan which shows the impacts of a proposed development on existing forest resources. A "Forest Conservation Plan" includes existing forest areas to be removed or retained; the location, extent and specifications for any reforestation or afforestation required; and legal measures to protect forest resources after completion of development in accordance with Section 16.1203 below.

(k) **Forest Conservation Program:** "Forest Conservation Program" means the administration of the Howard County Forest Conservation Act and Manual by appropriate County agencies and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

(l) **Forest Mitigation Banking:** "Forest mitigation banking" means the planting or retention of trees, according to plans approved by the Department, to be used as credit for planting or retention required under this subtitle.

(m) **Forest Stand Delineation:** "Forest stand delineation" means the evaluation, pursuant to Section 16.1204 of this subtitle, of existing forests and other vegetation on a site proposed for development.

(n) **Green Infrastructure Network:** "Green Infrastructure Network" means the system of hubs and corridors mapped in the Howard County Green Infrastructure Network Plan, published by the Department of Planning and Zoning in December 2012, as amended.

(o) **Historic Site:** "Historic Site" means a site or structure listed on the Historic Sites Inventory adopted by resolution of the County Council.

(p) **Historic Structure:** "Historic Structure" means a structure or cluster of structures situated within the county which, together with its appurtenances and environmental setting, have significant historic or architectural value and have been designated as such by resolution of the County Council.
1. **Impervious Surface**: "Impervious surface" means any permanent artificial surface, including but not limited to areas covered by asphalt, concrete, pavers, permeable paving, rooftops and decks.

2. **Limit of Disturbance**: "Limit of disturbance" means the boundary of permitted changes to existing site conditions due to clearing and grading, as well as other activities associated with site development such as parking of vehicles and equipment, storage of materials, and disposal of construction debris.

3. **Linear Project**: "Linear project" means a project having an elongated configuration with nearly parallel sides designed to transport a utility product or public service (for example, gas, electricity, water, sewer, communications, trains and vehicles) not otherwise addressed in an application for subdivision.

4. **Lot**: "Lot" means a piece of land described in a final plat or deed and recorded in the land records of Howard County in accordance with the laws and regulations in effect at the time of recordation.


6. **Net Tract Area**: "Net tract area" means the total area to the nearest 1/10 acre, whether forested or not, of a proposed development, exclusive of any 100-year floodplain, utility transmission line easements, or preservation parcel as referenced in the zoning regulations. "Net tract area" is to be used in calculating any reforestation or afforestation obligations that may be created by the proposed development.

7. **Planned Business Park**: "Planned business park" means a commercial-industrial subdivision developed with an integrated plan that provides common infrastructure and protection of environmentally sensitive features.

8. **Planned Unit Development**: "Planned Unit Development" means a development comprised of a combination of land uses or varying intensities of the same land use in accordance with an integrated plan that provides flexibility in design with at least 20% of the land permanently dedicated to open space.

9. **Priority Funding Area**: "Priority Funding Area" means an area designated as a Priority Funding Area under Title 5, Subtitle 7B of the State Finance and Procurement Article. In Howard County the Priority Funding Area is all land within the Planned Service Area for both public water and sewerage.
(2) **Reforestation:** "Reforestation" means the establishment, in accordance with the Howard County Forest Conservation Manual, of new forest cover to replace forest resources lost because of development activities.

(AA) **Scenic Road:** "Scenic road" means a public road or road segment that is included in the scenic roads inventory adopted by the County Council in accordance with Section 16.1403 of this Title.

(BB) **Stream Restoration Project:** "Stream Restoration Project" means an activity that:

1. Is designed to stabilize stream banks or enhance stream function or habitat located within an existing stream, waterway or floodplain;
2. Avoids and minimizes impacts to forests and provides for replanting on-site an equivalent number of trees to the number removed by the project;
3. May be performed under a municipal separate storm sewer system permit, a watershed implementation plan growth offset, or another plan administered by the State or Howard County to achieve or maintain water quality standards; and
4. Is not performed to satisfy stormwater management, wetlands mitigation, or any other regulatory requirement associated with proposed development activity.

(CC) **Subdivision Regulations:** "Subdivision Regulations" means Title 16, Subtitle 1 of the Howard County Code, entitled "Subdivision and Land Development Regulations."

(DD) **Urban Canopy:** "Urban Canopy" means tree canopy inside the planned service area for water and sewer that does not meet the definition of forest but does provide air quality, water quality, and habitat benefits.

(EE) **Watershed:** "Watershed" means the Maryland 12-digit watershed delineation as defined by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

(FF) **Other Terms:** Other terms which are defined in Title 5, Subtitle 16 of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, COMAR 08.19.01.03, "Definitions," and COMAR 08.19.03 08.19.03.01, Article II, "Forest and Tree Conservation Definitions," are incorporated by reference and shall apply to this Subtitle for any terms which are not defined in this Section or the Manual.
SECTION 16.1202. APPLICABILITY; EXEMPTIONS; DECLARATION OF INTENT.

(A) Forest Conservation Plan Required for Subdivision Plan, Site Development Plan, or Grading Permit: Unless exempted by Subsection (b) of this Section, any person or unit of local government developing land 40,000 square feet or greater in area shall file a Forest Conservation Plan with the Department. Plan approval is required prior to development and prior to approval of a:

1. Subdivision plan;
2. Site development plan;
3. Grading permit; or
4. County road and utility construction plans.

(B) Exemptions to Requirement for Forest Conservation Plans:

1. Exemptions not requiring a Declaration of Intent: The following development is exempt from the requirement of this Subtitle:

   (i) Development activity on a single lot smaller than 40,000 square feet, as long as the cutting, clearing or grading does not include any area already subject to a previously approved Forest Conservation Plan.

   (ii) A Planned Unit Development which has preliminary development plan approval and 50% or more of the land is recorded and substantially developed before December 31, 1992. If new land area is added to the planned unit development, that new land area is subject to this Subtitle;

   (iii) A Planned Business Park of at least 75 acres which has preliminary plan approval before December 31, 1992, and which meets the intent of this Subtitle by retaining forest in high-priority locations (floodplains, wetlands, wetland and stream buffers, steep slopes, and/or wildlife corridors/green infrastructure network);

   (iv) Any agricultural activity, including agricultural support buildings and structures built using accepted best management practice unless it involves the clearing of 40,000 square feet or greater of forest within a 1-year period;

   (v) Agricultural Preservation Subdivision, unless it involves the clearing of 20,000 square feet or greater of forest;
(VI) Resubdivisions, that do not create additional lots, deed adjoiners, property consolidations, reconfigurations and correction plats as provided for in Sections 16.102 and 16.103 of this Title;

(VII) Minor subdivisions that create one additional lot and have no further subdivision potential;

(VIII) Mining or other extractive activity exempted by state law from the forest conservation requirements;

(IX) Routine maintenance of existing roads and public utility rights-of-way.

(X) Highway construction using full or partial state funding is exempt from this Subtitle but subject to state reforestation requirements set forth in Title 5, Subtitle 1 of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland;

(XI) The cutting or clearing of public utility rights-of-way, or land for electric generating stations licensed pursuant to Title 7, Subtitle 2 of the Public Utility Companies Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, if:

A. Required certificates of public convenience and necessity have been issued in accordance with the Natural Resources Article, § 5-1603(f), Annotated Code of Maryland; and

B. Cutting or clearing of the forest is conducted to minimize the loss of forest.

(XII) Howard County capital improvement projects, including those with partial State funding, provided that:

A. The activity is conducted on a single lot of any size;

B. The activity does not result in the cutting, clearing or grading of more than 20,000 square feet of forest; and

C. The impacted forest is not subject to a previously approved Forest Conservation Plan;

(XIII) An activity on a previously developed area covered by an impervious surface and located in the Priority Funding Area;

(XIV) Maintenance or retrofitting of a stormwater management structure that may include clearing of vegetation or removal and trimming of trees, so long as the maintenance or retrofitting is within the original limits of
(2) Exemptions requiring a Declaration of Intent: The following development is exempt from the requirements of this Subtitle, provided that the developer files a Declaration of Intent with the Department as provided in subsection (c) below:

(i) Residential development on an existing single lot of any size if:
   A. The total cutting, clearing or grading of forest resources is less than 20,000 square feet; and
   B. The forest resources affected by the development are not subject to a previously approved Forest Conservation Plan;

(ii) Commercial logging and timber harvesting operations conducted subject to the forest conservation and management program under the Tax Property Article §8-211, Annotated Code of Maryland;

(iii) Any agricultural activity, including agricultural support buildings and structures built using accepted best management practice involving the clearing of 40,000 square feet or greater of forest within a 1-year period;

(iv) Subdivision in connection with real estate transactions to provide a security, leasehold, or other legal or equitable interest, including a transfer of title, of a portion of a lot or parcel, if:
   A. The transaction does not involve a change in land use, or new development or redevelopment, with associated land-disturbing activities; and
   B. Both the grantor and grantee file the Declaration of Intent; and

(v) Linear projects that are not exempt and that disturb less than 20,000 square feet of forest, if the impacted forest is not subject to a previously approved Forest Conservation Plan.

(C) Declaration of Intent:
(1) A person seeking an exemption under subsection (b) above shall submit a Declaration of Intent to the Department to verify that the proposed activity is exempt.

(2) No regulated activity may occur on the area covered by the Declaration of Intent within 5 years of the completion of cutting, clearing or grading of forest resources, or in the case of real estate transactions, within 5 years of the effective date of the Declaration of Intent.

(3) The Department may require a person failing to file a Declaration of Intent or found not in compliance with a Declaration of Intent to perform one or any combination of the following:

   (i) Meet the retention, reforestation and afforestation requirements established by this Subtitle;

   (ii) Pay a penalty fee established by fee schedules approved by resolution of the County Council per square foot of forest cut or cleared, but in no case less than the minimum set by state law;

   (iii) Be subject to other enforcement actions appropriate under Title 5, Subtitle 16 of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and this Subtitle; or

   (iv) File a Declaration of Intent with the Department.


(a) Purpose: The Forest Conservation Manual is the technical manual used to establish standards of performance required in preparing forest stand delineations and Forest Conservation Plans.

(b) Preparation and Adoption: The manual and amendments to it are prepared by the Department and adopted by resolution of the County Council.

(c) Contents: The manual includes specific standards and guidelines for:

   (1) Submission of Forest Conservation Plans, including forest stand delineations;

   (2) Approval of Forest Conservation Plans;

   (3) Forest retention priorities;

   (4) Reforestation and afforestation calculations, priorities and preferred methods;

   (5) Forest conservation agreements and financial security;
(6) Deed of forest conservation easements;

(7) Procedural variations for minor subdivisions, single lot site development plans, rural cluster subdivisions, and phased development;

(8) Forest mitigation banking; and

(9) Other information necessary to implement this subtitle.

SECTION 16.1204. FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN.

(A) Applicability: Forest Conservation Plans, consistent with this Subtitle and the Manual, shall be submitted to the Department with applications for all development not exempt under Section 16.1202 of this Subtitle.

(B) Professionally Prepared: The Forest Conservation Plan shall be prepared by a licensed forester, landscape architect or other qualified professional as specified in COMAR 08.19.06.01: Licensed Landscape Architect, or Certified Arborist.

(C) Forest Stand Delineation: The Forest Conservation Plan shall include a forest stand delineation for the property to be subdivided, developed, or graded. An approved forest stand delineation is valid for 5 years. The forest stand delineation shall:

1. Describe the extent and quality of existing forests and other vegetation and its relationship to environmentally sensitive areas on-site and to forest resources on adjacent properties.

2. Be used during the review process to determine the most suitable and practical areas for forest conservation.

(D) Forest Conservation Plan: A Forest Conservation Plan shall:

1. State the net tract area, area of forest conservation required, and the area of forest conservation proposed on-site and/or off-site;

2. Show the proposed limits of disturbance;

3. Show locations for proposed retention of existing forest and/or proposed reforestation or afforestation;

4. Justify the following, if existing forest cannot be retained:

   (i) How techniques for forest retention have been exhausted;

   (ii) Why the priority forests specified in Section 16.1205 of this Subtitle cannot be left in an undisturbed condition;
(Ill) If priority forests and priority areas cannot be left undisturbed, where on
the site in priority areas reforestation or afforestation will occur in
compliance with Section 16.1208 of this subtitle;

(iv) How site design requirements will be followed to maximize meeting forest
conservation obligations on-site in compliance with Section 16.1209 of this
subtitle;

(v) How the sequence for preferred reforestation or afforestation location
and methods will be followed in compliance with Section 16.1208 of this
subtitle; and

(vi) Why reforestation or afforestation requirements cannot reasonably
be accomplished on- or off-site, or through a forest mitigation bank, if the
applicant proposes payments of an in-lieu fee to the forest conservation
fund;

(5) Show proposed locations and types of protective devices and measures to be
used during construction to protect trees and forests designated for
conservation, including protection of critical root zones;

(6) In the case of reforestation or afforestation, include a reforestation or
afforestation plan, with a timetable, description of needed site and soil
preparation, and the species, size, and spacing of plantings;

(7) Include a minimum three growing season forest conservation agreement as
specified in the manual that details how the areas designated for retention,
reforestation or afforestation will be maintained to ensure protection and
satisfactory establishment, including a reinforcement planting provision if
survival rates fall below required standards. Financial security shall be
provided for the forest conservation agreement as provided in Section 16.1210
and the manual. Minor subdivisions which meet forest conservation
requirements entirely by forest retention are not required to have a forest
conservation agreement;

(8) Include a deed of forest conservation easement with a plat of the forest
conservation easement area, as specified in the manual that:

(i) Provides protection, in perpetuity, for areas of forest retention,

reforestation and afforestation; and
(II) Limits uses in areas of forest conservation to those uses that are
designated and consistent with forest conservation, including
recreational activities and forest management practices that are used to
preserve forest;

(9) Include other information the Department determines is necessary to
implement this subtitle; and

(10) Be amended or a new plan prepared, as provided in the manual, if required as a
result of changes in the development or in the condition of the site.

Section 16.1205. Forest Retention Priorities.

(A) On-site forest retention required: Subdivision, site development, and grading
shall leave the following vegetation and specific areas in an undisturbed condition.

(1) Trees and other vegetation identified on the lists of rare, threatened and
dangerous species of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the Maryland
Department of Natural Resources.

(2) Trees that are part of a historic site or associated with a historic structure.

(3) State champion trees, trees 75% of the diameter of state champion trees, and
trees 30" in diameter or larger.

(B) On-site forest retention priorities: The following vegetation and specific areas
are considered priority and are listed in order of preference for on-site retention
and protection in the county. Subdivision, site development, and grading shall leave
the following vegetation and specific areas in an undisturbed condition unless
demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Department, that reasonable efforts have
been made to protect them and the plan cannot be reasonably altered or that forest
planting in an alternate location would have greater environmental benefit:

(1) Howard County Green Infrastructure Network.

(2) 100-year floodplain as defined in the Subdivision Regulations.

(3) Stream buffers as defined in the Subdivision Regulations;

(4) Forested wetlands and wetland buffers as defined in the Subdivision
Regulations;

(5) Critical habitat areas and forest corridors with a minimum width of 300 feet,
where practical, for wildlife movement;
(6) Steep slopes as defined in the Subdivision Regulations and slopes of 15% or greater with a soil erodibility factor greater than 0.35;

(7) Forest contiguous with the priority areas listed above;

(8) Forest contiguous with off-site forest, if the off-site forest is also protected by a Forest Conservation Easement; and

(9) Property line and right-of-way buffers, particularly adjacent to scenic roads.

(C) Off-site Retention:

(1) The County or a developer may provide for off-site forest retention at a ratio of 2 acres of forest retention for every 1 acre of forest conservation obligation. The off-site forest must not be currently protected in perpetuity by easement or other long-term protection measures.

(2) The vegetation and specific area priorities for locating off-site forest retention under this subsection are the same as provided under subsection (B) of this section.

SECTION 16.1206. Reforestation.

(A) Requirement to Reforest Areas Which Have Been Cut or Cleared: The Forest Conservation Plan shall provide for:

(1) On- or off-site reforestation to replace forest which is proposed to be cut or cleared on the net tract area after reasonable efforts to minimize such cutting or clearing; or

(2) Payment-in-lieu of reforestation if reforestation cannot reasonably be accomplished.

(B) Minimum Size: Areas to be reforested shall be at least 10,000 square feet with a minimum width of 50 feet, unless otherwise approved by the Department based on criteria in the Forest Conservation Manual.

(C) Calculating the Amount of Reforestation Required: The amount of reforestation required depends upon the amount of forest cover existing and removed from the net tract area and the land use being developed. The reforestation requirement shall be calculated as follows:

(1) Reforestation Threshold: There is a reforestation threshold for all land use categories. The reforestation threshold establishes the percentage of the net
TRACT AREA AT WHICH THE REFORESTATION REQUIREMENT CHANGES. REFORESTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CLEARING FOREST BELOW THE THRESHOLD ARE GREATER THAN FOR CLEARING ABOVE THE THRESHOLD. THRESHOLDS FOR CALCULATING REFORESTATION REQUIREMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND USE</th>
<th>THRESHOLD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential: Rural Low Density</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Residential lots average 5 acres or more)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Rural Medium Density</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Residential lots average 1 to 4.99 acres)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Suburban</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Less than 1 acre per dwelling unit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional or Linear</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail, Industrial or Office</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use Development or Planned Unit</td>
<td>15% 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) **Reforestation Calculation:** For all existing forest cover cleared on the net tract area, measured to the nearest 1/10 acre, the reforestation requirement shall be calculated as follows:

(i) For reforestation sites within the same watershed, 1/2 acre shall be reforested, for each acre or portion of an acre cleared above the threshold (1/2:1 ratio). For reforestation sites outside the same watershed, 1 acre shall be reforested, for each acre or portion of an acre cleared above the threshold (1:1 ratio).

(ii) For reforestation sites within the same watershed, 2 acres shall be reforested for each acre or portion of an acre cleared below the threshold (2:1 ratio). For reforestation sites outside the same watershed, 3 acres shall be reforested for each acre or portion of an acre cleared below the threshold (3:1 ratio).
(III) ALL FOREST ACREAGE RETAINED ABOVE THE THRESHOLD SHALL BE DIRECTLY CREDITED AGAINST ANY REFORESTATION OBLIGATION (1:1 RATIO).

SECTION 16.1207. AFFORESTATION.

(A) **REQUIREMENT TO AFFOREST:** IF EXISTING FOREST RESOURCES ARE BELOW THE FOLLOWING MINIMUMS, THE FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN SHALL PROVIDE FOR:

1. AFFORESTATION ON-SITE OR OFF-SITE; OR
2. PAYMENT-IN-LIEU OF AFFORESTATION IF AFFORESTATION CANNOT REASONABLY BE ACCOMPLISHED.

(B) **MINIMUM SIZE:** AREAS TO BE AFFORESTED SHALL BE AT LEAST 10,000 SQUARE FEET WITH A MINIMUM WIDTH OF 50 FEET, UNLESS OTHERWISE APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT BASED ON CRITERIA IN THE MANUAL.

(C) **CALCULATING THE AMOUNT OF AFFORESTATION REQUIRED:** THE AMOUNT OF AFFORESTATION REQUIRED DEPENDS UPON THE AMOUNT OF FOREST COVER EXISTING AND REMOVED FROM THE NET TRACT AREA AND THE LAND USE BEING DEVELOPED. THE AFFORESTATION REQUIREMENT SHALL BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

1. **MINIMUM FOREST COVER:** FOR EACH LAND USE, THE FOLLOWING MINIMUM PERCENTAGE OF FOREST COVER SHALL BE PROVIDED:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND USE</th>
<th>THRESHOLD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESIDENTIAL: RURAL LOW DENSITY</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(RESIDENTIAL LOTS AVERAGE 5 ACRES OR MORE)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESIDENTIAL RURAL MEDIUM DENSITY</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(RESIDENTIAL LOTS AVERAGE 1 TO 4.99 ACRES)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESIDENTIAL SUBURBAN</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(LESS THAN 1 ACRE PER DWELLING UNIT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTITUTIONAL OR LINEAR</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RETAIL, INDUSTRIAL OR OFFICE</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT OR PLANNED UNIT</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **FOREST CUT OR CLEARED BELOW THE REQUIRED AFFORESTATION LEVEL SHALL BE AFFORESTED AT 2:1 RATIO FOR AFFORESTATION SITES WITHIN THE SAME WATERSHED AND**
AT 3:1 RATIO FOR AFFORESTATION SITES OUTSIDE THE SAME WATERSHED. THIS
AFFORESTATION SHALL BE ADDED TO THE AMOUNT OF AFFORESTATION NECESSARY TO
REACH THE MINIMUM REQUIRED AFFORESTED LEVEL, AS DETERMINED BY THE AMOUNT OF
FOREST EXISTING BEFORE CUTTING OR CLEARING BEGAN.

SECTION 16.1208. REFORESTATION AND AFFORESTATION LOCATION PRIORITIES, PREFERRED
LOCATION, AND PREFERRED METHODS.

(A) LOCATION PRIORITIES: THE FOLLOWING ARE PRIORITY LOCATIONS FOR REFORESTATION AND
AFFORESTATION, AND ARE LISTED IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE. THE DEPARTMENT MAY APPROVE
LOWER PRIORITY LOCATIONS ON THIS LIST WHEN SUCH LOCATIONS BETTER ACHIEVE THE INTENT OF
THIS SUBTITLE OR COUNTY LAND USE REGULATIONS. IF OFF-SITE PLANTING WOULD HAVE GREATER
ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT, THE DEPARTMENT MAY APPROVE OFF-SITE REFORESTATION OR
AFFORESTATION IN HIGH-PRIORITY LOCATIONS WITHIN HOWARD COUNTY, PREFERABLY WITHIN
THE SAME SUBBASIN OR WATERSHED:

(1) ESTABLISH OR ENHANCE FOREST IN THE HOWARD COUNTY GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
NETWORK.

(2) ESTABLISH OR ENHANCE FOREST IN 100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS AND BUFFERS TO
INTERMITTENT AND PERENNIAL STREAMS AS DEFINED IN THE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS;

(3) ESTABLISH OR ENHANCE FOREST IN WETLANDS AND WETLAND BUFFERS AS DEFINED IN THE
SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS;

(4) ESTABLISH OR ENHANCE CRITICAL HABITAT BUFFERS AND FOREST CORRIDORS FOR
WILDLIFE MOVEMENT, THE CORRIDORS, WHERE PRACTICAL, BEING A MINIMUM OF 300 FEET
IN WIDTH;

(5) ESTABLISH PLANTINGS TO STABILIZE SLOPES OF 25% OR GREATER AND SLOPES OF 15% OR
GREATER WITH A SOIL K VALUE GREATER THAN 0.35;

(6) ESTABLISH FOREST AREAS ADJACENT TO EXISTING FORESTS TO INCREASE THE OVERALL
AREA OF CONTIGUOUS FOREST COVER;

(7) ESTABLISH FOREST AREAS BETWEEN SMALL FOREST AND TREE STANDS TO BUILD A FOREST
COMMUNITY; AND

(8) ESTABLISH BUFFERS ALONG PROPERTY LINES BETWEEN DIFFERING LAND USES WHEN
APPROPRIATE, OR ADJACENT TO HIGHWAYS OR UTILITY RIGHTS-OF-WAY, PARTICULARLY
ADJACENT TO SCENIC ROADS.
(B) **Preferred Location:** The following is the preferred sequence for location of reforestation and afforestation. The Department may approve less preferred locations when such locations better achieve the location priorities for reforestation and afforestation, take better advantage of opportunities to consolidate forest conservation efforts, or better achieve the objectives of other county land use regulations.

1. **On site.**
2. **Mitigation bank.**
3. **Off site.**

(C) **Preferred Methods:** The following sequence of reforestation and afforestation methods is preferred. The Department may approve less preferred methods when such methods will better achieve forest survival.

1. **Planting with nursery stock.**
2. **Transplanting local plant material.**
3. **Natural regeneration.**
4. **Selective clearing and supplemental planting.**

### 16.1209 Site Design Requirements.

(A) Site design should address the Forest Conservation Program goals of maximizing forest retention and meeting forest conservation obligations on-site.

(B) Before mitigation banks, off-site compliance, or fee-in-lieu requests will be considered, forest conservation obligations shall be met on-site, in accordance with the following site design requirements:

1. **Nonresidential developments shall accommodate forest conservation obligations on-site by establishing forest conservation easements with retained or planted forest in all on-site sensitive areas, including floodplains, wetlands, wetland buffers, steep slopes and stream buffers. To ensure protection of riparian areas, the Forest Conservation Easements shall be a minimum 75-foot width from the banks of any perennial and intermittent stream. The area between outside the required stream buffer buffer, as defined by subdivision regulations, and the Forest Conservation Easement may be disturbed during construction then reforested.**
(2) RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS WITH MORE THAN ONE ACRE OF OBLIGATION SHALL MEET A
MINIMUM OF 75% OF THEIR OBLIGATION ON-SITE BY REDUCING LCT SIZES, CLUSTERING
LOTS AND MAXIMIZING OPEN SPACE TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT PERMITTED BY THE
SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS. INFILL SUBDIVISIONS OF TEN LOTS
OR LESS ARE EXEMPT FROM THIS REQUIREMENT.

(3) RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RC OR RR ZONING DISTRICTS THAT PROPOSE TO
IMPORT DEVELOPMENT DENSITY, SHALL ACCOMMODATE ALL FOREST CONSERVATION
OBLIGATIONS WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF A RECEIVING PROPERTY BEFORE IMPORTING
DEVELOPMENT DENSITY.

(4) TO ENSURE ADEQUATE SETBACKS FROM FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ON
RESIDENTIAL LOTS, A 35-FOOT SETBACK SHALL BE PROVIDED FROM REAR AND SIDE LOT
LINES FOR A DETACHED OR ATTACHED DWELLING UNIT AND ANY ON-SITE OR OFF-SITE
PLANTED FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT. THE SETBACK MAY BE ELIMINATED IF
LARGER STOCK (TWO ROWS OF ONE-INCH MINIMUM CALIPER) IS PLANTED ALONG THE EDGE
OF THE FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT.

SECTION 16.1210. FINANCIAL SECURITY FOR REFORESTATION AND AFFORESTATION.

(A) FINANCIAL SECURITY REQUIRED: A PERSON REQUIRED TO PROVIDE AFFORESTATION OR
REFORESTATION UNDER THIS SUBTITLE SHALL FURNISH FINANCIAL SECURITY IN THE FORM OF A
BOND, AN IRREVOCABLE LETTER OF CREDIT, OR OTHER SECURITY APPROVED BY THE COUNTY. THIS
SHALL BE PROVIDED PRIOR TO PLAT RECORDATION IF THE AFFORESTATION OR REFORESTATION IS
REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL OF A SUBDIVISION; PRIOR TO SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL IF THE
AFFORESTATION OR REFORESTATION IS REQUIRED FOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL; AND
PRIOR TO GRADING PERMIT ISSUANCE IF THE AFFORESTATION OR REFORESTATION IS REQUIRED FOR
ISSUANCE OF A GRADING PERMIT. THE SECURITY SHALL:

(1) ASSURE THAT THE AFFORESTATION, REFORESTATION, AND THE ASSOCIATED FOREST
CONSERVATION AGREEMENT ARE IMPLEMENTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPROVED
FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN;

(2) BE IN AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO THE ESTIMATED COST, AS APPROVED BY THE COUNTY, OF
REFORESTATION AND AFFORESTATION; AND

(3) BE IN A FORM AND OF A CONTENT APPROVED BY THE COUNTY.

(B) RELEASE OF FINANCIAL SECURITY: IF, AFTER 3 GROWING SEASONS FOLLOWING THE
AFFORESTATION OR REFORESTATION OR AS PROVIDED IN THE FOREST CONSERVATION AGREEMENT,
THE PLANTINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE AFFORESTATION OR REFORESTATION MEET OR EXCEED THE
STANDARDS OF THE MANUAL, THE AMOUNT OF THE BOND, LETTER OF CREDIT, OR OTHER SECURITY
SHALL BE RETURNED OR RELEASED.

(c) Default and Lien: If, after 3 growing seasons or as provided in the forest
conservation agreement, the plantings do not meet the aforesaid standards, the
County shall have the right to draw on the security according to its terms and use
the sums withdrawn for the costs incurred by the County in achieving the
afforestation or reforestation standards required by the plan and manual. Any
costs incurred by the County in excess of the security amount shall be charged
against the developer and, unless they are paid or appealed to the Board of Appeals
within 30 days after billing by the County, shall become a final lien against the
property being developed and shall in every respect be treated as County real estate
taxes.

Section 16.1211. Fee-in-lieu of afforestation or reforestation.

(a) Fee-in-lieu authorized:

(1) The Department may approve the payment of a fee-in-lieu of afforestation or
reforestation:

(i) When afforestation or reforestation requirements cannot be reasonably
accomplished on-site or off-site based on criteria in the manual, and
appropriate credits generated by a forest mitigation bank are not
available; or

(ii) When a landowner requests a modification of a recorded forest
conservation easement and notice of the modification has been provided in
accordance with the Section 10-312 of the Local Government Article of
the Annotated Code of Maryland.

(2) The fee-in-lieu shall be calculated on a square-foot basis at a rate
established in the fee schedule adopted by resolution of the County Council,
but in no event shall it be less than the minimum set by state law. The fee-in-
lieu shall be 20% higher outside the Priority Funding Area.

(3) A developer of a residential subdivision may request a fee-in-lieu for no more
than one acre of forest conservation obligation.
(B) **Timing - Payment of Fee-In-Lieu:** Fee-in-lieu payments shall be paid to the County:

1. For a project not subject to a recorded forest conservation easement, prior to plat recordation of a subdivision, prior to approval of a site development plan or, if none, prior to issuance of a grading permit; or
2. When a landowner requests a modification of a recorded forest conservation easement, prior to the recordation of the revised subdivision plat or plat of forest conservation easement and prior to notice of the modification provided in accordance with Section 10-312 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

### Section 16.1212. Forest Conservation Fund.

(A) **Fund Established:** The Director of Finance shall establish an account to be known as the forest conservation fund. No monies deposited in this account may revert to the general fund.

(B) **Source of Moneys in Forest Conservation Fund:** Fees paid in-lieu of reforestation or afforestation under Section 16.1211 of this Subtitle and noncompliance fees paid pursuant to subsection (c) of this Section shall be deposited in the forest conservation fund. Interest earned by money in the forest conservation fund shall remain in the fund.

(C) **Noncompliance Penalties:** The noncompliance penalty is a fine per square foot of forest cut, cleared or graded which may be assessed against violators of this Subtitle as specified in Section 16.1213 of this Subtitle. The amount of the noncompliance penalty is set by resolution of the County Council, and in no event shall it be less than the minimum set by State law.

(D) **Use of Forest Conservation Fund:**

1. The minimum in-lieu-of fees established by the State may be expended by the County:
   (i) For afforestation or reforestation within Howard County, including site identification, acquisition, and preparation;
   (ii) For acquisition of forest retention easements;
   (iii) For maintenance of existing forests; and
   (iv) For creating urban canopy.
(2) In-lieu-of fees above the state minimums and noncompliance penalties may be used by the county for any purposes related to implementation of the forest conservation program.

Section 16.1213. Enforcement; Penalties.

The provisions of this Subtitle may be enforced with any or all of the following measures:

(a) Revocation of Exemption: The department may revoke an exemption for properties that are in violation of the conditions of exemption set forth in Section 16.1202(b) of this Subtitle and may require compliance with the retention, reforestation and afforestation requirements of this Subtitle. Prior to revocation, the department shall notify the violator in writing and provide an opportunity for a response.

(b) Revocation of Approved Forest Conservation Plan: The department may revoke an approved Forest Conservation Plan for cause, including any of the following conditions:

(1) Noncompliance with this Subtitle or with conditions of an approved Forest Conservation Plan; or

(2) Obtaining approval of the plan through fraud, misrepresentation, a false or misleading statement, or omission of a relevant or material fact.

Prior to revocation, the department shall notify the violator in writing and provide an opportunity for a response.

(c) Stop-Work Order: The county may issue a stop-work order against any violator of this Subtitle, the manual, an order, an approved Forest Conservation Plan, the associated forest conservation agreement and long-term deed of forest conservation easement, or a declaration of intent.

(d) Injunction: The county may seek an injunction requiring a violator to cease the violation and take corrective action to restore or reforest an area.

(e) Noncompliance Penalties: The county may assess a noncompliance penalty as defined in Section 16.1212 of this Subtitle, against a violator of this Subtitle, the manual, an order, an approved Forest Conservation Plan, an associated forest conservation agreement, a long-term deed of forest conservation easement or a declaration of intent.
(f) **Civil Penalties:** In addition to and concurrent with all other remedies, the Department of Planning and Zoning may enforce the provisions of this Subtitle or an approved Forest Conservation Plan with civil penalties pursuant to the provisions of Title 24, "Civil Penalties," of the Howard County Code. A violation shall be a class A offense. Each day a violation continues is a separate violation.

**Section 16.1214. Mitigation by County.**

In the event that any person develops land in violation of this Subtitle without an approved Forest Conservation Plan and any other required development approvals and permits, the County shall, after first giving the developer the opportunity to comply, have the right to enter upon the property being developed and afforest or reforest the property in accordance with the thresholds and standards of this Subtitle and the manual. The County may instead undertake off-site afforestation or reforestation if this would better serve the purposes of this Subtitle. In either case, the County shall charge all afforestation and reforestation costs incurred by it against the developer, including but not limited to consultant fees and overhead and administrative costs. Unless the charges are paid or appealed to the Board of Appeals within 30 days after billing by the County, they shall become a final lien on the property being developed and shall in every respect be treated as county real estate taxes. The County’s right to mitigate and recover its costs shall be in addition to the fines and other sanctions it may impose under Section 16.1213 of this Subtitle.

**Section 16.1215. Appeals.**

Any person specially aggrieved by an administrative decision of the Director of Planning and Zoning in relation to this Subtitle may, within 30 days of the decision, appeal the decision to the Howard County Board of Appeals according to its Rules of Procedure.

**Section 16.1216. Variances.**

(A) The Department may grant waivers to the requirements of this Subtitle in accordance with the procedures of Subsection 16.104(b) and Subsection 16.104(c) of the Subdivision Regulations.
(D) For purposes of this Section “unwarranted hardship” shall mean that, without a variance, an applicant shall be denied reasonable and significant use of the entire parcel or lot for which the variance is requested.

(e) (B). A variance to the provisions of this Subtitle shall be considered and approved or denied in writing by:

(1) The Planning Board, for plans that require Planning Board approval;

(2) For plans that do not require Planning Board approval, the Directors of the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Administrator of the Office of Community Sustainability, and the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks. Denied in writing by the Directors of the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Administrator of the Office of Community Sustainability, and the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks.

(c) Consideration of a variance requested under this Section shall include a determination as to whether an applicant has demonstrated to the satisfaction of each Department or the Planning Board that enforcement of this Subtitle would result in unwarranted hardship. Increased cost or inconvenience of meeting the requirements of the these regulations does not constitute an unwarranted hardship to the applicant. The applicant shall:

(1) Describe the special conditions peculiar to the property which would cause the unwarranted hardship;

(2) Describe how enforcement of these regulations would deprive the landowner of rights commonly enjoyed by others in similar areas;

(3) Verify that the granting of a variance will not adversely affect water quality;

(4) Verify that the granting of a variance will not confer on the applicant a special privilege that would be denied to other applicants;

(5) Verify that the variance request is not based on conditions or circumstances which are the result of actions by the applicant;

(6) Verify that the condition did not arise from a condition relating to land or building use, either permitted or nonconforming, on a neighboring property; and

(7) Provide any other information appropriate to support the request.
(E) ANY NATIVE SPECIMEN TREE REMOVED SHALL BE REPLACED ON-SITE BY AT LEAST TWO
NATIVE TREES WITH A DBH (DIAMETER AT BREAST HEIGHT) OF AT LEAST THREE INCHES.
(F) NOTICE OF A REQUEST FOR A COMPLETE VARIANCE OF THE FOREST CONSERVATION
PROGRAM SHALL BE GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING TO THE MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES WITHIN 15 DAYS OF RECEIPT OF A REQUEST FOR A
VARIANCE. NOTICE OF A REQUEST FOR A VARIANCE TO INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS,
TEMPORARY DEFERRAL, PHASING OF OBLIGATIONS, OR SEEKING ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE
DEFERRAL OR PHASING OF OBLIGATIONS WITH THE FOREST CONSERVATION PROGRAM
REQUIRED MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AFTER A DECISION ON THE VARIANCE
REQUEST IS RENDERED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

SECTION 16.1217. ABANDONMENT OF A FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT.
(A) AUTHORIZED. WHERE AN ERROR OR ENCROACHMENT IS DISCOVERED AFTER THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT AND THE AREA WITHIN THE
ENCROACHMENT OR ERROR NO LONGER COMPLIES WITH THE FOREST CONSERVATION ACT, THE
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING MAY ALLOW FOR THE ABANDONMENT OF NO MORE THAN
0.5 ACRES IF EQUIVALENT REPLACEMENT IS PROVIDED EITHER:
1. OFF SITE ADJACENT TO AN EXISTING FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT;
2. WITHIN A FOREST CONSERVATION BANK; OR
3. THROUGH PAYMENT OF A FEE IN-LIEU.
(B) NOTIFICATION. NOTIFICATION WILL BE PROVIDED ACCORDING TO SECTION 10-312 OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ARTICLE OF THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND.

SECTION 16.1218. FOREST MITIGATION BANKING.
(A) OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A FOREST MITIGATION BANK: THE HOWARD COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS OR A PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNER WITH THE
DEPARTMENT'S APPROVAL, MAY ESTABLISH A FOREST MITIGATION BANK. MITIGATION BANK
EASEMENT RIGHTS MAY BE PURCHASED BY A DEVELOPER WHEN THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES
THAT ALL OR A PORTION OF A PROJECT'S RETENTION, REFORESTATION OR AFFORESTATION
OBLIGATIONS CAN BE MET OFF-SITE AND THAT THE MITIGATION BANK HAS MET ALL
REQUIREMENTS.
(B) **Minimum Size:** Mitigation banks shall be at least one acre in area unless otherwise approved by the Department.

(c) **Location Priorities:** Forest retention mitigation banks shall be located in accordance with the highest eight retention priorities specified in Section 16.1205 of this subtitle. Planted forest mitigation banks shall be located in accordance with the highest six reforestation and afforestation priorities specified in Section 16.1208 of this subtitle.

(d) **Preferred Methods:** Planted forest mitigation banks shall be planted using nursery stock, whips, or seedlings, but not natural regeneration.

(e) **Approval Procedure:** Private forest mitigation bank applicants shall submit for the Department's approval the proposed location and a forest conservation plan. Upon completion of the installation of all protection devices and all forest planting, as required, the county shall certify compliance with the approved Forest Conservation Plan. At the end of the minimum three growing seasons, or longer if required, the county shall certify that the survival rates specified in the manual have been achieved.

(f) **Forest Conservation Agreement and Financial Security:** Planted forest mitigation banks shall execute a Forest Conservation Agreement and post a financial security.

(g) **Deed of Forest Conservation Easement:** The applicant shall record a forest conservation easement plat and a deed of forest conservation easement in accordance with procedures outlined in the manual.

**Section 16.1219. Severability.**

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase or portion of this subtitle is held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, that portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision; and the invalidity shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the subtitle and for this purpose, the provisions of this Act are declared severable.

Section 2. And Be It Further Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland

that, for sketch plans or preliminary equivalent sketch plans that are technically complete on or before December 2, 2019, plans or permits listed in Section 16.1202(a)(1) – (4) shall continue to
be processed and reviewed under the Forest Conservation Act of Howard County existing prior to amendments approved and enacted by this Act. If there are any inconsistency between the Act and the Manual, the provisions of the Act will apply. If the plan fails to be finally approved, then the plan shall be resubmitted under the provisions of this Act.

Section 32. And Be It Further Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland that this Act shall become effective 61 days after its enactment.
AN ACT repealing and reenacting the Forest Conservation Act of Howard County; providing the purpose of the Act; defining certain terms to be used throughout the Act; requiring a Forest Conservation Plan for any person, or unit of local government, developing land 40,000 square feet or greater, subject to certain exceptions; requiring a Declaration of Intent for certain exemptions; setting forth the requirements of a Forest Conservation Plan; providing for the review process of a Forest Conservation Plan; requiring a Forest Conservation Manual to be prepared and adopted; requiring that the Manual include specific standards and guidelines; setting forth certain Forest Retention Priorities; requiring certain reforestation requirements and providing that reforestation shall be based on certain calculations; requiring certain afforestation and providing that afforestation shall be based on certain calculations; setting forth certain afforestation and reforestation location priorities and preferred methods; requiring certain site design; requiring certain financial security for afforestation and reforestation; authorizing a fee-in-lieu of afforestation and reforestation under certain conditions; providing for Forest Conservation Fund to keep the fee-in-lieu of afforestation and reforestation and providing for the use of monies contained in the fund; providing for certain enforcement and penalties; requiring mitigation by the County when land is developed in violation of the Act; providing for certain appeals; allowing for the grant of variances of the provisions of the Act, under certain circumstances; allowing the abandonment of Forest Conservation Easements under certain conditions; providing for the opportunity to create a Forest Mitigation Bank under certain conditions; and generally related to forest conservation in Howard County.
Section 1. Be It Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that the Howard County Code is amended as follows:

By repealing and reenacting:

Title 16. Planning, Zoning, and Subdivisions and Land Development Regulations

SubTitle 12. FOREST CONSERVATION.

SECTION 16.1200. SHORT TITLE; BACKGROUND; PURPOSE.

(A) SHORT TITLE: This Subtitle shall be known as the Forest Conservation Act of Howard County.

(B) BACKGROUND: This Subtitle is pursuant to the requirements of the Maryland Forest Conservation Act of 1991, which requires units of local government to adopt, by December 31, 1992, a local forest conservation program which meets or is more stringent than the requirements of Title 5, Subtitle 16 of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

(C) PURPOSE: The purpose of this Subtitle is to protect and maintain forest vegetation and forest areas in Howard County by requiring certain development projects to have an approved Forest Conservation Plan as a condition of approval of the development.

SECTION 16.1201. DEFINITIONS.

Except as provided in Subsection (ff) of this Section, words and phrases used in this Subtitle have their usual meaning unless defined in the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations as set forth in Subtitle 1 of this Title or as follows in this Section:

(A) AFFORESTATION: "AFFORESTATION" means the establishment of new forest on an area presently without forest cover, by planting in accordance with the practices specified in the Forest Conservation Manual.

(B) COMAR: “COMAR” means the Code of Maryland regulations.
(C) **Critical Habitat Area:** "Critical Habitat Area" means a critical habitat for threatened or endangered species and its surrounding protection area. A critical habitat shall:

1. Be likely to contribute to the long-term survival of the species;
2. Be likely to be occupied by the species for the foreseeable future; and
3. Constitute habitat of the species which is deemed critical under Title 4, Subtitle 2A or Title 10, Subtitle 2A of the Natural Resource Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

(D) **Declaration of Intent:** "Declaration of Intent" means a statement signed by a landowner or developer certifying that:

1. A proposed development is exempt from the requirement for an approved Forest Conservation Plan; and
2. No activity requiring a Forest Conservation Plan will occur on the site within 5 years of the date of the completion of the exempt activity.

(E) **Department:** "Department" means the Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning.

(F) **Development:** "Development" means the establishment of a principal use of a site; a change in a principal use of a site; or the improvement or alteration of a site by the construction, enlargement, or relocation of a structure; the provision of stormwater management or roads; the grading of existing topography; the clearing or grubbing of existing vegetation; or any other nonagricultural activity that results in a change in existing site conditions.

(G) **Forest:** "Forest" means a biological community dominated by native trees and other woody plants covering an area of 10,000 square feet or greater that is at least 50 feet wide. "Forest" includes:

1. Areas with a cover ratio of 100 trees per acre with at least 50% of these trees being at least 2 inches in diameter at a height of 4.5 feet above ground; or
2. Areas meeting the criteria above that have been cut but not cleared.

"Forest" does not include orchards, tree nurseries, Christmas tree farms or other types of forest crops.

(H) **Forest Conservation:** "Forest Conservation" means the retention of existing forest or the creation of new forest at the levels set by this Subtitle.
(i) **Forest Conservation Manual:** "Forest Conservation Manual" means the technical manual approved by the County Council containing performance standards and guidelines for implementation of the Howard County Forest Conservation Program.

(j) **Forest Conservation Plan:** "Forest Conservation Plan" means a plan which shows the impacts of a proposed development on existing forest resources. A "Forest Conservation Plan" includes existing forest areas to be removed or retained; the location, extent and specifications for any reforestation or afforestation required; and legal measures to protect forest resources after completion of development in accordance with Section 16.1203 below.

(k) **Forest Conservation Program:** "Forest Conservation Program" means the administration of the Howard County Forest Conservation Act and Manual by appropriate County agencies and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

(l) **Forest Mitigation Banking:** "Forest mitigation banking" means the planting or retention of trees, according to plans approved by the Department, to be used as credit for planting or retention required under this Subtitle.

(m) **Forest Stand Delineation:** "Forest stand delineation" means the evaluation, pursuant to Section 16.1204 of this Subtitle, of existing forests and other vegetation on a site proposed for development.

(n) **Green Infrastructure Network:** "Green Infrastructure Network" means the system of hubs and corridors mapped in the Howard County Green Infrastructure Network Plan, published by the Department of Planning and Zoning in December 2012, as amended.

(o) **Historic Site:** "Historic Site" means a site or structure listed on the Historic Sites Inventory adopted by resolution of the County Council.

(p) **Historic Structure:** "Historic Structure" means a structure or cluster of structures situated within the county which, together with its appurtenances and environmental setting, have significant historic or architectural value and have been designated as such by resolution of the County Council.

(q) **Impervious Surface:** "Impervious surface" means any permanent artificial surface, including but not limited to areas covered by asphalt, concrete, pavers, permeable paving, rooftops and decks.
(R) **LIMIT OF DISTURBANCE:** "LIMIT OF DISTURBANCE" MEANS THE BOUNDARY OF PERMITTED CHANGES TO EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS DUE TO CLEARING AND GRADING, AS WELL AS OTHER ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH SITE DEVELOPMENT SUCH AS PARKING OF VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT, STORAGE OF MATERIALS, AND DISPOSAL OF CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS.

(S) **LINEAR PROJECT:** "LINEAR PROJECT" MEANS A PROJECT HAVING AN ELONGATED CONFIGURATION WITH NEARLY PARALLEL SIDES DESIGNED TO TRANSPORT A UTILITY PRODUCT OR PUBLIC SERVICE (FOR EXAMPLE, GAS, ELECTRICITY, WATER, SEWER, COMMUNICATIONS, TRAINS AND VEHICLES) NOT OTHERWISE ADDRESSED IN AN APPLICATION FOR SUBDIVISION.

(T) **LOT:** "LOT" MEANS A PIECE OF LAND DESCRIBED IN A FINAL PLAT OR DEED AND RECORDED IN THE LAND RECORDS OF HOWARD COUNTY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN EFFECT AT THE TIME OF RECORDATION.

(U) **MANUAL:** "MANUAL" MEANS THE FOREST CONSERVATION MANUAL.

(V) **NET TRACT AREA:** "NET TRACT AREA" MEANS THE TOTAL AREA TO THE NEAREST 1/10 ACRE, WHETHER FORESTED OR NOT, OF A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, EXCLUSIVE OF ANY 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN, UTILITY TRANSMISSION LINE EASEMENTS, OR PRESERVATION PARCEL AS REFERENCED IN THE ZONING REGULATIONS. "NET TRACT AREA" IS TO BE USED IN CALCULATING ANY REFORESTATION OR AFFORESTATION OBLIGATIONS THAT MAY BE CREATED BY THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

(W) **PLANNED BUSINESS PARK:** "PLANNED BUSINESS PARK" MEANS A COMMERCIAL-INDUSTRIAL SUBDIVISION DEVELOPED WITH AN INTEGRATED PLAT THAT PROVIDES COMMON INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE FEATURES.

(X) **PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT:** "PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT" MEANS A DEVELOPMENT COMPRISED OF A COMBINATION OF LAND USES OR VARYING INTENSITIES OF THE SAME LAND USE IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN INTEGRATED PLAN THAT PROVIDES FLEXIBILITY IN DESIGN WITH AT LEAST 20% OF THE LAND PERMANENTLY DEDICATED TO OPEN SPACE.

(Y) **PRIORITY FUNDING AREA:** "PRIORITY FUNDING AREA" MEANS AN AREA DESIGNATED AS A PRIORITY FUNDING AREA UNDER TITLE 5, SUBTITLE 7B OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE. IN HOWARD COUNTY THE PRIORITY FUNDING AREA IS ALL LAND WITHIN THE PLANNED SERVICE AREA FOR BOTH PUBLIC WATER AND SEWERAGE.

(Z) **REFORESTATION:** "REFORESTATION" MEANS THE ESTABLISHMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HOWARD COUNTY FOREST CONSERVATION MANUAL, OF NEW FOREST COVER TO REPLACE FOREST RESOURCES LOST BECAUSE OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.
(AA) **SCENIC ROAD:** "SCENIC ROAD" MEANS A PUBLIC ROAD OR ROAD SEGMENT THAT IS INCLUDED IN THE SCENIC ROADS INVENTORY ADOPTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 16.1403 OF THIS TITLE.

(BB) **STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT:** "STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT" MEANS AN ACTIVITY THAT:

1. IS DESIGNED TO STABILIZE STREAM BANKS OR ENHANCE STREAM FUNCTION OR HABITAT LOCATED WITHIN AN EXISTING STREAM, WATERWAY OR FLOODPLAIN;
2. AVOIDS AND MINIMIZES IMPACTS TO FORESTS AND PROVIDES FOR REPLANTING ON-SITE AN EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF TREES TO THE NUMBER REMOVED BY THE PROJECT;
3. MAY BE PERFORMED UNDER A MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM PERMIT, A WATERSHED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN GROWTH OFFSET, OR ANOTHER PLAN ADMINISTERED BY THE STATE OR HOWARD COUNTY TO ACHIEVE OR MAINTAIN WATER QUALITY STANDARDS; AND
4. IS NOT PERFORMED TO SATISFY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT, WETLANDS MITIGATION, OR ANY OTHER REGULATORY REQUIREMENT ASSOCIATED WITH PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY.

(CC) **SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS:** "SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS" MEANS TITLE 16, SUBTITLE 1 OF THE HOWARD COUNTY CODE, ENTITLED "SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS."

(DD) **URBAN CANOPY:** "URBAN CANOPY" MEANS TREE CANOPY INSIDE THE PLANNED SERVICE AREA FOR WATER AND SEWER THAT DOES NOT MEET THE DEFINITION OF FOREST BUT DOES PROVIDE AIR QUALITY, WATER QUALITY, AND HABITAT BENEFITS.

(EE) **WATERSHED:** "WATERSHED" MEANS THE MARYLAND 12-DIGIT WATERSHED DELINEATION AS DEFINED BY THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

(FF) **OTHER TERMS:** OTHER TERMS WHICH ARE DEFINED IN TITLE 5, SUBTITLE 16 OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES ARTICLE OF THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND, COMAR 08.19.01.03, "DEFINITIONS," AND COMAR 08.19.03, ARTICLE II, "FOREST AND TREE CONSERVATION definitions," ARE INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE AND SHALL APPLY TO THIS SUBTITLE FOR ANY TERMS WHICH ARE NOT DEFINED IN THIS SECTION OR THE MANUAL.

SECTION 16.1202. APPLICABILITY; EXEMPTIONS; DECLARATION OF INTENT.

(A) **FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN REQUIRED FOR SUBDIVISION PLAN, SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN OR GRADING PERMIT:** UNLESS EXEMPTED BY SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION, ANY PERSON OR UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPING LAND 40,000 SQUARE FEET OR GREATER IN AREA SHALL
FILE A FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN WITH THE DEPARTMENT. PLAN APPROVAL IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT AND PRIOR TO APPROVAL OF A:

(1) SUBDIVISION PLAN;
(2) SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN;
(3) GRADING PERMIT; OR
(4) COUNTY ROAD AND UTILITY CONSTRUCTION PLANS.

(b) EXEMPTIONS TO REQUIREMENT FOR FOREST CONSERVATION PLANS:

(1) EXEMPTIONS NOT REQUIRING A DECLARATION OF INTENT: THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT IS EXEMPT FROM THE REQUIREMENT OF THIS SUBTITLE:

(i) DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY ON A SINGLE LOT SMALLER THAN 40,000 SQUARE FEET, AS LONG AS THE CUTTING, CLEARING OR GRADING DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY AREA ALREADY SUBJECT TO A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN.

(ii) A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT WHICH HAS PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL AND 50% OR MORE OF THE LAND IS RECORDED AND SUBSTANTIALLY DEVELOPED BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1992. IF NEW LAND AREA IS ADDED TO THE PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT, THAT NEW LAND AREA IS SUBJECT TO THIS SUBTITLE;

(iii) A PLANNED BUSINESS PARK OF AT LEAST 75 ACRES WHICH HAS PRELIMINARY PLAN APPROVAL BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1992, AND WHICH MEETS THE INTENT OF THIS SUBTITLE BY RETAINING FOREST IN HIGH-PRIORITY LOCATIONS (FLOODPLAINS, WETLANDS, WETLAND AND STREAM BUFFERS, STEEP SLOPES, AND/OR WILDLIFE CORRIDORS/GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK);

(iv) ANY AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY, INCLUDING AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES BUILT USING ACCEPTED BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE UNLESS IT INVOLVES THE CLEARING OF 40,000 SQUARE FEET OR GREATER OF FOREST WITHIN A 1-YEAR PERIOD;

(v) AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION SUBDIVISION, UNLESS IT INVOLVES THE CLEARING OF 20,000 SQUARE FEET OR GREATER OF FOREST;

(vi) RESUBDIVISIONS, THAT DO NOT CREATE ADDITIONAL LOTS, DEED ADJOINERS, PROPERTY CONSOLIDATIONS, RECONFIGURATIONS AND CORRECTION PLATS AS PROVIDED FOR IN SECTIONS 16.102 AND 16.103 OF THIS TITLE;

(vii) MINOR SUBDIVISIONS THAT CREATE ONE ADDITIONAL LOT AND HAVE NO FURTHER SUBDIVISION POTENTIAL;
(VIII) Mining or other extractive activity exempted by state law from the forest conservation requirements;

(ix) Routine maintenance of existing roads and public utility rights-of-way.

(x) Highway construction using full or partial state funding is exempt from this subtitle but subject to state reforestation requirements set forth in Title 5, Subtitle 1 of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland;

(xi) The cutting or clearing of public utility rights-of-way, or land for electric generating stations licensed pursuant to Title 7, Subtitle 2 of the Public Utility Companies Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, if:

A. Required certificates of public convenience and necessity have been issued in accordance with the Natural Resources Article, § 5-1603(f), Annotated Code of Maryland; and

B. Cutting or clearing of the forest is conducted to minimize the loss of forest.

(xii) Howard County capital improvement projects, including those with partial state funding, provided that:

A. The activity is conducted on a single lot of any size;

B. The activity does not result in the cutting, clearing or grading of more than 20,000 square feet of forest; and

C. The impacted forest is not subject to a previously approved forest conservation plan;

(xiii) An activity on a previously developed area covered by an impervious surface and located in the Priority Funding Area;

(xiv) Maintenance or retrofitting of a stormwater management structure that may include clearing of vegetation or removal and trimming of trees, so long as the maintenance or retrofitting is within the original limits of disturbance for construction of the existing structure, or within any maintenance easement for access to the structure; or

(xv) Stream restoration project, as defined in this subtitle, for which the applicant for a grading or sediment control permit has executed a binding maintenance agreement of at least 5 years with the affected property owner or owners.
(2) **Exemptions Requiring a Declaration of Intent:** The following development is exempt from the requirements of this Subtitle, provided that the developer files a Declaration of Intent with the Department as provided in subsection (c) below:

(i) Residential development on an existing single lot of any size if:
- A. The total cutting, clearing or grading of forest resources is less than 20,000 square feet; and
- B. The forest resources affected by the development are not subject to a previously approved Forest Conservation Plan;

(ii) Commercial logging and timber harvesting operations conducted subject to the forest conservation and management program under the Tax-Property Article § 8-211, Annotated Code of Maryland;

(iii) Any agricultural activity, including agricultural support buildings and structures built using accepted best management practice involving the clearing of 40,000 square feet or greater of forest within a 1-year period;

(iv) Subdivision in connection with real estate transactions to provide a security, leasehold, or other legal or equitable interest, including a transfer of title, of a portion of a lot or parcel, if:
- A. The transaction does not involve a change in land use, or new development or redevelopment, with associated land-disturbing activities; and
- B. Both the grantor and grantee file the Declaration of Intent; and

(v) Linear projects that are not exempt and that disturb less than 20,000 square feet of forest, if the impacted forest is not subject to a previously approved Forest Conservation Plan.

(C) **Declaration of Intent:**

(1) A person seeking an exemption under subsection (b) above shall submit a Declaration of Intent to the Department to verify that the proposed activity is exempt.

(2) No regulated activity may occur on the area covered by the Declaration of Intent within 5 years of the completion of cutting, clearing or grading of forest resources, or in the case of real estate transactions, within 5 years of the effective date of the Declaration of Intent.
(3) The Department may require a person failing to file a Declaration of Intent or found not in compliance with a Declaration of Intent to perform one or any combination of the following:

(i) Meet the retention, reforestation and afforestation requirements established by this Subtitle;

(ii) Pay a penalty fee established by fee schedules approved by resolution of the County Council per square foot of forest cut or cleared, but in no case less than the minimum set by state law;

(iii) Be subject to other enforcement actions appropriate under Title 5, Subtitle 16 of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and this Subtitle; or

(iv) File a Declaration of Intent with the Department.


(A) Purpose: The Forest Conservation Manual is the technical manual used to establish standards of performance required in preparing forest stand delineations and forest conservation plans.

(B) Preparation and Adoption: The manual and amendments to it are prepared by the Department and adopted by resolution of the County Council.

(C) Contents: The manual includes specific standards and guidelines for:

(1) Submission of Forest Conservation Plans, including forest stand delineations;

(2) Approval of Forest Conservation Plans;

(3) Forest retention priorities;

(4) Reforestation and afforestation calculations, priorities and preferred methods;

(5) Forest conservation agreements and financial security;

(6) Deed of forest conservation easements;

(7) Procedural variations for minor subdivisions, single lot site development plans, rural cluster subdivisions, and phased development;

(8) Forest mitigation banking; and

(9) Other information necessary to implement this Subtitle.
SECTION 16.1204. FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN.

(A) APPLICABILITY: Forest Conservation Plans, consistent with this Subtitle and the Manual, shall be submitted to the Department with applications for all development not exempt under Section 16.1202 of this Subtitle.

(B) PROFESSIONALLY PREPARED: The Forest Conservation Plan shall be prepared by a licensed forester, landscape architect or other qualified professional as specified in COMAR 08.19.06.01.

(C) FOREST STAND DELINEATION: The Forest Conservation Plan shall include a forest stand delineation for the property to be subdivided, developed, or graded. An approved forest stand delineation is valid for 5 years. The forest stand delineation shall:

1. Describe the extent and quality of existing forests and other vegetation and its relationship to environmentally sensitive areas on-site and to forest resources on adjacent properties.
2. Be used during the review process to determine the most suitable and practical areas for forest conservation.

(D) FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN: A Forest Conservation Plan shall:

1. State the net tract area, area of forest conservation required, and the area of forest conservation proposed on-site and/or off-site;
2. Show the proposed limits of disturbance;
3. Show locations for proposed retention of existing forest and/or proposed reforestation or afforestation;
4. Justify the following, if existing forest cannot be retained:
   (i) How techniques for forest retention have been exhausted;
   (ii) Why the priority forests specified in Section 16.1205 of this Subtitle cannot be left in an undisturbed condition;
   (iii) If priority forests and priority areas cannot be left undisturbed, where on the site in priority areas reforestation or afforestation will occur in compliance with Section 16.1208 of this Subtitle;
   (iv) How site design requirements will be followed to maximize meeting forest conservation obligations on-site in compliance with Section 16.1209 of this Subtitle;
(V) **How the sequence for preferred reforestation or afforestation location and methods will be followed in compliance with Section 16.1208 of this Subtitle; and**

(VI) **Why reforestation or afforestation requirements cannot reasonably be accomplished on- or off-site, or through a forest mitigation bank, if the applicant proposes payments of an in-lieu fee to the forest conservation fund;**

(3) **Show proposed locations and types of protective devices and measures to be used during construction to protect trees and forests designated for conservation, including protection of critical root zones;**

(6) **In the case of reforestation or afforestation, include a reforestation or afforestation plan, with a timetable, description of needed site and soil preparation, and the species, size, and spacing of plantings;**

(7) **Include a minimum three growing season forest conservation agreement as specified in the manual that details how the areas designated for retention, reforestation or afforestation will be maintained to ensure protection and satisfactory establishment, including a reinforcement planting provision if survival rates fall below required standards. Financial security shall be provided for the forest conservation agreement as provided in Section 16.1210 and the manual. Minor subdivisions which meet forest conservation requirements entirely by forest retention are not required to have a forest conservation agreement;**

(8) **Include a deed of forest conservation easement with a plat of the forest conservation easement area, as specified in the manual that:**

(i) **Provides protection, in perpetuity, for areas of forest retention, reforestation and afforestation; and**

(ii) **Limits uses in areas of forest conservation to those uses that are designated and consistent with forest conservation, including recreational activities and forest management practices that are used to preserve forest;**

(9) **Include other information the Department determines is necessary to implement this Subtitle; and**
(10) Be amended or a new plan prepared, as provided in the manual, if required as a result of changes in the development or in the condition of the site.

SECTION 16.1205. FOREST RETENTION PRIORITIES.

(A) ON-SITE FOREST RETENTION REQUIRED: Subdivision, site development, and grading shall leave the following vegetation and specific areas in an undisturbed condition.

(1) Trees and other vegetation identified on the lists of rare, threatened and endangered species of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

(2) Trees that are part of a historic site or associated with a historic structure.

(3) State champion trees, trees 75% of the diameter of state champion trees, and trees 30" in diameter or larger.

(B) ON-SITE FOREST RETENTION PRIORITIES: The following vegetation and specific areas are considered priority and are listed in order of preference for on-site retention and protection in the county. Subdivision, site development, and grading shall leave the following vegetation and specific areas in an undisturbed condition unless demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Department, that reasonable efforts have been made to protect them and the plan cannot be reasonably altered or that forest planting in an alternate location would have greater environmental benefit:

(1) Howard County Green Infrastructure Network.

(2) 100-year floodplain as defined in the Subdivision Regulations.

(3) Stream buffers as defined in the Subdivision Regulations.

(4) Forested wetlands and wetland buffers as defined in the Subdivision Regulations.

(5) Critical habitat areas and forest corridors with a minimum width of 300 feet, where practical, for wildlife movement.

(6) Steep slopes as defined in the Subdivision Regulations and slopes of 15% or greater with a soil erodibility factor greater than 0.35.

(7) Forest contiguous with the priority areas listed above.

(8) Forest contiguous with off-site forest, if the off-site forest is also protected by a Forest Conservation Easement; and

(9) Property line and right-of-way buffers, particularly adjacent to scenic roads.
(c) **Off-Site Retention:**

1. The county or a developer may provide for off-site forest retention at a ratio of 2 acres of forest retention for every 1 acre of forest conservation obligation. The off-site forest must not be currently protected in perpetuity by easement or other long-term protection measures.

2. The vegetation and specific area priorities for locating off-site forest retention under this subsection are the same as provided under subsection (b) of this section.

**Section 16.1206. Reforestation.**

(A) **Requirement to Reforest Areas Which Have Been Cut or Cleared:** The forest conservation plan shall provide for:

1. On- or off-site reforestation to replace forest which is proposed to be cut or cleared on the net tract area after reasonable efforts to minimize such cutting or clearing; or

2. Payment-in-lieu of reforestation if reforestation cannot reasonably be accomplished.

(B) **Minimum Size:** Areas to be reforested shall be at least 10,000 square feet with a minimum width of 50 feet, unless otherwise approved by the department based on criteria in the forest conservation manual.

(C) **Calculating the Amount of Reforestation Required:** The amount of reforestation required depends upon the amount of forest cover existing and removed from the net tract area and the land use being developed. The reforestation requirement shall be calculated as follows:

1. **Reforestation Threshold:** There is a reforestation threshold for all land use categories. The reforestation threshold establishes the percentage of the net tract area at which the reforestation requirement changes. Reforestation requirements for clearing forest below the threshold are greater than for clearing above the threshold. Thresholds for calculating reforestation requirements are as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential: Rural Low Density</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Residential lots average 5 acres or more)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Rural Medium Density</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Residential lots average 1 to 4.99 acres)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Suburban</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Less than 1 acre per dwelling unit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional or Linear</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail, Industrial or Office</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use Development or Planned Unit</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Reforestation Calculation: For all existing forest cover cleared on the net tract area, measured to the nearest 1/10 acre, the reforestation requirement shall be calculated as follows:

(i) For reforestation sites within the same watershed, 1/2 acre shall be reforested, for each acre or portion of an acre cleared above the threshold (1/2:1 ratio). For reforestation sites outside the same watershed, 1 acre shall be reforested, for each acre or portion of an acre cleared above the threshold (1:1 ratio).

(ii) For reforestation sites within the same watershed, 2 acres shall be reforested for each acre or portion of an acre cleared below the threshold (2:1 ratio). For reforestation sites outside the same watershed, 3 acres shall be reforested for each acre or portion of an acre cleared below the threshold (3:1 ratio).

(iii) All forest acreage retained above the threshold shall be directly credited against any reforestation obligation (1:1 ratio).

Section 16.1207. Afforestation.

(a) Requirement to Afforest: If existing forest resources are below the following minimums, the Forest Conservation Plan shall provide for:

(1) Afforestation on-site or off-site; or
(2) **PAYMENT-IN-LIEU OF AFFORESTATION IF AFFORESTATION CANNOT REASONABLY BE ACCOMPLISHED.**

(b) **Minimum Size:** Areas to be afforested shall be at least 10,000 square feet with a minimum width of 50 feet, unless otherwise approved by the Department based on criteria in the manual.

(c) **Calculating the Amount of Afforestation Required:** The amount of afforestation required depends upon the amount of forest cover existing and removed from the net tract area and the land use being developed. The afforestation requirement shall be calculated as follows:

1. **Minimum Forest Cover:** For each land use, the following minimum percentage of forest cover shall be provided:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential: Rural Low Density (Residential lots average 5 acres or more)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail, Industrial or Office</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use Development or Planned Unit Development</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Forest Cut or Cleared Below the Required Afforestation Level Shall Be Afforested at 2:1 Ratio for Afforestation Sites Within the Same Watershed and at 3:1 Ratio for Afforestation Sites Outside the Same Watershed.** This afforestation shall be added to the amount of afforestation necessary to reach the minimum required afforested level, as determined by the amount of forest existing before cutting or clearing began.
SECTION 16.1208. REFORESTATION AND AFFORESTATION LOCATION PRIORITIES, PREFERRED LOCATION, AND PREFERRED METHODS.

(A) LOCATION PRIORITIES: The following are priority locations for reforestation and afforestation, and are listed in order of preference. The Department may approve lower priority locations on this list when such locations better achieve the intent of this Subtitle or County land use regulations. If off-site planting would have greater environmental benefit, the Department may approve off-site reforestation or afforestation in high-priority locations within Howard County, preferably within the same subbasin or watershed:

1. Establish or enhance forest in the Howard County Green Infrastructure Network.
2. Establish or enhance forest in 100-year floodplains and buffers to intermittent and perennial streams as defined in the Subdivision Regulations;
3. Establish or enhance forest in wetlands and wetland buffers as defined in the Subdivision Regulations;
4. Establish or enhance critical habitat buffers and forest corridors for wildlife movement; the corridors, where practical, being a minimum of 300 feet in width;
5. Establish plantings to stabilize slopes of 25% or greater and slopes of 15% or greater with a soil K value greater than 0.35;
6. Establish forest areas adjacent to existing forests to increase the overall area of contiguous forest cover;
7. Establish forest areas between small forest and tree stands to build a forest community; and
8. Establish buffers along property lines between differing land uses when appropriate, or adjacent to highways or utility rights-of-way, particularly adjacent to scenic roads.

(B) PREFERRED LOCATION: The following is the preferred sequence for location of reforestation and afforestation. The Department may approve less preferred locations when such locations better achieve the location priorities for reforestation and afforestation, take better advantage of opportunities to consolidate forest conservation efforts, or better achieve the objectives of other County land use regulations.
(1) On site.
(2) Mitigation bank.
(3) Off site.

(C) Preferred Methods: The following sequence of reforestation and afforestation methods is preferred. The Department may approve less preferred methods when such methods will better achieve forest survival.

(1) Planting with nursery stock.
(2) Transplanting local plant material.
(3) Natural regeneration.
(4) Selective clearing and supplemental planting.

16.1209. Site Design Requirements.

(A) Site design should address the Forest Conservation Program goals of maximizing forest retention and meeting forest conservation obligations on-site.

(B) Before mitigation banks, off-site compliance, or fee-in-lieu requests will be considered, forest conservation obligations shall be met on-site, in accordance with the following site design requirements:

(1) Nonresidential developments shall accommodate forest conservation obligations on-site by establishing Forest Conservation Easements with retained or planted forest in all sensitive areas, including floodplains, wetlands, wetland buffers, steep slopes and stream buffers. To ensure protection of riparian areas, the Forest Conservation Easements shall be a minimum 75-foot width from the banks of any perennial and intermittent stream. The area between the required stream buffer and the Forest Conservation Easement may be disturbed during construction.

(2) Residential developments with more than one acre of obligation shall meet a minimum of 75% of their obligation on-site by reducing lot sizes, clustering lots and maximizing open space to the maximum extent permitted by the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. Infill subdivisions of ten lots or less are exempt from this requirement.

(3) Residential developments in the RC or RR zoning districts shall accommodate all forest conservation obligations within the boundaries of a receiving property before importing development density.
(4) To ensure adequate setbacks from forest conservation easements on residential lots, a 35-foot setback shall be provided from rear and side lot lines for a detached or attached dwelling unit and any on-site or off-site planted forest conservation easement. The setback may be eliminated if larger stock (two rows of one-inch minimum caliper) is planted along the edge of the forest conservation easement.

Section 16.1210. Financial security for reforestation and afforestation.

(A) Financial Security Required: A person required to provide reforestation or afforestation under this subtitle shall furnish financial security in the form of a bond, an irrevocable letter of credit, or other security approved by the County. This shall be provided prior to plat recordation if the afforestation or reforestation is required for approval of a subdivision; prior to site development plan approval if the afforestation or reforestation is required for site development plan approval; and prior to grading permit issuance if the afforestation or reforestation is required for issuance of a grading permit. The security shall:

1. Assure that the afforestation, reforestation, and the associated forest conservation agreement are implemented in accordance with the approved forest conservation plan;
2. Be in an amount equal to the estimated cost, as approved by the County, of reforestation and afforestation; and
3. Be in a form and of a content approved by the County.

(B) Release of Financial Security: If, after 3 growing seasons following the afforestation or reforestation or as provided in the forest conservation agreement, the plantings associated with the afforestation or reforestation meet or exceed the standards of the manual, the amount of the bond, letter of credit, or other security shall be returned or released.

(C) Default and Lien: If, after 3 growing seasons or as provided in the forest conservation agreement, the plantings do not meet the aforesaid standards, the County shall have the right to draw on the security according to its terms and use the sums withdrawn for the costs incurred by the County in achieving the afforestation or reforestation standards required by the plan and manual. Any costs incurred by the County in excess of the security amount shall be charged.
AGAINST THE DEVELOPER AND, UNLESS THEY ARE PAID OR APPEALED TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER BILLING BY THE COUNTY, SHALL BECOME A FINAL LIEN AGAINST THE PROPERTY BEING DEVELOPED AND SHALL IN EVERY RESPECT BE TREATED AS COUNTY REAL ESTATE TAXES.

SECTION 16.1211. FEE-IN-LIEU OF AFFORESTATION OR REFORESTATION.

(A) FEE-IN-LIEU AUTHORIZED:

(1) THE DEPARTMENT MAY APPROVE THE PAYMENT OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AFFORESTATION OR REFORESTATION:

(i) WHEN AFFORESTATION OR REFORESTATION REQUIREMENTS CANNOT BE REASONABLY ACCOMPLISHED ON-SITE OR OFF-SITE BASED ON CRITERIA IN THE MANUAL, AND APPROPRIATE CREDITS GENERATED BY A FOREST MITIGATION BANK ARE NOT AVAILABLE; OR

(ii) WHEN A LANDOWNER REQUESTS A MODIFICATION OF A RECORDED FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT AND NOTICE OF THE MODIFICATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SECTION 10-312 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ARTICLE OF THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND.

(2) THE FEE-IN-LIEU SHALL BE CALCULATED ON A SQUARE-FOOT BASIS AT A RATE ESTABLISHED IN THE FEE SCHEDULE ADOPTED BY RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL, BUT IN NO EVENT SHALL IT BE LESS THAN THE MINIMUM SET BY STATE LAW. THE FEE-IN-LIEU SHALL BE 20% HIGHER OUTSIDE THE PRIORITY FUNDING AREA.

(3) A DEVELOPER OF A RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION MAY REQUEST A FEE-IN-LIEU FOR NO MORE THAN ONE ACRE OF FOREST CONSERVATION OBLIGATION.

(B) TIMING - PAYMENT OF FEE-IN-LIEU: FEE-IN-LIEU PAYMENTS SHALL BE PAID TO THE COUNTY:

(1) FOR A PROJECT NOT SUBJECT TO A RECORDED FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT, PRIOR TO PLAT RECORDATION OF A SUBDIVISION, PRIOR TO APPROVAL OF A SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN OR, IF NONE, PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF A GRADING PERMIT; OR

(2) WHEN A LANDOWNER REQUESTS A MODIFICATION OF A RECORDED FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT, PRIOR TO THE RECORDATION OF THE REVISED SUBDIVISION PLAT OR PLAT OF FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT AND PRIOR TO NOTICE OF THE MODIFICATION PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 10-312 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ARTICLE OF THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND.
SECTION 16.1212. FOREST CONSERVATION FUND.

(A) Fund Established: The Director of Finance shall establish an account to be known as the Forest Conservation Fund. No monies deposited in this account may revert to the General Fund.

(B) Source of Moneys in Forest Conservation Fund: Fees paid in-lieu of reforestation or afforestation under Section 16.1211 of this Subtitle and noncompliance fees paid pursuant to subsection (c) of this Section shall be deposited in the Forest Conservation Fund. Interest earned by money in the Forest Conservation Fund shall remain in the Fund.

(C) Noncompliance Penalties: The noncompliance penalty is a fine per square foot of forest cut, cleared or graded which may be assessed against violators of this Subtitle as specified in Section 16.1213 of this Subtitle. The amount of the noncompliance penalty is set by resolution of the County Council, and in no event shall it be less than the minimum set by State law.

(D) Use of Forest Conservation Fund:

(1) The minimum in-lieu-of fees established by the State may be expended by the County:
   (i) For afforestation or reforestation within Howard County, including site identification, acquisition, and preparation;
   (ii) For acquisition of forest retention easements;
   (iii) For maintenance of existing forests; and
   (iv) For creating urban canopy.

(2) In-lieu-of fees above the State minimums and noncompliance penalties may be used by the County for any purposes related to implementation of the Forest Conservation Program.

SECTION 16.1213. ENFORCEMENT; PENALTIES.

The provisions of this Subtitle may be enforced with any or all of the following measures:

(A) Revocation of Exemption: The Department may revoke an exemption for properties that are in violation of the conditions of exemption set forth in Section 16.1202(b) of this Subtitle and may require compliance with the retention, reforestation and...
AFFORESTATION REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SUBTITLE. PRIOR TO REVOCATION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL NOTIFY THE VIOLATOR IN WRITING AND PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A RESPONSE.

(B) REVOCATION OF APPROVED FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN: THE DEPARTMENT MAY REVOKE AN APPROVED FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN FOR CAUSE, INCLUDING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. NONCOMPLIANCE WITH THIS SUBTITLE OR WITH CONDITIONS OF AN APPROVED FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN; OR
2. OBTAINING APPROVAL OF THE PLAN THROUGH FRAUD, MISREPRESENTATION, A FALSE OR MISLEADING STATEMENT, OR OMISSION OF A RELEVANT OR MATERIAL FACT.

PRIOR TO REVOCATION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL NOTIFY THE VIOLATOR IN WRITING AND PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A RESPONSE.

(C) STOP-WORK ORDER: THE COUNTY MAY ISSUE A STOP-WORK ORDER AGAINST ANY VIOLATOR OF THIS SUBTITLE, THE MANUAL, AN ORDER, AN APPROVED FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN, THE ASSOCIATED FOREST CONSERVATION AGREEMENT AND LONG-TERM DEED OF FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT, OR A DECLARATION OF INTENT.

(D) INJUNCTION: THE COUNTY MAY SEEK AN INJUNCTION REQUIRING A VIOLATOR TO CEASE THE VIOLATION AND TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION TO RESTORE OR REFOREST AN AREA.

(E) NONCOMPLIANCE PENALTIES: THE COUNTY MAY ASSESS A NONCOMPLIANCE PENALTY AS DEFINED IN SECTION 16.1212 OF THIS SUBTITLE, AGAINST A VIOLATOR OF THIS SUBTITLE, THE MANUAL, AN ORDER, AN APPROVED FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN, AN ASSOCIATED FOREST CONSERVATION AGREEMENT, A LONG-TERM DEED OF FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT OR A DECLARATION OF INTENT.

(F) CIVIL PENALTIES: IN ADDITION TO AND CONCURRENT WITH ALL OTHER REMEDIES, THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING MAY ENFORCE THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE OR AN APPROVED FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN WITH CIVIL PENALTIES PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF TITLE 24, “CIVIL PENALTIES,” OF THE HOWARD COUNTY CODE. A VIOLATION SHALL BE A CLASS A OFFENSE. EACH DAY A VIOLATION CONTINUES IS A SEPARATE VIOLATION.

SECTION 16.1214. MITIGATION BY COUNTY.

IN THE EVENT THAT ANY PERSON DEVELOPS LAND IN VIOLATION OF THIS SUBTITLE WITHOUT AN APPROVED FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN AND ANY OTHER REQUIRED DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS AND PERMITS, THE COUNTY SHALL, AFTER FIRST GIVING THE DEVELOPER THE OPPORTUNITY TO
1 COMPLY, HAVE THE RIGHT TO ENTER UPON THE PROPERTY BEING DEVELOPED AND AFFOREST OR
2 REFOREST THE PROPERTY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE THRESHOLDS AND STANDARDS OF THIS
3 SUBTITLE AND THE MANUAL. THE COUNTY MAY INSTEAD UNDERTAKE OFF-SITE AFFORESTATION
4 OR REFORESTATION IF THIS WOULD BETTER SERVE THE PURPOSES OF THIS SUBTITLE. IN EITHER
5 CASE, THE COUNTY SHALL CHARGE ALL AFFORESTATION AND REFORESTATION COSTS INCURRED BY
6 IT AGAINST THE DEVELOPER, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO CONSULTANT FEES AND OVERHEAD
7 AND ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS. UNLESS THE CHARGES ARE PAID OR APPEALED TO THE BOARD OF
8 APPEALS WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER BILLING BY THE COUNTY, THEY SHALL BECOME A FINAL LIEN ON
9 THE PROPERTY BEING DEVELOPED AND SHALL IN EVERY RESPECT BE TREATED AS COUNTY REAL
10 ESTATE TAXES. THE COUNTY’S RIGHT TO MITIGATE AND RECOVER ITS COSTS SHALL BE IN ADDITION
11 TO THE FINES AND OTHER SANCTIONS IT MAY IMPOSE UNDER SECTION 16.1213 OF THIS SUBTITLE.
12
13 SECTION 16.1215. APPEALS.
14 ANY PERSON SPECIALLY AGGRIEVED BY AN ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
15 PLANNING AND ZONING IN RELATION TO THIS SUBTITLE MAY, WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE DECISION,
16 APPEAL THE DECISION TO THE HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF APPEALS ACCORDING TO ITS RULES OF
17 PROCEDURE.
18
19 SECTION 16.1216. VARIANCES.
20 (A) THE DEPARTMENT MAY GRANT WAIVERS TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SUBTITLE IN
21 ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES OF SUBSECTION 16.104(B) AND SUBSECTION 16.104(C) OF
22 THE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS.
23 (B) FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION “UNWARRANTED HARDSHIP” SHALL MEAN THAT, WITHOUT A
24 VARIANCE, AN APPLICANT SHALL BE DENIED REASONABLE AND SIGNIFICANT USE OF THE ENTIRE
25 PARCEL OR LOT FOR WHICH THE VARIANCE IS REQUESTED.
26 (C) A VARIANCE TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE SHALL BE CONSIDERED AND APPROVED OR
27 DENIED IN WRITING BY:
28 (1) THE PLANNING BOARD, FOR PLANS THAT REQUIRE PLANNING BOARD APPROVAL
29 (2) FOR PLANS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE PLANNING BOARD APPROVAL, THE DIRECTORS OF THE
30 DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING, THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE OFFICE OF
31 COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY, AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION
32 AND PARKS.
(D) Consideration of a variance requested under this Section shall include a determination as to whether an applicant has demonstrated to the satisfaction of each Department or the Planning Board that enforcement of this Subtitle would result in unwarranted hardship. Increased cost or inconvenience of meeting the requirements of the these regulations does not constitute an unwarranted hardship to the applicant. The applicant shall:

(1) Describe the special conditions peculiar to the property which would cause the unwarranted hardship;

(2) Describe how enforcement of these regulations would deprive the landowner of rights commonly enjoyed by others in similar areas;

(3) Verify that the granting of a variance will not adversely affect water quality;

(4) Verify that the granting of a variance will not confer on the applicant a special privilege that would be denied to other applicants;

(5) Verify that the variance request is not based on conditions or circumstances which are the result of actions by the applicant;

(6) Verify that the condition did not arise from a condition relating to land or building use, either permitted or nonconforming, on a neighboring property; and

(7) Provide any other information appropriate to support the request.

(E) Any native specimen tree removed shall be replaced on-site by at least two native trees with a DBH of at least three inches.

(F) Notice of a request for a complete variance of the Forest Conservation Program shall be given by the Department of Planning and Zoning to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources within 15 days of receipt of a request for a variance. Notice of a request for a variance to individual program requirements, temporary deferral, phasing of obligations, or seeking alternative compliance with the Forest Conservation Program requirements shall be given by the Department of Planning and Zoning to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources after a decision on the variance request is rendered by the Department.
SECTION 16.1217. ABANDONMENT OF A FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT.

(A) Authorized. Where an error or encroachment is discovered after the establishment of a forest conservation easement and the area within the encroachment or error no longer complies with the Forest Conservation Act, the Department of Planning and Zoning may allow for the abandonment of no more than 0.5 acres if equivalent replacement is provided either:

1. Off site adjacent to an existing forest conservation easement;
2. Within a forest conservation bank; or
3. Through payment of a fee in-lieu.

(B) Notification. Notification will be provided according to Section 10-312 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

SECTION 16.1218. FOREST MITIGATION BANKING.

(A) Opportunity to create a forest mitigation bank: The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks or a private property owner with the Department’s approval, may establish a forest mitigation bank. Mitigation bank easement rights may be purchased by a developer when the Department determines that all or a portion of a project’s retention, reforestation or afforestation obligations can be met off-site and that the mitigation bank has met all requirements.

(B) Minimum size: Mitigation banks shall be at least one acre in area unless otherwise approved by the Department.

(C) Location priorities: Forest retention mitigation banks shall be located in accordance with the highest eight retention priorities specified in Section 16.1205 of this Subtitle. Planted forest mitigation banks shall be located in accordance with the highest six reforestation and afforestation priorities specified in Section 16.1208 of this Subtitle.

(D) Preferred methods: Planted forest mitigation banks shall be planted using nursery stock, whips, or seedlings, but not natural regeneration.

(E) Approval procedure: Private forest mitigation bank applicants shall submit for the Department’s approval the proposed location and a forest conservation plan. Upon completion of the installation of all protection devices and all forest planting, as required, the County shall certify compliance with the approved forest
CONSERVATION PLAN. AT THE END OF THE MINIMUM THREE GROWING SEASONS, OR LONGER IF REQUIRED, THE COUNTY SHALL CERTIFY THAT THE SURVIVAL RATES SPECIFIED IN THE MANUAL HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED.

(F) **FOREST CONSERVATION AGREEMENT AND FINANCIAL SECURITY:** PLANTED FOREST MITIGATION BANKS SHALL EXECUTE A FOREST CONSERVATION AGREEMENT AND POST A FINANCIAL SECURITY

(G) **DEED OF FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT:** THE APPLICANT SHALL RECORD A FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT PLAT AND A DEED OF FOREST CONSERVATION EASEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN THE MANUAL.

**SECTION 16.1219. SEVERABILITY.**

IF ANY SECTION, SUBSECTION, SENTENCE, CLAUSE, PHRASE OR PORTION OF THIS SUBTITLE IS HELD INVALID BY ANY COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION, THAT PORTION SHALL BE DEEMED A SEPARATE, DISTINCT AND INDEPENDENT PROVISION; AND THE INVALIDITY SHALL NOT AFFECT THE VALIDITY OF THE REMAINING PORTIONS OF THE SUBTITLE AND FOR THIS PURPOSE, THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT ARE DECLARED SEVERABLE.

Section 2. And Be It Further Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland that, for sketch plans or preliminary equivalent sketch plans that are technically complete on or before December 2, 2019, plans or permits listed in Section 16.1202(a)(1) - (4) shall continue to be processed and reviewed under the Forest Conservation Act of Howard County existing prior to amendments approved and enacted by this Act. If there are any inconsistency between the Act and the Manual, the provisions of the Act will apply. If the plan fails to be finally approved, then the plan shall be resubmitted under the provisions of this Act.

Section 3. And Be It Further Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland that this Act shall become effective 61 days after its enactment.
BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been approved by the Executive and returned to the Council, stands enacted on December 16, 2019.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been passed by the yeas and nays of two-thirds of the members of the Council notwithstanding the objections of the Executive, stands enacted on _, 2019.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having received neither the approval nor the disapproval of the Executive within ten days of its presentation, stands enacted on ____________, 2019.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, not having been considered on final reading within the time required by Charter, stands failed for want of consideration on ____________, 2019.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been disapproved by the Executive and having failed on passage upon consideration by the Council stands failed on ____________, 2019.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, the withdrawal of which received a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council, is withdrawn from further consideration on ____________, 2019.

Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council