

Critical Area Commission

STAFF REPORT September 2, 2020

APPLICANT:	City of Baltimore
PROPOSAL:	Critical Area Map Update
COMMISSION ACTION:	Concurrence with Chairman's Determination of Refinement
STAFF RECOMMENDATION:	Approval
STAFF:	Alex DeWeese
APPLICABLE LAW/ REGULATIONS:	Ch. 119, Acts of 2008, §1—4 COMAR 27.01.11

DISCUSSION

As part of the comprehensive overhaul of the Critical Area Law by the General Assembly in 2008, a requirement was included to remap the 1,000-foot Critical Area boundary based on recent technologies. In July 2012, the Commission adopted regulations that address the types of source documents used, the process for updating the maps, and the procedures for classifying newly added lands. Subsequently, each local jurisdiction is undergoing a Critical Area mapping update.

Updated Critical Area Maps

Commission staff worked with the City of Baltimore, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Maryland Department of the Environment, and the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) to develop updated Critical Area maps for the City. These draft maps were vetted by the aforementioned agencies, were presented at a public meeting in Baltimore City, and lastly, were delivered to the City for public comment and local approval. The update resulted in a gain of 1,568 acres and a loss of 5,016 acres, with a net loss of 3,448 acres. The loss is primarily along Gwynns Falls; a site visit was performed to confirm the loss. This loss can be attributed to both inaccuracies in the 1972 tidal wetland maps, and the channel filling in with sediment and thus decreasing the tidal extent.

Council of the City of Baltimore Bill 20-0506

As part of the mapping update, the City Council adopted Bill 20-0506 on May 20, 2020 and the Mayor signed it on June 24, 2021. This action constituted local adoption of the updated maps.

RECOMMENDATION

The mapping update was completed in accordance with State Law and COMAR 27.01.09.01-8.

Commission staff recommends the Commission concur with the Chairman's determination that the City of Baltimore mapping update can be reviewed as a refinement to the City's Critical Area Program. Staff also recommends that the Chairman approve this map amendment as proposed.