



*By the end of 2017, with the direct involvement of local governments or their representatives, evaluate policy options, incentives, and planning tools that could assist them in continually improving their capacity to reduce the rate of conversion of agricultural lands, forests and wetlands as well as the rate of changing landscapes from more natural lands that soak up pollutants to those that are paved over, hardscaped or otherwise impervious. Strategies should be developed for supporting local governments' and others' efforts in reducing these rates by 2025 and beyond.*

**Why is this outcome important?**

Land use change is a local issue with regional consequences. Land use can affect restoration and protection efforts if not understood, mitigated, or otherwise planned for. This outcome was included in the Agreement to provide tools and support to local governments to ensure the capacity to plan for and mitigate land use change impacts.

**Current Conditions:**

Despite the efforts by many local governments and other organizations to reduce the conversion of agricultural lands, forests and wetlands within the Bay watershed to parking lots, rooftops and other impervious surfaces, these natural landscapes continue to be lost. The population in the Bay watershed will continue to grow, reaching 20 million people by 2030, bringing additional demand for natural resources and subsequent land use changes.

**How was the outcome derived? Who came up with it?**

This outcome responds to public comments received that an earlier version of the Agreement did not sufficiently address the extent and impacts of land use change in the watershed. The Land Use Workgroup of the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team was instrumental in developing this outcome, along with representatives of the Maryland Department of Planning and the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

**What was the basis or baseline?**

Over the next three years, experts across the watershed will be evaluating various policy options, incentives and planning tools. The Land Use Methods and Metrics Outcome, due in 2016, will provide the Bay Program partners with an understanding of the scope and extent of strategies needed to support local governments' and others' efforts to lower land use conversion rates by 2025 and beyond.