

An aerial photograph of a river valley. A town is visible on the left bank, with a baseball field and some industrial buildings. A dam spans the river in the middle ground. The right bank is heavily forested. The background shows more of the town and distant hills.

Feedback on Land Use Decision Support (LUDS) Outcome and the Transition of the Land Use Workgroup

Jackie Pickford, USGS-CBPO
September 17, 2025
Land Use Workgroup Meeting



Review of feedback and changes to Land Use Decisions Support (LUDS) outcome language

Original Land Use Decision Support Outcome Language

(Evolved from the former [Land Use Options Evaluation](#) Outcome)

DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Develop and disseminate relevant and actionable land use information to organizations and communities involved in local and regional land use planning on past, present and future conditions, and the potential environmental and socioeconomic consequences of changing conditions.

DRAFT TARGETS:

- Continually increase the number, variety and/or geographic scope of use cases (e.g., watershed protection, aquatic connectivity, stormwater, tree canopy, stream health or redevelopment) for landscape information.
- Highlight two use cases annually to showcase best practices and share this information with local planning officials and partners through Story Maps and/or other communication products.
- Promote land use data and tool applications that maintain the ecological integrity of watersheds supporting good stream health and address the needs of local communities.

Feedback on Land Use Decision Support Outcome



Strengthen Conservation Amid Development: urges intensified land conservation efforts in response to urban sprawl, solar farms, and data center expansion across the Chesapeake region.



Empower Local Governments: stresses the need for funding, technical assistance, and accessible tools to help local governments make informed land use decisions.



Broaden Use Case Visibility: suggests increasing the number and geographic diversity of annual land use case studies to improve public engagement and understanding.



Address Data Center Impacts: highlights environmental concerns from data center growth, calling for better modeling of water usage, effluent discharge, and land conversion effects.

Updated Land Use Decision Support Outcome Language

as of 09/17/2025

DRAFT OUTCOME LANGUAGE:

Develop and disseminate relevant and actionable land use information to organizations and communities involved in local and regional land use planning. This information will include past, present and future conditions, as well as the potential environmental and socioeconomic consequences of changing conditions.

DRAFT TARGETS

- Continually increase the number, variety and/or geographic scope of use cases (e.g., watershed protection, aquatic connectivity, stormwater, tree canopy, or redevelopment) ~~for landscape development~~ **to inform land-use decisions and maintain the ecological integrity of watersheds supporting good stream health.**
- Highlight **at least** two **widely applicable** use cases annually to showcase best practices and share this information with local governments and partners through Story Maps and/or other communication products.



The Future of the Land Use Workgroup

Protect valued areas: forests, wetlands, farmland, tribal lands, urban greenspace, and lands supporting healthy streams.



Reduce future risks to people and habitats: from changes in temperature, precipitation, and land use.



Restore and maintain forests and trees: in communities, riparian areas, and other areas.



Inform land use planning decisions: produce and share data and case studies relevant to both local needs and the health of local waterways.

Proposed Restructuring of the Land Use Workgroup



Land Use Workgroup (LUWG)



Mapping/Modeling-Focused Team

Emphasis on providing technical expertise on the development of the high-resolution land use/land cover data.

Details of group will be discussed at the December 2025 Joint LUWG Meeting.

Communication/ Applications-Focused Workgroup

Emphasis on applications & communication of the high-resolution land use/land cover data.

Details of group will be discussed in early 2026.

Land Use Workgroup: Reimagined



New coordination team

Coordinator: Jackie Pickford, USGS

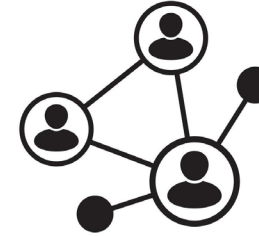
Chair: TBD

Staffer: TBD



New membership

- Planning Associations
- Regional planning and development boards
- Local Governments (county, municipal)
 - NGOs (Land Trust Alliance)
- Academic (National Center for Smart Growth)



Improved external coordination

- Joint meetings with Mid-Atlantic Planning Collaboration, American Planning Association, specific local governments/NGOs, etc.
- Presentations at conferences & professional meetings



DATA CENTER



SOLAR ENERGY

Issue-based focus

Meetings focused on specific topics (data centers, solar farms, infill & redevelopment, etc.) with presentations from relevant subject matter experts



New scope & purpose

Creates and communicates actionable land data information
Highlight use cases
Showcase best practices

Things to consider for our March 2026 Meeting...

Membership & Engagement

- Who are the key players we need to engage in our new membership?
- What is the best way to engage with them? Are there existing channels or networks we can leverage?

Future Topics

- Are there specific land use-related topics that this group should explore (e.g., emerging issues or opportunities, such as data centers, solar farms, infill & redevelopment, etc.)?
- Determining a conceptual framework for the LUWG

Scope & Purpose

- Communities of Practice (CoPs) already exist for land use. How will the LUWG add value or differentiate itself from these existing groups?

If you have immediate thoughts, please email me at: jpickford@chesapeakebay.net

Next Steps

