



## COUNTY OF PRINCE WILLIAM

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

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Acting County Executive

September 13, 2016

**TO:** Board of County Supervisors

**FROM:** Christopher M. Price, AICP  
Director of Planning 

**THRU:** Christopher E. Martino  
Acting County Executive

**RE:** Rural Preservation Study Implementation

**I. Background** is as follows:

- A. Rural Preservation History – Prince William County has a long rural preservation history. In 1964, Harland Bartholomew and Associates conducted a planning study for Prince William County and recommended a Comprehensive Plan that identified a significant portion of the County as “Large Estate and Agricultural.” The County’s 1972 Comprehensive Plan designates much of that area as Agricultural and Large Estate. The preservation goals for this area became more formalized through designation of the Rural Area in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. At that time, the area was formally described with both a map and a series of policies and strategies. In addition to the Rural Area, the County has over time adopted various rural preservation measures including policies and strategies in several Comprehensive Plan Chapters (e.g. Environment, Parks, Open Space, and Trails, Long Range Land Use, Sanitary Sewer), zoning ordinance provisions (e.g. large lot zoning, cluster ordinance), and subdivision ordinance standards. Together, these measures constitute the County’s overall rural preservation vision, goals, policies, and strategies.
- B. Rural Preservation Tools – On November 22, 2011, through Directive 11-120, Preserve Open Space – Rural Areas, the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) directed the Planning Office to conduct research on appropriate planning tools to help in the preservation of open space in rural areas and to report its recommendations to the Board. In addition, on March 20, 2012, the BOCS discussed the need to 1) evaluate whether the goals for the Rural Area have been effectively met through its implementation and 2) identify other rural preservation tools that may be effective and appropriate. Staff noted that this could be accomplished by conducting a policy analysis of the Rural Area to review what has happened since its implementation and a review of what other conservation tools may be available.

On April 26, 2012, in response to Directive 11-120, the Planning Office provided a summary of the rural open space preservation tools available to Virginia localities and detailed which tools were currently available within Prince William County (Attachment A – Open Space Planning Tools). Staff also noted that there are likely ways to improve upon several of our existing strategies, that additional rural preservation tools are available for use by Virginia localities but are not currently authorized or utilized in Prince William County, and that these tools warrant further study.

- C. Planning Office Work Program – On May 8, 2012, the Planning Office presented a two year Work Program to the BOCS. This work program and the corresponding staff presentation noted that a variety of rural/open space preservation strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan have been adopted by the BOCS, but have not yet been initiated and that staff does not have the resource capacity to develop and implement those strategies. Given the fact that there are several rural preservation strategies authorized for use within Virginia but not currently available within Prince William County, the Board’s discussion regarding the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the Rural Area in meeting its objectives, and the many uninitiated rural preservation strategies from the County’s adopted Comprehensive Plan, staff recommended that the County procure consulting services to determine the effectiveness of the Rural Area and to identify additional rural preservation strategies. The BOCS approved that request and the Planning Office prepared a scope of work and a request for proposals.
- D. Rural Preservation Study - In April 2013 a consultant team lead by the consulting firm Environmental Resources Management was selected to complete the Rural Preservation Study. The purpose of the Rural Preservation Study was to provide an overview of the County’s rural preservation policies and an evaluation of their effectiveness, identify additional rural preservation tools that may be appropriate and effective, and make recommendations regarding possible amendments to the County’s land use planning policies. The scope of work addressed the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the County’s rural preservation policies in meeting stated goals and objectives, evaluate the County’s rural preservation tools with respect to best practices, assist the County in developing a clear rural preservation policy statement and measureable goals and objectives based on stakeholder input, identified needs, and best practices, identify and recommend tools including policies, ordinances, etc. to implement rural preservation policies, goals, and objectives as appropriate, prepare a policy guidance framework for evaluating future Comprehensive Plan amendments and rezoning requests consistent with identified rural preservation policies, goals, and objectives, conduct stakeholder interviews and workshops and provide a written summary of the process and input, and present the results to the Board of County Supervisors.

Community input was a key component of the Study. The stakeholder input process was broad and provided a variety of ways in which to participate including public meetings, focus groups, interactive workshops, surveys, etc. In addition, meetings were conducted at locations throughout the County and a



dedicated project web page was created to solicit input and keep stakeholders informed about the process. This process and the input received allowed the consultant to better understand the character of the area and the community's vision for rural preservation in Prince William County.

The consultant team prepared the Rural Preservation Study report and presented a summary of their findings at the May 6, 2014 Board of County Supervisors meeting (see Attachment B – Rural Preservation Study). The Study recommendations focused on suggested changes to the Comprehensive Plan, suggested changes to the County's Zoning Ordinance, and recommendations regarding opportunities to promote and advance the County's rural economy. Specific recommendations included the following:

- Adopt a Vision Statement for the Rural Area.
  - Designate Rural Character Areas to recognize the different types of natural and man-made landscapes.
  - Preserve 60 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the Rural Area (17,000 acres) as open space. Explore Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), and Rural Cluster programs as potential implementation strategies.
  - Maintain the current residential density standards (A-1 zoning of one dwelling per ten acres), but create policy flexibility in locations where adjustments would advance the vision for the Rural Area.
  - Promote environmental protection that will have direct environmental benefits especially those related to land preservation, sewer, and open space corridor creation.
  - Enhance cultural resources and integrate them into a broad-ranging rural preservation strategy.
  - Plan for public facilities and recognize that while public facilities must be located within the Rural Area to meet the needs of both Rural Area residents and residents throughout the County, steps should be taken to ensure that these facilities are compatible with the rural character.
  - Support economic development (including farming and agribusiness) and recognize the contributions made by the County's farming, agribusiness, agritourism, recreation, and rural business development. Enhance the economic development potential of the rural economy.
- E. Board Directive – On July 8, 2014, through DIR 14-82, the Board directed staff to provide additional information regarding implementation of the Rural Preservation Study, review the Zoning Ordinance to look for opportunities to eliminate barriers or create new incentives for more rural economic development, look for remedies for farmers who raise and slaughter livestock specifically for religious events, and further investigate opportunities to purchase property development rights and how that relates to other elements of the Study's recommendations (e.g. cluster development).

**II. Current Situation** – The following is a brief status report regarding recommendations from the Rural Preservation Study and the individual elements from the aforementioned BOCS directive.

A. Rural Economic Development – One of the elements of the Rural Preservation Study involves promoting and advancing the County’s rural economy. Among the principal recommendations is to establish a committee to assist with reviewing development regulations in order to ensure that our land use planning tools do not negatively impact rural businesses. In January 2015, the BOCS reconstituted the Agricultural and Forestal District (AFD) Advisory Committee after a long dormant period and the Committee has begun to assist with this task, including reviewing proposed zoning text amendments (e.g. craft breweries, agribusiness/agritourism zoning text amendments, etc.) and participating in work sessions with the Planning Commission as part of the Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Chapter update. On September 22, 2016 the Planning Office is facilitating a work session with the AFD Committee to continue our review of the Zoning Ordinance for potential changes that can benefit the rural economy.

While the formation of the Committee is complete, the work of the Committee is ongoing. No additional BOCS actions are necessary, however any proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance recommended by the AFD would require a vote by the BOCS and would be subject to public hearings before both the Planning Commission and the Board of County Supervisors.

B. Religious Slaughter of Livestock – The slaughter of livestock raised on a farm is generally part of an agricultural use that is not subject to zoning review. However, in the case of a religious event requiring the slaughter of livestock where the livestock is not raised on the property, zoning review is required. To address the impacts of these events while providing clarity with regards to permit requirements, such uses are now permitted through a temporary activity permit. As such, no changes to the Zoning Ordinance are necessary to address this use. Unless otherwise directed, this task is considered complete and no additional BOCS actions are necessary.

C. Comprehensive Plan Amendments – In addition to the land use planning tools described below which are the primary focus of this report (PDR, TDR, and Rural Cluster Development), the Rural Preservation Study also recommended certain revisions to the County’s land use policies. In particular, the Study recommended a review of the vision for the Rural Area and the incorporation of Rural Character Areas to recognize the particular goals and unique aspects of preservation efforts within the Rural Area (e.g. protection of Marine Corps Base Quantico from encroachment, expansion of the conservation areas surrounding Prince William Forest Park, preservation of the small town character of Nokesville and promotion of agribusiness opportunities, protection of the cultural resources in and around the Manassas National Battlefield, etc.). On August 3, 2016, the Board of County Supervisors accepted a scope of work to update the Comprehensive Plan which

included the consideration of recommendations from the Rural Preservation Study.

The Comprehensive Plan update is ongoing and no additional BOCS actions are necessary at this time. However, any proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan (goals, policies, strategies, maps, etc.) would require a vote by the BOCS and would be subject to public hearings before both the Planning Commission and the Board of County Supervisors.

- D. Purchase of Development Rights – A PDR Program allows a landowner to voluntarily sell development rights from their land to a public body or land trust for the purpose of permanently protecting the land from being developed. The landowner retains the remaining ownership rights attached to their land, and can maintain the existing use, but they cannot develop the property for another use. A conservation easement is placed on their land, permanently protecting the land from development. In buying the development rights to the property, the purchasing body shall ensure, by conservation easement, that the property cannot be developed in the future. In selling the development rights to their property, the landowner receives proceeds from the sale and usually uses those proceeds to invest in their farming business, or to sell their property to another farmer at, presumably, a lower cost given that the property is no longer permitted to be developed.

To date, the Planning Office has conducted additional research on Purchase of Development Rights for the Board's consideration (see Attachment C) including examples of programs which have been established and financial resources that have been used to assist with program costs. A County Code amendment would be required to implement a Purchase of Development Rights Program in Prince William County. In addition, significant financial resources would be required to initially capitalize and to maintain such a program. Any proposed changes to the Code of Prince William County would require a vote by the BOCS and would be subject to public hearings before the Board of County Supervisors.

- E. Transfer of Development Rights – A TDR program features the creation of a development credits market by the County. Under such a program, the County assigns development credits to landowners in a designated sending area from which the development credits will be sent. The land is then preserved by a deed of easement (conservation easement). The development credits can be purchased by developers and landowners for use in designated receiving areas, and proposed developments are allowed to be built at a higher than normal density within those receiving areas. Sending areas should be the highest value agricultural, scenic, and culturally significant parts of the Rural Area. A TDR program enables a jurisdiction to preserve both working lands, such as farms and forest lands, as well as open space and natural areas, by restricting future development of the land while allowing the land's continued use in its current state. TDRs are a voluntary, incentive-based, market driven approach to preserve land and relocate development growth away from rural areas and into urban areas.



To date, the Planning Office has conducted additional research on Transfer of Development Rights for the Board's consideration (see Attachment D), however amendments to the County's Zoning Ordinance would be required to implement such a program and no zoning text amendments have been initiated. Any proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance would require a vote by the BOCS and would be subject to public hearings before both the Planning Commission and the Board of County Supervisors.

- F. Rural Cluster Development – A rural cluster development is a zoning tool in which residential subdivisions are designed with dwelling units clustered together on smaller than average lots on a small portion of the subject tract. The remaining land serves as farmland, open space, or a similar use. Typically, depending on the cluster ordinance, the remaining open space within a cluster development may be held in common and/or be strictly an agricultural or environmental area with no development rights remaining on it. Rural cluster development zoning provisions are typically aimed at agricultural and forest conservation or open space preservation.

Prince William County has an existing voluntary rural cluster provision which allows a maximum density of one dwelling for every ten acres in the A-1, Agricultural zoning district. The current rural cluster development method in the County allows a minimum lot size of three acres, a maximum lot size of five acres, and does not have a density bonus. Further, there is an open space requirement of fifty percent (50%). A cluster development ordinance can be an effective preservation tool, but is not heavily used in Prince William County.

To date, the Planning Office has conducted additional research on Rural Cluster Development for the Board's consideration (see Attachment E), however amendments to the County's Zoning Ordinance would be required to implement any changes to existing standards and no zoning text amendments have been initiated. Any proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance would require a vote by the BOCS and would be subject to public hearings before both the Planning Commission and the Board of County Supervisors.

**III. Issues** in order of importance are:

- A. Policy – Does the initiation of the proposed amendments further the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance?
- B. Fiscal Impact – Are there budget or financial impacts?
- C. Legal – What legal requirements should guide decisions to initiate or not initiate proposed amendments?
- D. Timing – Is there a timeframe for the BOCS to take action?

**IV. Alternatives** – As noted above, work involving the establishment of a committee to assist with promoting rural economic development and improvements to the permitting process for the religious slaughtering of animals have been completed, and work involving potential changes to the Comprehensive Plan is ongoing. As such, the focus of this section is on the items that have been recommended but have not yet been initiated (i.e. Purchase of Development Rights, Transfer of Development Rights, and Rural Cluster Development):

A. Initiate a PDR Amendment to County Code

1. Policy – The County’s adopted Comprehensive Plan includes Policies and Action Strategies aimed at rural preservation that are consistent with the establishment of a Purchase of Development Rights program. Such policies and strategies include the following:

*OPEN SPACE POLICY 4: Retain existing open space in the county.*

*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

1. *Review and implement programs, including the purchase of development rights (PDR), transfer of development rights (TDR), and outreach highlighting opportunities available through private conservation easements in order to protect existing open space.*
2. *Review and implement programs that provide incentives for landowners in the rural area to preserve agricultural land uses, protect prime soils, and prevent non-agricultural uses from negatively impacting the primary land use.*

*OPEN SPACE POLICY 5: A minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County, (exclusive of acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico for all calculation purposes), should be retained as protected open space.*

*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

2. *Review the open space development standards and definitions in the Zoning Ordinance, including the rural cluster component, and update them to reflect the goals and policies of this chapter.*
3. *In the Comprehensive Plan, identify and map existing open space and other areas where acquisition of additional protected open space should be prioritized.*
4. *Review opportunities, including the purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDRs) and implement appropriate programs in order to provide incentives for landowners to protect open space and to shift density to appropriate locations where infrastructure is planned or in place.*

5. *Actively seek to acquire easements or fee interest in property – through land purchases, grants, proffers, and donations – that is suitable for protected open space, including existing open spaces, or where an environmental constraints analysis shows that by-right development would result in substantial community impacts.*
6. *Acquire easements as authorized by the Virginia Open Space Land Act.*
7. *Update the Zoning Ordinance to ensure increased requirements for protected open space.*
8. *Consider open space acquisition as a regular component of the capital improvement program.*

*EN-POLICY 3: To further support OS-Policy 5, a minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County exclusive of acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico for all calculation purposes, should be retained as protected open space, as defined in the Open Space Plan.*

*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

*EN3.8 The County shall review and implement opportunities for a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.*

*EN3.9 Explore the use of available federal and state funding resources, including grants, foundations, and transportation related funds, to support green infrastructure planning initiatives and a PDR program.*

*EN3.11 Investigate the benefits of involving a private conservancy for the purpose of purchasing privately held lands for preservation purposes and seeking perpetual conservation easements to preserve open space.*

If enacted, a Purchase of Development Rights program is a voluntary process which would extinguish development rights on participating parcels in perpetuity. This is a powerful conservation tool and the impact on land use is permanent and binding. As such, careful consideration should be given to the areas within which this tool is appropriate. If initiated, staff would review and make recommendations regarding areas appropriate for such a tool.

In addition, and as noted below, significant up front and ongoing financial and staff resources would be necessary to establish and maintain such a program. These are resources which would otherwise be available to



support a variety of programs, services, and capital facility needs and are described in more detail below.

2. Fiscal Impact – A Purchase of Development Rights program would require the allocation of financial capital and staff resources in order to purchase development rights and place the property in a permanent conservation easement. During the discussion regarding the Board’s directive, staff was requested to investigate ways to keep the general fund contribution for such a program as low as possible. As such, staff researched available program funding resources that, if secured, could reduce reliance on the general fund. As noted in the attached analysis, there are many federal and state funding sources for PDR programs, particularly given the unique preservation goals within Prince William County (e.g. protection of Marine Corps Base Quantico from encroachment, expansion of the conservation areas surrounding Prince William Forest Park, preservation of the small town character of Nokesville and promotion of agribusiness opportunities, protection of the cultural resources in and around the Manassas National Battlefield, etc.). Potential funding sources for a Prince William County PDR program include:

- Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
- National Park Service
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
- U.S. Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program

While these programs could be utilized to augment local resources, such funding sources typically require local matching funds. The Rural Preservation Study noted that the most powerful preservation strategy is to utilize all of the tools referenced in the report (e.g. PDR, TDR, and Rural Cluster Development). As a way to link these tools, staff has also investigated the ability to utilize proffered open space funds to capitalize a program and serve as a source of local matching funds. However, it is unclear at this time whether or not recent changes to state law regarding the ability to negotiate proffer contributions has reduced or eliminated our ability to utilize proffer funds as a potential resource. If the BOCS chooses to initiate a PDR County Code amendment, staff would also continue to research sources of local and non-local funding to capitalize and maintain the program. However, it should be noted that regardless of potential funding sources, it is likely that there would be significant up front and on-going monetary contributions from the general fund to capitalize and maintain a program. In addition, creation and maintenance of such a program is beyond staff’s existing resource capacity. If the BOCS chooses to initiate a PDR program, staff will present a budget request as part of the FY18 budget process for both financial resources to

capitalize the program and staff resources (one new position) to administer the program. This position would also be utilized to support the ongoing work of the Agricultural and Forestal District Committee to promote the rural economy as outlined above and a Transfer of Development Rights Program should the BOCS choose to authorize such a program as further detailed below.

3. Legal – Initiation of a County Code amendment does not mean that the Board must approve the amendment after it is studied; it instead begins the process for consideration. Other legal issues are appropriately addressed by the County Attorney’s Office.
4. Timing – There is no requirement to take action within a certain amount of time for County Code amendment requests.

B. Initiate a TDR Zoning Text Amendment

1. Policy - The County’s adopted Comprehensive Plan includes Policies and Action Strategies aimed at rural preservation that are consistent with the establishment of a Transfer of Development Rights program. Such policies and strategies include the following:

*OPEN SPACE POLICY 4: Retain existing open space in the county.*

*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

1. *Review and implement programs, including the purchase of development rights (PDR), transfer of development rights (TDR), and outreach highlighting opportunities available through private conservation easements in order to protect existing open space.*
2. *Review and implement programs that provide incentives for landowners in the rural area to preserve agricultural land uses, protect prime soils, and prevent non-agricultural uses from negatively impacting the primary land use.*

*OPEN SPACE POLICY 5: A minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County, (exclusive of acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico for all calculation purposes), should be retained as protected open space.*

*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

2. *Review the open space development standards and definitions in the Zoning Ordinance, including the rural cluster component, and update them to reflect the goals and policies of this chapter.*

3. *In the Comprehensive Plan, identify and map existing open space and other areas where acquisition of additional protected open space should be prioritized.*
4. *Review opportunities, including the purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDRs) and implement appropriate programs in order to provide incentives for landowners to protect open space and to shift density to appropriate locations where infrastructure is planned or in place.*
5. *Actively seek to acquire easements or fee interest in property – through land purchases, grants, proffers, and donations – that is suitable for protected open space, including existing open spaces, or where an environmental constraints analysis shows that by-right development would result in substantial community impacts.*
7. *Update the Zoning Ordinance to ensure increased requirements for protected open space.*

*ENVIRONMENT POLICY 3: To further support OS-Policy 5, a minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County exclusive of acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico for all calculation purposes, should be retained as protected open space, as defined in the Open Space Plan.*

*LONG RANGE LAND USE POLICY 2: Provide for a variety of land uses to allow a diversity of housing unit types and employment opportunities throughout the County.*

*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

*LU2.5 Direct new development to areas served by transit corridors; particularly designated centers of commerce, centers of community and Mass Transit Nodes.*

*LU2.6 Ensure that the primary function of the Rural Area as reflected by the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map is to maintain open space, protect native habitats, allow for large-lot residential development, allow for agricultural activities, and provide potential sites for community facilities.*

*LONG RANGE LAND USE POLICY 8 – To achieve centers of commerce at appropriate locations that promote high-density, mixed-use development near existing and planned multi-modal transit centers that will facilitate greater use of mass transit by County residents and bring new high-quality employment opportunities to Prince William County.*



*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

*LU8.4 Review and evaluate programs, including the purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDR), in accordance with OS-Policy 4, Action Strategy 1 to provide clear goals and policies when considering these opportunities for additional density in centers of commerce.*

If enacted, a Transfer of Development Rights program is a voluntary process which would extinguish development rights on participating parcels in perpetuity. Similar in some ways to a PDR program, this is a powerful conservation tool and the impact on land use is permanent and binding. However, unlike a PDR policy, a TDR program would also require the designation of parcels within the County's Development Area to which severed development rights could be transferred. While such a transfer can ensure the efficient use of existing and planned capital facilities (e.g. VRE stations), it does require designated parts of the County to accept densities greater than present zoning would accommodate. As such, careful consideration should be given to the areas within which this tool is appropriate. If initiated, staff would review and make recommendations regarding areas appropriate for such a tool.

2. Fiscal Impact – Unlike a PDR program, TDRs involve private market transactions rather than public fund expenditures to protect rural lands. However, while no direct expenditure of public funds is necessary, staff resources are needed to manage the program. If the BOCS chooses to initiate a TDR zoning text amendment, staff will present a budget request as part of the FY18 budget process that includes the aforementioned staff position. As previously noted, this position would also be utilized to support the ongoing work of the Agricultural and Forestal District Committee to promote the rural economy and a Purchase of Development Rights Program should the BOCS choose to authorize such a program.
3. Legal – Initiation of a zoning text amendment does not mean that the Board must approve the amendment after it is studied; it instead begins the process for consideration. Other legal issues are appropriately addressed by the County Attorney's Office.
4. Timing – There is no requirement to take action within a certain amount of time for zoning text amendment requests.

C. Initiate a review of the County's Rural Cluster Development Provisions

1. Policy – The County's adopted Comprehensive Plan includes Policies and Action Strategies aimed at rural preservation that are consistent with the establishment of an incentive based Rural Cluster Development program. Such policies and strategies include the following:

*OPEN SPACE POLICY 4: Retain existing open space in the county.*

*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

- 2. Review and implement programs that provide incentives for landowners in the rural area to preserve agricultural land uses, protect prime soils, and prevent non-agricultural uses from negatively impacting the primary land use.*

*OPEN SPACE POLICY 5: A minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County, (exclusive of acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico for all calculation purposes), should be retained as protected open space.*

*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

- 2. Review the open space development standards and definitions in the Zoning Ordinance, including the rural cluster component, and update them to reflect the goals and policies of this chapter.*
- 3. In the Comprehensive Plan, identify and map existing open space and other areas where acquisition of additional protected open space should be prioritized.*
- 5. Actively seek to acquire easements or fee interest in property – through land purchases, grants, proffers, and donations – that is suitable for protected open space, including existing open spaces, or where an environmental constraints analysis shows that by-right development would result in substantial community impacts.*
- 7. Update the Zoning Ordinance to ensure increased requirements for protected open space.*

*ENVIRONMENT POLICY 3: To further support OS-Policy 5, a minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County exclusive of acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico for all calculation purposes, should be retained as protected open space, as defined in the Open Space Plan.*

*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

- EN3.1 Encourage cluster development to protect contiguous natural open space, as defined by the Zoning Ordinance.*
- EN3.2 Amend the cluster ordinance to ensure that open space is permanently protected.*

*LONG RANGE LAND USE POLICY 2: Provide for a variety of land uses to allow a diversity of housing unit types and employment opportunities throughout the County.*

*ACTION STRATEGIES:*

*LU2.2 Review the effectiveness of planned development districts and cluster zoning districts.*

*LU2.3 Open space created as part of cluster developments shall be preserved as permanent open space.*

*LU2.4 The purpose of both cluster development and planned district / planned unit development is to:*

- Provide locations for town centers.*
- Implement the development of centers of commerce and centers of community.*
- Promote the efficient use of land and minimize or limit cut and fill.*
- Preserve slopes and woodlands.*
- Better manage stormwater run-off and water quality.*
- Reduce the length of streets, utility lines, and stormwater piping.*
- Provide design flexibility.*
- Promote the most cost-effective provision of public services necessary to support the development.*
- Preserve open space.*
- Preserve cultural resources.*

*LU2.5 Direct new development to areas served by transit corridors; particularly designated centers of commerce, centers of community and Mass Transit Nodes.*

*LU2.6 Ensure that the primary function of the Rural Area as reflected by the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map is to maintain open space, protect native habitats, allow for large-lot residential development, allow for agricultural activities, and provide potential sites for community facilities.*

The Rural Preservation Study noted that our current land use planning tools generally promote large lot residential development rather than open space preservation and farming which are the stated goals of the Rural Area policies. Further, per the Study, continuation of our existing development patterns will not likely yield large contiguous conservation areas. Increased use of rural cluster development opportunities could yield larger tracts of contiguous open space (particularly if coupled with a



PDR and TDR program). However, an incentive based rural cluster option would likely result in increased residential densities within, and could necessitate the extension of public sewer into, the Rural Area. As such, this tool is not likely appropriate for a large portion of the Rural Area.

2. Fiscal Impact – Existing staff resources would be utilized as part of the development review process.
3. Legal – Initiation of a zoning text amendment does not mean that the Board must approve the amendment after it is studied; it instead begins the process for consideration. Other legal issues are appropriately addressed by the County Attorney’s Office.
4. Timing – There is no requirement to take action within a certain amount of time for zoning text amendment requests.

D. Take No Action

1. Policy – There would be no change to the existing County code to address the recommendations of the Rural Preservation Study.
2. Fiscal Impact – No fiscal impacts are identified if the Board of County Supervisors takes no action on the request.
3. Legal – Legal issues are appropriately addressed by the County Attorney’s Office.
4. Timing – There is no requirement to initiate County code amendment requests.

V. Next Steps:

As previously noted, certain recommendations from the Rural Preservation Study and certain elements of the Board’s subsequent directive have been implemented or are underway. If the BOCS chooses to continue implementing the recommendations from the Rural Preservation Study, staff recommends the following:

- A. Initiate PDR, TDR, and rural cluster development Code amendments (see attached initiating resolutions). If initiated, staff will seek input from citizens and stakeholder groups. Amendments to the County Code require a public hearing before the Board of County Supervisors. Any proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance would be subject to public hearings before both the Planning Commission and the Board of County Supervisors.
- B. Begin to consider allocation of funds to capitalize and maintain a Purchase of Development Rights Program and to create a Rural Preservation Specialist position as part of the FY18 budget process in order to pursue funding for a

purchase of development rights program, manage such a program, manage a transfer of development rights program, and continue work with farmers, landowners, and stakeholders to promote rural economic development opportunities. While no additional funds are necessary to accommodate a Rural Cluster Development option, establishment and maintenance of the PDR and TDR programs are beyond staff's existing resources.

**Staff:** Chris Price, AICP

**Attachments:**

- A. Open Space Planning Tools
- B. Rural Preservation Study
- C. Purchase of Development Rights Summary
- D. Transfer of Development Rights Summary
- E. Rural Cluster Development Summary



Melissa S. Peacor  
County Executive

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April 26, 2012

**TO:** Board of County Supervisors  
**FROM:** Christopher M. Price, AICP  
Director of Planning  
**THRU:** Melissa S. Peacor  
County Executive  
**RE:** Open Space Planning Tools

**I. Background** is as follows:

- A. Board Directive – In Directive 11-120, Preserve Open Space – Rural Areas, Chairman Stewart requested that the Planning Office conduct research on appropriate planning tools to help in the preservation of open space in rural areas and to report its recommendations to the Board.
- B. Planning Office Research –
  1. Dillon Rule –The tools available to Prince William County are those specifically delegated to the County in State law.
  2. Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association – The Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-Virginia) publishes *Managing Growth and Development in Virginia: A Review of the Tools Available to Localities* which outlines the planning tools available to Virginia jurisdictions. A copy of the publication is provided as Attachment C.
- C. Review of Current Tools Used – Based on the APA Virginia publication and the County's current use of these tools the Planning Office presents a summary of the current tools used and additional tools that could be used to encourage preservation of open space in rural areas. See table below.

*An Equal Opportunity Employer*

Open Space Planning Tools  
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Rural Open Space Preservation Tool	Currently Used?	Effective Tool?	Possibility for Use or Enhancement?
Comprehensive Plan	Yes	Yes	Yes
Large Lot Zoning	Yes	Yes with other tools	Yes
Rural Cluster Development	Yes	Yes, but not used often	Yes
Overlay Districts	Yes	Yes, but limited	No
Conditional Zoning	Yes	Not currently available in Rural Area	Yes
Capital Improvement Program	Yes	Yes, but requires funding	Yes
Use Value Assessment	Yes	Yes, but not permanent	No
Agricultural and Forestal Districts	Yes	Yes, but not permanent	No
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	No	Yes, but dependent on a market for rights	Yes
Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)	No	Yes, but requires funding	Yes
Lease of Development Rights (LDR)	No	Yes, but not permanent	No
Donation of Conservation Easements	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conservation Design	Yes	Yes	Yes

D. Comprehensive Plan – A comprehensive plan is the most important part of any open space preservation effort. State law mandates that every local government in Virginia prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan (Virginia Code, § 15.2-2223). A locality's comprehensive plan may include items that can help guide open space preservation:

- Designated areas for various land uses including agricultural and conservation uses
- A system of community service facilities such as parks
- Historical areas
- Areas for the implementation of groundwater protection measures
- Areas for locating military bases, military installations, military airports and their adjacent safety areas

The Prince William County Comprehensive Plan currently recognizes the importance of open space in the rural area. Attachment B includes all references to rural open space preservation and protection and are summarized below.

1. Land Use Designation – The Plan designates four types of land uses with goals of protecting open space: P&OS, AE, ER and CRHS. Definitions of these are provided in Attachment A.
  2. Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan – The Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan sets a goal of 39% open space and identifies recreational, cultural and environmental corridors to target for open space preservation. Excerpts from the Plan that reflect rural open space preservation and protection are included in Attachment A.
  3. Environment Plan – The Environment Plan identifies characteristics of the land that should be targeted for open space preservation. Relevant polices are identified in Attachment A.
  4. Land Use Policies – The Plan contains several policies protecting open space including targeting the peak noise zone of MCB Quantico and the south fork of Quantico Creek watershed for preservation efforts. These policies are presented in Attachment A.
- E. Implementation Tools – State code (V.C., § 15.2-2224) identifies tools communities can use to implement their comprehensive plans including, Zoning (V.C., § 15.2-2280) and the Capital Improvement Program (V.C., § 15.2-2239). In addition, other tools for open space preservation are specifically outlined in State code including Use Value Assessment (V.C., § 58.1-3231 through § 58.1-3244), Agricultural and Forestal Districts (V.C., §§ 15.2-4300 et seq), Transfer of Development Rights (§ 15.2-2316.1 and 2316.2) and Conservation Easements including Purchase of Development Rights (§10.1-1009 et seq.).
- F. Zoning – According to the Virginia Code (§ 15.2-2280) any locality may, by ordinance, classify the territory under its jurisdiction or any substantial portion thereof, into districts of such number, size and shape as deemed important to needs of the community and for the general purpose of promoting the health, safety or general welfare of the public.
1. Large-Lot Zoning – “The American Farmland Trust defines a ‘large lot’ for the purposes of agricultural protection as being 20 acres or more. Many localities consider smaller minimum lot sizes such as five or 10 acres as being a ‘large lot’ measure. However, if lots less than 10 acres are permitted without a clustering provision, there is a risk that such development will create undue encroachment on agricultural areas and undermine the purpose of the tool.



In the words of one farmer, less than 10 acres is ‘too small to plow and too big to mow’. Thus, large lot zoning provisions are often combined with cluster zoning provisions within a given zoning district.” (Managing Growth and Development in Virginia, APA Virginia Chapter, October 2011, p. 28) The primary zoning designation in the rural area is A-1, Agricultural, which has a minimum lot size of 10 acres. Within the A-1 zoning district, rural cluster developments are permitted. The A-1 zoning provisions (Zoning Ordinance §32-301) are included in Attachment B.

2. Cluster Subdivisions – “Under cluster subdivision/zoning provisions, when a residential subdivision is created, it is designed so that the dwelling units are clustered together on smaller than average lots on only a portion of the tract, leaving the remainder available for open space or similar uses. Depending on the provisions of the specific cluster ordinance, the remaining open space within a cluster development may be held in common and/or be strictly an agricultural or environmental area with no ‘development rights’ remaining on it; or, the open space parcel(s) may be allowed to have a dwelling unit with a permanent easement that prohibits further subdivision or additional dwellings.” (Managing Growth, p. 30) The County’s Rural Cluster Development provisions (Z.O. §300-40) are included in Attachment B.
  - a) Cluster Provisions Voluntary – “Cluster provisions can be voluntary options within a zoning district, or they can be mandatory. Per §15.2-2286.1, a rezoning, use permit or special exception may not be required in order to create a cluster development, unless there is a density increase involved in the request.” (Ibid., p. 30) The County cluster provisions are voluntary and require a subdivision plan review. There is no option for a density increase.
  - b) Advantages – “One of the key advantages of rural cluster techniques is that the tool can help to preserve rural land resources while still meeting the desires of rural landowners to obtain a relatively high development value for their property. Typically, rural cluster provisions allow roads and dwellings to be sited with less disruption to views from the public road right-of-way and/or with greater buffer distances between neighboring properties. Thus, cluster provisions can protect “rural character” as viewed from the road and in some localities also allow for some continued agricultural use of the remaining land.” (Ibid., p. 30)

- c) Limitations – “Clustering is a middle ground between full preservation and full development, and thus doesn’t completely “solve the problem” of preserving agriculture or rural character. While each individual cluster development may be an improvement over conventional subdivision of the same property, in the aggregate, it still may create a sprawling development pattern across the locality and region and contribute to rural road congestion and other infrastructure capacity deficiencies. Also, additional design effort is usually required to create a cluster subdivision compared to a conventional, large lot subdivision.” (Ibid., p. 33)
  
- d) Variations – Several variations are in use on how clustering is achieved.
  - (i) Percent of Land Developed – One variation on rural clustering is to specify a maximum percentage of the parent parcel or tract that can be converted to nonagricultural or non-open space uses. Such a provision can be relatively simple and may permit a great deal of flexibility to the developer in terms of lot size and unit type on that portion of the land that is permitted to be converted.
  
  - (ii) Lot Size Averaging – Another variation on rural clustering is to specify the average minimum lot size for a rural subdivision, but permit the developer to achieve that average by creating some lots that are larger and some smaller. Again, the advantage of this variant is to provide more design flexibility in order to respond to unique site conditions and to the local market demand.
  
  - (iii) Maximum Size of Building Lots – Another variation is to set a maximum rather than minimum lot size for rural subdivisions, thereby forcing a clustered layout. The percentage of open space remaining will be determined by the actual maximum lot size required in relation to the maximum overall site density required.
  
  - (iv) Current Method – Currently, the Rural Cluster Development provisions specify a minimum lot size of 3 acres, a maximum lot size of 5 acres, a maximum density of one unit per 10 acres and a minimum of 50% open space.

3. Overlay Districts - The purpose of the special public interest overlay districts is to protect and enhance certain specific lands and structures which, by virtue of their type or location, have characteristics which are distinct from lands and structures outside such overlay districts. Currently, the County maintains three overlay districts that would be relevant to rural open space preservation; however, their use is restricted to areas with special characteristics that warrant preservation.
  - a) Resource Protection Area - The purpose of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Overlay District is to: (a) protect existing high quality state waters; (b) restore all other state waters to a condition or quality that will permit all reasonable public uses and will support the propagation and growth of all aquatic life, including game fish, which might reasonably be expected to inhabit them; (c) safeguard the clean waters of the Commonwealth from pollution; (d) prevent any increase in pollution; (e) reduce existing pollution, and (f) promote water resource conservation in order to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the present and future citizens of Prince William County. This overlay district limits development on lands adjacent to water bodies with perennial flow. Authority for resource protection district zoning is provided in Virginia Code, § 10.1-2108.
  - b) Flood Hazard – Flood hazard areas of the County are subject to periodic inundation which results in the loss of life and/or property, health and safety hazards, disruption of commerce and other governmental services, extraordinary public expenditures for flood protection and relief, and impairment of the tax base. As such, the Board has chosen to delineate this district in accordance with the areas of the County subject to inundation by the 100-year flood. This overlay district limits development on lands subject to periodic inundation. Authority for flood hazard district zoning is provide in Virginia Code, § 10.1-603.7.
  - c) Historic Districts – Historic overlay districts are created for the purpose of imposing special requirements in addition to the requirements pertaining to the underlying zoning in designated areas of the county, in order to protect and perpetuate those areas or structures which have been designated as being of significant historic, architectural or cultural interest. Regulations imposed in such districts are intended to protect against destruction of or encroachment upon such historic resources, to encourage uses which will continue to preserve them and to prevent the creation of adverse environmental influences.

This overlay district limits development on lands with significant historic, architectural or cultural interest. Authority for historic district zoning is provided in Virginia Code, § 15.2-2306.

4. Conditional Zoning – As designed, conditional zoning allows reasonable conditions, known as proffers, to be offered by the applicant during a rezoning process as a way of mitigating the impacts of the proposed rezoning. Proffers may include land, infrastructure, cash or other conditions/constraints on the use of the property. These proffers, if accepted by the governing body as part of the rezoning approval, become part of the zoning ordinance as it applies to that property (Virginia Code, § 15.2-2297). In theory, conditional zoning allows land to be rezoned that might not otherwise be rezoned because the proffers will protect the community or area affected by the rezoning. This tool, while very effective in protecting open space in the Development Area, does not help in the Rural Area where the highest density zoning district consistent with the Rural Area designation, A-1, is already mapped on land in the Rural Area.

G. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

1. Park Land Acquisition – Acquisition of land for parks and recreation purposes provides protected open space (Virginia Code, § 15.2-5704).
2. Historic Preservation – Virginia Code, § 15.2-2306 – 4 allows any locality to acquire land for historical preservation. Acquisition of land for historic preservation purposes can often provide protected open space.

H. Other Tools

1. Use Value Assessment Program – Virginia Code, § 58.1-3231 through § 58.1-3244 allows any locality, which has adopted a land-use plan, to adopt an ordinance to provide for use value assessment and taxation in certain districts. The Use Value Assessment and Taxation Program provides tax relief to certain agricultural, forestal, horticultural, and open space property owners. The program allows qualifying land to be taxed according to its use value, rather than its market value. Buildings do not have use value assessments and are assessed at full market value. However, this program does not create permanently protected open space as the property owner may pull out of the program at any time. The County currently administers this program.

2. Agricultural and Forestal Districts - The Virginia Code provides for the voluntary creation of Agricultural and Forestal Districts (AFDs) in order to “provide a means for a mutual undertaking by landowners and localities to protect and enhance agricultural and forestal land as a viable segment of the Commonwealth's economy and as an economic and environmental resource of major importance.” Virginia Code, §§ 15.2-4300 et seq. authorizes the adoption of Agricultural and Forestal Districts. However, this program does not create permanently protected open space as this is a voluntary program that must be re-evaluated every 4 to 10 years. The County currently maintains +/- 3,900 acres in three Agricultural and Forestal Districts.
3. Transfer of Development Rights – “TDR, or transfer of development rights (V.C., § 15.2-2316.1 and 2316.2), is a concept in which some or all of the rights to develop a parcel of land in one district (the sending district) can be transferred to a parcel of land in a different district (the receiving district). TDR is a tool used to preserve open space, farmland, water resources and other resources in areas where a locality wishes to limit or curtail development.” (Managing, p. 45)
  - a) TDR Mechanics – “In a classic TDR system one or more sending districts are identified as well as one or more receiving districts. “Development rights” are assigned to landowners in the sending district, typically on the basis of a certain number of permitted dwellings per acre. Owners of land in the sending district instead of developing at the full level of their development rights, may sell their development rights to owners of land in the receiving district, who may then use the newly acquired development rights to build at higher densities than normally allowed by existing zoning (without further legislative approval). TDR systems are intended to maintain designated land in open or non-developed uses and to compensate owners of the preserved land for the loss of their right to develop it (Ibid., p. 45).
  - b) Limitations – “TDR programs are technically complicated and will require a significant investment of time and local government resources to implement. Key questions for a locality include:
    - Which areas should be protected?
    - How should development rights be allocated?
    - To where should development be transferred and at what densities?
    - What mix of incentives should a locality use to encourage landowners to use TDR?



A major challenge associated with TDR involves predicting the likely supply of and demand for development rights in the real estate market. Indeed, the pace of transactions will depend on the private market for development rights.” (Ibid., p. 46)

4. Conservation Easements – Conservation easements are used in conjunction with many of the above preservation tools as well as being a main component of cluster developments and TDRs. “Conservation easements may be established through purchase, lease (short term), or through donation. In all of these easement programs, the easement is established through the voluntary cooperation or initiative of the landowner.” (Ibid., p. 65)
  - a) Definition – “A conservation easement (also known as an Open Space or Scenic Easement) is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that limits the use of the land by recording deed restrictions that prohibit or severely restrict further development in order to protect the conservation value of the property, such as farmland, watersheds, wildlife habitat, forests, and/or historical lands. Each easement is unique in terms of acreage, description, use restrictions, and duration. These details are negotiated between the property owner granting the easement, and the organization that will be holding the easement.” (Ibid., p. 65)
  - b) Typical Provisions – “Conservation easements are typically established in perpetuity, but may be established for shorter periods. The easement allows a property owner to continue to own any underlying interest in the land that is not specifically limited by the easement, to use the land within the terms and restrictions of the easement, and to sell the land or pass it on to heirs (with the easement restrictions conveying with the land). Conservation easements do not permit public access unless specifically provided.” (Ibid., p. 65)
  - c) Authority – “Virginia Code, §§10.1-1009 et seq. allows any locality or land trust (defined in § 10.1-1700-5) to purchase or accept as a donation, and hold a conservation easement for periods of as little as five years, and for as long as perpetuity. In addition, § 10.1-1801.1, enacted in 1997, created a fund to assist landowners with the costs of preparing and conveying conservation easements. Virginia localities are authorized within their general powers (§15.2-1800) to acquire property to initiate a purchase of development rights program (PDR).” (Ibid., p. 66)

- d) Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) – “When conservation easements are purchased as part of a broad government program, it is typically called “Purchase of Development Rights” or PDR. In some other parts of the country it is also known as PACE or Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements. Purchasing “development rights” is the same as purchasing conservation easements or that portion of the “bundle of rights” that allows landowners to construct dwellings or non-farm commercial structures on the property. Thus, when a locality purchases a conservation easement from a landowner, it essentially “buys” the right to develop the land and “retires” that right by placing a permanent conservation easement on the property that restricts or prohibits further non-farm development. Typically, these easement restrictions run in perpetuity.” (Ibid., p. 65)
- e) Limitations of PDRs – “Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs require a dedicated source of stable revenues in order to be most effective. Most local governments simply do not have the funds required for such a program and counties are further restricted in that they cannot incur debt.” (Ibid., p. 68)
- f) Lease of Development Rights (LDR) – “Lease of Development Rights (LDR) is the same as Purchase of Development Rights except that the term of the easement can be as short as five years, under amendments to Virginia’s Open Space Land Act made in 1981. To date, no Virginia locality has enacted an LDR program, but the concept has the potential to be a good alternative to Use Value Assessment, because the locality can set the terms of eligibility, easement duration, restrictions, and compensation; whereas under the Use Value program, the state sets most of the rules. However, like Use Value Assessment, an LDR program is a temporary solution to the problem of farmland and open space conversion.” (Ibid., p. 65)
- g) Donation – “When conservation easements are accepted as donations from landowners, the donor property owner qualifies for certain tax incentives at the state and federal levels, instead of receiving payment from the locality. Localities may accept donations of conservation easements, and many private or semi-private institutions also accept easement donations. Easement donations can also be promoted by localities in conjunction with a PDR program. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) code allows two principal forms of tax benefit – a federal income tax deduction and an estate tax exclusion. The amount of the deduction or exclusion is determined by an appraiser who calculates the

diminution in value resulting from the permanent restriction on the use of the land resulting from the placement of the easement on the land. Only easements granted in perpetuity are eligible for the tax benefit. The donation must be made to a qualified organization exclusively for ‘conservation purposes.’” (Ibid., p. 66)

- h) Advantages – “In general, conservation easements provide for a great deal of flexibility in implementation. Features include:
- Placing land under easement does not make it open to the public unless specifically provided
  - The property is maintained in private ownership
  - Segments or whole parcels may be placed under easement
  - Some or all of the property rights may be deed restricted
  - The easement may be held in perpetuity or for a set number of years
  - The financial benefits of conservation easements can be substantial in reduced real estate taxes and inheritance taxes if the conservation is donated” (Ibid., p. 67-68)
- i) Limitations – “A common limitation of conservation easement tools is the funding they require to administer the program, to publicize it, and often, to operate it. For example, lack of information limits the use of voluntary conservation easements.” (Ibid., p. 61)

5. Conservation Design – “Conservation design is a density neutral design system that takes into account the natural landscape and ecology of a development site and facilitates development while maintaining the most valuable natural features and functions of the site.” (An Introduction to Conservation Design (Part I), John Southard, P.E.). This approach develops subdivision design standards that focus on the design of building sites and infrastructure in a subdivision to minimize the impact on environmental features.

**II. Current Situation** is as follows:

- A. Tools Currently Being Implemented Effectively – Some of the rural open space preservation tools have no reasonable opportunity for enhancement. These are Overlay Districts, Use Value Assessment and Agricultural and Forestal Districts.
- B. Tools Currently being Implemented that Could be Enhanced – The following current rural open space preservation tools could be enhanced as follows:
1. Comprehensive Plan – The most effective policy guide in the Comprehensive Plan is the Long-Range Land Use Plan. By including

policies that encourage more aggressive open space policies in the Rural Area, the Board could guide other programs that preserve open space. Additionally open space is more valuable if it is connected with other open space. The Comprehensive Plan helps identify corridors of open space and open space connections.

2. Large Lot Zoning – This tool could be enhanced by increasing the minimum lot size in the Rural Area to 20 acres as recommended by the American Farmland Trust. This could be paired with Rural Cluster Development – allowing density increases if Rural Cluster Development is utilized.
  3. Rural Cluster Development – Enhancement of this tool could include density bonuses for Cluster Development. This could be paired with Large Lot Zoning as described above.
  4. Conditional Zoning – Currently, there are no opportunities for rezoning within the Rural Area. Introduction of a new zoning district, i.e., A-2 that provides more density than A-1 may make this a useful tool. This could be paired with Large Lot Zoning and Rural Cluster Development to encourage open space preservation.
  5. Capital Improvement Program – Additional funding could be provided for land acquisition for parks or as part of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.
  6. Conservation Easements – The County could enhance the effectiveness of this tool by partnering with a land trust to help educate property owners on the value of donation and to maintain conservation easements.
  7. Conservation Design – The County could incorporate conservation subdivision design standards into the Subdivision Ordinance and/or Design and Construction Standards Manual.
- C. Develop New Tools – The tools that are not currently being used could be implemented. These are Transfer of Development Rights, Purchase of Development Rights and Lease of Development Rights.
- D. Tools for Further Study – The following rural open space preservation tools warrant further study in order to bring forward appropriate legislation for initiation:

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1. Comprehensive Plan – Identify additional policies to encourage open space preservation in the Rural Area and develop a policy framework for evaluating rural development projects.
  2. Rural Cluster Development – Review opportunities to enhance the Rural Cluster Development regulations in the Zoning Ordinance including possible density bonuses. Consider opportunities to pair this with Large Lot Zoning or Conditional Zoning.
  3. Conditional Zoning – Study the feasibility of creating a new zoning district that can be used in the Rural Area to allow rezoning to occur.
  4. Conservation Easements – Research possible land trusts that could partner with the County in conservation efforts.
  5. Conservation Design – Research possible design standards for rural development that would support rural open space preservation goals.
  6. Other – Other rural preservation tools as appropriate.
- E. Policy Support - The following policies in the Comprehensive Plan support further study of rural open space preservation tools:
1. Comprehensive Plan
    - a) EN1.3 – Identify and pursue opportunities for open space preservation that preserve unique habitats of special concern with an emphasis on connecting to existing natural resources conservation areas.
    - b) LU4.5 – Due to the collective environmental responsibilities of MCB, Quantico, Prince William Forest Park and Prince William County and in the best interests of preserving the pristine character of the entire south fork of the Quantico Creek watershed the County shall implement cooperative resource protection strategies. Such strategies shall employ measures that result in the conservation of that portion of the watershed (Figure 5) outside of MCB, Quantico and Prince William Forest Park. Such measures may include best management practices, public land acquisition and /or conservation easements.
    - c) OS5.3 3 – In the Comprehensive Plan, identify and map existing open space and other areas where acquisition of additional protected open space should be prioritized.



2. Rural Cluster Development

- a) EN3.1 – Encourage cluster development to protect contiguous natural open space, as defined by the Zoning Ordinance.
- b) LU2.3/EN3.2 – Amend the cluster ordinance to ensure that open space is permanently protected.
- c) OS5.2 – Review the open space development standards and definitions in the Zoning Ordinance, including the rural cluster component, and update them to reflect the goals and policies of this chapter.

3. Conditional Zoning

- a) OS4.2. – Review and implement programs that provide incentives for landowners in the rural area to preserve agricultural land uses, protect prime soils, and prevent non-agricultural uses from negatively impacting the primary land use.
- b) LU4.3 – Consider whether additional provisions are needed in the Zoning Ordinance to reduce potential use incompatibilities between MCB, Quantico training activities and uses located in the County.

4. Conservation Easements

- a) OS5.5 – Actively seek to acquire easements or fee interest in property through land purchases, grants, proffers, and donations that is suitable for protected open space, including existing open spaces, or where an environmental constraints analysis shows that by-right development would result in substantial community impacts.
- b) EN3.10 – Establish and continue partnerships with local agencies and organizations to initiate and provide public information programs aimed at conserving lands in the watershed through civic engagement community stewardship.
- c) EN3.11 – Investigate the benefits of involving a private conservancy for the purpose of purchasing privately held lands for preservation purposes and seeking perpetual conservation easements to preserve open space.

5. Conservation Design

- a) DES-Policy 9 – Preserve and enhance the unique architectural and landscape qualities of the County’s rural area.
  - (i) Action Strategy 3 – Provide site plans and building designs that protect the existing visual quality and natural resource values that make these areas distinctive.
  - (ii) Action Strategy 4 – a Encourage any new development in the Rural Area to preserve the visual character of the rural landscape by providing appropriate building setbacks, with landscaped/preserved open space occupying the setback area; and preserving important scenic resources— hedgerows, mature trees, farm buildings, walls and fences, and open fields.
  
- b) DES-Policy 12 – Fit new development into the natural landforms, particularly the existing woodland areas of the County.
  - (i) Action Strategy 1 – Recognize existing woodland areas as important features for protecting water quality, contributing to the overall beauty of the County, and promoting ecological diversity. Preserve and protect the natural terrain, drainage, and woodland areas in new development in accordance with EN-Policy 4, AS-1 and 2 of the Environment Plan. Preserve historic and champion trees and other specimen trees in cooperation with the County Arborist.
  - (ii) Action Strategy 2 – Encourage the integration of public open space areas with that of neighboring properties, to avoid fragmentation of open spaces and natural areas.
  - (iii) Action Strategy 3 – Minimize clearing and cut-and-fill operations. Encourage the placement of buildings so as to minimize the need for excessive grading. Avoid disturbance of steep slopes, particularly up-slope of important natural resource areas, such as perennial streams.
  - (iv) Action Strategy 4 – Align new roads to follow the natural contours of the land. Incorporate into the DCSM road standards that will allow greater preservation of the natural terrain and woodland areas.

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- (v) Action Strategy 5 – Encourage the preservation of existing natural woodland strips of 50 feet in width and greater along collector and higher classification streets to screen views of parking lots and building rears, to maintain a more uniform and continuous streetscape edge along a roadway corridor, and to blend development in with the natural setting of the surrounding areas.

**III. Recommendation** – This report is for information only.

Staff: David McGettigan, AICP x7189

Attachments:

- A. Comprehensive Plan Open Space Policies
- B. Zoning Ordinance A-1 & Rural Cluster provisions
- C. Managing Growth and Development in Virginia: A Review of the Tools Available to Localities

**Attachment A  
Comprehensive Plan Open Space Policies**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Comprehensive Plan for Prince William County contains a clear strategy for responsible, fiscally-sound growth to produce a vibrant, prosperous, stable, “livable” community. The Plan encourages new opportunities for high-end housing and targeted economic development that will strengthen the County’s tax base and balance existing housing and economic activities. It seeks to ensure a high quality of life for all County residents and heighten the County’s image by:

- Providing large amounts of open space, particularly in preservation and conservation areas.
- Encouraging higher land use densities at transit locations.
- Maintaining planned levels of residential and non-residential development.
- Providing adequate and affordable public services to meet the needs of current and future residents, and meeting established levels of service.
- Improving the design of sites and buildings.

The goals, policies, and action strategies in the Comprehensive Plan have been shaped by citizen preferences, the County’s Strategic Plan, sound planning principles, and a need to balance the competing demands for development and the preservation of the County’s distinct, irreplaceable character. The following four general goals for the future development of Prince William County represent the vision within which the Comprehensive Plan was crafted:

- **Strong economic growth**
  - ◆ New and expanded employment opportunities.
  - ◆ An improved County tax base – higher ratio of jobs to houses, non-residential uses to residential uses.
  - ◆ Higher-income professional jobs and higher-income housing.
  - ◆ Greater number of targeted industries, and the development and expansion of certain existing County-based companies.
  - ◆ Public and private investment to encourage quality economic growth.
- **Affordable, practical, and fiscally sound residential and economic development**
  - ◆ Infill development, mixed-use, and development of already developed areas within the development densities indicated in the Long-Range Land Use Plan, to maximize efficiency of existing infrastructure.
  - ◆ Updated levels of public service standards.
  - ◆ Capital Improvements Program and operating budget reflective of Comprehensive Plan policies and action strategies.

**Attachment A**  
**Comprehensive Plan Open Space Policies**

- **Prince William County as an attractive, “livable” community**
  - ◆ Good community design to ensure a high quality of life for County residents and to attract targeted businesses.
  - ◆ Preservation of areas of rural character and significant cultural/historical resources.
  - ◆ Revitalization of older commercial and residential areas of the County.
  - ◆ Sound environmental quality.
  - ◆ A variety of land use types and densities, to make the County an interesting place to live or visit.
  
- **Cost-effective and Plan-based transportation systems**
  - ◆ Roadway widths and locations determined by existing and planned densities.
  - ◆ Major new roadways to serve development.
  - ◆ Regional mass transportation “hubs” to develop at high-density mixed-use with transit-oriented land uses.

**The Rural Area** is that portion of Prince William County containing agricultural, open space, forestry, and large-lot residential land uses, as well as two federal parks. Large-lot residential clusters, providing large tracts of permanent open space, are an alternative residential pattern permitted in the Rural Area. The Rural Area designation helps preserve the County’s agricultural economy and resources, the quality of the groundwater supply, and the present open space and rural character of Prince William County. The Rural Area may be served by public water facilities but not by public sewer facilities, except under the emergency conditions identified in the Sewer Plan or to serve specific public facilities. Designation of the Rural Area and application of the development goals, policies, and action strategies for it are intended to help avoid the negative economic, social, and environmental characteristics of sprawl development.



**Attachment A  
Comprehensive Plan Open Space Policies**

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Intent**

The intent of the Environment Plan is to ensure that in developing the County, the natural beauty is preserved, water quality is protected, property values and quality of life are enhanced, and ecological diversity is preserved. With sound protection measures, such as those presented herein, Prince William County’s citizens, business community, and visitors enjoy a healthy environment coexisting with a vibrant economy. In this regard, this Plan is to be used to address environmental issues, evaluate development proposals in their earliest stages, and develop ordinances.

Sustaining our environmental position is critical to the County’s capacity to ensure a high quality of life, provide for continued economic growth, and actively conserve and protect natural resources, including public drinking water supplies. To this end, it is critical for the County to establish clear measurable goals and environmental benchmarks in order to gauge its progress and plan for the future. Prince William County utilizes a sustainability approach in its planning and development policies. Prince William County embraces the environmental and economic benefits of its green infrastructure, considering emerging green technology, ensuring a multi-faceted decision-making approach that balances infrastructure needs, while balancing environmental, economic, and social issues.

**GOAL:** Preserve, protect, and enhance the significant environmental resources and features of the County including air quality, topography, soils, ground and surface water, biotic communities (stream corridors, forests, and wetlands), sensitive plant and animal species, and natural viewsheds.

**EN-POLICY 1:** Consider environmental concerns at all levels of land use related decision-making.

**EN1.3** Identify and pursue opportunities for open space preservation that preserve unique habitats of special concern with an emphasis on connecting to existing natural resources conservation areas.

**EN-POLICY 3:** To further support OS-Policy 5, a minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County exclusive of acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico for all calculation purposes, should be retained as protected open space, as defined in the Open Space Plan.

**EN3.1** Encourage cluster development to protect contiguous natural open space, as defined by the Zoning Ordinance.

**EN3.2** Amend the cluster ordinance to ensure that open space is permanently protected.

**EN3.3** Amend the DCSM to ensure that there is a defined buffer standard for public parks.

**Attachment A  
Comprehensive Plan Open Space Policies**

- EN3.4 Amend the Zoning Ordinance and/or DCSM to prohibit the establishment of proffered conservation and preservation areas on residential lots.
- EN3.5 Develop and publish guidelines for homeowner associations that detail how to manage conservation areas while providing information on responsibilities and a checklist of standard management measures and benefits.
- EN3.6 Make information on conservation easements available to landowners, including distribution points at the Tax Assessment Department and other relevant County offices, to encourage the use of open space/conservation easements as tools to preserve environmental resources.
- EN3.7 Encourage the use of open space/conservation easements or fee simple dedication to preserve open space in already developed areas in order to provide natural areas, protect environmentally sensitive resources, preserve wildlife habitat and ensure a scenic appearance over time. Consider development at the high end of the density range for those projects that preserve sensitive features, identified in the ECA, beyond the minimum preservation requirements such as buffers, RPA and floodplain.
- EN3.8 The County shall review and implement opportunities for a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.
- EN3.9 Explore the use of available federal and state funding resources, including grants, foundations, and transportation related funds, to support green infrastructure planning initiatives and a PDR program.
- EN3.10 Establish and continue partnerships with local agencies and organizations to initiate and provide public information programs aimed at conserving lands in the watershed through civic engagement community stewardship.
- EN3.11 Investigate the benefits of involving a private conservancy for the purpose of purchasing privately held lands for preservation purposes and seeking perpetual conservation easements to preserve open space.
- EN3.12 Support initiatives promoted by the County's Trails and Blueways Council to establish a Countywide trails and corridors system through the voluntary donation of land and conservation easements from interested property owners as a means of environmental protection.
- EN3.13 To protect the biological diversity, processes, and functions of natural habitats, identify and prioritize a network of preservation corridors or large woodland areas to be incorporated into an overall habitat protection network.

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**LONG-RANGE LAND USE**

**Intent**

Prince William County, as a locality within the Washington metropolitan region, recognizes that growth and change will occur, and embraces the belief that change is vital to the well-being of the community. Specifically, Prince William County recognizes that smart long-range land use planning can help create sustainable transportation networks and encourage development that is environmentally and fiscally sound. Concentrating population, jobs, and infrastructure within vibrant, walkable, mixed-use centers served by transit will help ease road congestion by providing options for a range of transportation modes. This type of development will also ease development pressure on less developed or rural portions of the County. Furthermore, this type of development creates vibrant destinations with a strong sense of place, which foster business and provide housing and job opportunities. Thus, the County seeks to follow guidance from a number of nationally recognized smart growth principles regarding the long-range development of land within its boundaries, so that open space and cultural resources are preserved, business is supported and expanded, the County's financial health is strengthened, and an exceptional quality of life is provided to County Residents.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency defines smart growth as a range of development and conservation strategies that help protect our natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse. The ten principles of Smart Growth, as adapted specifically to the County, provide a sound basis by which the County can plan for its long-term future:

1. Mix land uses in the Development Area.
2. Take advantage of compact, environmentally friendly and energy efficient building design.
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
4. Create walkable neighborhoods.
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
6. Preserve open space, farmland, cultural resources, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities and infrastructure.
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.



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Observing these principles will allow for the County's long-term success. Smart growth recognizes connections between development and quality of life. It leverages new growth to improve the community. The features that distinguish smart growth in a community vary from place to place, but in general, smart growth invests time, attention, and resources in restoring and creating vitality to communities. Smart growth is town-centered, is transit and pedestrian oriented, and has a mix of housing, office and retail uses. It also creates open space, and preserves environmental amenities and cultural resources. Additionally, because of quality architecture and site planning, these communities are generally attractive and desirable.

The Long Range Land Use Plan contains six distinct goals, the achievement of which, along with the remaining chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, guides a land use pattern consistent with the principles of smart growth. This plan provides a framework of land use and infrastructure that will improve the quality of life for citizens by creating self-sustaining communities where it is possible to live, work and play. Centers of commerce and community within Prince William County will encourage future growth to be concentrated in vibrant, safe, mixed-use centers that will accommodate a range of housing and transportation choices. These compact, walkable, and transit-friendly areas should develop with attractive design themes to foster a sense of place. Centers are generally located in areas that already have significant investment in public facilities.

Focusing growth in centers will ease development pressures on existing communities. This policy complements the goal of preserving existing communities and ensuring appropriately scaled in-fill development. Protection of cultural resources, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas is also integral to the preservation goals. The pedestrian orientation of these centers provides opportunities for adequate open space and trails. Parks and recreation facilities should be integrated into development to increase accessibility of parks to communities.

Developing processes that further the land use vision will ensure success in implementing the plan. Providing the tools necessary to achieve the vision establishes a pathway to success. Review of public facilities to ensure investment in public infrastructure furthers the vision is a critical component of plan implementation.

**LAND USE GOAL:** To promote a Countywide pattern of land use that encourages fiscally sound development and achieves a high-quality living environment.

**LU-POLICY 2.** Provide for a variety of land uses to allow a diversity of housing unit types and employment opportunities throughout the County.

**LU2.3** Open space created as part of cluster developments shall be preserved as permanent open space.

**LU2.4** The purpose of both cluster development and planned district/planned unit development is to:

- Provide locations for town centers.

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- Implement the development of centers of commerce and centers of community.
- Promote the efficient use of land and minimize or limit cut and fill.
- Preserve slopes and woodlands.
- Better manage stormwater run-off and water quality.
- Reduce the length of streets, utility lines, and stormwater piping.
- Provide design flexibility.
- Promote the most cost-effective provision of public services necessary to support the development.
- Preserve open space.
- Preserve cultural resources.

**LU2.5** Direct new development to areas served by transit corridors; particularly designated centers of commerce, centers of community and Mass Transit Nodes.

**LU2.6** Ensure that the primary function of the Rural Area as reflected by the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map is to maintain open space, protect native habitats, allow for large-lot residential development, allow for agricultural activities, and provide potential sites for community facilities.

**LU-POLICY 4:** To recognize Marine Corps Base (MCB), Quantico as a valuable asset deserving protection and to ensure that future development adjacent to or near MCB Quantico does not negatively affect the mission of the military base.

**LU4.2** When evaluating proposed rezonings and/or special use permits that involve property potentially impacted by MCB, Quantico consider measures to reduce potential use incompatibilities between the proposed use and the MCB, Quantico training activities.

**LU4.3** Consider whether additional provisions are needed in the Zoning Ordinance to reduce potential use incompatibilities between MCB, Quantico training activities and uses located in the County.

**LU4.4** Retain the existing boundary and the 1 unit per 10 acre density of the Rural Area where it presently exists near MCB, Quantico.

**LU4.5** Due to the collective environmental responsibilities of MCB, Quantico, Prince William Forest Park and Prince William County and in the best interests of preserving the pristine character of the entire south fork of the Quantico Creek watershed the County shall implement cooperative resource protection strategies. Such strategies shall employ measures that result in the conservation of that portion of the watershed (Figure 5) outside of MCB, Quantico and Prince William Forest Park. Such measures may include best management practices, public land acquisition and /or conservation easements.



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**LU-POLICY 11:** Encourage a land use pattern that respects environmental features in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Environment Plan.

**LU11.3** Ensure that the primary function of the Rural Area as reflected by the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map is to maintain open space, protect native habitats, allow for large-lot residential development, allow for agricultural activities, and provide potential sites for community facilities.

**PARKS AND RECREATION GOAL:** To provide adequate recreational, park, open space and trail amenities that contribute to a high quality of life for County residents.

**LONG RANGE LAND USE PLAN MAP AND CLASSIFICATIONS**

The Long-Range Land Use Plan serves as a guide to the physical development of the County and reflects the spatial distribution of various urban, suburban and rural land use classifications. While this plan is a generalized document, it can be looked at on a site-specific basis, in consideration of approved zonings or other Board of County Supervisors' action that clearly states County planning policy for a site or area. The plan is implemented by the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision Ordinance and/or the Design and Construction Standards Manual. The Long-Range Land Use Plan can only be interpreted in conjunction with the rest of the Comprehensive Plan.

Previously approved projects shall be considered when new projects are being evaluated.

**THE RURAL AREA**

**The Rural Area.** This is the area of Prince William County in which are contained agricultural, open space, forestry and large-lot residential land uses, as well as occasional small-scale convenience retail centers and community facilities. Large-lot residential cluster development contained within or abutted by large tracts of permanent open space is an alternative residential pattern permitted in the Rural Area. Unlike the 10-acre lots permitted by right, however, these clusters require subdivision approval by the County. The purpose of the Rural Area designation is to help preserve the County's agricultural economy and resources, the County's agricultural landscapes and cultural resources, the quality of the groundwater supply, and the open space and rural character presently found there. The Rural Area also protects Prince William Forest Park and Manassas National Battlefield County Registered Historic Sites, which serve as key anchor points within the Rural Area classification. While it is intended that the Rural Area be served by public water facilities, the Rural Area is not intended to be served by public sewer facilities, except under emergency conditions as identified in the Sewer Plan. Protecting the Rural Area from higher density is the key to furthering the intent of this plan and achieving the ten smart growth principles throughout the County including the Development Area. Designation of the Rural Area and application of the development Goals, Policies, and Action Strategies relative to the Rural Area are intended to help avoid the negative economic, social and environmental characteristics of sprawl development.



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**Agricultural or Estate (AE).** The purpose of the Agricultural or Estate classification is to protect existing agricultural lands, cultural resources, and open space, as well as other important rural environmental resources, and to provide areas within the County where large lot residential development is appropriate. The maximum density is one dwelling per 10 gross acres.

**COUNTYWIDE CATEGORIES**

**Environmental Resource (ER).** This classification is explained in detail within the Environment Plan. Therein are located goals, policies, action strategies, and other Plan components designed to protect the sensitive nature of the identified resources. Environmental Resources include all 100-year floodplains as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA), Flood Hazard Use Maps or natural 100-year floodplains as defined in the Design and Construction Standards Manual, and Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) as defined by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. In addition, areas shown in an environmental constraints analysis submitted with a rezoning or special use permit application with wetlands; 25 percent or greater slopes; areas with 15 percent or greater slopes in conjunction with soils that have severe limitations; soils with a predominance of marine clays; public water supply sources; and critically erodible shorelines and stream banks are considered part of the Environmental Resource Designation.

**Parks and Open Space (POS).** The purpose of this classification is to designate existing and projected parks and recreational areas of the County. The Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan contains a complete inventory of existing federal, state, and local parks, and of planned parks within the County.

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**PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS**

**INTENT**

The quality of life for residents of Prince William County is linked closely to the development and management of a well-maintained system of parks, trails, and open space. Prince William County contains a diversity of park, open space, and trail resources. These parklands, open spaces and recreational facilities play a key role in shaping both the landscape and the quality of life of Prince William County residents through the conservation of natural and cultural resources, protection of environmental quality, and provision of recreational facilities. Prince William County's parks and open spaces have evolved into a diversified mosaic of public parks, public open space and recreation facilities, ranging from smaller local parks to extensive, regionally and nationally significant land holdings. Privately managed parks, open space, and facilities provide additional components of the open space and recreation system serving County residents. The integrated park system serves as the primary public mechanism for accomplishing two equally important purposes: (1) to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive land, habitat connectivity, and water resources, and areas of archaeological, historical and/or cultural significance; and (2) to provide opportunities for residents, workers and visitors to pursue leisure activities in safe, accessible, and enjoyable parks and community recreational facilities.

**OPEN SPACE PLAN**

**INTENT**

A system of open space and corridors will protect water quality in streams and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay (including sources of public drinking water); enhance the ability of wildlife to find food, water, and shelter; minimize environmental damage from development on excessively steep slopes, floodplains, resource protection areas (RPAs), or inappropriate soils; conserve cultural sites and scenic vistas; and enhance connections between neighborhoods.

These open spaces and corridors can be used for recreation; wetlands and forests supply storm-water drainage and wildlife habitat; and farms and forests provide aesthetic benefits to surrounding residents. In rapidly growing urban and suburban areas, any preserved land can offer relief from congestion and other negative effects of development.

Open space provides a range of economic, aesthetic, environmental, and recreation benefits to the citizens of a community. Open space enhances property values and attracts businesses, homebuyers, and workers.

This open space plan provides policy guidance for the future of Prince William's open space. The plan includes objectives, strategies, and recommended actions designed to ensure the

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provision of an adequate supply of beneficial open space to satisfy the needs of this and future generations in the county.

The plan also includes minimum open space and recreation facility principles and identifies criteria to evaluate acquisition sites and implementation strategies.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Open Space:** Land that is not dominated by man-made structures. It preserves natural or cultural resources, provides for passive recreation, is used for cultivated fields or forests, or exists in a natural and undeveloped state. Open space may include nature preserves, historic sites, farms, parks, forests, floodplains, wetlands, etc., and may include some structures, parking areas, roads, trails and facilities that support the use of the land.

**Protected Open Space:** Land that is protected from development with perpetual conservation or open space easement or fee ownership, held by federal, state, or local government or nonprofit organization for natural resource, forestry, agriculture, wildlife, recreation, historic, cultural, or open space use, or to sustain water quality and living resources values.

**OPEN SPACE GOAL:** Preserve existing protected open space, maintain high quality open space, and expand the amount of protected open space within the County.

**OS- POLICY 1:** Complete and maintain an up-to-date inventory of protected open space in Prince William County.

1. Periodically prepare and publish a comprehensive inventory of existing protected open space.
2. Define and publish guidelines for calculating changes to the inventory of protected open space.
3. Maintain an open space inventory map showing parcel-specific boundaries of protected open space and make this information available as a geographic information system (GIS) layer on the County Mapper.

**OS- POLICY 2:** Partner with other government agencies, businesses, and non-government organizations, including nonprofit organizations and home owner associations to permanently protect open space and increase public access to open space areas.

1. Coordinate land use planning with the recommendations of the Virginia Outdoors Plan, the Virginia Wildlife Plan, the Virginia Natural Heritage Resources Assessment, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources' Cultural Resources Inventory.



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2. Coordinate county land use planning efforts with federal, state, regional, and local public and private open space providers.
3. Coordinate open space planning efforts with adjoining counties, the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park, and the towns of Occoquan, Quantico, Dumfries, and Haymarket.

**OS- POLICY 3:** Identify county-owned land and designate such land for open space, where suitable.

1. Review county-owned properties and determine what county-owned lands should be protected as open space, and ensure such designation is made in official management plans of the Park Authority, Service Authority, Department of Public Works, Transportation Department, and other county agencies.
2. Consider using future "surplus" county rights-of-way or other county-owned lands for trails, parks, and open space, prior to determining if other disposition is more appropriate.

**OS- POLICY 4:** Retain existing open space in the county.

1. Review and implement programs, including the purchase of development rights (PDR), transfer of development rights (TDR), and outreach highlighting opportunities available through private conservation easements in order to protect existing open space.
2. Review and implement programs that provide incentives for landowners in the rural area to preserve agricultural land uses, protect prime soils, and prevent non-agricultural uses from negatively impacting the primary land use.

**OS-POLICY 5:** A minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County, (exclusive of acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico for all calculation purposes), should be retained as protected open space.

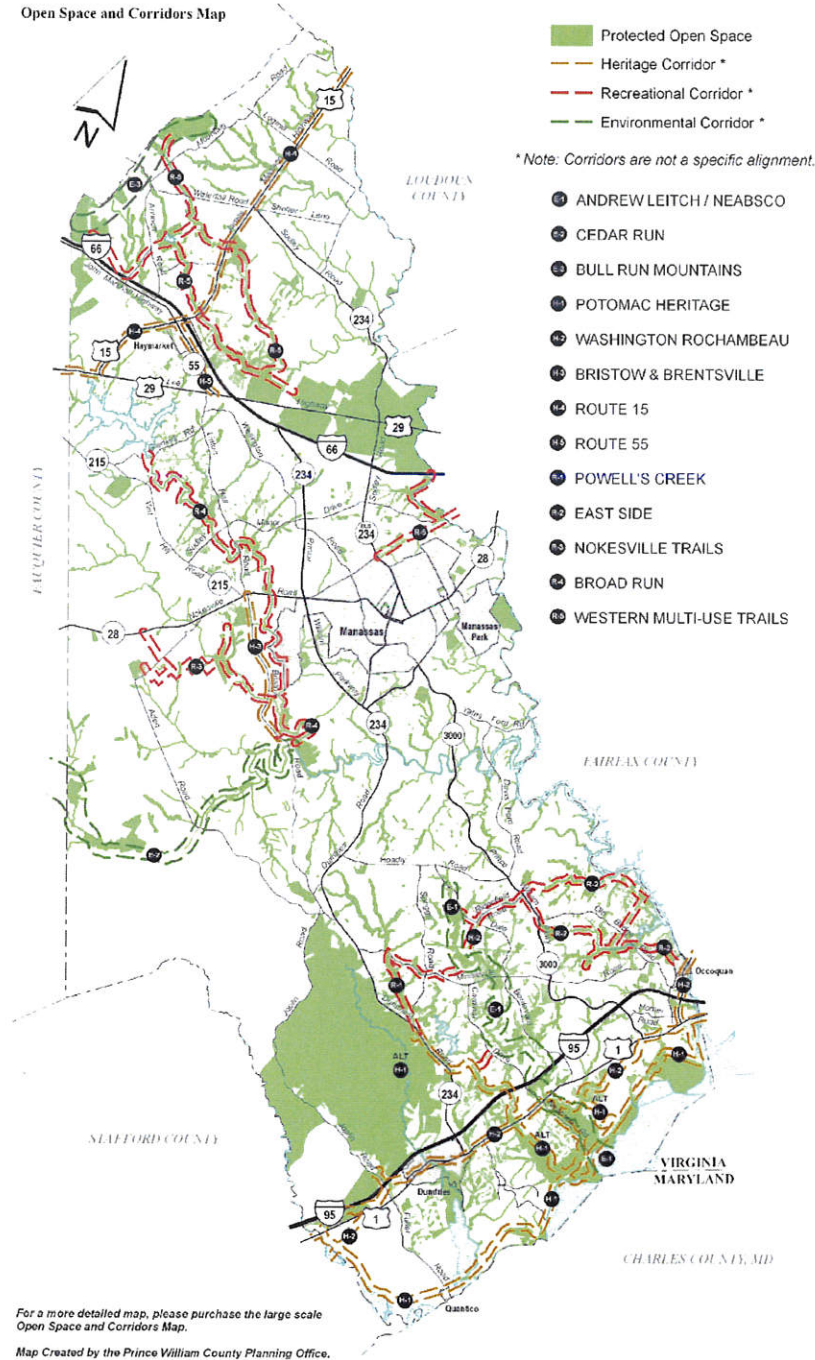
1. When and where possible and appropriate, work with home owner associations, utility companies, and other private property owners to obtain appropriate easements and covenants that ensure permanent protection of open space.
2. Review the open space development standards and definitions in the Zoning Ordinance, including the rural cluster component, and update them to reflect the goals and policies of this chapter.
3. In the Comprehensive Plan, identify and map existing open space and other areas where acquisition of additional protected open space should be prioritized.

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4. Review opportunities, including the purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDRs) and implement appropriate programs in order to provide incentives for landowners to protect open space and to shift density to appropriate locations where infrastructure is planned or in place.
5. Actively seek to acquire easements or fee interest in property – through land purchases, grants, proffers, and donations – that is suitable for protected open space, including existing open spaces, or where an environmental constraints analysis shows that by-right development would result in substantial community impacts.
6. Acquire easements as authorized by the Virginia Open Space Land Act.
7. Update the Zoning Ordinance to ensure increased requirements for protected open space.
8. Consider open space acquisition as a regular component of the capital improvement program.

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Open Space and Corridors Map





**Attachment B**  
**Zoning Ordinance – A-1 And Rural Cluster provisions**

**Sec. 32-301.01. - A-1, Agricultural, zoning district; purpose and intent.**

The A-1, Agricultural zoning district is intended to implement the agricultural or estate classification of the comprehensive plan. The district is designed to encourage conservation and proper use of large tracts of real property in order to assure available sources of agricultural products, to assure open spaces within reach of concentrations of population, to conserve natural resources, prevent erosion, and protect the environment; and to assure adequate water supplies. The intent is to encourage private land owners to protect these values and thereby create an environment favorable for the continuation farming and other agricultural pursuits; to preserve prime agricultural land, forest land and/or open space; and to reduce the demand for costly public facilities and services that are inconsistent with the character of the rural areas within Prince William County.

(Ord. No. 99-26, 4-20-99; Ord. No. 11-30, Atch., 7-19-11)

**Sec. 32-301.02. - Uses permitted by right.**

The following uses shall be permitted by right in the A-1 district:

1. Except for the keeping of domestic fowl as regulated in Part 508, agricultural uses, the keeping of livestock and fishery uses, on lots two acres or greater. For lots principally used for agricultural purposes, the limits on the number of horses and other domesticated equines provided for in subsection 32-300.02.6 shall not apply for lots ten acres or larger in size. Accessory structures such as, but not limited to, barns, sheds and stables shall be permitted as required for bona-fide agricultural uses.
2. Group home, as defined by Code of Virginia, § 15.2-2291, including group residences for ambulatory elderly persons, whether or not special accommodations are required, but shall not include nursing homes or hospitals.
3. Home employment, subject to standards in section 32-300.16
4. Home occupation, subject to standards in section 32-300.07.2.
5. Home sales office, subject to standards in section 32-300.07.1.
6. Lodging house, on lots ten acres or greater in size.
7. Noncommercial keeping or breeding of exotic birds and miniature animals (other than dogs), pursuant to the standards of section 32-300.02.8.
8. Nursery, greenhouse, selling only produce, flowers or other plant life raised to a mature state for harvest or through several growing seasons, on lots ten acres or greater in size; limited retail sales of incidental products and the storage and use of equipment to maintain plant life shall be permitted, however, landscaping businesses and garden centers shall be permitted only by a special use permit.
9. Stables, private or commercial; for lots principally used as stables, the limits for the number of horses and other domesticated equines established by subsection 32-300.02.6. shall not apply provided such lots are ten acres or greater in size.
10. Temporary sawmill.

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Open Space Planning Tools  
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**Zoning Ordinance – A-1 And Rural Cluster provisions**

11. One-family dwelling, and manufactured homes on a permanent foundation and subject to all requirements of this chapter applicable to one-family dwellings, one per lot. One-family dwellings and manufactured homes on nonconforming lots, including those allowed by subsection 12. following, shall be governed by the provisions of subsections 32-601.33.2. and 32-601.40.2. of this chapter.
12. One-family dwelling, and manufactured homes on a permanent foundation and subject to all requirements of this chapter applicable to one-family dwellings, (one per lot) on a lot created under the provisions of section 25-6 of the Prince William County Code.
13. Rural cluster developments, with lots of less than ten acres, created under the provisions of sections 32-300.40 et seq.
14. Timbering, subject to the restrictions contained in Part 504, sections 32-250.53 et seq., and any other applicable provisions of this chapter.

(Ord. No. 94-1, 1-11-94; Ord. No. 95-76, 9-5-95; Ord. No. 99-26, 4-20-99; Ord. No. 99-64, 9-7-99; Ord. No. 04-78, 12-21-04; Ord. No. 11-22, 4-19-11)

**Sec. 32-301.03. - Secondary uses.**

The following uses shall be permitted by right in the A-1 district only in conjunction with a permitted principal use, as specifically identified below, existing or proposed:

1. Community operated parks, clubhouses, swimming pools, racquet ball and tennis courts, health and fitness facilities, and other recreational or civic facilities, as secondary uses to a principal residential development for the exclusive use of the residents of the development and their guests.
2. Dwelling unit for farm employees. One dwelling unit shall be permitted as an accessory use for every ten acres of lot area, for lots ten acres or greater in size.
3. Satellite parking, secondary to a religious institution or place of religious worship only, with a special use permit, subject to standards in section 32-300.07.8.
4. Tack shop, secondary to a stable use only.

Editor's note—

Section 301-03 adopted Dec. 21, 2004, pursuant to Ord. No. 04-78, and includes provisions relocated from §§ 32-300.02 and 32-300.07. Former §§ 32-301.03—32-301.06 renumbered accordingly.

**Sec. 32-301.04. - Special uses.**

The following uses shall be permitted in the A-1 district on existing lots of any size with a special use permit:

1. Adaptive reuse of a historic building, subject to the standards of section 32-300.07
2. Adult day care facility.
3. Airport, heliport, private airstrip.
4. Bed and breakfast, subject to the standards of section 32-300.15
5. Cemetery.

**Attachment B**

**Zoning Ordinance – A-1 And Rural Cluster provisions**

6. Child care facility.
7. Civic club.
8. Commercial kennels.
9. Commercial recreation facility, outdoor, excluding laser tag facilities.
10. Commercial riding facility, equestrian center, polo club, or recurring horse show or equestrian events.
11. Community operated parks, clubhouses, swimming pools, racquet ball and tennis courts, health and fitness facilities, and other recreational or civic facilities, as secondary uses to a principal residential development, for the use of the residents of the development and others.
12. Country club.
13. Extraction of mineral resources (mining, quarrying, etc.).
14. Farmer's market/flea market.
15. Garden center.
16. Horse racetrack (excluding training tracks for horses, which are permitted by right).
17. Home business
18. Landscaping service.
19. Lodging house (on lots smaller than ten acres in size).
20. Mortuary, funeral home, crematory accessory to a cemetery which is a minimum size of 20 acres and which is operated as a commercial enterprise or associated with a religious institution.
21. Paintball facilities, including all land devoted to shooting ranges, as well as any accessory buildings or structures, shall be permitted in the A-1 district with a special use permit, and shall meet the following minimum standards:
  - (a) Facilities shall be located entirely within areas designated AE, Agricultural or Estate in the comprehensive plan.
  - (b) Minimum lot size for the use shall be 50 acres.
  - (c) Facilities shall not be located within 500 feet of any occupied dwelling.
22. Petting farm.
23. Private camp.
24. Private school.
25. Recovery home, subject to the standards of section 32-300.07.9.
26. Religious institution or place of religious worship, subject to the standards of section 32-300.07.7.
27. Retail sales/breeding of exotic birds and miniature animals (other than dogs)

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**Zoning Ordinance – A-1 And Rural Cluster provisions**

28. Rifle, pistol, skeet, trap, archery range, turkey shoots; indoor shooting ranges.
29. Rural home business, subject to the standards of section 32-300.14
30. Satellite parking lot for religious institution subject to the standards of section 32-300.07.8.\*
31. Shelters for the homeless.
32. Travel trailer and camp park.
33. Veterinary hospital.

The requirement for an SUP is set out in \* section 32-300.07. It is repeated here for ease of reference and consistency with all other special uses indicated in section 32-300.07.

(Ord. No. 92-70, 7-7-92; Ord. No. 94-1, 1-11-94; Ord. No. 94-41, 7-5-94; Ord. No. 98-49, 6-2-98; Ord. No. 99-64, 9-7-99; Ord. No. 04-78, 12-21-04; Ord. No. 05-41, 6-7-05; Ord. No. 05-65, 9-6-05; Ord. No. 09-30, 5-19-09; Ord. No. 11-30, Atch., 7-19-11)

Editor's note—

Former § 32-301.03 entitled "Special Uses" was renumbered as § 32-301.04 pursuant to Ord. 04-78, adopted Dec. 21-2004, and includes uses relocated from section 32-300.07

**Sec. 32-301.05. - Development standards.**

1. Minimum lot size for new lots shall be ten acres, except that for a lot created under the provisions of section 25-6 of the Prince William County Code, the minimum lot size shall be one acre and except as otherwise provided for in section 32-300.40 or Part 301
2. Lots shall have a minimum lot width of 100 feet or shall have at least 100 feet of width at the setback line and be served by a private road. Lots created after November 21, 1991, shall have access to a street via an exclusive and unobstructed easement not less than 18 feet in width unless served by a public or private road. If served by a private road, the following conditions shall be met:
  - a) The road shall be of a width and design as required by the design and construction standards manual.
  - b) The road shall be used only to serve permitted A-1 uses and the road right-of-way shall be zoned A-1. In the event such road is accepted by the state for maintenance, the provisions of this subsection shall not apply, provided that such road is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
3. The height limitations identified in section 32-300.05 shall not apply to structures for secondary uses to bona fide agricultural uses on lots ten acres or greater.

(Ord. No. 94-1, 1-11-94; Ord. No. 94-67, 10-4-94; Ord. No. 99-26, 4-20-99; Ord. No. 04-78, 12-21-04)

Editor's note—

Former § 32-301.04 entitled "Development Standards" renumbered as § 32-301.05 pursuant to Ord. No. 04-78, adopted Dec. 21, 2004.

**Attachment B**

**Zoning Ordinance – A-1 And Rural Cluster provisions**

**Sec. 32-301.06. - Setbacks.**

1. All buildings, including accessory structures, shall be set back at least 35 feet from the front lot line, all streets, and all private access easements or rights-of-way.
2. An agriculturally-related accessory structure shall be located no closer than five feet from the right-of-way on lots greater than three acres. The lot shall be within the rural area as defined by the Comprehensive Plan and the right-of-way shall be a category I or II residential local street per Section 600 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual. Additionally, the structure shall not be permitted unless adequate sight distances are met in accordance with Section 600 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual.
3. The minimum rear setback shall be 25 feet.
4. The minimum side setback shall be 15 feet, except the side setback may be reduced to ten feet when properties of similar acreage within the vicinity have a ten-foot sideyard setback.

(Ord. No. 04-78, 12-21-04; Ord. No. 05-41, 6-7-05; Ord. No. 05-65, 9-6-05; Ord. No. 06-50, 5-2-06)

Editor's note—

Former § 32-301.05 entitled "Yards and Setbacks" amended and was renumbered as § 32-301.06 pursuant to Ord. No. 04-78, adopted Dec. 21, 2004.

**Sec. 32-301.07. - Site plans required for commercial uses.**

No commercial use, except for agricultural, fishery or forestry uses, shall be commenced in the A-1 district without approval of a site plan therefor, in accordance with the requirements of Part 800 of this chapter.

Ord. No. 04-78, 12-21-04)

Editor's note—

Former § 32-301.05 entitled "Yards and Setbacks" amended and renumbered as § 32-301.06 pursuant to Ord. No. 04-78, adopted Dec. 21, 2004.

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**Zoning Ordinance – A-1 And Rural Cluster provisions**

**Sec. 32-300.40. - Rural cluster development.**

1. Rural cluster developments shall be permitted in the rural area, as designated in the comprehensive plan, on land in the A-1, agricultural zoning district. Rural cluster development shall be subject to subdivision plan review in accordance with the subdivision ordinance and the Design and Construction Standards Manual. The subdivision plan shall include provisions for establishment of a homeowner's association or recorded covenants and restrictions that shall be responsible for the maintenance and/or use of the required open space area in accordance with this section.
2. Within rural cluster developments, the permitted uses shall be as follows:
  - (a) One-family dwellings.
  - (b) Home occupations.
  - (c) Home employment.
  - (d) Agricultural uses and their accessory uses and buildings and structures, as permitted in the A-1 agricultural zoning district and as determined under the homeowners' association covenants or other recorded covenants and restrictions pursuant to section 32-300.42
  - (e) Special uses as determined under the homeowners' association covenants or other recorded covenants and restrictions pursuant to section 32-300.42
3. If the property contains an existing farm house and associated buildings and structures, a single-family dwelling that is a designated cultural resource in the comprehensive plan, or other single-family dwelling that is determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, that farm or historic resource may be part of the required open space area of the rural cluster development, as established under the homeowners' association covenants or other recorded covenants and restrictions pursuant to section 32-300.42. The use of the farm or the historic resource other than for farming and dwelling purposes shall require a special use permit pursuant to section 32-300.42. If a separate lot is created for the farm buildings or the historic building, it shall be a minimum of three acres. The farm dwelling or historic dwelling shall not count as one of the dwellings that would otherwise be allowed pursuant to section 32-400.41.5 and a separate lot created for such features shall be allowed to count toward the required open space.

(Ord. No. 99-26, 4-20-99; Ord. No. 06-30, 3-7-06)

**Sec. 32-300.41. - Design standards.**

1. Any proposed rural cluster development shall be designed so as to foster the preservation of open space or existing farmland; to protect the distinct visual quality and the natural landscape, topographic, and natural resource features of the rural area; to provide landowners in the rural area an alternative use of their property; and to uphold the general intent of the A-1, agricultural zoning district.



**Attachment B**

**Zoning Ordinance – A-1 And Rural Cluster provisions**

2. A minimum rural cluster development area of 50 acres shall be required. Additions to existing rural cluster developments may be less than 50 acres but must meet all other provisions of sections 32-300.40 through 32-300.43
3. No rural cluster development shall be further divided or otherwise redeveloped, except in accordance with sections 32-300.40 through 32-300.43
4. The minimum size of lots for residential use shall be three acres and the maximum size of lots for residential use shall be five acres, except that some lots may exceed five acres in size to accommodate topographic features, fit within a particular road layout, or address other design considerations.
5. The total number of dwellings within a rural cluster development shall not exceed one dwelling for each ten acres of land, except that a farm dwelling or historic dwelling is allowed in addition to the cluster subdivision lots, pursuant to section 32-400.40.3.
6. The rural cluster development shall have no more than one access to a public street external to that development, except for the following:
  - (a) More than one access is required pursuant to section 600 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual;
  - (b) A second or separate entrance is needed for a use located in the open space area;
  - (c) A topographic or other environmentally sensitive feature would be avoided or protected with a second entrance.

The access shall be consistent with the minimum state entrance requirements contained in section 600 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual.
7. All buildings, including accessory structures, shall be set back a minimum of 35 feet from the front lot line.
8. A 100-foot wide buffer shall be created and maintained between any external street and the edge of the rural cluster development. This buffer shall be used for the purpose of partially screening the view of a cluster-lot subdivision from the public right-of-way external to the rural cluster development and from an existing farm or a historic house on the property. If an existing farm or historic house is to remain on the property along the frontage of the external street, the buffer shall be placed between the farm or historic house and the cluster lots. This screening shall be achieved in one of the following ways:
  - (a) Where the 100-foot wide buffer already contains existing healthy trees, shrubs, or other vegetation adequate to provide the equivalent of a 100-foot wide rural buffer, the existing vegetation shall be retained during the development process and maintained in perpetuity.
  - (b) Where the buffer does not already contain vegetation, native landscaping in accordance with Table I-2 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual shall be provided adequate to screen the development from the external street, existing farm, or

**Attachment B**

**Zoning Ordinance – A-1 And Rural Cluster provisions**

historic house, appropriate to a rural location and maintained in perpetuity. Landscaping shall be appropriate to a rural location and may include vegetation types such as old field successional trees and shrubs, flowering meadows, and meadow grasses. The provisions of the DCSM 802.12C and D shall not apply to rural cluster buffers.

(c) Only stone walls, brick walls, split-rail fences, and board rail fences are allowed, in the required buffer in conjunction with plantings or tree preservation areas

9. The maximum lot coverage for lots containing dwellings shall be 25 percent.
10. No fence or wall over four feet high shall be permitted along the frontage of the rural cluster development or each lot within that development, provided that such fences that are needed to contain permitted animals may exceed four feet.
11. Ponds, meeting the requirements of section 700 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual, may be used as stormwater management facilities.
12. A subdivision sign, when provided, shall be integrated into the landscape and be in accordance with sections 32-250.20 et. seq. Internally illuminated subdivision signs are prohibited.

(Ord. No. 99-26, 4-20-99; Ord. No. 04-78, 12-21-04; Ord. No. 06-30, 3-7-06)

**Sec. 32-300.42. - Open space.**

1. That portion of the gross acreage of a rural cluster development that is not developed as residential lots and as internal street(s) shall be provided as open space. The open space shall not be less than 50 percent of the gross acreage of the rural cluster development. The buffer required under section 32-300.41(7) shall be included in the open space calculation.
2. The open space shall be maintained in its natural, scenic, open and/or wooded condition and/or planted and maintained in perpetuity with indigenous species and/or species appropriate to rural locations. Agricultural use of all or a portion of this open space is permitted, as well as uses allowed in subsection 3. below.
3. The open space shall be conveyed to one or a combination of the following:
  - (a) An authorized public or private grantee, as described in the Conservation Easement Act, Code of Virginia, ch. 10.1, §§ 10.1-1009, et seq.
  - (b) A homeowners' association.
  - (c) An entity allowed by the homeowners' association or by other recorded covenants and restrictions, to live in an existing farm dwelling and operate a farm.
  - (d) An entity allowed by the homeowners' association or by other recorded covenants and restrictions, to live in and maintain an existing historic building.
  - (e) An entity allowed by the homeowners' association or by other recorded covenants and restrictions, to obtain a special use permit for one of the following uses:

**Attachment B**

**Zoning Ordinance – A-1 And Rural Cluster provisions**

- (1) Adaptive reuse of a historic building, subject to the standards of section 32-300.07
  - (2) Bed and breakfast.
  - (3) Cemetery.
  - (4) Commercial riding facility, equestrian center, polo club, or recurring horse show or equestrian events.
  - (5) Community operated park.
  - (6) Farm winery.
  - (7) Garden center.
4. The open space shall be governed by recorded restrictive covenants that shall reaffirm and provide notice of, at a minimum, the development restrictions set forth in this section. The restrictive covenants shall be achieved through a deed conveying the land to one of the entities identified in this section. This deed must be binding upon the party to which this open space is conveyed and that party's successors and assigns, unless modified with approval from the director of planning.
  5. Except with a formal public facility review under Code of Virginia, § 15.2-2232, no portion of any land provided as open space may be used or disturbed for any public use. Such open space may, however, be permitted to contain any required stormwater management facilities.
  6. Maintenance of the open space shall be the responsibility of the party or parties identified above.
  7. Open space in rural cluster developments shall be laid out so as to provide adequate setbacks and other appropriate transitions to and from surrounding land uses.

(Ord. No. 99-26, 4-20-99; Ord. No. 04-78, 12-21-04; Ord. No. 06-30, 3-7-06)

**Sec. 32-300.43. - Internal streets.**

1. Streets internal to the rural cluster development shall be public or private and shall be platted in accordance with section 600 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual. Pipestem lots leading from such private streets are prohibited. Common driveways serving a maximum of two lots are, however, permitted if constructed in accordance with the standards contained in the Design and Construction Standards Manual. All internal streets shall be built to the RL-1 standards contained in the Design and Construction Standards Manual, unless a higher standard is required to accommodate traffic generated by a permitted special use.
2. All cluster lots within a rural cluster development shall have direct access on internal streets. No cluster lots shall have direct access to a street that is external to the rural cluster development.

(Ord. No. 99-26, 4-20-99; Ord. No. 06-30, 3-7-06)

[Bound and Attached Separately]

## **Purchase of Development Rights**

A Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program is a voluntary program that allows a landowner to sell their development rights from their land to a locality or land trust for the purpose of permanently protecting the land from being developed. In buying the development rights to the property, the locality or land trust, has purchased the rights to develop the land and will ensure that the property cannot be developed in the future by placing the property in a conservation easement. In selling the development rights to their property, the landowner receives proceeds from the sale and usually uses those proceeds to invest in their farming business, and can sell their property to another farmer at a lower cost (the property is no longer allowed to be developed and so the property's resale value has lessened making it more affordable for another farmer to buy the property). A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a public body or land trust that limits the use of the land by recording deed restrictions that prohibit or severely restrict further development in order to protect the conservation value of the property, such as farmland, watersheds, wildlife habitat, forests, and/or historical lands. Each easement is unique in terms of acreage, description, use restrictions, and duration. These details are negotiated between the property owner granting the easement and the organization that will be holding the easement.

Virginia Code, §§10.1-1700 et seq. allows any locality or land trust (defined in § 10.1-1009) to purchase development rights through recordation of an open space easement. In addition, § 10.1-1801.1 created a fund to assist landowners with the costs of preparing and conveying conservation easements. Virginia localities are authorized within their general powers (§15.2-1800) to acquire property to initiate a purchase of development rights program (PDR).” Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs require a dedicated source of stable revenues in order to be most effective. Counties may appropriate funds and issue general obligation bonds to purchase land and development rights for open space preservation.

To assist localities in the preservation of farmland, Virginia has established the Office of Farmland Preservation in the Virginia Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services (VDACS). The Office of Farmland Preservation is charged with working with other governmental and private organizations to help establish local purchase of development rights (PDR) programs by creating model policies and practices, establishing criteria to certify programs as eligible to receive funds from public sources, and determining methods and sources of funding for localities to purchase agricultural conservation easements. In addition, the Office of Farmland Preservation administers a matching grant program to help localities purchase development rights.

The Model PDR Program that the VDACS has developed for localities includes the following recommendations:

- Ensure that the PDR Program is voluntary, in that the landowner is volunteering to participate in the Program.
- Determine specific areas of farmland or forestland that will be targeted for being preserved, and these specific areas should be carefully selected to ensure that they are the areas that are more likely to be successfully preserved.

- Create and maintain other preservation strategies, like protective zoning and land use taxation, to ensure that the Program will be successful.
- Follow the model program to help qualify for federal and state funding.
- Ensure that the Local PDR Program has clearly defined goals as well as a set purpose.
- Create a plan that contains various methods for educating the public on the local PDR Program
- Adopt an ordinance to establish a PDR Program.

The purposes of the ordinance are to create fixed standards for the process involved in determining the values of the development rights, to ensure that the deed of easement is a consistent document that contains particular content, to define forestland and agricultural areas to target purchases, to create a required monitoring program, and to establish a review program to evaluate the PDR Program.

A successful PDR Program can leverage federal and state funding to substantially advance open space, historic preservation and farmland preservation goals. An example of a successful program is the Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) Program in Albemarle County.

### **Albemarle County’s Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) Program**

Albemarle County is located in central Virginia, and is known for its rural countryside, natural beauty, and agricultural heritage. Albemarle County’s PDR Program, the Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) Program, was one of the first three PDR Programs that was created in Virginia, and it is also one of the first PDR Programs to be established in the southeast. From 2000-2015, Albemarle County received over \$2,225,000 in grants and donations for their ACE Program. During this time frame Albemarle County’s ACE Program protected 8,508 acres, eliminated 484 development lots, and acquired easements on 44 properties.

Albemarle County’s “Open Space and Critical Resource Plan” was adopted as an amendment to their Comprehensive Plan in 1992. This Open Space Plan stated clear goals and objectives related to protecting open spaces throughout Albemarle County. Albemarle County’s Open Space Plan also recognized that purchase of development right (PDR) programs are a critical tool for protecting open space from development pressures and fragmentation. Albemarle County’s Board of Supervisors (BOS) created a committee in 1997 to oversee the development of a PDR Program, and ensuring that it was aligned with their Comprehensive Plan. In 1998 the Albemarle BOS directed this committee to gather public input on creating a PDR Program. This exploratory committee created and tested the ranking evaluation criteria that is now used to determine if a property is appropriate to be preserved through their PDR Program. The Albemarle BOS passed an ordinance in 2000, which established their PDR Program, also known as the ACE Program. Albemarle County has an ACE Program Coordinator whose main focus is monitoring the ACE Program.

Albemarle County’s BOS provided initial funding for their PDR Program by using transient lodging tax money and sources from their General Fund. Albemarle County’s Code discusses funding for their ACE Program. Albemarle County’s BOS may provide annual funding in the County Budget for the ACE Program, but the County should be seeking other means of funding, like state, federal, or



private funding. From 2000-2015, Albemarle County received over \$2,200,000 in grant money for their ACE Program from preservation groups like the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the Office of Farmland Preservation, and the Virginia Land Conservation Fund. The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) also donated \$22,500 to the Albemarle County's ACE Program during this same fifteen year time frame. Albemarle County also receives private funding through their ACE Contribution Fund, which only uses these donations to purchase conservation easements under their ACE Program. Currently, Albemarle County no longer utilizes transient lodging or tourism tax money as a funding source for their PDR Program, but they do continue to use sources from their General Fund. Albemarle County mostly obtains state funding from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to supplement the local funding sources for their PDR Program.

### **Rural Preservation Study Recommendations**

Consultants from Environmental Resources Management (ERM) conducted the Rural Preservation Study and produced the final report which included some recommendations for improving Prince William County's current rural preservation policies. One of these recommendations was to create a PDR Program.

This Rural Preservation Study Report included several recommendations to develop a PDR Program that is specifically tailored for Prince William County. According to the study, the Rural Area contains approximately 28,000 acres of privately held land that has not been developed or preserved, and about 20,000 acres within this undeveloped, unpreserved area have an agricultural use. The Study recommended that the County's PDR Program contain an obtainable preservation goal, and it was suggested to aim to preserve 10,000 acres.

The County could fund a PDR Program with the help of state and federal funding and partnering with private land trusts or other preservation related non-profit organizations; however, a dedicated source of local funding must be identified.

### **Next Steps**

To create the PDR Program, the following steps would be needed:

1. Amend the Comprehensive Plan to identify targeted areas for use of the PDR program.
2. Adopt an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to establish the PDR Program processes and procedures.
3. Appropriate funding for the PDR Program and pursue a combination of state, federal, and private funding sources.
4. Add staff resource to administer the PDR Program.

5. Carry out an educational/outreach plan to inform the public about the Program.

The Purchase of Development Rights program as an open space preservation tool provides the locality with the most control over the locations to be preserved, but requires the most in financial resources to implement.

## **Transfer of Development Rights**

A transfer of development rights (TDR) program features the creation of a market in development credits through the county government. The county gives development credits to landowners in a designated sending area from which the development credits will be sent and the land is preserved by a deed of easement (conservation easement). The development credits can be purchased by developers and landowners for use in designated receiving areas, and proposed developments are allowed to be built at a higher than normal density. Sending areas should be the highest value agricultural, scenic, and culturally significant parts of the Rural Area. Receiving areas would be: appropriate locations in the Comprehensive Plan's Development Area such as within Sector Plans, mixed-use districts, areas designated for high density development, and areas appropriate for transit-oriented development. A TDR program enables a jurisdiction to preserve both working lands, such as farms and forest lands, as well as open space and natural areas, by restricting future development of the land while allowing the land's continued use in its current state. TDRs are a voluntary, incentive-based, market driven approach to preserve land and relocate development growth away from rural areas and into urban areas. TDRs use private, rather than public funds, to protect rural lands.

### **Virginia Transfer of Development Rights Legislation**

The Virginia General Assembly adopted statewide enabling legislation for local zoning ordinances permitting the transfer of development rights ("TDRs") in 2006. Virginia Code §§15.2-2316.1 and 15.2-2316.2 defines terms and procedures for development of a TDR program. The law focuses on the mechanisms for transferring development rights including establishing sending and receiving areas, severing rights, taxing development rights, and the provision of density bonuses for the receiving property.

### **A Model Transfer of Development Rights Ordinance for Virginia Localities**

To facilitate implementation of TDRs, a usable model ordinance was developed. When setting up their programs, local governments need to determine several critical design features including:

- Designation of sending areas: Land from which development rights can be transferred
- Designation of receiving areas: Land to which development rights can be transferred to get additional density
- TDR allocation rate: Number of TDRs that landowners in sending area are permitted to sell, usually expressed per acre
- Density bonus in receiving areas: Additional density allowed above the baseline with TDRs, usually expressed as dwelling units per acre
- TDR requirement in receiving areas: Number of TDRs required for an additional dwelling unit

Economic opportunities for land parcels in undeveloped or in developed uses are key in the functioning of TDR markets. Because the TDR program is added to existing zoning rules, the supply and demand for TDRs will depend on the profitability of development under existing zoning, and the demand (or lack thereof) for higher density in some areas. As an example, if local zoning rules have set density limits in receiving areas that reflect the current market demand, there may not be much demand for additional density and thus little demand for TDRs.

Setting a high density bonus will do nothing to spur demand. Similarly, if sending areas have high potential values in development, few properties will be offered to the program even if TDR allocation rates are high, and little land will be preserved.

TDRs cannot be expected to achieve all of a community's land use goals. TDRs work best when they are used in conjunction with other policies, such as PDRs, land purchase programs for public open space, and zoning. TDRs can help attain land preservation goals at little public cost, but they cannot be used to preserve particular properties or to achieve spatial patterns of preservation that a community may consider important. They also retain land in private ownership and are thus not a substitute for public lands such as parks and recreation areas. Communities should consider a well-designed and implemented TDR program as one tool in their land conservation kits.

### **Prince William County Rural Preservation Study**

Consultants from Environmental Resources Management (ERM) conducted the Rural Preservation Study and produced the final report which included some recommendations for improving Prince William County's current rural preservation policies. One of these recommendations was to create a TDR Program for Prince William County.

Sending areas should be the highest value agricultural, scenic, and culturally significant parts of the Rural Area, including two character areas; the Valley Agriculture and Forests rural character area and the Route 15 (Journey through Hallowed Ground) rural gateway corridor character area.

Receiving areas would be:

- Appropriate locations in the Comprehensive Plan's Development Area such as Centers of Commerce and Centers of Community.
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Regional Activity Centers. There are five in the County: Gainesville, Innovation, Potomac Shores, Potomac Town Center/Potomac Mills, and North Woodbridge.
- Nokesville Village – Sector Plan Core Area only.

Most TDR programs fail for lack of market demand. While the County would want to conduct a market assessment before adopting a program, ERM's preliminary observation is that Prince William County's strong real estate market is a good candidate for a functioning TDR program. A successful TDR program would help the County meet both its rural preservation goals (by helping preserve rural land) and its urban development goals (by increasing development density in appropriate locations in the Development Area). The prior designation of the Rural Area and Development Area should facilitate establishing sending areas and identifying receiving areas.

### **Next Steps**

Below are the next steps for creating a successful TDR program for Prince William County:

1. Utilize the Model Transfer of Development Rights Ordinance for Virginia Localities as a basis for creating Prince William County's TDR program.

2. Conduct a market assessment before adopting a program.
3. Add a staff resource to manage the TDR program. TDR programs can be complicated to design and implement, and take a good deal of ongoing analysis and management to be successful.
4. Designate receiving areas in areas with demand for density above the baseline zoning. Virginia code requires TDR development densities to be by-right, which is best to encourage use of the program.
5. Promote the program by providing information, periodically participating in the market, and collecting and analyzing data from the program.

The Transfer of Development Rights program as an open space preservation tool provides the locality with less control over the locations to be preserved than a PDR program, but requires less in financial resources to implement.

## **Rural Cluster Development**

A rural cluster development/subdivision is a zoning tool in which residential subdivisions are designed with dwelling units clustered together on smaller than average lots only on a portion of the tract. The remaining land would then serve as open space or similar uses. Typically, depending on the cluster ordinance, the remaining open space within a cluster development may be held in common and/or be strictly an agricultural or environmental area with no development rights remaining on it. The open space parcel may be permitted to have a dwelling unit with a permanent easement that prohibits further subdivision or additional dwellings. Rural cluster subdivision/zoning provisions are typically aimed at agricultural and forest conservation. There are a number of variations of the cluster subdivision/zoning technique which includes the following:

- a) Percent of land Developed: Specifies a maximum percentage of the parent parcel or tract can be converted to non-agricultural or non-open space uses. Such provision can be relatively simple and may permit a great deal of flexibility to the developer in terms of lot size and unit type on that portion of the land that is permitted to be converted.
- b) Lot Size Averaging: Specifies the average by creating some lots that are larger and some smaller. The advantage of this particular variation is to provide more design flexibility in order to respond to unique site conditions and to the local market demand.
- c) Maximum Size of Building Lots: Set a maximum number rather than minimum lot size for current subdivision, thereby forcing a clustered layout. The percentage of open space remaining will be determined by the actual maximum lot size required in relation to the maximum overall site density required.

## **Virginia Cluster Subdivision Legislation**

Virginia Code §15.2-2286.1 authorizes and requires zoning ordinances to incorporate provisions for cluster subdivisions. The cluster provisions must be permitted by right and allow the same density. Virginia Code §15.2-2286.1.C states, “Additionally, a locality may, at its option, provide for the clustering of single-family dwellings and the preservation of open space at a density calculation greater than the density permitted in the applicable land use ordinance.” It continues, “To implement and approve such increased density development, the locality may, at its option, (i) establish and provide, in its zoning or subdivision ordinances, standards, conditions, and criteria for such development, and if the proposed development complies with those standards, conditions, and criteria, it shall be permitted by right and approved administratively by the locality's staff in the same manner provided in subsection A, or (ii) approve the increased density development upon approval of a special exception, special use permit, conditional use permit, or rezoning.”



### **Prince William County Rural Cluster Subdivision**

Prince William County has a voluntary cluster provision which allows a maximum density of one dwelling for every ten acres in the A-1, Agricultural zoning district. The current rural cluster subdivision/zoning method in the County allows a minimum lot size of three acres, a maximum lot size of five acres, and does not have a density bonus. Further, there is an open space requirement of fifty percent (50%). The cluster tool can be an effective tool, but is not heavily used in Prince William County.

Other jurisdictions that have included density bonuses for rural cluster subdivision include Howard County, MD, Hanover County, VA, and Loudoun County, VA. The following is a summary of their rural cluster subdivision provisions.

### **Howard County Rural Cluster Subdivision**

With the creation of rural clustering in 1992, the Howard County was able to obtain dedicated preservation easements through the land development process. The purpose of rural cluster provisions in Howard County was to provide a form of subdivision that would conserve farmland and preserve the rural and scenic quality of the landscape, while creating attractive rural residential developments.

One of the goals outlined in Howard County's Comprehensive Plan aims to protect the land and character of the Rural West. The Rural West is considered the area of the County outside the Planned Service Area for public water and sewer through strategies to enhance the farm economy and to balance agricultural, residential, and commercial uses. Howard County permits rural cluster development in the Rural Conservation (RC) District and the Rural Residential (RR) District. The Rural Conservation and Rural Residential districts in the Rural West allow low density, clustered residential development to protect natural resources and agricultural lands. This type of clustering may also be appropriate to enhance environmental protection in other residential zoning districts.

Howard County's rural cluster subdivision allows clustered residential lots, by right, at a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 4.25 gross acres in the Rural Conservation (RC) District and the Rural Residential (RR) District. The remaining area of the parcel being subdivided is placed in one or more preservation parcels. A preservation parcel is considered the residual area after the residential lots, roads, and stormwater management facilities are created which is then protected by permanent easements that prohibit further development. In the RC and RR districts where the size of a parcel is twenty or more acres, cluster subdivision is required. Howard County's rural cluster provision also provides density incentives. If a preservation parcel is larger than 25 acres, one additional dwelling unit is permitted for every 25 acres of area within that preservation parcel.

### **Hanover County Rural Cluster Subdivision**

Prior to 1996 Hanover County permitted rural cluster with a base development of one unit for every 6.25 acres which would yield four lots for every twenty-five acres by right. In 1996 the Board of County Supervisors revised the requirements of the Agricultural (A-1) zoning district to change base development density to one unit for every ten (10) acres. In order to address the issue of lost density for agricultural property owners, two new zoning districts were created—agricultural-residential district and a rural conservation district. The years between 1996 and 2010 Hanover County approved thirty-seven (37) Rural Conservation cluster applications which has preserved over 5,700 acres of rural land.

Rural clusters are permitted in the Rural Conservation Area and are mandatory in order to obtain the maximum permitted density required. The permitted density allows one dwelling unit for every ten acres. Sixteen clustered lots are permitted for each 100 acres with a minimum of 70% of open space required.

### **Loudoun County Rural Cluster Subdivision**

In 1984, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors adopted the Rural Land Management Plan (RLMP) to “guide future rural land use changes, increase the opportunities and choices of farm-land owners, establish a healthy and affordable pattern of growth in the rural areas, and conserve irreplaceable agricultural and environmental resources”. It established Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) around the County’s seven incorporated Towns in the hope that new residents and public facilities would locate there and theoretically enable large amounts of open land to be preserved for farming and for maintaining the area’s rural character. The plan offered landowners a variety of voluntary conservation measures that included clustering development, leasing of easements, and transferring development density but none were used extensively. Within four years of the adoption of the Rural Land Management Plan, one-third of the countryside had been re-platted into lots smaller than 12 acres. In July 1988, the Board of Supervisors adopted a “Vision for Rural Loudoun” that introduced the concept of clustered development in a traditional pattern of small hamlets and new rural villages surrounded by farms and forests, similar to the pattern of Loudoun’s historic settlements. It was hoped the clustered development pattern would replace 3-acre lot subdivisions and accommodate residential development that would not eradicate the County’s treasured landscape and rural heritage.

Rural Cluster is voluntary in Loudoun County and is permitted in the Agricultural Rural – 1 (AR-1) and Agricultural Rural – 2 (AR-2) district. In the AR-1 district, a minimum lot size of twenty (20) acres is required unless it the lots are clustered. In this case a lot yield of one lot per 5 acres is permitted, with cluster lots at least 20,000 square feet (with off-site sewer) and not more than four acres in size, with at least one lot of at least 15 acres, and at least 70% of the land in the cluster subdivision is common open space. AR-2 requires a minimum lot size of forty (40) acres unless lots are clustered. In this case a lot yield of one lot per fifteen (15) acres is allowed with cluster lots at least 20,000 square feet and not more than four acres in size, with at least one lot of at least 25 acres, and at least 70% of the land in the cluster subdivision is common open space.

### **Prince William County Rural Preservation Study**

Prince William County completed their Rural Preservation Study earlier this year and the *Prince William County Rural Preservation Study Report* was developed with the findings of this Study. Consultants from Environmental Resources Management (ERM) conducted the Study and produced the final report which included some recommendations for improving Prince William County's current rural preservation policies. Below are recommendations for the existing rural cluster provisions for Prince William County.

- Provide incentives for rural clusters to allow an increase density in areas dominated by farming such as the Valley and Forestry rural character areas while increasing the open space requirements for the development.
- Maintain current sewer policies except in specific rural character areas where cluster would be consistent with their rural character, in order to advance the preservation of open space and help protect the environment.
- Create a Rural Cluster Committee to oversee the Program.
- Dedicate a staff position to maintain and evaluate the effectiveness of the Rural Cluster zoning tool.
- Carry out an educational/outreach plan to inform the public about the Program.

Prince William County should adopt additional rural preservation tools in combination with Rural Clusters such as Purchase Development Rights and Transfer Development Rights for an effective rural preservation program. According to the Center for Rural Virginia, cluster provisions, can protect "rural character" as viewed from the road and in some localities also allow for some continued agricultural use of the remaining land, but because development still occurs in the rural part of the locality, cluster provisions do not completely protect agricultural land from encroachment of potentially conflicting land uses. However, if a locality implements a combination of the programs available that are most appropriate to the community and its farmers, agriculture can remain viable, even while accommodating additional development.

### **Next Steps**

Below are the next steps for promoting rural cluster development:

1. Amend the Comprehensive Plan to identify targeted areas for use of the Rural Cluster program.
2. Adopt an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to provide for additional density in rural cluster development in the Rural Area.

3. Carry out an educational/outreach plan to inform the public about the Program.

The Rural Cluster program as an open space preservation tool provides the locality with less control over the locations to be preserved than a PDR program, but requires less in financial resources to implement. However, the rural cluster subdivision process may not allow the County to protect the most productive or strategically located farms. Even with improved design requirements, preservation parcels created within cluster subdivisions will be smaller and more fragmented than most purchased easements. Thus, this tool is not as effective in preserving agriculture or rural character, but it is preferable to conventional subdivision.



Prince William County Government  
Board of County Supervisors

## Rural Preservation Study Implementation

September 20, 2016

*Chris Price*  
Planning Director


## BACKGROUND

- County has long history of rural preservation strategies dating back to 1964
- Strategies have evolved and improved over time
- County's existing strategies include:
  - ◆ Comprehensive Plan
    - Land Use Chapter (Rural Area established in 1998)
    - Environment Chapter
    - Parks, Open Space, & Trails Chapter
    - Sanitary Sewer Chapter
  - ◆ Zoning Ordinance provisions
    - Large Lot Zoning
    - Rural Cluster
  - ◆ Subdivision Ordinance

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## PROJECT HISTORY



- November 2011: BOCS directed the Planning Office to conduct research on planning tools available for rural open space preservation
  - ◆ Staff prepared a summary of tools available to Virginia localities and noted that we are using many, but not all, available strategies
  - ◆ Staff recommended that further study is warranted to evaluate both existing and new tools
- March 2012: Board discussed need to evaluate whether Rural Area goals have been effectively met through its implementation and to identify other rural preservation tools as appropriate
- May 2012: BOCS approved request to procure consulting services to conduct the Rural Preservation Study

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## RURAL PRESERVATION STUDY GOALS



- Provide an overview of the County's rural preservation policies and an evaluation of their effectiveness
- Identify additional rural preservation tools that may be appropriate and effective
- Make recommendations regarding possible amendments to County's land use planning policies

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## STAKEHOLDER INPUT

- Study involved several stakeholder input opportunities throughout the project including public meetings, surveys, interviews, open houses, workshops, comment forms, etc.



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[5]

## STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consultant team presented findings and recommendations to the BOCS in May 2014
- Recommendations included Comprehensive Plan amendments, establishment of a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, enabling the transfer of development rights (TDR), reviewing the County's existing rural cluster development regulations, and promoting the rural economy

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[6]

## BOCS DIRECTIVE

On July 8, 2014, through DIR 14-82, the Board of County Supervisors directed staff to:

- Provide additional information and follow up regarding the Rural Preservation Study
- Review the Zoning Ordinance to look for opportunities to eliminate barriers or create new incentives for more rural economic development
- Look for remedies for farmers who raise and slaughter livestock specifically for religious events
- Further investigate opportunities to purchase property development rights and how that relates to other elements of the Study's recommendations (e.g. cluster development)

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## STATUS REPORT

- Promote Rural Economy – Ongoing
- Comprehensive Plan Amendment – Ongoing
- Religious Slaughtering Permitting – Complete
- Purchase of Development Rights – Not Initiated
- Transfer of Development Rights – Not Initiated
- Rural Cluster Development – Not Initiated

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# PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

**OS-POLICY 3:** Identify county-owned land and designate such land for open space, where suitable.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

1. Review county-owned properties and determine what county-owned lands should be protected as open space, and ensure such designation is made in official management plans of the Park Authority, Service Authority, Department of Public Works, Transportation Department, and other county agencies.
2. Consider using future "surplus" county rights-of-way or other county-owned lands for trails, parks, and open space, prior to determining if other disposition is more appropriate.

**OS-POLICY 4:** Retain existing open spaces in the county.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

1. Review and implement programs, including the purchase of development rights (PDR), transfer of development rights (TDR), and outreach highlighting opportunities available through private conservation easements in order to protect existing open space.
2. Review and implement programs that provide incentives for landowners in the rural area to preserve agricultural land uses, protect prime soils, and prevent non-agricultural uses from negatively impacting the primary land use.

**OS-POLICY 5:** A minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County, (exclusive of acreage of Virginia Camp Base Quartermaster for all calculation purposes), should be retained as protected open space.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

1. When and where possible and appropriate, work with home owner associations, utility companies, and other private property owners to obtain appropriate easements and covenants that ensure permanent protection of open space.
2. Review the open space development standards and definitions in the Zoning Ordinance, including the rural cluster component, and update them to reflect the goals and policies of this chapter.
3. In the Comprehensive Plan, identify and map existing open space and other areas where acquisition of additional protected open space should be prioritized.

**4.** Review opportunities, including the purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDR) and implement appropriate programs in order to provide incentives for landowners to protect open space and to shift density to appropriate locations where infrastructure is planned or in place.

**5.** Actively seek to acquire easements or fee interest in property - through land purchases, grants, proffers, and donations - that is suitable for protected open space, including existing open spaces, or where an environmental constraints analysis shows that by-right development would result in substantial community impacts.

**6.** Acquire easements as authorized by the Virginia Open Space Land Act.

**7.** Update the Zoning Ordinance to ensure increased requirements for protected open space.

**8.** Consider open space acquisition as a regular component of the capital improvement program.

**CORRIDORS GOAL:** Identify, protect and preserve environmental, heritage, and recreational corridors.

**CO-POLICY 11:** Ensure connectivity, and encourage diverse forms of transportation between neighborhoods, employment centers, transit nodes and open space that is accessible to the public.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

1. Link neighborhoods to existing and planned county parks and state and federal natural/historic/recreational sites. Link employment centers and transit facilities to county, state and federal natural/historic/recreational sites.
2. Provide convenient, well-marked, well-defined entrance points in and near public parks for access to trails within the park and to environmental, heritage, and recreational corridors. Where possible, locate these entrance points at activity centers, such as recreation centers, nature centers, field complexes, public transit, and residential communities.
3. As part of the rezoning and special use permit process, ensure adequate pedestrian, biking, and equestrian access to the nearest local parks through environmental, heritage, and recreational corridors. Access should incorporate, where practical, existing utility and conservation easements, abandoned railroad beds, and existing or planned trail segments.

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# ENVIRONMENT

**EN-POLICY 3:** To further support OS-Policy 5, a minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County exclusive of acreage of Virginia Camp Base Quartermaster for all calculation purposes, should be retained as protected open space, as defined in the Open Space Plan.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- EN3.1 Encourage cluster development to protect contiguous natural open space, as defined by the Zoning Ordinance.
- EN3.2 Amend the cluster ordinance to ensure that open space is permanently protected.
- EN3.3 Amend the DCSM to ensure that there is a defined buffer standard for public parks.
- EN3.4 Amend the Zoning Ordinance and/or DCSM to prohibit the establishment of preferred conservation and preservation areas on residential lots.
- EN3.5 Develop and publish guidelines for homeowner associations that detail how to manage conservation areas while providing information on responsibilities and a checklist of standard management measures and benefits.
- EN3.6 Make information on conservation easements available to landowners, including distribution points at the Tax Assessment Department and other relevant County offices, to encourage the use of open space conservation easements as tools to preserve environmental resources.
- EN3.7 Encourage the use of open space conservation easements or fee simple dedication to preserve open space in already developed areas in order to provide natural areas, protect environmentally sensitive resources, preserve wildlife habitat and ensure a scenic appearance over time. Consider development at the high end of the density range for these parcels that preserve sensitive features, identified in the ECA, beyond the minimum preservation requirements such as buffers, RP A and floodplain.
- EN3.8 The County shall review and implement opportunities for a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.
- EN3.9 Explore the use of available federal and state funding resources, including grants, foundations, and transportation related funds, to support green infrastructure planning initiatives and a PDR program.
- EN3.10 Establish and continue partnerships with local agencies and organizations to initiate and provide public information programs aimed at conserving lands in the watershed through civic engagement community stewardship.
- EN3.11 Investigate the benefits of involving a private conservancy for the purpose of purchasing privately held lands for preservation purposes and seeking perpetual conservation easements to preserve open space.

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# LONG RANGE LAND USE

Long Range Land Use
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
FROM THE FUTURE OF THE POTOMAC

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## GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTION STRATEGIES

**LAND USE GOAL:** To promote a Countywide pattern of land use that encourages fiscally sound development and achieves a high-quality living environment.

**LU-POLICY 1:** Ensure adequate land uses necessary to provide a supply of land that allows the County to compete on a regional, national, and international basis for advanced technological industries and other economic development opportunities that will bring new jobs to Prince William County residents, particularly new professional and other high-paying jobs.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- LU1.1** Advocate policies and public funding associated with the County's Strategic Plan, Budget, Capital Improvement Program, and Secondary Road Improvements Program that direct needed infrastructure improvements to achieve the economic development goals of the County. Funds should be concentrated in the Development Area as well as toward appropriate, Board of County Supervisors (BOCS)-approved inter-County connectors and other needed public facilities in the Rural Area.
- LU1.2** Ensure that policies and public funding associated with other public agencies, such as the Service Authority, Department of Parks and Recreation, Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, Virginia Railway Express, and School Board, are structured to support the economic development goals of the County. Funds should be concentrated in the Development Area for needed public facilities, but should also be provided in the Rural Area.
- LU1.3** Periodically update the County's *Build-out Analysis* and Residential Inventory to monitor the amount of available residential and non-residential development capacity.
- LU1.4** Seek and promote the redevelopment of unoccupied retail developments and existing office buildings into Class A or Class B office space using the *Strategic Guidelines for Office Development*, provided as a supplement to the Community Design Plan.

**LU-POLICY 2:** Provide for a variety of land uses to allow a diversity of housing unit types and employment opportunities throughout the County.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- LU2.1** Allow cluster housing and the use of planned districts and the planned unit development concept in the Development Area, so long as the resulting residential density is recommended in the grant land use classification, provided that such clustering furthers valuable environmental objectives such as are stated in EN-

**PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
FROM THE FUTURE OF THE POTOMAC**

Long Range Land Use

**Policy 1 and EN-Policy 4 of the Environment Plan, is consistent with fire and rescue service objectives, and the proposed use does not negatively impact any cultural resources.**

- LU2.2** Review the effectiveness of planned development districts and cluster zoning districts.
- LU2.3** Open space created as part of cluster developments shall be preserved as permanent open space.
- LU2.4** The purpose of both cluster development and planned district planned unit development is to:
  - Provide locations for town centers.
  - Implement the development of centers of commerce and centers of community.
  - Promote the efficient use of land and minimize or limit cut and fill.
  - Preserve slopes and woodlands.
  - Better manage stormwater run-off and water quality.
  - Reduce the length of streets, utility lines, and stormwater piping.
  - Provide design flexibility.
  - Promote the most cost-effective provision of public services necessary to support the development.
  - Preserve open space.
  - Preserve cultural resources.
- LU2.5** Direct new development to areas served by transit corridors, particularly designated centers of commerce, centers of community, and Mass Transit Nodes.
- LU2.6** Ensure that the primary function of the Rural Area as reflected by the Long Range Land Use Plan Map is to maintain open space, protect native habitats, allow for large-lot residential development, allow for agricultural activities, and provide potential sites for community facilities.

July 17, 2012
LU-3
July 17, 2012
LU-4

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# LONG RANGE LAND USE

Long Range Land Use
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
FROM THE FUTURE OF THE POTOMAC

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- LU7.6** Encourage open space within new development in centers of community that protects and complements existing environmental and cultural resources.
- LU7.7** Allow flexibility in the mix of uses allowed in land designated CLC within centers of community provided the project contributes to a center's mix of uses and form as defined in this chapter.

**LU-POLICY 8:** To achieve centers of commerce at appropriate locations that promote high-density, mixed-use development near existing and planned multi-modal transit centers that will facilitate greater use of mass transit by County residents and bring new high-quality employment opportunities to Prince William County.

**ACTION STRATEGIES:**

- LU8.1** Promote distinctive attractive development with a strong sense of place within centers of commerce.
- LU8.2** Within centers of commerce, encourage developers to develop at the high end of the density and intensity range, for residential, mixed use buildings, mid- to high-rise office, and structured parking as part of the rezoning and special use permit process, for areas designated SRH, URH, URM, URM, VMU, MTN, CLC, RHC, O, and RCC.
- LU8.3** Encourage ground floor retail/service uses at commuter parking lots in these structured parking lots where there is a planned adjoining mix of other uses to support retail uses in centers of commerce.
- LU8.4** Review and evaluate programs, including the purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDR), in accordance with DP-Policy 4, Action Strategy 1 to provide clear goals and policies when considering these opportunities for additional density in centers of commerce.
- LU8.5** Improve the appearance of, and amenities available at commuter parking lots. Efforts to improve the appearance and land uses near these parking lots may be appropriate, especially when not located in shopping centers. Structured parking with ground floor retail, including amenities for users of mass transit such as dry cleaners, dry-cleaning facilities, and office shops, is encouraged in areas where there is a planned adjoining mix of other uses to support retail uses in centers of commerce.
- LU8.6** Incentives such as density bonuses, shared parking, and lower parking requirements should be considered to encourage the desired land uses within centers of commerce.

**PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
FROM THE FUTURE OF THE POTOMAC**

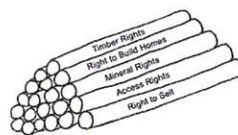
Long Range Land Use

July 17, 2012
LU-11

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## PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

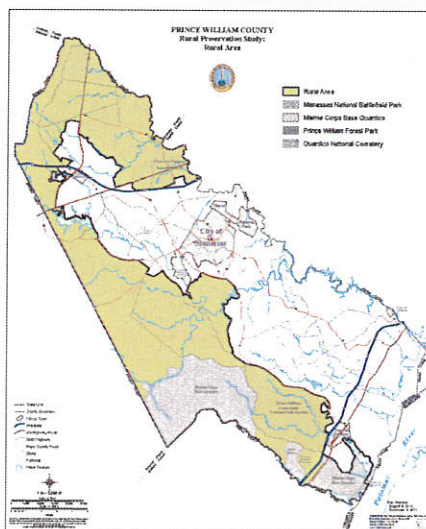
- A PDR Program allows a landowner to voluntarily sell their development rights from their land to a public body or land trust for the purpose of permanently protecting the land from being developed.
- The landowner retains the remaining ownership rights attached to their land, and can maintain the existing use, but they cannot develop the property for another use.
- A conservation easement is placed on their land, permanently protecting the land from being developed.



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## RURAL AREA



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[14]



## PDR CONSIDERATIONS

- Powerful conservation tool – development rights are permanently extinguished
- Property can continue to be utilized for other purposes (e.g. farming)
- Land is not available to accommodate future growth

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## PDR CONSIDERATIONS (Cont'd)

- Funding is available from a variety of sources, but most programs require a local match
- Significant County financial contribution would be required to initially capitalize the program and for ongoing program maintenance
- Public funding would be used to purchase conservation easements from private property owners
- Existing staff resources are not sufficient to manage such a program

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[16]

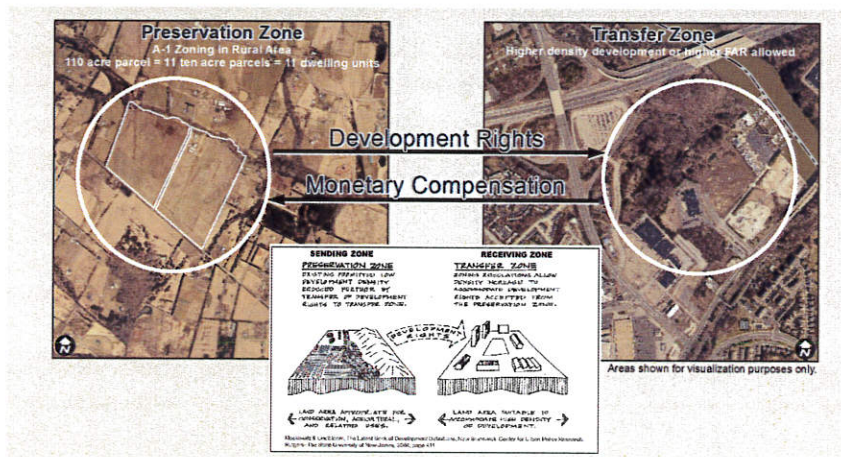
## TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

- Private market transaction between a buyer (developer) and seller (land owner)
- County creates market by establishing sending and receiving areas
- Sending areas are tracts targeted for preservation (e.g. portions of the Rural Area)
- Receiving areas are tracts targeted for growth (e.g. Regional Activity Centers)

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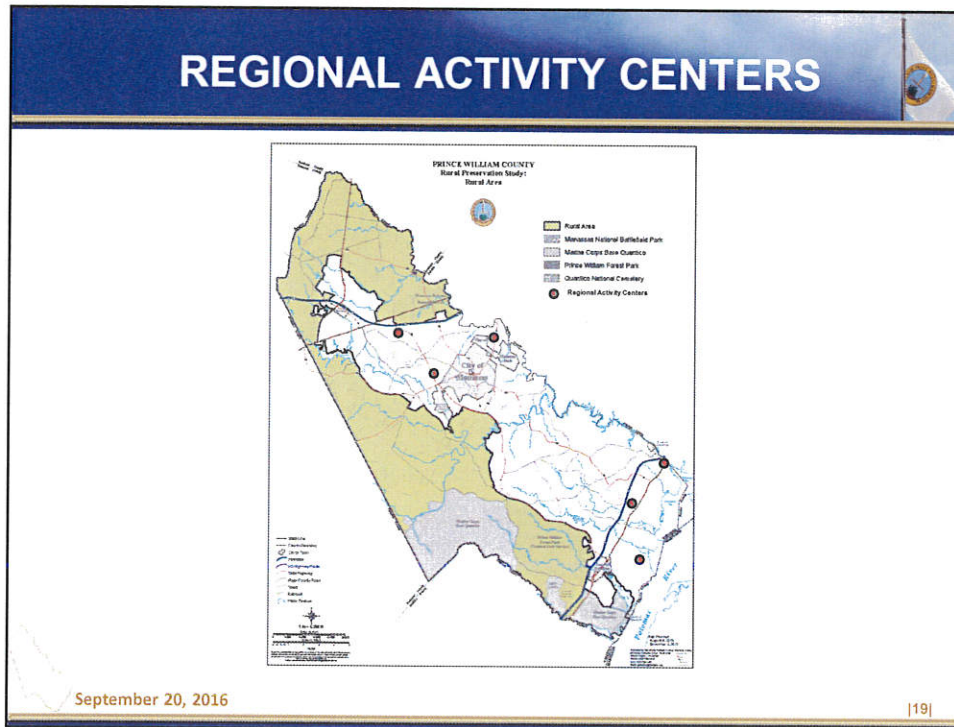
[17]

## TDR EXAMPLE



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[18]



- ## TDR CONSIDERATIONS
- Links County's preservation goals to our urban development goals
  - Private market transaction reduces reliance on public expenditures
  - Promotes private investment in targeted development and redevelopment areas
  - Maximizes use of publicly funded infrastructure
- September 20, 2016 [20]



## TDR CONSIDERATIONS (Cont'd)

- Programs generally allocate “bonus density” to achieved desired outcomes (e.g. rural preservation and transit oriented development)
- Receiving areas must accommodate higher density development
- Existing staff resources are not sufficient to manage such a program

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## SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

- Mix land uses in the Development Area
- Take advantage of compact, environmentally friendly and energy efficient building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, cultural resources, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities and infrastructure
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration

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## RURAL CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

- A cluster development is a zoning tool in which residential subdivisions are designed with dwelling units clustered together on smaller than average lots only on a portion of the tract.
- The remaining land serves as farmland, open space, or a similar use and may be strictly an agricultural or environmental area with no “development rights” remaining on it.



Traditional Subdivision



Cluster Subdivision

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## RURAL CLUSTER CONSIDERATIONS

- Successful programs generally rely on “bonus” densities to achieve preservation goals
- While revised cluster development provisions is a private market opportunity to ensure large contiguous tracts of preserved open space, it would likely yield greater residential densities within the Rural Area
- In addition, such densities may warrant public sewer service
- As such, this tool is not likely appropriate for much of the Rural Area

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## NEXT STEPS

Unless directed otherwise, staff intends to:

- Continue working with the AFD Committee and the farming community to promote the rural economy by improving the regulatory environment and permitting processes
- Prepare Comprehensive Plan amendments for the Board's consideration consistent with the Rural Preservation Study recommendations

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## NEXT STEPS (Cont'd)

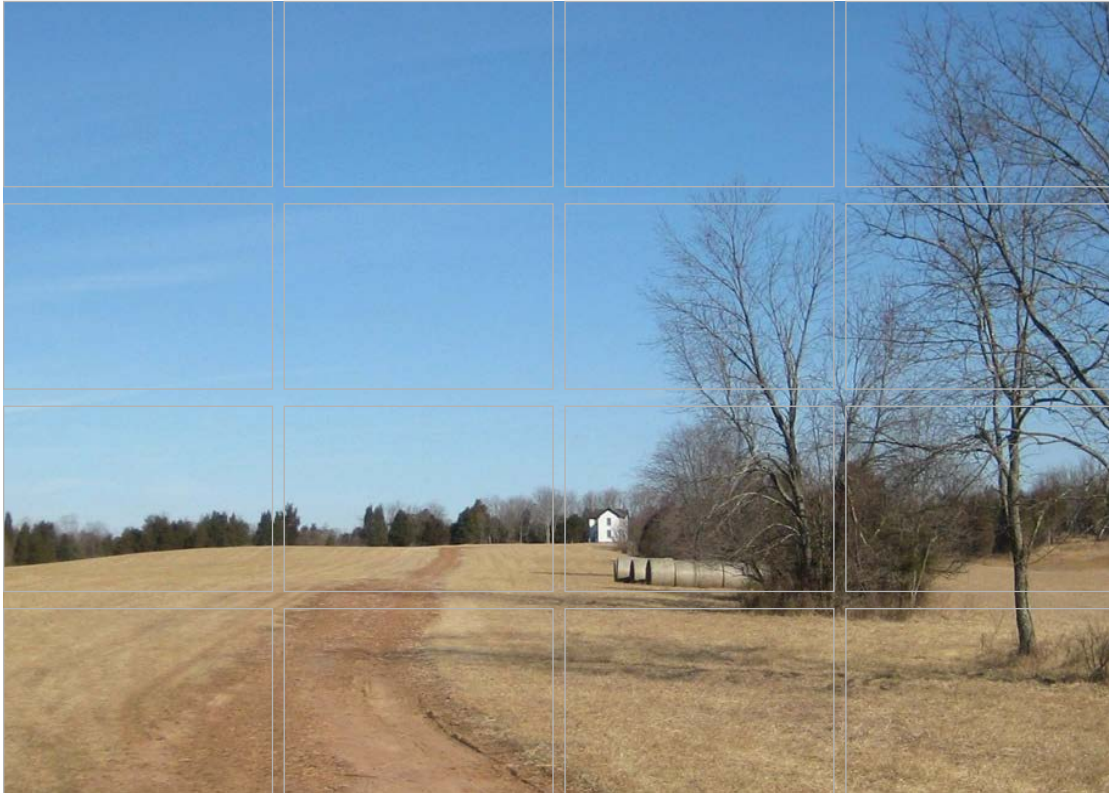
- If the BOCS chooses to further evaluate and consider the Study's recommended preservation tools (PDR, TDR, Rural Cluster Development), staff recommends adoption of the attached resolutions
- Implementation of a PDR and/or TDR program will require resources beyond our existing capacity and staff will request a program allocation as part of the FY 18 budget process

September 20, 2016

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# Prince William County Rural Preservation Study Report

May, 2014



*Prepared for*

**Prince William County Planning Office**

*By*

**Environmental Resources Management, Annapolis, MD**

EDSA, Baltimore, MD

Dr. Tom Daniels, University of Pennsylvania

## **Authors and Acknowledgements**

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ERM acknowledges and wishes to thank the staff of the Prince William County Planning Office for their extensive assistance and for developing all the maps and GIS analyses.

- Christopher M. Price, AICP, Planning Director
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- Frank Hunt, Data Systems Analyst
- Anika Chowdhury, Development Services Technician
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ERM also wishes to thank the many members of the public who contributed extensively to the Study through the opinion survey and the public meetings.

# **Executive Summary**

## **1. Purpose and Approach**

The Rural Area in Prince William County covers approximately 117,000 acres or 52% of the County. The Rural Area, also called the Rural Crescent, was formally created in 1998 when the Board of County Supervisors adopted a Comprehensive Plan that, for the first time, divided the county into two general areas, a Development Area and a Rural Area.

The purpose of this Rural Preservation Study (the Study) is to evaluate the rural preservation policies and tools the County has in place, to determine whether they are meeting the County's objectives, and, if warranted, to recommend new objectives, policies and tools.

The Study was conducted between July 2013 and February 2014. The ERM team's objective was to make practical, implementable recommendations tailored to Prince William County's unique situation. Our approach to the study was to make recommendations based on a broad suite of inputs, namely: Public input – hearing from as many interested groups and individuals as practicable; fieldwork - a landscape-level documentation and visual assessment of what the Rural Area actually looks like today; research into the planning history of the Rural Area; and comparison of the preservation policies the County has in place with best practices from other counties throughout the US.

The Study covers 10 subject areas, such as agricultural / forest land preservation, land use and development, and rural character, where County policy affects the Rural Area. The subject areas were created for the Study, and there is some overlap among them.

For each subject area, where appropriate, the Study describes:

1. Current policies, and related text such as goals and action strategies
2. Issues /concerns regarding those policies, including those expressed through public input to the Study
3. Trends; data or other information regarding the policies that are currently in place
4. ERM team observations on the effectiveness of the policies
5. ERM team recommendations

## **2. Overarching Conclusions and Recommendations**

As the ERM team completed its analyses on the 10 subject areas, a number of conclusions began to emerge that cut across one or more of the subject areas. These are summarized here along the associated recommended actions that draw from the different subject areas.

### *Conclusions*

1. Public input to the Study showed a strong consensus on the importance of maintaining a rural area in Prince William County.
2. The Rural Area is a large, very diverse area (Quantico to Nokesville to Bull Run to Manassas). Within this area are sub-areas with distinct and different types of “rural character”
3. Current development policies treat the Rural Area as a single character type – one size fits all (commonly referred to as 10-acre zoning)
4. Past zoning policy has had mixed impacts on the Rural Area landscape. More nuanced policies are needed to preserve the Rural Area.

5. Much development happens without design review, resulting in lost opportunities for preserving land and inter-connected open space.
6. More tools are needed in the Rural Area land preservation and land development toolboxes, to give more choices and options to landowners, farmers, businesses, and government.
7. Rural Area and Development Area policies and outcomes are interconnected. What happens in one area can beneficially affect the other.
8. There is farming in the Rural Area, but the type of farming has changed. Agricultural land is a key element of rural character and needs to be a high priority for action
9. Farming needs supportive policies, the window of opportunity to put supportive programs in place is narrow
10. Achieving the County's 39% protected open space goal will be major challenge. 39,000 additional acres are needed to meet the goal, but the pool of land to achieve this is limited
11. Without policy changes, the Rural Area will likely develop in a manner dominated by large lot residential development, with little contiguous open space and significant loss of agricultural lands.

#### *Recommended Actions*

##### 1. Adopt a Vision Statement for the Rural Area

Adopt in the Comprehensive Plan a vision that describes what the County wants the Rural Area to be and use the vision as the basis for setting policy. The following is offered as a draft:

The Rural Area is a landscape dominated by agriculture, woodland, open space and other undeveloped land. The Rural Area allows for low-density residential development that is planned and designed not to dominate the landscape.

The rural area accommodates a variety of activities and lifestyles associated with rural areas including farming of all types, low density residential living, rural businesses, cultural heritage, recreation and preservation and enjoyment of the natural environment.

##### 2. Designate Rural Character Areas to recognize the different types of natural and man-made landscapes (including built landscapes) in the Rural Area. Adopt the Rural Character Areas map into the Comprehensive Plan.

See map and list on the following page.

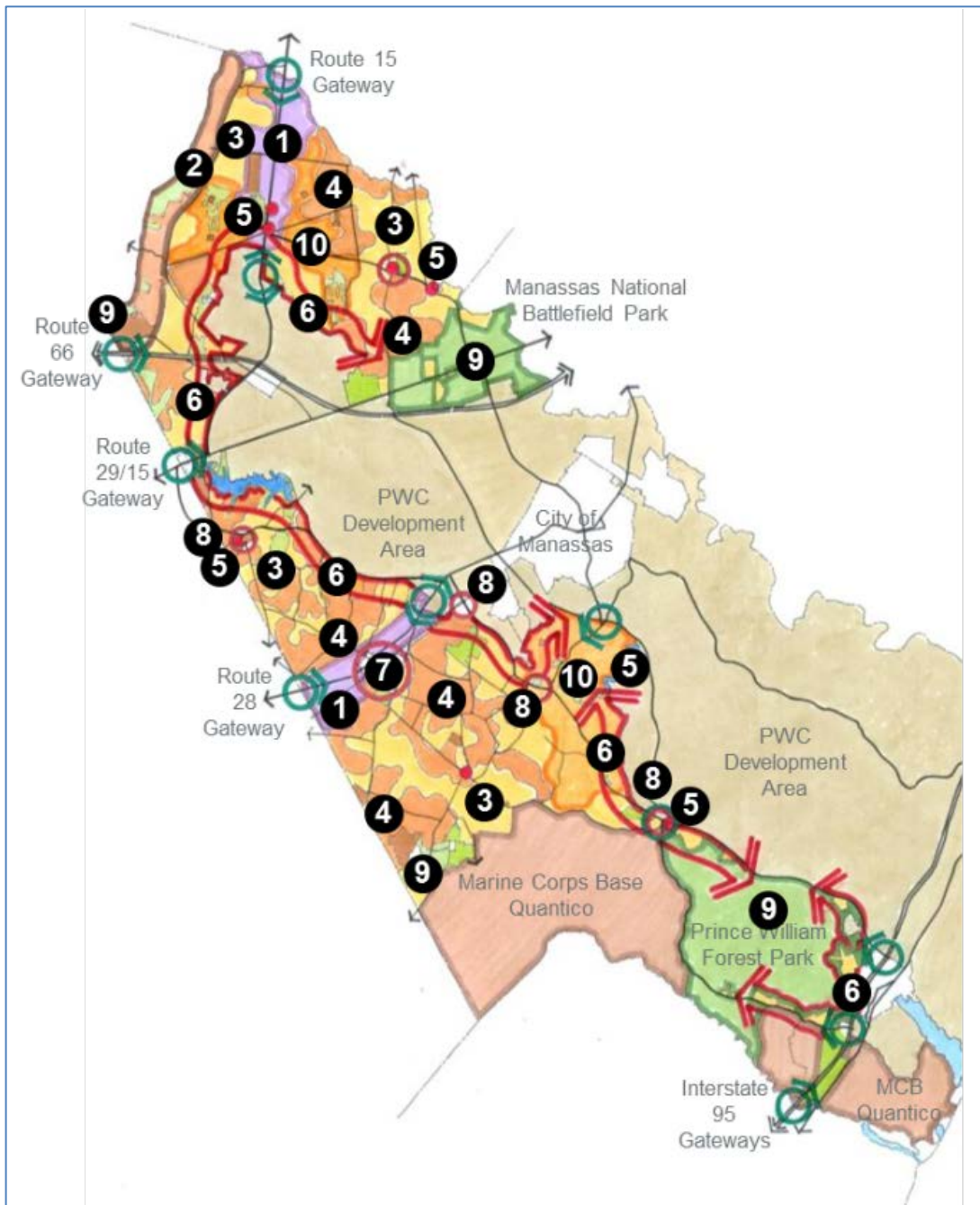
##### 3. Preserve 60 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the Rural Area (17,000 acres) as open space.

Strategies:

- Explore a purchase of development rights program (PDR) to compensate landowners and keep land in productive use.
- Explore a transfer of development rights program (TDR); a private transaction similar to PDR.
- Use the rural character areas as the basis for prioritizing land preservation through PDR and TDR
- Explore the potential for revisions to the five-year prior use standards for entry into Virginia's Use Value Taxation Program.
- Refine the Comprehensive Plan's Open Space and Corridor map into a detailed, unified, interconnected open space vision suitable as the basis for specific implementation projects including land preservation and trail development.
- Implement the recommendations of the MCB Quantico Joint Land Use Study.



## Rural Character Areas (Preliminary Proposed)



1. Rural Gateway Corridors
2. Bull Run Mountainside
3. Stream Valley Estates and Subdivisions
4. Valley Agriculture and Forests
5. Crossroad Commercial Areas
6. Transitional Ribbon(s)
7. Nokesville Village
8. Mixed-Use Hamlets
9. Protected Lands, Public Lands/Facilities & Organized Recreation Parks/Golf Course
10. Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves

4. Maintain the current residential density standards (A-1 zoning of one dwelling per ten acres) but create policy flexibility in locations where adjustments would advance the vision for the Rural Area.

Strategies:

- Incentivize the rural cluster development provisions, to preserve open space and contribute to rural character.
  - Increase the density in areas dominated by farming (Valley Agricultural and Forestry rural character areas) from one dwelling per 10 acres to one per five acres while increasing the open space requirement from 50 percent to 60 percent of total development.
  - Maintain current sewer policies except in specific rural character areas where cluster would be consistent with their rural character, can advance preservation of open space and help protect the environment (see #6 below).
- 5. Support Farming and Agri-Businesses. Give recognition to and support farming, agri-tourism, and rural recreation as making real contributions to the County's economic development and quality of life.

Strategies:

- Create a working group to review and recommend revisions to codes and regulations to support agriculture.
- Market and promote the County's agribusiness economy
- Consider establishing an Agricultural Development/Promotion position
- 6. Promote Environmental Protection – that will have direct environmental benefits especially those related to land preservation, sewer, and open space corridor creation.

Strategies:

- Allow extensions of public sewer on a case-by-case basis in the following rural character areas: Transitional Ribbon; Older, Smaller Lot Residential Enclaves; and Valley Estates and Subdivisions.
- Allow hook-ups to public sewer on a case-by-case basis to individual properties where septic systems are failing and public sewer is readily available such as in Nokesville.
- Consider this Study's recommendations in tandem with the County's efforts to comply with the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements including the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.
- 7. Enhance cultural resources and integrate them into a broad-ranging rural preservation strategy

Strategies:

- Identify specific cultural-related projects to implement the recommended refined Comprehensive Plan's Open Space and corridor's map

8. Plan for Public Facilities. Recognize that public facilities must be located within the Rural Area to meet the needs of both Rural Area residents and residents throughout the County, but ensure that these facilities are compatible with the rural character.

Strategies:

- Avoid locating visually intrusive, high traffic recreation facilities such as sports complexes in sensitive rural character areas such as Rural Gateway Corridors or Valley Agricultural Forests areas.
  - Coordinate the location of new public facilities with the Open Space and Corridors map to help fill gaps in corridors and reinforce other Rural Area Goals and Strategies.
  - In making road upgrades, apply road design standards carefully to protect and/or enhance the character in the rural character areas. As a general guideline, rural roads should not be widened with the exception of primary and higher classification roads.
9. Support Economic Development. Recognize the contributions made by the County’s farming, agribusiness, agri-tourism, recreation, and rural business development and enhance the economic development potential of the rural economy.

Strategies:

- Give recognition to and support farming, agri-tourism, and rural recreation as making real contributions to the County’s economic development and quality of life.
- Create a working group to review and recommend revisions to codes and regulations to support agriculture.
- Consider creating an agricultural development/promotion staff position in the County.

### **3. List of all key recommendations**

This section lists all the key Study recommendations, numbered pursuant to the numbers in the Study. For the detail that led ERM to make the recommendations, the reader is urged to read the full study text.

#### *Comprehensive Plan*

- 3.4.1 Adopt in the Comprehensive Plan a vision that describes what the County wants the Rural Area to be. Use the vision as the basis for setting policy. Using the vision as a starting point, create a more substantial subsection or subsections of the Plan dedicated to the Rural Area.

Draft vision for discussion:

“The Rural Area is a landscape dominated by agriculture, woodland, open space and other undeveloped land. The Rural Area allows for low-density residential development that is planned and designed to not dominate the landscape. The Rural Area accommodates a variety of activities and lifestyles associated with rural areas including farming of all types, low density residential living, rural businesses, cultural heritage, recreation, and preservation and enjoyment of the natural environment.”

- 3.4.2 Adopt a Rural Area land preservation acreage goal as a subset of the County’s overall Open Space preservation goal. We recommend consideration be given to a goal of 17,000 acres.

## *Agricultural / forest land preservation*

### 4.5.1 Adopt a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program

A Purchase of Development Rights is a voluntary program in which a landowner agrees to sell his or her development rights to a government (local, state, or federal) in return for a cash payment. A reasonable, though aggressive, goal would be to preserve 8,000 acres through PDR. This level of preservation would maintain the largely rural character of the agricultural parts of the Rural Area.

We recommend the County appropriate \$5 million to begin funding the program using local and non-local revenue sources (see discussion in Section 4). This sum could preserve at least 1,000 acres using a cap of \$5,000 per acre and with additional acreage possible through leveraging state and federal matching funds and partnering with preservation-oriented organizations.

### 4.5.2 Explore the creation of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program

A transfer of development rights (TDR) program features the creation of a market in development credits through the county government. The county gives development credits to landowners in a designated sending area from which the development credits will be sent and the land is preserved by a deed of easement (conservation easement). The development credits can be purchased by developers and landowners in designated receiving areas, and proposed developments are allowed to be built at a higher than normal density.

Sending areas should be the highest value agricultural, scenic, and culturally significant parts of the Rural Area. Receiving areas would be: appropriate locations in the Comprehensive Plan's Development Area; Nokesville Village, Sector Plan Core Area; and areas within the Transitional Ribbon where such transfers would allow development that would be more protective of environmental resources and rural character compared to the existing zoning.

### 4.5.3 Explore the potential for revisions to the five-year prior use standards for entry into Virginia's Use Value Taxation Program

## *Land Use and Development*

### 5.5.1 Maintain the A-1 zoning density of one dwelling per ten acres, but create policy flexibility in locations where adjustments would advance the vision for the Rural Area.

### 5.5.2 Revise and incentivize the cluster provisions of the A-1 zone

#### Areas dominated by farming

Increase the permitted density in the Valley Agriculture and Forestry rural character area from one dwelling per 10 acres to one dwelling per five acres. Increase the open space requirement from the current 50 percent to 60 percent. Such cluster development would go through the development review process ensuring that its design meets the policy intent.

#### Areas dominated by higher density development

Allow limited extensions of public sewer into the Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves, and Valley Estates and Subdivisions rural character areas in the Transitional Ribbon. Public sewer would allow maximum flexibility in lot size and placement and the maximum amount of open space. Rather than opening up the Rural Area to development, such limited extensions would create a firmer, long term edge to the Rural Area compared to the current patchwork.

Not every property in these areas would be suitable for public sewer. Each development proposal should be reviewed on a case by case basis to consider whether it would further the vision and policies for the Rural Area. We recommend consideration be given to a maximum gross density of one unit per two to three acres and a minimum 50 percent open space requirement.

In return for the increased density that would occur on properties in these areas, developers could purchase PDRs or proffer funds to help support the PDR program. These properties could also be TDR receiving areas.

#### 5.5.3 Implement the recommendations of the MCB Quantico Joint Land Use Study

These include pursuing conservation partnering opportunities through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) and other conservation efforts, and pursuing Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs.

### *Rural Character*

Rural character is a term used broadly in the Study to address the look and emotive feel of the different types of natural and man-made landscapes (including built landscapes) in the Rural Area. Rural character means a landscape dominated by or with a strong presence of rural elements, and the Study lists 18 such elements.

The Rural Area has different sub-areas within it, based on the extent to which some elements are stronger or more dominant in the landscape compared to others. We call these sub-areas “rural character areas” and divide the Rural Area into 10 such areas each one recognizable for its shared characteristics.

#### 6.5.1 Recognize rural character areas. Refine/verify the rural character area map developed for this Study and adopt the map into the Comprehensive Plan.

#### 6.5.2 Use the character areas as the basis for policies that protect and/or enhance the character in the different areas. For example:

- Allow selective public sewer extensions in the Transitional Ribbon into Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves and Valley Estates and Subdivisions.
- Incentivize cluster development in Valley Agriculture and Forest character areas.
- Apply roadway design standards more carefully to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas.

#### 6.5.3 Use the rural character areas as the basis for prioritizing land preservation through PDR and TDR.

#### 6.5.4 Use the rural character areas in selecting/screening sites for public facilities

### *Sewer and Water*

#### 7.5.1 Allow extensions of public sewer on a case by case basis in the following rural character areas in the Transitional Ribbon, #10 - Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves; and #3 Valley Estates and Subdivisions.

#### 7.5.2 Allow hookups to public sewer on a case by case basis to individual properties where septic systems are failing and public sewer is readily available, such as in Nokesville.

#### 7.5.3 Retain the other Rural Area sewer and water policies.



### *Environmental Protection*

- 8.5.1 Implement this Study's recommendations that will have direct environmental benefits especially those related to land preservation, sewer, and open space corridor creation.
- 8.5.2 Consider this Study's recommendations in tandem with the County's efforts to comply with Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements including the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

### *Open Space and Recreation*

- 9.5.1 Consider a goal to protect 60 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the Rural Area – equivalent to approximately 17,000 acres.  
  
Protection would come from a combination of a variety of sources and programs including PDR, TDR, park acquisition, federal and state acquisitions and funding support, easement donations, REPI, and open space in cluster subdivisions.
- 9.5.2 Refine the Comprehensive Plan's Open Space and Corridors map into a detailed, unified, interconnected open space vision suitable as the basis for specific implementation projects including land preservation and trail development.

### *Economic Development*

- 10.5.1 Give recognition to and support farming, agri-tourism, and rural recreation as making real contributions to the County's economic development and quality of life.
- 10.5.2 Create a working group to review and recommend revisions to codes and regulations to support agriculture.
- 10.5.3 Consider creating an agricultural development/promotion position, perhaps in the County's Department of Economic Development or as part of the Planning Office's Community Development program.

### *Cultural Resources*

- 11.1 Identify specific cultural-related projects to implement the recommended refined Comprehensive Plan's Open Space and Corridors map.

### *Public facilities/ capital projects*

- 12.5.1 Avoid locating visually intrusive, high traffic recreation facilities such as sports complexes in sensitive rural character areas such as Rural Gateway Corridors or Valley Agriculture and Forests areas.
- 12.5.2 Coordinate the location of new public facilities with the Open Space and Corridors map to help fill gaps in corridors, and reinforce other Rural Area policies.
- 12.5.3 In making road upgrades roadway design standards should be applied carefully to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas. As a general guideline, rural roads should not be widened with the exception of primary and higher classification roads.

## **Study Impacts**

The Study's recommendations are potentially quite far reaching, especially those affecting land use and development and land preservation. The Study contains an estimate of the potential impacts of the recommendations on two key areas of interest; change in the number of dwelling units and change in the acres of open space preserved.

The estimates suggest that if the recommendations were fully adopted the result would be a net increase of approximately 1,150 dwelling units in the Rural Area over the current baseline and an increase of approximately 10,700 acres of preserved land. The increase in dwelling units could generate approximately \$8 million in proffers for parks and open space.

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Appendix 1 Survey Results

Appendix 2 Stakeholder Meetings List

Appendix 3 Comprehensive Plan Maps 1991, 1998, 2008

Appendix 4 Comparison of Prince William County Growth Management Techniques in the Rural Crescent Compared to National Best Practices

Appendix 5 Workshop powerpoint presentations from Study Open House December 7, 2013

## **1. Purpose and Approach**

The Rural Area in Prince William County, as delineated in Land Use Chapter of the County's Comprehensive Plan, covers approximately 117,000 acres or 52% of the County (227,300 acres), see Figure 1. The Rural Area, also called the Rural Crescent, was formally created in 1998 when the Board of County Supervisors adopted a Comprehensive Plan that, for the first time, divided the county into two general areas, a Development Area and a Rural Area.

The purpose of this Rural Preservation Study (the Study) is to evaluate the rural preservation policies and tools the County has in place, to determine whether they are meeting the County's objectives, and, if warranted, to recommend new objectives, policies and tools.

The County undertook the Study at this time due to a number of concerns:

- Public debate over development proposals (including Comprehensive Plan amendments and rezonings) that, in some people's view, have the potential to undermine the objectives of the Rural Area.
- Perception that the development policies and regulatory tools the County has in place for the Rural Area are unable to sufficiently preserve the rural character that residents value.
- Desire for the County to review the land preservation tools it has in place against the best practices used in other jurisdictions.
- Need to review the Rural Area policies that are largely unchanged since 1998. This review is necessary especially in light of policy debates over continued outward growth of Metropolitan Washington, the effects of growth on water quality and the Chesapeake Bay, the County's water and sewer policies, and the appropriateness in the Rural Area of some types of capital projects such as schools, parks, and transportation.

### **1.1 Definition of Rural Area**

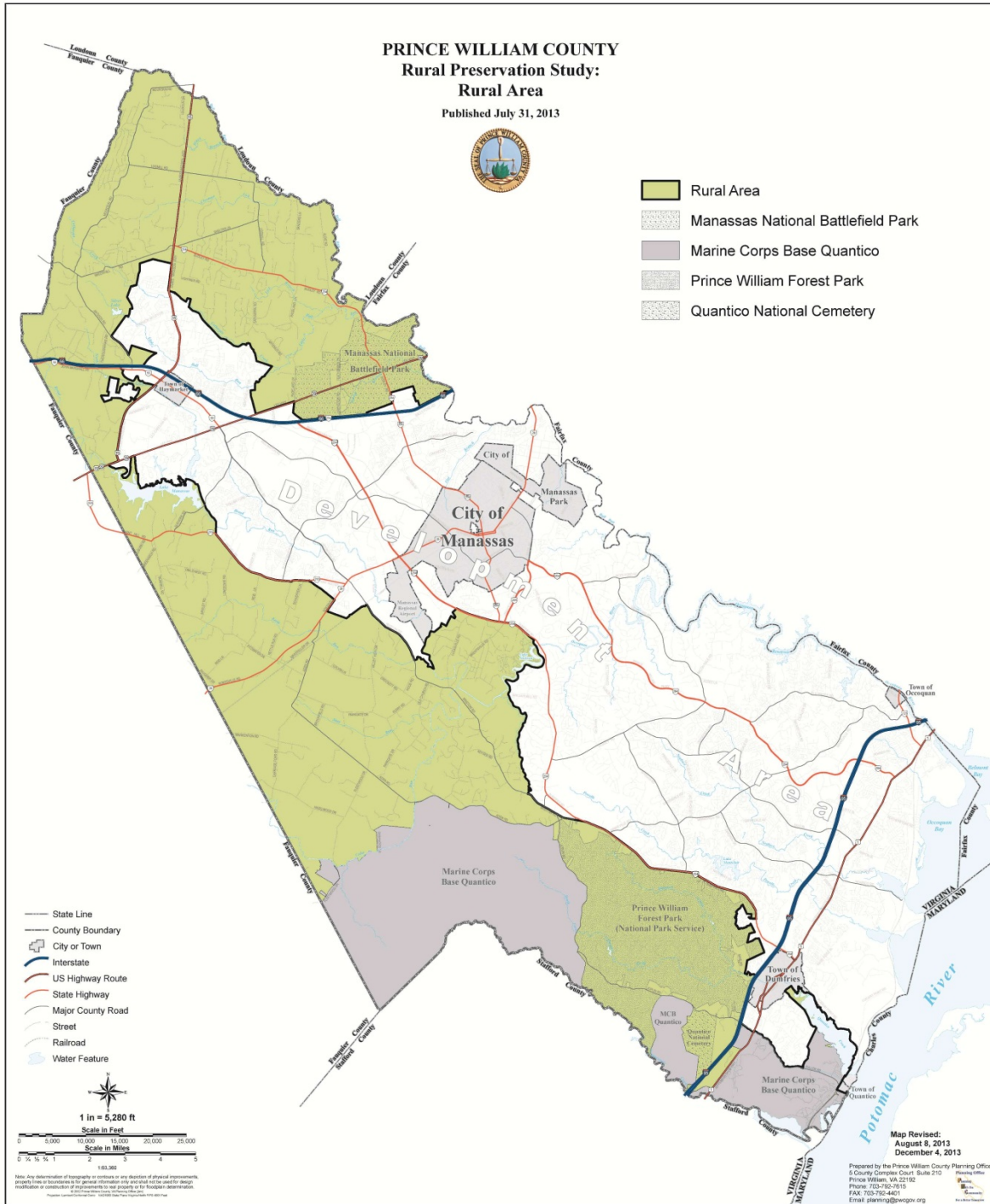
The Rural Area is defined as follows in the County's 2008 Comprehensive Plan:

That portion of Prince William County which contains agricultural, open space, forestry and large-lot residential land uses, as well as occasional small-scale convenience retail centers and community facilities. It is intended that the Rural Area be served by public water facilities but not by public sewer facilities, except under emergency conditions as identified in the Sewer Plan. This is also referred to as the "Rural Crescent". (Comp Plan, Glossary-17<sup>1</sup>)

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<sup>1</sup> The Comprehensive Plan gives page numbers using this element name page format.

**Figure 1 Rural Area**





## 1.2 Approach to the Study

The Study was conducted between July 2013 and February 2014. As consultants, the ERM team's objective was to make practical, implementable recommendations tailored to Prince William County's unique situation. Our approach to the study was to make recommendations based on a broad suite of inputs, namely:

- Public input – hearing from as many interested groups and individuals as practicable. This was achieved through:
  - an internet-based survey to which there were 384 responses,
  - group meetings with approximately 33 stakeholders from a broad range of interests,
  - a kick-off public meeting in Nokesville in August with approximately 130 attendees,
  - an all-day open house and workshop in Manassas in December with approximately 80 attendees,
  - an open house in January in the County's Development Services Building with approximately 60 attendees,
  - the Planning Office that maintained a project website throughout the duration of the Study including meeting notices, all materials presented at meetings, survey results, and public input forms.

**Note on use of the survey.** The survey included questions requesting responses along a scale as well as open-ended questions which allowed for a broad range of input. Respondents to the survey were self-selected and were free to respond to as few or as many questions as they wished. In this sense the survey was not scientific, and the results should not be interpreted as being statistically representative of a particular population. Consequently, we considered the results with the same weight as the other public input.

- Fieldwork; a landscape-level documentation and visual assessment of what the Rural Area actually looks like today,
- Research into the planning history of the Rural Area since 1991 to understand the background to the policies currently in place,
- Comparison of the preservation policies the County has in place with best practices from other counties throughout the US.

Please see the Appendix for some of these key inputs.

## 1.3 Study organization

The Study covers 10 subject areas where County policy affects the Rural Area. The subject areas were created for the Study, and there is some overlap among them. For each subject area, where appropriate the Study describes:

1. Current policies, and related text such as goals and action strategies
2. Issues /concerns regarding those policies, including those expressed through public input to the Study
3. Trends; data or other information regarding the policies that are currently in place
4. ERM team observations on the effectiveness of the policies
5. ERM team recommendations

## **2. Planning History**

County land use and development policy is established in the County Comprehensive Plan and implemented through the County Code and functional programs such as the Capital Improvements Program. The planning history of the Rural Area is important because it shows the evolution of County land use and development policy. Many participants in this Rural Preservation Study process have followed County land use policy over the past 20+ years and are concerned that potential changes to policy be evaluated against this evolution.

Prince William County first prepared a Comprehensive Plan in 1964. The Comprehensive Plans most relevant to this Study are the current (2008) Comprehensive Plan, and the 1998 and 1991 Comprehensive Plans. Appendix 3 contains the Long Range Land Use Maps from these three Plans.

The 1991 Comprehensive Plan divided the County into four Long Range Concept Areas. The general area now called the Rural Area was Concept Area IV and was divided into three areas:

- Agricultural Estate; 10 acres or larger per dwelling, public sewer not permitted,
- Rural Residential; 5 to 10 acres per dwelling, public sewer not permitted,
- Semi-Rural Residential; 1 to 5 acres per dwelling, public sewer permitted.

The A-1 zoning district that helps implement the Agricultural Estate Comprehensive Plan area was established in the 1958 Zoning Ordinance. The 1982 Zoning Ordinance amended the minimum lot area for a single family home in the A-1 zoning district from one acre to ten acres.

The 1998 Comprehensive Plan combined the Agricultural Estate, Rural Residential and portions of the Semi-Rural Residential areas into a single “Rural Area”. Nearly all the Rural Area was designated “Agricultural or Estate (AE) 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres or greater”, thereby:

- Re-designating the areas that were Rural Residential and Semi-Rural Residential in the 1991 Plan from less than 10 acres per dwelling to 10 acres or larger per dwelling,
- No longer permitting sewer in areas formerly designated Semi-Rural Residential, and
- Making amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that would result in changes to the A-1 zoning (upzonings) more difficult to consider and approve as they would be inconsistent with the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

The current 2008 Comprehensive Plan is generally consistent with the 1998 Plan with respect to the Rural Area.

## **3. Comprehensive Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan is the key policy document for the Rural Area.

### **3.1 Overall Vision**

The Introduction to the Plan includes an overall vision statement. The vision includes some statements specific to the Rural Area:

- The Plan seeks to “ensure a high quality of life by .....providing large amounts of open space, particularly in preservation and conservation areas”. (Comp Plan, Intro-1)

- One of the Plan’s four general goals is for the County to be an attractive, “livable” community. This will be achieved, in part, through “Preservation of areas of rural character and significant cultural/historical resources”. (Comp Plan, Intro-2).

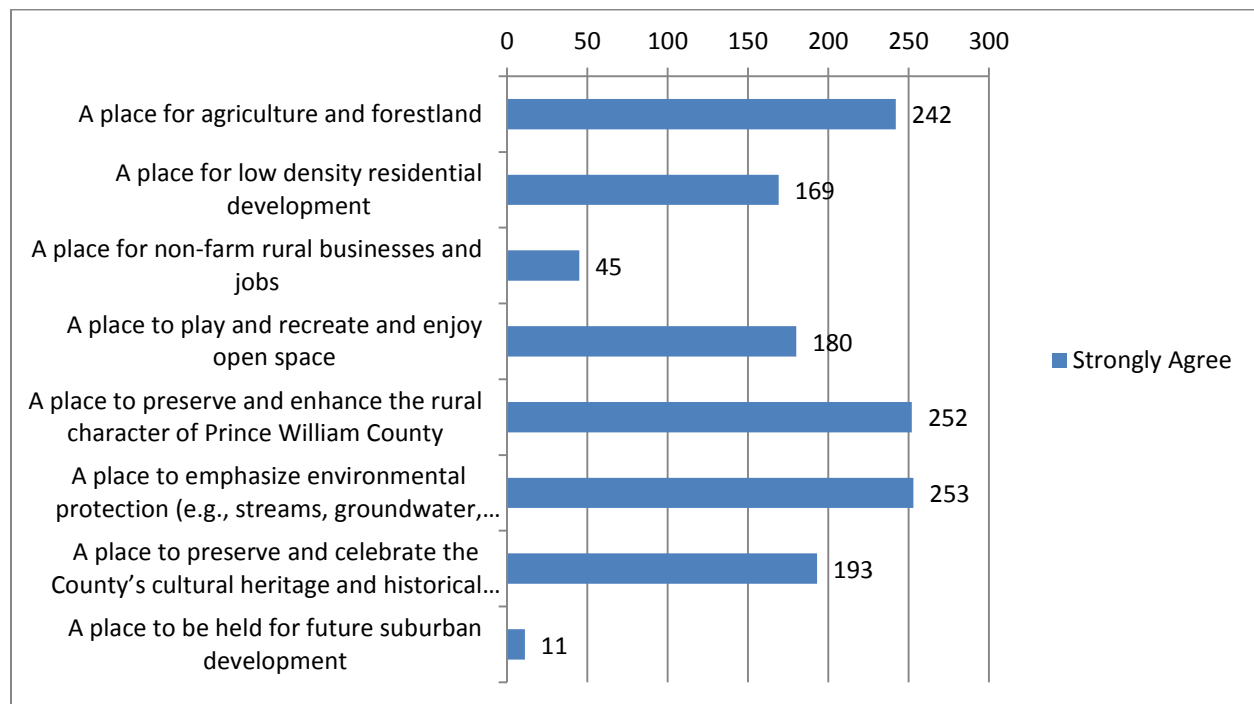
The Introduction describes two general land use areas; the Development Area and the Rural Area. The Rural Area is described as follows:

“The Rural Area is that portion of Prince William County containing agricultural, open space, forestry, and large-lot residential land uses, as well as two federal parks. Large-lot residential clusters, providing large tracts of permanent open space, are an alternative residential pattern permitted in the Rural Area. **The Rural Area designation helps preserve the County’s agricultural economy and resources, the quality of the groundwater supply, and the present open space and rural character of Prince William County.** The Rural Area may be served by public water facilities but not by public sewer facilities, except under the emergency conditions identified in the Sewer Plan or to serve specific public facilities. **Designation of the Rural Area and application of the development goals, policies, and action strategies for it are intended to help avoid the negative economic, social, and environmental characteristics of sprawl development.** (Comprehensive Plan, Intro-3, bold by ERM).

### 3.2 Trends

As part of the survey to solicit public input about the County’s rural preservation efforts, respondents were asked to indicate their opinion about what the Rural Area means to them, how they think of the Rural Area. The top three responses were a place to: emphasize environmental protection; preserve and enhance rural character; and for agriculture and forestland (Figure 2). Appendix 1 includes the full survey results.

**Figure 2 Opinions regarding the Rural Area**



### 3.3 Observations

The results shown in Figure 2 were generally consistent with the views expressed in other parts of the public input process; the stakeholder meetings and public meetings. The results show broad consensus around the desire and importance of maintaining a Rural Area. Another point of general consensus was that current preservation policies (primarily 10-acre zoning) constitute a one-size fits all approach that does not work well across the very large Rural Area, which varies greatly in character from one end to the other. In short, more tools are needed in the County’s Rural Area preservation toolbox. Further, careful application of these tools can advance both Rural Area and Development Area goals.

Vision statements can be powerful and valuable as a basis for setting land use policy. For “places” or “areas”, the best vision statements describe what the county<sup>2</sup> wants that place or area “to be”, including what it should look like.

While the Comprehensive Plan contains numerous references to the Rural Area in terms of definition, commentary and action strategies, it does not contain an overall vision statement or a set of policies that clearly define the County’s overall policy for the Rural Area. Indeed, given the amount of land in the Rural Area (52% of the County) relatively little of the Comprehensive Plan is devoted to the Rural Area.

In the description of the Rural Area above, the two sentences in bold come the closest to a vision statement. However, as a whole, the description states what the Rural Area should “do”, not what it should “be”. In other words it is a functional description; it is not a vision.

### 3.4 Recommendations

*3.4.1 Adopt in the Comprehensive Plan a vision that describes what the County wants the Rural Area to be. Use the vision as the basis for setting policy. Using the vision as a starting point, create a more substantial subsection or subsections of the Plan dedicated to the Rural Area*

As a starting point for discussion we offer the following draft vision:

“The Rural Area is a landscape dominated by agriculture, woodland, open space and other undeveloped land. The Rural Area allows for low-density residential development that is planned and designed to not dominate the landscape. The Rural Area accommodates a variety of activities and lifestyles associated with rural areas including farming of all types, low density residential living, rural businesses, cultural heritage, recreation, and preservation and enjoyment of the natural environment.”

The expanded subsections would incorporate the recommendations from this Study the County would choose to pursue.

*3.4.2 Adopt a Rural Area land preservation acreage goal as a subset of the County’s overall Open Space preservation goal*

We recommend consideration be given to a goal of 17,000 acres. See discussion below in Sections 4 and 9.

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<sup>2</sup> or any other place such as town, city, or region.

## **4. Agricultural / forest land preservation**

### **4.1 Policies**

While the words “preserve” or “preservation” are used approximately 260 times in Comprehensive Plan they are scarcely used at all with respect to agricultural or forest preservation<sup>3</sup>. The Plan has no specific policy or related text to preserve agricultural land other than the overall policy to use the Rural Area for preservation. The limited agricultural preservation language in the Plan is general. For example:

“The Rural Area designation helps preserve the County’s agricultural economy and resources”, (INTRO-3)

“The purpose of the Rural Area designation is to help preserve the County’s agricultural economy and resources, the County’s agricultural landscapes and cultural resources” (LU-30)

The County developed a sector plan for Nokesville in 2000. The plan is an element of the Comprehensive Plan. It includes the following action strategy under the goal to, “Promote limited growth and renovation within the core area while continuing to maintain and enhance the environmental resources of Nokesville”.

“Continue to support and implement the County’s Agricultural and Forestal District program in order to preserve farmland and wooded areas in Nokesville”. (NOKES-7)

The Parks, Open Space and Trails element contains the following policy:

“Retain existing open space in the county”. (POS&T-26)

Action Strategies under this policy are:

1. Review and implement programs, including the purchase of development rights (PDR), transfer of development rights (TDR), and outreach highlighting opportunities available through private conservation easements in order to protect existing open space.
2. Review and implement programs that provide incentives for landowners in the rural area to preserve agricultural land uses, protect prime soils, and prevent non-agricultural uses from negatively impacting the primary land use.

The Comprehensive Plan has no numerical agricultural land preservation goal distinct from or as a component of the goal to retain 39 percent of the County as protected open space (see Section 9 below, under Open Space and Recreation).

### **4.2 Issues/concerns**

Much of the public input part of the study was devoted to the discussion of the future of agriculture in Prince William County –see especially Appendices 1 and 2. As might be expected, there were a variety of opinions and views. Some of the key ones expressed were as follows:

- Traditional row crop agriculture is in decline
  - Some statements included: “There is no good farmland in Prince William County”, “corn yields are low” (compared to other places), “Ag. is gone”,
- Only a small number of large farms remain - less than two dozen. As a result, a critical mass of agriculture is lacking,

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<sup>3</sup> Most uses of the words are for preserving historic, environmental, open space resources or communities.



- Farmers state it is difficult to farm because area has suburbanized,
- Regulations more suited to large operations are onerous to the small farmer/operator,
- Farming doesn't get respect (the County doesn't support it and treat it as viable component of the local economy).

These views were countered to some extent by people who were positive about the future of agriculture in Prince William County, especially the “new” agriculture, including:

- Farms focused on high value crops and products especially for direct sale to consumers and for Washington D.C. market, including turf, vegetables, and flowers,
- Small farms (farmettes), including those with specialty products such as, hydroponics, goats, and sheep,
- Agritourism; farm tours, festivals, events,
- Horse farms.

Even those people who were positive about the future potential for agriculture stressed the need for supportive land use and economic development policies.

Lack of clarity in the zoning regulations was frequently cited as an issue – for example lack of definition of what constitutes an agri-business.

Some participants expressed concern over the standards for classification of real estate to qualify as agricultural use under Virginia's Use Value Taxation that gives preferential tax treatment to land in agricultural use. The standards require that before entering (or re-entering) the program the land must have been devoted to agriculture for at least five prior consecutive years.<sup>4</sup>

## 4.3 Trends

### 4.3.1 Land in Agriculture, Preserved Land

Different agencies publish land use and preserved land data but the data vary by content, purpose, and date published. Therefore, a number of datasets, used in combination, are the best way to get the best picture of the amount of agricultural land and preserved agricultural land in Prince William County.

#### Census of Agriculture

The 2007 Census of Agriculture reported 32,816 acres in farms in Prince William County, a slight increase over the 2002 number (32,549). The Census counted 345 total farms of which 210 were 50 acres or less. The 2012 census results are expected in May 2014.

Very small farms (< \$1,000 sales value) are not counted in the Census. Prince William has such small “hobby” farms, though the exact number is not known. To the extent that they are not counted, the census data may be undercounting the amount of agricultural land in the County.

#### Prince William County

Prince William County does not currently have an agricultural land preservation program. Some agricultural land in the County is permanently preserved through conservation easements but the County currently counts this land as “open space” along with some other types of protected land.

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<sup>4</sup><http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/448/448-037/448-037.html> and <http://usevalue.agecon.vt.edu/myweb3/Procedures/SLEAC%20Manual%202003.pdf>

Of the 116,944 acres in the Rural Area approximately 25,750 acres (22%) are permanently protected (Table 1 and Figure 3). Of these, approximately 3,194 acres are protected by easement or zoning<sup>5</sup>. Approximately 27,944 acres (24%) of the Rural Area are undeveloped and of these 20,077 acres have agricultural land use.

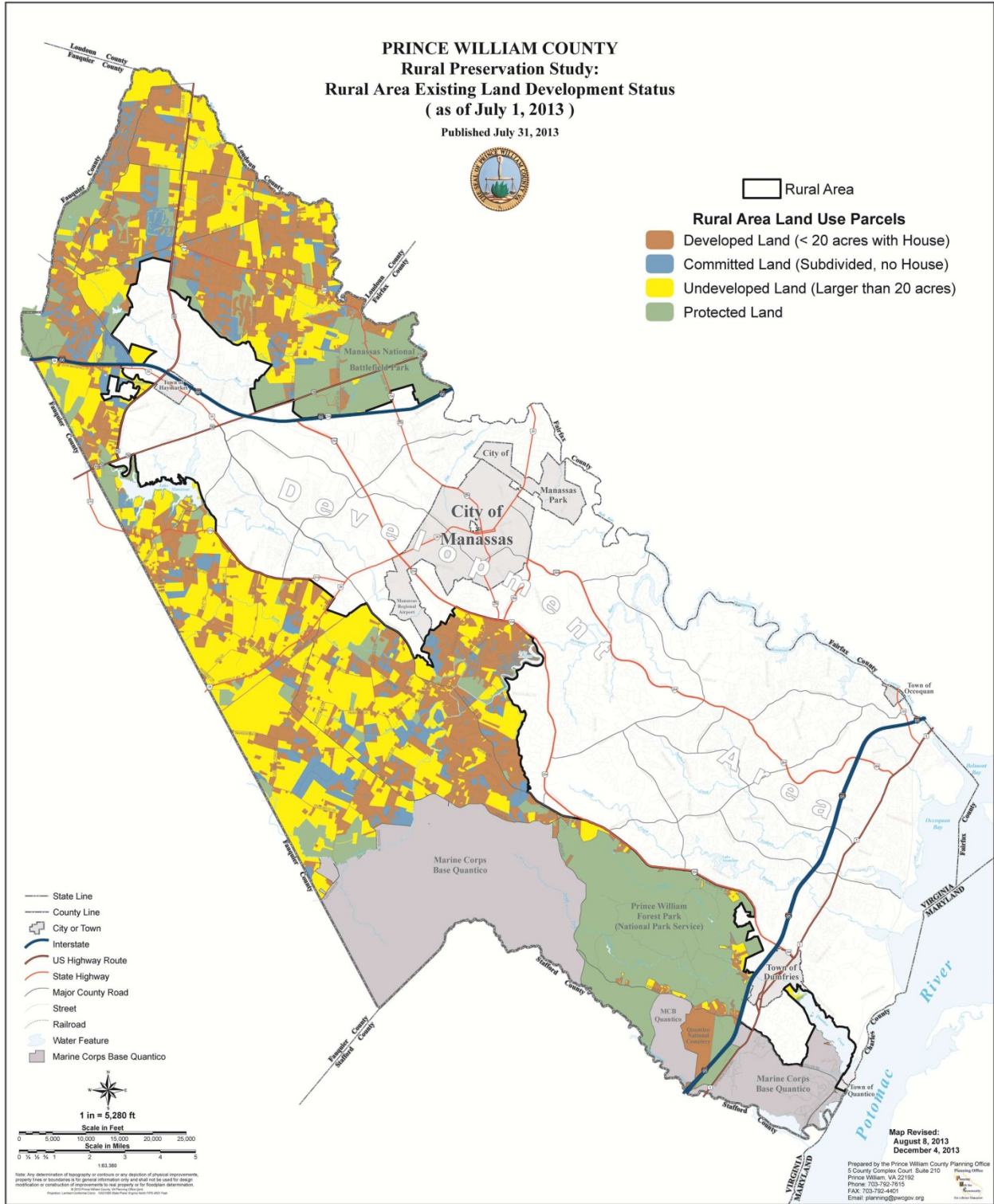
**Table 1 Rural Area Land Use Status, 2013**

<b>Land Category</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<i>Developed</i> (includes MCB Quantico)	55,082	47
<i>Committed</i> (subdivided, platted lots)	8,218	7
<i>Protected</i>	25,750	22
State	744	
Federal (mostly Prince William Forest Park)	16,706	
<u>Open space</u>	7,021	
Parks	2,071	
Protected by easement or zoning (e.g., Merrimac Farm)	3,194	
Bull Run Mountain State Natural Preserve	1,481	
Other (school + private)	276	
Historic (County Registered Historic Sites, e.g., Buckland)	1,278	
<i>Undeveloped</i>	27,944	24
Agricultural	20,077	
Other	7,868	
<b>Total</b>	<b>116,944</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Prince William County Planning Office, unpublished data, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> The County maintains a detailed inventory of protected lands with approximately 335 records in the Rural Area alone.

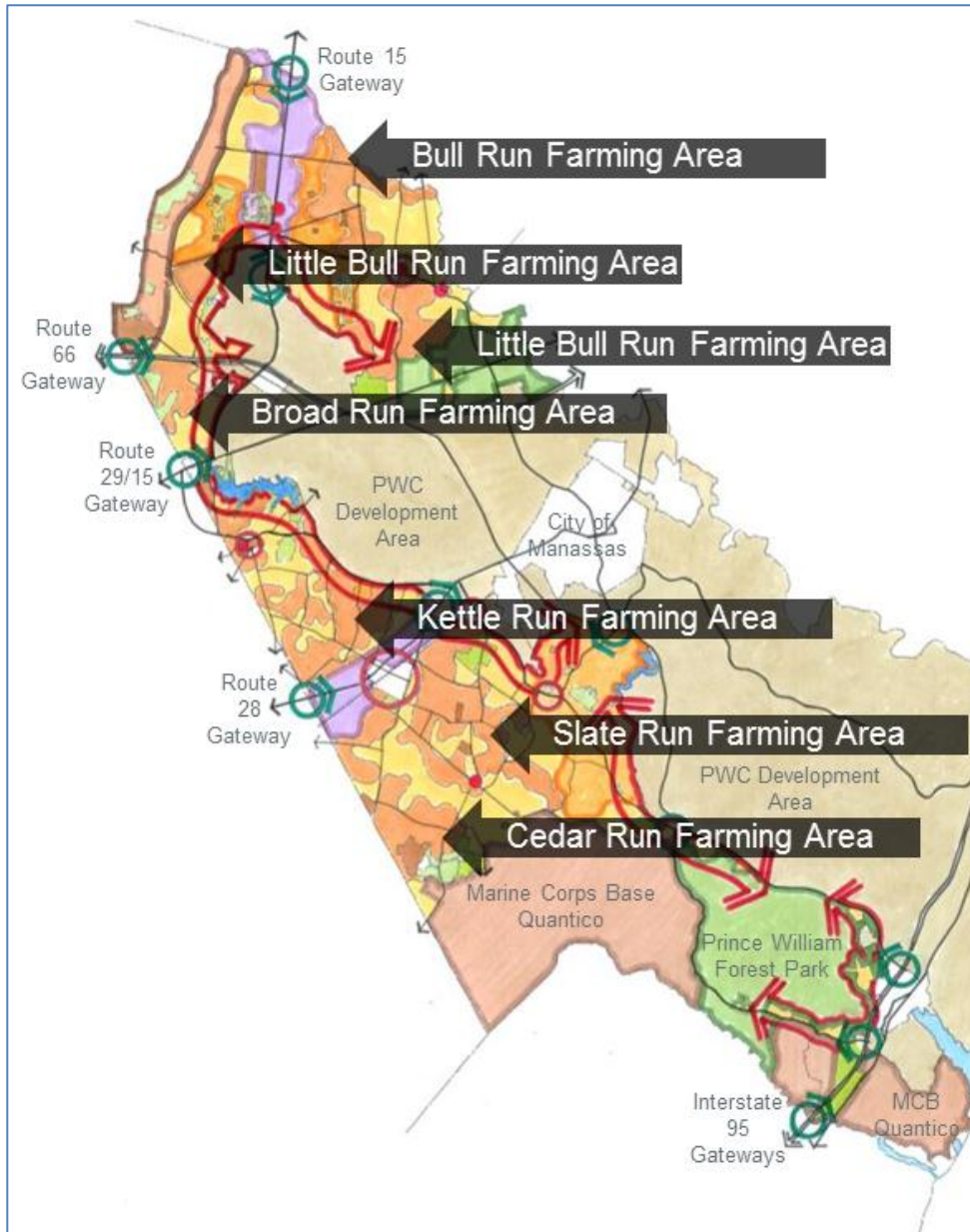
**Figure 3 Rural Area Land Use Status**



## Farming Areas

Figure 4 shows the farming areas that were identified through the landscape-level fieldwork conducted for this Study. Taken together, these areas constitute a “Valley Agriculture and Forestry” rural character area that we describe in more detail in Section 6. The farming area names are not “official” and were created for this Study.

**Figure 4**      **Farming Areas**



## Agricultural Districts

As of 2009, landowners in Prince William County had voluntarily enrolled approximately 3,467 acres in two large agricultural and forestal districts<sup>6</sup>, mostly in the Nokesville area (see Figure 2 in Appendix 4). This amount of land is indicative of continued interest in agriculture, but these lands are not permanently preserved; a landowner may withdraw land from the district at any time, though there may be a property tax penalty depending on the timing.

## Summary

The data on the amount of land in agricultural use are somewhat inconsistent, depending on the agency providing the data. In addition the agricultural industry around metropolitan areas like Washington DC is in rapid change, so accurate up to date numbers are difficult to obtain. Nevertheless, the picture is of a county with 20,000 to 30,000 acres in agricultural use, of which perhaps 1,500 to 2,000 acres are under easement.

### *4.3.2 Groups/organizations*

The stakeholder meetings and public meetings for the Study revealed a lot of interest in agriculture and in agricultural land preservation among individuals, groups, and organizations. These are potential partners for the County in pursuing agricultural land preservation. They include:

- Northern Virginia Conservation Trust,
- Prince William Conservation Alliance,
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation,
- Virginia Land Conservation Foundation,
- Virginia Farmland Preservation Program, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services,
- Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (Agricultural Land Easements in the 2014 Farm Bill) Natural Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture.

Some of these groups have a particular focus or interest, such as environmental land, but would likely include agricultural land as part of their mission.

## **4.4 Observations**

From the perspective of agricultural land preservation, creating the Rural Area in 1998 was, overall, a positive move. The density of one house per 10 acres combined with the limit on sewer extensions is among the most protective zoning densities in Virginia<sup>7</sup>. Protective zoning is an important component of a land preservation program, but unless the zoning is very protective (one unit per 30 or 50 acres, example) zoning alone will not preserve agricultural land.

However, preserving large amounts of land in perpetuity requires programs and actions in addition to zoning, particularly in a place like Prince William County that is under development pressure, has competing demands for land, and has other challenges such as an older generation of farmers. Absent such additional programs and actions, land in Prince William County's Rural Area will steadily be lost to

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<sup>6</sup> Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 2012.  
[http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/pdf/ag\\_forestal\\_summary.pdf](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/pdf/ag_forestal_summary.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Though the argument is sometimes made that such zoning works against land preservation because it consumes land in larger amounts (10 acres) compared to, for example, one-acre zoning.



other uses. There is evidence this has been happening – note, for example, the approximately 8,200 acres of land in the Rural Area that are committed to development (see Table 1).

Agricultural land is a key element of rural character and needs to be a high priority for action. Two thirds of respondents to the survey indicated that for them the Rural Area means “A place for agriculture and forestland” (see Figure 2).

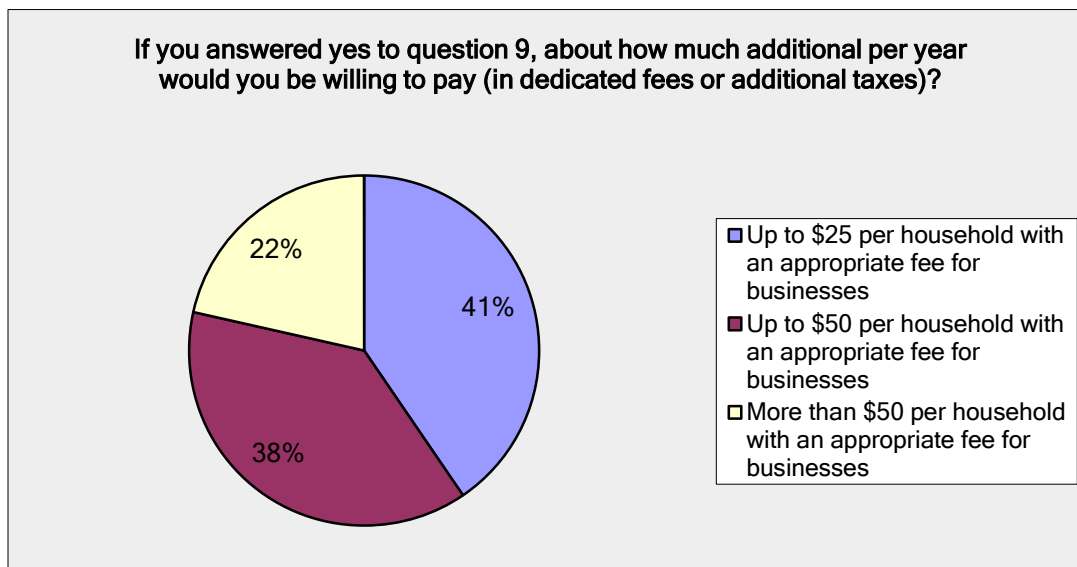
The County has a window of opportunity to develop additional supportive programs and actions but the window is quite narrow. The 20,000 to 30,000-acre pool of farmland is fairly small and has been shrinking. Subdivision activity continues. For example, between 2000 and 2012 an average of 842 acres per year were subdivided in the Rural Area<sup>8</sup>. Subdivision activity can be expected to pick up as the economy continues to improve following the 2007 to 2009 recession.

The key mechanism for land preservation is a Purchase of Development Rights program (PDR). In some places a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program can also be effective. See Appendix 4, Comparison of Prince William County Growth Management Techniques in the Rural Crescent Compared to National Best Practices. Both are contemplated in the Comprehensive Plan (see Section 4.1) and this Study recommends both (see Section 4.5).

The survey results indicate support for preservation and a willingness among residents to help pay for it<sup>9</sup>:

- 68% of respondents indicated they would be willing to pay more to help preserve land in the Rural Area,
- Of those willing to pay more, 41% indicated a willingness to pay up to \$25 per household with an appropriate fee for businesses,
- 38% indicated a willingness to pay up to \$50 per household (Figure 5).

**Figure 5 Willingness to Pay for Land Preservation**



<sup>8</sup> Subdivision activity database provided by Prince William County Planning Office.

<sup>9</sup> As noted above, respondents to the survey were self-selected and were free to respond to as few or as many questions as they wished. In this sense the survey was not scientific, and the results should not be interpreted as being statistically representative of a particular population.

Preservation oriented groups and organizations have been less active directly in land preservation in Prince William County than they have been in some other counties. To some extent these groups have been focused on protecting the Rural Area line.

These groups recognize the importance of preserving land in Prince William County because of its geographically strategic importance on the edge of the Washington DC metropolitan area. If the County becomes more active in land preservation, they would be willing and interested partners and could assist the County by leveraging efforts.

## **4.5 Recommendations**

### *4.5.1 Adopt a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program*

A Purchase of Development Rights program is a voluntary program in which a landowner agrees to sell his or her development rights to a government (local, state, or federal) in return for a cash payment<sup>10</sup>.

There are about 28,000 acres of undeveloped and unpreserved privately-held land in the Rural Area. Of this total about 20,000 acres are in agricultural use (see Table 1). Three important features of a PDR program are: character and nature of the area being preserved; the level of funding; and an acreage goal to work toward. A reasonable, though aggressive, goal would be to preserve 8,000 acres through PDR. This level of preservation would maintain the largely rural character of the agricultural parts of the Rural Area.

We recommend the County identify and appropriate \$5 million to begin funding the program using local and non-local revenue sources<sup>11</sup>. The County should also explore state and federal matching funds for the PDR program and partnering on land preservation projects with preservation-oriented organizations including private non-profit land trusts. \$5 million could preserve at least 1,000 acres with additional acreage possible through leveraging.

Appendix 4 contains additional detailed discussion of the recommended PDR program. Recommended program components include:

- \$5,000 maximum payment per acre. If the value of the development rights is appraised at more than \$5,000 an acre, a landowner can use the difference between the appraised development rights value and the \$5,000 sales price as a federal income tax deduction,
- A minimum eligible parcel size of 20 acres,
- Preference for properties that are enrolled in agricultural and forestal districts,
- Preference for properties that are in Valley Agriculture and Forests “Rural Character” areas (see Section 6 below).

### *4.5.2 Explore the creation of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program*

A transfer of development rights (TDR) program features the creation of a market in development credits through the county government. The county gives development credits to landowners in a designated

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<sup>10</sup> Development rights can be sold to non-profit organizations or other private entities, but, as with agreements with a government, the legal transaction is recorded in the public land records and is enforceable. Non-profit organizations sometimes serve as co-guarantors of easement terms on easement sales to governments.

<sup>11</sup> There are several funding options for PDR. The sale of general obligation bonds has been a popular option for counties, especially 20-year tax-exempt bonds. In some cases, the sale of bonds has been put before the voters as a referendum. Some counties have chosen a pay-as-you-go approach. A few counties have dedicated real estate transfer taxes for the purchase of development rights. Several counties have used installment purchase agreements with landowners to combine a funding approach with a payment arrangement. Please see Appendix 4 for additional detail on funding options.

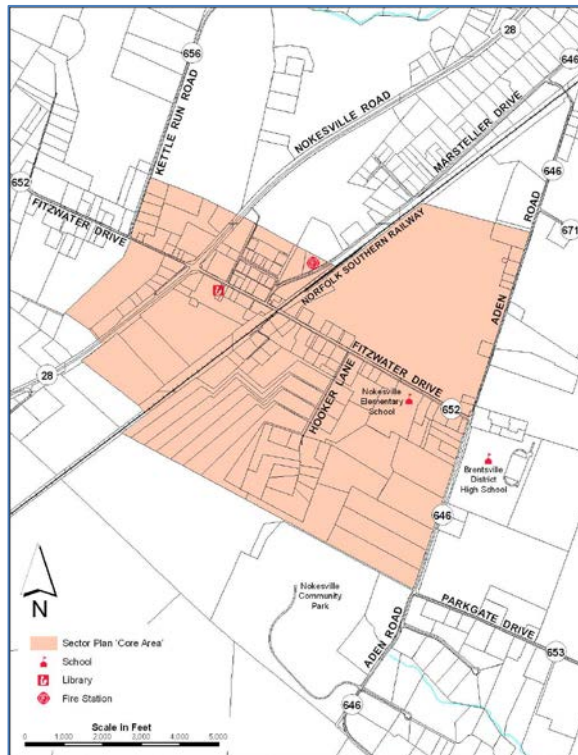
sending area from which the development credits will be sent and the land is preserved by a deed of easement (conservation easement). The development credits can be purchased by developers and landowners in designated receiving areas, and proposed developments are allowed to be built at a higher than normal density. The price of TDRs is determined through negotiation, just as in any real estate transaction.

Sending areas should be the highest value agricultural, scenic, and culturally significant parts of the Rural Area, including two character areas; the Valley Agriculture and Forests rural character area and the Route 15 (Journey Through Hallowed Ground) rural gateway corridor character area.

Receiving areas would be:

- i) Appropriate locations in the Comprehensive Plan’s Development Area such as Centers of Commerce and Centers of Community,
- ii) Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Regional Activity Centers. There are five in the County: Gainesville, Innovation, Potomac Shores, Potomac Town Center/Potomac Mills, and North Woodbridge.
- iii) Nokesville Village – Sector Plan Core Area only (see Figure 6),
- iv) Areas within the “Transitional Ribbon” character area where such transfers would allow development that would be more protective of environmental resources and rural character compared to the existing zoning. Section 6, below, describes these “Rural Character” areas (#3 - Stream Valley Estates and Subdivisions and #10 - Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves).

**Figure 6- Nokesville Village – Sector Plan Core Area**



Some counties permit TDR receiving areas throughout their Rural Areas (so called Rural to Rural transfers). Such transfers can be controversial because while the sending area is preserved they create clusters of higher density development in areas that are otherwise rural. We do not recommend such

receiving areas, especially in the Valley Agriculture and Forests rural character areas because they are of relatively limited spatial extent and land preservation should be the key priority.

Most TDR programs fail for lack of market demand. While the County would want to conduct a market assessment before adopting a program, ERM's preliminary observation is that Prince William County's strong real estate market is a good candidate for a functioning TDR program. A successful TDR program would help the County meet both its rural preservation goals (by helping preserve rural land) and its urban development goals (by increasing development density in appropriate locations in the Development Area). The prior designation of the Rural Area and Development Area should facilitate establishing sending areas and identifying receiving areas.

#### *4.5.3 Explore the potential for revisions to the five-year prior use standards for entry into Virginia's Use Value Taxation Program*

This is state law but the potential is worth exploring because the program is a significant incentive to keeping land in agricultural use or converting land to agricultural use.

## **5. Land Use and Development**

### **5.1 Policies**

The Comprehensive Plan's Land Use element sets out land use and development policy for the Rural Area. The key sections are on pages LU 29 and LU 30 with the descriptions of the Rural Area and of the Agricultural or Estate classification as shown on the Land Use Plan Map. The key provisions are as follows:

- The purpose of the Agricultural or Estate classification is to protect existing agricultural lands, cultural resources, and open space, as well as other important rural environmental resources, and to provide areas within the County where large lot residential development is appropriate. The maximum density is one dwelling per 10 gross acres.
  - The density is codified in the Zoning Code, Sec. 32-301.05 A-1 Agricultural, zoning district.
- Large-lot residential cluster development contained within or abutted by large tracts of permanent open space is an alternative residential pattern permitted.
  - In a rural cluster development the overall maximum density is 1 dwelling per 10 acres, the minimum lot size is three acres and 50% of the parcel must be preserved open space (Zoning Code Secs. 32-300.40 -43).
- A family subdivision can be created with a minimum lot size of one dwelling per acre (Zoning Code Sec. 25-6).
- The Rural Area can be served by public water facilities, but is not intended to be served by public sewer facilities, except under emergency conditions.
- The area immediately around the village of Nokesville is covered by a specific sector plan; a separate 40-page element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use Policy 4 (page LU-7) recognizes Marine Corps Base (MCB) Quantico as a valuable asset deserving protection and to ensure that future development adjacent to or near MCB Quantico does not negatively affect the mission of the military base. A number of action strategies are intended to implement this policy, including, for example: Retain the existing boundary and the 1 unit per 10 acre density of the Rural Area where it presently exists near MCB Quantico.

The Land Use element also contains policies to protect Prince William Forest Park and Manassas National Battlefield Park.

## **5.2 Issues/concerns**

Land use and development policy in the Rural Area generated vigorous debate during the public input process to the Study.

Overall there was dissatisfaction with the appropriateness of the land use and development policies, but very little consensus about what to put it in its place. A broad range of views were expressed by property owners, longtime farmers, “newer” farmers, developers, Farm Bureau members, community groups, business representatives, preservation and conservation organizations, and staff. Specific concerns expressed were as follows:

- The 1998 Comprehensive Plan (which extended the 10-acre zoning over most of the Rural Area) “has killed agriculture”; “will diminish agriculture”, and was a property “taking”..
- 10 acre lots are “too small to farm; too large to mow” i.e., not enough land for a farm from which one can make a living, but more land than is needed for a dwelling.
- The 1998 Comprehensive Plan precluded the ability to do “good” development (protecting sensitive environmental land and open space) by making it difficult to get approval to develop under higher density provisions that uses smaller lots and public sewer.
- 10-acre zoning uses land in large amounts. Developers do not use the cluster provisions of the development policies that would preserve 50 percent of a tract.
- Current policies constitute a one-size fits all approach that doesn’t work well across the very large Rural Area, which varies greatly in character from one end to the other. This last point was one of general consensus.

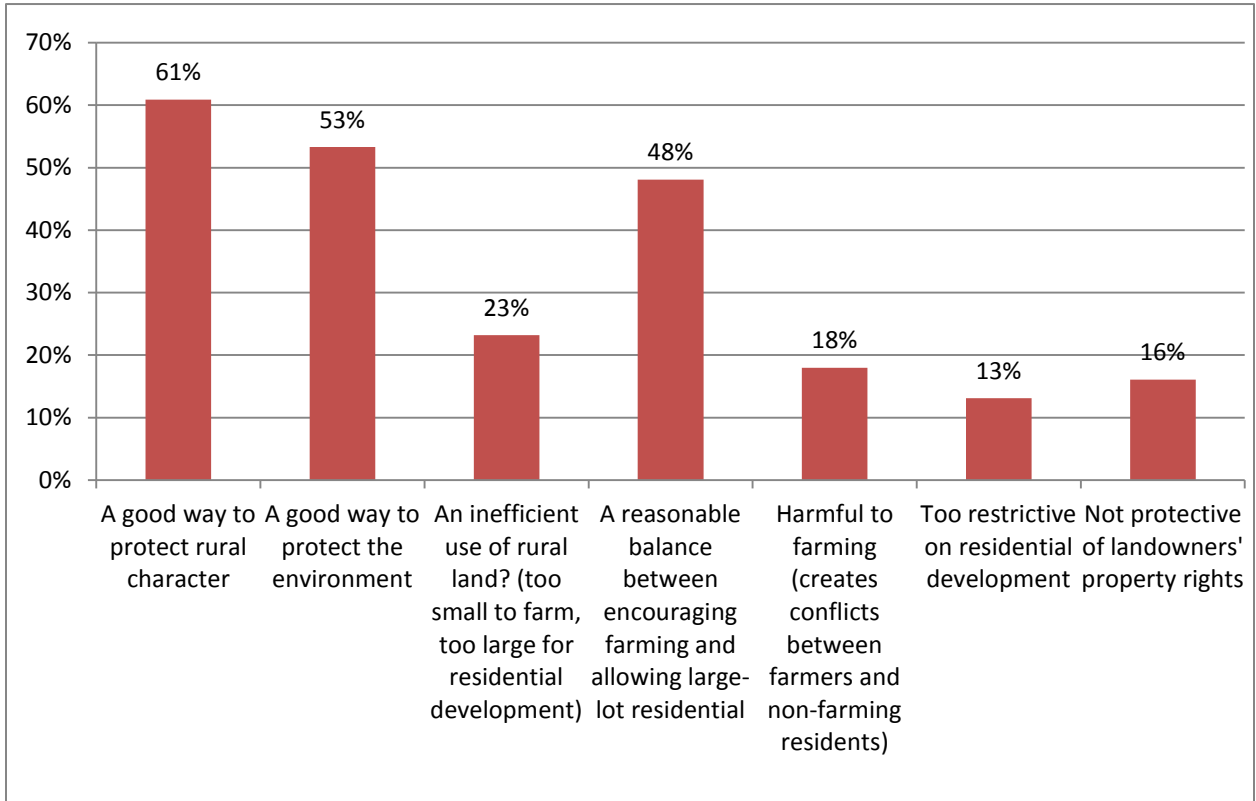
Notwithstanding the concerns described above, there were participants in the public input process who expressed the view, “What’s wrong with 10-acre zoning?”

Question 6 of the survey developed for the Study asked participants’ opinions about this question. The results were generally supportive of 10-acre zoning (see Figure 7).



**Figure 7 Opinions On 10-Acre Lots**

*Question: Future Residential Development: The primary residential development pattern in the rural area is ten-acre lots. Do you think this approach to residential development is (check all that you think apply)*

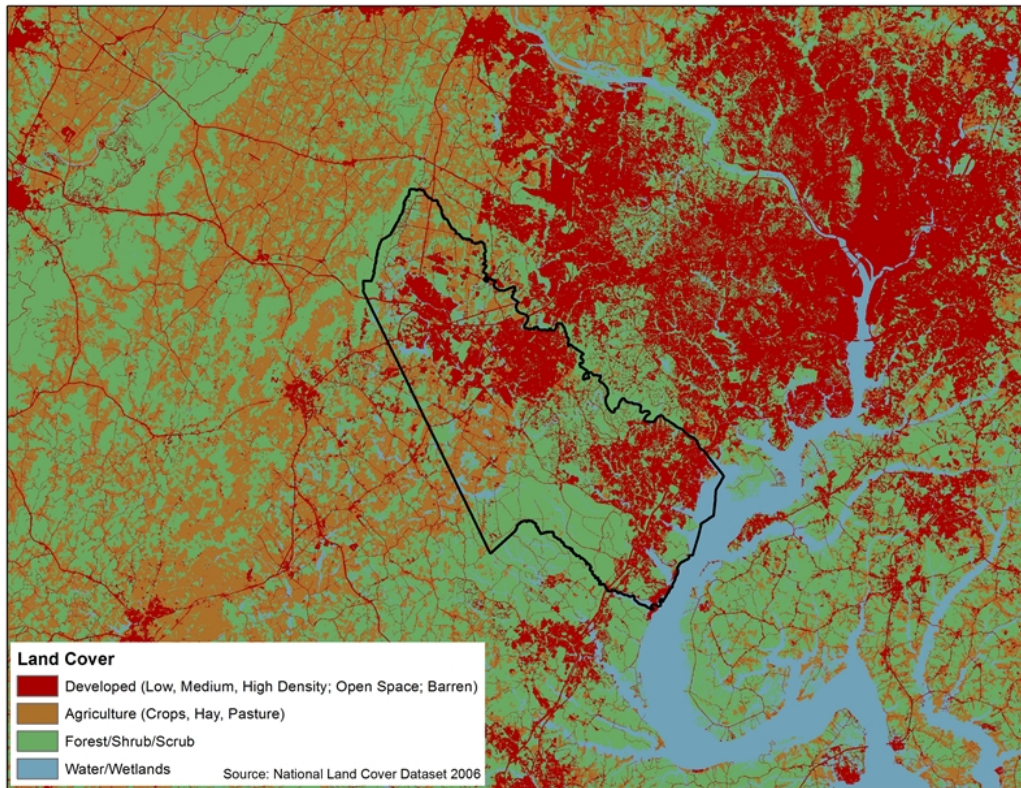


## 5.3 Trends

### 5.3.1 Location

Prince William County is on the outer southwestern edge of the Washington D.C. metropolitan area making it attractive to development (see Figure 8). The Rural Area lies between the more development-oriented areas to the north and east (eastern Prince William, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties) and the more rural areas to the west and south (Fauquier and Stafford Counties) that are dominated by agricultural and forest/shrub cover.

**Figure 8** Land Cover, Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area



Note: Prince William County outlined in black.

### 5.3.2 Land Use and Development Status

Approximately 76% of the Rural Area is developed, committed to development or protected (see Tables 2 and 3 and Figures 3 and 9). In terms of development policy the Study is primarily focused on the approximately 28,000 acres of undeveloped land, most of which is agriculture and forest/shrub/scrub.

**Table 2 Rural Area Land Use Status**

	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Developed	55,082	47	Land that has been built on and with little or no capacity for additional development, especially residential subdivision.
Committed	8,218	7	Land that has an approved development plan (preliminary or final plat of subdivision) but that is not yet developed
Protected	25,750	22	Land that is protected from development with perpetual conservation or open space easement or fee ownership, held by federal, state, or local government or nonprofit organization (Comprehensive Plan definition of Protected Open Space
Undeveloped	27,944	24	Land that is not developed, committed, or protected.
<b>Total</b>	<b>116,944</b>	<b>100</b>	

Of the 27,944 acres of undeveloped land, 22,628 acres (17,167+5,461) or 81% are in larger parcels of over 20 acres (see Table 3). These larger parcels are scattered throughout the Rural Area but there are concentrations in a few areas, especially around Nokesville Area (see Figure 9).

**Table 3 Parcel Sizes**

		<b>Land Use Status Category</b>									
		<b>Developed</b>		<b>Committed</b>		<b>Undeveloped</b>		<b>Protected</b>		<b>Total</b>	
		<b>#</b>		<b>#</b>		<b>#</b>		<b>#</b>		<b>#</b>	
<b>Acres range</b>		<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Parcels</b>	<b>Acres</b>
0	1.9	4,908	4,222	3575	868	428	324	181	26	9,092	5,441
2	4.9	1,712	5,497	201	688	161	510	27	93	2,101	6,788
5	9.9	1,158	8,101	201	1,542	152	1,126	28	188	1,539	10,957
10	19.9	869	9,843	362	3,992	255	3,356	31	426	1,517	17,616
20	49.9	78	2,231	22	570	173	5,461	19	606	292	8,868
50	plus	18	25,189	6	558	152	17,167	47	24,411	223	67,326
	<b>Total</b>	8,743	55,083	4367	8,218	1,321	27,944	333	25,750	14,764	116,995

The Rural Area contains approximately 7,570 homes. Under current policies (10-acre zoning) there is capacity for approximately 3,670 more homes<sup>12</sup>.

As noted above, between 2000 and 2012 an average of 842 acres per year were subdivided. Were this average pace to continue, there would remain an approximately a 27-year supply of land (22,628/842) before the entire undeveloped portion of the rural area would be subdivided into residential parcels. This

<sup>12</sup> 2011 Prince William County Build-Out Analysis.

27-year time frame is provided for context discussion only and is not based on a residential real estate market analysis.

### *5.3.3 Rezoning – land removed from Rural Area*

The Rural Area Boundary has remained largely unchanged and the Rural Area itself has experienced a net reduction of less than 0.5 percent (454 acres) of the total land area as it was constituted in 1998. These changes are the result of four rezonings (The Reserve at Lake Manassas, Airport Gateway Commerce Center, Dominion Valley, and Avendale) that reduced the size of the rural area, and two rezonings (Van Buren and Villages of Piedmont II) that added land to the Rural Area

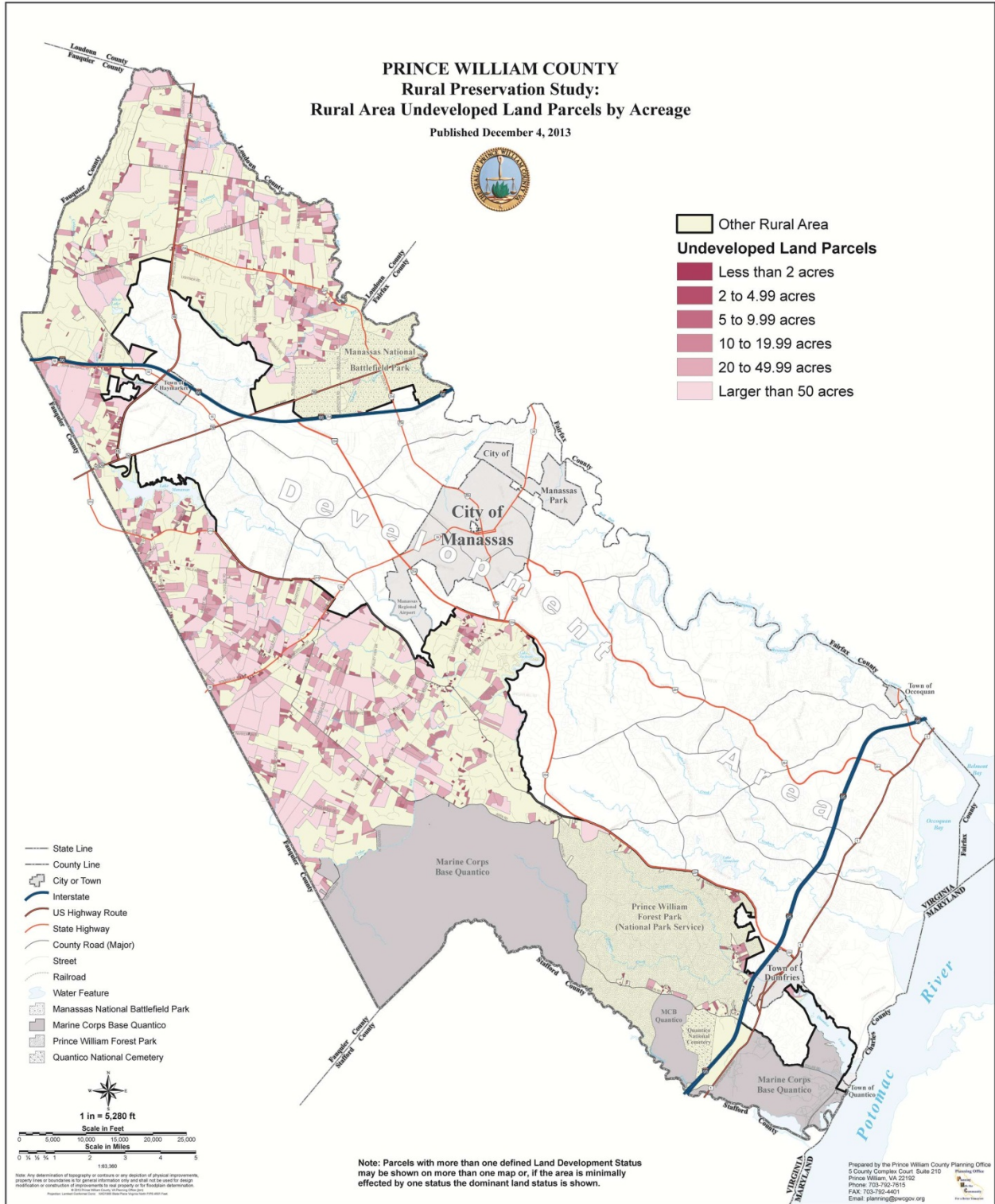
### *5.3.4 Cluster development*

Few if any cluster developments have occurred in the Rural Area since 1998. Although permitted, the cluster development option is not attractive to developers (see below, Section 5.4). There are some current cluster developments in the Rural Area (e.g., Oak Valley see Figure 12 below), but their zoning appears to predate the 1998 Comprehensive Plan.

### *5.3.4 Family subdivisions*

Family subdivisions are a small part of the development picture in the Rural Area. Between 2000 and 2012 there were 144 family conveyances covering 359 acres.

**Figure 9 Undeveloped Land Parcels By Size**





### 5.3.5 Marine Corps Base Quantico

Marine Corps Base Quantico (MCB Quantico) and surrounding counties began a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) in 2013 aimed at identifying and ultimately controlling or minimizing land use and related factors that might affect the Base mission. One of these factors is incompatible land uses, especially within an approximately 3,000-foot area around Base. Work on the JLUS has identified some potential incompatibilities.

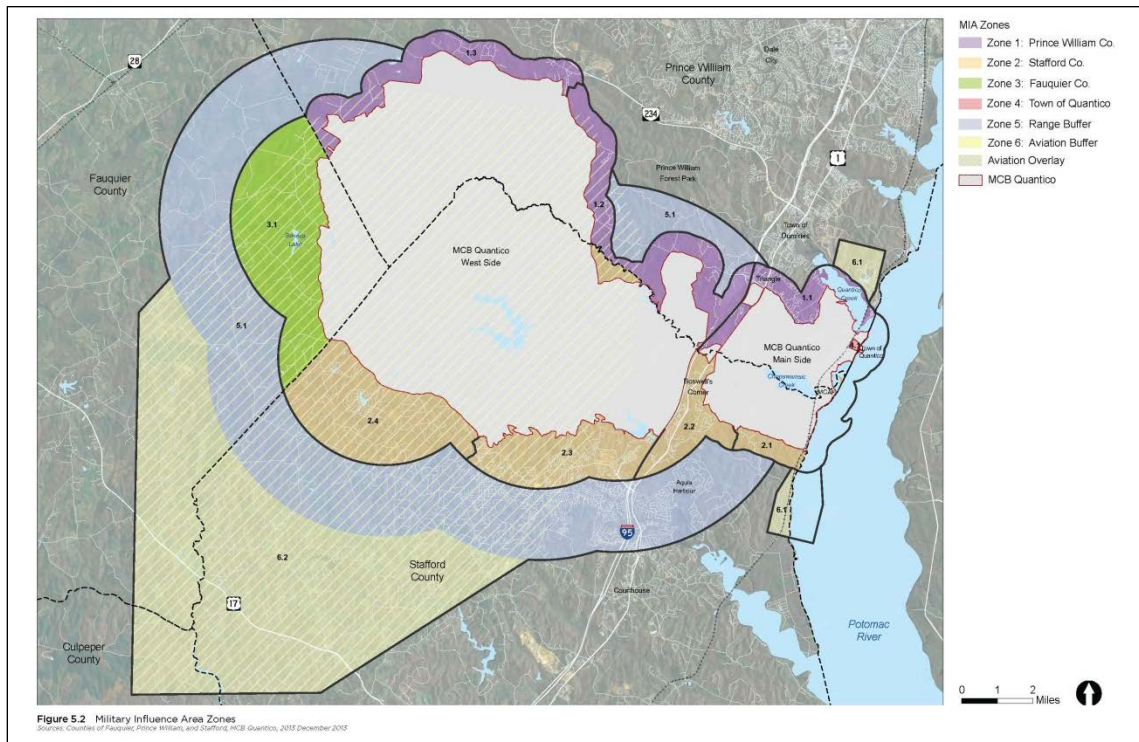
The JLUS has produced recommendations (draft December 2013) some of which are pertinent to the Rural Area. These include:

- Pursue conservation partnering opportunities through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) under DoD and through state, local and private conservation efforts (in collaboration with conservation partners) to pursue suitable properties for conservation in JLUS Military Influence Area Zone 1. (Figure 10).

REPI is a program that can be used to pay for up to half the cost of purchasing development rights on targeted properties around a base. Merrimac Farm is a 302-acre wildlife management area in the Rural Area on Deepwood Lane near MCB Quantico that was protected using REPI funds and through a partnership between MCB Quantico, the Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries and the Prince William Conservation Alliance.

- Pursue Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs for future land conservation purposes in the three JLUS counties and utilize the programs to transfer development potential out of JLUS Military Influence Area Zone 1.

**Figure 10 MCB Quantico Military Influence Areas**



Source: MCB Quantico Land Use Study Draft December 2013.

## 5.4 Observations

Prince William County's Rural Area occupies an "edge" location between the more development-oriented areas to the north and east (eastern Prince William, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties) and the more rural areas to the west and south. Development policy in edge areas is always challenging because of pressures from the edges. Development policy in the Rural Area has consequences to the entire southern Washington D.C. metropolitan area.

As noted above, the Rural Area has capacity for approximately 3,670 more homes (under current policies). In a county of approximately 412,000 people this may not seem like a particularly large number but, under current policies, most of this additional development would be on 10-acre lots in current agricultural and forest/shrub lands. Were this to occur, it would change large parts of the Rural Area from a predominantly "rural" character area to a low density "suburban" character area. This would result in major changes to parts of the Rural Area that currently have strong rural character, and would be inconsistent with the general consensus we felt during the Study process around the desire and importance of maintaining a Rural Area. However, absent different options for rural properties and different planning policies by the County, the Rural Area will likely develop in a manner dominated by large lot residential development, with little contiguous open space and significant loss of agricultural lands.

### 5.4.1 *Comprehensive Plan Amendments*

Given the amount of development pressure in Prince William County, the net loss of only 454 acres since 1998 is striking. However, the pressure for change is strong as evidenced in the strong feelings expressed at Study meetings. Comprehensive Plan amendment and other development proposals that would result in rezonings have resulted in controversy and major public debates that have polarized people's opinions (as seen in many of this Study's survey results).

The Rural Area boundary has become the key policy for many supporters of the Rural Area. They feel, perhaps justifiably, that rezonings would undermine the principles that underlay the creation of the Rural Area and would result in accelerated conversion of rural land to development that would quickly erode the entire Rural Area concept.

This position does, however, have some negative consequences because the 10-acre zoning regulations do not require or encourage development design that minimizes impacts on rural character. The development of 10-acre lots on land that is surrounded by farms is not only visually obtrusive, but it undermines the long-term viability of farming. In other parts of the Rural Area, because of the way the Area evolved over time (see Section 2 above), there is land zoned for one dwelling per 10 acres that is unsuitable for this type of development because, for example, it is surrounded by one unit per acre development. If developed at higher density but with generous amounts of open space, such higher density development could contribute more to rural area environmental and open space policies than 10-acre lots.

Supporters of the Rural Area may acknowledge this but still oppose rezoning such properties for the reasons described above. This may appear to be counter to sound land use planning and development, but the position is understandable given that the Rural Area boundary line is, essentially, the only land preservation policy in place.

The key issue is that additional land preservation-supportive policies are lacking. With a more comprehensive set of Rural Area preservation policies in place, energy and attention could be directed to more effective long-term land preservation rather than to debating the location of a boundary line.

#### 5.4.2 Cluster Development

The current cluster development regulations are not used for several reasons:

- There is little developer incentive to cluster because the cluster option does not offer a density increase over the base 1 dwelling per 10 acre zoning.
- There is a developer disincentive because cluster development has to go through the County's development review process for approval. This can be time-consuming and expensive.
- Cluster is easiest to accomplish with central sewer or with a package sewerage treatment plant or a shared community on-lot septic system. Opportunity to tap into sewer lines in the Rural Area is scarce.

Some counties such as Fauquier allow "alternate sewerage systems" (such as shared septic drainfields or mound systems) that can allow smaller lot sizes. Prince William County allows package sewer systems only if connected to public sewer, and each parcel is required to have its own on-site private (e.g., septic) system.

- Soils in the Rural Crescent generally do not "percolate" well and so have limited ability to support on-site septic systems – especially multiple drainfields in close proximity or large, shared fields.
- The market economics are not favorable: a 10-acre lot may currently sell for about \$250,000. A three-acre lot might fetch \$80,000<sup>13</sup>.

Cluster can play a role in helping to preserve land in the Rural Area and in contributing to rural character, but the cluster regulations would need to be revised.

#### 5.4.3 Marine Corps Base Quantico

The Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) adds more impetus to preserving land that might create incompatibilities between off base land uses and the MCB Quantico's military mission. The Military Influence Areas are limited in extent into the Rural Area (see Figure 10) and the 10-acre zoning is generally protective of the mission.

The REPI program is a preservation tool that can be used in the Military Influence Area as has been demonstrated in the preservation of Merrimac Farm.

### 5.5 Recommendations

#### 5.5.1 *Maintain the A-1 zoning density of one dwelling per ten acres, but create policy flexibility in locations where adjustments would advance the vision for the Rural Area.*

There is much dissatisfaction with the present zoning but no clear consensus emerged for what to put in its place. Reducing the density to more restrictive zoning (such as one house per 20 acres or the sliding scale used in Fauquier County) would lower the number of potential new dwellings, but would be very unpopular among property owners. Rolling back the Comprehensive Plan mapping to pre-1998 conditions (thereby allowing increases in density through upzonings) would be a major policy reversal and would be very unpopular among supporters of the Rural Area.

In the survey for the Study, participants were asked their views on 10-acre lots. Among the respondents, 48 percent indicated it was a "reasonable balance between encouraging farming and allowing large-lot

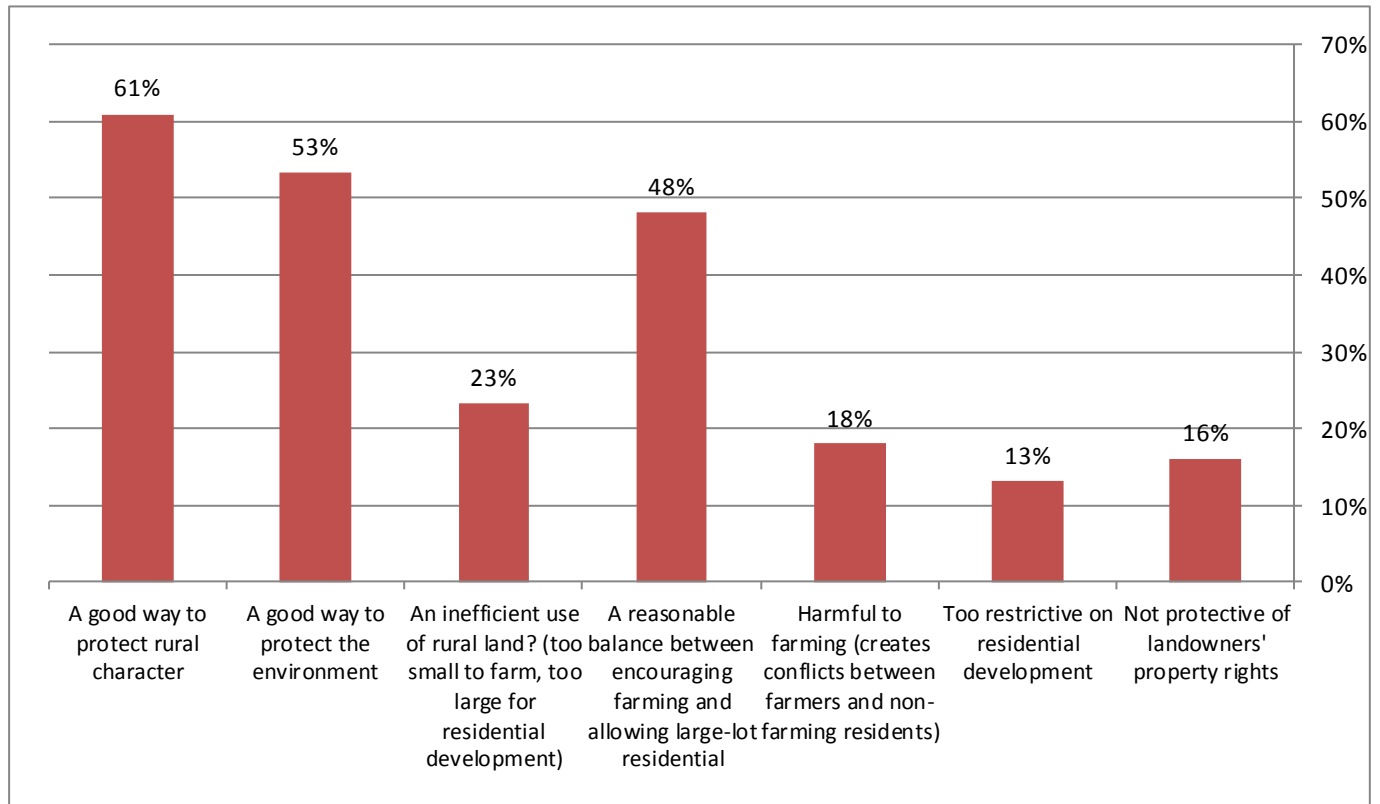
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<sup>13</sup> Consultant estimates based on properties listed for sale during the study period and feedback at the stakeholder group meetings.

residential”; 61 percent said it was a good way to protect rural character; and 53 percent said it was a good way to protect the environment (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Opinions regarding 10-acre lot in the Rural Area

*Question: The primary residential development pattern in the rural area is ten-acre lots. Do you think this approach to residential development is (check all that you think apply):*



### 5.5.2 Revise and incentivize the cluster provisions of the A-1 zone

Two types of locations are good candidates for revisions: i) areas dominated by farming, and ii) areas dominated by higher density development

#### Areas dominated by farming (Valley Agriculture and Forestry rural character area)

In areas dominated by farming, clustering can allow for development that gives value to the landowner and, at the same time, the preservation of large amounts of open space that could be cropped, used for livestock or horses, or forested. To incentivize clustering, the permitted density could be increased from one dwelling per 10 acres to one dwelling per five acres. The open space requirement could be increased from the current 50 percent to 60 percent. Such cluster development would go through the development review process ensuring that its design meets the policy intent.

While clustering works best in areas with public sewer we do not recommend extending public sewer throughout the Rural Area, particularly to those areas dominated by farming, because accessibility to public sewer can allow for a scale of development that is more intense than that which is appropriate for the rural character and economy of the Rural Area. Extensions of public sewer in the Rural Area should be limited and targeted to achieve the strategic outcomes identified in this Study.

Extension of sewer throughout the Rural Area would be counter to the Comprehensive Plan's intent with respect to sprawl:

Designation of the Rural Area and application of the development goals, policies, and action strategies for it are intended to help avoid the negative economic, social, and environmental characteristics of sprawl development (Comprehensive Plan, Intro-3).

#### Areas dominated by higher density development

Several parts of the Rural Area are dominated by development at a density higher than one dwelling per 10 acres. This is due in large part to the planning history of the Rural Area – see Section 2 above. When the Rural Area boundary was created in 1998, it included some areas that had been developed at higher density (including some areas on public sewer) or were zoned for higher density and were grandfathered.

Section 6, below, describes these “Rural Character” areas (#10 - Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves, #3 Valley Estates and Subdivisions and # 6 the Transitional Ribbon). Some of these areas are adjacent to the Comprehensive Plan's Development Area.

Cluster development could work well in these areas. It could be more compatible with existing development, and more protective of environmental resources and rural character compared to 10-acre lots (see Figure 12). For example, in the Transitional Ribbon, the development part of the cluster could be placed across from existing developed areas and the open space be placed adjacent to the Rural Area, thereby creating an effective transition from the Developed Area to the Rural Area. Such open space could be protected by easement to ensure permanent preservation. Some counties require non-governmental easement co-holders as a further assurance of permanent preservation.

In these areas limited extensions of public sewer could be allowed. Public sewer would allow maximum flexibility in lot size and placement and the maximum amount of open space. Rather than opening up the Rural Area to development, such limited extensions would create a firmer, better-defined, long term edge to the Rural Area compared to the current patchwork. This would help the County meet both its rural preservation goals and its urban development goals. We recommend consideration be given to a maximum gross density of one unit per two to three acres and a minimum 50 percent open space requirement.

Not every property in these areas would be suitable for public sewer. Each sewer extension request should be reviewed on a case by case basis to consider whether it would further the vision and policies for the Rural Area.

In return for the increased density that would occur on properties in these areas developers could purchase PDRs or proffer funds to help support the PDR program. These properties could also be TDR receiving areas (see Section 4.5.2, above).

#### *5.5.3 Implement the recommendations of the MCB Quantico Joint Land Use Study*

These include pursuing conservation partnering opportunities through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) and other conservation efforts, and pursuing Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs.

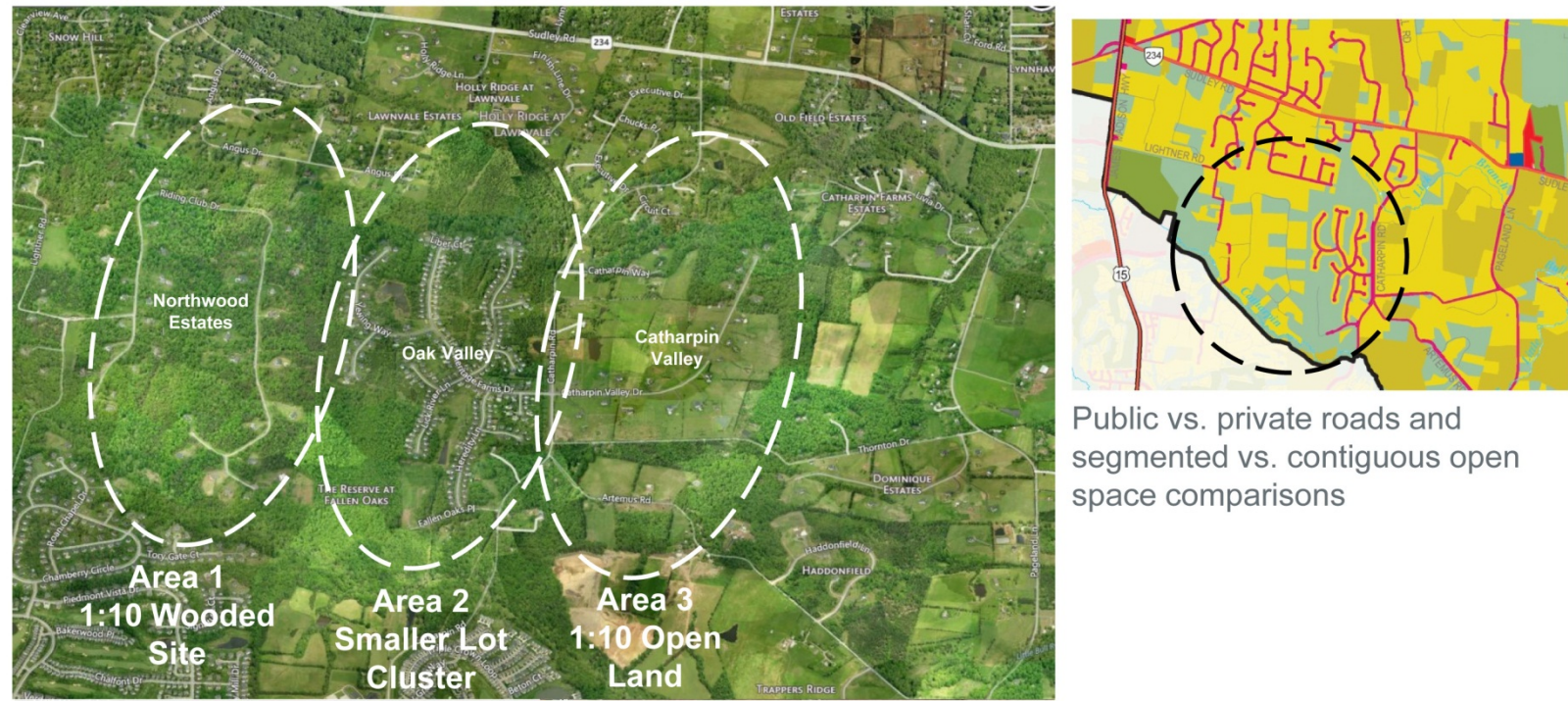


Figure 12 Cluster and Non-Cluster Development, Case Study from the Rural Area

# Enhancing the Rural Character Areas

## Valley Area Case Study

- **Northwood Estates** A-1 = Agricultural Zoning
  - 1 dwelling per 10 acres with isolated open space preserve areas
- **Oak Valley** SR-1C = SR-1 Cluster Development Zoning
  - 1 dwelling per 1/2 acre with dedicated open space preserve areas



Public vs. private roads and segmented vs. contiguous open space comparisons

Source: Rural Character Areas presentation Open House Sessions, December 7, 2013.

## 6. Rural Character

Rural character is a term we use broadly in the Study to address the look and emotive feel of the different types of natural and man-made landscapes (including built landscapes) in the Rural Area.

Many respondents to the Survey expressed strong emotions in describing the landscape and what it means for them. For example,

“The things I love about the rural area are the wide open spaces, farms, trees, "historic feel" of the area, and lack of cookie cutter housing developments, strip malls, industrial parks, etc. It preserves a sense of what Prince William of yesteryear was. I feel a little bit like I'm going back in time when I go to the rural area, and it gives me an idea of what it was like for my ancestors in Prince William County. I hope to be able to move into a property in the Rural Crescent someday.”

### 6.1 Policies

The Comprehensive Plan uses the term “rural character” approximately 20 times but does not formally define the term. The term is important in that it is used in the explanation of the Rural Area:

The Rural Area designation helps preserve ..... **the present open space and rural character** of Prince William County. (Comprehensive Plan, Intro-3)

The Plan’s Community Design element contains the following policy:

Preserve and enhance the unique architectural and landscape qualities of the County’s rural area. (DES-6)

The action strategy for this policy is to:

Encourage any new development in the Rural Area to preserve the visual character of the rural landscape by providing appropriate building setbacks, with landscaped/preserved open space occupying the setback area; and preserving important scenic resources—hedgerows, mature trees, farm buildings, walls and fences, and open fields. (DES-6)

Within the Plan’s Community Design element are design guidelines for gateways and corridors. Two of the County’s five gateways are in the Rural Area:

- Route 29, from the Fauquier County boundary to Route 15. Here the objective is to create a gateway in a historic community that complements the rural village of the Buckland Historic District. (GATEWAYS-10).
- Interstate 66 West. Here the objective is to create a corridor that illustrates both the rich agricultural history of the western portion of the County and yet demonstrates the transition to the high-quality mixed-use projects being developed at the Route 15 intersection. (GATEWAYS-20).

The Plan includes a definition of viewshed:

A viewshed is an area of land, water, and other environmental elements that is visible from a fixed vantage point. The term is used widely in such areas as urban planning, archaeology, and military science. In urban planning, for example, viewsheds tend to be areas of particular scenic or historic value that are deemed worthy of preservation against development or other change. The preservation of viewsheds is a goal in the designation of open space areas, green belts, and community separators. (GLOSSARY-22)

## **6.2 Issues/concerns**

Generally, participants in the public input process expressed more concern over “development” than over loss of rural character. However since development impacts the landscape, most of the issues listed above in Section 5.2 are equally applicable to rural character.

The Planning Office notes that 10-acre subdivisions can be created by deed. As a result they do not go through the development review process that would allow staff the opportunity to improve the subdivision design layout, including land preservation. Achieving the Comprehensive Plan’s rural character design policies is currently largely unachievable because most development will occur outside of a development review process that provides the mechanisms to achieve the policies. Figure 12 above shows the differential results on the landscape of a 10-acre versus a cluster subdivision.

The Study survey asked some questions directly and indirectly about rural character:

- When participants were asked to indicate their opinion about what the Rural Area meant to them among the top three responses was “a place to enhance rural character” (see Figure 2 above).
- Survey question 12 was titled “Preserving and Enhancing Rural Character” It described various site design, landscape architectural, and architectural techniques that can help preserve and/or enhance the character of a rural landscape (such as building setbacks from property lines, building placement on the property, and fence material and style). It then asked respondents the extent they would support more or less county control over these techniques. Fairly strong majorities (60 to 70%) indicated no support for change to current controls.

The only technique with a majority opinion supporting more control was “public road design”.

In the open response section of the survey a number of respondents indicate concern over what they viewed as excessive lighting at public facilities in the Rural Area.

See Appendix 1 for the full survey results.

## **6.3 Trends**

Little meaningful data exists regarding rural character and the extent to which county policies are being achieved.

Landscapes do change over time but landscapes are complex and change tends to be gradual making it hard to pinpoint when a landscape underwent fundamental change. In addition the rural character concept itself is hard to define objectively making it difficult to measure trends.

Partly in response to this difficulty, as a component of the Study we conducted a landscape-level documentation and visual assessment of what the Rural Area actually looks like today. We describe this assessment in the following section.

## 6.4 Observations

Rural character means a landscape dominated by or with a strong presence of *rural elements*. We list these elements in Prince William County in Table 4. Some elements, such as churches or elevation changes, are not exclusively rural, but, in combination with other elements, can contribute to the sense and feeling of being in a rural area.

**Table 4 Rural Character Elements**

- Buildings/ signage that refer to “rural” activities (e.g., churches, hunting, golf, farms),
- Commercial buildings that refer to “rural” business (e.g., nurseries, country stores, farm to table restaurants)
- Dwellings that fit into the landscape, (versus being the dominant element)
- Elevation changes, topography (rural in combination with other rural elements)
- Farms – cropland, managed;
- Farm animals, cattle, horses, goats;
- Farm buildings (e.g., barns, silos);
- Fencing that is open (typically of wood)
- Historical references (sites, markers, architecture)
- Lighting that is low or muted
- Open as opposed to closed views (urban areas are characterized by a greater sense of closure)
- Open space;
- Parks (though this depends on the park design/elements)
- “Rural” roads (scenic, 2-lane, winding, undulating)
- Streams
- Views/vistas;
- Woods/forested areas
- Absence of “urban elements” –(e.g., large, modern buildings);

To understand and document what Prince William County’s Rural Area is actually like and how it differs in different parts, we reviewed aerial photography, reviewed maps showing land use, property parcel patterns and sizes, environmental resources and vegetation patterns, topography, views and vistas, dedicated open spaces and recreation, agricultural/ forested areas, undeveloped lands, and road types. We also toured and photo-documented the area taking over 1,300 photographs.

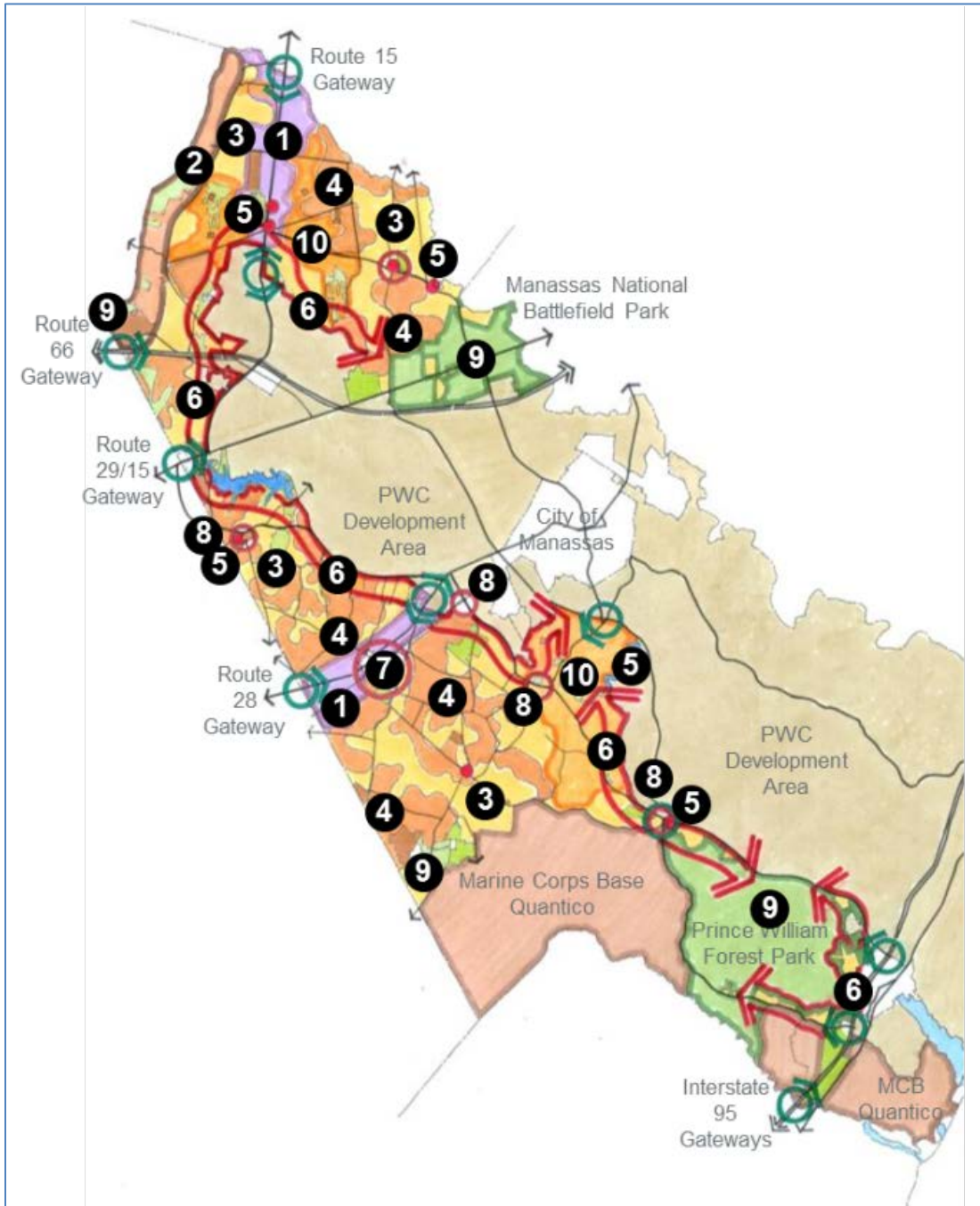
Overall, based on our field work and analysis, we conclude that the Rural Area is “rural”, meaning that the Rural Area in its entirety includes the rural elements listed above. However the Rural Area has different sub-areas within it, based on the extent to which some elements are stronger or more dominant in the landscape compared to others; the Rural Area feels different, for example, near Quantico and Prince William Forest Park compared to Nokesville or to the Bull Run Mountainside. In this Study we call these sub-areas “rural character areas”, which we define as follows:

Recognizable geographic areas that share like characteristics and evoke a unique and different feeling through their natural and man-made elements and surroundings.

We identify 10 rural character areas each one recognizable for its shared characteristics (see Figure 13)



**Figure 13 Rural Character Areas (Preliminary Proposed)**



- |                                           |                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Rural Gateway Corridors                | 7. Nokesville Village                                                                |
| 2. Bull Run Mountainside                  | 8. Mixed-Use Hamlets                                                                 |
| 3. Stream Valley Estates and Subdivisions | 9. Protected Lands, Public Lands/Facilities & Organized Recreation Parks/Golf Course |
| 4. Valley Agriculture and Forests         | 10. Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves                                          |
| 5. Crossroad Commercial Areas             |                                                                                      |
| 6. Transitional Ribbon(s)                 |                                                                                      |



As an example of shared characteristics, rural character area #4, Valley Agriculture and Forestry, has (in summary) the following characteristics (Figure 14):

- Active and fallow farming and forestal areas,
- Adjacent undeveloped lands,
- Open vistas to Bull Run Mountain, Manassas Battlefield, valley stream corridors,
- Scenic farm buildings/complexes.

**Figure 14 Valley Agriculture and Forestry Character**

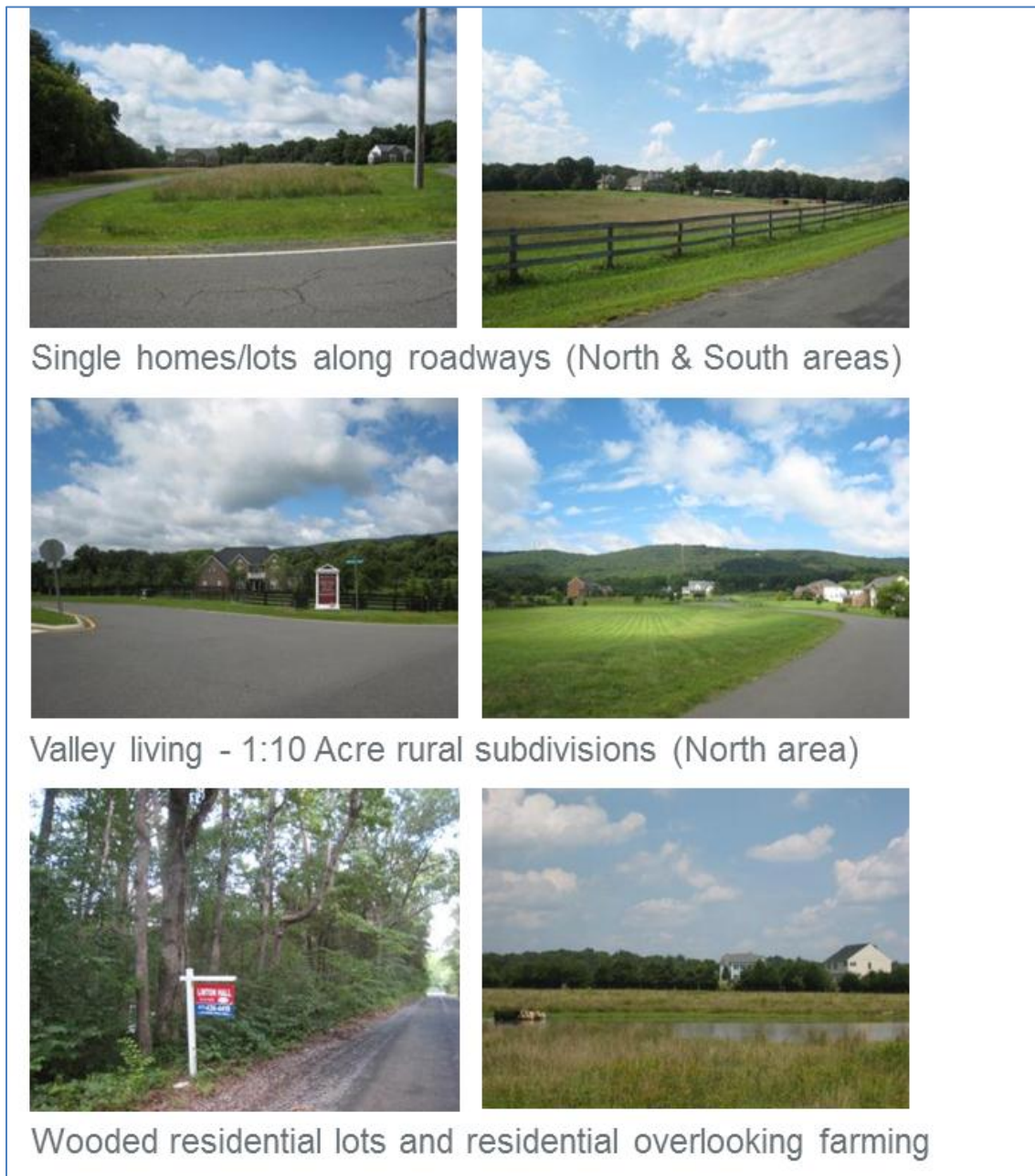


Source: Rural Character Areas presentation Open House Sessions, December 7, 2013

As another example, the “Valley Estates and Subdivisions” character area has (in summary) the following characteristics (Figure 15)

- Existing mix of individual homes/or committed building lots and organized subdivisions,
- Range of lot sizes depending on zoning/subdivision requirements when built,
- Existing suburban densities of 0.5 to 3 acre lots in many areas,
- Road widening beyond rural standards,
- Located in areas with mostly improved roads and nearby access to existing commuter routes

**Figure 15 Valley Estates and Subdivisions Character**



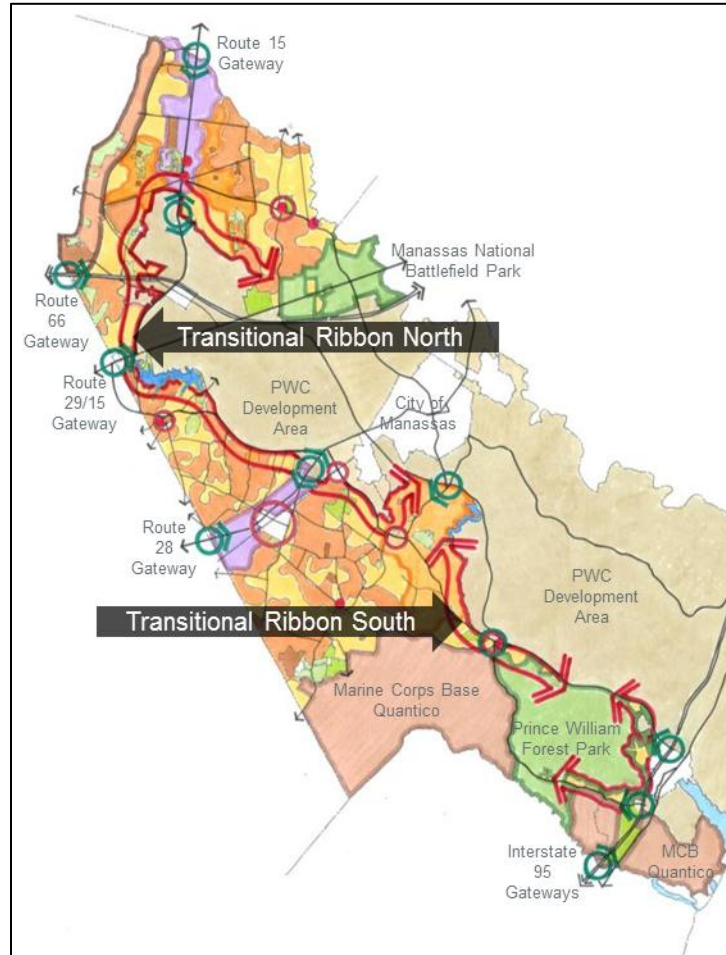
Source: Rural Character Areas presentation Open House Sessions, December 7, 2013

The “Transitional Ribbon” is an important character area. It is a linear area of land use transition between the Rural Area and the Development Area. It follows frontage roads and streams that in some cases could create future conflict between rural area character quality and Development Area goals.

As noted in Section 5, development policy in edge areas is always challenging because of pressures from the edges.

The Transitional Ribbon North has edge conditions and a mix of uses along the Manassas Battlefield, the West Haymarket area, Rte. 215/Vint Hill Rd, Bristow Road, Manassas Airport, and the south side of Lake Manassas.

The Transitional Ribbon South is primarily composed of the Prince William Forest Park fringe. It has relatively small pieces of land many of which are already developed.



**Please see Appendix 5 for a detailed description of rural character and each of the rural character areas presented in Powerpoint form at the Public Open House Sessions on December 7, 2013.** The character areas presentations were well received at the sessions and several participants noted that it was the first time they had seen documentation that illustrated their intuitive sense that the landscape of the Rural Area varied considerably and should not be treated in a one-size fits all manner.

Preserving and enhancing the different rural character in the different areas to achieve desired outcomes will require more pre-emptive planning and management, including using a broader range of planning and preservation tools, than currently occurs.

## 6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 *Recognize rural character areas. Refine/verify the rural character area map developed for this Study and adopt the map into the Comprehensive Plan.*

6.5.2 *Use the character areas as the basis for policies that protect and/or enhance the character in the different areas. Examples:*

- Allow selective public sewer extensions in the Transitional Ribbon into Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves and Valley Estates and Subdivisions.

Not every parcel in these character areas is suitable for public sewer. Such extensions should be allowed only by the Board of County Supervisors when justified, and on a case by case basis.

TDRs, PDRs, and/or conservation easements should be required in return for any density increase that results from extension of sewer.

Criteria for consideration in approving sewer extensions would include:

- Impacts on adjoining/nearby parcels,
  - Impacts on adjoining/nearby character areas,
  - Development design, especially the amount and location of open space and its contribution to the Rural Area, especially farming.
- Allow cluster development in Valley Agriculture and Forest areas (one dwelling unit per 5 acres, not on public sewer). (See above Section 5.5)
  - Apply roadway design standards more carefully to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas. There was strong support for this in the survey. For example, avoid road widenings (acceleration/deceleration lanes) in the Valley Agriculture and Forest areas.
  - Adopt site design, landscape architectural, and architectural techniques to help preserve and/or enhance the character of selected character areas. Overall there was not strong support for this in the survey, but there may be support in selected character areas.

#### 6.5.3 *Use the rural character areas as the basis for prioritizing land preservation through PDR and TDR.*

Priority areas would be: Rural Gateway Corridors, Valley Agriculture and Forests, and land adjacent to existing protected lands.

#### 6.5.4 *Use the rural character areas in selecting/screening sites for public facilities*

For example, avoid locating schools or sports complexes in Rural Gateway Corridors or Valley Agriculture and Forests character areas.

## **7. Sewer and Water**

### **7.1 Policies**

Sewer and water policy is an important component of land use and preservation planning. As described in Section 1, sewer policy helps define the Rural Area. The key policy statement is in the Comprehensive Plan's introduction:

The Rural Area may be served by public water facilities but not by public sewer facilities, except under the emergency conditions identified in the Sewer Plan or to serve specific public facilities (Comp Plan, Intro-3).

Supporting policies in the water and sewer elements are as follows:

Extension of public water shall not be used as a justification for increasing the residential densities that are shown on the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map for a given area (Water-1)

Prohibit the extension of public sewer into the Rural Area, except under special circumstances that maintain the land use densities delineated in the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map and uphold the policies and action strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. (Sewer-4)



13 action strategies are intended to implement this policy. For example:

- All new development within the Rural Area shall be served by individual-lot, on-site sewerage systems. Public sewer systems – except under..... special circumstances ... shall not be extended into the Rural Area.
- Permit the voluntary use of public sewer systems for existing structures in a sub-watershed that has a documented history of sewerage system failures, as determined by the Health Department.
- The existence or extension of a public sewer system in the Rural Area shall not provide justification for altering the land use classifications on the Long-Range Land Use Plan.
- To serve a public facility, such as a public school, fire station, or public library, allow for the extension of public sewer into the Rural Area.

## **7.2 Issues/concerns**

Much public input to the Study concerned sewer policy. Contrasting views were expressed ranging from support for the current policy to recommendations to extend public sewer to all or much of the Rural Area. Additional views were that:

- The soils in the Rural Area are not suitable for septic drain fields,
- Many areas have septic drain fields that are failing,
- Public sewer is less harmful to the environment compared to septic systems,
- Extending public sewer would allow effective cluster development that would result in larger, contiguous open space areas that could be used for farming.

Question 7 of the Survey addressed sewer, asking respondents views on five questions. The results indicated approximately 60% versus 40% support for the current policies. Responses to a question as to whether the County should allow sewer in parts of the Rural Area that have very little rural character were split roughly 50-50 agree/disagree (See Appendix 1 for the full results).

## **7.3 Trends**

### *7.3.1 Existing areas with sewer*

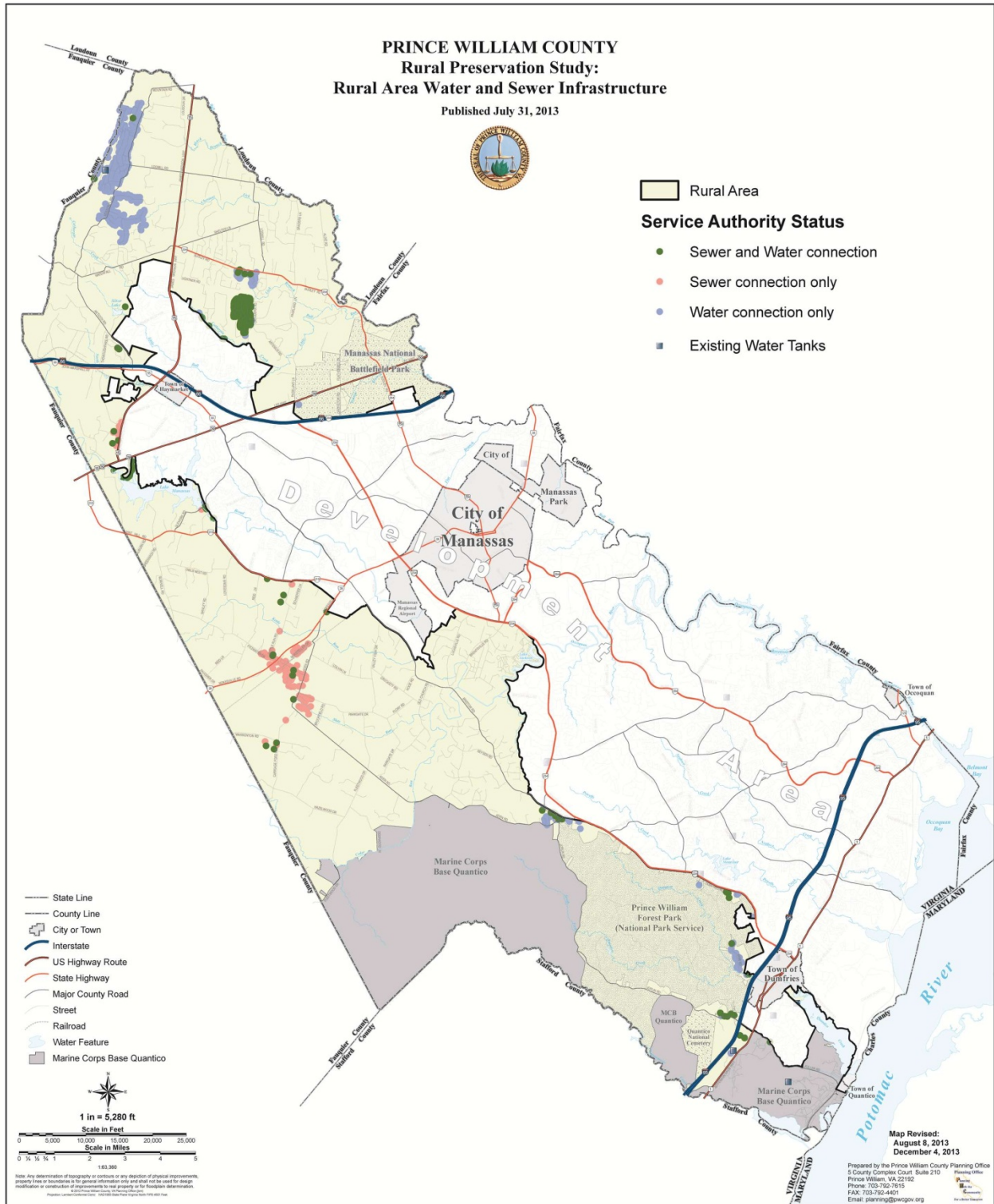
There are some areas with public sewer in the Rural Area but they are very limited in extent. Four areas have sewer (Figure 16):

- Nokesville: Nokesville had a wastewater treatment plant until the early 2000s but wastewater from Nokesville is now pumped to east side of the County. The Nokesville sewerage system has very limited capacity to provide service to properties outside the planned service area identified in the Nokesville Sector Plan.
- Joplin Road (near Bristow Road). This area is near the County landfill on Dumfries Road, and is on the edge of the Rural Area.
- Roland Park Place. This area is on Rt 15 near Rt 29 on the edge of the Rural Area.
- Catharpin Road and Sudley Road. These areas are inside the Rural Area but have Suburban Residential (SR) zoning (that predates creation of the Rural Area).

Figure 16 also shows areas with public water.



**Figure 16 Water and Sewer**



### 7.3.2 *Septic systems*

The Prince William Health District does not have records of areas with large numbers of failing septic systems in the Rural Area<sup>14</sup>. However, cases of individual failing systems do come to the District's attention. The District works with the property owner to install a system that does not create health concerns. Such systems are issued a "small discharge permit". The Rural Area has approximately 120 such permits, and the Department issues approximately five new permits per year.

## 7.4 **Observations**

Sewer policy is an important component of rural preservation. Extending sewer to large parts of the Rural Area would be inconsistent with the current Comprehensive Plan's overall vision for the Rural Area. Accessibility to public sewer can allow for a scale of development that is more intense than that which is appropriate for the Rural Area. Extensions of public sewer in the Rural Area should be limited and targeted to achieve the strategic outcomes identified in this Study. Extension of public sewer outside of the limits recommended in this Study could facilitate a scale of development that would be incompatible with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and would increase demand for public facilities. Where septic systems are failing and public sewer is available, such as in Nokesville, it may make sense to allow hook up to sewer rather than install a small discharge system.

Public sewer can facilitate cluster development and creation of large open space areas, but such cluster developments need to be carefully located in relation to the larger landscape. Cluster developments on sewer across large parts of the Rural Area would not create an area that, overall, would feel "rural" as we define it in Section 6.

With respect to nitrogen pollution from wastewater, development on sewer is generally less harmful to the environment compared to septic systems because the wastewater from thousands of homes and businesses is treated at a wastewater treatment plant. However, there are offsetting considerations. Land served by sewer can generally accommodate higher densities and, as such, development on sewer may result in greater overall impacts to the environment when considering the larger amount of runoff from increased impervious areas as well as impacts associated with the increased number of vehicle trips from the larger number of homes

While large numbers of septic systems are not desirable from an environmental perspective, the current 10-acre minimum lot size does allow a "cushion" for septic systems in that such large lots provide more land for dissipating environmental effects compared to smaller sized lots (such as one or three acre lots).

## 7.5 **Recommendations**

7.5.1 *Allow extensions of public sewer on a case by case basis in the following rural character areas in the Transitional Ribbon, #10 - Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves; and #3 Valley Estates and Subdivisions.*

See additional detail above in Section 5.5.2 (Land Use and Development).

7.5.2 *Allow hookups to public sewer on a case by case basis to individual properties where septic systems are failing and public sewer is readily available, such as in Nokesville.* 7.5.3 *Retain the other Rural Area sewer and water policies.*

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<sup>14</sup> Discussions with Marcus Haynes, Senior Environmental Health Specialist, Virginia Department of Health.

## 8. Environmental Protection

### 8.1 Policies

The Comprehensive Plan's Environment element contains countywide policies – not policies that are specific to the Rural Area. The element's goal is to:

Preserve, protect, and enhance the significant environmental resources and features of the County including air quality, topography, soils, ground and surface water, biotic communities (stream corridors, forests, and wetlands), sensitive plant and animal species, and natural viewsheds.

Environmental resources are defined to include:

All 100-year floodplains as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Flood Hazard Use Maps or natural 100-year floodplains .... and Resource Protection Areas as defined by the *Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act*. (LU 31)

Some policies are of specific relevance to rural preservation. For example, EN-POLICY 3 states:

To further support OS-Policy 5, a minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County exclusive of acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico for all calculation purposes, should be retained as protected open space, as defined in the Open Space Plan. (ENV-4)

A number of action strategies are intended to implement this policy. For example (ENV- 4,5):

- encourage cluster development to protect contiguous natural open space,
- make information on conservation easements available to landowners,
- review and implement opportunities for a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program,
- initiate and provide public information programs aimed at conserving lands in the watershed,
- establish a Countywide trails and corridors system,
- identify and prioritize a network of preservation corridors or large woodland areas to be incorporated into an overall habitat protection network .

Environment Policy 9 states:

Ensure the high quality of public drinking water sources.

A number of action strategies are intended to implement this policy. For example (ENV-12, 13):

- encourage conservation of natural features and limit impervious surfaces in areas where groundwater is the water supply,
- develop procedures to protect or improve, if necessary, the quality of groundwater in areas where groundwater is the water supply,
- amend the Zoning Ordinance to develop a Drinking Water Reservoir Protection Overlay District.

The Comprehensive Plan's Land Use element's policy 12 is relevant:

Encourage a land use pattern that respects environmental features in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Environment Plan. (LU-14)

A number of action strategies are intended to implement this policy. For example:

Ensure that the primary function of the Rural Area as reflected by the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map is to maintain open space, protect native habitats, allow for large-lot residential development, allow for agricultural activities, and provide potential sites for community facilities.

## 8.2 Issues/concerns

In the survey conducted for this study when participants were asked to indicate their opinion about what the Rural Area meant to them, the top response was “a place to emphasize environmental protection.

While this Study’s focus is on preservation some specific environmental concerns that were raised in the public outreach for the Study were:

- **Total Maximum Daily Load.** Prince William County is in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and is subject to the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) – popularly known as the “pollution diet”.
- **Groundwater and water supply.** Human activity in the Rural Area affects streams and groundwater which in turn affects the Occoquan water supply reservoir.
- **Green Infrastructure.** Desire for interconnectivity between environmental and open space resources to create connected corridors of protected land, including connectivity between the Development Area and the Rural Area.

## 8.3 Trends

The Clean Water Act establishes Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) regulations for waterbodies that do not meet the numeric standards for fishable and swimmable water. The number of listed streams in the County has grown each year from 44 streams in 2004 to 60 in 2006. The county has started to address this stream degradation with a baseline stream assessment. TMDL requirements and anticipated Virginia Storm Water Management Permit mandates may soon require expanded programs to address deficiencies (Prince William County Strategic Plan, 2012).

The Chesapeake Bay now has a TMDL. According to the Virginia Assessment Scenario Tool (VAST) model, the County expects to meet the TMDL for all sectors in 2025. However, changes in county land use as well as in Chesapeake Bay Program goals will undoubtedly impact this in the future<sup>15</sup>.

Fairfax County Water Authority (Fairfax Water) manages the Occoquan Reservoir as a water supply impoundment. The Rural Area makes up approximately 20% of the Occoquan watershed and Fairfax Water has a Source Water Planning and Protection office that monitors water management issues.

Also of note is the Northern Virginia Regional Water Supply Plan which follows the State Water Control Board’s regulations for Water Supply Planning. The major sections in the Plan include information on water sources, water use, and natural resources in the region.

## 8.4 Observations

This Study’s focus is on land preservation and larger environmental issues such as the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and public water supply are beyond the Study scope. However, in thinking about preservation environmental considerations were also considered.

The Comprehensive Plan’s environmental policies address the broad range of environmental resources. This Rural Preservation Study makes recommendations for several of the action strategies that have not

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<sup>15</sup> Discussions with Department of Public Works, Environmental Services Division

been implemented such as cluster development, purchase of development rights, and creation of interconnected open space corridors. Implementing these would benefit the environment, through for example, environmental site design that would provide more opportunities to reduce impervious surface from development and the associated stormwater runoff, and to preserve land that can be used for increasing forest cover, especially along streams.

Other action strategies will need to be addressed more directly as the County works to comply with TMDL requirements including the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

As discussed above in Section 7, sewer policy is key to preserving the Rural Area. While development on sewer is generally less harmful to the environment compared to septic systems, the offsetting considerations are the impacts to the environment from the larger amounts of impervious surface that results from development that can be accommodated by sewer. This Study's land use and development and rural character recommendations seek to balance these offsetting impacts.

## **8.5 Recommendations**

*8.5.1 Implement this Study's recommendations that will have direct environmental benefits especially those related to land preservation, sewer, and open space corridor creation.*

*8.5.2 Consider this Study's recommendations in tandem with the County's efforts to comply with TMDL requirements including the Chesapeake Bay TMDL*

## **9. Open Space and Recreation**

### **9.1 Policies**

The Comprehensive Plan defines Open Space broadly:

Land that is not dominated by man-made structures. It preserves natural or cultural resources, provides for passive recreation, is used for cultivated fields or forests, or exists in a natural and undeveloped state. Open space may include nature preserves, historic sites, farms, parks, forests, floodplains, wetlands, etc., and may include some structures, parking areas, roads, trails and facilities that support the use of the land. (POS&T-24)

Protected Open Space is defined as:

Land that is protected from development with perpetual conservation or open space easement or fee ownership, held by federal, state, or local government or nonprofit organization for natural resource, forestry, agriculture, wildlife, recreation, historic, cultural, or open space use, or to sustain water quality and living resources values.

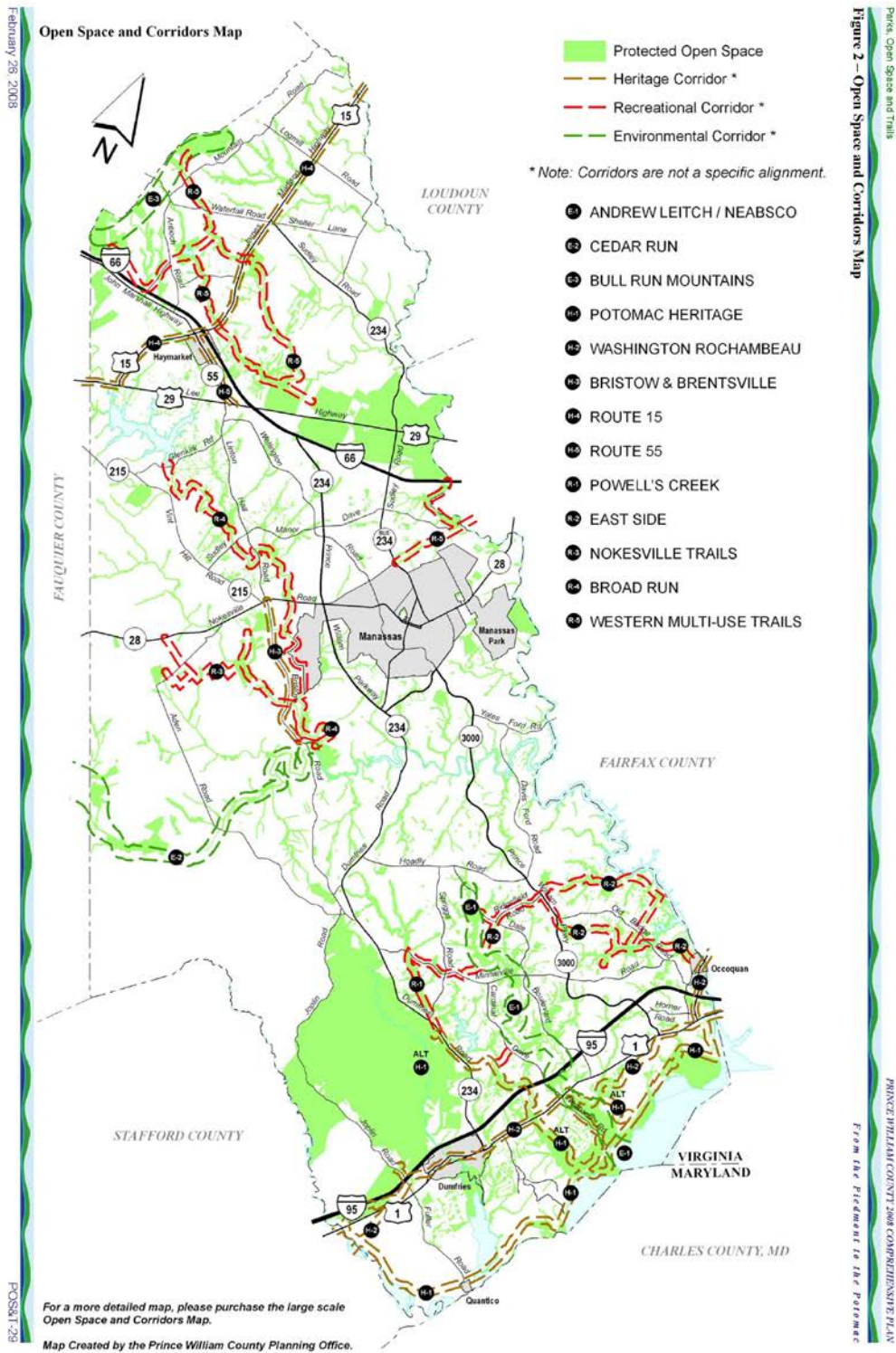
The Plan sets an aggressive goal to retain a minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County, (excluding MCB Quantico) as protected open space. (POS&T-26).

Other policies of interest include: (See Figure 17)

- Corridors goal: Identify, protect and preserve environmental, heritage, and recreational corridors. (POS&T-27)
- Trails Goal 2: Plan and implement a comprehensive countywide network of trails. (POS&T-31)



**Figure 17 Comprehensive Plan Open Space and Corridors Map**



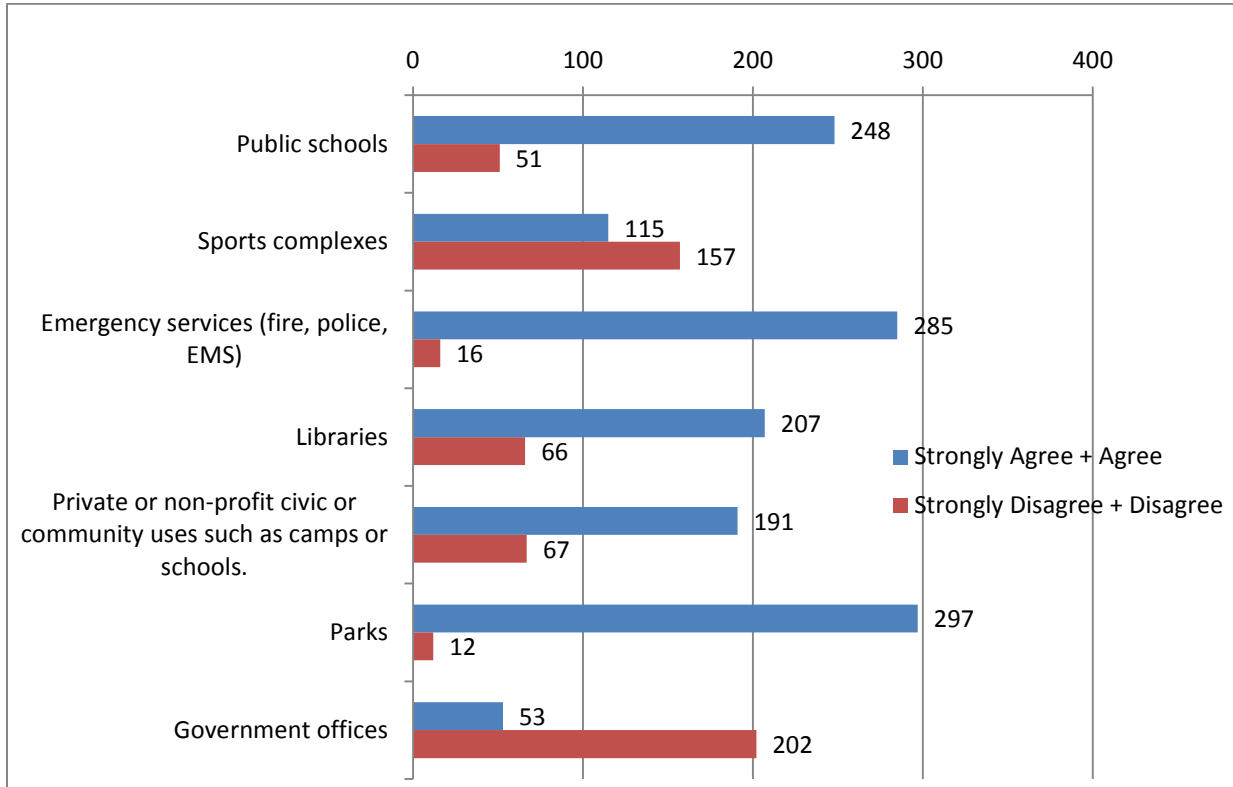
## 9.2 Issues/concerns

Some participants in the public input process questioned and wanted more details regarding how the County calculates its protected open space acreages.

Many participants in the survey expressed concern over the appropriateness of locating sports complexes in the Rural Area. Participants drew a distinction between parks (widely viewed as appropriate) and sports complexes (widely viewed as inappropriate) – see Figure 18.

**Figure 18 Opinions Regarding Public Facilities**

Please indicate your opinion on whether the following public facilities are appropriate for the Rural Area:



### 9.3 Trends

Countywide, as of 2013, approximately 40,200 acres are protected (see Table 5). Of these approximately 25,750 acres are in the Rural Area (see Table 1 above for a breakdown). The County’s 39% Protected Open Space goal is approximately 79,250 acres so that approximately 39,000 additional acres are needed to meet the goal.

**Table 5 Protected Open Space**

	Acres	Source
County total	227,314	Developed area 110,320 from 2011 Build out analysis. Rural Area 116,994 from Rural Preservation Study acreage analysis
Quantico	24,079	Rural Preservation Study acreage analysis
Subtotal	203,235	Calculation (County total minus Quantico)
39% goal	79,262	Calculation 203,235*0.39
Protected Countywide	40,229	2011 Build out analysis.
Protected Rural Area	25,750	Rural Preservation Study acreage analysis
Protected Development Area	14,479	Calculation 40,229-25,750
Percent protected	20%	Calculation 40,229/203,235
Acres needed to reach goal	39,033	Calculation: 79,262-40,229

There is much interest in green infrastructure, corridor and trail planning in, for example, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission Conservation Corridor Planning, and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Virginia Outdoors Plan.

### 9.4 Observations

Achieving the County’s 39% protected open space goal will be major challenge. Approximately 27,944 acres (24%) of the Rural Area remain undeveloped (see Table 1). A very aggressive goal would be to protect 60 percent of this – equivalent to approximately 17,000 acres. When added to the 25,750 existing protected acres, the total would be 42,500 acres (approximately 36% of the entire Rural Area).

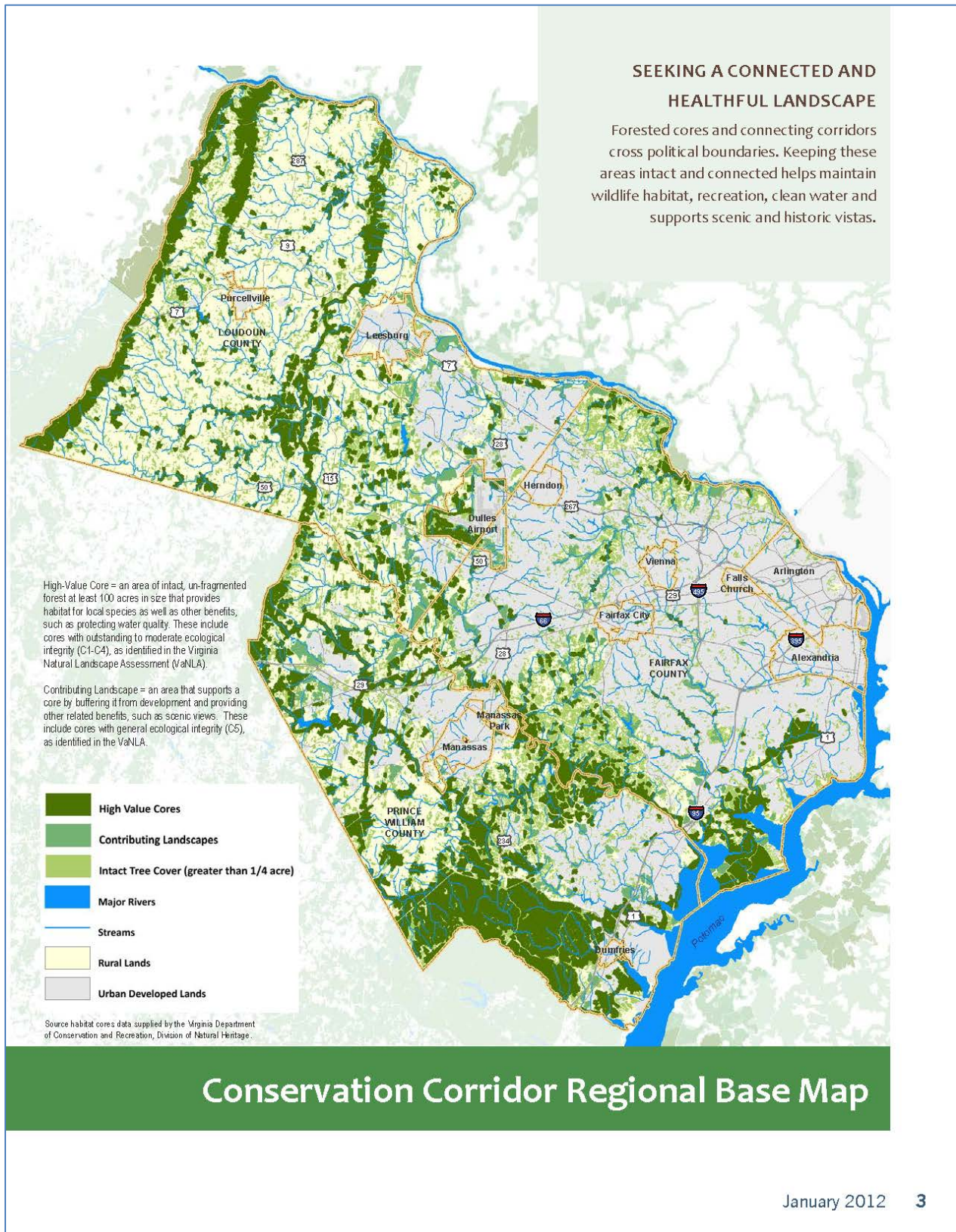
Extensive areas of large lot (10-acre plus) development limit the ability to create large contiguous areas of open space that are particularly important for wildlife habitat. Conversely areas that are largely free of development including carefully designed cluster development can support wildlife habitat and biodiversity. These points were discussed at stakeholder meetings by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and by the Virginia Outdoor Foundation.

The Comprehensive Plan’s Open Space and Corridors Map is a forward-looking map combining environmental, recreation, and heritage considerations into a unified open space vision. A lot of work is being done on pieces of this type of vision by different organizations, groups, and individuals. For example Figure 19 shows an environmentally oriented corridors map by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission.

Several people working on trail development participated in meetings for this Study and there appears to be much local interest in trail development.



**Figure 19 Conservation Corridors**



Source: Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC)'s Conservation Corridor Planning (2012)

## **9.5 Recommendations**

*9.5.1 Consider a goal to protect 60 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the Rural Area – equivalent to approximately 17,000 acres.*

Protection would come from a combination of a variety of sources and programs including PDR, TDR, park acquisition, federal and state acquisitions and funding support, easement donations, REPI, and open space in cluster subdivisions.

*9.5.2 Refine the Comprehensive Plan’s Open Space and Corridors map into a detailed, unified, interconnected open space vision suitable as the basis for specific implementation projects including land preservation and trail development.*

- Incorporate environmental, recreation, and heritage considerations.
- Include consideration of related efforts such as the:
  - Northern Virginia Regional Commission Conservation Corridor Project mapping,
  - Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Virginia Outdoors Plan,
  - Journey Through Hallowed Ground Scenic Byway corridor management plan,
  - Rural Preservation Study’s rural character area mapping.

## **10. Economic Development**

### **10.1 Policies**

The Comprehensive Plan’s Economic Development element is focused on enhancement and diversification of Prince William County’s revenue base and growth. It does not contain policies specific to the Rural Area. However a component of the overall vision for the Rural Area is to “help preserve the County’s agricultural economy and resources” (see Section 3.1 above).

### **10.2 Issues/concerns**

Much of the public input part of the study was devoted to the discussion of the future of agriculture in Prince William County. There were a variety of opinions and views; these are described in Section 4.2 above, and to avoid duplication are not repeated here.

The County Planning Office noted some difficulties in applying/interpreting the current zoning regulations with respect to determining the types of business that would come under the definition of agricultural use or a use accessory to agriculture. The term agribusiness, for example is not used in the zoning ordinance.

### **10.3 Trends**

#### *10.3.1 Agriculture*

From a purely economic perspective the prospects for farming in Prince William County have not looked good. In both the 2002 and the 2007 Census of Agriculture, total farm production expenses exceeded gross sales, indicating a net financial loss. In 2002, farm production expenses were \$10.95 million and gross sales were \$9.521 million. In 2007, farm production expenses were \$15.752 million and the market value of agricultural products sold was \$9.43 million. Of the 350 farms in the County in 2002, 163 showed gross sales of less than \$2,500. In 2007, of the County’s 345 farms, 181 had gross sales of less



than \$2,500. In other words, farming lost money in both 2002 and 2007, and about half of the farms produced negligible sales. Caveats to this are as follows:

- The 2012 Census data are expected to be released in May 2014, and may show an increase or decrease in agricultural activity.
- The largest 3 farms in the County accounted for \$5.5 million in total sales, or nearly 60%.
- The Census data do not include the value of horse industry.
- The Census data do not include very small farms, such as hobby or specialty farms. While these would not make a large difference to the overall economic results, we know from the input to the Study that the interest trend in such farms is increasing and that they do make an important contribution to rural character in Prince William County.

While the public input process yielded much pessimism about the future of agriculture in the County, there was also some optimism. Some farms are committed to farming, for example Evergreen Acres, Windy Knoll Farm (Nokesville) and Yankey Farms. The County has a winery (The Winery at La Grange). The farm bureau has 300 registered producers in Prince William and Fairfax Counties.

Trends in the amount of agricultural land in the County are described above in Section 4.3.

### 10.3.2 Recreation

We know from the Study survey and from the public meetings that Prince William County residents value and use the Rural Area as a recreation resource (see Figure 2 above). Activities include bicycling, hunting clubs, golf, parks (Prince William Forest, Manassas Battlefield, Silver Lake Regional), nature viewing, and cultural/historic-related activities.

Large numbers of people visit parks in the Rural Area (Table 6). However, no composite recreation economic data specific to the Rural Area exist and how much money recreationists spend in the Rural Area is not known.

**Table 6 Annual Park Visitation**

	<b>Prince William Forest Park</b>	<b>Manassas Battlefield Park</b>
2011	379,535	659,740
2012	280,325	600,354

Source: National Park Service

### 10.3.3 Other Economic Activity

Other economic activity in the Rural Area includes:

- Marine Corps Base Quantico with its weekday population of approximately 28,000, including marine corps, the Military Defense Investigative Agencies (MDIA), FBI/Drug Enforcement, dependents and contractors. MCB Quantico’s economic impact is broad and not limited to the Rural Area.
- Nokesville; the Rural Area’s “rural center”.
- Scattered crossroads commercial, retail nurseries (B-1 zoning).
- Home businesses, including home employment, rural home businesses.
- Forestry (limited value; value of forest production: \$350,000, according to Virginia Tech, 2010).

#### 10.3.4 Public Input into Businesses Suitable for the Rural Area

Survey question # 22 was open ended and asked, “Besides farming, what types of business development do you think are appropriate in the rural area to support the rural economy?” The question received a good deal of input and varying perspectives (see Appendix 1 for the full results). A selection of responses, as presented at the December workshop, follows:

- General support for businesses supporting/related to farms, recreation environment, cultural/historic. Small business, including home-based: Not large or “heavy” industry.
- Some responses that would favor a broader suite of businesses.
- Some respondents said “none” i.e., no more businesses.
- Alternative energy sources, i.e. wind farms or solar energy plants.
- Nurseries, small stores (general), occasional gas stations, antique shops.
- Agricultural and equestrian related activities. NOT the landfill-like operations we are currently seeing taking place!
- I do not think "commercial business development" should be allowed in the Rural Crescent. However, farms are businesses. Vineyards are businesses. Raising and training horses is a business.
- One thing I think the county could do much better is to utilize the rural area to encourage farming and then to use that industry to sell in its own area. In other words, we should support our local farmers by helping and encouraging their production and then selling their produce locally through strategically placed stores (designed to fit in a rural setting).
- Non-manufacturing jobs such as IT and R&D would help alleviate some of the traffic on 66 and possibly 95. These higher wage jobs would be necessary for the desired types of housing developments. A high end shopping mall near the rural area (Gainesville maybe) would be a great addition.
- Home businesses and home schooling should be encouraged in every way possible. Having more people staying in neighborhoods during the day increases safety and decreases demand on the roads.
- There is no need for business development in the rural area. The BEAUTY of the rural crescent is that it is close enough to large industry and already established businesses that there is no need for more to support the "rural economy".
- Nokesville has a strong horse community - leverage it with trails throughout and otherwise make it a closer in Middleburg (Note: you have hunters/jumpers and trail riders when it comes to horse people so segmentation is very possible). Other areas may have aquatics - rowing, canoeing, fishing, diving etc.

#### 10.4 Observations

Economy activity is important to rural areas, so that they are working landscapes and not just open space. A vibrant rural economy can help preserve land in that landowners value the land for its intrinsic economic and productivity value and not only as potential future residential development.

While agriculture is a key component of rural economic development, and is particularly important to the rural landscape and rural character, the overall rural economy is larger and should be understood broadly and in an integrated manner to include recreation, tourism, and other types of economic activity.

The Rural Area makes a valuable contribution to Prince William County’s countywide, quality of life and economic development. Research has shown clearly that businesses making location decisions consider

in part their employees' quality of life, and easy access to an attractive, rural area and open space is an important (though not the only) contributor to quality of life. Therefore, land preservation in the Rural Area has broad economic benefits.

Some participants in the Study process expressed a lack of support for agriculture in the County. Promotion of agriculture as a component of the County's Economy appears to be limited. The Department of Economic Development works to attract high-wage jobs and capital investment to Prince William County. It cites rural living, Manassas National Battlefield Park and Prince William Forest National Park as contributing to the County's quality of life but does not otherwise cite or promote the Rural Area (<http://www.pwcecondev.org/AboutPWC/QualityofLife.aspx>). The Prince William County Department of Finance publishes The Prince William Report, a quarterly demographic and economic newsletter<sup>16</sup>. The newsletter does not discuss any aspect of the rural economy including tourism.

Land preservation can be fiscally positive in that by avoiding extensive development in the Rural Area, the County will not have to spend money providing schools, roads and other public facilities to a scattered rural population.

Lack of agreement over businesses that are appropriate in the Rural Area creates challenges for policy makers and a review of land uses that are currently permitted is warranted, especially if they have not been reviewed for some time. We reviewed the home employment regulations in the zoning ordinance, and they seem supportive of a broad range of home business activity.

## **10.5 Recommendations**

*10.5.1 Give recognition to and support farming, agri-tourism, and rural recreation as making real contributions to the County's economic development and quality of life.*

*10.5.2 Create a working group to review and recommend revisions to codes and regulations to support agriculture.*

- Review the definition of agriculture,
- Clarify what uses should be permitted as agri-businesses,
- Review regulations to be supportive of small farmers/operators.

*10.5.3 Consider creating an agricultural development/promotion position, perhaps in the County's Department of Economic Development or as part of the Planning Office's Community Development program. This position would:*

- Support existing farms.
- Work with the Soil and Water Conservation District to resolve farmers' regulatory issues.
- Promote the "new" agriculture (hobby farms, value-added products).
- Promote the proposed PDR and TDR programs.
- Explore potential revisions to five-year prior use standards for entry into Virginia's Use Value Taxation Program (see above Section 4.5).

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/finance/Pages/Demographic-Publications.aspx>

## 11. Cultural Resources

### 11.1 Policies

Prince William County has a very rich cultural and historic heritage. The Comprehensive Plan has a cultural element that includes a map of Historic Sensitivity and County Registered Historic Sites including but not limited to, Brentsville, Bristow Battlefield, Buckland, Bull Run Mountain and Manassas Battlefield (CUL 55). The element's overall goal is to:

Identify, preserve, and protect Prince William County's significant historical, archaeological, architectural, and other cultural resources.....

The goals and policies in the cultural element are countywide. One specific Rural Area-related action strategy is to:

Explore changes to the development review process to ensure that by-right development in the Rural Area that will impact historic lands and structures will undergo full site or subdivision plan review (Cul 7).

The Comprehensive Plan's Design element also contains relevant policies, for example:

**DES-POLICY 10:** Encourage site plans and building designs for new development that enhance the settings of the County Registered Historic Sites, as identified in the Cultural Resources Plan. (DES-7)

### 11.2 Issues/concerns

No specific cultural issues or concerns were raised. Respondents to the Study survey expressed strong support for the Rural Area as "A place to preserve and celebrate the County's cultural heritage and historical significance" (see Figure 2 above). Many expressed strong emotions in describing their feelings for the Rural Area. For example,

In 1985 my husband and I relocated to PWC from Fairfax County to take advantage of the plushness greenery (the richness) of the County. Since then we had kids and I can't count the number of times we've ventured to local battle grounds, parks, farms, and historical sites practically in our backyard. That's why we love PWC. In addition, we patronize our local farmers by visiting the farmer market weekly and taking trips to local orchards. We love it! Nature at its BEST.

The key issue is to preserve cultural resources and integrate them into a broad-ranging Rural Area preservation strategy.

### 11.3 Trends

The designation of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway in 2009 added additional emphasis to the County's cultural resources. The byway has a corridor management plan (CMP, 2008) that seeks to promote, conserve and enhance the Byway corridor's scenic, historic, archaeological, cultural, natural and recreational resources and to implement strategies for sustainable tourism development based on those resources. Prince William County was a member of the Corridor Management Plan Advisory Committee. The CMP identifies specific enhancement capital projects for Prince William County and the City of Manassas such as visitor facilities and Buckland Mills and Battlefield Preservation and Interpretation<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.hallowedground.org/Partner-Resources/National-Scenic-Byway/Corridor-Management-Plan>

Members of the Prince William County Architectural Review Board participated in the stakeholder interviews and expressed specific interest in the Buckland Historic District.

#### **11.4 Observations**

Over 600,000 visits are made annually to Manassas Battlefield (Table 6). This scale of visitation has spinoff economic impacts that the Rural Area could both support and take greater advantage of.

As noted above, the Comprehensive Plan’s Open Space and Corridors Map is a forward-looking map combining environmental, recreation, and heritage considerations into a unified open space vision. The map includes two heritage corridors (Route 15 and Bristow/Brentsville).

The recommended cluster provisions in Section 5 above would result in more development going through the development review process, and would help implement the Comprehensive Plan’s action strategy to ensure that development in the Rural Area that will impact historic lands and structures undergo site or subdivision plan review.

#### **11.5 Recommendations**

##### *11.1 Identify specific cultural-related projects to implement the recommended refined Comprehensive Plan’s Open Space and Corridors map*

Coordinate with existing efforts and plans including those of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership such as the Buckland Preservation Society, and the Prince William County & Manassas Convention and Visitors Bureau.

### **12. Public facilities/ capital projects**

#### **12.1 Policies**

The Comprehensive Plan discusses public facility needs such as schools, police, and fire and rescue in individual elements. A key action strategy is in the Land Use element:

Ensure that policies and public funding associated with other public agencies..... are structured to support the economic development goals of the County. Funds should be concentrated in the Development Area for needed public facilities, but should also be provided in the Rural Area. (LU-3)

County policy allows public facilities in the Rural Area to be served by public water and sewer (see above, Section 7.1)

Transportation is a major element of the Comprehensive Plan. While roads and other transportation facilities were not a focus of this Study, the following action strategy is relevant to the rural character discussion:

Improve existing substandard rural roads through the CIP and/or development-financed road and access improvements. These improvements can be identified during the rezoning, special use permit, and site/subdivision plan review processes. (TRANS-9)



## **12.2 Issues/concerns**

Issues and concerns over public facilities seem to be specific to certain types of facilities and to their location.

The Study Survey asked whether respondents felt that the current County policy to allow public facilities in the Rural Area is appropriate. The results were somewhat mixed. While a large majority (135 to 75) indicated that the policy was appropriate, only a small majority (114 to 104) disagreed with the statement that Current County policy allows too many public facilities in the Rural Area (thereby making it less “rural”).

Several comments were made suggesting that new schools that have been built in the Rural Area do not have adequate roads to support the traffic they generate. As noted above, many participants in the survey expressed concern over the appropriateness of locating sports complexes in the Rural Area. Participants drew a distinction between parks (widely viewed as appropriate) and sports complexes (widely viewed as inappropriate) – (see Section 9.2 above, Figure 18)

## **12.3 Trends**

The Comprehensive Plan identifies potential general locations for new public facilities. A composite map was developed for this Study showing some 25 potential locations in the Rural Area (Figure 20), though some of these are multiple potential locations for a single facility.

## **12.4 Observations**

Public facilities can play a supportive role in land use and development planning in the Rural Area. Land for facilities can be acquired to serve multiple purposes. A school or fire station, for example, can include open space that would help fill a corridor or trail gap.

Public facility locations can be coordinated with rural character areas. For example, a large public facility such as a school could be appropriate in the Transitional Ribbon and in the Older or Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves character areas, but would be less appropriate in the Valley Agriculture and Forests Areas – where the policy focus should be on land preservation.

While substandard roads exist in the rural area, in making upgrades roadway design standards should be applied carefully to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas (see Section 6.5).

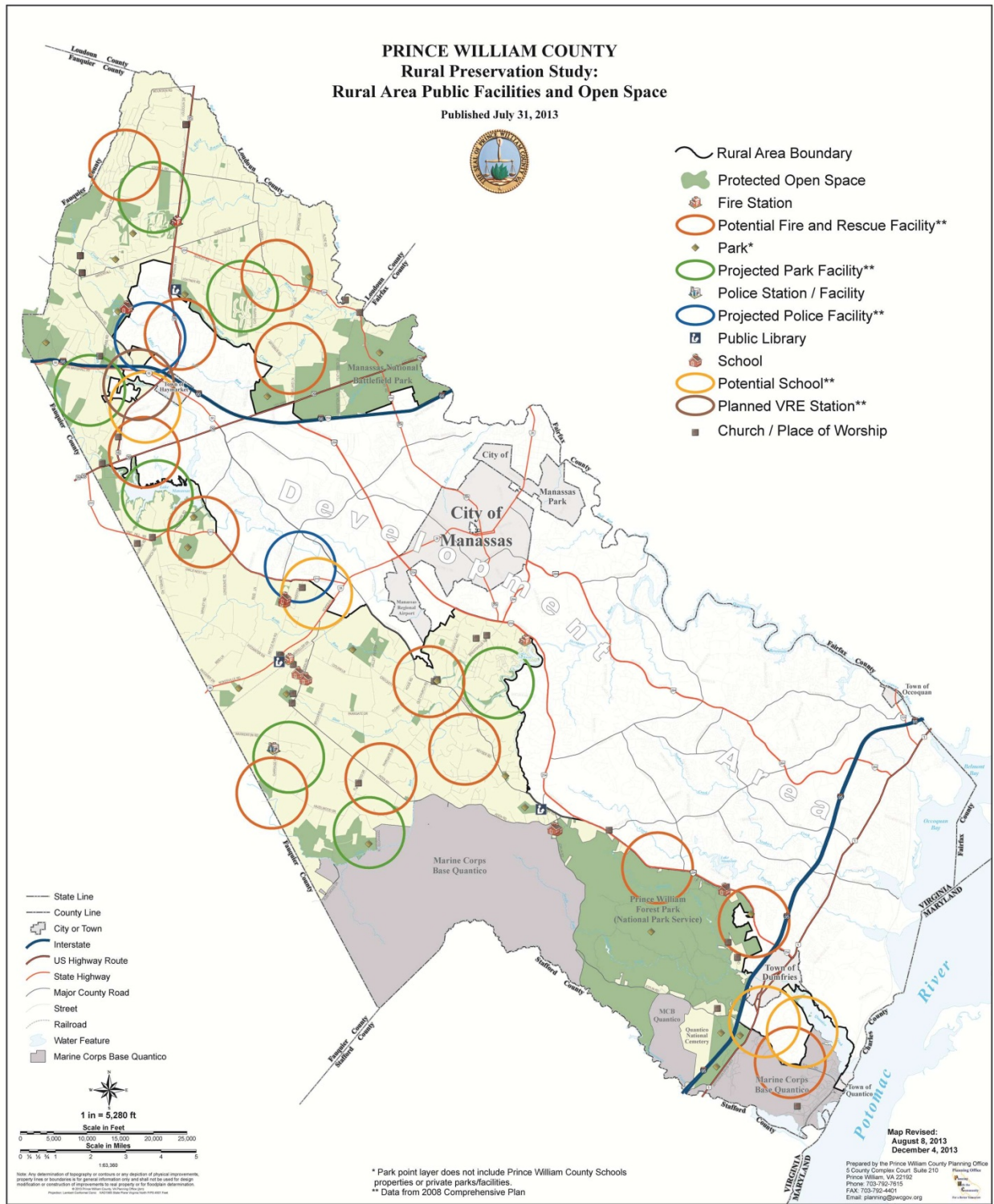
## **12.5 Recommendations**

*12.5.1 Avoid locating visually intrusive, high traffic recreation facilities such as sports complexes in sensitive rural character areas such as Rural Gateway Corridors or Valley Agriculture and Forests areas.*

*12.5.2 Coordinate the location of new public facilities with the Open Space and Corridors map to help fill gaps in corridors, and reinforce other Rural Area policies.*

*12.5.3 In making road upgrades roadway design standards should be applied carefully to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas. As a general guideline, rural roads should not be widened with the exception of primary and higher classification roads.*

**Figure 20 Rural Area Public Facilities**



### 13 Study Impacts

The Study’s recommendations are potentially quite far reaching, especially those affecting land use and development and land preservation. This section contains an estimate of the potential impacts of the recommendations on two key areas of interest; change in the number of dwelling units and change in the acres of open space preserved.

Table 7 shows the key policies recommended in this Study, the geographic areas affected, the estimated effects, and the assumptions used in making the estimates.

The estimates suggest that if the recommendations were fully adopted the result would be a net increase of approximately 1,150 dwelling units in the Rural Area over the current baseline and an increase of approximately 10,700 acres of preserved land. The increase in dwelling units could generate approximately \$8 million in proffers for parks and open space.

The baselines for purposes of these estimates are:

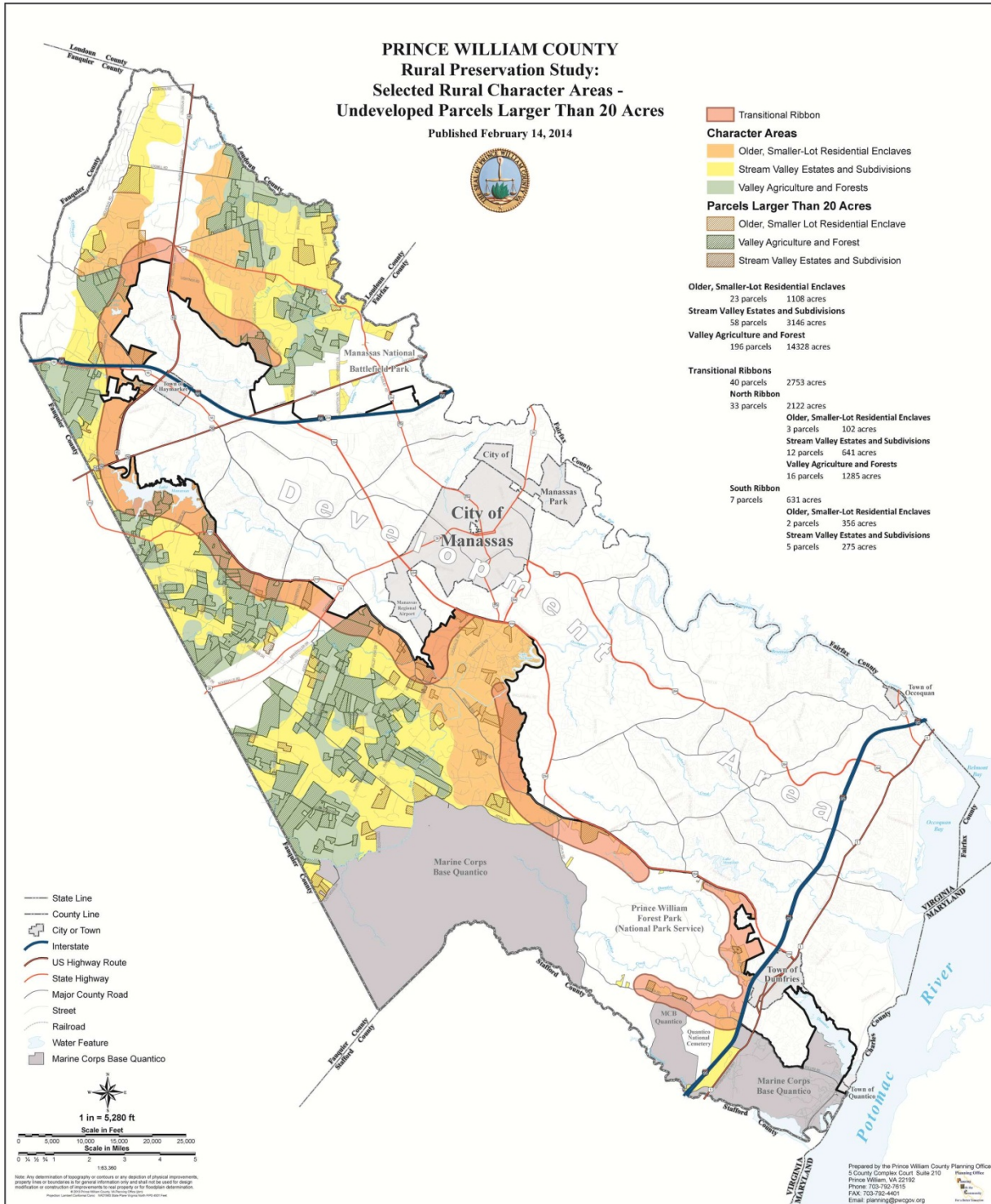
Existing dwelling units	7,570 (see Section 5.3)
Additional potential units (current policy)	3,670 (see Section 5.3)
Existing protected open space (acres)	25,750 (See Table 1)

The estimates were made by overlaying the Rural Character areas from Figure 13 over property parcel maps, focusing on undeveloped parcels 20 acres and larger. Figure 21 shows the map used as the basis for the estimates. Note that the analysis focused on the character areas most affected by these policies: Agriculture and Forest, Valley Estates and Subdivisions, Older Smaller Lot Enclaves, and the Transitional Ribbon.

**Table 7 Policy Impact Assessment**

Recommended Policy	Areas affected	Anticipated Policy Effects	Estimated Impact					Notes/Assumptions
			# parcels	Acres	Change in Future Units (from current baseline of 3,670). Negative numbers mean units not built due to preservation	Open Space Preserved (acres)	\$ in proffers (parks and open space)	
7.5.1 Allow extensions of public sewer on a case by case basis in the following rural character areas: #10 - Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves; and #6 – the Transitional Ribbon	Transitional Ribbon North	Some parcels converted from 1:10 to higher density	14	778	1,478	389	\$ 5,871,410	Assumes average approved density of 2 units per acre (then discounted by 1 unit per 10 acres). 50% open space. Proffer amount is \$3,972 per unit based on Policy Guide for Monetary Contributions (2006). Assumes parks contribution can be purposed for land preservation.
	Transitional Ribbon South	Some parcels converted from 1:10 to higher density	4	278	528	139	\$ 2,098,010	
4.5.1 Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program	Agriculture and Forest	Ag/forest land permanently preserved	variable (no basis for specific estimate)	variable (no basis for specific estimate)	-600	6,000		8,000 acre goal in Study is aggressive. Assume 75% success. Some PDR could be in other character areas (e.g., Gateways corridors)
4.5.2 TDR program	Several: Sending Areas and Receiving Areas	Ag/forest land permanently preserved	variable (no basis for specific estimate)	variable (no basis for specific estimate)	-100	1,000		Assumes relatively low use: TDR program is new in VA, may take time to gain traction
5.5.2 Revise and incentivize the cluster provisions of the A-1 zone	Agriculture and Forest, and Transitional Ribbon	Some parcels converted from (from 1 du per 10 to 1 du per 5 acres) in ag. areas. 60% OS	variable (no basis for specific estimate)	variable (no basis for specific estimate)	100	600		Assume 1,000 acres in clusters. Total units = 200 (1,000/5) vs 100 at 1 per 10. 1,000 acres is a low number based on reported limited ability for suitable drainfields for clusters
9.5.1 Increased use of Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI)	Areas near Quantico	Ag/forest/environmental land permanently preserved	variable (no basis for specific estimate)	variable (no basis for specific estimate)	-25	250		Assume 50% of approximately candidate 500 acres (in 10 parcels) in Quantico Military Influence Areas.
9.5.1 Consider a goal to protect 60 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the Rural Area – equivalent to approximately 17,000 acres	Entire Rural Area	Park acquisitions, federal and state acquisitions and funding support	variable (no basis for specific estimate)	variable (no basis for specific estimate)	-230	2,300		Acreage estimate is exclusive of acres in rows above. Estimate is to add land equivalent to 25% of the existing non-federal open space acres in the Rural Area. (25,750-16,706=9044 x .25, and rounded)
<b>Total</b>					<b>1,151</b>	<b>10,678</b>	<b>7,969,421</b>	

**Figure 21 Selected Rural Character Areas –Undeveloped Parcels larger than 20 Acres**





## 14 Next Steps, Implementation

1. Incorporate the Study recommendations into the Comprehensive Plan. Care needs to be taken in selecting which recommendations, if any, to not pursue. The recommendations taken together comprise an integrated plan strategy. Many of the recommendations are key to the strategy and if eliminated would affect the entire strategy.

Recommendation 3.4.1 is to: “Adopt in the Comprehensive Plan a vision that describes what the County wants the Rural Area to be. Use the vision as the basis for setting policy.” Section 3.4.1 includes a draft vision for as a starting point for discussion.

2. Make a budget and time commitment to implementation – including staff and other support.
3. Refine/verify the rural character area map developed for this Study.
4. Develop an implementation strategy. Key elements ERM would recommend be established first are:
  - a. Establish a PDR program
  - b. Explore the creation of a TDR program
  - c. Revise and incentivize the cluster provisions of the A-1 zone.
  - d. Adjust county sewer plans to allow for limited extensions of public sewer.
  - e. Refine the Comprehensive Plan’s Open Space and Corridors map.
  - f. Consider creating an agricultural development/promotion position in the County’s Department of Economic Development.
  - g. Create a working group to review and recommend revisions to codes and regulations to support agriculture.
5. Monitor implementation of the Study recommendations. Develop a set of performance metrics to gauge preservation of rural character: i.e., is the Plan succeeding? Key metrics could include the amount of permanently protected land, number of farms, acres in active agriculture. Metrics could be designed to include measures of rural character.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Survey Results

Appendix 2 Stakeholder Meetings List

Appendix 3 Comprehensive Plan Maps 1991, 1998, 2008

Appendix 4 Comparison of Prince William County Growth Management Techniques in the Rural Crescent Compared to National Best Practices

Appendix 5 Workshop powerpoint presentations from Study Open House December 7, 2013

**Appendix 1 Survey Results**

# **Prince William County Rural Preservation Study**

## **Survey Results – October 2013**

The Prince William County Planning Office is undertaking a Rural Preservation Study. The objectives are to evaluate the rural preservation policies and tools the County has in place to determine whether they are meeting the County's objectives and, if warranted, to recommend new objectives, policies, and tools.

As part of the public outreach component of the Study the Planning Office sponsored a survey to solicit public input about the County's rural preservation efforts. This document summarizes the results. Along with other input from stakeholder interviews and public meetings, the results will be used to inform the study findings and its recommendations.

The survey was internet-based and ran on SurveyMonkey website ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) between August 20<sup>th</sup> and September 27<sup>th</sup>. Respondents were self-selected and were free to respond to as few or as many questions as they wished. In this sense the survey was not scientific, and the results should not be interpreted as being statistically representative of a particular population.

A total of 384 responses were received. The survey allowed more than one survey to be submitted from a computer. The responses were checked to ensure that respondents did not submit multiple identical surveys, and the project consultant does not believe that this occurred.

This survey had two parts. The first part had "closed" questions where respondents were asked to respond to specific questions given a limited set of response choices. This document summarizes and charts the results to the closed questions. The charts necessarily select the data to be represented. Results are also provided in table form to allow the reader to draw his or her conclusions. The second part had "open ended" questions where respondents could give their opinions without being bound to specific responses. Please note that comments containing inappropriate language, personal attacks or other content not suitable for a general audience will not be published. Responses to the survey will be kept anonymous.

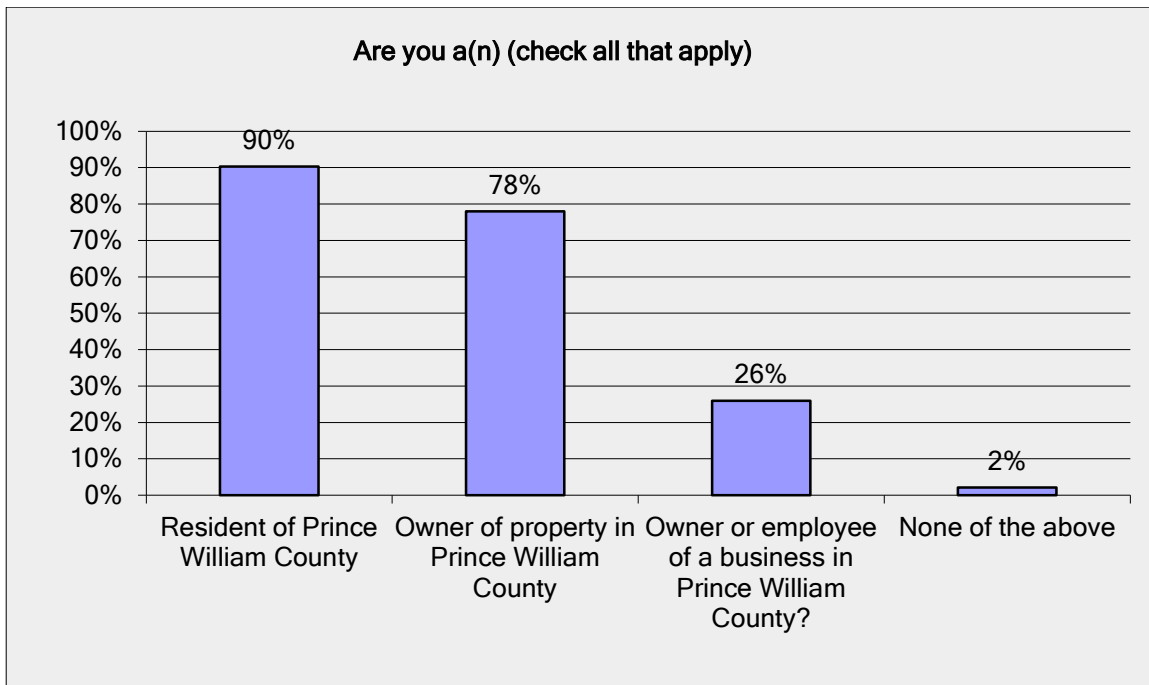
The project team would like to thank everyone that participated in the survey. The size of the response and the thoughtfulness of the responses was gratifying and will provide very valuable input into the study.

## Survey Questions

1. Name. This was an optional question. 123 respondents answered this question. As noted above, Responses to the survey will be kept anonymous
2. Affiliation. Also optional. 44 responses were received.

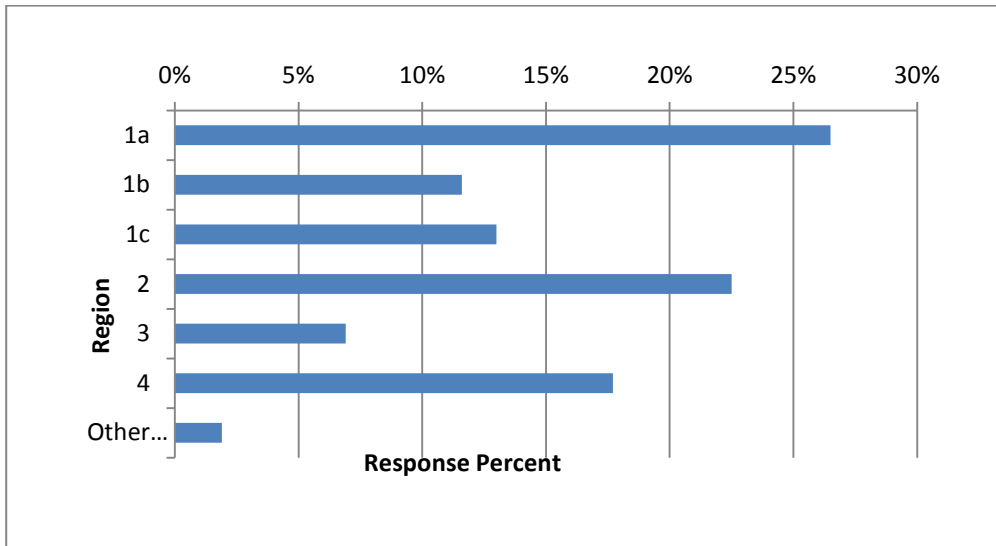


### 3. Respondent location

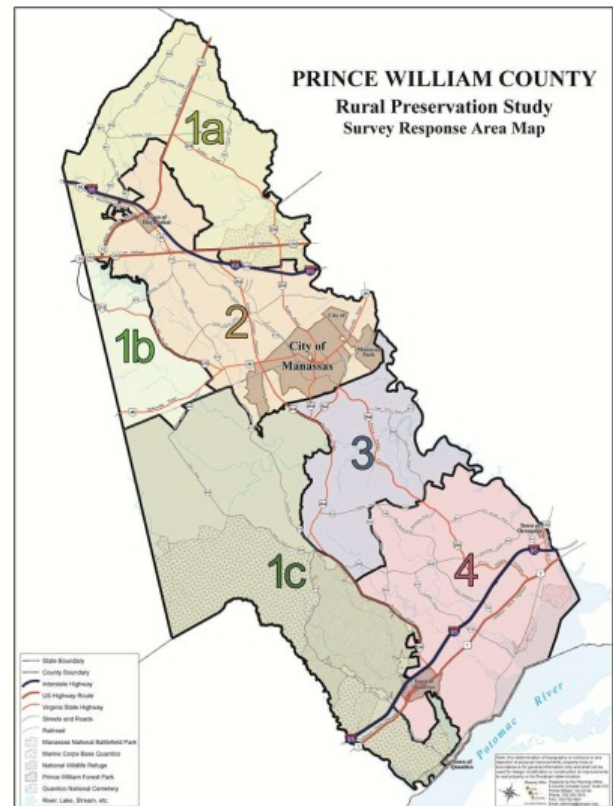


Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Resident of Prince William County	90%	345
Owner of property in Prince William County	78%	298
Owner or employee of a business in Prince William	26%	99
None of the above	2%	8
<i>answered question</i>		<b>382</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>2</b>

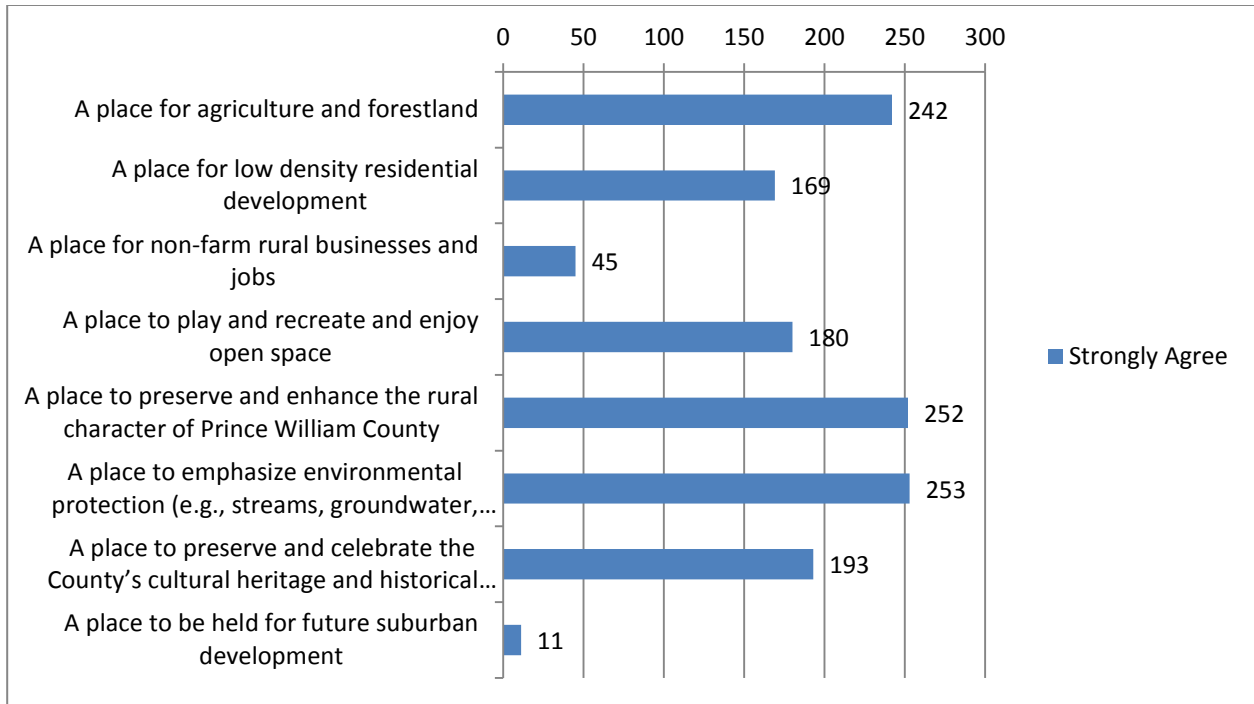
4. If you live, work, or own a business or property in Prince William County, select the number on Map 2 (below) that indicates the part of the County where you live or work, or where you own a business or property (a larger version of this map is available on the project web site). If you are not from Prince William County, please specify.



Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1a	27%	100
1b	12%	44
1c	13%	49
2	23%	85
3	7%	26
4	18%	67
Other (please specify)	2%	7
<b><i>answered question</i></b>		<b>378</b>
		<b>6</b>

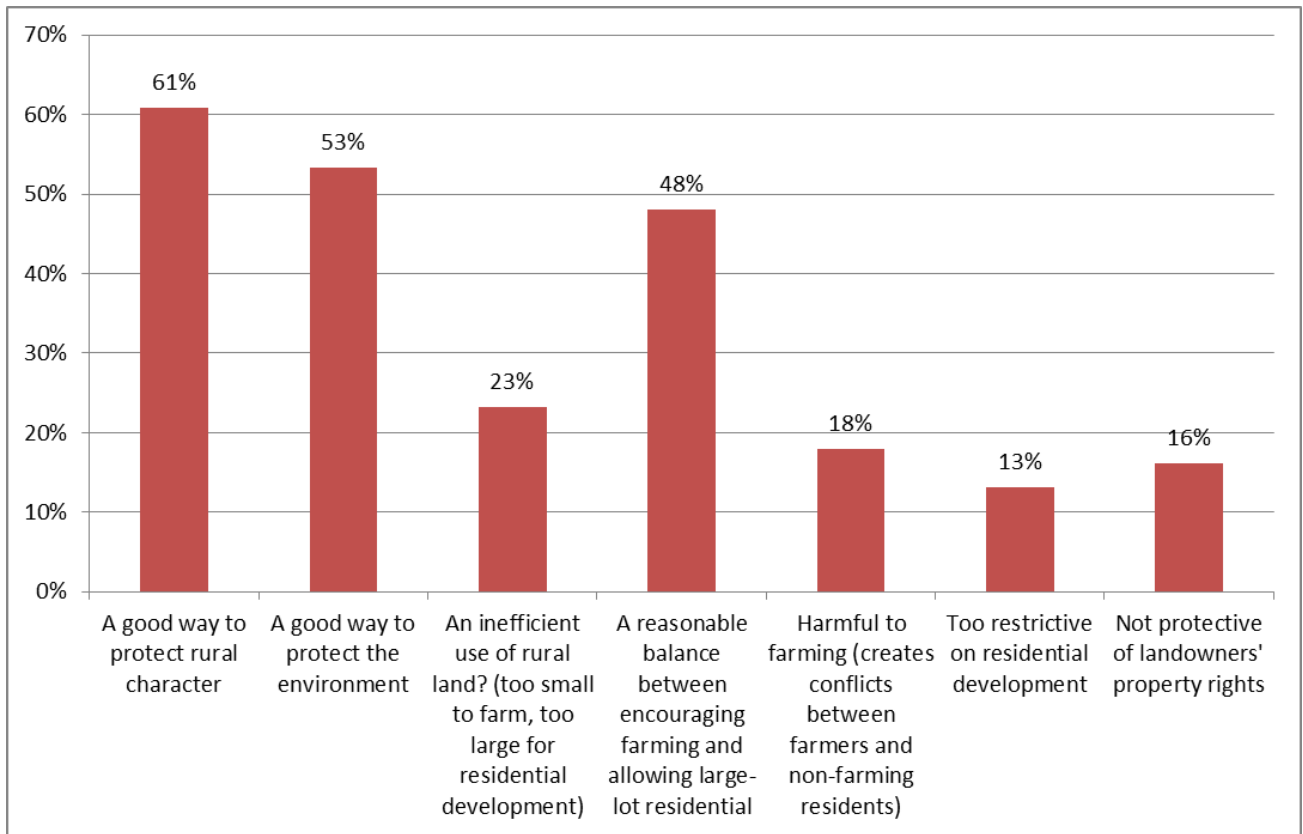


**5. What does the Rural Area mean to you? Please indicate your opinion about what the Rural Area means to you; how you think of the Rural Area.**



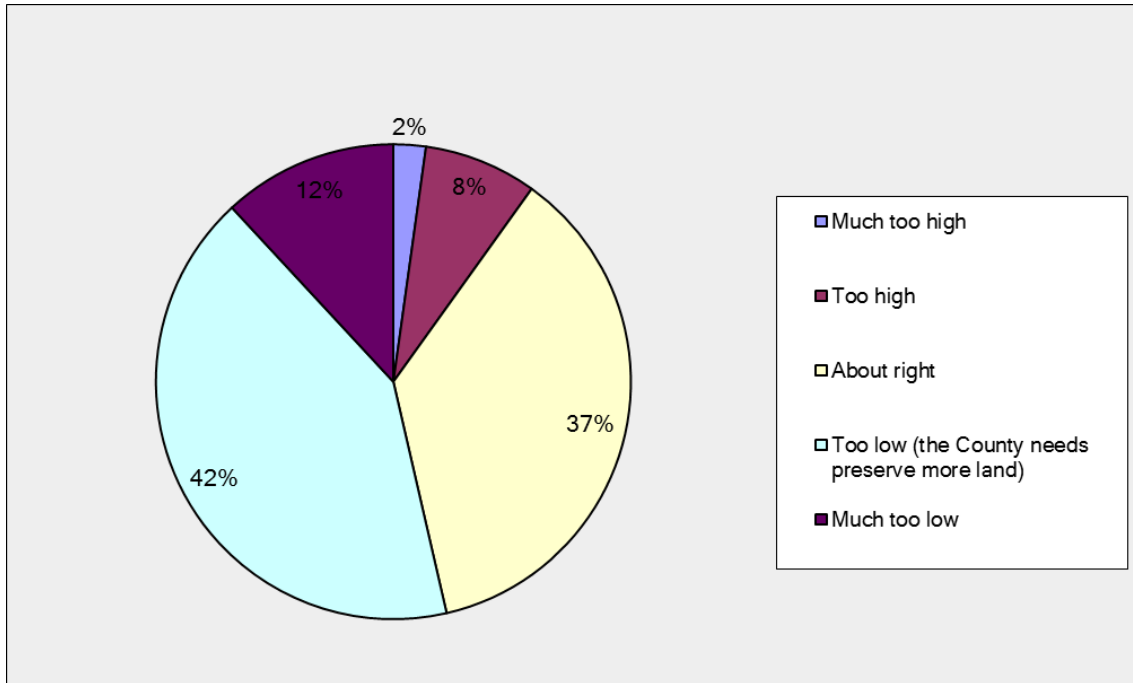
Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
A place for agriculture and forestland	242	98	17	7	3	1.45	367
A place for low density residential development	169	96	36	46	16	2.02	363
A place for non-farm rural businesses and jobs	45	109	86	69	52	2.93	361
A place to play and recreate and enjoy open space	180	126	38	20	3	1.75	367
A place to preserve and enhance the rural character of Prince William County	252	67	24	20	4	1.52	367
A place to emphasize environmental protection (e.g., streams, groundwater, soils, wildlife habitat)	253	65	34	10	7	1.52	369
A place to preserve and celebrate the County's cultural heritage and historical significance	193	97	46	25	8	1.80	369
A place to be held for future suburban development	11	20	36	81	213	4.29	361
<i>answered question</i>							<b>371</b>
<i>skipped question</i>							<b>13</b>

**6. Future Residential Development: The primary residential development pattern in the rural area is ten-acre lots. Do you think this approach to residential development is (check all that you think apply)**



Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A good way to protect rural character	61%	223
A good way to protect the environment	53%	195
An inefficient use of rural land? (too small to farm, too large for residential development)	23%	85
A reasonable balance between encouraging farming and allowing large-lot residential	48%	176
Harmful to farming (creates conflicts between farmers and non-farming residents)	18%	66
Too restrictive on residential development	13%	48
Not protective of landowners' property rights	16%	59
<i>answered question</i>		<b>366</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>18</b>

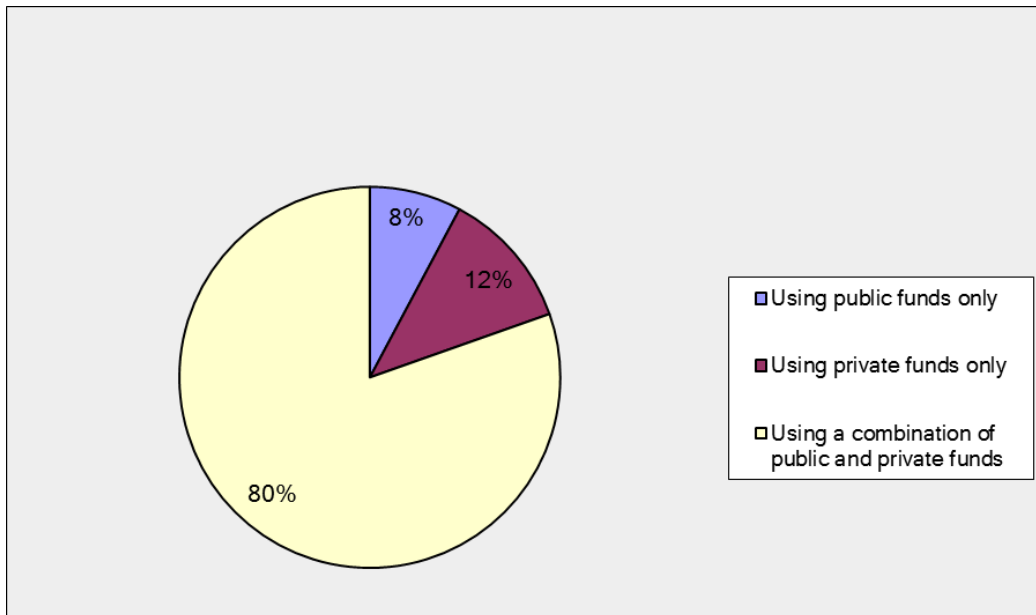
**7. Land Preservation: The County has a history of rural preservation strategies dating back to the 1960s. As of 2013, approximately 26,200 acres or 28% of the Rural Area (excluding Marine Corps Base Quantico) has been permanently preserved. In your opinion is this number:**



Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Much too high	2%	8
Too high	8%	28
About right	37%	132
Too low (the County needs preserve more land)	42%	151
Much too low	12%	43
<i>answered question</i>		<b>362</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>22</b>

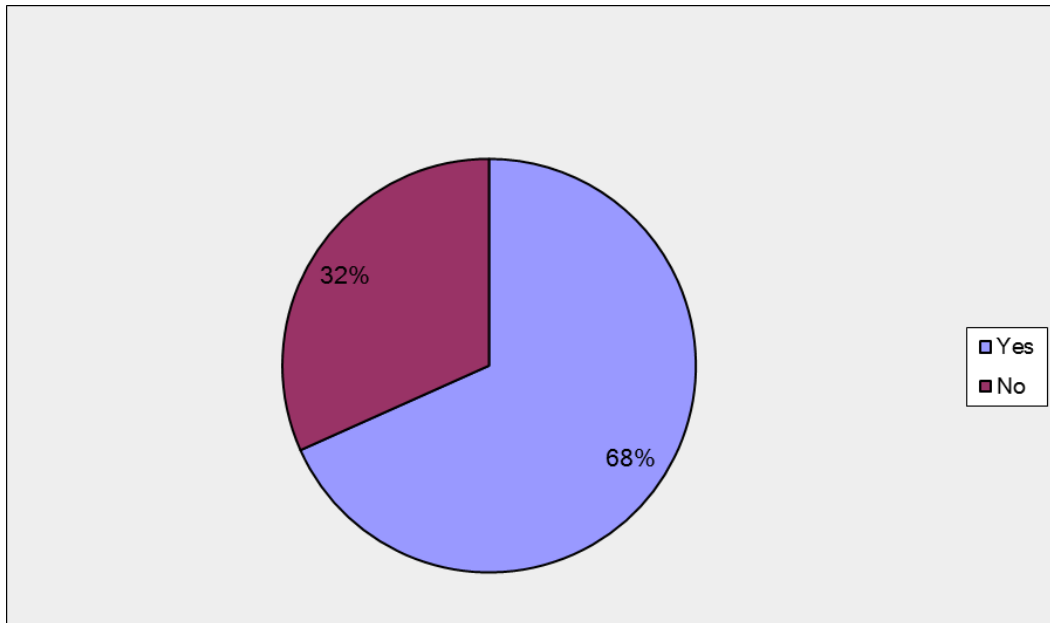


8. **Willingness to Pay for Land Preservation:** Preserving land often costs money to acquire land or compensate property owners who agree to sell conservation easements. Land preservation can be accomplished with public or private funds or some combination of the two. This question and the following two questions address aspects of this issue. How do you think land preservation is best paid for?



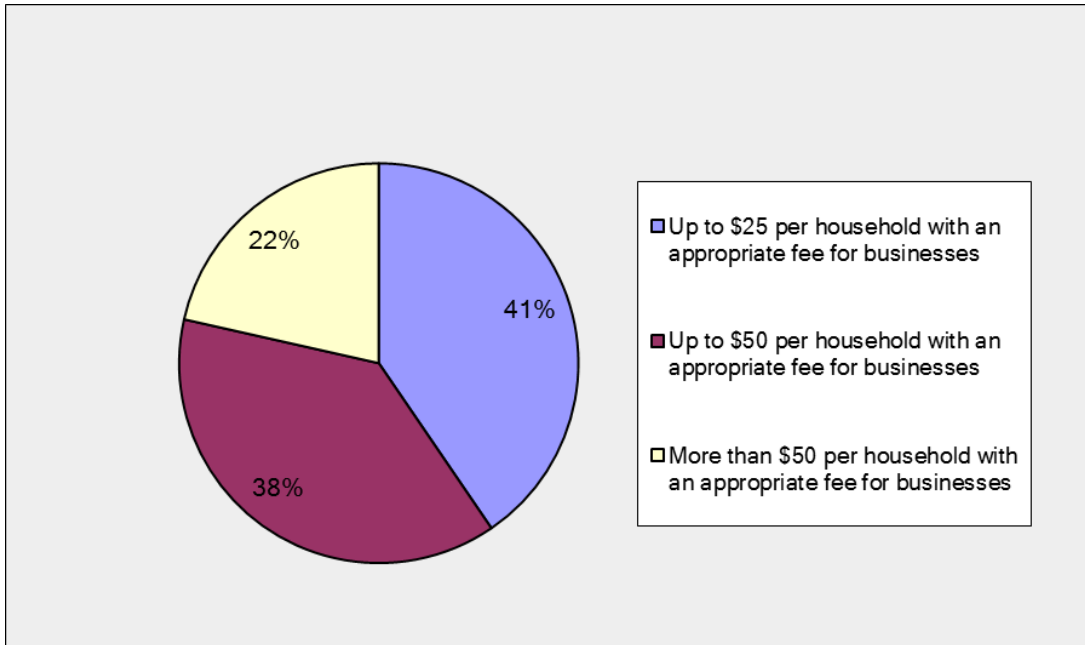
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Using public funds only	8%	28
Using private funds only	12%	42
Using a combination of public and private funds	80%	287
<i>answered question</i>		<b>357</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>27</b>

**9. Would you be willing to pay more to help preserve land in the Rural Area?**



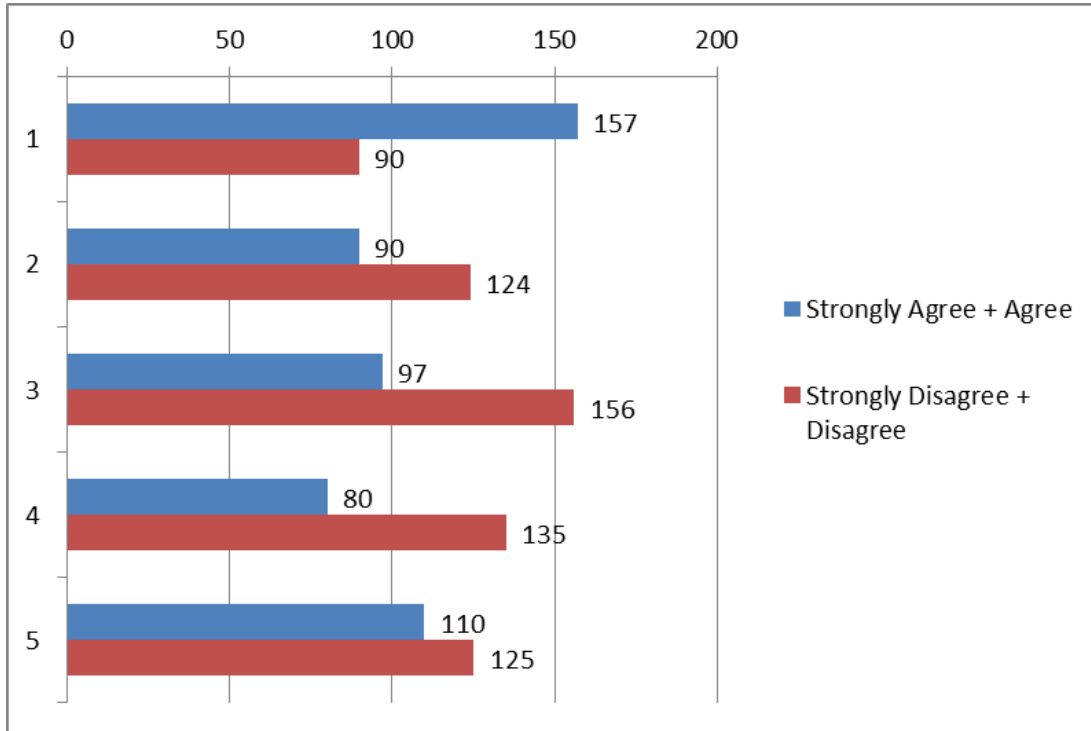
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	68%	243
No	32%	113
<i>answered question</i>		<b>356</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>28</b>

**10. If you answered yes to question 9, about how much additional per year would you be willing to pay (in dedicated fees or additional taxes)?**



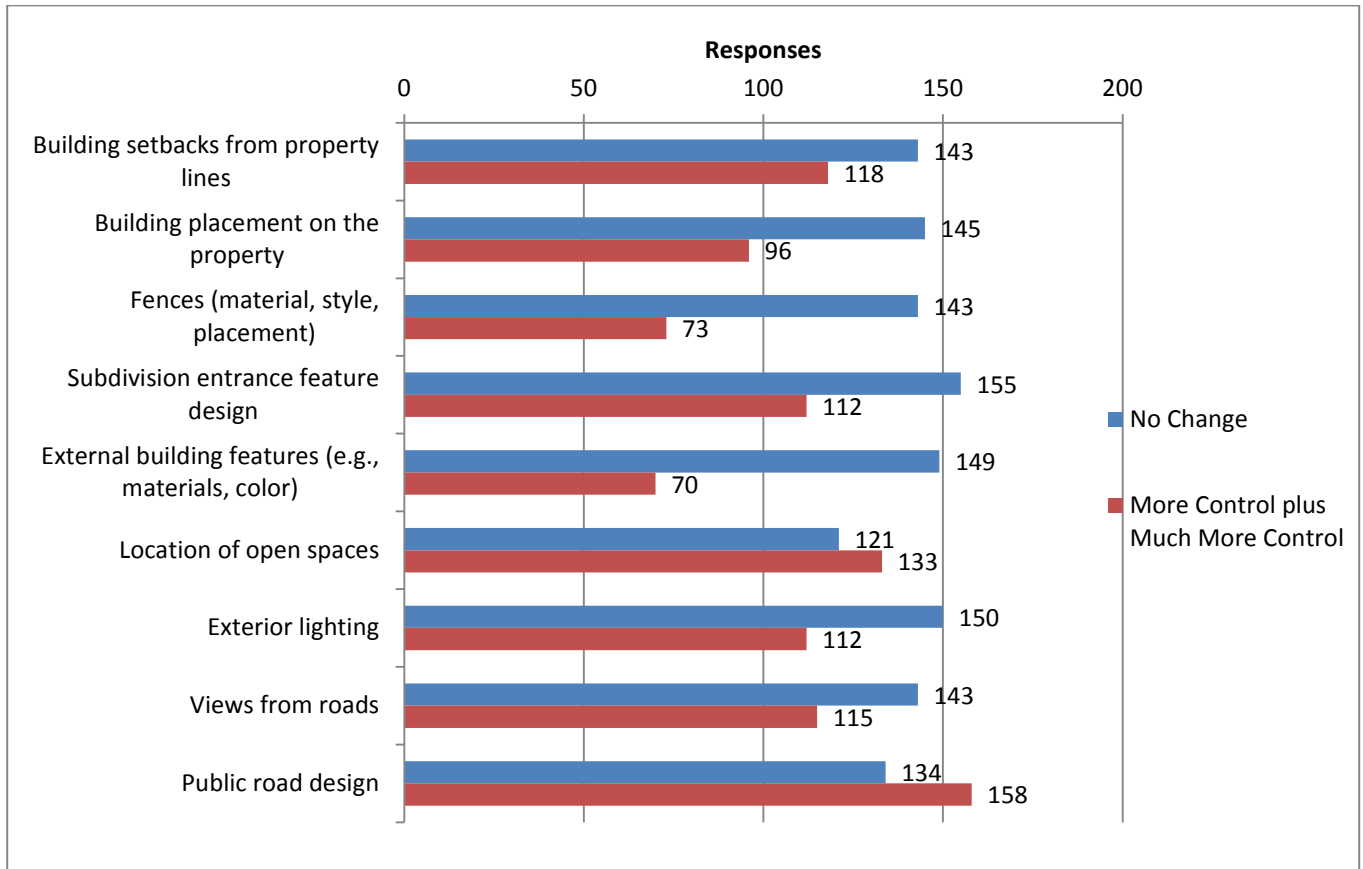
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Up to \$25 per household with an appropriate fee for businesses	41%	100
Up to \$50 per household with an appropriate fee for businesses	38%	94
More than \$50 per household with an appropriate fee for businesses	22%	53
<i>answered question</i>		<b>247</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>137</b>

**11. Public Sewer: Sewer policy is an important component of land use planning. Some believe that allowing sewer in the Rural Area would lead to higher density “suburban” residential development and additional service costs. Others argue that land use is ultimately controlled as a policy decision and that allowing sewer is better for the environment and gives more flexibility in site layout and design. Currently, sewer is permitted in the Rural Area under very limited circumstances (failing septic systems, public facilities such as schools). Please indicate your opinion on the following statements:**



Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Need More Information	Rating Average	Response Count	Agree + Strongly Agree	Disagree + Strongly Disagree
1 The current County policy is appropriate	56	101	58	60	30	27	2.70	332	157	90
2 Current County policy is too lenient; the County should be stricter in limiting sewer extensions in the Rural Area.	41	49	88	70	54	26	3.16	328	90	124
3 The County should allow more public sewer in the Rural Area.	42	55	46	76	80	27	3.32	326	97	156
4 Sewer allows development on smaller lots, is better for the environment and could help the County preserve more land in the Rural Area	28	52	77	59	76	33	3.35	325	80	135
5 The County should allow sewer in parts of the Rural Area that have very little rural character.	41	69	57	59	66	32	3.14	324	110	125
<i>answered question</i>								339		
<i>skipped question</i>								45		

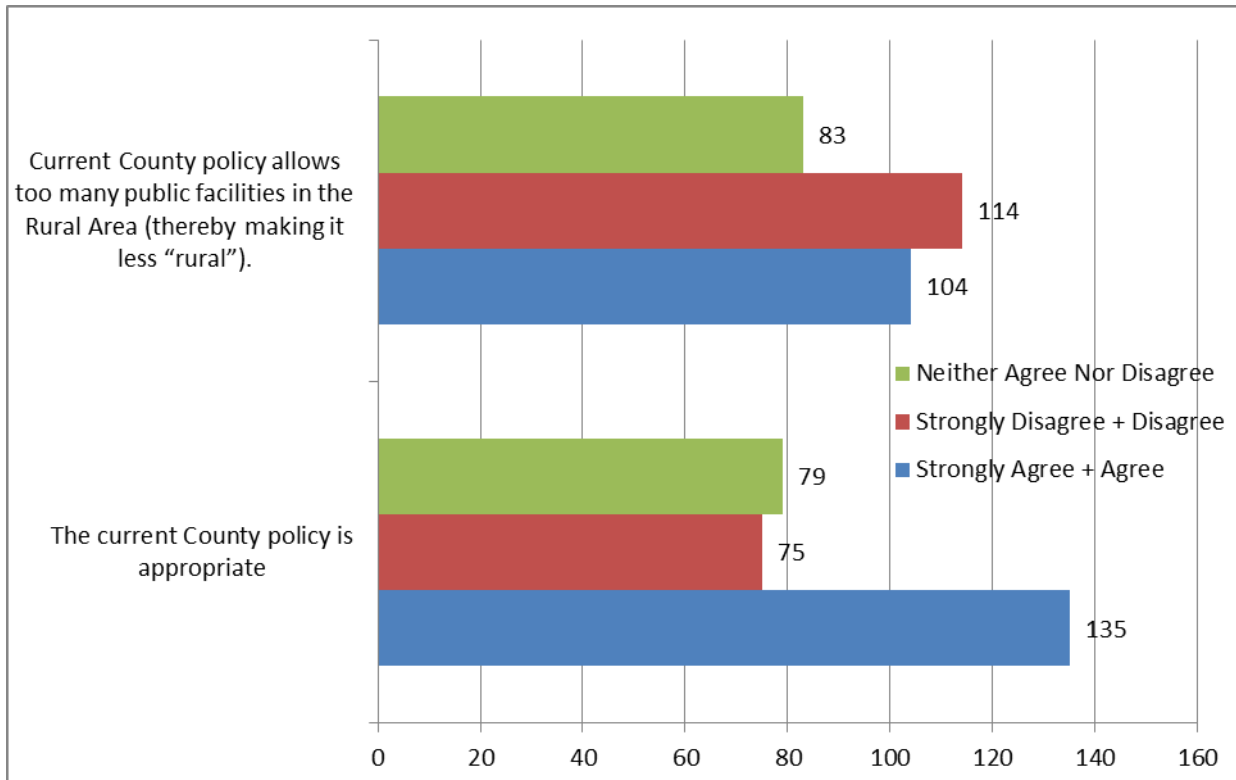
**12. Preserving and Enhancing Rural Character: A number of site design, landscape architectural, and architectural techniques can help preserve and/or enhance the character of a rural landscape. To what extent would you support more or less county control over the following?**



Answer Options	Much More Control	More Control	No Change	Less Control	Much Less Control	Rating Average	Response Count	More Control + Much More Control
1 Building setbacks from property lines	37	81	143	45	19	2.78	325	118
2 Building placement on the property	28	68	145	61	24	2.95	326	96
3 Fences (material, style, placement)	21	52	143	71	35	3.15	322	73
4 Subdivision entrance feature design	38	74	155	36	21	2.78	324	112
5 External building features (e.g., materials, color)	22	48	149	68	36	3.15	323	70
6 Location of open spaces	46	87	121	45	25	2.74	324	133
7 Exterior lighting	39	73	150	37	22	2.78	321	112
8 Views from roads	36	79	143	40	26	2.82	324	115
9 Public road design	59	99	134	19	12	2.46	323	158
<i>answered question</i>							<b>329</b>	
<i>skipped question</i>								<b>55</b>

**13. Public Facilities (e.g., schools, fire and rescue, sports facilities): Current County policy in the Comprehensive Plan allows public facilities in the Rural Area. Please indicate your opinion on the following statements:**

Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Need More Information	Rating Average	Response Count	
Current County policy allows too many public facilities in the Rural Area (thereby making it less "rural").	43	61	83	85	29	28	2.99	329	
The current County policy is appropriate	27	108	79	53	22	31	2.78	320	
								<i>answered question</i>	<b>335</b>
								<i>skipped question</i>	<b>49</b>
	<b>Strongly Agree and Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree and Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</b>						
Current County policy allows too many public facilities in the Rural Area (thereby making it less "rural").	104	114	83						
The current County policy is appropriate	135	75	79						



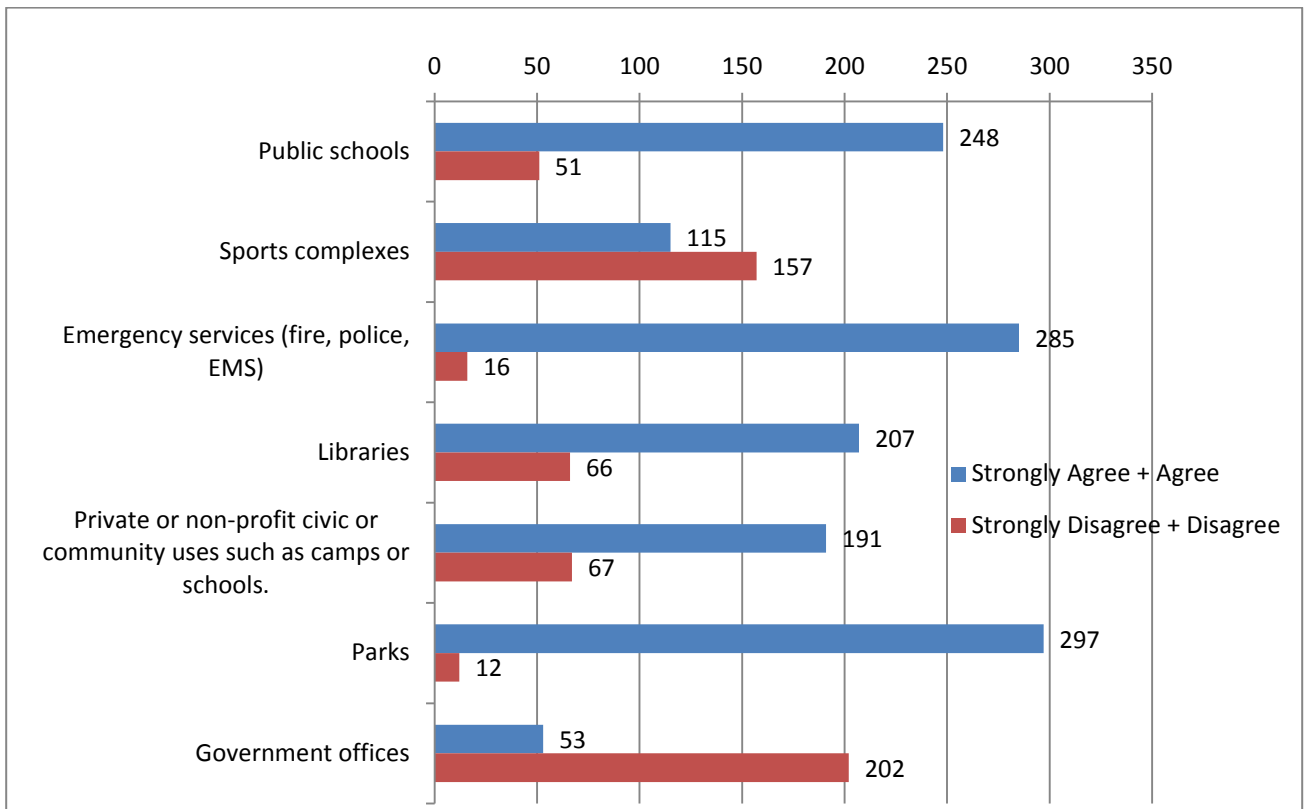


**14. Public Facilities Continued: Please indicate your opinion on whether the following public facilities are appropriate for the Rural Area:**

Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Need More Information	Rating Average	Response Count	
Public schools	76	172	36	41	10	3	2.21	338	
Sports complexes	23	92	62	92	65	6	3.25	340	
Emergency services (fire, police, EMS)	89	196	33	12	4	4	1.94	338	
Libraries	51	156	58	53	13	5	2.46	336	
Private or non-profit civic or community uses such as camps or schools.	47	144	67	52	15	13	2.52	338	
Parks	144	153	23	8	4	6	1.72	338	
Government offices	12	41	79	113	89	5	3.68	339	
								<b>answered question</b>	<b>340</b>
								<b>skipped question</b>	<b>44</b>

	Strongly Agree + Agree	Strongly Disagree + Disagree
Public schools	248	51
Sports complexes	115	157
Emergency services (fire, police, EMS)	285	16
Libraries	207	66
Private or non-profit civic or community uses such as camps or schools.	191	67
Parks	297	12
Government offices	53	202



# Open-Ended Questions

## Do you live in the Rural Area? If so, why?

- Yes. The land I live on has been in my family since 1950 and as a boy I visited the farm quite often. I was given 17 acres off the farm in 1990, moved there in 1996, and inherited 27 more acres of the farm in 2006. I love the rural nature of my home and the property is being still being farmed.
- Yes, wanted a larger lot for dogs, etc.
- Yes. When we moved here 17 years ago there was for more rural. More here for lower housing density, less congestion.
- We moved from Falls Church, VA, where we had lived 33 years to Western Prince William to escape the constant crush of endless traffic, sirens and noise. We moved into the Rural Crescent because of the beauty and completely 'rural' nature of the development and road layouts. We have to drive further now, to stores than we used to, but there is no longer the 'frenzy' associated with going to the store. There is no shortage of fine stores; we just have to go further to get there. That we knew before we moved.
- Yes I live in a Rural Area. The landscape and views are why I moved to Western Prince William County. I appreciate the history and tranquility of the area. The surrounding horse farms and mountains are therapeutic.
- We like this area because of having more space and land. We own horses and enjoy the ability to have land and less population density. We do not want to be in the newest up and coming Ashburn and could not stand to live in such a dense area. I grew up in Herndon and though I work in Lorton as well we continue to move farther and farther west to have the lifestyle we want and peace and quiet.
- The Western Part of Prince William County is uniquely beautiful, its' character lies in the environment and landscape. It's a delicate balance between humans and nature that provides the best outcome for both.
- Yes, we specifically chose to live here because of the rural character of the community and the schools.
- We use to live within the Rural Area but have since been zoned out of it (SRR). We bought in PWC for this rural feel - woods, many native birds (even eagles), non-traditional housing. As an art major, I find the large amount of tacky vinyl-sided beige houses visually offensive and doomed to be very dated in the future. 'd like to see zoning force more variety in the appearance of PWC's housing stock.
- Yes, to have lots of open space and separation from my neighbors
- Yes. We love the beauty and the history. We are sad to see the road work at Rt. 29 and Linton Hall Rd. It should have been done in a more esthetic way. The view of the mountains is blocked, and there is so much concrete, it looks like the Tyson's area. We don't want to see that spread any further. That is why we are against the bi-county bypass. We commute on 66 to jobs north of PW and we love to come home to the beauty and peacefulness of PW county.

- Yes, because I want my kids to experience nature. I don't want neighbors looking through my windows. I want to see nature and changing seasons. I want farmers nearby - actual, working farms. I'm willing to drive farther for shopping to get that.
- Yes, this is the closest I can get to a rural area while still working in the DC area. After the horrible drive in/out of work, it is very appealing to come to a home that has a bit of property, woods and quiet.
- No.
- We moved to the area to enjoy the beauty, nature and peacefulness of our home in our daily life. We felt it would be a lovely place to raise our family and have our grandchildren visit. We needed a slower paced living with less traffic when moving from Fairfax County, and knew we had found the perfect home.
- Yes because I grew up in a rural area in another state.
- We chose to live here because we love the rural feeling of our community. Home prices are higher due to less congestion.
- No.
- I live adjacent to the rural area. That is one of the things that attracted me to my community, Oak Valley. I love the feel of being in the country. I would hate to lose that, and I fear that property values would definitely go down in my community if the Bi-County Parkway is built where it is currently proposed.
- We moved to Oak Valley because of its proximity to the Rural Crescent and don't want to lose the 'open' feel of the area. The more you widen roads, add public facilities and build 'needed' bypasses, the more the feel of the country areas deteriorate. We've seen huge changes in the atmosphere of Gainesville since moving here in 2002. We chose to live where we did because of that 'country feel' and hate to see 'progress' eat away at that.
- Yes, I wanted to live in the rural area to enjoy a life free from zero lot lines and one house on top of another and to have peace and quiet. An area like that is something developers hate and they want to make sure there is not one tree left standing.
- I do not live in the Rural Area. I live in a planned community that is surrounded by other planned communities.
- No.
- Yes, I like the feel of the area.
- I enjoy the separation from the rush of daily life in the fast lane. We need to preserve these areas because if we don't, there will be none left. Just because these rural areas offer new land on which to develop, doesn't mean we should. You need to draw the line somewhere before it's too late.
- No. No interest in larger lot.
- I like the country feel and the wide open spaces which has less traffic and less congestion.
- Yes, I moved out here because of the open space, the nature and wildlife as well as the peace and quiet that comes at night.
- We wanted more land, fewer neighbors/construction/less traffic. Wanted a place for our children to grow up with trees and room to run and play!

- No because our family's lifestyle is not supported by the rural crescent; however, it is our plan to purchase property in the area, as it is now, in the future in order to enjoy the natural surroundings.
- I don't want to live in a congested suburban area with tons of buildings, traffic, shopping centers, etc. I am completely against the tri-county parkway and all of the development that is going on in the Haymarket / Gainesville area. Why is Ryan building a million cheap, unattractive Townhouses on Heathcote / Catharpin Road. I am completely against the Toll Bros development planned at the Red Fence Farm on Catharpin Road. It is too much development and destroying everything attractive about this area.
- Yes, love the open spaces and the tranquility.
- Yes, we built and bought a house in one of the smaller subdivisions because of the land we could get as well as the beautiful space. It is nice to come home to a quiet area which does not have a whole lot of lights that you can enjoy your backyard at night.
- Enjoy the area, like seeing farms, animals, and nature. It is very relaxing driving by fields of grass with horses, deer or cows grazing. Farms and agriculture is such an important part of our countries heritage that is seems to be destroyed more and more each day. I enjoy in the evening hearing the faint moo of the cows near my neighborhood and the occasional horse that gets loose and wanders by our home. The amount of wildlife in and around our neighborhood is amazing. It would be a shame to push it away for more homes, and businesses. The rural crescent is why I moved here, I hope that is remains as it has for the last 10 years with minimal changes.
- No.
- We live next to the rural area. We chose that location 13 years ago for the opportunity to move away from the over population and crowding of other areas in Prince William and Fairfax counties.
- Yes, because I bought a home there.
- We moved here because of limited housing & larger lot sizes (1/2 acre+ & lots across road are 10+). Limited "planned" development on our rural road.
- I live right next to the line.
- No, but I do enjoy visiting.
- No.
- No. Want more convenience.
- No. I wish I did, but can't afford it.
- We like the peaceful area, like living close to nature.
- No.
- Peace and quiet.
- We chose to live in the Rural Crescent because it is the only place in PW County where there is still undisturbed natural land and beautiful wildlife, but we are slowly losing everything we moved here for. The western part of Prince William County has some of the most beautiful natural land we have seen and we love the horse and cattle farms, and the peace and quiet. We feel the county is growing much too fast and we are losing our natural resources and natural

beauty. When this happens we will have no choice but to move to Fauquier or Rappahannock County where they believe in preserving their natural resources.

- No.
- Yes I live in the Rural Area. I like living in a less congested area that hasn't been paved over.
- I live in the Rural Area because I prefer a low density population neighborhood around me. I do not like living near busy roads or highways, and find it much safer to live in the Rural Area.
- Yes, I live in the Rural Area by design. We have been in the Rural Crescent for 21 of the 24 years we have lived in the County. Initially, we purchased in the Rural Area (1989 and prior to designation) based on affordability. We moved deeper into the Rural Area in 2006 to keep our youngest child in the Brentsville District High School territory.
- Yes. Here before the rural crescent.
- My neighbors and I came to this part of the county for the very reason we are not shoe boxed into a sea of rooftops and an overbearing amount of traffic and traffic lights needed to get in and out of access points. If I wanted that lifestyle I would have lived in Centerville! My neighbors are close but not too close, the very reason I came here would be destroyed by developers and their lust for money seeking to get the net revenue return for their PAC investment.
- I want quiet. Less congested roads. Fewer neighbors. I want to hear nature, not traffic.
- Moved here to have more room and not be trapped in constant traffic, less noise, less pollution, better quality of life. Violating the Rural Crescent concept will be a betrayal of principled conservation.
- Elbow room. Reduced traffic density in resident areas.
- No - Own property in the Rural Area.
- No.
- Yes I live in the Rural area. It is nice to have some space and see wildlife without all of the traffic.
- I moved to Western PWC in 1990 because of the rural character. We looked at several counties before deciding on this location. The lack of amenities at the time was a trade-off for more green space and fewer cars.
- Yes, we have a small farm.
- Yes, we have a horse farm.
- Purchased property to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city.
- I have lived in the Rural Crescent since it was created. I enjoy the relative peacefulness, privacy and nature. I left Fairfax County and came to the Haymarket area in 1985 to escape the dense development and live on "a little bit of land" that would have been unaffordable closer in.
- No.
- I own land in the rural area. I would like to live in the rural area but due to current sewer policies I cannot build on my land.
- This survey is obviously a veiled attempt to change the rural crescent in order to pay back developers and real estate companies. The fact that this has not been advertised to the public more through either mailings, notices and/or information from district supervisor makes this

very suspicious. Stop trying to pull the wool over the public's eyes we ARE NOT STUPID. Keep the rural crescent rural stop "KILLING all the trees and paving over everything".

- Yes. Moved from Fairfax county for peace, quiet and reasonable distances from other houses.
- No.
- No.
- Yes. Enjoy scenic beauty and wildlife and quiet.
- Yes. I own a horse farm in the rural crescent. I bought in Prince William because it has protected areas.
- YES, I purposefully moved to the Rural Crescent for the rural lifestyle and additional quality of life. I do not think it is a coincidence that PWC is the only county with passing grade for air quality in the region. FYI - I do NOT believe the options in question #12 are real rural area characteristics. They are sleight of hand, deception ("looks" like) for what it "means" to live in a rural community.
- Yes, I live in the rural crescent. Living in a rural area brings one a quality of life that just cannot be experienced in the city. I've spent half of my adult life living in cities. There is a constant stress of being constantly exposed to violence; traffic congestion no matter what time of day or what day of the week; walking out your door and bumping into neighbors; constant noise from cars, emergency vehicles, obnoxious neighbors, loud music from cars or houses, etc. People in cities are also different from those who live in a rural community. Living in a rural community provides the peace and tranquility that cannot be had in a city. The sense of community is stronger. Being able to enjoy nature & animals rather than concrete and asphalt is incomparable. Also, being able to leave my doors unlocked when I am home or be out in my yard and not have to worry so much about violence gives a peace of mind that cannot be underestimated. Walking out my door and hearing neighborhood roosters crowing or cows mooing cannot be compared to stereos blaring or sirens screaming.
- Yes. We moved to the Haymarket area (not a subdivision) to get out to the country. We have watched an excessive amount of development in this area make it no longer a rural area, but one filled with subdivisions and sadly lacking in road and school development to keep up with the amount of houses allowed - notably NOT on 10 acre lots.
- I live on the edge of the rural area.
- We chose to buy our home in the rural area to avoid the congestion in the Linton Hall area. We like the open space and country feel. When this home was purchased, we did not want to buy in a tightly packed, high density, neighborhood with small lot sizes.
- No.
- No, but would like to.
- No.
- Yes, close to work. I like to live where I work.
- Semi-Rural. Enjoy the country feel.
- No.
- No, I do not, but very close to it.
- No.



- No.
- Yes. It is a less hectic and congested but is still convenient to DC for my job. VRE is a pretty good commute.
- We bought in the rural crescent because we wanted to live in a protected area. We gave up \$Millions in profits by refusing to sell our land to developers or Disney. Now, the state is repaying us by destroying the rural crescent, tearing down our homes, and/or destroying our property values in order to put in a road that will not benefit Prince William County residents in any way. We bought in the so-called rural crescent because we were promised it would remain just that. If you really cared about preserving the rural crescent, rather than providing meaningless, feel-good questionnaires like this, the county board would be standing firm against the ridiculous destruction of Pageland Lane. It may be good for Commercial enterprises in Virginia, but it doesn't benefit PW County, and it exposes this sham for what it is. If you truly cared about preserving the rural crescent, instead of providing this bogus online survey, you'd be putting a stop to the tri-county parkway, which will ultimately destroy the rural crescent, and the economy of PW County. Who is getting the payoff for this travesty?
- No.
- No.
- Yes, in Rappahannock County, I drive an hour into work for PWC govt and the majority of that is stuck in traffic in "rural" PWC. What used to be farm land and houses that weren't crowded together, are now subdivisions with traffic lights that the infrastructure can't support. There are too many useless shopping centers in PWC. Leave some of the land alone & have citizens suffice off 1 grocery store in a 10 mile radius. On Hoadly Rd alone there are 2 Walgreens within less than 5 miles of each other. That trend is repeated all over the county. There is barely anything pretty to look at in PWC anymore. I was born here, work here & lived here for 30 years - and couldn't wait to get out!! There are hardly any options for people that prefer a less congested way of life, own horses, want some TREES in their yard, don't want to see their neighbors...and want these things with the financial support of a PWC paycheck.
- No.
- Yes, because it is less subject to blight, less suburban and the right distance from neighbors.
- No but I live in a conservation area and we bought there because it was a conservation area.
- I started looking at land about 16 years ago. The place I have lived for the past 15+ years was the second piece of land I found. I looked at over 30 other pieces of land and always just kept coming back to that one slice of land and beautiful woods that I live in now.
- No. I live in a semi-rural area, but am seeking a home in a rural area. The attraction of Prince William County for me, was the rural and semi-rural areas. To decrease that would make the area less desirable. Look what is happening to Fairfax County now. The only areas left to be considered as nice now, are the semi-rural and rural areas. Be careful not to take away that which makes the community desirable.
- No.
- The rural area has been my home for over 30 years. It has been an environment that my family has tried to nurture and enjoy. There has always been sacrifices to live in an area further from

the amenities but the pleasure of nature and the seasons have been the rewards. I'm not sure if the new families in the 21st Century are willing to accept the inconveniences of living further from schools, stores and sports complexes. I do know that when the infrastructure is put in the country there will be an explosion of development. When the rural land is lost there is no going back.

- No.
- Not anymore.
- Yes, peace, cleanliness, good neighbors, wholesome life.
- Hope to afford to purchase land/residence someday in rural area.
- Yes I don't like the suburbs. I had a farm w/ sheep and horses. I believe that every county should preserve forests outside public parks for environmental reasons, protection of wild species, the Chesapeake Bay, our water and for beauty. The suburbs that have been recently built don't protect the environment nor the natural surroundings. They do not replant native species nor do they keep meadows. They pollute the water ways w/ chemicals, petrol pollutants. The road situation in this county is horrendous.
- Because after living on 1/4 acre or less lots for 50 years, it is very nice to have 1 or more acres to live on and view. People come out here to see landscapes, not building-scapes.
- We live and own property on the edge of a rural area. Before buying our house, we carefully studied everything we could find on the Internet for future use of the land around us. We bought our house because of the limited development scheduled to go on around us. I enjoy the peace and quiet of living next to a rural area.
- Unfortunately, it isn't as rural as it once was and we do miss that. However, we are enjoying Sudley Manor and the facilities available to us. What we don't like is the heavy traffic on Vint Hill Rd making it difficult to get out of our driveway at busy traffic times. We are fortunate to live far enough off the road so at other times the traffic doesn't bother us.
- I fell in love with a woman who happened to own a house in the Rural Area, and the house location turned out to be a nice bonus to the relationship.
- No.
- Yes, peace and quiet, pleasant neighbors, agricultural use of land (horses, fowl).
- I do live in or near the Rural Area. I live here because it's beautiful, historic and is a wonderful place for my children to grow up. Frankly, developing the Rural Crescent ought to be a crime. We have too many people living here already. Our politicians need to stop taking kickbacks from the developers and start protecting the beauty and historical significance of the area the way their constituents want them to. Prince William County is lovely. Why do you want to put more scars on the land by building more houses, schools and other facilities that aren't needed?
- Yes because it is a low density rural area. It is not my concern to make money for developers or landowners. My concern is my quality of life. If the rural crescent restrictions are removed I will sell my house and move to Fauquier County. This issue comes up all of the time. These developers are like children. They continually ask the same question hoping we will give in out of sheer exhaustion. If the Board does this, their reputation will be tainted by the word

"corrupt." Members of such a Board would be prudent to expect to lose their seat next election. Simple statement of fact--there are consequences to poor decisions.

- I like less density & the solitude.
- No.
- We moved to the Rural Crescent a little over a year ago after having lived in PWC for 22 years. We wished to live in a farming community and have been strong advocates of the Rural Crescent since long before moving here. We raised our children in Bristow, but have benefited greatly from being exposed and exposing them to a rural lifestyle. The one drawback of living here is constantly wondering what is the next threat to our choice to live in the country. Will they tear down the Aden Bridge and widen the road (apparently yes), will they build on every square inch of space available (apparently yes)? Residents in the rural area deserve to know that their choices will not be sold down the river to the next developer or large business that doesn't care long term about the community.
- No.
- I've lived in Nokesville for many years and have watched the surrounding area close in on our town. Without the rural crescent rule, Nokesville would lose its character and become just another development town.
- Did not want to live in a suburban neighborhood with an HOA.
- Yes. Live on farm bought by family in 1950's. Operate business in another location since 1950's.
- I own land in the Rural Area.
- Yes. I live on and farm a farm bought by my parents in 1957.
- No.
- Yes, we live in the rural crescent (off 619 by the airport). The area has been built up over the past 11 years. New shopping centers have been built to support more families. However, we are still zoned 10 acres which doesn't make sense. The land is too small to farm and too big to maintain as a regular lawn. We can't get many public services (snow plowing/sewer/water, etc.) The county would make so much more in taxes if they allowed the residents to break up their land into smaller parcels. We are within a couple of miles from VRE which should be considered a transportation hub (and have higher density of housing). The Meadows at Bristow got around the 10 acres requirement by making thin strips of land that run so far away from their homes. Why should people have to go to this length because of the 10 acre rule. Lastly, families are splitting up their land to deeding the land to their family... however; their family members are building smaller, less valuable homes (lower taxes).
- I would like to comment on questions 15 to 23 at some other time.
- No. Don't like to be far away from stores, public facilities, and don't like drain field/ septic failing issues etc.
- I did not want to live in a suburban environment as is found in Chantilly, South Riding or Centreville. I wanted to live somewhere without home owners associations where farm life. I enjoy spending time outdoors and wanted to live somewhere I could garden in a wildlife friendly environment.

- No.
- Yes, the peaceful, private atmosphere.
- Yes. Moved from Fairfax County to PWC Rural Crescent specifically to get away from development and live in a habitat friendly to wildlife.
- I don't but I love that there's a green area behind my house -- I can get the feel of being surrounded by trees and the sound of so many song birds.
- No.
- I live in Nokesville because of the landscape and how there is little to no construction.
- Wanted a place where I could keep my horses at home, and still be able to commute to work. Wanted to live in a rural environment, away from noise and lights.
- Yes, I live in a rural area because I love the quiet, peaceful lifestyle.
- Yes. I live in the Town of Haymarket which I believe to be rural because it takes everyone an hour to get to work. I live there because my family is close-by and I can afford a nice home in a nice neighborhood for my young family.
- No.
- Property owner, but no longer reside there. Too remote and area.
- Live in a rural area. Privacy and living close to nature are the primary reasons.
- Open spaces, 10 acres, horses.
- No.
- We live in the rural area (RA) on a 10+ acre lot because we enjoy the piece and solitude not available in a subdivision, where we previously lived for 8 years (also in PWC).
- No.
- No, but I feel very strongly that the rural character of southern Prince William County must be preserved.
- YES, I DO. I HAVE LIVED HERE FOR 30 YEARS. I MOVED HERE FOR THE RURAL CHARACTER- THE SMALL COMMUNITY, THE SMALL SCHOOL AND THE PUBLIC PRIDE THAT EVERYONE HAD IN THEIR TOWN. HOWEVER, A LOT OF THAT HAS BEEN DESTROYED ALREADY WITH THE COMING OF LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENTS. NOW, WE NEED BIGGER SCHOOLS, AND THE SMALL TOWN FLAVOR HAS ALMOST TOTALLY VANISHED. DIFFERENT VALUES HAVE REPLACED THE OLD "WORK HARD" STANDARDS THAT WERE ALWAYS TAUGHT BY FAMILIES WHO HAD TO MAINTAIN FARMS AND LARGE PARCELS OF LAND. THE NEW VALUES INCLUDE: LAZINESS AND BAD MANNERS IN YOUTH, AND A DECREASE IN INVOLMENT IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES. DON'T ERODE THE FAMILY VALUES OF THIS AREA FURTHER BY ALLOWING MORE PEOPLE TO MOVE HERE. WE WILL BE JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHER DEVELOPMENT SUBDIVISIONS ALREADY IN THIS COUNTY.
- Yes, I have lived in the rural crescent for about ten years. I love it here because of all the woodland and wildlife. I think the limitations on developers is beneficial for those who live here because not only does it preserve what I love about the area, but it also helps raise home values and encourages more high scale (i.e.) estate development. While I would strongly oppose higher density residential development, I would also hope that for property owners who live here (as opposed to holding it as investment), should a need arise to build another

detached home on the same property - to care for an ailing family member or to create a dwelling more accessible for a disabled family member, for instance - that an exception to 1-house-per-ten-acres rule be made (within reason).

- Yes, I moved to Haymarket area in 1996 before most of the development occurred. I moved there rather than Westridge for the very purpose of not being in a suburban development. Unfortunately suburbia has found me.
- Make hay, keep horses.
- No.
- No. When I moved to the area I moved to a location that is not in the Rural Area as that is what I could afford and am still at that location. I believe it is important to keep land from being developed as the natural environment is something one can't "undo". Certainly people with greater means are more likely to live in the rural area but everyone is able to enjoy it simply by traveling through it. The idea of having communities pop up in areas that once had a back to nature feel to it is sad. On a practical note the auxiliary costs that would be associated with any development would likely have to be picked up to current or future taxpayers. This seems unfair and short sighted. I understand that there are people who want to develop property in order to provide homes, jobs, etc. to a current population --but at what cost? I appreciate the opportunity to voice my concern. Thank you.
- No.
- No, because we couldn't afford it, but as we retire, we will be saving up to live in rural area that has no air, water or soil pollution, no biochemical or any industrial complexes of any kind, and ability to see the stars at night and no traffic noise to be heard. We will live within walking distance of an undisturbed forest that has every tree, shrub, and native plants so that migrating birds can live, breed, and feed to move onto the next migration stop. PWC urban and suburban life has already destroyed valuable habitat for migrating birds. We shall not cut down any more trees or cover up any more meadows with asphalt. These precious ecosystems will not come back. The ecosystems clean our soil and water without spending tax dollars to artificially cleanup said pollution. The Rural Area must stay rural without encroachment of developers. One house on 10 acres of land destroys needed habitat for song birds that need uninterrupted acreages to enjoy their life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. Cloister housing, industry, jobs, shopping, recreational parks within walking distance of residents in already disturbed landscapes. Save the rural areas for us to get rid of stress and reinvigorate our lives by walking among life, so we can stay sane enough to walk on concrete and asphalt to pay for our goods and services. Keep what is left of rural area rural. That is the beauty of PWC. We are not close enough to DC to imagine large companies wanting to move in nor do we want these companies. We want PWC to be the premier bird watching site for Virginia and the East Coast. More money is spent on visiting nature. The GDP grows when we pollute and when we clean up that pollution. PWC does not. When companies pollute, PWC has to clean it up. We don't want to live in a polluted PWC. Keep rural area rural.
- I do not live in the Rural area.
- No.

- No.
- I do not live in the rural area. I am a City of Manassas resident, but many of the 178 members of Write by the Rails live in the county. We like to do "quiet days" or writer retreats where we go to a rural area, spread out to write, come together to share a meal, and then go back to writing.
- No.
- I grew up in rural Prince William in the Nokesville area and have remained here. I enjoy wide open spaces and spending time out of doors and having room for my children to play and explore outside without leaving home. My family gardens and has had small livestock. I do not like the congestion of suburbia nor do I want to be a part of a neighborhood association that creates rules and guidelines for my home and property.
- Yes, because of the natural open space and the love we have for the farming communities.
- I live in the rural area because I wanted to farm for home use: to grow my own food, to raise farm animals for food. I supply for to my extended family and friends. I live in the rural area so I can live where it is quiet and peaceful. I run a home tutoring office and my clients remark often how lovely a drive it is to come to my home.
- I live in the village sector plan area of Nokesville. We have always lived here. I enjoy having a larger track of land.
- I moved to this area of the County specifically because it was rural and with the "Rural Crescent" ruling in place, is guaranteed to stay that way. I am retired military and continue to serve our Country working for the Marine Corps. The rural crescent in Prince William County is unique in Northern Virginia and offers a retreat from the overcrowding and stress of working and commuting in this area. It is so much more important as is than providing developers with the opportunity to make a few dollars.
- I moved here from Woodbridge to be with my partner. I thought I'd miss the urban conveniences of Woodbridge but the privacy and peace in the area is really pleasing. The people in Nokesville appreciate the peace and privacy as well, even though they come off as hostile they mean well. A lot of them have lived here for generations and see the encroaching subdivisions as being treated as second class citizens for various reasons sometimes feeding off their own insecurities (subdivision residents appear to be highly paid government workers with higher education). The rural crescent allows them to oppose aggressive development without exposing their insecurities which they feel, for good reason, can be an embarrassing pink elephant. In addition this area has been their home for generations and they feel the incoming development will result in what is effectively an eviction from their homes and even the county. To add insult to injury, to them it always appears to be outsiders making these decisions for them as opposed to with them (which again feeds into their insecurities). I've only lived in Nokesville since 2008 but there's no doubt the people here feel a great deal of pride in their community, a deep connection to the area from their families' history, and a profound fear that might result in everything being taken away - a fear they vocalize but not always articulately. To them urban development and residential subdivisions symbolize a lack of culture, character, and respect as individuals. I tend to agree since corporate chains tend to proliferate from development.



- In a nutshell, I moved to the Rural Crescent for the quality of life I have there. The ability to be surrounded by nature and wild animals when I walk out my door is something that is essential to my happiness. Being a member of a rural community is much more rewarding than the unfriendliness of urban or suburban neighborhoods. Being able to own land and not having my house so close to my neighbor that I can watch them eating dinner is important. In a rural area it often takes more work to maintain your property, but the ability to get away from all the noise of the city, the violence associated with many parts of cities, the constant noise of traffic and sirens, and not feeling claustrophobic makes the work all that much more rewarding. For me, being rural is just as much as who I am as where I am at. I can't breathe in cities or suburbs.
- Yes, I have lived in the Nokesville Area since 1978. I moved back here as an adult to raise my kids. I love the rural and open spaces. The friendliness of my neighbors and that the area I live in is less transitional.
- No.
- I live in a semi-rural area because we like the quiet and dark night skies. I marked "more control" in many instances but what I really mean is more enforcement of the existing policies. I don't know that the regulations need to be strengthened; rather they need to be enforced. I'd particularly like to see a return to "dark skies" where possible. There is much unnecessary lighting in locations where turning them off or at least pointing them down and using the appropriate materials would not pose a significant safety or security issue.
- No.
- No.
- Yes because we wanted to live someplace where it would be quiet and we would have open space for horses.
- Yes, so that I can have horses and ride and know that a developer is not going to turn it into roads, malls or townhouse/apt. subdivisions, like what has been done in the rest of the County, and the developers' attempts to carve it up continue. The development in the County is hideous, and I'm embarrassed to tell people I live in Pr. William County. I miss the historical and natural beauty that was here before the mass development that has occurred in the last 20 years, which has also attracted lowlife and illegal activity. Thanks a lot, PW County.
- Yes. Just the right combination of residential, nature, and rural.
- Yes. We wanted space, no close neighbors, freedom to develop land for agriculture/horticulture. Easier to be good neighbors when no one is looking in your backyard criticizing you. Also no requirements for nice lawn which requires fertilizers & pesticides which lead to all sort of water quality & environmental problems.
- I hate suburbs I like the country for the safety of my kids.
- No but we're close to it. We moved to a rural property to expand our animal rescue organization.
- No.
- Yes I have lived here all of my life. I went to college in Fairfax and felt like it was too crowded and not the lifestyle I wanted for my family. I moved back to Nokesville, built a home next to family and appreciate the community feel. I love it and would not want it any other way. I feel

like the commercial building that has already taken place is sufficient to serve the public but any additional public building threatens that community.

- Yes - Enjoy the small town atmosphere. Like that houses & neighborhoods are not stacked on top of each other.
- I've been here for 55 years. My family has had property here for over 140 years.
- Yes. Because we have animals and grow vegetables.
- No.
- I do. I purchased a home with land in this area for the purpose of living in a more rural area. I wanted my children to experience like it "was" with playing outdoors without HOA rules, without major traffic.... I wanted my children to experience nature and animals on an agricultural lot. These things have been studied and it has been proven that they are needed for healthy development. I wanted privacy and freedom. Now we are being threatened with this being taken away. When I moved here and purchased this land it was in the rural crescent, had I known there was any plan to develop more in this area, I would have moved elsewhere.
- Yes, because it is more beautiful, more safe, and quieter than living in the city.
- No.
- I grew up in Nokesville and have decided to remain in the town with my family. Our decision was based on the rural community and the desire to raise our children in a safe, private environment where they had the ability to gain life skills and morals by learning the importance of hard work. I hope the community remains the same. The 10 acre per home has slowed down development in the area and I hope the laws do not change.
- No, I prefer to live in a better defined community with higher quality public services, roads and convenient access to shopping / retail stores.
- No.
- No, but own 10 acres.
- We purposely purchased property in 2007 within the rural crescent because it is protected from urban sprawl. We believe having this protection will benefit our property values in the future. We also believe that the smaller, community based schools within Nokesville provide a better learning environment for our children. We are willing to pay higher home prices and taxes for this environment. It also provides the only alternative to mega development living. The county should be spending more time developing other areas not within the rural crescent and drawing in business development there to increase the tax base.
- I live in this area because my family has lived here for decades and used to farm this land when farming was profitable and feasible for the family.
- No.
- Yes I do. I believe it is nice to have some extra space. Having said that 28% of the county is rural. We are in the Metro DC area. This is excessive. I believe our county could benefit by scaling back restrictions. Ten acres is excessive. Also not allowing sewer connections is a mistake. Alternative systems are much more expensive for residents and known to fail. Why impose such restrictions?

- Yes... I moved here from Bristow specifically because of the Rural Crescent. It's what kept my family in PWC. I think it would be detrimental to the county to develop this area. PWC development has been vast and often ill planned. It would be a real shame to open up this land to mass development because the sole beneficiaries would be the large developers! Save this land for our children. They deserve the option of a rural lifestyle.
- To get away from living so close to another person, to have the land to do what I want to on.
- No.
- Yes, because of lower population density and relax atmosphere.
- We are very glad that Nokesville has not turned into a claustrophobic atmosphere like Tartan Hills, Kingsbrook, and all of the neighborhoods leading into Gainesville and Haymarket.
- The environment and low density population.
- Yes, born and raised in the rural area. My family has lived and farmed in Prince William County since the 1700's. I am 35 and have an established and growing farming operation of my own and would like to have an opportunity to continue to grow this business here in Prince William.
- Yes, we just built a custom home on 10 acres off of Orlando Rd. I specifically sought out the Rural Crescent so we could enjoy all of the privacy 10 acre lots have to offer. I know developers keep putting pressure on officials to lessen the restrictions, but this will do nothing to enhance our county. I moved from Braemar neighborhood to get away from the sprawl!! Please protect our land!!
- I do live in a subdivision in the rural area.
- To enjoy nature, live in a clean environment, have privacy, farm land, grow garden, have farm animals. Because it is rural, and I was told it would stay so.
- At one time Haymarket was in a rural area. Now all one sees are houses after houses and the traffic is terrible.
- I have a small 10 acre farm with private horse facility.
- Yes, because we have horses and like the quite open spaces and all the wildlife that is all round and in our woods and fields.
- Yes we do. We have horses and dogs and wanted to raise our children with a lot of outdoor options, as opposed to glued to electronics. Due to the location of my husband's job, we couldn't move too far out.
- I do live in a rural area. I like having a little more privacy and a small piece of property.
- No. But I used to and now I live right on the other side of it. It's nice to live in an area that isn't a mess like Gainesville has become. I may commute a long way to Fairfax County every day, but I want to keep the peace and quiet in western PWC/eastern Fauquier.
- The area off of Vint Hill is peaceful and removes the feeling of being smashed in to a cookie cutter development where your neighbors are within arm's reach. A rural area allows for more of a community feeling, a stress free area where one can relax and enjoy nature.
- I do live in the rural area because I like the laid back, easy life. I enjoy living on acreage and not being on top of my neighbors. I enjoy less restrictions on how I can live. Open fires are a big plus in the rural area, plus having all the farm land around me.
- Yes - Horses and Hay business.

- Privacy except for the fact that Brookfield homes is about to develop 120 acres all around me!
- Yes, wanted more land, good schools.
- No, too expensive for 10 acres.
- Because I wanted space. I wanted a small neighborhood feeling.
- I live in a Rural area because I enjoy the peace & quiet. We farm & hunt on our land. There are no city lights at night & we can see the stars. It is slowly creeping toward us. Crimes are not a problem - our neighbors and I police our road. There are no sidewalks for skateboarders to crowd.
- Yes, we have a small farm.
- No.
- I recently moved out - I lived there for the space and quality of life.
- Yes. We wanted a larger lot with more privacy.
- Yes. I have lived in this home for 30 years. It is a mile from the family homestead, a 269 acre parcel farm owned by the same family since 1882. I live here because we farm and we prefer it to the city or very high density development.
- No. We didn't even know there was a rural area in the county when we bought our house. If we had, we probably would have bought a house in the rural area. I live in Braemar and, as much as I like my neighborhood, I'd like to be a little further away from my neighbors. I'd also like more trees in my neighborhood and on my lot. I hate the developers strip all the trees down when they build. Maybe if they had to build on larger lots - 2, 5, or 10 acres each, maybe then they'd leave more trees.
- Yes. Quiet spaces. Not on top of neighbor.
- I live in a forested "mountainous" area which has been developed since the 1960's. The gentrification of the rural crescent is a worrisome effect of the larger lots and the appeal of Prince William County's location to the urban conurbation of DC. The current politics of the counties policies on residential planning and placement of facilities in High schools rather than in communities- Long park swimming pool verses a high school near the Chinn center with a pool?
- Because it is quiet, away from the hullabaloo. It is one of the few if only clean places not soiled by those wanting to get out of DC; They can keep on looking somewhere else. People take pride in our rural areas and don't try to turn it in to something that doesn't belong here. Move that plan to another county please and take the money whores with you. LEAVE HISTORY ALONE.
- I do not live in the rural area.
- No we do not because when we moved to PWC we had to be closer to I-95 for my husband's work and we could not afford the small farm I really wanted at that point in time. I wanted to live rurally but could not.
- Like the land, trees, air, open space.
- No.
- It is clear that development is encroaching on the rural area; money and developer money talks!! This stated, we are seeing development PUSHED and encouraged into other parts of the County, in many instance as a dirty trade-off. This is particularly the case with the SRR areas, as

are dwindling. Whereas I agree with many of the perspectives of residents of the Rural sector, WHY should folks like me in other parts of the county be asked to PAY for THEIR rural areas...?!!

- To allow my children the opportunity to live in a place where outdoor play is open and invites exploration. To not live with restrictive covenants about how we use our personal property. To enjoy the wildlife of the area. To not be sitting on top of a neighbor, privacy.
- Quiet, open space, less traffic, no HOA, views.

**If you don't live in the Rural Area, have you visited the rural area lately? Why? Where did you go?**

- I work in the rural area. I would prefer it not be so 'rural'. I shouldn't have to drive 5 - 10 miles to have lunch.
- N/A
- N/A
- I have friends that live in the Rural Area, I take my kids hiking regularly, and we going on drives to get away from the crowded area we live in. We drove out to the rural area in the western part of the county last weekend.
- Yes. Visited farms to purchase produce, visited Merrimac farm to take my kids to see bluebells.
- Prince William Forest Park for hiking and recreation. Western Prince William County for photography.
- I live in and I also visit other rural areas where they still exist. The sad fact is that all communities compete to rid themselves of this commodity to increase the tax base, but once it's gone they can't figure out how they got there and how they can go back (you can't). This is why we need to prevent it now before you cannot do anything to stop it.
- No.
- Yes - visited family and friends and to enjoy the outdoors.
- No.
- Almost every weekend. We go to neighboring farms, wineries, parks, etc.
- Every day, I live in the bloody county you fools.
- We went to visit a historic church and also to attend an even in Nokesville. Very pretty area. LaGrange winery.
- Yes. I have friends who live in the rural area in Nokesville. It is nice to see the stars and hear the crickets at night. And not have the sound of cars driving by all evening long.
- I wish I lived in the rural area. I love to go out into nature, see people's farms, and horses and fields. I do not like to see shopping plazas, school parking lots and McMansions.
- Yes. Parks, exercise.
- Yes. Drive through it almost daily. Don't want to see more crappy townhouses, 7-11s and other "visionary" PWC inspired development.
- Yes - Just drove around to see what it looked like.
- Yes - I intentionally drive through the rural areas when traveling on personal business to enjoy the view and character of the rural areas. I also find the traffic much more agreeable than high congestion roads with large trucks and many stoplights.
- N/A
- Farms, back roads for driving & fishing.
- I visit my land every day to check on livestock.
- Yes we are there quite frequently and as a native i love the rural crescent stop trying to destroy it



- To the high school, driving on Vint Hill Rd, walking the dog in Battlefield park area.
- Yes. I like the rural feel so close to where I live. I like living "on the edge" of the massive city with easy access to non-populated areas. When I drive to Quantico from the Bristow/Gainesville area, I like to take the back roads. I enjoy the woodlands and open spaces. It's much prettier than driving down 234, even if it takes a little longer.
- I live in the rural area, purposefully moved from a development area within PWC.
- Although I do live in the rural crescent, it is often still too crowded for me, especially with developers constantly trying to encroach upon every undeveloped area they possibly can. As a result, I spend a lot of my weekends down in central Virginia or the Shenandoah areas. The ability to get outside and enjoy the world around us is irreplaceable. There is more to this world than concrete and asphalt. We should not lose that just so politicians can get bigger donations to their various campaigns.
- Yes, Nokesville.
- Yes, visit farmers, various areas.
- I go to church in the rural crescent and I visit the Manassas Battlefield regularly to hike and walk my dogs.
- Yes.
- Yes, quite frequently. Why--for the view. Outside of Haymarket.
- No.
- Yes. Nokesville. To appreciate the green space.
- Yes. Park trail.
- Yes, I visit relatives who live in Nokesville.
- Yes, Nokesville, all the area around Quantico marine base, Brentsville, - to visit friends, ride my bike, buy antiques.
- Bull Run Park, historic features and walking paths.
- I thought that the Rural Area was created due to the inability of the road system to handle increased traffic. I believe with the 234 bypass that the rural area should be reduced to allow property with easy access to bypass to have more residential development without the need for 10 acre lots.
- I drive through it every day, but soon, that will be impossible thanks to greedy politicians who are putting Loudon County and Dulles Airport economic concerns above preservation.
- Walk the Battlefield & go to the Brentsville site, visit friends on Bull Run Mountain.
- Yes, Haymarket, VA.
- Yes - Carter Mountain Orchard.
- No.
- Live in rural area.
- Yes. I am looking for a home in a rural area, as I plan to sell my home in the semi-rural area. The rural area has come closer to my home and the area simply is not as nice, or safe, as it once was.
- Enjoy open space, views, and photography.

- I drive thru a rural area daily.
- Yes, Brentsville, tourism.
- Yes. Weekly drives.
- Visit friends weekly who live in rural areas.
- I live in the rural area.
- Yes. I drive around Nokesville frequently.
- Yes. I drove through several parts of it because I enjoy the views and the change from the urban bustle I deal with on weekdays. I also stopped at some small businesses in the area to partake of the atmosphere and unique goods offered.
- Yes.
- Regularly visit Manassas battlefield and pw forest park.
- Vint Hill Rd. and Joplin Rd just within the last month. Also frequently visit Bull Run Battlefield and the area surrounding it. We enjoy the scenic beauty of those areas.
- Try to visit a lot, Manassas Battlefield Park, Silver lake, Marshalls park(Fauquier County), local farms that sell produce.
- Yes, I live very close to it, and go back into the rural area to run or take my family into Warrenton to avoid 29.
- Yes; visited a home on Artemus - most relaxing to view the wildlife away from traffic noise; concrete; etc.
- I used to love that mile-long walk from Occoquan to the dam. I wish you could find a way to open that path again. I often go to park to walk and/or eat lunch.
- Yes. We hike and bike in rural areas. We went to Prince William forest and the battlegrounds.
- Not yet, but I think it's a great feature of PWC to have so many rural areas.
- NA.
- Yes. Looking at property to possibly purchase.
- No.
- Yes, I live near the RC and use travel way through the RC in day to day life simply for the views and less traffic.
- Yes, we went hiking.
- Nokesville.
- On 234, very pretty. This SHOULD BE A FULL HIGHWAY already. Packaged North South Highway deal with rural property preservation.
- I have visited because of the peacefulness and the back to nature. I have visited Forest Park, Leesalvania Park and the Battlefields.
- We go to some farm events during the spring and fall in both Fairfax and Prince William counties
- Various parks and open areas such as Brentsville Historic Centre, Bristow Battlefield, Manassas Battlefield, Bull Run Mountain, Silver Lake.
- Yes. We've been out to several vineyards, parks, and wandering.

- I live near Costco in Manassas. I traveled to Haymarket and visited Silver Lake. It is beautiful! I saw a school that backed up to the park. When I went to the front of the school I saw that I passed a lot of homes that I refer to as McMansions. They all are close to a golf course and don't seem to have the character that I would think would be desirable in a rural area, but then I think the purchasers are finding exactly what they want, or they wouldn't buy there. It definitely screams classy suburbia. I like classy and I like suburbia, but I like rural better. I also traveled to Middleburg down Route 15. I saw some older homes that seemed much more in keeping with what I would expect to be part of a rural setting. We don't need more development. Unless one happens to be a developer or affiliated with one.
- To the battlefield. ..for historical appreciation and beautiful scenery.
- It is not about visiting the Rural Area, it's about having the Rural area for future generations to enjoy. I may not be able to get there right now, but it is extremely important to me to have it there when I can get away from my studies. Once it's gone, it's gone, and we become the polluted PWC, the dirty bedroom of DC. Please, take a percent of my taxes to preserve the natural beauty that I want my great grandchildren to visit and take pictures of and journal about.
- I have visited the rural area lately. I visit friends who live there; I frequent parks and other open space attractions such as Manassas Battlefield, Bristoe Battlefield, Silver Lake park.
- No.
- Have passed through on Route 29.
- Featherstone and Merrimac Farm for quiet days and to see bluebells, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Silver Lake and private property in Prince William. As a freelance writer, I also work to promote Nature Visions Expo the annual photography event at the Hylton Center. Year round, seven photography clubs in the Washington Metro area seek out rural areas to photograph wildlife and scenes that do not have "the hand of man" in them. Members of the Manassas Warrenton Camera Club have been winners of the annual photography competition with photos taken in Prince William County.
- Park.
- Yes, I go out to Nokesville frequently. I go to Merrimac Farm WMA for birding and nature activities, drive along Route 28 to reach Route 17. It's a much more pleasant and scenic drive than the eastern part of PWC and Rt. I-95.
- Traveled through it and enjoyed the drive.
- I live in rural crescent, but have also spent time this summer in central Virginia, where it is even more rural. Places like Orange County. I did that because even living where I do, it is still too crowded. It is nice to get away and be able to escape the madness.
- Yes, personal reasons. Yes, scuba diving at Millbrook Quarry.
- What is rural business, agricultural business, what does agribusiness mean to PW?
- I live in a rural area and wish you would keep the bikes off our roads its dangers for the drivers and bikers make them find a park!!!!!! I thought that's what parks are for that's way we don't have bike lanes out here!

- My wife and I travel through it every once in a while. For me, going through, or visiting the rural area, gives me a sense of relaxation.
- Yes, Nokesville, Greenwich.
- Yes out 15 and 55 both.
- Yes. Drove through to Fauquier County and to Haymarket - Saddle Liquidators.
- I only drive through the Rural Area on the way to work. There is VERY little to 'visit' in the Rural area outlined on this map.
- Every day, I live next door your morons, I can't avoid it.
- N/A.
- Yes. Visit farms for fresh eggs, produce, honey and horseback riding.
- Yes because I live right next to it and use the parks and have friends who live in it.
- N/A.
- I live and play here!!
- Yes, my parents and most of my friends live there so I visit very often. It's one of the best areas of Prince William County since there are many hardworking folks that both live and work in the area - this is a rarity in the county as many people are commuting to DC and Fairfax. I typically am visiting the Bristow/Nokesville corridor.
- My family lives in the rural area.
- Bull Run Battlefield. I enjoy the trails around the Battlefield and the natural beauty.
- Yes, visited Silver Lake Park.
- I live in Rural area.
- Yes, to look at homes for sale. A few different locations.
- Yes, Girlfriend, Nokesville- Hazelwood.
- We hike Beverly's Mill on the regular. We have family that lives in the rural crescent. I drive through it every day.
- Yes, parks, and sports complexes.
- Pass through as we're heading to Leesburg.
- I work in Nokesville.
- I visit Nokesville all the time to have lunch and see friends. I've visited PWC Forest Park several times as well. Beyond that, there really isn't much to do in the rural area because it's farms and houses. PWC doesn't have many parks or recreation areas in the rural crescent to visit.
- NA.
- I GO TO VISIT MY FRIENDS WHO LIVE IN QUIETER AREAS THAN I DO.
- I visit the rural area frequently to visit friends who live in the Haymarket area, and I frequently have the opportunity to drive through the rural area.
- We go through them frequently for a variety of reasons - to get farm fresh produce and foods to support local farmers because without them we are forced to import more foods from other countries or are forced to purchase foods that may have pesticides and be such things (GMO) that we do not want to show my kids where their food (produce to meat) comes from and the importance or farming to all communities.

- Visited pw forest park for hiking, water, trees, nature.
- Yes, bicycling in the area close to Nokesville.
- Visit it occasionally - parks and the like.
- N/A.

## What do you value about the Rural Area?

- Farming, hunting, neighbors not so close, quiet and beautiful nature.
- Appreciate less density, but believe that 10 acres is too high of a minimum. Would like to see a mixture of large lots, with opportunities to build developments on 2+ acres as well.
- Reduced development. Less development would be better.
- The beauty, the quietness and the slower pace it seems to foster.
- Peace, beauty, and tranquility of the landscape and views. It has a country feel with simplicity.
- Space and land. Not having wall to wall houses and enjoying the environment. I love the wildlife around us and would hate to lose it.
- Open space with the ability of my kids to run around outside, play with their friends over large areas without having to worry about traffic, the fact that many families have lived here for generations ... but they have welcomed those of us who have come here more recently.
- The variety of natural landscapes - woods, fields, farms, and parks.
- Less density and open space.
- The open, green spaces and preservation of plant/animal species. People need a place to commune with nature.
- Um, the RURAL part. The opposite of a city. Not a ton of big lights, not a lot of cars racing through or shopping centers. Having farms, horses, chickens, etc close enough for the kids to see them regularly.
- Open, uncongested views. Safety. Reduced traffic. Less crime. Less people.
- It stops sprawl and it prevents developers from building tax negative neighborhoods.
- The peacefulness and beauty of the area. It is a treasure that we continue to brag about to our friends who live in the rat race of city life.
- The beauty of nature.
- Nature, animals, less traffic, quiet and neighbors not right on top of you.
- Rural speed limits. The openness and breathable lifestyle.
- The open spaces and lack of development.
- Open space and maintaining a "country" type viewshed. If I didn't want trees and open space, I would have stayed in Fairfax.
- I moved to PWC to enjoy open land, farms, parks, and because it does NOT look like Centreville, Fairfax, or most of Northern VA. I do not want to see further residential development of areas that were long ago designated to be kept open, especially when our schools are overcrowded and under-performing and existing county services are inadequate, especially for parks and athletic fields that EVERYONE can enjoy. I do not want to see western PWC look like Springfield VA, which is what, will happen unless county gov't takes a proactive approach to land management. If they want to develop, attract good businesses and industries that provide a solid tax base and will make western PWC more than the bedroom community it is now.
- Unspoiled land with trees and wildlife.
- The peace and quiet.



- The ruralness. Leave something from the natural world behind...stop destroying everything beautiful about this land. Wipe clean the areas already destroyed if you want to do something useful, but don't destroy new land just because it's easier.
- Control of development and preserving natural resources.
- Nature.
- Nature.
- Peace and quiet! Less traffic and road congestion! No big highways!
- The ability to enjoy and teach our children about nature when their everyday life is inundated with urban design.
- The parks, the historical spaces, the quiet.
- That in a day and age where all you see are strip malls, development on top of development and lots of concrete, it is nice to come home to a lovely backyard where the kids can play and there is wildlife.
- Nature the way God intended. Open space and not having overpopulated areas.
- QUIET. Not a lot of traffic, crime, etc.
- All of the positive previously noted in the survey.
- Room to breathe. Beautiful Virginia countryside. Retaining some farmland close to urban areas.
- I disturbed land, local farming.
- Nothing.
- Less traffic, open spaces, less density of buildings, we need trees & plants to counteract the pollution that is generated by the other parts of the county.
- Lack of development.
- Because of its wildness, and peacefulness, and the ability for people to continue to have small working farms in our county. I live in Westgate because it is what I could afford at the time, but if I could, I would have bought a lovely farm in the Rural Area. I would rather be defined by our rural places in PWC than our shopping centers.
- Lack of congestion. No wall to wall townhouses sucking the life out of the County coffers. Peace and quiet.
- Natural beauty, natural resources, beautiful wildlife, peace and serenity of completely natural land. We want to keep it that way and do not want it developed.
- It's not full of crappy neighborhoods backed up against each other, strip malls, convenience stores, and other suburban wastelands like the rest of the county.
- Leaves part of the county underdeveloped so less congestion.
- I value the limited amount of busy roads and highways around this area. I value the amounts of farm properties and rural areas round my property.
- We value the open spaces and "old time country feel" of the Rural Area, although it is rapidly decreasing as housing developments along Rt. 28 and Vint Hill encroach upon the border, and with the traffic along Vint Hill Road and Kettle Run Drive.
- Little. I have less ability to maintain my property because of the zoning restrictions.

- By its very name "rural" we have the lifestyle we desire. Folks that love townhouse living can do so in other areas, folks that love to live in a home where you can link arms and touch your neighbor's home can do so in other areas. Here we have an option, and that option should never be taken away and surely never seized because a developer desires more townhouse net revenue. No one is cookie cutter in their selection of homes and lifestyle, the BOCS should not shoehorn people into a lifestyle that only meets the needs of the developer.
- The quiet.
- Low density green space.
- Being able to get away. Preserve "Hallowed Ground"
- Open spaces, wildlife, less commercial traffic, friendlier fellow drivers than on major roads, the feeling of being "in the country" without having to drive long distances.
- Our historic heritage and land cannot be replaced. Once we lose them to development and pavement, they will never be reclaimed. By having a Rural Crescent, we are also helping the environment by having tree canopy.
- The low density housing.
- Low density residential properties.
- Location, Location, Location; less crime than in the larger urban and suburban areas.
- Less demand for government services. Less ugly subdivisions. Greater habitat for animals. Better for the environment.
- Rural says it all!
- I think the rural area is good for preserving ground water and run off issues. I also think public sewer should be used when possible to prevent contamination of ground water from failed septic systems.
- Lack of development. Infrastructure can barely hold current developed land.
- The beauty of Virginia's rural area for generations to come. Streams, rivers, rolling valleys, farmland.
- I love the peace and relaxation that comes from having rural areas so accessible.
- The beauty and serenity of my property. I cannot imagine finding a more perfect location.
- Areas of less density and encouraging small farms.
- Greenery. Less traffic. Openness.
- Wildlife and quiet.
- The open space, quiet, and abundant wild life.
- Forests, agriculture, open/private owned land, and small town communities - QUALITY OF LIFE. Less traffic and less congestion.
- One of the most valuable and critically important things about the rural crescent in Prince William County is its location. Our rural crescent allows people to experience the rural living, yet remain critically close to their jobs. Without the rural crescent we would be forced to move to completely different locations farther away from the metropolitan area, probably to different states, and lose opportunities for quality jobs with decent salaries. The rural crescent also preserves the history, culture, atmosphere, and character of Virginia as it has been for hundreds of years. It protects our water tables, the environment, and our air quality. It protects

what wildlife this area has left. These things are necessary for balance in our world. Personally, I value the quality of life and peace of mind it allows me to have.

- What I valued about the Rural Area is gone. The peacefulness, the quiet and the tremendous amount of stars that could be viewed. Route 15 is always a traffic jam now. The schools are overcrowded. The stars are obscured by light pollution from all the neighborhoods and lights at the high school and Long Park.
- Tranquility and beauty.
- Lack of people. Absolutely no more housing developments should be allowed unless the infrastructure is build first and then it must be controlled. There are TOO many homes and not enough businesses in PWC.
- I think the rural crescent is what makes Prince William County. I moved from Fairfax, where practically every square inch was paved over and appreciate the value of open space.
- Country roads with lighter traffic, wildlife, space between neighbors, country landscaping with many trees and colorful seasons...basically getting away from it all when we get home. We near a very urban area, but have a complete country feel at home. It's perfect.
- Too many people in the area-too many new developments.
- The natural environment. Especially, horses, the farms, and the woods.
- Appearance of wooded / open environment.
- Less density.
- Environmental balance to county development.
- The things I love about the rural area is the wide open spaces, farms, trees, "historic fee" of the area, and lack of cookie cutter housing developments, strip malls, industrial parks, etc. It preserves a sense of what Prince William of yesteryear was. I feel a little bit like I'm going back in time when I go to the rural area, and it gives me an idea of what it was like for my ancestors in Prince William County. I hope to be able to move into a property in the Rural Crescent someday.
- Farms, beauty, low development, open space, forest land, winding roads, wildlife, peace and quiet.
- Quiet, LESS TRAFFIC.
- I like the lower density and somewhat slower pace as compared to areas like Woodbridge.
- That it is a RURAL AREA! What about that don't you understand?
- Clean, green and peaceful.
- Quiet open spaces.
- Everything listed in #15 - scenery, less congestion. This county could learn SO much from Fauquier in the respect that you have a few "towns" and people live outside of the town. With the exception of the occasional convenience store/gas station, when people need to shop/dine etc they go into town. This way of life can support large parcels of farm land, private land or even affordable townhouse, apartment or single family home subdivisions.
- In 1985 my husband and I relocated to PWC from FFx Co to take advantage of the plushness greenery (the richness) of the County. Since then we had kids and I can't count the number of times we've ventured to local battle grounds, parks, farms, and historical sites practically in our

backyard. That's why we love PWC. In addition, we patronize our local farmers by visiting the farmer market weekly and taking trips to local orchards. We love it! Nature at its BEST.

- Pastoral setting, small school setting (before it got bigger), no two houses look alike, don't have to worry about a lot of noise, people hanging out on streets, junk cars parked everywhere, etc.
- Keeping the land and not allowing subdivision after subdivision to be built here. I'd like to keep our woodlands intact as much as possible.
- I grew up in Baltimore City and while I can't say that I have always wanted a house in the woods, once I found this place I can't imagine living anywhere else. The nature of this area is the key to that feeling for all of us that live here.
- Escape from suburban environment that fills much of northern Virginia. I love being able to see the wild life.
- Open space, less congested and positive environmental effects.
- The rural area has a high value and should be preserved. Mechanisms should be in place to help protect and maintain the rural area such as TDRs and other voluntary methods.
- The look of farm, fields, the feel of being away from the hurrying around and people.
- Relaxed and less crowded, especially on the roads.
- It is rural. Less traffic and congestion and less harassment from aggressive drivers found elsewhere in the County. –
- Everything about the way it exists today.
- Open space more, uncongested roads, facilities. Moved to PWC from downtown Alexandria to live in more rural area with open space. Don't change the current policies protecting rural areas. We need smart business development in existing non-rural areas, rather than the proliferation of new housing developments, which lead to immediate overcrowding of schools and roads. Still amazed that we don't require construction of roads and schools before or simultaneous to residential development. We're always playing catch up with schools, roads, and other public facilities, while the kids and resident families bear the brunt of this poor development framework.
- The beauty, the quiet, less light pollution. I also believe that woods, forests, farm land are a necessary part of a county's desirability living spaces. Forests and meadows, streams, ponds etc are beautiful, provide a welcome contrast to suburbs and strip malls. It is also each county and state responsibility to preserve wild spaces for animal and plant species to survive and thrive, to protect our water, to protect beauty. Protection of farm land is very important to the county and states food safety and availability. Small farms are an important way of life. It is beautiful. I enjoy the birds, animals and plants. I enjoy the native plants and animals.
- Rural character of people, views, air, lack of noise, nature, animals, seeing weather from horizon to horizon develop.
- Peace and quiet, low density of people, open space, forest, beauty, agriculture, farmers' markets.
- The peace and quiet and all the nature around us, especially the deer and their little ones! Also enjoy the local corn and other vegetables.

- It offers variety, a different experience from the typical crowded suburban landscape in Centreville or Dale City. It offers a chance to see natural areas, if only while driving through in a car, and opportunities to get out of the car and experience quieter, greener places. It offers an opportunity for the county to minimize property tax increases, if new infrastructure investment (especially for roads) reflected the low population density of the Rural Area.
- The openness, the beauty, and the fact it isn't suburban.
- Lower density, less traffic, farming lifestyle/culture.
- It is gorgeous. Many people died here so that we could have our freedoms and liberties. Now all our elected officials care about is getting back into office with the help of the developers. I cherish the Rural Crescent because it is a place in which I can raise my children, taking them to parks and battlefields or just for a drive in the gorgeous scenery. If our politicians have their way, all of that will be gone because of the lure of the all-mighty dollar.
- The benefits are obvious. Where would you rather live? Crime infested Dale City or Nokesville where you don't even have to lock your doors, ever.
- Trees.
- The beauty, open spaces, woods, lower population density, open roads, etc.
- I have a friend from Fairfax who stopped his car, got out and stood gap jawed looking at a farm in Nokesville. He indicated to me that he had been born in Fairfax, raised in Burke and graduated from college yet had never seen a cow in a field in Virginia ever!!! My kids are learning agro business, they are learning where food comes from, they are learning life lessons that simply aren't available 5 miles from here. At night, after putting the chickens up, my wife and I walk down the gravel lane and can see the stars, hear the frogs and smell the fresh air. We are living healthier and enjoying it more.
- Open space, natural, wooded areas, more peaceful, quiet atmosphere.
- Open space, distant neighbors, community feel. Open space, less congestion. But 5 acre lots are large enough for maintaining these aspects.
- Low congestion. Open space, but still could be achieved with 5 acre lots.
- Green space, natural beauty, unspoiled landscapes only lightly touched by man.
- It is pretty but you can't sustain at this rate. More and more people are moving out from the city. Why not take advantage, bring more revenue into the county?
- Green open space, no traffic, no development, cultural heritage, landscape, local produce, rural character.
- Open spaces, the beauty, horse farms, and keeping our area (Gainesville) less dense.
- Above.
- Same as 15.
- Habitat for wildlife and putting limits on further development.
- The connection to nature is reenergizing. In such a hectic and traffic-burdened environment, rural areas are stress reliever.
- Trees and trails.
- Open land, public parks and space, positive for the environment.
- Peace and quiet. Wild animals. Virginia Bluebells. Room to keep horses. Places to ride.

- For its beauty, peacefulness, historic values, and the type of people that choose to live there.
- Open space. Quiet lifestyle.
- I thoroughly enjoy the outdoors and think that special natural areas should be preserved but not on the grand scale of the rural crescent).
- Nothing.
- The fact that you can drive through the RC and forget that the rest of your week is spent sitting in bumper to bumper traffic while looking at strip malls and cookie cutter suburban sprawl.
- A place to get away from the hustle and relax and enjoy nature.
- The rural lifestyle? Everything without giving up anything. I grew up in the urban sprawl of Houston back in the 70s, and it is easy to see the same fate possible for PWC.
- It is rural.
- It must exist to balance out poor planning in Woodbridge/Occoquan. Because of poor decisions by the county over 10 years ago, they are building on the only remaining wooded areas in my neighborhood. Do we really need another Chick Fil-a in Woodbridge or bank by the Chinn Center. Seriously? Stop this madness; if it is about jobs, these aren't the types of low-paying jobs we want in our neighborhoods anyway.
- THE OPEN AREAS. THE CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED HERE FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS. THE CHURCH COMMUNITIES. NOT HAVING NEIGHBORS TOO CLOSE.
- Its character, its nature, its people.
- I value my land and the open spaces. The quiet. The stars.
- Agriculture, forest land and woodlots, quiet.
- I think farm land and just good old country is important. A local farmers market and such is good for the community. I also think it's important for the environment.
- Provides a great community resource and allows the County to have a diverse community.
- Clean air, open space, quaint towns, less traffic, opportunities, to explore and play.
- Trees, rolling hills, less pollution, less congestion, green, birds singing, trickling water, peace, relief from hectic-ness, brighter stars, and more.
- It gives a good balance to the congestion we normally have in NOVA. It gives us clean air from the many trees, allows beautiful wildlife to flourish, allows citizens to enjoy nature. It is unique asset of our area and smart thinking that future generations will appreciate and enjoy.
- The value of the Rural Area is the ability for the song birds to migrate and survive their journey every year because we did not pave over their migration stop overs. The value of the Rural Area is to take pictures and journal and relax the mind while hiking and enjoying the sights and sounds of nature; to forget the job, the noise, and the pollution of urban and suburban life.
- The author John McGee once said The Wilderness holds answers to questions man has not yet learned to ask. Large, empty open space is therapeutic. It offers the solitude every human needs from time to time. It is essential for our health. The list can go on and on.
- Keeps a nice balance in the county.
- That the local jurisdiction values green space and it is close by so that City residents can visit. Green space is important to the arts -- photography, writing, etc.
- Getting out of the burbs.



- I love the wide open spaces, seeing livestock, feeling closer to the land and the food that we eat.
- We value the tradition of the American farming community. The fact that we don't have lights from the city to ruin the beauty of the country nights. The wildlife is such a gift to experience on a regular basis.
- Peace and quiet--nice to see livestock---slower pace of life. Less pavement and less people. The ability to get away for a while.
- I value the space for wild life. When I take a walk on my 12 acre lot I see some of the most beautiful wild flowers - prettier than any flowers I plant in my garden. I am able to look at birds, turtles, foxes, skunks, groundhogs, mice, deer and rabbits all on my own property. After 20 years on the same property, I still get excited to see a doe and her two fawns nursing. I pay taxes to the county for the pleasure of keeping my land private. I don't want the county to take someone else's money to make open parkland; we have enough parkland and rural land. Let those private land owners support the rural crescent through their private stewardship.
- I value the open space and the closeness to farms and animals. I also really value having fewer people around. I feel safer here. There are not cars filled with people I don't know driving by all the time. I know ALL my neighbors, yet there is plenty of room between our homes. I have room for my pets and don't have to worry about infringing on other people's peace and quiet. I have room for all my hobbies and love sharing my love of the country with other people who feel the same. Also, while this area is open and "country", it is close enough to my work for a reasonable commute as well as visiting the museums and monuments in DC.
- I value the serenity the green space imparts. Concrete and crowds seem disrespectful to the environment and are a constant barrage to the senses. I feel like I think clearer just by being surrounded by nature. While farming can be an assault to the environment, farmers are practicing more sustainable ways to farm and they can benefit from the local food (localvore) movement. Farmers markets are rapidly increasing in our area which means there is an obvious appreciation for food being grown and raised locally. I also value the rural area because it tends to attract people who also value the rural area for what it naturally is. It attracts friendly people who appreciate peace and privacy for example. Subdivisions tend to attract people who glorify busy and who over appreciate conformity. Neither of these are absolutes. Rural areas also attract people who would try to take advantage of the vast space purely for profit with no regards for the community. Subdivisions also rapidly build a tax base and attract modern conveniences both of which increase the benefits to the community as a whole. The serenity of green will typically trump any benefit subdivisions and urban development can bring, at least in my eyes but that doesn't mean that I oppose all development. Development is going to happen and I might as well choose the way it develops so I can continue to want to live here.
- About this rural area in particular, there are many things I value. One of the most, however, is the location. It is ideal to be able to live in a rural setting that is still within commuting distance to a good job. If we lost the rural crescent, I would have to move to a completely different area probably with less job opportunities. That is one of the many important benefits of the Rural Crescent in PWC. Location, Location, Location, as they say. It also helps to preserve the

atmosphere, culture, character, and appearance of Virginia as it has been for hundreds of years. It protects the environment and the water tables. It provides a much needed balance of city/suburban living with "country" living. Fairfax has lost its character in all of the pavement. Eastern Loudoun has also, and continues to, lose its character amidst all the development. It also promotes hard work and values that make America what it is.

- Open space, my neighbors do not sit right next to me.
- The Rural Area helps keeps taxes for ALL County taxpayers down but not allowing tax-revenue negative residential development. This survey is poorly structured because it implies that backing off from the Rural Crescent concept will cost taxpayers. The opposite is true.
- The quiet.
- Open space. Quiet Trees.
- Open space. Little congestion.
- Open space, preservation of land, and especially stream protection which is not effective in more dense areas.
- Private quite no drama great schools with good values.
- Habitat for wildlife, open spaces, forests, no buildings/people, less pollution, gives the mind a rest & peace.
- Growing up in a very small town in Southern Illinois I grew to love the rural life. It was the definition of RURAL....To me it gives you a much different outlook on life, versus the suburban or city life. It seemed there was more freedom, and less stress.
- The space between neighbors is good, the air is clean and there is not much construction or overload of loud traffic.
- It used to be enjoyment of wildlife in natural habitats and their sounds. I find this no longer available because of the introduction of the government training facility which also pollutes my air and causes acid rain on my property.
- Not having the HOA restrictions and the lack of neighbors on top of you.
- The quiet less hurried atmosphere. Good night sky views, unimpeded by city lights.
- See above....Nature. Old fashion way of living. Friendly people that know each other and wave to each other. Family values. Freedom for children to be children and be creative without structure/rules/etc. I may not always agree with these things (like the overly-religious stuff) but the good far out-weighs the bad.
- Open spaces, beautiful landscapes, and hospitable "country" people.
- Aside from the natural beauty, rural character of limited development, and environmental benefits, the value to my everyday life is that hoards of residents don't drive through toward my area in Lake Ridge and clog the roads as they go toward their jobs. As development has grown further west from Lake Ridge, the transportation impacts have been immense and Old Bridge Road carries a great load that the Prince William County Parkway does not. While developers have to address transportation right near where they develop, "downstream" areas have to suffer.
- It's possibility for growth and development. It's an ideal place to construct highways that connect commuters to work areas to unburden traffic on 66, 29, 28, and Prince William Pkwy.

Once the roads are in place, better land uses can be considered that will bring jobs and revenue to the area.

- It keeps the county from growing at an even more insane rate.
- Privacy.
- I value everything - the scenery, the smaller Nokesville schools, the fact that not everyone is from the same socio economic backgrounds. (Gee kids, not everyone gets a brand new car for their 16th birthday) The fact that its a slower pace of life amidst the urban sprawl of DC. I value the farms, the people, the less transient nature and the ability to have gardens and livestock - I value the fact that I can raise my children where they can run free and know where their food comes from. I love the sense of community it fosters which is much different that the mega development "communities". Unfortunately, we have to live in the DC region due to my husband's work and living in the rural crescent is the ONLY thing that makes this reality palatable. Honestly, I try not to venture beyond its boundaries on a daily basis unless absolutely necessary. I also try to patron only rural crescent business. Opening up this area to further development would be absolutely heart breaking and would destroy what little character is left.
- I value the rural setting and lack of intrusion; however, I also value the need for some commercial and development which has enhanced my ability to more readily obtain things like groceries, restaurants, and entertainment.
- Preserving our agricultural land is imperative.
- Outside the rural crescent, PWC has become one large suburban sprawl. I value the land and the streams and the wildlife and the option to live a rural lifestyle.
- My peace and ability to do what I want on my land.
- The open space and its impact on lessening the potential for more dense development in PWC.
- Open spaces and trees. The rural character/nature of the land.
- Peace, quiet, and people who take pride in their homes & property, and feel a true connection and value to their 'non-rat-race' environment.
- Less light and noise pollution. Rural lifestyle, beautiful land, natural resources.
- The ability to grow high value crops for direct sales to a large nearby population center. The history and natural resources also.
- The history and the character. I love driving through Nokesville and seeing the few working farms that are left. It is such a peaceful drive down Aden Rd!!
- The cohesiveness of the community and respect for resources.
- I like the idea of a lot of land, but 10 acres for a house is way too much land for most to take care of and their place ends up looking shabby. Why can't there be a mix of rural and subdivisions.
- Less traffic, less traffic lights, less people to deal with. Beautiful views, open farm land, historic properties, it is a better way of life.
- Being rural.
- The natural beauty--trees, farms, and the animals living in their natural habitat. The tranquility is fabulous.
- Open areas with not congested traffic.

- The open space, the county as it used to be, framing and farm animals roaming the fields and pastures. The quite at night and on the weekend.
- I value green, neighbors who are neighborly, seeing deer and turkey alive, not dead by the side of the road. I value local produce and meats and dairy. I value a place to escape the traffic (well, not on Rte 29) and all the people, to not have to listen to the neighbor's parties or arguments.
- The openness, quitter.
- Openness, privacy, less density.
- Less development, farm markets, not seeing ugly houses built on top of each other!
- Nature, farming, wildlife, just the simple fact that a person can feel safe in a open environment of nature. If you want to live on top of your neighbor and deal with the unrelenting traffic (foot and vehicle) with the nonstop feeling of always needing to be on go, I highly recommend a person lives in DC, Arlington or Fairfax.
- The Nokesville area has, in my opinion, lost its ruralness. For example, the Manassas airport runway requires planes to fly directly over the area. Planes occasionally crash and having open space provides opportunity for less trama. However, noise level is pretty high. Traffic is pretty high and moves fairly fast. Police who are late for range meetings scamper through, though trucks are not supposed to go through Aden road still make the journey and on weekends you get alot of bike traffic. With the addition of the new elementary school along with the fairly new high school - traffic will become even higher. What I would value from a rural area is relative quiet, serene views, large working farms and/or ranches and little litter being thrown out the windows.
- My privacy and letting my children be able to run around outside and play like I did :) also enjoy seeing the nature and animals around us.
- No HOAs, no cookie cutter homes, the most diverse income mix in the county.
- The feel of the country being so close, open spaces, opportunity to engage in adult sports.
- Small-town, fresh air, and animals.
- Serenity.
- Open space, less people, less traffic, nicer folks...we want to keep developers OUT.
- It's beautiful horse country. I love that PW can offer that lifestyle.
- Space, rural nature, small community feel.
- I like having a part of the county that isn't open to residential or commercial development. PWC has practically no businesses located here, outside of retail, and most of our suburban houses use more in county resources than they provide in property taxes. Preventing or carefully selecting projects in the rural crescent probably saves me money on my taxes as I don't have to pay for services for homes that don't exist.
- Natural habitat. Wildlife.
- Peace, wildlife, space, you can hang out your washing and plant what you want where you want to.....
- It is history and it has served generations of people who do not think of taking someone else's property for the sake of trying to make it better for others who don't even live there.

- Listed in no particular order: Provides area for some agricultural and related uses. Provides area for rural life style without being too far from the city. Provides for rural scenic values enjoyed by those who live there as well as others. Provides natural areas for enjoyment of nature and for environmental protection. Protects historic sites from encroachment by modern urban development. Provides a desirable alternative to urban development, for which there is at least enough area in the County. Provides area for low intensity land uses needed to balance the high intensity land uses of the urban areas - this is important to preserve the integrity of watersheds and to provide a desirable and varied living environment. Does its part to reduce the strain on the County's transportation system and community facilities by significantly reducing the number of persons living there. Prevents the development of a vast number of additional homes, which would further destroy the balance between the County's residential and commercial land uses. Enhances the County's finances - County is more desirable as location for living and running a business.
- Everything. It is vital to our lives and also if you want to own a horse but are not zoned where you are, you need places to board and it is getting harder to find stables and such in PWC. This means people are going to other counties with their business and horses are a big buck thing.
- Nature and architecture.
- Open space.
- The peace and serenity.
- The quiet and the green.
- Space, not too much sprawl, parks and clean air.

## What role should the Rural Area play in Prince William County's future?

- Everyone enjoys the rural setting and we have bicyclists almost every weekend riding our quieter roads and people enjoy jogging and walking too. We have open house at a dozen farms each fall. Several local farms produce good veggies for all to enjoy and I think the citizens of the denser parts of PWC enjoy visiting the rural areas for a refreshing taste of what PWC used to be like.
- It should retain its character as rural/forested area.
- Keeping Prince William, Prince William!
- Western Prince William County has been defined as a great place to live and raise a family. People move here because the environment is attractive. Destruction of the rural crescent will destroy the identity of this great county and make it less attractive. I moved here despite the traffic challenges I face going to work each week. I truly believe property values would decrease.
- It should always be a vital piece of Prince William County's landscape and not to turn northern PWC into what southern PWC looks like.
- Preserve the rural areas for generations to come. Once the area is destroyed we won't be able to go back to its' pristine state.
- The Rural Area plays a vital role in the future of PWC. PWC is unique in that it has rural, urban and suburban areas all in the same county. I would hate to see it lose this uniqueness.
- It should remain a foil to all the congested, cookie-cutter housing that plagues PWC. It can be as enjoyable to drive past as Fairfax Station, Clifton, and Great Falls in Fairfax County and the northern part of Montgomery County.
- It needs to play a critical role.
- It should stay a priority.
- Living in Gainesville, I have seen this area become more and more congested. Proximity and access to rural areas is key to my continuing to enjoy living in this area. If we lose much more, I'm prepared to move from the area (Fauquier County).
- It needs to be kept, and not shrunk at all. It is a unique resource and should be valued as such.
- The rural area should play a significant role. Not only from a historical perspective but also from a desirability to live out here. If the character changes to more urban, why would people want to live out here? Drive 2 hours each way to work to STILL live in a city? No, the uniqueness of PWC is its rural character. And people are willing to pay - both in commute time and pricing to live here.
- It should play an extremely important role in the future of the county.
- It should be valued and preserved. What are you willing to turn this beautiful area into?
- It must be kept close to the way it is. Manassas Battlefield is filled with incredible history and we find it a sacred park to visit with friends and family. The farms are also very valuable to our community.
- It should be prepared for 'progress'. It's not realistic to live/work this close to DC and expect it's going to remain Mayberry forever.



- The Area should be preserved with current roads maintained; without having mega highways.
- A huge amount. If we can only trust the county to "do the right thing" and not sell the soul of the county to the developers.
- Prince William County should put in place policies that protect our open space.
- Preserve PWC's agricultural heritage while ensuring that they are has plenty of open space for parks and other common use area that will enhance quality of life in PWC for everyone.
- Land preservation, recreation, and beautification while preserving the land for future generations.
- Maintain the open area.
- Just being rural is, in itself, the role it should play. Leave it as an example for the rest of Virginia to copy.
- Pwc should be encouraging farm and forest preservation.
- It should be protected by the County.
- Preservation, need to make smart decisions that the county wants not what the government wants.
- More parks!
- It should be marketed as a retreat from the urban areas county residents are accustomed to by providing trails and other outdoor uses not found in the more urban areas of the county.
- The rural area should be preserved! Don't sell out to developers who will ruin this part Prince William County.
- Very important part. Education for the children, remember the people who fought to keep it this way.
- Prince William is steeped in history - The Battle of Manassas and the Civil War need to be protected. While we do need road infrastructure it needs to be done in an environmental fashion. We need land for parks, schools, sports facilities. It should be a place where people want to come out and visit for the day or the weekend.
- History, beauty and health of the county.
- A very, very large role in the future development of PW County. It is a wonderful place to have to get back to nature, feel like you are part of a more "normal" living space and not having a business or home within arm's reach of your house.
- The same as it has in the past and the present.
- I think we should preserve it, but perhaps with more supports for farmers so that agriculture can be a more viable venture in the county.
- It should stay pretty much the same. Maybe some recreation areas and sports fields.
- Nothing.
- We should maintain the rural area and maintain a minimum lot size to build any future residential development. We should limit business to smaller businesses that won't create a huge footprint, or require a large amount of traffic.
- Maintain the rural crescent. Do NOT allow more development within it.

- None. They should remain rural areas. There is a reason people keep moving west. Because they don't want to live in townhouse farms. Don't encourage more awful development in some of the only open space we have left.
- Large role in keeping open areas.
- A dominant role -- no compromise on the integrity of the rural nature.
- Prince William County should leave the Rural Crescent exactly as it is and stop trying to develop it because once this beautiful area is lost, it is lost forever. The Rural Crescent plays a vital role in Prince William County as it is the only place in the county where the natural beauty of wildlife, land and agriculture are still visible for everyone to see and enjoy without the overdevelopment that has consumed the rest of the county.
- Possibly it could just exist as a non-developed area? We don't need any more houses in this county. None.
- Controlling sprawl and preserving rural character.
- The Rural Area needs to be preserved and protected from large developmental projects so that we can keep our wildlife, history, and beauty intact. It is important to make sure we keep strict developmental laws over areas such as our Rural Areas so that population density does not increase where it could damage natural parts of our beautiful county.
- The Rural Area should play a vital role in our future, however, with "smart growth" as a guiding principal. We need county services such as fire and police, as well as natural gas and sewer available in communities immediately bordering the Area. I am a proponent of keeping mandatory residential lot sizes between 2 and 3 acres in the Area, which allows us to grow our tax base, yet still maintain an open feel to the Area.
- The Rural area, as its name implies, should be celebrated and not looked upon as some untapped bank of developmental growth. What does more growth lead to? It leads to more schools (thus more school employees), it leads to pollution from more cars and the lifestyles from the increased rooftops, it leads to more fire and police, more libraries, more tax supported needs and expectations put upon an already overtaxed electorate. You cannot pay for these things with property taxes so additional taxes would have to be created. So in the end you crush the rural area, increase traffic and pollution, plop down dozens of traffic lights and increase the taxes needed to support any plan that would call for developers to get richer and political favors to be paid off. Where is the overarching sense? I do see the sense in trying hard to pay back the favor that came with the taking of developer PAC money.
- It should remain as a mostly unspoiled asset for the county.
- An environmental oasis.
- Balance Development.
- Preservation of open space and forest land is an important attraction of PWC. The county should try to purchase as much park and forest land as possible to improve the quality of life for residents. Parks and forests should be set up to be free or minimal cost to enter for residents, but more costly (within reason) for non-residents to help finance the parks/forests development such as restroom facilities, picnic and party areas, sports fields, etc. Continued low density development is fine but should be limited to prevent subdivision of large parcels

into many 10 acre lots, creating a "wealth zone" that detracts from the appearance of openness the rural area needs to maintain.

- I don't think everyone wants Prince William County to look like Woodbridge. If the residents who live in the Rural Crescent wanted to live in a cityscape, there are several nearby counties with more to offer than Prince William in terms of entertainment, cultural attractions, and character. We chose PW because we love that it stays true to its roots.
- The Rural Area is important and should be protected.
- The Rural Area is vitally important to PWC's future to protect horse farms and other farm activities.
- Keeping land and historic landmarks for future generations.
- The Rural Crescent should remain as it is currently designated. There is plenty of land left for dense development.
- Same as its traditional one, a big role.
- Limit Development to help focus Economic Development around VRE stations.
- It SHOULD STAY RURAL.
- The county should not build highways through rural areas which have been adequately served by secondary roads for decades. The bi county parkway would destroy everything I moved to Prince William county for!
- Encourage small farms, recreation, preservation of native wildlife and plants.
- PWC should maintain the amount of rural areas that currently exist. Our county doesn't need more subdivisions, especially since the infrastructure can't support them and since so many new homes are already approved on the western end of the county.
- Continue with current policies that keep the rural area rural. Limit development. Do Not build highways through the rural crescent.
- It should continue to be a large part of the county.
- PWC is one of the fastest growing and wealthiest counties in the entire country. We do NOT need to grow!! Our children eat lunch after 1:00 PM, go to classes in trailers, and move school districts every few years due to the excessive growth because many of the BOCS grant too many housing development waivers to current policy. The Rural Crescent should be used to manage (LIMIT) our growth, so our infrastructure can catch up, stabilize and be paid for to meet the community. The Rural Crescent should be maintained more strictly to continue to character of our community - many people moved here specifically for the rural atmosphere.
- The rural crescent should be a highly valued gem that has already been lost to other counties in Northern Virginia. Prince William County is currently at a cross roads. There are developers who are salivating and would love to destroy it just so they could get richer. They demonstrate a complete disregard for the importance of keeping some land in its natural state in order to maintain balance. The Rural Crescent is only 28% of the entire county. There is more than 70% of the county open to development and suburban living. PWC needs to focus on smart growth and not disorganized, uncontrolled sprawl. Furthermore, the roads in PWC are already suffering from severe overload. Why is it necessary to allow developers to cram as many people on every square foot available without regard to the congestion nightmares it will contribute

too? The rural crescent needs to be preserved as it is in order to maintain balance on many levels: Balance between asphalt and nature; balance between smart growth and sprawl; balance between toxic fumes and air quality. There are SO many reasons why the rural crescent should be preserved!! It should be preserved to help those of us who live here, pay our taxes, and contribute to the welfare of this county to also have a good quality of life.

- Protect it. It has to cost less to keep it Rural than to constantly play catch up with all the road and school costs to keep up with current development. Use the money to refurbish and restore Manassas.
- It should stay rural and farms should continue to thrive with community awareness and support.
- Farming, Conservation.
- I think it would be foolish to abandon the concept of the rural crescent.
- We should protect the Rural Crescent. This county is over building. People move here because they like what the county is now. Do not yield to the developers who live in other counties or other states. This is our county and we need to be careful that we don't over build like Fairfax has.
- Control urban sprawl--fewer developments.
- It should be of utmost importance.
- An area of low to moderate density to bring balance to the high to moderate density of the eastern and central parts of the county.
- Smart development. To improve the quality of life. Less commuting time which would improve life and would allow more time with family and serving the local area. For example, volunteering at local schools, events, community outreaches, etc.
- Preservation. Public access park wilderness spaces.
- Preservation of the environment and resources for future generations.
- Should be used for historic preservation, homes with very large lots only, farming, and possibly parks.
- Cherished and preserved. Northern Virginia has too much urban sprawl; people appreciate having undeveloped land, open space and forest land. I think this makes living in Prince William even more desirable. I also believe that animals need a place to live as well instead of being 'squeezed out' by development. We need to live in harmony with nature, not pave over every field and forest for profit.
- PWC should embrace its rural heritage and better plan its residential areas to lessen traffic and promote live/work/shop environments, all accessible via public transportation but if private transportation is needed, enhance traffic flow.
- The rural area would be best suited for development with upscale housing and town centers. I believe such developments still maintain a hometown feel and can be created with park settings. Perhaps some of the more sensitive areas along creeks and in flood zones could be made into publicly accessible wildlife viewing areas. The increased county revenues from the upscale housing could offset the expense and builders would probably offer proffers if given the

opportunity to develop. Perhaps some incentives for horse communities where common stables and riding areas would maintain some of the heritage.

- PW County has benefitted tremendously by preserving the battlefield and the rural crescent. Besides keeping the character and heritage, it has promoted tourism, and led to a populous of caring, concerned citizens, a low crime rate, a strong middle class - which our president touts as his primary concern - and has kept this area of PW County from being paved over with roads and housing developments, of which Northern Virginia has a sufficient supply. If the board wants PW County to become like Loudon County, they should at least give the landowners the opportunity to cash in first, rather than letting crooked politicians cash in by selling us out.
- An important role - it is a natural resource we cannot get back if used.
- QUIT ripping up every tree there is to build useless shopping centers or houses smack on top of each other. Plan the infrastructure first so those of us that only work here or pass through PWC to get to work, don't spend forever sitting in traffic.
- Agriculture is a foundation of the economy here, along with forestry and other resources are key factors to healthy ecosystems.
- Be a little "haven" in a densely populated county.
- It should not be used to increase the population of the county.
- It should be crucial. If some of the proposed roads that are planning to cut through this area are built the entire rural environment could be lost. I don't have a problem with development but that development must be balanced with the area with which it is to reside.
- It should be maintained as something to attract people trying to get away from suburbia to enjoy and learn about wilderness and wild life. Further if we have any farm land left, it should be preserved as such.
- Major role in guiding land use policy.
- Hopefully, there will always be a portion of PWC that will be rural so children can learn about and see some of agricultural heritage. It's also important to protect our watersheds, streams and forests. The loss of great swaths of forest will be so detrimental to the environment and global warming.
- A place for families to enjoy, kids to learn the difference in environments.
- Keep the county mixed with some areas high density and other less dense.
- What future?
- Leave the high density, high crime, non-personable subdivisions to Fairfax. PWC county has already allowed a dangerous amount of that into western Price William, mostly, it seems, in the interest of the dollar.
- Prominent. Preserve our existing rural areas and culture and prevent urban sprawl. PWC is overweighed as bedroom community for commuters to DC and other counties. Let's bring smart business growth and jobs here, rather than houses for commuters.
- It should be protected and maintained. No more erosion into the rural area is allowed.
- Think about this....You get off the airplane at Dulles, get on 28 south, and drive into Manassas, and wonder where is the beauty of Virginia? Just keep driving, and right after Kettle Run creek, you say, oh here it is! Then, you see your first fields, tractors, and barns. This experience can be

pushed into the next county, but that is PWC's decision. This is a big county, and travelling around Woodbridge, it is hard to imagine places like Nokesville really exist. Too much crowding-no one happy, and 1/2 the population on meds for mood or lack of exercise.

- A big one. Everyone knows Loudon County is a rural area, and they have a great reputation. Everyone knows Fairfax County is too high density and overcrowded. Prince William County should lean more towards the rural example. We already have Manassas (so not rural), and look how that turned out. There are too many people living out here. The traffic is terrible. More residential development would be a mistake. We don't want more people--the roads can't support it and by the time any developers build roads, it will be too little, too late. I am open to bringing more jobs to Prince William County, but not more residential.
- It should be a major part of our economic development outreach, distinguishing Prince William from Fairfax/Loudoun. Those counties are closer to Dulles and closer to DC, with Metro access to the urban core. Prince William can compete head-to-head regarding distance to Quantico MCB, in our own back yard - but otherwise, we are further away from customers (especially Federal agencies) and the airports. Prince William needs to highlight its unique values, other than "cheaper land and lower wages," if we expect to attract businesses and make Prince William a place to live, play, and \_work\_. Our Rural Area should be a key part of our business recruitment efforts.
- I feel it should be maintained in order to maintain the nature of this area. If I had wanted to live in the middle of D.C. I would have bought a house there instead of here.
- The current development limits should be maintained in the rural crescent. High density housing would spoil the culture and heritage of the rural parts of the county.
- It should be preserved for future generations to enjoy, not having to wade through countless homes just to get to a sterile-feeling park. Preserve nature!
- It attracts wealth. PW County can't compete with Fairfax, Loudoun or Fauquier in terms of attracting wealthy businesses and taxpayers without the beauty and tranquility of the Western end of the county. The Eastern end of the county is not well liked by Northern Virginians. Without preserving the rural crescent, Prince William would be a county to skip over entirely in every regard.
- Preserve it.
- Preserving open spaces, history, culture, and keeping sprawl (traffic) growth in check.
- The Rural Area is critical to the future of PWC. If it goes, so does our unique character. We become some cheap extension of Fairfax Station. One of your questions posits that it will cost more to preserve the rural area. The complete opposite is true. Less people means less infrastructure needs and less demand on county services of all sorts. Since implementing a controlled growth policy our taxes have gone from the highest in NOVA to the lowest, our need for schools and other expensive public services has decreased. If we are going to maintain a high quality of life, with a reasonable cost basis, we have to stop increasing demand for govt services. If we are going to maintain a diverse community, it will require that the protections on the rural areas be strengthened and expanded.
- Preserve open space and continue to allow farming on 5 acre and larger parcels.



- Preserving open space, but without restricting landowners from selling with a higher return due to the 10 acre rule. Should be able to subdivide at 5 acres.
- It should be a natural preserve only lightly touched by man, or not touched at all.
- None.
- Protection of agriculture and forestry, recreation, local farming, open area conservancy, sustainable environment opportunities or hopefully live examples.
- More development should be allowed in this area.
- Same or more than today.
- Preservation of the rural heritage.
- Maintain the rural character and the habitat.
- The rural area should play a very big role in future development.
- It should remain protected from non-agricultural development.
- It should be left alone and preserved forever.
- People like to call this area home. With that being said, it will need public facilities, recreational spaces, etc. for all of those residents. I think those features should be allowed. Also, not everyone can afford 10 acre lots so I do not agree with those stipulations.
- There should be some areas preserved (but not as large as the current rural area).
- None, It should be revoked (large lot single family homes) and the area rezoned and planned for development accordingly. Prince William is not a farming district; I doubt enough food is grown and harvested to feed its residence for a week.
- First and foremost it should be home to the few true farmers we have left in PWC. Secondly, it should become PWC's place of agri-tourism with large passive recreation parks, orchards, wineries, battlefields, hunting outfitters, farm education, etc.
- Make sure it does not change.
- Preserve some of Prince Williams's rural history and give the citizens a place to enjoy.
- Over the next 50-75 years, it should provide non-developmental space to the extent that large tract subdivisions are excluded, 10 acre home lots are permitted where farming closes down, and increasing public services are required. Re-development of the route 1 corridor should be completed well in advance of any change to the character of the rural area.
- It should be expanded.
- I feel that an independent trade zone could be established which would have some of its own self-governing duties. I don't like that the rural sections have such vocal anti-progress views on other development elsewhere in the county. Create the ability to protect their sections, and it may reduce some of the friction on other issues that need to be dealt with while protecting rural areas from future development risk.
- KEEP IT THE WAY IT IS- DO NOT ALLOW ANYMORE HOUSING.
- I believe the area should continue to protect its agricultural lands, forests, and open spaces. The suburban sprawl that has consumed the remainder of the county would sully the rural crescent if it was ever allowed to encroach upon it. If read right, I believe it was reported that there were over 7,000 residences in the rural crescent, and nearly half of that number is

available for the building of additional residences. To me, that seems sufficient, perhaps even a bit too much.

- Keep a green space for future generations that want a rural lifestyle. Once it is gone it cannot be reclaimed.
- Future preservation of this area as rural will allow the County to increase its percentage of open space and parks, trails.
- I would like to see Prince William keep its farms and rural areas. Most of Loudoun has been developed to the point that there are few farms and public areas left to enjoy. Traffic is awful, and the cost of living is exorbitant. The entire stretch of 267 between Leesburg and Sterling is developed, with no transportation infrastructure to support it besides a \$50 per week luxury toll road and most people can't afford to use.
- The rural area should be a testament acknowledging that nature in itself does not need to be altered in order to be valued. In fact, altering it often takes away from its beauty. A role--let the rural area continue to be an area where people can go and enjoy relief from the congestion that they experience in other aspects of their lives.
- Allow farmers to produce more local crops, provide hiking, horseback, and bicycling opportunities and trails. Keep an emphasis on public education on the importance of keeping the Potomac watershed clean and leave space for nature to thrive and be enjoyed.
- The Rural Area shall be a place to maintain the song bird's migration, a legacy that the history books will acknowledge as 'wisdom beyond the ages'. The Rural Area shall be a place to take a camera, a journal, a hiking stick, and listen to an interpreter explains that when you close your eyes and hear a bird song, you will then know where that bird is, and see it in your binoculars. The Rural Area is a place to see the birds' sacred mating rituals, the frogs silently floating on the pond, looking like leaves, until you get too close and they dive under the water together, as one. The Rural Area is a place to see hundreds of male butterflies sipping minerals from a puddle in an open area of the meadow, watch the female butterflies flit from flower to native flower, sipping the sweet nectar to nourish then in the search for just the right native plant to place their precious eggs. The Rural Area shall be able to harbor more than one species of song bird, so if one mate dies, another can carry on the legacy of its beauty and melodious song. What we hear in our back yards are birds that can carry a tune raucous enough to be heard above the polluting noise of our polluting ways. The Rural Area will allow us to hear the beautiful and awe inspiring songs of birds that need total forest shelter to breed and feed their young ones. The Rural Area shall be a natural cathedral: relaxing our mind, soul, and body as we stroll into and around its majestic beauty and calming tranquility.
- The central role of preservation of healthy environments for all the County's residents. It should give us a sense of place, history, and purpose.
- It is a valuable resource that should be protected.
- Preserve the agricultural feel of the county.
- It slows down the need to build schools, libraries, roads, fire and rescue.
- Prince William County's rural area is something to be cherished and is a jewel in the endless suburbs of Washington, DC. Once it is gone, it cannot be replaced. I would hope that the EDA

and Farm Bureau would encourage more niche farming (organic vegetables, mushrooms, strawberry fields, llamas, etc.) in our rural area for a more locally sustainable economic base.

- Rural Prince William should provide an alternative to the suburban life-style. Prince William has a strong agricultural heritage. It would be appropriate to use the rural community to help educate residents about local heritage.
- We need rural land. Once the land is developed, it's gone. I feel the county as gone "overboard" with development. Agriculture and forest lands are important to the environment.
- If the rural area is developed it will only increase pollution - air, light, noise. The bi-county parkway is a particular threat because it will worsen the traffic by encouraging new north/south traffic to Dulles for cargo. I think it's time for government to take the lead on alternatives to road building. If the road is built I am likely to move out further west. I am developing an internet business model that limits my need for travel. I think everyone is tired of the commute. Building more roads just worsens the problem.
- It should remain rural and undeveloped. It should be an island of sanity in contrast to all the congestion and overcrowding of the surrounding areas. It should be a place for farms and homes with enough room to relax in peace and quiet.
- I would love to see the rural area be treated the way that Middleburg or downtown Culpeper is. If development must come I'd like to see an emphasis on the community, small business, independently owned business, and culture. I'd love to have the town of Nokesville - the strip of Fitzwater drive that goes from 28 to Aden Rd - turn into walking area with small cafes, wineries, unique shops, and venues for the arts. I think it would be fantastic if Nokesville Elementary could become an artist colony that promoted visual, fine, and performing arts. This kind of development would increase existing property values and bring in sales tax revenue. It would also hamper the opportunities of those who would choose to abuse the rural area for gain with no regards for the community. After all, who would allow a recycling plant to be built right behind a winery?
- I think the Rural Crescent plays a crucial role in PWC's future and PWC is currently at a crossroads. The time is now to take a stand and say, "We will not cave in to the pressure of developers and we will not lose our unique identity as other counties around us have." Again, it is about balance. Only 28% of the county is dedicated to preserving the rural atmosphere. That is not a lot. The rest of the county is in a development area. There is only so much traffic our roads can hold and most of those are already over utilized. Western PWC does not have rail or metro to help with traffic congestion. How much do you have to overbuild and crowd the roads before enough is enough??? There is no reason to destroy every ounce of land and nature that we have just so developers can get richer. At what price? Once it is gone you cannot get it back.
- A huge role. This will be an example to future leaders to create spaces like this and how to maintain them.
- The Rural Crescent should continue as-is. It allows property owners to profit from developing the land as ten-acre lots, but prohibiting the dense development that imposes costs on everyone else.
- It should be a buffer against overdevelopment and congestion for one reason.

- It should be preserved.
- It should stay as it is, with very rare exceptions made for more development. No development should occur unless the residents vote for it, since this was a plan that we were all assured would stay in place forever.
- Should remain rural in character and support agricultural and forestry practices.
- Should be at the forefront.
- It should be a national model for how not to trash your environment.
- NOT the new place to build you houses and traffic. Keep Nokesville a quiet little town.
- Preserving habitat for wildlife, unpolluted natural spaces.
- Prince William should protect the Rural Area as it has done, but it needs to be careful the exceptions that it makes to its policies as they endanger the area.
- Think that the rural areas we have now are great - however, allowing some growth & allowing infrastructure to keep pace would be acceptable & is probably inevitable.
- If natural environments are to be preserved and enjoyed then they should be spread out for easier access for county residents. Keeping such a lump sum of acreage as we have now in the Crescent doesn't seem productive to me.
- Be a larger part of western PW and keep sprawl to a minimum.
- The Rural Area should be retained or enlarged.
- Things need to change in terms of where money comes from for education, but allowing more homes to be built, more trees and nature to be taken away, and more structured/boring/model homes is not the answer. People who have lived here for generations should not have their lives changed so drastically.
- It should be maintained and not developed.
- Residential development should be prohibited in the near term (next 20 years) and any development should be for large employment uses. There is plenty of undeveloped, planned residential area in the county that is not in the Rural Area. If there is any consideration for additional residential in the rural area, it should be removed from the development area. We need more permanent employment destinations in the county, not residential.
- It gives residents variety in their home choice. There is a wide range of living environments in PWC, ranging from apartments to farmland.
- None - while the planning commission had a 'vision' in 1998, it has been overcome by the reality of our growing county and the needs of the residents currently residing in the areas adjacent to the old 'Rural Crescent'. It is time for new blood on the Planning Commission in PWC and a new more relevant and futuristic vision for land use in this area needs to be developed and initiated. The Planning Commission is not serving to the majority of the populous of the county by continuing to propagate their dated vision of a rural reserve at the boundaries of the county.
- Exactly the role it's playing now, less the chipping away by the BOCS.
- None, believe PWC needs to relax the 10acre rule.
- As a reminder that PWC is innovative, forward thinking and not afraid to do something different (at least by NoVA standards.)

- Agricultural preservation, limited residential development.
- Protected parks and perhaps a small agricultural area. 28% of land in Prince William is rural and it is too restrictive to have interested buyers only have 10 acre lot options. I believe we are losing economic growth to counties as far south as Stafford because of this. Perhaps suburban restrictions (min lot of 1+acres, distance between subdivisions) I don't expect condos/townhomes to overtake the current rural area but 10 acres is a monstrosity for most people seeking a single family home in a quiet area. Take a ride down Aden road all you will see of newer development is 6000+sq foot homes (already does not look like farmland to me.)
- It should remain rural! I feel any changes are motivated by dollar signs and not I the best interest of county residents.
- Preserving land.
- The same as it does currently.
- Continue to protect our environment and preserve our historic lands.
- Be left as is, so people can see what FARM communities and homes are like outside of city limits.
- To preserve history and quality of life, educational opportunities, recreation, hunting, habitat, etc.
- The rural area should be planned to retain working farm and forest lands that provide both economic and environmental benefit to the citizens of the county while not costing them to maintain.
- We need to protect it for our children and our children's children. I think there are too many people that are willing to destroy the beauty to build more houses. Our schools are already crowded. We don't need bigger box neighborhoods!!!
- The area should be preserved to maintain the rural foot print. The last thing the county needs is 100% housing development. "No farms = No food" and the county should look to keep as much of that business within the county itself.
- We do need some rural area but not over abundance. We do not need to limit owners on what they may do with the property they own.
- The traffic will never be eased on 66. Opening up PWC to more development will only hurt the present residents' commute. The outer beltway is a farce, strictly for the gain of developers. Instead of spreading the urban sprawl of Fairfax County into the best kept natural resources of the rural crescent, more should be done to rehabilitate ailing areas like Manassas and Manassas Park. There should be less apartment building built in the county attracting multiple families and low income residents.
- It should continue to stay rural.
- Rural areas play an important role in our history, heritages and guardians of our natural resources. If the people who live in rural areas are no longer there to take care of the natural resources and food producing land-who will? Perhaps it will be giant corporations and outside investors who are more concerned with profits than the health of the land and the safety of the food produced on it. The vitality of America's rural areas should be a concern for everyone, not just those that reside in rural communities. All Americans - rural, suburban and urban alike -

benefit from vibrant rural communities and thriving family farms. Prince William needs to take steps to ensure that this continues in our county. In Fairfax and Arlington these farms have all disappeared and the roads are clogged with traffic and air pollution.

- A well and intelligently developed area that favors clustered development - numerous villages surrounded by farmland or large open space. STOP the 10-acre lot subdivisions with no open space. Keep the density (or give a slight bonus) to cluster homes on smaller lots with more open space. Encourage rural businesses, wineries, bed-n-breakfasts, recreational opportunities. Open space for the sake of just keeping out people is wrong and elitist.
- Stay as open areas of farm land and rural character.
- An area to preserve the rural life style and allow small, medium and large farms to provide areas to raise horses, other animals and grow fresh local produce to provide local residents. It will allow more open space and woodlands for future generations to explore and enjoy.
- The rural area needs to survive. It is a way to remind us that if we want milk, we need cows. If we want eggs, we need chickens. It is a way for those of us who are willing to go without a store within walking distance to enjoy our values and quality of life, while we continue to be employed in jobs that pay enough to allow us to live on the land. It is NOT a place for future development, it is a place for our children to also enjoy the open spaces and see what real life is all about.
- I think that where there are already established rural neighborhoods they should be left alone and not have to be included in what the future brings. Regulate areas that have not been developed yet.
- Farming, historical preservation.
- None. Leave it alone.
- It will allow PWC to offer a special area that will be in high demand to those foolish enough to live in the metro craziness of DC, MD, and FFX. There will be a need for rural areas that will allow for separation from the high density areas of PWC. We need to preserve the fact that PWC offers the nightmare urban living area Woodbridge, Dale City, Lorton and so on and we also offer the rural areas.
- A very large part. If we claim all the rural area, we'd be no different than Fairfax, Arlington or Alexandria counties. Too congested. Leave the country where it is and the cities where they are.
- A balanced role...one that is part of solid urban planning to ensure roads are in alignment with urban development which is in concert with commercial/business development and both pristine and semi-pristine areas to support human activities whether camping, wandering or horseback riding. Cars moving at speeds in excess of postings, littering as they go and/or intolerant of farm vehicles are simply not compatible rural. Additionally, a 10 acre lot will drive farmers to sell at less than what their land is worth and 10 acre homes which must have large homes to qualify for a standard mortgage will in effect cause the county to look like rich man/poor man. Rich people live in mansions on 10 acre lots and rest in Prince William county live in townhomes, condos, non-descript homes on .25 of an acre.
- Help to conserve.

- Preservation, real open space (open space that does NOT include Quantico or state or federal forests which are already protected).
- A big part in quality of life.
- Nothing. The rural area should just be that! A place for farming and a small community.
- The preservation of the rural areas is critical to quality of life in PWC. It should be of paramount importance.
- It should not change.
- It should be strengthened; I see it being eaten away piece by piece.
- Controlling sprawl. We don't want the Rural Area to become paved over and end up like Centerville.
- It benefits us all to maintain it as is and strictly limit development.
- Parks. Outdoor education centers.
- Everyone needs space to breathe and de-stress from the long commutes and high stress of work- you owe it to the children!
- The same one it always has LEAVE IT ALONE.
- The rural area should remain as a permanent feature of the County, in order to provide for the land uses and values mentioned above.
- It needs to be preserved and also be educational. Many people have no idea about farm to table and so not realize the importance of rural areas and family farms to them.
- Keep it. Keep it with trees, birds.
- The peace and serenity in the Rural area should be destroyed, and the residents of the rural area should be made to suffer like all of the rest of us in PWC...
- It is critical for a variety of reasons. Historically much would be lost with elimination of the Rural area. In addition, you remove a housing option for people looking to live a private live if you take the Rural area away. I know many people who are saving money with the hope that someday they will be able to leave their crowded sub-divisions and own property in the Rural area.
- Preserved with parks and trails added as funds allow. The farming should be strongly encouraged.



**Counties engage in rural preservation for a number of reasons, including protecting agricultural and forestal lands, preserving important environmental or cultural features, preserving rural character, or controlling suburban sprawl. Do you think Prince William should be engaging in rural preservation and, if so, why?**

- Yes, there should be a mix of land use in any county urban, suburban and rural. I moved to Northern Virginia in 1970. I saw Fairfax counties explosive growth. I think PW should retain what's left of its rural nature.
- Yes! Prince William is known as a beautiful, more rural county. May Prince William never surrender to suburban sprawl?
- I believe Prince William County should engage in rural preservation. People move here because the environment is attractive. Destruction of the rural crescent will destroy the identity of this great county and make it less attractive. It has developed an important character as an area of rural presence.
- Yes. Because it is the right thing to do.
- Yes ... for all of the above reasons.
- Yes. Too much residential housing and its accompanying population growth burden our highways and streets, create more demand for schools and infrastructure, and visually clog our sight as we travel throughout the county. The rural area is a respite.
- Absolutely.
- Yes, for all the reasons above. PW has the reputation for all the above. That is why people move here.
- They don't need to buy up all the woods, but they need to stop allowing new subdivisions to be built.
- Yes, and it is. 10 acre minimums. Protecting the rural crescent area. Having small farms still working.
- Because we live not that far from areas that are filled with people who live right on top of one another and their lives consist on non-stop traffic. These are special areas and once developed, can't be undone.
- Absolutely the county should. If we wanted congestion, high density and a less quality of life, we would live in Arlington, Fairfax or Loudoun.
- No. If it's not an active farm and it's not a designated forest or park, the property owner should be free to sell to/develop/use the land any way they want.
- Absolutely. If a rural area exists in any county, it should definitely be preserved for historical reasons, for agricultural reasons, for controlling suburban sprawl, and for maintaining a way of life.
- Absolutely. It draws others who are interested in preserving these ideals and don't mind contributing to helping maintain and preserve them. You get families with higher incomes

coming into the County and who will contribute as necessary to retain the 'country atmosphere.'

- Yes, to leave trees and open spaces for future generations.
- Yes, a comprehensive view needs to be taken when looking at preservation in the County.
- Yes, otherwise it will not be a desirable place to live.
- Yes, for all the above mentioned reasons. Our land (and water) is the one resource that is not renewable. We have a limited amount of resources and need to conserve what is available for today and future generations.
- Yes, for the reasons you cited.
- YES! Because if you don't then we'll end up looking like Fairfax County. That's great for business, but not great for man. I'm not an environmentalist, and those that are drive me crazy, but where there is an opportunity to protect small segments of our land an history, we should, at all costs. There's always some other area already devoid of rural landscape to rape for the next developer.
- I strongly believe the rural crescent should be continued and that this preservation is good for this county.
- Yes, PWC has a lot to protect in the way of the environment and historical value.
- Yes! One main reason the people we know have moved here is to get away from the over development of Fairfax! Rural preservation was a big draw for us to leave Fairfax for PWC.
- Yes of course it should! The rural character of this area must be preserved for future generations to enjoy.
- Yes it is very important part of who we are.
- Yes, it is an area steeped in history and needs to be preserved. We don't need more houses or traffic congestion. We need to protect the lands for the farmers. As our family frequents farmers markets as well as we buy certain meat from eco farmers, it is important to continue to have space for that. Food is an essential part of our lives and part of our history. With more and more farmers turning to healthier farming, we need the space for them as well as we need space for our children to play in parks.
- Why not, is the question, I believe that rural preservation is the key to balance our county it is important to have all types businesses including farming. Development is such an eyesore and only brings more people and problems.
- Absolutely! Why would we want to be another county of over population and no longer have a place for our children to grow up and enjoy the parks, farms and everything the outdoors has to offer? I want my children to have the opportunity to enjoy the land around them.
- Yes for all of the reasons in the question.
- Yes, for all of the above reasons.
- Yes.
- No.
- Yes. To prevent suburban sprawl. Where I grew up in a county just 50 miles from NYC, they instituted a 3 acre zoning back in the 80's, much of the suburban sprawl went past that county and into the county above it and to the west & east of it. A good thing or not, I can go back to

the town I came from and still recognize the place it was before. The trees are still there, new houses are there, but not on top of each other, there are yards, and woods, property values are higher. It is still a nice place to live.

- To control sprawl and encourage agricultural uses.
- Yes. Maintain open land.
- Yes -- for all the reasons your question mentioned.
- The rural character of the Rural Crescent should be preserved and protected because once this beautiful source of natural resources is lost, it is lost forever.
- Yes. To protect agricultural and forestal lands, preserve important environmental or cultural features, preserve rural character, or control suburban sprawl.
- Yes I think Prince William County should be engaged in rural preservation since it can benefit all residents with less sprawl and congestion. They aren't making any more land. What we have is what we got.
- I think PWC should, without a doubt or hesitation, engage in rural preservation. It is important that all counties look into preserving rural land. The idea that all land should be developed for commercial or community living, in the future, will be detrimental to our counties. We need our rural areas to keep a healthy environment. It is important that the county prides itself in the agricultural and environmental beauty that is naturally here.
- Absolutely, we should be engaging in rural preservation. Northern Virginia and Prince William County in particular, are steeped in American history - a natural, built in class room for all our students. We need to honor our past to embrace our future. I do not wish to see sites of historical significance (Bull Run Battlefield, Bristow Station) be demolished for the sake of development of any kind.
- In a limited way.
- See above...not everyone wants to live in a suburban setting, stop trying to force this down our throats! The people in the rural area don't want it only the developers covet the land so they can rape the soil, evict the current owners.
- I think PWC should get out of the business of rural crescent busting developments.
- Yes, for reasons above.
- Yes, to counter commercial development.
- Absolutely! Primary reasons are to preserve open space including farm and forest lands, preserve the heritage of the county's agricultural heritage and rural character in general, and ESPECIALLY to limit suburban sprawl. We moved to PWC many years ago primarily BECAUSE of its rural nature. We live in the Gainesville area and have seen what poorly controlled development can do to change the character of an area of the county. PLEASE maintain planning restrictions already in place, and add MORE control where possible to stop the county from becoming a crowded urban center. Where development is allowed, ensure sufficient traffic capacity exists BEFORE allowing development, especially commercial development and high density residential which put so much strain on already overcrowded roads.
- All of the above. If one is not protecting and preserving the environment, then they are most likely abusing it.

- Yes, the county should protect the rural area from developers because no one else will be able to stop them from over building on this land.
- Absolutely, if the county did not protect this land from development, large development companies would come in and flood the area with housing and suburban sprawl.
- It is important to keep some areas rural for farming and conservation but there needs to be a balance that keeps land owner rights and the government control of said lands. If someone wants to build on their property and follows the proper procedure and safety guidelines then they should be allowed to do so.
- Yes, for all the reasons stated. Additionally, keeping dense development out of the rural area will save the county money and help keep the average homeowner's property tax lower.
- To maintain the natural beauty and appeal.
- Yes, mainly because we are losing too much beauty to sprawl and congestion. What will our kids have to remember us by, outer beltways and gridlocked traffic, overcrowded schools is that what we want PWC heritage to be?
- Yes, to control and prevent suburban sprawl.
- Yes. People move to the rural crescent area for a reason...to get away from densely packed neighborhoods, noise and traffic.
- PWC should engage in rural preservation for all of the above reasons, PWC schools are full or overflowing. Allowing more development adds to the number of people at schools and on the roads.
- People move to western PWC for a variety of reasons: more affordable homes, closer to the mountains, more access to rural areas, etc. Suburban sprawl will only diminish the appeal of this area to many. Traffic is bad enough as it is. Adding more homes will only make it worse.
- The county should engage by limiting speculative developers buying large pieces of land with hope to have the building density changed to their favor.
- Yes. For all the reasons stated in the question.
- ALL OF THE ABOVE - WE DO NOT WANT TO LIVE IN A CITY!! This does not mean the planting of 10' trees along a four lane road, planter in a shopping plaza, or establishment of a park. It means, leave the land natural and plentiful.
- Prince William should absolutely be actively engaged in rural preservation!! So much of it has already been lost in Northern Virginia and once lost it cannot be regained. You answer your own question in the question. All of the reasons mentioned are exactly many of the reasons the rural crescent should be maintained: protecting agricultural and forestal lands, preserving important environmental or cultural features, preserving rural character, or controlling suburban sprawl. Add to this the protection of our water tables, preserving our history, providing a habitat for what wildlife we have left in this area, providing the PWC citizens with a quality of life that cannot be adequately achieved without it, preserving air quality, and so much more. We cannot allow developers (whose only interest in the county is to get richer and get out) to dictate to the citizens how and where this county will develop. The people who live here have the right to have a say in how this county develops. Our voices deserve to be heard and heeded.

- Absolutely yes, although I think we have already lost too much of our rural character.
- Absolutely! They've over built and need to rein it in.
- YES.
- Yes, see above.
- Start with scraping plans for a major truck route cutting the county in half (bi county parkway). We are not Springfield or the mixing bowl. For Prince William County to continue to be a place where people want to live and work, we need to make sure that we don't destroy our best natural resource - our natural beauty and surroundings.
- Yes.....
- Prince William most assuredly should be involved. For preserving the rural character and controlling suburban sprawl.
- To preserve its rural character and to control suburban sprawl.
- Some but there should be a balance between smart development and preserving the battlefield.
- Yes. For all if the reasons listed in the question.
- Yes; agricultural and forestal lands should be protected for future generations, for their important functions in protecting the environment, to keep the characteristic rural character of the area, to preserve history and to control suburban sprawl.
- I absolutely think Prince William should be engaging in rural preservation for all of the reasons stated in the questions. Keep our character! We moved here out of congested Fairfax County for this very reason. Don't turn beautiful Prince William into Fairfax County!
- For all the reasons you mention above.
- Some preservation should be done but I believe it should be in the form of parks and recreation areas that open to the public. Designated areas that are considered ecologically fragile could possibly be made into parks and wildlife viewing areas. However, landowners would need to be fairly compensated.
- I don't want to see the county's rural area developed until there is adequate infrastructure in place, especially roads and sewer.
- This should not be a question. Decades ago, PW County decided to engage in rural preservation. The county lured in buyers - taxpayers - under this premise. The Board has no right to even consider changing the rules at this point, unless the Board is prepared to cover the losses of owners who protected the rural crescent for all these years. The plan was in place, the promises were made. We foolishly trusted the county to hold up your end of the bargain. We gave up \$Millions to do that. Apparently, some people are gaining \$Millions to divide our county, destroy homes, uproot families, and enrich Loudon County. Anyone who bought property in PW County after 1968 should have no voice.
- Primarily to preserve wooded/wetlands, historical sites and to control suburban sprawl.
- Yes, forestal and agriculture are important in every community. We need more open space to help control urban/suburban sprawl.
- Has anyone taken a look at ANYTHING off of Rt1 or Dale Blvd lately? I think suburban sprawl is already out of control.

- Yes. We need to preserve the environment, and we have too much development as it is. I don't want to see a lot of suburban sprawl in my area. Also, I don't want to see people who have lived in the rural area most of their lives have their homes condemned and taken away from them unless they accept a low price (rural land doesn't command as much) in an eminent domain proceeding. This is especially true of people who are now retired and their homes are paid for. Chances are, they wouldn't get enough to pay cash for another home in this high priced area and no one wants to take out a mortgage loan in their retirement years.
- Let's not do what Fairfax did. Let's stay as rural as we can.
- Absolutely. As someone who watched while Gainesville was allowed to explode it proved the perfect example of development gone wild. The rural crescent gives us the tools to better control that growth which is inevitable.
- PWC should be engaged in rural preservation in order to preserve rural character, agricultural and forest lands, as well as to preserve environmental or cultural features.
- Yes, for the reasons stated in the question and providing quality of life.
- All of the reasons above as well as preserving our historical cultural heritage. Some of the specific areas are more sensitive than others and should be examined and evaluated - maybe there could be a scoring system for assessing the more important sites. These may be the areas that TDRs or equivalent compensatory systems could be put in place to help the landowner.
- Yes, Prince William needs to take pride in the area and the land development so that people and industry will want to move here.
- Just because it is rural does not mean NO development in any way.
- Less pollution; lower taxes; open space.
- Yes, see above.
- Preserve our existing rural areas and culture and prevent urban sprawl. PWC is overweighed as bedroom community for commuters to DC and other counties. Let's bring smart business growth and jobs here, rather than houses for commuters.
- Yes. To protect the wild plant and animal species, to protect the environment, our water ways, to protect small farms, a way of life. To stop urban sprawl that pollutes the air, water, creates noise and light. Urban sprawl creates too much traffic. Also as urban sprawl as spread traffic, pollution has increased tremendously.
- Yes PWC should. It has it now, and once gone, is gone forever.
- Yes. I think that particularly in a historic area such as ours that you should preserve some cultural and historical heritage areas.
- Yes, rural preservation is in our interest. It gives Prince William a unique character, facilitating our efforts to recruit creative business leaders who value "quality of life" over closeness to Dulles or the Pentagon/DC. The Rural Area offers opportunities to manage growth so property taxes are minimized, to manage storm water so costs to comply with the Chesapeake TMDL are minimized, and to preserve commercial agriculture. The Rural Area also offers a diversity of housing types, with large lots suitable for executive homes that will generate more in taxes than they will require in services.

- Control suburban sprawl most of all. But I also believe we should preserve the environment and forested land.
- Yes, to preserve the rural character. If the rural crescent is further destroyed it is unfair to the families who have lived or moved here with the understanding of the restrictions on development.
- ABSOLUTELY!! The Rural Crescent should be preserved for all of those reasons. We need to protect our forests and natural bounties. We need to preserve cultural features, such as our battlefields and streams. We need to preserve our rural character. And we need to outlaw suburban sprawl. NO ONE wants more houses here except the developers and those politicians who are in bed with them. WE have enough homes, enough people and frankly NOT enough roads. Why can't our politicians get it through their heads that inviting more people to live here, through their construction of more homes, without improving the roads, will only cause more danger and heartache? It's really NOT that difficult to see, is it?
- Yes. It is the way things are going. The County has enough development much of it not even leased out yet. Stop building.
- Yes, so the rural life isn't lost.
- Yes. For all of the reasons mentioned in the question.
- Yes. For all the reasons listed in the question, with the exception of controlling suburban sprawl, which is just a way of forcing an unreasonable density on people who would prefer not to be crammed in next to their neighbor.
- Yes. Considering the Board of Supervisors' willingness to approve about any development plants despite the overcrowded roadways, overabundance of traffic signals, and a poor public transportation system, if the Rural Area is not preserved, the county will turn into a massive ugly suburb.
- Yes, for all reasons stated above.
- To a certain extent. The current policy is too restrictive.
- Yes, so that it is a pleasant, attractive, and healthy place to live physically, spiritually, socially, economically, and in every other way that matters. If you allow it to become overrun with ugly, unnatural sprawl and to look and become ugly, dumpy, overcrowded, overdeveloped, or slummy, you tend to get more slummy behavior from human beings in response. If you don't believe this, read and think a little about broken windows theory. Here's one link: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broken\\_windows\\_theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broken_windows_theory) To the BOCS: On the other hand, if you don't give a darn and just want to stay in power with \$100s of thousands in developer contributions, then keep building overcrowded and/or slummy developments. Keep packing people in like cattle on a cattle car and see what you get. Furthermore, we'll make sure the public knows which of you is behind this, how much you are getting in political contributions from developers, what other conflicts of interest you have, and thus how corrupt you are.
- There is nothing wrong with preserving our battlefields and parks. Why not build them into communities, neighborhoods?



- Absolutely, making sure we all don't wake up in a suburban, builders driven architecture(or the lack of it) and development, monotone new residential suburbs that have no identity, no connection to any commercial, civic or other infrastructure, cut down cul-de sac non sense.
- Yes, for all the reasons mentioned above. Controlling suburban sprawl will help to keep home values and will help to protect the rural character of our county.
- No, perhaps a smaller area of preservation. Most of PWC outside of the rural area has been development. If this County wants to continue its financial growth, something has to be done to allow development in the rural area.
- I think Prince William County should engage in protecting its rural spaces in order to maintain its agriculture, forest lands and protect our wildlife and native plants. There are plenty of spaces that are within the county that are not rural where development can be focused. Prince William's resources would be better served by focusing on building infrastructure to support those developments that are near major arteries of transportation and business hubs to best facilitate the movement of traffic and developing strong live/work communities that would draw people to the area for more than just bedroom neighborhoods. Allowing further sprawl that cannot be adequately supported with the current resources of the county is a disservice to both the rural communities and those that reside in the non-rural communities. Prince William County should not look to build itself such it loses the character which draws people to the area now in order to become a clone of the sprawling outer suburbs of Fairfax County.
- Yes - critical to our quality of life.
- Yes, lack of rural preservation brings crowded conditions. The quality of PW county schools has suffered greatly. We will have to spend more money on roads to move more residents. The county will become UGLY! Proffers just don't do enough. Look how ugly 66 has become from Haymarket to Manassas and beyond.
- Yes. PWC already has a significant part of the county that is dedicated to development. Maintaining the Rural Crescent will make the developed areas more valuable and is good for the overall county.
- ABSOLUTELY! Being good stewards of public lands and cultural heritage is a critical part of the job.
- To preserve rural character and to control sprawl.
- Yes. All of the above.
- Yes. Urban sprawl is running rampant throughout this and every county in the area. We need to keep the fat cat developers and their bought and paid for politicians out so people who value their style of living can be left alone.
- Yes because it adds to the quality of life.
- Yes but not as large an area as currently controlled.
- No PW Co. should stay out of the politics of picking winners and losers. The idea that the rural area is anything other than a NIMBY argument is laughable. Most people that are against development of that area came there and had a house built for them, they aren't the answer to the problem, they are the problem. Stating without words, "I got mind, but I don't want you to have yours."

- Yes. Northern VA is already dense with urban and suburban sprawl.
- Yes and for all of the above reasons.
- Yes we need less development.
- Yes.
- Rural preservation definitely conflicts with a developer's agenda no question about it. This is a matter of timing and trades available to the county. If the DC area continues to grow, then PWC's opportunities will still be there 50-75 years from now. It will be hard to not allow land owners at that point the opportunity to migrate PWC to something different than today. Hard to say if a RA might not still be highly prized even then.
- Yes. Look at Woodbridge. Wouldn't wish that blight on anybody else.
- Stop the sprawl. We don't need new housing developments. Upgrade the neighborhoods we already have. What we desperately need in this county is trails and paths to connect the neighborhoods and commuting approaches to the DC Metro area.
- I do, but not going too overboard. Really, I don't want to see taxes rise uncontrollably. Policy-wise though, I think the limitations on development will naturally continue to help counter all of these things. If public funds are set aside for protecting lands in the rural crescent, I think it would be nice if those could be taken out of existing public coffers rather than through the levying of additional taxes. However, that's not always possible. If additional taxes are levied, I think it would be wise to tie them to median income or value of the property rather than a flat tax for every resident in the area.
- Yes, preserving the rural character and controlling suburban sprawl.
- Yes. Agriculture. Keep a green space for future generations that want a rural lifestyle.
- Yes, these are all important aspects of a vibrant and meaningful community that will attract businesses because families will want to locate here.
- Yes! The cost associated with each home built isn't covered by the taxes each new homeowner pays. The state doesn't have the financial funds to provide the infrastructure needed to support additional homes. Schools are crowded, roads are gridlocked, and we can't build either fast enough to meet the growing population.
- There is a limited amount of agricultural and forestal lands. Thing that are limited are usually of great value. If one takes it away it is gone and cannot easily, if at all, be re-established.
- Yes, yes, and yes! That is what public planning is about. We need public leaders to think on these things and guide the county's preservation efforts or it won't happen at all.
- YES, PWC should engage in rural preservation. The time is now to save what is left. Just a few more years and the song birds will not have enough habitats to migrate through out PWC. They are our true money makers. Business with their goods and services will thrive as tourists flock to PWC to see the magnificent migration stop overs that PWC has preserved forever. A brochure of the stopovers and which song birds use them and at what times, insure businesses to sustain high occupancy of their services and daily outputs of their goods, with plenty of money entering PWC. Money that is spent in PWC will stay in PWC because our businesses will grow to service our tourists that migrate to the song bird stopovers.
- Yes, it should for all the reasons listed in the question.

- Yes. Once it is gone, it is lost forever.
- Yes. We do need some space since the county is filling-in the closer-in areas along Route 28. Yes, you should preserve green space in the county. For years my friend was a summer camp nurse at Camp Glenkirk in the county and was even married in the lodge there. Now, the camp is gone and there are all huge houses there. Same with Camp Tapawingo - I worked there when I was in high school. It's gone, along with the rural areas around it. There are vivid memories to experiences in rural areas. I've lived here 30 years and have never returned to visit the subdivision I lived in West Springfield. It was just a house.
- My question is, do you want to see a county with nothing but houses and roads? Eastern PWC is already crowded and many of the (commercial) buildings are in poor shape and too many are unoccupied.
- Yes.
- As stated in #18, once the rural land is developed, it is gone forever. Rural areas give us space to breath, to relax, to be at one with nature and our agricultural roots.
- Yes, not only to control over populating, but we do need to be responsible regarding nature and preserving what is being destroyed on a daily basis. We need the Rural Crescent.
- Yes. The county needs to get a handle on development. It is important to preserve forest and agriculture and to control suburban sprawl. Once it's paved a way of life is lost.
- I believe Prince William should be engaged in rural preservation to protect the environment and the mental health of the people who live in northern Virginia.
- It appears that Prince William Counties main objective is the control of growth. I do not think Prince William County knows how to manage a rural preservation area...considering they allow Sports facilities, parks, Training academy in areas with rural roads in ten acres zoning. Why should the rural crescent be subjected to increased traffic, wear and tear on roads and facilities so suburbanites go to a professional softball park that the local residents cannot utilize.
- Rural preservation and open space should be a top priority of the County. The lifestyle offered by this area is unsurpassed and quickly disappearing. Once gone, it is gone forever.
- We cannot live in a world without balance nor can we live in a world where there is uncontrolled progress. We should be able to improve the quality of life for our communities but we should do so without endangering the surrounding ecosystems. We should be able to have access to modern conveniences but we should not neglect entrepreneurship. Planting a row of 5 year old trees should not be an acceptable resolution for the destruction of a mature woodland. The county not only has the right but the responsibility to engage in rural preservation. It would be reckless otherwise.
- Most definitely, PWC should be engaging in rural preservation. Many of the answers to this question lies within your own question. We should be protecting agricultural and forestal lands, preserving important environmental or cultural features, preserving rural character, and controlling suburban sprawl. We cannot allow the selfishness of developers and corrupt politicians to destroy the legacy we need to leave for future generations. Do they also not have a right to enjoy a quality of life that does not always contain asphalt and concrete? Do we not have an obligation to protect the environment, the water tables, and the wild life? Do we not

have an obligation to preserve history, like the Manassas Battlefield historic district? Do we not have an obligation to our hardworking farmers and hardworking residents? It is pure selfishness to continue suburban sprawl just to make a small subset of people richer...at the expense of so much more.

- Yes, it is a vital part of our history, our food, and our freedoms. (Not constitutional freedoms, of course). Our freedoms from the loud noises, urban sprawl and enjoying schools with the appropriate level of students (We need to work on this one).
- Yes, for the reasons listed above and to avoid tax-revenue negative residential development that imposes additional costs on everyone.
- Yes, see above.
- Yes. We do not need more sprawl in PWC. Continuously building out every open space leads to worse road congestion and traffic.
- YES!!!! Your question states the answer.
- I like the idea of preservation, but want to be able to use my land, not just look at it.
- Yes. To protect against suburban sprawl that does not pay for itself.
- Yes, clean water is going to be our most precious commodity worldwide. Taking steps now to protect the streams, keep forested areas intact will serve county well in future. Sadly, this year has seen an accelerated decline in numerous essential pollinators that alone is going to translate into many vegetation changes when plant reproduction dwindles. Keeping large tracts of forested or natural meadow land, with diverse plant communities is best way to keep diverse pollinator communities available. Once developed that opportunity is gone. Our great grandchildren should have a 'right' to breath clean air, drink clean water. By giving individuals the 'right' to put in high density now, you strip the rights if future yet unborn citizens.
- Yes because someone has to look what happens in other areas that are left unprotected first comes the Neighborhoods the businesses then next thing you're in the city and not living in the Kind of community you bought your house in.
- Yes, rural spaces should be preserved because development is harmful to the environment: air, water & land all suffer from concrete overkill & deforestation. We need a healthy environment if we're to survive.
- For the very reasons you just mentioned. With all the increased population, our future children will miss out on some of the joys of rural if it is not preserved. My family moved to PW county 30 years ago, so we have witnessed some of the major changes to the county. Especially all the building and development.
- Yes it should it preserves the rural character and cultural features. This area was integral in the civil war, and sky scrapers don't preserve that legacy.
- I think you have to first determine if there are any people left that want to farm large acreage. This is a difficult occupation in today's economy and weather patterns. Don't stick the large land owners that can't farm any longer with the albatross of their acreage.
- In name only. Too many developments (avondale, braemar, ashley ridge, etc..)
- Yes, to protect and preserve our heritage and history.
- Yes. See above.

- I object to forgiving the RE Taxes and only recovering 5 years of taxes of them when sold or changes made to the use.
- Yes, for all the reasons listed in the question above.
- Rural preservation is valuable if it benefits the residents. Preventing suburban sprawl and downstream traffic is a valuable benefit. Offering Open Space destinations for all residents is also valuable.
- YES!! It gives our community character and teaches the young the importance of farmland.
- No - and by the way - the only place in all of VA where Hwy 29 is a two lane road is between Gainesville and Centerville - we don't need preservation of battlefield land to include the 20-30 feet on both sides of Hwy 29 (or 234 for that matter) that would allow for additional lanes. The Planning Commission's current vision for preservation is an obstacle to smart growth.
- Yes because it's proven to work.
- PWC is located in NOVA and needs to grow not stay rural due too close proximity to Wash DC. Only way to grow, is to relax the 10acre rule and build Single Family Homes.
- Hell yes the county should be engaging in rural preservation because development is absolutely out of control. Zoning exists for a reason.
- Absolutely!
- I would preserve rural character while scaling back the large number of restrictions. Property owners loose too many rights when it comes to this issue.
- Yes... For all the above reasons. If we destroy all of our natural habitats, do we truly know the long term effect
- Yes for all the reasons noted.
- Yes! We've watched Linton Hall Road, and much of 234 turn into a crowded environment of cookie cutter houses, and miles of asphalt. Not appealing at all.
- Yes, for all of the reasons stated.
- To protect remaining farming operations while also protecting in environmental and cultural resources and rural character.
- Yes, for all of the reasons stated above.
- Yes, it maintains a good mix for the county to help balance out all of the neighborhood developments.
- No...it's grown too much around it. Keep some parks and such, but really let it grow. There is nearby rural area.
- Yes, if the government doesn't support protecting wild life and farm land, no one will.
- For all the reasons listed here, #19.
- Yes because without it future generations will lose their heritage and also their appreciation for nature. Rural communities provide a valuable safety net and should be preserved. In times of crisis and financial collapse, agriculture in rural areas has proven to be an important employment buffer, offering entire families some sense of stability upon loss of jobs due to restructuring, market or currency collapse – some of the insecurities that are part of the new global economy.

- The county should only be involved to the extent that regulations provide incentives - but ultimately if people want to economically utilize their property they should have the right to do so.
- Much of Prince William County has very congested residential areas that are having much conflict within the community. Rural areas tend to be more peaceful with more community interaction (Neighborly).
- The county should pursue a policy of rural preservation to protect the agriculture land, woodlands and allow the rural life style to continue in the county as an option to urban sprawl.
- ABSOLUTELY!!!! Look around at all the cookie cutter subdivisions, the strip malls that all have the exact same stores (pizza, nails, etc), the roads clogged with vehicles. Do we need more of that? NO! Let's manage development along the 95 corridor, while limiting all development out west.
- To a lesser extent than what they are now. I think Prince William County has some growing room.
- Yes, otherwise we'll end up filling all the open space.
- Yes! The area is already out of control with development and no roads. Let's leave the rural crescent alone...
- Yes we need to be. Rural areas will be in high demand once FFX, Arlington and the other areas reach a point that people will just want to get away from the madness. I work with a number of people that live inside the beltway and when they travel to Warrenton, Nokesville, Gainesville, Haymarket and the other areas they "Love the Area" Some are looking at moving to the Linton Hall area just to get out of FFX county and this simple fact that a 2 mile trip takes them 30 min.
- YES! For all the reasons I noted in #18. I am from Long Island, NY, which is about 35 miles outside of NYC. Long Island used to be full of cornfields, potato farms, duck farms, etc. Now it's all sprawl and crawl with Hollywood stars invading the eastern end. Please keep PW's rural crescent. Stop whoring out every piece of open land and allowing builders to slap up cookie cutter homes. I own a home and a business in Nokesville, VA... leave it be.
- Yes and No. It's part of the cultural history. It also provides habitat for plants and animals. However, county should have first right of refusal when large tracks of land become available for sale. It should not deny the landowner fair market value of property or otherwise control private property without compensating the landowner. As a side point, the county already engages in rural preservation simply by its current tax structure and in its behavior (for example, where it places large schools, expands roadways to 4 lanes, denies sewers, not supportive of allowing acreage into get into and use (but retains the 10 acre rule), etc)
- Yes.
- Yes, especially controlling suburban sprawl.
- Yes because residential development calls for added services and money for those services.
- Yes, we all need to eat. Sometimes I think people forget where there food comes from.
- Yes, by protecting rural areas we are also protecting waterways and a better future for our children.

- Yes, otherwise it will end up like the 2 crappy cities Manassas & Woodbridge. Riddled with illegals, crime & trash. Can't trust anyone in either of those places. Not a great environment for kids in my opinion.
- Yes Of course!
- Yes. The people who live in Rural Crescent chose that lifestyle when they invested in our community and I think we should try to preserve it for as long as possible. The other advantage in doing so is to redirect development to areas that need to be either redeveloped or expanded upon to create a desirable urban lifestyle.
- Absolutely. We need to encourage the revitalization of existing neighborhoods not the building of more new homes. We need to maintain the green space and watershed areas to allow the continued small farms and keep habitats.
- The county went too far in limiting development in the rural area. The current scheme (10 acre rule) undermined agriculture and failed in creating open, green space for all to use. Restricting a home to a 10 acre site was a mistake - with many of the sites poorly maintained - and none of them providing access and use that an intelligent development plan would allow.
- Yes. I think we need to protect the pocketbooks of current taxpayers by controlling suburban sprawl and should protect environmentally sensitive areas from development (including schools and government buildings).
- Yes, Prince William County in the last 20 years has rapidly developed from a "hickville" to a smart suburban area. The countryside was never far away- now you have to drive to enjoy space and tranquility. Fairfax and Loudoun also have this issue and the importance in a mixed purpose environment enables a lifestyle which is both urban with escape not too distant. People are attracted to trees and space not concrete and unquenched urban sprawl- balance is needed.
- Let those who love in it deal with it. Stay out of your neighbors business and try to make your money elsewhere without ruining others' lives families and homes.
- Yes, I firmly believe the county should be "engaging in rural preservation," for all of the reasons listed (protecting current agricultural and forest lands, preserving important environmental and cultural/historic features, preserving rural character, and controlling suburban sprawl and its many costs). In addition, this "rural preservation" land use provides an area for an important and desirable life style that is good to have in our community (I can't afford it, but I am glad that many others can).
- Hell yes - and for all the reasons I explained.
- Yes, crowded areas lead to increase in crime, decrease in environmental quality.
- Yes.
- Yes - I think so - and to start, the hypocrites in county government that are wasting tax-payer money and screwing around with a "new County seal" should be forced to this back on their own. In the alternative, we should have TRUTH from this government - and the county seal should be replaced with a BIG RED TRAFFIC SIGNAL in the middle - with two felled trees to either side. The motto should become "Prince William: Where Trees Live in Fear." Yes, once



these are gone, they cannot be replaced. History and culture which made Prince William County unique will vanish and we will have nothing special to offer potential citizens.

- Yes for all the reasons listed.

## What types of development you would like to see in the Rural Area?

- Low density planned residential developments and commercial developments OK along major arteries.
- I'm not in favor of even 10 acre lots. A lot of those involve clear cutting so that you are assaulted with the view of the ensuing McMansion. Development of limited business and housing that that do not involve clear cutting would be ok.
- Trail type / picnic type/ hiking parks with long bike trails.
- Very limited. Protect farms, natural parks, creating public parks.
- Large farms and some lots allowing horse and other farm life.
- Little to any.
- Limited to the current 10-acre policy. This has the benefit that the larger lots drive larger, more expensive homes which pay more in taxes per unit than smaller houses on smaller lots.
- Schools, hiking paths and recreational facilities other than ball fields. I'd even favor increasing the lot size for residential housing to 20 acres.
- None.
- Camps, trails, parks, educational facilities.
- Parks and walking trails.
- Occasional single family homes. Not developments and not shopping centers.
- Farm, open areas. No more track housing - puts too much pressure on the roads, increases congestion and reduces the desirability of the area.
- As little as possible.
- None really. I agree with the current restrictions.
- None.
- Only a couple 10 acre lot homes- nothing else- including the Tri county Parkway!
- Commercial, retail, something that will provide tax revenue.
- None. Leave it alone.
- Parks with camping and small Mom&Pop establishments.
- NONE.
- Limited residential, parks, a high school, and farms. I'm very concerned we are losing all of our farms in the county.
- No development except for schools, parks, and athletic fields that are open to public, in limited cases.
- Preservation with limited home development, more parks.
- Ten ac lots.
- Parks and recreation areas, vineyards, small farms, and large lot residential where the community is built in amongst the land that is there and is not cleared first.
- None. Maybe more trails and park land. Co-op farms.
- Parks with trails and nature areas for kids! The western part of the county is seriously lacking!
- An addition of treed walking paths not found elsewhere in the county.

- NONE!
- Parks, Libraries, schools.
- More parks for the children to play - have a picnic, have some walking and Nike paths. We also need more sports fields - there are not enough and a whole lot of children play sports. And sports are a good thing - we need our children outside and exercising - not at home playing video games. And having sports venues also can bring in revenue to the sports complex by holding events every so often too.
- Not much. Try to encourage/incentivize farms to remain in business don't sell out to the developers even for 10 acre home sites. Bring back the farm tour and help to preserve the land as it was.
- Low density.
- Possibly more trails and parks.
- More homes on 1-3 acre lots.
- Limited to town of Gainesville itself. Too much sprawl everywhere else in the area, only leads to more traffic going West/East.
- The same type as is currently allowed.
- Limited... perhaps some cluster zoning for homes and schools.
- There should not be a rural designation. Population is increasing and the typical growth model should be applied to all areas of the County.
- Single family homes on a minimum lot size (can be bigger, but can't be smaller) Also must minimize the clearing of trees without a specific approved reason. Do not want to see HOA developments with townhouses or condos or apartments.
- None.
- Agricultural only.
- Police, Fire, Library.
- None.
- None!!!
- None. Zero.
- Large acreage residential and needed community features, i.e., schools, fire houses, etc.
- I would like to see minimal development in the Rural Area. Do not develop what you do not need. Projects such as the Bi-County Parkway NEED to be shot down and denied from ever being placed on the Rural Areas of our County.
- Development I would like to see in the Rural Area includes LOW-DENSITY, single-family housing on 2-3 acres with 21st century amenities such as public sewer and water; sports fields and small business complexes built to suit the surrounding area (open green areas, ponds, etc.) as mandatory components of the business site.
- Public sewer and water.
- IF you put a gun to my head I would amend the law to allow for 1 house in 5 acres not 10, home buying has changed, not to suburban demand, nor townhouse demand and not for "mic-mansion: demand either. But the area can surely be enhanced through a citizen/county program(s) that bring people out to the area for festivals, nature walks, history hikes (the NPS does a terrible job in

promoting its own options...terrible). Doing nothing is the wrong answer, ripping down the current rural area is also the wrong answer...failure to get local citizens engaged and empowered in the decision process is clearly wrong.

- A western county community center with sports fields/gym.
- Minimal low density absolutely no high density.
- Answered in multiple choice portion of this survey.
- Parks, including amusement parks, water parks, and etc. if developed in a way that preserves the rural nature of the area and in locations with sufficient traffic capacity. Other low traffic developments which by design are well integrated with the rural concept would also be fine. Examples that come to mind include: Cemeteries Businesses related to rural use such as farm related businesses if the development is meant to service the surrounding area ONLY such as agricultural processing plants. Businesses that support use of park and forest land features such as small stores, restaurants, gas stations, etc. but ONLY if the number is limited and placement is sensible for the surrounding area.
- None.
- None.
- None. Leave it be.
- Schools and public services such as Police, Fire and EMT. If not hospitals then definitely a few more Urgent Care facilities with ER capability and 24/7 support.
- Farms, parks and large lot residential.
- Whatever the residents feel is appropriate. Not my call, I don't live there.
- Large lots, 10 acres or more. Farmland, parks for families.
- Parks and recreational facilities, trails, camps.
- Only single family homes on 5 to 10 (or more) acre lots.
- No development!
- More fire and ems services.
- Should continue with low density development.
- I would NOT like to see any development in the Rural Crescent!! If the county and your maps call farm land "undeveloped" land, they should be labeled. Farm land is naturally developed and is passed on from generation to generation. Rural is a way of life, not sporadic symbols of nature and artificially aligned plants.
- First of all, and most importantly, a major freight cargo highway should NOT under ANY circumstances be allowed to plow right through the middle of the northwestern section of the rural crescent!!!!!! This will destroy this whole section of the rural area. It will cut a community right in half and cause irreparable damage. It will cause all kinds of sound/noise quality issues, air pollution, put well water at risk, and more. The current A-1 zoning should be retained for the area. Maybe a couple of parks and other rural type business development. Necessary public facilities such as emergency services, as needed. We do need to encourage the work, live, play environment in our county, but it should be controlled and balanced between the development area and the rural crescent. Development in the rural area should be strictly controlled so as to not destroy the rural atmosphere and to further increase the congestion nightmares that already exist.

- Finish the Gainesville interchange. Catch up to all of the mess you've made by funding schools and public safety facilities, but leave everything else alone.
- Parks, Rec & farms.
- NONE.
- I think the current 1 per 10 acres is appropriate.
- Certainly NOT densely packed townhouses or homes on 1/4 acre lots or less! We have plenty of those already on line to be built. We need to continue with large lot sizes (multi acre to 10 acre or larger) with single family homes and farms in the rural areas.
- Farms and fields.
- More encouragement of farm development and the growth of organic farming.
- Low density areas of 10 acres or more per lot.
- More jobs and homes. Residential/Commercial.
- Parks.
- Agricultural development.
- Farming and associated buildings and homes.
- Renovation of older homes already in place. Nothing else.
- Farm land.
- Town centers like South Riding with open communal spaces. Equestrian communities with common stable and riding areas that eliminate the need for large lots.
- None.
- Parks, farms, camps, historical sites, green businesses or businesses with green practices.
- More parks with trails for walking, biking etc.
- NONE - leave it alone. What is mapped as Rural on this map is hardly rural aside from the parks. Rt 29 has already been destroyed & is now commercialized, overpopulated & a traffic nightmare. Rt 15 is slowly beginning to mirror that. Rt 28 is working its way south to Fauquier.
- Not a lot.
- Very little.
- That would take longer than I have here to explain.
- No less than 10 acre lots, unless property already exists as less. There should be no change in use of land if it is agricultural land.
- Almost none. More roads encourage more development.
- The clustering of homes on 2 acre lots but leaving the overall density at one home/10 acres might help maintaining the rural character. Open space and pasture land could remain along the roadway.
- All the things listed above.
- Parks, recreation areas, schools and other facilities with a lot of land.
- Keep as is.
- None.
- None beyond perhaps parks (if done correctly). The ongoing Avendale development on Vint Hill Rd. (behind Harris Teeter) was a complete encroachment on the rural crescent and poor decision

by the PWC supervisory. Very disappointing that the majority of the board approved this development for football fields, new schools, etc. We will never get that land back to rural status and it opened the door to future encroachments.

- None. Prince William County does not need more development. It needs smarter development. The recent house and town house developments have increased the traffic horribly. There is no reliable public transportation. 66 has become a parking lot almost constantly. The development that has been allowed destroyed old trees, wild life homes, created traffic jams, more pollution. It is not smart development. The trees and other plantings in these new developments are not native, require too much maintenance, and use too much chemicals and waste water. All further development outside of the rural environment must be more environmentally suitable, permeable parking lots, rain gardens, native plantings of trees, less strip malls, better access to public transportation.
- Some shoulder widths added to county and state roads for those brave bicycle riders who want to enjoy the outdoor experience. Virginia is very stingy with road shoulders for bike riders. You don't need a developer to make bring this to the surface. Widen 28 at Aden intersection; add a shoulder for bike riders (or a side trail).
- Very low density residential is fine. Schools and public facilities as they are needed are fine. I would be open to inviting businesses out here so we have more jobs and don't have to commute so far for non-retail type jobs.
- Farm-related activities should be encouraged, though Prince William should learn lessons from the experience of Fauquier County in regulating event centers that are not closely connected with actual farming. Wholesale nurseries should be encouraged, but retail nurseries that are traffic magnets should be discouraged. Expanding roads in the Rural Area to encourage Culpeper and Fauquier residents to commute through Prince William is counter-productive. Building the Bi-County Parkway is inconsistent with the concept of preserving the Rural Area. Placing a VRE station in Haymarket would subsidize sprawl - any new VRE stations should be located east of Route 29.
- Parks.
- The existing by right uses of property is adequate for the foreseeable future growth needs. Any rezoning of large tracts of land will overload resources (schools/roads).
- None. There is enough of it already. Leave the county alone!!!
- Leave it alone. If any, go with the one home per ten acres like it is now.
- None.
- Very limited. At most, 10+ acre home sites outside of standard developments. In other words, lots with space and custom builds, not neighborhoods.
- I don't think we should be developing in the rural area at all, beyond what is allowed now. We need to be more creative in our development. Loudoun has done far better than we have creating diverse communities. We create suburban neighborhoods on big lots. They have clustered houses efficiently; created communities clustered around a central commons and created communities with larger and smaller lots - all leading to a far more natural and more livable feel to their communities.

- Limited. Some public facilities for the residents, such as community center or library, police or fire stations. Passive recreation public areas.
- Residential lots, 5 acres minimum.
- I think sewer should be extended into the rural area to preserve the ground water and surrounding rivers and waterways.
- 5 acre parcels that could be used for equestrian or other livestock. 5 acres is more manageable to take care of and large enough for an owner to have a few animals.
- None.
- More density of housing including townhomes and single family homes.
- Only essential development, small retail, service, support and small business but in small clusters.
- Educational type venues (touring a farm) or parks for families to enjoy the beauty and the outdoors closer to home.
- Residential, commercial.
- None - except environmental, recreational.
- Affordable farming, parks for all, home businesses.
- As little as possible.
- I would prefer less than more, but controlled and well thought out development seems reasonable to me.
- Recreational areas.
- Public use - parks, etc.
- Development of a trail system (hikers, horse riders, mountain bike riders, dirt bike and ATV riders) connecting the parts of the rural crescent.
- 10 acre residential only.
- More modest and affordable homes for young families that are not townhouses or retirement communities.
- No development in very special areas but clustered development in much of the current rural area.
- Ideally, denser subdivisions and affordable housing, including apts. and condos. With an emphasis on commercial development, for the strong tax base it produces.
- As stated above...agri tourism facilities (public or private "parks", etc.) in addition to good 'ol fashion farms. Perhaps PWC should encourage true farm use through incentives. Very large lot residential 50+ acres.
- NONE!
- Farms, wineries, forests, lakes.
- With the exception of the Manassas battlefield area and other public and private civil war sites in the county, development on the 66, 28, and 234 corridors should be enabled and focused on capturing professional and technical projects. The route 1 area needs to be rehabilitated as well.
- None.
- PARKS. Create spaces that connect the Leesylvania State Park, Prince William Forest, and the Battlefields. I want to be able to bike across my county on separate paved trails or country roads without getting run over with subdivision construction trucks.



- NONE.
- Libraries and parks are always nice, but in terms of business development, please stop the march of the strip mall and town center! Actually, one of the key areas that I think much of the rural crescent needs is access to affordable Internet - many places are still unserved by Comcast or Verizon. While cellular-based wide area networks are more readily available, they are expensive. With more businesses inside and outside of the county employing work-from-home policies, encouraging cable-based Internet deployment will be key to ensuring that there is still opportunity for jobs outside of farming while simultaneously preserving open spaces. Of course, cellular networks are getting better so that may be a good option, but only if prices come down - and given the lack of competition, I don't really see that happening. Similarly, I believe it will help the desirability of living in the rural crescent. Of course, everyone wants to have their cake and eat it too, but I'll tell you this: earlier this year I was considering moving, and looked at a lot of other houses within Nokesville. There were many houses that were beautiful, but I simply couldn't even consider them until I knew whether they had high-speed cable. That's really becoming an important consideration, especially among the young.
- When farms go out of production, for economic reasons or because there are no heirs interested in farming, and then consider 10 acre lots (20 would be better). Encourage truck farms and animal-based lifestyles on 10-20 acre parcels as a priority. A problem that should be addressed is the unusually shaped lots developers care out around perk sites that cannot be used for anything but a house. That is just disguised suburban sprawl, not a rural lifestyle.
- Parks, camps, preserves, wildlife tours, wineries, horseback riding trails, apple orchards, corn mazes.
- None.
- Very little, except for parking to allow access to trails, restroom facilities, large and small farms but sizeable forests left intact.
- The only development in the Rural Area is the reintroduction of beneficial microorganisms to the soil to prevent soil erosion and promote native plant growth for the song birds. The Rural Area needs to develop a program of pulling out invasive plants and seed balling the area with native plants to promote song bird ecosystems that clean up our soil and water and air. No more asphalt and concrete, houses and big box stores. You would lose money as you would pollute the last vestige of Mother Nature's attempt to keep us sane as we live and work in our air, water, and soil pollution to make a buck and sleep at night. Impervious surfaces are not needed in the song bird migration preservation habitat called the Rural Area.
- Above all else, planned development. Unplanned growth is the ethic of the cancer cell, said author Edward Abbey. Our Comprehensive Plan details how the rural area should be controlled. Prince William leaders tend to ignore the Comprehensive Plan, and thus we have unplanned, somewhat chaotic growth.
- Not much.
- None. Keep it open green space or park land.
- More parks. Fix Silver Lake like promised. Fix Long Park. It's shabby also.
- None.

- NONE.
- Not much--essential services such as schools, fire stations, libraries, medical facilities, and a few shopping areas. Gas stations are essential.
- None.
- Subdivisions with smaller tracks of land 1 to 3 acres...with public sewer and water.
- ABSOLUTELY NONE!
- As I said in question 18, arts, small shops, and culture would be an amazing addition the area. Meanwhile we should avoid depersonalizing subdivisions and land abusing development like industrial.
- Maybe some parks, I do not think we have many of those around the region. Places where people can go to get away from the noise and business of the city. I think any development should be restricted to rural type businesses, farms, homes, etc. I do not mind the subdivisions that have 1 home per 10 acres. Honestly, I am not in favor of much development, but that is selfish too. There just has to be a balance.
- Personally, none. There are limited resources on this end of the county. To start developing in this area without those resources would be an egregious act. Fire, rescue and police are limited, while better than twenty years ago. The schools are busting at their seams. Traffic is continuing to be a huge issue, not just from PWC, but from surrounding areas as well.
- Only the existing ten-acre lot development, and parks and environmental protection areas.
- None.
- Development that in for the entire county (see question 21).
- Restoration of historical homes and locations; set aside of parkland and conservation areas. Not more new tract homes and strip malls!
- 10 acre lots. No sewer/water.
- Parks with large natural areas.
- None.
- None.
- As little as possible.
- Parks and watershed considerations.
- Continued low density housing - possibly shrinking from the 10 acre lot to 3-5.
- Allow for smaller lot size. 2 or 3 acres per site.
- I like the idea of smaller cluster developments instead of the 10 acre rule. The rural appearance can be so much preserved with this type of planning versus willy-nilly development as we have seen so far. Central entrances to developments make utilization of emergency and utility services much more efficient. Parks in the Crescent should have more than just ball fields. It is over 10 miles to get to the nearest pool facility for some of us, while the rest of the county has them within each new subdivision for owners only.
- None.
- More parks and forested areas.

- None. Other than necessary schools/facilities NEAR the areas that need them (if there are more students in Woodbridge, the school should be built near that area, not in Bristow), otherwise I see no reason for more things to be developed unless it is the land owner. If a person who owns 10 acres wants to build a home on it that is their right. But developments should not be continuing in these areas.
- None.
- If any development, it should be large employment uses (preferable not just retail) and should take into account environmental and transportation impacts.
- None.
- Anything other than nothing. Roads would be a good starting point.
- What we currently have less the dense rezonings.
- Single Family Homes on at least 1/4 acre. And a large YMCA for public use.
- Agricultural (ie: farming), parks, and protected areas. Maybe more tourism and making it a safer place to bike.
- Educational, public services, parks and recreation.
- I think Prince William has a lot to offer. I think with the right development we could offer just as much as Middleburg or Leesburg for visiting the area. Focusing on rural character restrictions and loosening other restrictions would bring growth and investment to our area.
- By nature, rural areas should be protected from mass development... Bristow Village, for example, totally destroyed the rural environment and the small battlefield park did nothing to maintain the rural heritage of the area. It is an extension of suburban sprawl in a protected area.
- None.
- Ten acre lots if any.
- Personally none, but that is not realistic. So large lots. Innovative approaches, such as clustered houses with an average of 10 acres per house that preserves the rural character on the area is fine.
- Leave as is, though perhaps the Brentsville Store can be gutted and re-built, and the building next to the train tracks is simply a rat motel now. It needs to go, and perhaps just leave a gazebo & historical marker in its place.
- Educational, natural history, environmental stewardship center, farming preservation/history.
- Would prefer to see options to 10 acre lots. Hopefully a program to transfer development rights to areas with better public services will take shape from this study. The next best option is incentives to cluster the development on a tract and place the balance under conservation easement. The least attractive is the current 10 acre lots. However landowners and developers need options to meet market demands and preserve larger farmable properties.
- Green spaces and some recreational areas. Maybe hiking trails through the country would be fantastic!!
- None.
- Subdivisions with 2-3 acre home sites. Some smaller lots and a diverse grouping of homes. It's hard to live in part of the county b/c most of the homes in the rural area are much older. I think we need newer homes on not so big lots.
- None.

- NONE.
- I would like to see nature trails and private farms.
- See #18. And don't be afraid if people actually want to have working farms - which usually aren't pretty little manicured estates. Be ready for animals (and their manure), processing of agricultural products, noises (during the day), and the inconveniences that come with planting, harvesting, etc.
- Occasional office buildings are ok without interrupting the natural setting of the rural areas.
- Farms of all sizes, some houses on five to ten acre lots. No large developments.
- I'd like to see a return to farming. Seems every day there are horror stories about additives in food, GMO food, and unsafe food from China. Let's grow our own food and make Prince William County a place where healthy people live.
- Parks, subdivisions but with 2 acres or more lots, not 10.
- None, leave it alone (protect it).
- NONE.
- More community focused such as Sports Center, like the area for the Grizzlies off of Vint Hill. Camping, without services. Basically development that allows people to enjoy the amazing areas we have in PWC.
- More public parks; Community "victory" gardens; Theatres.
- Free Market should determine development as a general rule. Where necessary, some areas to protect wildlife and fauna should be frozen with no roads or widening of roads. Some areas where semi development is appropriate should be designated to provide for historical opportunities or human activity such as hiking, horseback riding, certain farm/ranch activity or buffer zone for airports, railroads and the like. If land becomes available, the county should purchase them.
- More parks and community center.
- I would not like to see a quarry or a stump grinder industrial place trying to lie and say they are really just a farm.
- Controlled building, some commercial or factories ok if not in appropriate farm land, some senior living facilities, so close to hospitals but yet get open, fresh air and also provides jobs, etc.
- Not much at all.
- Fix the roads & bridges.
- None.
- Don't go there so I really can't say but anything that can add to the tax base.
- Parks, nature centers, community gardens.
- I want rural area development to evolve to a higher density use (a 3-5 acre requirement) and accept intelligent planning principles such as "clustering" homes. Clustering lowers costs to provide roads, infrastructure and utility services, It enhances the landscape, can provide more open and green space accessible to everyone and its concept works much better for planning purposes.
- I'd like to see some more parks and recreation areas - not sports fields like Long Park but actual parks with hiking and walking trails and open space for picnics. I think we could allow some commercial development along major roadways like the 234 bypass (not more strip malls but commercial office buildings in a buffer area along 234 close to 95 and 66). I'd like to see the county

allow homeowners to "tap" into public sewer and water if they live close to areas with public sewer and water and are willing to pay the cost of "hooking up" themselves.

- Education centers. Camping areas.
- A more community based development with small local shops and parks, facilities on both east and west side of the county.
- As indicated in response to a question above, appropriate development would include agricultural and forest uses, low density residential uses, and public facilities such as schools and parks and other low intensity recreational uses (riding stables, golf courses, cemeteries, etc.). No mention has been made so far of cluster development. Residential cluster development would be the best form of residential development in many cases (sometimes called LID development). This provides for clustered housing with the most environmentally sensitive or agriculturally useful land devoted to non-residential use. This approach would also serve to preserve the scenic values of the Rural Area better than conventional development on ten-acre lots, in most cases.
- NONE! I am sick of the over development of lands and such.
- Outdoor recreation such as PW Forest, canoeing, hiking, biking, walking.
- Cut down every tree - defer taxes in Prince William with their sale - and let the people in the Rural sector join in the misery with the remainder of WC...
- None. As it is some of the new roads being built are doing nothing more than bringing in more out of county traffic to our roads.
- More parks and a pool. Housing should be small developments. Put the houses on 1/2-2 acre lots and set aside the remaining 8 or so acres per house as public open space.

## **Should the county allow public facilities such as schools and sports facilities in the Rural Area? Why. Why not?**

- Yes, but completely opposed to the way in which the county extorts developers and communities to provide the facilities. The potential appropriation of ball field at Oak Valley is shameful. If this is the way that the county plans to conduct business in the future, then I am flatly against an appropriation of land for public purposes.
- Schools are only built if there is enough population density to require them. I don't favor additional suburbanization so therefore I don't favor schools. Soccer and ball fields would be fine but not stadiums.
- Yes. Schools with sports facilities related to the school activities only.
- Yes...To support established residents-schools only.
- Limited schools based on needs.
- Why the continued focus on sports facilities? This survey seems rigged for a particular outcome. Is the Chairman trying to garner support for sports facilities in the Rural Areas? Sounds like it.
- No, these facilities should be located within the communities that they serve. Putting them in the rural area only increases the traffic on county roads and extends the amount of time that people spend in their vehicles ...which is already too much.
- Schools - yes. Students in existing communities often have a long commute to overcrowded schools. Sports facilities - not so much. They should be located closer to the more heavily populated areas where more people live.
- Yes, it's a beautiful area to enjoy such things. Just don't "overbuild" and keep the look in line with character of the area.
- Schools are essential as the county continues to grow. The only issue with that and with sports facilities is that generally once some development is allowed government's tendencies are to suddenly relax the rules and allow other development.
- Yes, although sports should have to be scheduled to turn off the lights at 9 pm and fined if they aren't off by 10 pm.
- No...they are not needed.
- To a certain extent.
- Definitely schools when needed. There could be more athletic fields at this moment because of the growth in the past decade....I have children who are athletic and I know the struggles the leagues have with scheduling games/practices. But right now only one more athletic field complex should be necessary....what about the open space behind the Catharpin baseball fields?
- Schools yes because the kids should not have to travel far and no to sports facilities as they are noisy and bring too much traffic. Only ball fields should be allowed.
- If the County owns land, they should do what the citizens want. That means ALL the citizens, not just those who live in the rural area that may want to preserve their private secluded playgrounds.

- I guess if a school was necessary to serve the area, that should be allowed, but I don't think sports facilities should be allowed because it would bring too many people into the area and this could become problematic.
- The sports facilities have to have enough parking and should be restricted to daylight areas. With the ball park in Catharpin and Long Park now having the night lighting, there's no reason to expand further unless you want to build a professional soccer stadium in the mid-county area. County would make a fortune with it!
- Because whether or not we like it, development still occurs and at least the kids will have a nice place to go.
- Yes. We need them and we can decide on setback and other details of the project.
- Yes, but only to the extent that they are needed, and that the people who live there vote on what gets built.
- As population growth occurs, it may be necessary to allow public schools. However, I do not believe we need more sports facilities unless they are located on the school grounds.
- Yes, but also in keeping with the natural landscapes. If they are built in such a way as to preserve the land around them, this is okay. Keeping as much of the natural surroundings as possible is critical to maintaining the character of the crescent.
- No both should be in areas with high population so kids and families can walk to these places. Schools are supposed to be in areas of development per county comprehensive plan. Look at the traffic problem at Patriot bc it is on the border of the rural crescent. The new K to 8 on the same property as Brentsville hs is a nightmare about to happen. The infrastructure to support these is not present.
- Yes, we need schools and sports facilities in this area to serve the families who live here.
- Yes- these types of facilities positively benefit the community.
- Schools are a necessary feature of any community and should be allowed. Sports facilities should be kept to a minimum as they require countless acres of open, untreed areas.
- Of course not! That will destroy the rural-ness of the areas where the schools, facilities are built.
- No sport facilities. Too much traffic in a very rural area that is not equipped for it. Lose all that it stands for.
- Yes - schools are important - overcrowding for one. And sports facilities are definitely important - we have so many children - it would be great to have soccer, baseball fields, and tennis courts. We need to be encouraging our children to be outside when they can. They use their brains all day in the classroom and they need to have a place to go and exercise too.
- Maybe sports facilities for outdoor activities. Schools especially elementary will bring neighborhoods. You will end up with busing issues and angry parents who are upset with long bus rides.
- Yes. Facilities are away from other types of development. many need open space.
- Schools only if it is necessary due to population increase. I don't feel we should ever compromise the Rural Area for just another sports facility. We have some amazing sports facility close to our home, like Catharpin Park. Why not expand that existing park and others like it instead of cutting out another piece of land.



- Yes, because families who live in the rural area would like to have easier access to amenities.
- More information needed.
- Yes and the "why" is a stupid question. The rural areas need public services as much as the development area and those services have typically been provided not only in the rural areas of PWC but in the rural areas of every county in the Commonwealth. This is a moronic question; I guess you haven't traveled through the rural counties in central or southwest Virginia where one can find such facilities dotting vast acres of rural land. If you put public facilities such as fire stations only in the developed areas of a county, fire department response time would be adversely affected, damage would be greater and people would die. Again, this may be your most moronic question.
- Schools, yes. I'm not sure about sports complexes.
- Yes.
- Schools, if necessary, but if you minimize development, you will minimize the need for additional schools. No to sports facilities, especially if they are huge, expansive with lights and such. A multi-purpose field without lights or permanent structures would be fine, but not a huge facility.
- No. Because there are plenty of crappy places for schools and sport facilities all around the county without dipping into our limited cache of open space.
- Schools yes. We need schools for our children. Sports facilities no. They should go into Commercial areas.
- Just schools. Sport facilities should be confined to already established parks.
- No, because public facilities like school and sports facilities ruin the natural resources and cause untold damages to the land and ecosystem.
- Yes. The existing people need services and they pay taxes. The county should provide services for the current residents.
- Public facilities should be allowed in rural area on as needed basis for current residents.
- Yes, we have to allow schools and sports facilities for the taxpayers living in those areas - HOWEVER, you have to improve the roads leading in to and away from those areas. Patriot High school is a prime example of Prince William County's FAILURE to finish the job. Kettle Run should have been improved all the way around the loop (portion that changes name to Shaeffer Lane) to INCLUDE SIDEWALKS from the Vint Hill road intersection to beyond the elementary school. The small country roads cannot handle the amount of vehicle traffic or foot traffic. HUNDREDS of school kids walk from the Braemar community to the High School during the week, crossing Vint Hill Rd without street lights, a cross walk or sidewalks! A TRAGEDY just waiting to happen. FYI - My children have aged out of public school - this does not affect me personally - I am just a concerned citizen.
- Certainly schools and parks. Large sports facilities should be in higher density areas.
- IF the developers, responsible for the growth (they built the homes where the kids are they should pay for 80% of all the associated costs) pony up the money, by law, then schools designed to fit the birth rate should be enhanced so that no child gets on a bus before 7am and no child learns in a trailer.

- This is a stupid question. To not have these would sentence families to driving long distances for school or sports.
- No.
- Answered in multiple choice portion of this survey.
- YES.
- Yes, but for schools only if the infrastructure is already in place or can be added with minor extensions of existing infrastructure. By infrastructure I mean sewer and water service, power, roads and public facilities such as fire and police services. Schools in rural settings help preserve the rural character by providing students a rural location to appreciate during their matriculation. For sports facilities, development should be limited to public use low impact development such as parks with sports fields. I do not support sports facilities such as large recreation centers which would draw people from long distances. Recreation centers belong in developed areas so that people who are not near the rural areas can access them without having to travel very far. This makes them more valuable to residents while avoiding increased traffic in rural areas.
- Of course, we have to provide schools for our citizens and recreational facilities can be viewed as open space by some.
- No. These things can be placed in more developed areas which are not far away from the rural areas.
- No. These facilities can be located in suburban areas that are not far from the rural areas.
- Yes. If the people are there then they deserve the same facilities as the urban citizens.
- Parks yes, schools no. Schools are not a realistic option without sewer and water.
- No, because "public" funding is anything but public. It is more taxes which are paid by the middle & upper class.
- Yes, but only if private citizens are also allowed to use public facilities.
- On a very limited basis for schools. No to sports facilities.
- Public schools ok as necessary based on population.
- If the rural areas are not developed, they won't need schools and sports facilities. Keep those where the population is. It shouldn't be the job of the county to provide sports facilities to the community. Those should be private ventures.
- No, because more roads will be needed to support infrastructure.
- These facilities should only be added if truly needed.
- I support rural, local schools so the children do not have to be bused all over the county. However, the growth must be stopped, the residential development waivers must be stopped, and the communities must be allowed to stabilize and grow closer instead of being forced into a transient nature. Sports, as a part of the school functions, are good, but not commercial sports arenas. The citizens of this county have learned not to trust the words some of the BOCS use.
- Public facilities should be allowed only as needed and not as a method to encourage sprawl. Sports facilities do NOT HAVE ANY place in the rural crescent!! A sports facility defeats the whole purpose of the rural crescent. Streams of vehicles pouring into and out of the facility, the noise, and enormous facility that would be needed to support teams would be totally out of character for the

- rural area. Ball parks or fields such as Catharpin Park, for kids' sports is a bit different than a pro or semi-pro team and would be okay. Again, the intent is to maintain the rural area, not to destroy it.
- Schools are a necessity since you have built sooooo many houses. That should have been considered before building the houses. Unfortunately with that many more kids, sports facilities also need to be added now. Again, this should have been considered before all of the subdivisions were added in the first place and the cost of these should have been put on the builders and home buyers, not the rest of us who didn't want all these houses in the first place.
  - I don't believe we need more and should stop suburban sprawl.
  - There are enough already.
  - Yes.
  - Schools, yes. Bus lots - absolutely not. Sports fields are fine, but not huge sports facilities like the Freedom Center. Large indoor facilities belong near more dense housing areas. I can see a fire/police department in the interest of response time and need. No county office space - unless utilizing existing buildings - not new development in rural areas for county offices. Police and fire use like the training facility are also appropriate like the one in Nokesville. Just don't put in any Potomac Shores, Braemar, or Dominion Valley's in the rural areas!
  - No.
  - I would encourage schools, but not sports facilities. (Yes, to provide public services for the people of the Rural Area.
  - Yes.
  - The only public facilities should be parks and limited number of sports complexes.
  - Schools but not sports facilities. The rural character should be preserved.
  - Yes, but only enough to support the residents that live there. Too many of these things take away from the rural character.
  - If there is low development there, why do we need more schools? Sports facilities such as soccer and baseball fields and even dog parks would be fine.
  - If needed but encourage farming and less residential.
  - Schools and sports facilities are necessary to support the increased population. However, upscale housing will help to offset the cost. Sports facilities are being built already and don't seem to be an issue.
  - No because they require improved infrastructure and create pollution. Unless you could build more softball fields.
  - Yes to schools, no to sports facilities.
  - NO - there are enough of these places elsewhere. If these things are needed, build them in town & expect citizens to commute a few extra miles.
  - I'm undecided.
  - No. When I first moved to my area from a more suburban one in the area, there was only one elementary school (Nokesville ES) and one junior-senior High School. That was in 1999. Now, there are more schools, more houses and more people.
  - Schools yes, sports facilities no. Sports facilities would bring too much congestion and pollution to the area.

- I have no problems with schools. Children who live in this area are best educated in this area. Sports facilities are okay as long as their size is a consideration in their construction.
- Schools, yes. Sports facilities, yes only if for a school or public use, such as a park. Not for any official sports teams.
- Maybe, on a site specific need and adequate environmental analysis detailing all issues.
- The only reason schools or sports facilities which require a large waste-water system should be allowed in the rural area is if it could be at the edge of developed area where sewer is available. Putting in a large public facility w/o public sewer would be putting the cart before the horse. That's how Comprehensive Plans are broken and unplanned development spreads.
- Yes, if done right will support the environment in Prince William.
- Yes absolutely as long as they incorporate a large amount of land.
- Sure, if needed.
- If residential zoning has already been approved and construction has started, then, yes, county MUST allow schools to be built to accommodate these crowds. Stop approving new construction without significant proffers/impact fees (more than 10%).
- Without the Fairfax level of development, there would be no further need. For most in the rural crescent, those facilities are easy enough to get to.
- Mixed view on this. Rural resident need these facilities, but recently built schools often are designed not for rural residents, but for the neighboring high-density housing developments.
- No more. The schools that have been built are not very environmentally friendly. Too bright of lights, trees that were planted died, trees planted are not native, too much mowing, require too much energy to remain cool or warm. Block traffic; require cars to pick up kids. Old trees and plants must be protected, new plantings must be of natives, and planted properly. Only minimum grass should be allowed, permeable parking areas, low lights. Environmental and ecological considerations need to be a higher priority.
- It is tempting to use Rural Land for schools and sports facilities, since it is undeveloped. But each time one of those is added in the RC, county cross-wise traffic density goes up, and, really, these facilities should be located where those people are. After school starts, delays on 28 are much greater.
- Overall I think this is fine. Schools as necessary, of course. Sports facilities don't bother me, as long as they are properly planned and don't clog up roads.
- New public facilities - especially ball fields, schools, and libraries - should be located within walking distance of many residents/workers and/or located close to some form of public transit. Prince William can create live/work/play communities, starting with nodes near transit, and public facilities could incentivize such communities - but scattering public facilities in the Rural Area wastes opportunities. (Even the VRE garage at Broad Run has little opportunity to evolve into a node for transit-oriented development, due to height constraints tied to the airport.) There are few locations in the Rural Area where new public facilities would be in walking distance of more than a token number of residents/workers. Public Works, the Parks Department, and the School Board should conduct life cycle costs for facilities, including the costs of clients/customers to access the facilities. Simply buying the lowest-cost parcel, while ignoring the long-term costs on people who

must drive to the facilities and the additional traffic congestion created by current county practices, is short-sighted.

- Within reason. High brightly lit ball parks wouldn't be appropriate.
- No, they are not rural.
- No. We do need schools, that are for certain, but our politicians are putting the cart before the horse. Schools are great, but they're inviting more people in here without constructing the new schools first. Consequently, when new schools are finished they're already at or exceeding capacity. That's just plain stupid.
- Schools and parks that's it.
- No, schools etc need to be where the housing supports it.
- No. Inevitably, once these structures are built, pressure increases to develop around them. They become anchors for more dense residential and commercial development.
- There is no reason to keep encroaching on the rural area with things like schools. The growth that is creating the need for the schools is not out in the middle of nowhere and neither should the school be. It is really irritating that every modification to the county plans is a further erosion of the Rural Crescent. You never read - 700 townhouse permits have been surrendered and it will be turned into a school site or a park. I get that is harder to do, but I believe the county does not even look for opportunities to decrease density when they are available.
- Limited. Schools -Don't want children spending a large amount of time on busses, but building schools will increase pressure on the County to allow more housing in the area. Sports facilities- if connected to a school some related facilities would be OK, a large public sports facility like a stadium is inconsistent with preserving the nature of the rural area.
- Yes, to service the residents in their own community.
- Yes. The county needs to support the residents in their own community.
- No, except in the most unusual circumstances, such as to limit extreme school commutes for children.
- Yes.
- No. All these should be in more densely developed areas, within reach of residents-shorter travel distances, better use of land and infrastructure and services related to them.
- Yes, most PwC schools are overcrowded; therefore, building new schools in this area will alleviate the current schools.
- Yes - needed for quality of life also.
- Yes, because old and young need recreation available.
- Yes, within reason.
- People in rural areas need access to schools and sports facilities. What would not like to see is something large -- like Redskin Stadium land in the rural area. In addition, the large populations of active retired people are demanding lifetime learning and fitness centers.
- Not because people need to get to these places and this increases traffic and the need for wider roads.
- On an as needed basis.

- Schools needed to support residents of the rural crescent should be built in the rural crescent. But not schools to support students living outside the rural crescent. Sports facilities destroy the rural character (lights brighter than the full moon through the middle of the night. Loud noise through the night) and largely support residents outside the rural crescent (and outside the county). Sports complexes have NO PLACE in the rural crescent.
- No because that opens the door for more development.
- Yes because it adds to quality of life.
- Yes. It is a waste of taxpayers' money to not utilize such a large sweeping area of the county.
- Absolutely.
- Public facilities such as parks and recreation areas, sports facilities like soccer fields, baseball fields, kayak runs are appropriate. Stadiums should be placed in the more suburban areas.
- If PWC truly needs a school in the RC then so be it. However, logic says that if you limit new residential in the RC then you shouldn't need more schools in the RC. I would like to see PARKS in the RC, not sports facilities. There is nothing rural about 5 lit diamond fields and 6 lit soccer fields.
- No we want QUIET!
- Schools yes. Sports facilities no.
- County services for the RA should be extended to these parts of the county as development, specified above, warrants. Sports facilities, I assume, are parks like Hellwig and Valley View which would be suitable for county residence to attend. However, major or minor sports facilities like a Redskins camp, while attractive, are destructive to the overall character of the RA.
- No. They attract people, development, roads, noise, etc.
- Sure, at least it protects the land around it and can retain the character. NO MORE SUBDIVISIONS.
- ONLY THE SCHOOLS THAT ARE NEEDED FOR THE CURRENT LOCAL POPULATION. NO DUMPS/SPORT FACILITIES NO MORE TRAFFIC THAN NECESSARY THE POINT IS TO KEEP IT RURAL.
- Honestly, I don't know if the roads can really support schools and sports facilities - most of Nokesville, for instance, is served by two-lane roads. Moreover, because of the wildlife, deer are always a safety concern for drivers, and with as distracted as some teenagers are while driving, I don't know if it's a great idea. As far as sports facilities, I would just have to wonder what kind. If it's the kind likely to attract a lot of traffic, refer to the beginning of this statement.
- Yes to schools, when and where they are needed. Allow sports facilities only when they will not be lighted. NO LIGHTS!
- Schools, as needed. Put sports complexes in or adjacent to high density housing areas. Don't move heavy traffic into rural areas.
- Schools yes, sports facilities no. I think you need good schools everywhere, but sports facilities? No those can go to the burbs and/or cities.
- Yes.
- No. There shouldn't be enough of a population to justify schools. Sporting facilities depend on the use and funding.
- If schools or sports facilities are developed in the rural area it will be akin to putting one's foot in the door. Also, it will require parking, lighting, etc. I say, leave the rural area alone.

- Very little if any. Too great an impact on nature... and once development starts; it's hard to put the brakes on.
- Schools and sports facilities should not be allowed in the Rural Area. Remember, the Rural Area is a gold mine if left untouched by impervious surfaces. The tourists' money will sustain PWCs coffers as they come to watch the song bird and butterfly migrations all year round. Schools and sports facilities make money for the people that build them. PWC loses money because it has to pay to maintain them. The Rural Area can maintain itself, with very little maintenance dollars involved.
- Schools -Yes -Sports facilities - No. Schools should be located so that students can get to them fairly easily and without 2 and 3 hour commutes. Schools are essential for a society. Sports facilities are true amenities, and are thus, non-essential. Put them where the greater concentrations of people live and work.
- Yes for schools. Some sports with little impact on the land. Soccer fields for example.
- Yes. Why bus students, especially the very young, long distances to go to school.
- No. It just encourages more development and entitlement.
- Schools, yes, but only if needed to support the number of residences. No sport facilities; this can lead to too much extraneous traffic.
- Yes. Use of lighting should be judicious. Too much light pollution. Sports facilities bring lots of traffic. Make sure the roads are there.
- I think that schools should be located within the communities that they serve whenever possible. Schools often become the heart of the community. The schools in the rural area should serve those from that area, not bring in students from across the county. Large scale sports facilities below where the public transportation network can better support them. Redevelop old sites; don't destroy good land.
- Schools need to be built where land is available for them. They are important to the entire community. Small sports facilities in our parks designed for local community use are appropriate for a rural area, but sports facilities with lighted fields that are designed to bring in outside groups and possibly outside revenue are not appropriate for a rural area.
- Schools, with limitations and no to sports facilities which hurt the environment with artificial turf, blaring lights which can be seen for miles. And then there is the noise pollution!
- Of course schools should be included. Sports facilities generally generate a lot of traffic and should be somewhere else where public transportation is available.
- Schools should be limited because house building should be limited. We already have too many sports facilities. The county should encourage fishing, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, and other outdoor activities in the Rural area not tennis, baseball, and other activities that need infrastructure.
- No, how is increasing traffic and pollution preserving a rural area.
- Only as necessary to support the CURRENT POPULATION. NO MORE SOCCER fields, no more organized sports fields. There are plenty already. These facilities draw people from other areas and create traffic congestion.
- Schools definitely. Education should always be a priority. I'm not too keen on sports facilities since they tend to attract disrespectful roving tourists and the resulting trash they brings. If a



university decides to build out here then they can have a football stadium, otherwise let's downplay sports and concentrate on the arts more. Not everybody wants to play football.

- I cannot believe you even included sports facilities as an option for a rural area!!! Seriously?? There should be absolutely no sports facilities in a rural area, it defeats the whole purpose of it being rural!! I do not even think I need to explain the 'whys' of this one. There a place for public facilities. Fire, police, EMS, and other such services should be placed appropriately around the area. Schools, where needed but considering development should be limited in a rural area, there should not be a need for many more to be built within the rural crescent. These would mostly fall closer to where the development is.
- I would be okay with schools, as they are, as stated already, busting at the seams. I think the county, while sports facilities are needed, should work harder to come up with a concrete agreement with PWCS. From meetings I have attended many leagues say, while there is something in place; the schools do not always open their fields to them.
- No. That would destroy the rural character of the area, and open the door to sewer and other infrastructure that would facilitate more dense residential development than is possible there now.
- Yes, where they contribute to the overall utility of the rural sites without spoiling them. Schools are a good example of an appropriate use.
- Depends on the school. No sports facilities.
- Yes. Public facilities should be allowed in the Rural Area. It does not always make sense to have people travel further for school/sports.
- Only on a very limited basis - it attracts traffic and strip malls and subdivisions.
- Yes. Great place for them.
- Using rural crescent land for schools shows a lack of planning by allowing max # homes in developed area. Schools should be located next to their community to eliminate bus rides, increase child health by walking. It creates a much better sense of a community allowing this school-community interaction. Plopping a school in a rural field requires all students to be transported. I support redevelopment of areas to squeeze in schools, even if they have to be multistory instead of sprawling. Any Sports facility planned should have a bike trail put in in advance linking communities close by, to decrease all the transportation issues. Livable, walkable bikeable communities are much more inviting than what we currently have in PWC where driving is a necessity.
- Yes for the families of that community.
- Only the bare minimum of necessities, such as schools, medical facilities, etc. Land should not be paved/habitat should not be destroyed for non-necessities such as sport facilities, subdivisions, etc.
- Schools for sure, so that children don't have to spend a lot of time on buses. And I would imagine fire and rescue.
- Schools should be permitted, however the sports facilities already in place seem to be sufficient.
- Schools and a few sports complexes add to the infrastructure - they should be built to meet the needs of those that live here as opposed to building them because there is open space.
- Schools are needed where the students live. As to sport facilities see my comment above.
- Yes.

- Yes, in an unobtrusive way and with night light regulations.
- ONLY if they are near the people who are using them. If a park would be built near an elementary school, I can understand that. But to build a stadium on the East side because the people on the West side need it, not necessary.
- Of course they should.
- Schools, yes. Sports facilities, no. Schools are important and living in a rural area may mean that people have to travel farther to get their children to a school. However, sports facilities draw unnecessary traffic and would require getting rid of nice open spaces or old forests to build.
- Schools should be allowed as they would also support the residents of the rural areas, but should be mindful of environmental impacts. Sports Facilities could be considered if it is not something that impacts the transportation network in an area or impacts the environment. However it should be mindful of the specific location - i.e. lights and noise.
- Schools but not sports facilities.
- Yes, absolutely. Because we don't need a 'Rural Area' in Western PWC.
- Stupid question, you put public facilities where they are needed, if they are needed in the Rural Area then you put them in the Rural Area. What imbecile came up with this question?
- Yes, PWC is in need of a YMCA type facility. The GMU/Freedom Center is overcrowded.
- Possibly.... perhaps limited and within reason in keeping with the rural surroundings (case by case basis?) Mega schools should be built close to the mega developments that feed into them - the rural crescent should not be forced accommodate short sighted mega housing developments.
- Yes. The need for these facilities is great.
- Yes. Just because people choose to live in the more rural area of the county does not mean they would not enjoy these amenities?
- Schools as needed... Although keeping the area rural would help decrease overcrowding. My children have been in overcrowded schools since we moved to PWC. Sports complexes: no. We have acres of land to explore.
- Yes, you have to support the existing population.
- No schools because of vehicle traffic. Locating sport facilities so that traffic is mainly in the non-rural areas of the county would be fine; otherwise - NO.
- The K-8 school is already going to be a big source of congestion at Parkgate & Aden, so that should be the last school in the area for many years.
- Schools where needed and should better preserve rural character in building design.
- No. The farmers in the county have been struggling to find land to lease since quite a bit has been eaten up by 10 acre lots then the County allows tract developers to buy cheaper land in the rural area to proffer for public facilities instead of having to use land in their development. We can't sell our land for high density development but the developers can come buy our cheaper land to provide the public facilities they have to provide for their development. What a kick in the teeth.
- Maybe schools if there is a need. No sports complexes.
- More information is needed. Some would see giving this power to the county as a gateway for giving them complete control over the area and pushing out the folks that have lived here for many years.

- Yes. This is important to the community. We need school and sports facilities for the families that will be living in the area.
- No, space should be planned out in the areas of development like Gainesville, Haymarket, Bristow. Land should not be taken from Nokesville and the rural crescent to ease their poor development planning. Nokesville is getting taken apart piece by piece and destroyed, the future stump dump, western beltway, quarry...all ideas of people who do not value or live in the area.
- No. Schools will directly impact traffic and where the schools are, development follows.
- I need more information on this. How would our schools and sports facilities use rural areas? I think that we need to preserve the natural setting as much as possible.
- Yes. They should be located conveniently to the people that need them.
- There is a sports complex near here and the night is lit up like day most nights in the spring, summer, and fall months. The noise echoes throughout the area.
- No sports facilities, the lights are on to until late and they block out the night sky, just like being in the city.
- Schools, yes, but only enough to meet the needs. By now we must have enough. I say NO to sports complexes. Put them where people live. How is it preserving the environment if everybody drives in here, drops a kid off, leaves, then drives back to pick them up? Our roads are not designed for the volume of traffic these sports facilities create. The lights are disturbing at night. Put them where there is so much light anyway they go unnoticed.
- Yes, it gives families in rural areas more options.
- Yes, schools should be placed logically according to population. There's no reason a school will take away from rural character. Some sports facilities located near school areas make sense.
- Yes they are needed in any community.
- Schools, yes. That's about it.
- Yes. I realize that the type of use will be low impact to the environment and will provide a unique experience. Have environmental areas usable to colleges like GMU, JMU, Washington and Mary and so on.
- Yes. Kids living in rural areas lack the social aspect of living in a planned community. We need to keep the kids occupied and out of trouble. However, if you are going to build schools just to bus kids in from outside of the rural area, then NO.
- County has already answered that question and you cannot undue the results. Schools should be close to homes where students live. That should drive school location behavior. Sport facilities should be part of urban planning review. The old story of we don't have a transportation problem, we have an urban planning problem rings true. Don't just put a sports facility somewhere because open ground exists; allow for urban planning that would support a sports facility.
- Yes we live here.. We want to play here too :).
- Normal public facilities that serve the rural area are okay but it is ridiculous to build mega schools that serve only the suburban areas. Sports complexes and parks are fine as long as they don't disrupt the neighbors.
- Yes, there is definitely not enough sports facilities in PWC to support the residents who live here, not just for kids but fields for adult use as well, like softball, soccer, etc.

- If they keep residential building down- there is no need for schools. The county should keep up with other parts of the county as far as technology in the schools. Less is more :).
- Yes, to serve citizens already living in those areas.
- They have built several schools in my area. Should be enough, sports areas? Would be nice but then you have to trade the amount of people that will come from all over to go there. It puts a strain on the area, adds noise etc..
- NO...
- Just schools. Anything more doesn't belong in a rural area.
- Yes - to serve the families in those areas.
- Of course the county should allow it.
- Putting schools in the rural crescent is stupid since there aren't enough people in the rural area to fill them. Student transportation already costs over \$1000 per student per year. We need to build schools there the people are and need to require developers to proffer land that isn't wetland and doesn't require millions to build on. Busing kids from non-rural areas to the rural areas for school is stupid. I don't have a problem with playing fields, but we need more parks that aren't soccer fields or football fields.
- Schools yes. Sports no.
- Yes- why not this isn't so rural that the facilities are not needed but certainly people from this area should be able to go to the facilities without competing with those outside the area.
- NO THAT IS WHAT BUSSES ARE FOR.
- Yes, the County should allow these facilities in the rural area for several reasons (again in no particular order): Large sites are more available in the rural area. Large sites (or small sites for that matter) would probably cost less to acquire. Development could be sensitive to the rural area (siting of buildings and other facilities, landscaping, etc.) There is no reason to think that if the County can put public facilities in the Rural Area, then private developers ought to be able to build urban density housing there.
- Sports complexes - No because that would lead to rezoning and suburban development as others want amenities near the sport complexes. Schools, yes. My niece loves rurality in another county and spends 45 min one way on a bus.
- Schools are needed in rural areas due to logistics. Sports facilities don't need to be in the rural crescent.
- No.
- NO!!! -- It spoils the countryside - and besides: with social policy experiments, it only will bring undesirable criminal elements to the Rural sector. And NOW for the most decisive assessment: WHO needs schools anyway...?!! They are not used to teach anymore - and they only serve to turn out uneducated idiots. In modern dead ameriKa, schools are no more than day care - they have nothing to do with education.
- School yes if there is a need, sports facilities no. Build them where the people and infrastructure are.
- Yes but mainly to serve the residents of the rural area. Not to save the county money on cheap land or to bus kids from the rest of the county.

## **Besides farming, what types of business development do you think are appropriate in the rural area to support the rural economy?**

- OK with commercial developments if they are in harmony with the rural theme, preferably along major thoroughfares.
- Compact, medium to upscale shopping centers similar to Gateway and Stonewall.
- None.
- Nurseries, small stores (general), occasional gas stations, antique shops.
- There is already almost everything anyone could need very close, there isn't a need to develop more business in the rural area.
- Small family businesses.
- Small business.
- None.
- Small stores.
- Schools, ball fields, riding stables, etc.
- Any development that pays its own way and doesn't bleed the rest of the County.
- Landscaping, tree service, nurseries.
- A 'real' farmer's market area for restaurants and residents alike. For anything else we can go to Manassas or Woodbridge.
- Maybe a grocery store or a few small shops or doctor's offices.
- Very little.
- The types of businesses that county residents in that area decide are wanted and needed, .i.e., any rezoning should follow the wishes of the people who live there through a county wide election issue or referendum. County BOCS should no longer be able to rezone or make decisions on development in Rural Crescent without explicit voter approval.
- Alternative energy sources, i.e. wind farms or solar energy plants.
- Small, entrepreneurial businesses should be allowed. No business requiring large trucking operations should be permitted.
- This requires careful consideration on a case by case basis.
- NONE!
- I think farming is great. I think small businesses too - not big shopping centers. Although I do like going to outside malls - where it is a small enclave of stores and restaurants that you can walk around. Also vineyards.
- None.
- Not sure at this time.
- More information needed.
- Those that are currently allowed.
- Anything.

- Small convenience stores or small restaurants, businesses can be high tech, services that work out of a building, craftspeople, anything that wouldn't have a large number of people driving in and out at the same time every day.
- Very very small scale businesses. Nothing industrial, nothing polluting. Nothing that requires a parking lot, new roads or encourages more houses.
- No development other than that tied to farming or small business that does not impact neighboring property. Neighboring property impact inputs should be considered in business licensing application approvals.
- Maybe small family run stores, but nothing else.
- No businesses. None. Zero.
- Grocery stores, for sure; drug stores, small office building complexes (1-3 stories) on 10-20 acres with landscape/architectural designs to match the surrounding community; small churches - not the the MEGA type church proposed for the intersection of Vint Hill Road and Kettle Run drive because the roads cannot support the additional traffic it will bring.
- Small. Professional business...white collar that blends into the nature of the area not stands out like a sore thumb.
- Not landscape recycling - that is industrial. I would like to see a farmers market area set up. Bring the county co-operative office out here as well.
- Farming and large lot residential.
- Answered in multiple choice portion of this survey.
- Farm related businesses to the extent they support LOCAL farms. (Processing facilities, supply stores, etc.) Convenience stores and gas stations at a density that makes sense for a rural area. These should be limited to avoid having several competing similar businesses located in a small area, such as multiple gas stations on corners of intersections or across the street from each other. Storage facilities if they are designed to blend into the rural area. These would be more economical to develop in a rural area, generate little additional traffic, and are more appropriate there than in high density areas where they are generally unattractive. This type of facility needs to be set back from roads and screened to blend in well, with minimal road signage.
- Wineries.
- None.
- None.
- Restaurants, crafting, bed and breakfasts, wineries.
- Agricultural and equestrian related activities. NOT the landfill-like operations we are currently seeing taking place!
- N/A
- Can't think of anything, but definitely NOT industrial!!
- Only farming and farming related businesses'.
- I do not think "commercial business development" should be allowed in the Rural Crescent. However, farms are businesses. Vineyards are businesses. Raising and training horses is a business. Once again, this survey uses many broad, generalized terms without ever defining them for the participant. It makes your intent and results suspect.

- One thing I think the county could do much better is to utilize the rural area to encourage farming and then to use that industry to sell in its own area. In other words, we should support our local farmers by helping and encouraging their production and then selling their produce locally through strategically placed stores (designed to fit in a rural setting). Then the county should promote the purchasing of these products. Counties in central Virginia. They place a strong emphasis on buying locally. This way you are reaping the benefits of the land without demanding that houses cover every piece of available land. What's happening today is that our farmers feel like their lifeblood is being choked out of them. Many people have owned this land for generations and paid their taxes and dues over the years. It would be nice to see the county show some integrity and show some interest in those people.
- Farming.
- Home based businesses, farm support, or local landscape businesses. Forget asphalt paving near homes in the country. That is NOT a compatible use. Concentrate county business development in the Tech Corridor along the 234 bypass where there is PLENTY of space to grow. Bring us those high paying jobs to support our tax base.
- Development of VPI offices.
- Limited development of agricultural business and necessities of the local residents.
- Family-oriented business where residents won't have to drive to DC to find activities to do, places to eat, and families to hangout in.
- Artisan shops.
- Solar, wind and geothermal renewable energy development.
- Anything historic related, such as antique shops, etc. Maybe little areas here and there such as Old Town Manassas and Historic Occoquan.
- Retail grocery store, gas station, basic needs type businesses.
- Agri-energy such as ethanol or other alternative fuel production sites.
- The area has a well-educated, high tech workforce. Non-manufacturing jobs such as IT and R&D would help alleviate some of the traffic on 66 and possibly 95. These higher wage jobs would be necessary for the desired types of housing developments. A high end shopping mall near the rural area (Gainesville maybe) would be a great addition.
- Business that are green or have/operate with a green philosophy.
- No.
- Enough to support basic needs of citizens, but there is nothing in PWC that in less than 10-15 miles, someone can't drive to whatever business they need!
- I'd like to see Mom & Pop shops run and owned by the locals instead of the change stores. For example there is catering, tourists, blacksmithing, carpentry, spinning and organic production.
- Small shops. However, Fitzwater Drive has trouble attracting customers, similar to the problems the shop owners in Old Town Manassas have. This, of course, could be because larger businesses built close by have taken business away from the smaller ones.
- You don't have to build new businesses in the rural area to support the rural economy. We need local businesses to buy local to support the rural economy. Stop buying from California when we grow it here. Prepare school lunches from local supplies, etc.



- Small business is the best fit for rural areas.
- There is no far distance from any location in prince William County to rural areas. There is no need for rural business development other than farmers' stands and wineries. If a park is built, then concession-type businesses to support it would be acceptable.
- Maybe retail or wholesale plant nurseries.
- The problem with putting down types of businesses it can be so open ended. Through the years I have seen numerous businesses that think they have the right to zoning that is not permitted. A lot of the businesses in these categories have a large traffic component, outside storage and heavy trucks, these uses should be limited. Most businesses should continue to be in the Special Use Category.
- Company which use farming to support their business.
- Bed and Breakfast, camping, businesses if they do not require a lot of traffic and can be on large lots of land screened from roads and neighbors. Secret CIA facility. Jails and Police/fire training facilities, Even multi-family units can be built that are screened from the road and neighbors on large enough lots of land if they are designed creatively.
- Without the Fairfax level of development, there would be no further need. For most in the rural crescent, most businesses needs are easy enough to get to.
- Light employment (not heavy industry) that has minimal impact on the environment.
- I don't think there need be any more business development in rural areas other than farming.
- We use the gas station and hardware store in Catlett Va. There seems to be a scramble down there, maybe another gas station and general store somewhere would help the existing residents (not to bring in more and increase density).
- Home-based businesses that do not generate more than 10 visits/day by customers, clients, or package delivery services.
- Agricultural business.
- Perhaps bed & breakfast type businesses and limited unique retail (markets, custom shops, etc.) that would attract visitors to the areas by preserving the rural feel of the area while adding amenities that would increase the draw.
- There are thousands of people in this county working out of their homes - it was true when we lived in Manassas, when we lived in Bristow and it is true in our neighborhood here in Nokesville. Home businesses and home schooling should be encouraged in every way possible. Having more people staying in neighborhoods during the day increases safety and decreases demand on the roads. In the rural area a person can operate all kinds of businesses out of their "home" or garage. I take my car to a mechanic in Broad Run in Fauquier County to avoid a long drive to Gainesville or Centreville - I'd love it if someone in my vicinity did car repair. The person that works on my septic field, my HVAC guy and my plumber all work out of their homes in Fauquier. These are all perfectly appropriate businesses. And none of these involve any kind of special development.
- Limited government offices, small grocery stores, small medical offices.
- None.
- None.
- Only small country stores should be allowed.

- Nothing, if you plan on keeping the density the way it is.
- Any type of business.
- Recreation.
- Service contractors--landscapers, electricians, plumbers etc.
- None.
- Farm supplies and equipment, agricultural, forestry, environmental school & business.
- Golf courses. Soccer fields. Camp grounds. Summer camps. Recreational uses.
- Equestrian facilities, dog training and boarding facilities, "petting zoos", businesses that directly support farming (Southern States and the like), small restaurants, Bed and Breakfasts.
- Not sure.
- Local government, small retail, and restaurants.
- Services to the residents and visitors such as: small to medium sized shopping centers, small offices, small to medium hotels.
- Any and all kinds of business, America is all about business and jobs.
- Work-from-home businesses, small specialty stores, grocery shops.
- Wineries, orchards, hunting lodge/outfitter, food sales associated with a farm/orchard.
- Gardening.
- Wineries, those dedicated to growing things.
- FBI HQ; Tech and Bio-tech development; professional buildings tied to residential access offering an alternative to DC or inner-beltway development.
- None needed. Manassas is not that far away.
- Non-Profit, Government, self-owned small businesses.
- HOME BUSINESS ANTIQUE STORES FARM STORES SMALL EATERIES- NO CHAIN RESTAURANTS NO CHAIN STORES.
- Please see my earlier comments regarding Internet service.
- Animal husbandry, camps, parks, bicycle riding.
- Wineries, orchards, outdoor adventures, etc.
- If the people in the rural area are now traveling to other areas or farming why is it necessary to have business development there now?
- None. The point is to preserve nature and impact it as little as possible.
- Farming is not appropriate in the Rural Area. The farming that is going on now should not be allowed to encroach onto the Rural Area: it is to be preserved for the song bird and butterfly migration habitats. No business development can make more money in the Rural Area than tourists flocking to watch the amazing daily opera of nature. Business development makes money for them and leaves PWC with the cost of cleaning up the pollution and maintaining the impervious surfaces, draining our coffers and our song bird migration stop overs.
- Small retail clusters and professional office areas should be planned in rural areas. No large retail malls, no heavy industry or manufacturing businesses, and no transportation corridors.
- Smaller, low impact business.
- Home-based businesses; possible professional services offices.

- Camps, parks or festivals.
- Small convenient-type businesses.
- Business parks on acreage.
- Traditional farms, niche/small scale farming, vineyards/wineries, small arts/crafts studios.
- Gas stations.
- Businesses to support farming and basic necessities.
- I have a tutoring business and people in my neighborhood use my service. Doctors, and other service providers - ie small businesses are appropriate. If an area believes it needs a grocery store that should be left to the local people to decide. Catharpin doesn't need to tell Nokesville what to do (or vice versa).
- Livestock, growing crops to eat. Nothing else.
- There is no need for business development in the rural area. The BEAUTY of the rural crescent is that it is close enough to large industry and already established businesses that there is no need for more to support the "rural economy".
- Definitely local, small, and/or independently owned businesses. Rural area residents are proud of their community so let them be in charge of building businesses here. I NEVER want to see a Walmart in the Nokesville area - the one in Haymarket is bad enough. Let's bring in businesses that support the arts as well such as a theater or venue or even something even as sophisticated as Wolf Trap. Sure they'll bring in tourists too but ideally those crowds will be mature and respectful.
- I think one thing the county could do more of is to support the local farmers and such. (I am not a farmer). This would include having well designed and well placed stores to where things that are produced locally can be sold locally. Central Virginia does this; I have seen internet sights and printed information where they encourage people to buy locally. This would be a win-win for both the county and the farmers. Marketing is the key.
- Community Center, boutique type businesses.
- None.
- Business that are compatible with and support the rural communities.
- None.
- There aren't many, but that is why it is considered rural.
- Not sure I think there is any other than plant nurseries.
- Look at Lancaster County, there is a place for everything, we have moved so far from our ag roots that pw county and residents don't know the many different forms of agriculture and forestry use. There is not a zoning for forestry left in PW, zoning text.
- Banks, restaurants, hardware stores, machinery dealer, automotive repair, construction company, office buildings.
- Composting of restaurant food to dispense to public as soil, plant nurseries.
- Feed stores and other small mom and pop type stores no changes.
- Eco-tourism, camping, etc.
- Grocery stores, gas stores.
- Small, non-franchise-non big box businesses should be allowed in the rural area.

- Home based businesses are good, but difficult to maintain in our high technology world. You see, we don't rate enough to get high speed internet services because our population per acre is lower.
- Recreation, home/farm based businesses. NO MADERA FARM!
- Parks, forests, wild game and birding areas.
- There are plenty of people who work from home. Child care type businesses... The types of businesses that are currently available - Mom and Pop places NOT Walmarts.
- Business do not survive in today's world in rural areas and by not having them close by you pollute the air by more driving to get places.
- Locally owned small businesses such as those in Nokesville.
- While the idea of a rural economy is nice, the only small business activities I would see are farming - livestock, dairy, food harvesting, or winery and they are dwindling. The business development would need to be that which supports those small businesses either with sales or support. Sales could include sales of their products or tourism to draw to them. Historical areas like the Manassas Battlefield already benefit from National Park Service advertisements and other tourism literature.
- Family and local run businesses.
- Any and all that brings jobs and revenue to the county.
- Those are currently acceptable under A-1 Zoning.
- Upscale retail/restaurants similar to North Woodbridge/Potomac area. Nicely designed exteriors.
- Agricultural, preservation, tourism. Mom and pop type small businesses - not large industrial or franchise businesses. No mega office buildings. I would love to see bike trails both on and off road, water related tourism, camping, hiking...
- Restaurants, small businesses, government facilities.
- None.
- Whatever the zoning allows in A-1.
- Not really in favor of business development because it would reduce the rural character/nature of the land. An exception would be nurseries.
- Just a Subway, or something like that.
- Small business.
- Further processing and marketing of agricultural goods. Agricultural entertainment and direct marketing farms. Including forest, nursery, and horticultural businesses. Small home based businesses with minimal traffic and impact.
- That is difficult to say. Some business development is good, while others are harmful.
- Any small businesses. Restaurants, coffee shops, retail. Small main street community type shops.
- Small business, no big box large chain stores.
- None.
- Wineries perhaps. Also land that helps to protect and preserve our wild life. Businesses that educate people about wild life and the natural plants in the areas are appropriate.
- See #18.
- Occasional Govt. office buildings are ok without interrupting the natural setting of the rural areas. Park service.

- Small repair shops, welding facilities, small country stores, no strip malls.
- Home based businesses, community gardens, riding stables or parks.
- Landscaping, restaurant, smaller type stores.
- Ranching (that is different than farming).
- Small business. No large corporations should be allowed.
- Boarding horses, Rustic lodging, permanent farmers market. I am sure that the USDA Rural Business Cooperative Services would be of great help.
- Movie theatre, restaurants, community theatre and arts center. Small groceries, 7-11's, gas stations.
- First things first is how much/big is the farming activity in Prince William County? I have 40 acres and have not been able to get the land into land-use and I grow hay on the property as well as keep several horses on the land. Simply by intent one can witness it's in ranch use yet I pay residential taxes on the property. I am not the only one. Regards development, I submit it's what the community is doing. For example, Nokesville has a strong horse community - leverage it with trails throughout and otherwise make it a closer in Middleburg (Note: you have hunters/jumpers and trail riders when it comes to horsepeople so segmentation is very possible). Other areas may have aquatics - rowing, canoeing, fishing, diving etc.,.
- Agribusiness, service industries such as plumbing, landscaping, etc.
- Assisted living facilities, farm supply stores, and small factories.
- Nothing.
- Hardware store, fuel stations.
- Feed and tack stores. Equestrian facilities and parks.
- Rural economy needs only one thing and that's homes for people to live. Horse stables and farms.
- Wineries, garden centers.
- Agricultural businesses including nurseries and vineyards, small retail plazas, restaurants, preschool businesses.
- Light industry- farm tool, suppliers, microelectronics, small retail, horse farms, and outfitters.
- NONE LEAVE IT ALONE.
- Low intensity recreational uses would be appropriate, if properly designed to protect the rural landscape.
- Farmer's markets. Antiques. Bed and Breakfasts. Riding stables/boarding. Vet clinics. Craft outlets and such where people can sell their personal creations. Wineries Kennels.
- Farming and necessities such as food, health and safety.
- To be honest with you -- I do NOT live in the rural sector, but why not simply leave these people alone...?! After ALL: WHO are you to tell these people what to do and how to live?! These people moved there to get the heck away from idiots...
- Nothing Industrial. Encourage small scale farming ventures.
- Small scale retail.

**Use the following box to submit any other comments not covered in the questions above.**

- Definitely enjoy the rural flavor, but would like to see some relaxation of 10 acre minimum, as long as the developers respect the existing flavor, i.e. not in favor of bulldozing woodlands to build home sites, would like to see them built into the woods.
- Prince William County is a neat place to live. Just enough 'hustle' to know it has a rural heartbeat. Anything more would be unhealthy.
- I object to easing the extension of sewer into this area - even for churches. Sewer hopped the line on Dumfries Road and now instead of agricultural, our area is semi-rural residential - with much more development and a road that is nearly impossible to access safely during rush hour (Dumfries Rd.).
- The bi-county parkway would be SO disruptive to the beauty and peacefulness of the area. Other roads should be improved instead and keep as many trees as possible near the roads. Too many trees have already been removed for extremely dense housing and the noise level of traffic is starting to drift into previously peaceful areas. We are losing so much of the character that brought people to make PW their home. Please don't spread it out any further into the rural area.
- Please keep the rural crescent intact!
- I love the country feel of the area where we live and would hate to see that go away. It upsets me every time I see a builder come in and strip the area of trees and undergrowth. I'm seeing more and more dead animals on the road because of this 'progress.'
- I am appalled at how Prince William County is being run. How about trying a new strategy and do WHAT IS RIGHT and not WHO IS RIGHT. Leave the personal gains behind and care about what the citizens of the county are trying to say.
- Don't build the Bi-County Parkway. Spend the money to improve mass transport east-west from Gainesville to DC.
- Stop chasing tax dollars and start. This area does not need to become like the other large metropolitan areas. We should not be competing with them but setting the example.
- The BOCS needs to allow the planning commission to do their job in regards to school placement. You signed a contract with devil when you tied their hands on school matters. The schools are out of control. Look at their CIP for real and protect the citizens. No more schools in the rural crescent and stop the school at the landfill. Our students will face potential health issues and pwc will be the joke of this east coast. When a student gets a cancer there will be sues and it will make the papers. It will not matter if they can prove it, you will always be defending this site. Do you really not see this? If our kids are not your priority, what is? Add to that that you know very well the bi-county pwy will happen. The 12th hs has one entrance and exit, onto and off the pwy. Will you be attending the funerals when these new drivers get killed pulling out of their school? Wake up the pool is only the tip of the iceberg.
- I would like to see a combination of development that supports the houses already built in the area and protection that saves what is left of the open spaces in the rural crescent.

- Please say NO to the Bi-County Parkway. It will ruin our way of life. The BOCS needs to stop thinking about their pockets & developer friends & think about constituents & their way of life & what they want. Traffic runs West/East, NOT South/North. Use existing roads already in place to expand/widen. We do NOT want a toll road for heavy cargo running to Dulles.
- The questions in this survey seem to be skewed so that the result set supports the preliminary conclusions expressed by the consultants at the kickoff meeting.
- If you allow more development in the Rural Areas, then I want to be able to have 4 chickens in my 10k sq ft back yard.
- Should enforce existing codes better
- Smart growth is important for our county to keep pace with the jurisdictions surrounding us, but not growth for growths sake. Allow 21st Century amenities but protect our historical sites and maintain our small town atmosphere.
- Those of us in the rural crescent are handicapped and live with restrictions and lack of services so that the area can be pointed to as "rural preservation."
- Every decision maker should stand up and reveal their financial interest in the overhaul of the rural area be it PAC money, actual investment as a partner or owning a swath of land where rezoning can fatten their wallet. Be open and be clear, don't wait for it to be dug out that "you" have vested interest in the decision. If you are too embarrassed to tell where the money came from lining your pocket then you should not have taken it in the first place!
- Septic tanks and Sewer. The restrictions on composting toilets and incinerating toilets are too strict in PWC. Grey water recycling should be encouraged.
- Adding or improving roads through the rural area to decrease congestion on other roads would be great as long as the overall planning process prevents using new or improved roads to establish new development clusters. This would improve "through traffic" on existing roads in developed areas and improve resident access to enjoy the vistas of the rural area. The section of the Prince William Parkway in the northwestern area of the county is a great example of how road development can relieve crowding on other roads without causing large scale development along the new/improved roads.
- There was no mention of the Bi-county parkway in the survey. This road must be stopped. It will destroy the rural area in Catharpin along Sanders Lane.
- Stop the Tri-County or Bi-County Parkway from going through the rural area. Building the Bi-County Parkway will destroy the rural areas around Pageland Lane and Sanders Lane.
- Prince William county has tens of thousands of housing units approved and not yet built. The schools are overcrowded and we cannot afford 24/7 paid fire protection. If any percentage of the Rural Crescent is allowed to be sewerred and developed it will only contribute to our economic/quality of life problems.
- Do not allow the bi county parkway to be built, thus destroying the rural crescent forever.
- Do not build highways through the rural crescent. Causes noise disruption of wildlife and other natural resources.
- As stated earlier, I do NOT agree with the choices in question #12. Although they may make things appear to be rural, they do NOT and can NOT make a rural community or establish that quality of



life. I think it is amazing that you don't mention anything about water conservation. As part of the Chesapeake Bay water basin and the natural filtration area for the Occoquan and Culpepper basins and numerous aquifers, it seems you would ask about water quality. Will your study look at the impact of the I-95 corridor on that water table? Will your study look at how breaking open the Rural Crescent will affect the water tables? Additionally, you didn't mention air quality, noise, or chemical pollutants. I grew up in a rural community like PWC is now, actually more rural than this, and I could drink straight out of the rivers and streams. That is nature. That is rural. That is real country living. The developmental impacts on water runoff make the Potomac and the Chesapeake dangers for animals and humans. You never mentioned anything about wildlife. I would suggest they are separate from what you might say is "forest preservation" efforts. The Rural Crescent allows wildlife to be a part of our lives. They are beautiful and a part of nature, not a nuisance to "developed" areas.

- It seems that nothing we can say will keep the rural crescent preserved. Corrupt politicians and big money developers will be allowed to trample all over the rights of the citizens. This is truly a sad thing. It shows the lack of integrity that this county has. Not just the Board of Supervisors but county staff and even the people conducting this survey. Chances are you will not take anything we have to say seriously and you will not fight to do what is right by the people of this county. The rural crescent is an invaluable treasure that, once destroyed, can never be replaced. Your decisions and actions as a result of all of the surveys you receive will have an impact that will last generations and reach far beyond what you imagine. Please do the right thing and preserve the rural crescent that we have today. Please preserve our heritage, quality of life, and natural resources.
- PWC MUST limit housing developments and roads. We need roads, but we need to improve what is already there. There are too many housing developments now.
- I think that people on the eastern end of the county don't really understand the value of the rural crescent. If the rural area is developed, then the need for public facilities and services follow and the funds that currently go mostly to the eastern end will be diluted.
- DO NOT destroy the Rural Crescent. People know that it is no accident that this study is occurring at the same time that the state is pushing for the bi county parkway/North South Corridor along with the traffic and development possibilities that it could force. Honor the commitments that were made to protect our rural areas. It is time to think about the RESIDENTS who actually LIVE in Prince William County and not the developers who want to build here. We have invested our lives in this county. Don't sell us out.
- Prince William County has robbed people in the Rural Crest of their land rights.
- Allow for pedestrian crossing and bicycling along roads. Improve public transportation.
- I am gravely concerned about the additional traffic any additional development in the rural crescent would cause. Because I live near the crescent, there would be more traffic going through my area in the morning and evening going to and from the rural area. I dearly love Prince William's wonderful history. My ancestors have been here since the very early days when the county was established. I do not want to see it turn into a place of urban sprawl, and extension of Fairfax County!

- One of the main reasons we moved here 23 years ago was to escape the urban sprawl of Fairfax County! I hope and pray we can be unique and not turn Prince William into another, overcrowded, overdeveloped suburb of Washington, DC.
- If less residential communities were approved and more business/commercial ventures were brought to the county there would be less strain on public resources and more revenue generated. Then we would be able to have a healthy balance of urban, rural and commercial. The county needs to focus on business/economic development and stop denying business proposals because a couple of people have concerns, i.e. Disney would have been much better for the county than Dominion Valley, which did not adhere to the rural crescent rules. We need businesses like the Quarry, the 4-wheeler track and the asphalt plant. Or getting a business in the Eli Lilly site.
- Some people move to the rural crescent for a small town atmosphere as opposed to a suburban one.
- I love this place. Don't be in such a hurry to change.
- As a resident in the Catharpin area adjacent to the Manassas Battlefield I am concerned that the proposed Bi-County Parkway/North-South Corridor will destroy the rural crescent. The effects of the proposed Parkway and resultant destruction of our transportation network will open this area for development. It will be the only way for it to function because the noise from the highway and need for new roadways will bring the development community in to provide the needed infrastructure.
- The look and feel of the rural area can be maintained even though development occurs if some guidelines are set down to limit such things as traffic, noise, pollution. With proper screening and buffers from the road even large buildings can be hidden from the view of the public. Underground utilities should be absolutely mandatory for all development of the rural areas.
- I am very disappointed by the PW supervisors. Slow growth, smart growth and protection of the rural areas must be the highest priority. The way you have allowed rapid development to take over has made this a very congested area, the schools have one of the highest teacher to student ratio, affecting the education system in this county, there is no really planning, the lack of public transportation is appalling. I feel that as supervisors you have not honor what the people of Brentsville district worked so hard to protect. I feel you have made PW cty a more unpleasant place to live.
- Pay some attention to how you are allowing bike riders to ride on the main roads in almost no-shoulder situations. They need shoulders. That is our biggest fear, cresting a hill and hitting a person (not a deer). Who wants to ruin two families like that?
- Please, stop building more residential areas! There is enough housing. There are not enough jobs. The roads/traffic situation is terrible. We are limited in the kinds of jobs we can have because it takes too long to get there. I commute over 2 hours a day because of our terrible local road situation. My office is only 25 miles away. It is absolutely absurd.
- I believe the core problem we are running into is the conflict of interest that members of state and county government (past and present) have that leads to prioritizing the desires of the developers over the existing residents of the county.

- Stop trying to get rid of the rural crescent. This constant questioning over and over is a transparent strategy and it is insulting to any citizen who is paying attention.
- Look, it's obvious that the purpose of this study is to now open up the Rural Crescent to development. To the BOCS: Please don't try to pave over the Rural Crescent with development. If you try, we'll make sure the public knows which of you is behind this, how much you are getting in political contributions from developers, what other conflicts of interest you have, and thus how corrupt you are.
- Break up the land... it's time and we need more services.
- I've lived in this county for 34 years and the quality of life has really deteriorated. Why do we need to build a huge shopping center in Gainesville, when we have empty shops and offices elsewhere?
- Do not build the bi-county parkway and do not close Rt 234 and Rt 29 at the Manassas Battlefield. This parkway serves no purpose. It will not ease traffic congestion in this part of the county. It will make traffic congestion worse because it's only going to open the door for more development in the rural parts of the county. Work on easing east/west traffic congestion. And closing Rts 234 and 29 at Manassas Battlefield is not acceptable. What a stupid idea that is! Stop this madness!!!
- NO TRI-COUNTY PARKWAY. If you made the commute, you'd understand that anything that would make it worse should be avoided by all means.
- There seems to be NO logic to the current boundaries of the existing rural crescent. I suspect the boundaries were drawn as a knee-jerk reaction to fast development in prior decades. When master-planning, planners should create areas based on a logical need and natural boundaries - not based on politics. As an example, there is no logical reason why the rural area's boundary lines follow specific parcel boundaries (as shown northwest of Rt. 66 & Rt. 15 intersection). Better planning would show the boundaries following ridges, valleys, major roadways, or other existing barriers.
- Too many people have a say so through politics about other people's land etc., without having to stick their necks out, they can gum up the works for everyone. In my opinion the bypass needs to be built, it needed to be built 25 years ago, but this isn't so much an argument for today, but for 25 years from now. The world will keep adding people and Gov'ts need to plan for the people, someone making the argument against road improvements today will be long gone in a short time, and shouldn't be afforded the right to make life harder on the folks in the future.
- Once you turn it into houses and strip malls, the odds of it ever being woods and creeks again are zero. We have one shot to manage our remaining open space....don't use this study as a guide to open more land to developers.
- Thank you for providing a forum to share my perspective on this issue.
- Build the bi-county parkway and keep RT.15 from becoming the outer beltway. Otherwise to hell with this whole study and let me develop my land for townhouses, 10 units per stick, and I'll move the hell out.
- I am responding to this as I found the link from a blog written by Al Alborn, whom I have never met. I like what he said about having people have a voice in decisions that will impact them. Transparency in government is important, especially now, as there is so much distrust in the air. The issue of development is very complicated. However, information can be skewed, omitted,

altered to make a case for any way one wants to make it. Presentation is also a major factor. Once something is developed it can't be undone. If we think of future generations that may influence our decisions. Thank you.

- Appreciate your getting public input. Wish there had been greater planning where Route 28 is concerned. I just have to wonder why you allowed even MORE condo construction along that horribly congested road!
- You have the Native Bed at the Benedictine Monastery cared for the Master Gardeners to draw wisdom and resources from. Use that knowledge and plant material to colorfully beautify the Rural Area to get it ready for the tourists that will flock into PWC with their cameras and their cash. Reinvigorate your brown space areas within your urban blights. Rise up your skyscrapers there. Create gardens capes on their roofs and be a symbol of intelligent development that all the world can envy and emulate. Be the green community that raised the bar for the world to enjoy.
- The word 'rural' means simply all areas not called urban. Urban connotes a concentration of population into relatively small areas. Our rural area, therefore, should be kept open, lightly populated, and used for rural purposes - agricultural, forestry, and recreation.
- Thank you for allowing public comment on this, even by non-county residents. I am a Chamber member, but the Chamber does not ask for or reflect my views on issues like this.
- Do what the county promised with Silver Lake.
- I am a lifelong (50+ years) resident of the Manassas area. I remember when Sudley Road was two lanes and Manassas Airport was located where Manaport Shopping Center now stands (across from the Manassas Mall). I love this area, but hate the traffic and endless strip shopping centers. The rural area is a treasure that we should celebrate. I just hope that in the future that there are still people who want to farm and continue that noble profession. Is there any way that we could convince people with the large lots to "lease" their excess land to small scale farmers? We need to discourage these estate owners from creating large monocultures of mowed lawns. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
- Need Natural Gas, Water and Sewer on Rt 28 between Vint Hill and Fitzwater.
- I think the way things are now is okay (traffic on Sanders Lane is a little too heavy for my taste but not much to do there besides stopping the bi-county parkway). It appears that the laws on the books are fine and enforcement is adequate. I really hope that the bi-county parkway is not built. I know the National Battlefield Park wants it but the proposed bypass along Bull Run is not a good idea environmentally. Maybe the Park should build pedestrian bridges across 29 and 234. That would be a lot cheaper than building the bypass.
- It seems to me that the timing of the rural crescent being up for a new study and possible change is coincidentally happening at the same time that the developers and chambers of commerce are pushing for the Bi-County Parkway to be built. It seems that the BOCS is getting a lot of pressure to break open the rural crescent for development. I just hope that there is still enough people left in the PWC government that have integrity and honesty who still realize they have an obligation to the citizens and residents and not sell them out. PWC is a great county with a great character. The rural crescent is a big part of what helps maintain that. In the end if these people no longer reside within our local government it won't matter what these surveys say or how we, the citizens, feel.

- I did not answer questions 9/10. I felt that my taxes are fine the way they are. And with the county not holding departments fully accountable for the monies they spend (pool at the 12 high school, which is a mission of the parks and recs) I would prefer not to give more. Until the schools are caught up the growth, I feel that increasing my taxes or a "rural preservation" fund would not serve much purpose.
- Again, this is a poorly structured survey. It's intent is to avoid discussion of the negative fiscal impacts of increased residential density in the Rural Crescent that will harm all taxpayers in Prince William County.
- Don't put a 4 lane highway through rural land. According to the presentation at Hylton a couple months ago, the charts showed little growth out there but that makes sense since it is rural (and should stay that way).
- Clearly define agriculture, forestry, agribusiness, and let us work.
- I feel that the questions on #12 are silly and I feel they will be used out of context. For example, Stating that 85% of respondents want subdivision entrance feature design controlled by the county--could be misrepresented to imply that respondents actually want subdivisions in the rural area. I encourage you heavily NOT to do that. Those question imply citizens might want the area 'managed' which is different that leaving rural spaces to revert back to forest for example. In my 10 acre lot neighborhood I have been asked to manage 7 acres by mowing into a lawn. Dumb request, but it shows a lack of knowledge regarding healthy land management. I recommend working with PWSWCD and other agencies to detail what appropriate large land, soil; water mgmt is or could be before implementing a new rural crescent policy. You can have both responsible development and land protection, but not in a parcel by parcel format.
- It is important to me and many other people in Nokesville to keep are town small and tight knit if you don't trust me then come out to any school event and talk to us parents.
- Certain rural traditions should not be encouraged, such as hunting, trapping, rodeo, horse racing, factory farming, pesticide use, etc.
- Please keep us updated on this status.
- Please preserve the rural area and our way of life. This year my son will be starting kindergarten in the school that my grandmother attended as a high school. I am sad to see the building go, but I am glad that he will be able to have elementary middle and high school without leaving Nokesville. I support this decision, but I do not support destruction of the school building. Please preserve this treasure as well.
- This survey appears skewed to generate an outcome favorable to the consultants and several BOCS members.
- Recommend overturning the 10 acre rule.
- The survey seems skewed toward opening up the Rural Crescent.
- As currently described, the bi-county parkway portion of the planned North-South Corridor will destroy a part of our nation's historic Manassas Battlefield and will destroy much of the rural character in the Gainesville Magisterial District of Prince William County.
- Would love to see prudence practiced at all levels of our local government. Trim the fat from the top.

- I am happy to see we as a county are finally seriously looking at this issue. It is unfortunate that it wasn't addressed in 1998 when the down zoning took place. For 15 years we have had a rural area with no tools in the toolbox to preserve it. Instead we have developed a significant portion of it into unproductive large lot residential development. We have become the poster child for how not to set up a "rural preserve" in a locality. However I am optimistic we can come up with some programs that will allow myself and the several other young farmers in the county an opportunity to continue our operations into the future.
- I can't stress enough how important the Rural Crescent is. I boast about it to other people and say that our officials actually got this one right!! Please keep the developers out!!!
- If you are allowing bicyclists to ride throughout the rural area then the road will have to be a little wider to accommodate them without serious injury or have to pull over to get around. Or a bike path would have to be built as along the 234 corridor.
- Please stop messing with this. Why bring the rural area down to the level of suburban nightmare found in the rest of the county? Why can't those of us who like this life find a place to live it? If people don't like it, they don't have to come here.
- I would really like to see public sewer and water come the rural areas. I think it is much more sanitary, better for the environment.
- We do NOT need any more houses or people...
- County has allowed for development in rural areas (exemptions). One way to incentivize developers is to have tax policies that incentivize developers to pursue already developed areas vs undeveloped. Next, is for the county to determine growth by phasing in areas where it desires growth. Finally, with the 10 acre rule, sewers are a non-issue so it's better for people to connect to sewers than have septic systems.
- Looking at the list of your stakeholders, the process has been used to completely tilt the argument in one way. Through the guise of the NBA, Soil and Water, and similar organizations, you've managed to load up the stakeholder list with people who are openly hostile to preserving any rural area. I recognize the names of many people who want the rural crescent dismantled. There are people in all those organizations that feel the opposite but amazingly, they were left off the list. It taints the entire process when you start with a tilted mix of stakeholders. I'm sure that is why you saw the hostility. I suspect you'll meet the other side who believes in the rural area preservation at every public hearing.
- We need to steer development east not west.
- I believe like many others that the 10 acre rule was a mistake and has been in place too long. Its affect has harmed the rural area, not helped it. There are people in every community that say no to everything and don't want change. I am not one of them. Change is unavoidable and necessary. The farms and businesses in the Nokesville area today need a change in the status quo to be able to compete and thrive. A higher density will bring more residents capable of buying local products and using local services. Intelligent development is the key to it all. Instead of limiting development - invite it and have it done in a manner that does preserve green space - provide open space - preserve forest - helps business thrive, attracts more diversity, improves the tax base, grows jobs.
- Thank you for giving a voice to your tax payers in the rural communities.

- WAIT LONG ENOUGH AND PEOPLE WILL BE MOVING INTO PWC you don't need to take open land from landowners in the rural crescent to make roads and schools and buildings. They live there they know they have to drive to go places or get things. Are you people so stupid not to realize this is part of what makes Prince William County special. Grow a pair and tell the developers look elsewhere.
- What happens to the rural crescent will determine how I vote in upcoming elections. We moved here in 1997 for the balance of suburbs and rural. My area is now urban and all the farms within five to ten minutes of my house are GONE save for one. I am disgusted with the lack of respect for the rural heritage and also the lack of concern for the needs of farms and such in the county that many have. The reason we STAY here is for the schools (hard to find such a great program with IB schools) and the commute for my husband. The reason I want to leave is because I am sick of the urbanization and the issues coming along with it.
- Don't have enough information on sewer and septic to make an informed decision.
- I believe most people who go into politics have ... Never mind.
- Since moving to the county 20 years ago we have seen the forests cut down and the sprawl spread. The rural area is all you have left; don't let it be bulldozed.



**Appendix 2 Stakeholder Meetings List**

## Rural Preservation Study Stakeholder Participation

On Thursday August 1<sup>st</sup>, the Prince William County Planning Office held a meeting at the Nokesville Elementary School to introduce the project and the consultant team, discuss the project timeline, and seek input on information that should be considered as part of the Rural Preservation Study. Approximately 130 people were in attendance. Meeting materials are posted to the project website at [www.pwcgov.org/planning](http://www.pwcgov.org/planning). In addition, the Planning Office identified organizations and groups interested in rural preservation and the land use planning tools used to implement rural preservation strategies. The consultant interviewed representatives from those groups on August 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. The list of participants is below:

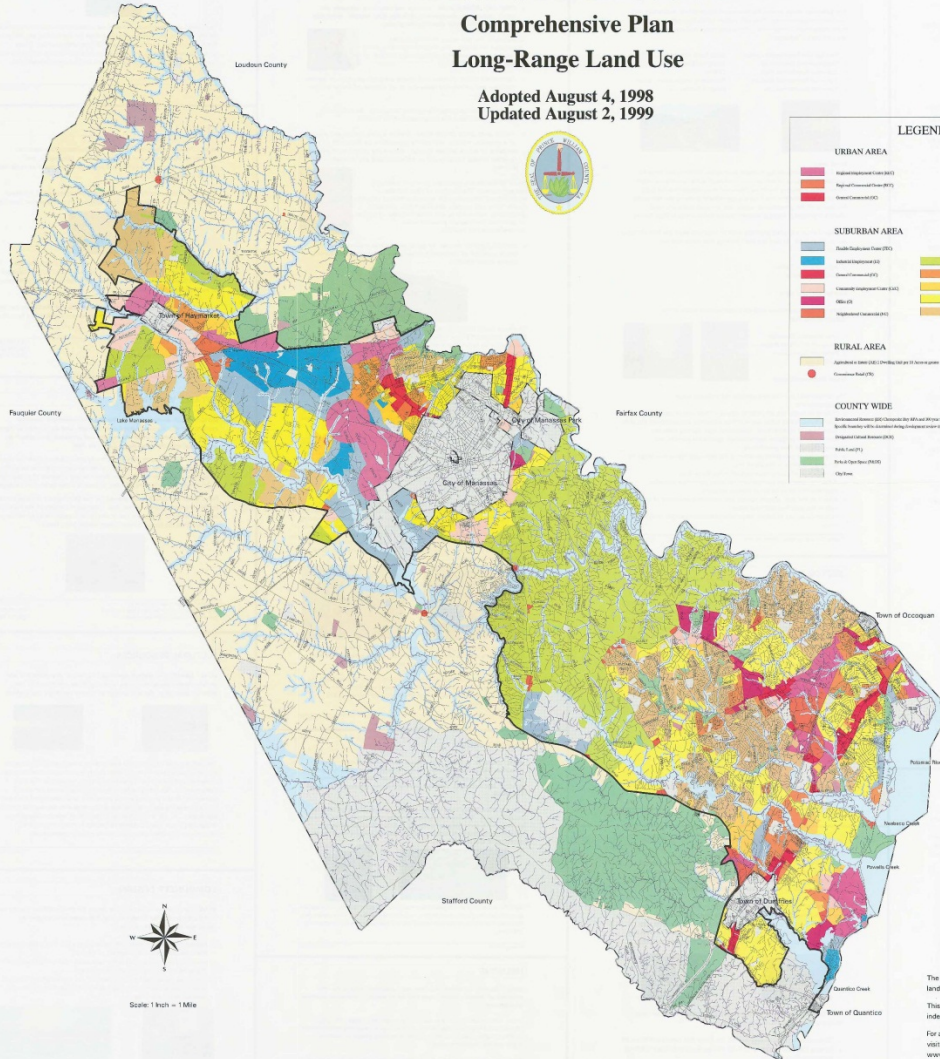
<b>Organization/Group</b>	<b>Participant</b>
Cooperative Extension	Tom Bowles
Farmers	Dale House Paul House Tom House
Farm Bureau	Chris Corry Dave Keller
Health District	Marcus Haynes
Manassas National Battlefield Park	Bryan Gorsira
Marine Corps Base Quantico	Steve Hundley Mike Law
Nokesville Business Association	Tom Basham Don Taylor
Nokesville Ruritans	Melinda Masters
Northern Virginia Building Industry Association	Mark Branca Mark Granville-Smith
Northern Virginia Conservation Trust	Patrick Coady Ryan Walker
Prince William Conservation Alliance	Charles Grymes Elena Schlossberg
Prince William County Architectural Review Board	Gail Johnson Elizabeth Long
Prince William County Historical Commission	Linda Wright
Prince William County Planning Commission	Fran Arnold Russell Bryant Ron Burgess Kim Hosen
Prince William Forest Park	Vidal Martinez Paul Peterson
Soil and Water Conservation District	Jim Gehlsen Jay Yankey
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation	Alli Baird Janit Llewellyn
Virginia Outdoor Foundation	Bob Lee





# PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY Comprehensive Plan Long-Range Land Use

Adopted August 4, 1998  
Updated August 2, 1999



**LEGEND**

URBAN AREA	
[Red]	High Density Urban (HDU)
[Orange]	Medium Density Urban (MDU)
[Yellow]	Low Density Urban (LDU)
SUBURBAN AREA	
[Light Blue]	Single-Family Residential (SFR)
[Blue]	Medium-Density Residential (MDR)
[Light Green]	Low-Density Residential (LDR)
[Light Yellow]	Office/Professional (OP)
[Light Orange]	Community/Neighborhood Center (CNC)
[Light Red]	Major Road (MR)
[Light Blue-Gray]	Major Road (MR)
[Light Green-Gray]	Major Road (MR)
[Light Yellow-Gray]	Major Road (MR)
[Light Orange-Gray]	Major Road (MR)
[Light Red-Gray]	Major Road (MR)
RURAL AREA	
[Light Yellow]	Aggriculture (A) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)
[Light Green]	Conservation (C)
COUNTY WIDE	
[Light Blue]	Intermodal Corridor (IC) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)
[Light Green]	Major Road (MR) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)
[Light Yellow]	Major Road (MR) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)
[Light Orange]	Major Road (MR) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)
[Light Red]	Major Road (MR) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)
[Light Blue-Gray]	Major Road (MR) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)
[Light Green-Gray]	Major Road (MR) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)
[Light Yellow-Gray]	Major Road (MR) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)
[Light Orange-Gray]	Major Road (MR) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)
[Light Red-Gray]	Major Road (MR) (2000-2010) (2010-2020)



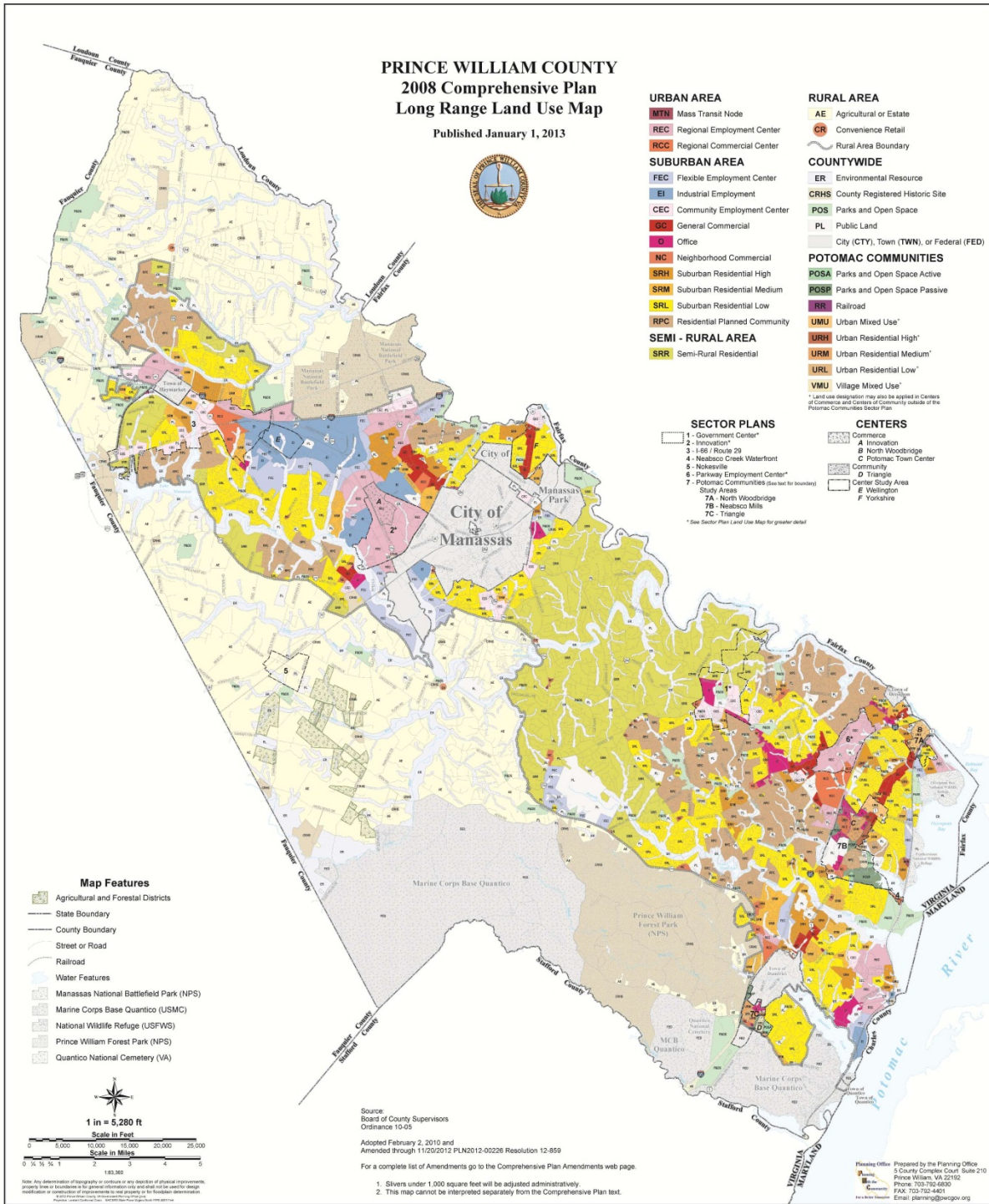
Scale: 1 inch = 1 Mile

Prepared by the Planning Office 11/30/1999

The Long Range Plan represents Prince William County land use policy and land use goals for 1998-2020. This map cannot be correctly interpreted independently of the Comprehensive Plan text. For a copy of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan, please visit the Prince William County internet site: [www.pwccgov.org](http://www.pwccgov.org). Questions on the Comprehensive Plan can be directed to the Prince William County Planning Office at (703) 792-6800.

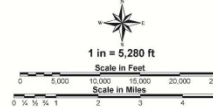
# PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY 2008 Comprehensive Plan Long Range Land Use Map

Published January 1, 2013



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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>URBAN AREA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>MTN</b> Mass Transit Node</li> <li><b>REC</b> Regional Employment Center</li> <li><b>RCC</b> Regional Commercial Center</li> </ul> <p><b>SUBURBAN AREA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FEC</b> Flexible Employment Center</li> <li><b>EI</b> Industrial Employment</li> <li><b>CEC</b> Community Employment Center</li> <li><b>GC</b> General Commercial</li> <li><b>O</b> Office</li> <li><b>NC</b> Neighborhood Commercial</li> <li><b>SRH</b> Suburban Residential High</li> <li><b>SRM</b> Suburban Residential Medium</li> <li><b>SRL</b> Suburban Residential Low</li> <li><b>RPC</b> Residential Planned Community</li> </ul> <p><b>SEMI - RURAL AREA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>SRR</b> Semi-Rural Residential</li> </ul> | <p><b>RURAL AREA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>AE</b> Agricultural or Estate</li> <li><b>CR</b> Convenience Retail</li> </ul> <p><b>COUNTYWIDE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ER</b> Environmental Resource</li> <li><b>CRHS</b> County Registered Historic Site</li> <li><b>POS</b> Parks and Open Space</li> <li><b>PL</b> Public Land</li> <li>City (CTY), Town (TWN), or Federal (FED)</li> </ul> <p><b>POTOMAC COMMUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>POSA</b> Parks and Open Space Active</li> <li><b>POSP</b> Parks and Open Space Passive</li> <li><b>RR</b> Railroad</li> <li><b>UMU</b> Urban Mixed Use*</li> <li><b>URH</b> Urban Residential High*</li> <li><b>URM</b> Urban Residential Medium*</li> <li><b>URL</b> Urban Residential Low*</li> <li><b>VMU</b> Village Mixed Use*</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>SECTOR PLANS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 - Government Center*</li> <li>2 - Innovation*</li> <li>3 - I-66 / Route 28</li> <li>4 - Neabsco Creek Waterfront</li> <li>5 - Nokesville</li> <li>6 - Parkway Employment Center*</li> <li>7 - Potomac Communities (see text for boundary) Study Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7A - North Woodbridge</li> <li>7B - Neabsco Mills</li> <li>7C - Triangle</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>* See Sector Plan 1 Land Use Map for greater detail</p> | <p><b>CENTERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercia</li> <li>A Innovation</li> <li>B North Woodbridge</li> <li>C Potomac Town Center</li> <li>Community</li> <li>D Triangle</li> <li>Center Study Area</li> <li>E Wellington</li> <li>F Yorkshire</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- Map Features**
- Agricultural and Forestal Districts
  - State Boundary
  - County Boundary
  - Street or Road
  - Railroad
  - Water Features
    - Manassas National Battlefield Park (NPS)
    - Marine Corps Base Quantico (USMC)
    - National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS)
    - Prince William Forest Park (NPS)
    - Quantico National Cemetery (VA)



Source: Board of County Supervisors Ordinance 10-05  
Adopted February 2, 2010 and Amended through 11/20/2012 PLN2012-00228 Resolution 12-859  
For a complete list of Amendments go to the Comprehensive Plan Amendments web page

1. Sivers under 1,000 square feet will be adjusted administratively
2. This map cannot be interpreted separately from the Comprehensive Plan text.

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**Appendix 4 Comparison of Prince William County Growth Management Techniques in  
the Rural Crescent Compared to National Best Practices**

# **Comparison of Prince William County Growth Management Techniques in the Rural Crescent Compared to National Best Practices**

Tom Daniels, Ph.D., January 2014

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to compare Prince William County's growth management policies and programs to national best practices. This comparison will suggest programs and policies that Prince William County may be interested in adopting. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that Virginia is a Dillon's Rule state; local governments can implement only those land use controls that are permitted by the state legislature. Therefore, it is also useful to compare Prince William's growth management policies and programs to those found in other Virginia counties. This comparison will show what growth management policies and programs are being used in other counties that Prince William County may also be interested in using to manage its growth

## **Introduction**

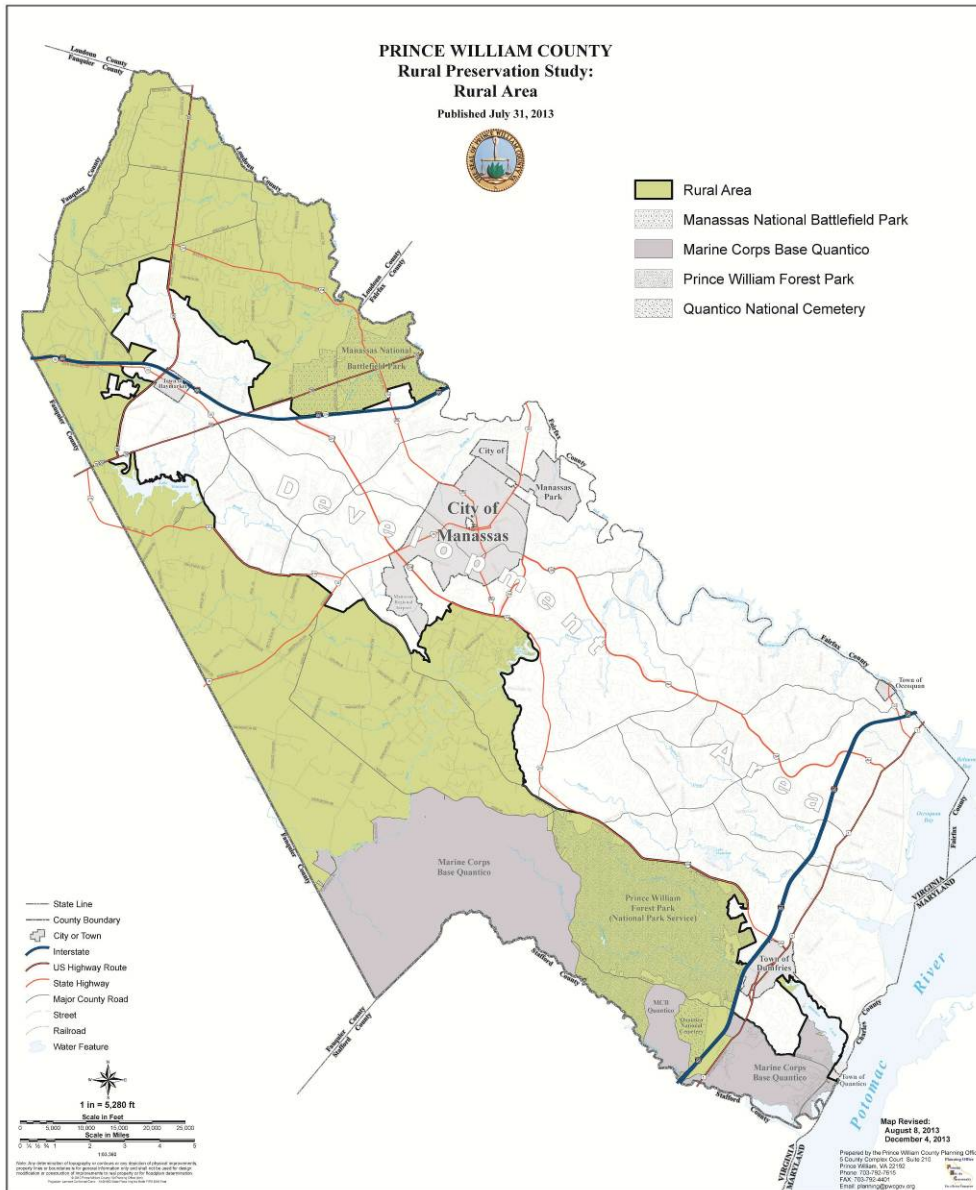
The Rural Crescent (also referred to as the Rural Area) of Prince William County is a broad arc of mostly rural land that sweeps from the greater Route 15 corridor in the north, southeasterly across Routes 29 and 28 to the border of the Quantico Marine Base and the Prince William Forest Park (see Figure 1). The Rural Crescent is located mainly in the western part of the county and contains approximately 117,000 acres or about 52 percent of the County (227,000 acres).

## **Sewer Service Boundary**

As part of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan, Prince William County designated a sewer service boundary between the County's Development Area and the Rural Crescent. The boundary generally limits the extension of sewer lines into the Rural Crescent. On a limited basis, sewer and water lines have been extended into the Rural Crescent to provide service where residential on-site septic systems have failed, posing a health hazard, and to serve schools that have been built in the Rural Crescent close to the boundary.

Prince William County is one of only a handful of counties in Virginia that are using urban service boundaries. The City of Virginia Beach, for instance, has had an urban service boundary—known as the green line—since the early 1990s. Prince William County's urban service area applies to sewer lines, but not to public water lines.





**Figure 1. The Rural Crescent of Prince William County**

## Large Lot Zoning

Also in 1998, the County designated nearly all of the Rural Crescent as Agricultural-Estate (AE): one house per 10 acres. This designation greatly expanded the AE area compared to the prior Comprehensive Plan. Family conveyances are allowed at a density

of one house per acre per family member. A family member has been broadly construed to mean children, grandchildren parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

The one house per ten acre zoning in most of the Rural Crescent is some of the most restrictive zoning found in Virginia. For instance, neighboring Loudoun County allows one house per three acres in much of its countryside. Neighboring Stafford County allows one house per acre. Fauquier County to the west of Prince William uses a sliding scale in its Resource Conservation (RC) and Rural Agricultural (RA) zones (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Fauquier County Sliding Scale Zoning in the Resource Conservation and Rural Agricultural Zones.**

<u>Size of Parcel (acres)</u>	<u>Number of Lots Permitted</u>
0-9.99	1
10-19.0	2
20-34.99	3
35-54.99	4
55-79.9	5
80-104.99	6
105-129.99	7
130-154.99	8
155-179.99	9
180-204.99	10
205 and above	11

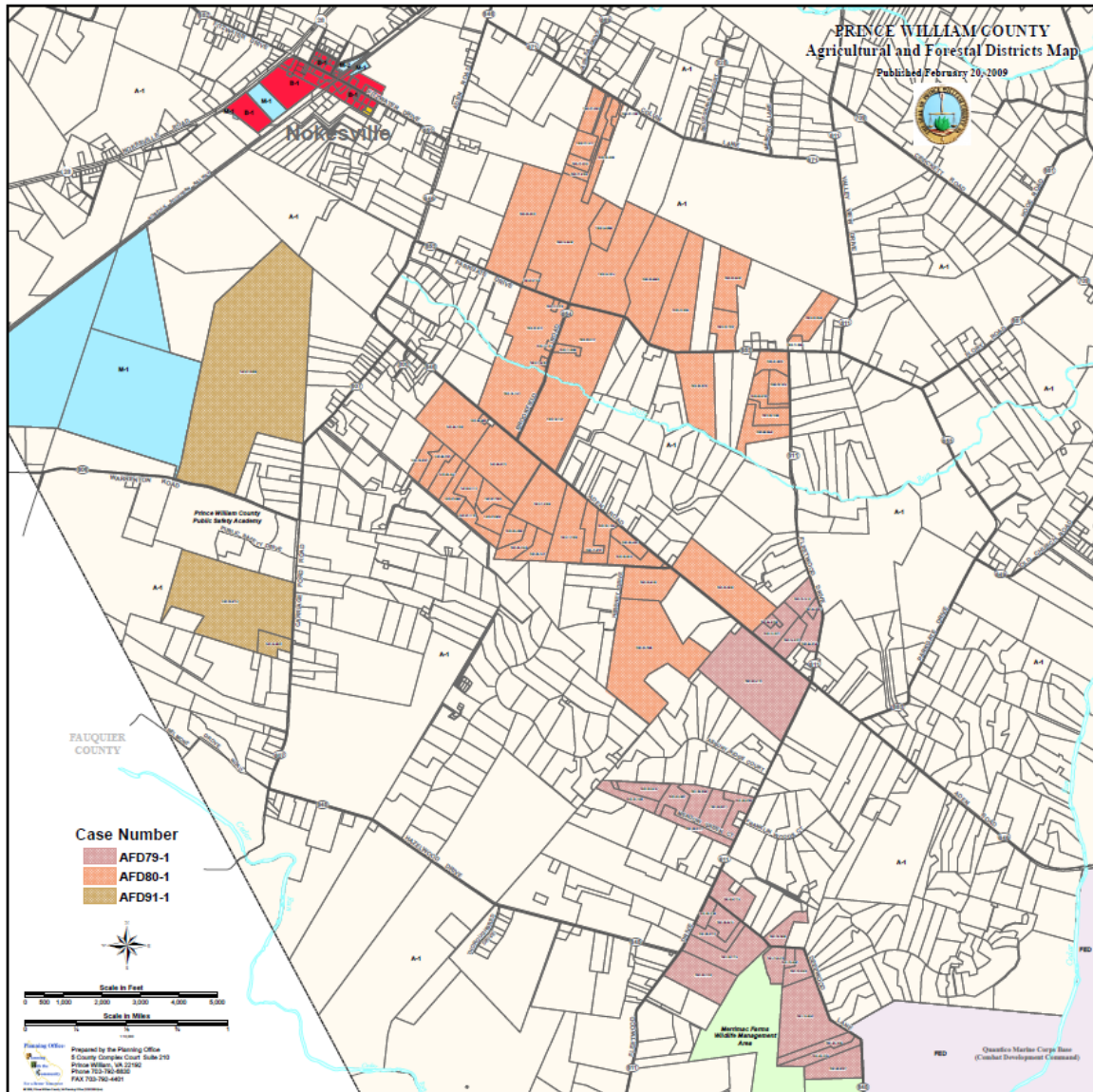
Source :

[http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/documents/departments/commdev/pdf/zoningordinance/ART\\_02.PDF](http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/documents/departments/commdev/pdf/zoningordinance/ART_02.PDF))

### **Agricultural Districts**

Landowners in Prince William County have voluntarily enrolled approximately 3,467 acres in agricultural and forestal districts (see Figure 2).<sup>i</sup> Such districts offer landowners several benefits, including: limits on assessments for sewer and water lines, limits on local government regulation of farming, limits on eminent domain, and use-value property taxation that reduces the property owner’s property taxes.<sup>ii</sup> In approving the creation of a district, the county must consider land quality, farm viability, current land use, development needs, and nearby idle land.

**Figure 2. Agricultural and Forestal Districts in Prince William County, 2009.**



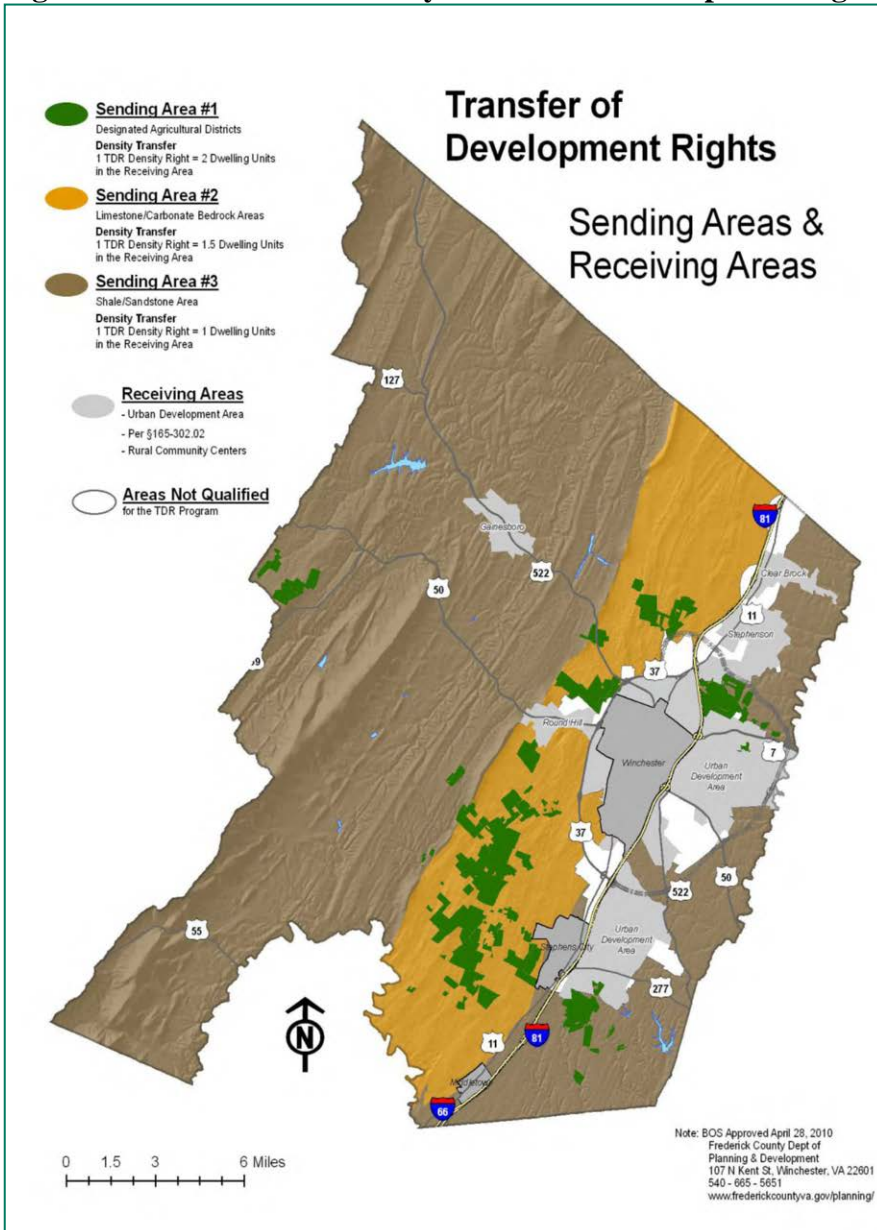
## Transfer of Development Rights

A transfer of development rights (TDR) program allows a county to designate sending areas where the county wishes to preserve land and receiving areas where the county would like to promote more intensive development. In the process, the county gives landowners in the sending areas transferable development rights and requires developers in the receiving areas to purchase TDRs if they wish to build at a density higher than

normally allowed under the zoning. Prince William County has not adopted a Transfer of Development Rights Program, which has been allowed under Virginia law since 2006.

Two Virginia counties, Frederick and Stafford, have created TDR programs.<sup>iii</sup> The Frederick County program has three sending areas. Each area has slightly different allowances for transferring density (See Figure 3). Sending area #1 allows the buyer of one TDR to build two additional dwelling units in a receiving area. Sending area #2 allows the buyer of one TDR to build 1.5 additional dwelling units in a receiving area. Sending area #3 allows the buyer to built one additional dwelling unit in a receiving area.

**Figure 3 Frederick County Transfer of Development Rights Map.**



Source: <http://www.co.frederick.va.us/home/showdocument?id=1032>.

## **Purchase of Development Rights**

Prince William County has not created a public purchase of development rights (PDR) program to preserve land by acquiring conservation easements from willing sellers. As of 2013, 22 counties and cities in Virginia had created PDR programs, but only nine programs had actually purchased development rights.<sup>iv</sup> Prince William County's neighbor to the west, Fauquier County, has preserved nearly 13,000 acres through its purchase of development rights program to preserve farmland, and the City of Virginia Beach has had a purchase of development rights program since 1995. The Commonwealth of Virginia created a statewide purchase of development rights program in 2001, but only slightly more than 5,700 acres had been preserved as of 2012.<sup>v</sup> Through 2012, the state purchase of development rights program had allocated \$6.45 million in grants to local governments.<sup>vi</sup> In fiscal 2013, the state allocated \$1.2 million for farmland preservation grants to local governments; the same level of funding, \$1.2 million, was authorized for fiscal 2014 as well.<sup>vii</sup>

The Rural Crescent has more contiguous undeveloped land compared to counties that are closer to Washington, DC. The Rural Crescent is a good example of what is known as the rural-urban fringe. Fringe areas are noteworthy because they contain agricultural land and forests, but they are also under considerable development pressure, especially for housing. Fringe areas are attractive because they have a considerable amount of open space and rural character. Yet, only a small fraction of residents earn their living from the land.

A key challenge in the fringe is deciding on a vision of the future. A vision is a set of goals and outcomes and provides direction for local elected officials, planners, landowners, developers, and the public to work toward. A vision also suggests particular planning techniques that can help make the vision a reality.

## **National Best Practices in Growth Management**

Growth management is a fundamental goal of many metropolitan counties. A basic purpose of growth management is to limit sprawl, which is expensive to service, causes a variety of environmental problems, and results in the loss of important open space, farmland, and forest land. An important strategy of growth management is not to stop population growth or real estate development, but to locate the growth in areas with adequate public services. This means that urban areas and designated growth areas are identified and development is encouraged. On the other hand, the rural parts of metropolitan counties are targeted for low density development and the protection of open space, agriculture, and forestry. This "inside game/outside game" planning approach has been a growing national trend among metropolitan counties over the past 30 years.



The leading metropolitan county growth management programs employ three main programs that work together to discourage non-farm or non-forestry residential and commercial development in the countryside. These include: 1) Restrictive zoning; 2) urban growth boundaries; and 3) the purchase and/or transfer of development rights. Nationally the leading metropolitan counties for growth management include: Baltimore County, Maryland, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Lexington-Fayette County, Kentucky, Montgomery County, Maryland, and Sonoma County, California. Fauquier and Clarke Counties are recognized leaders in growth management in Virginia.

### **Restrictive Zoning**

Restrictive zoning typically means no more than one house per 20 acres. Restrictive zoning comes in four types:

- 1) Minimum lot size zoning uses a large minimum lot size of 20 or more acres to discourage nearly all non-farm residential home buyers. For example, Multnomah County, Oregon, next to Portland, has a standard of one house per 40 acres in its agricultural zone. This restrictive zoning has helped Oregon counties lead the nation in the lowest percentage loss of farmland among states over the past few decades.
- 2) Another zoning approach, called fixed area ratio zoning, uses a density standard, such as one house per 25 acres, but the one house must be on a lot of no more than two acres. So, if a landowner owned 50 acres, there could be two lots created of two acres each, leaving 46 acres remaining for farming. This type of fixed area ratio zoning is common in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Fixed area ratio zoning seeks to strike a balance between allowing some non-farm residential development and maintaining the farmland base.
- 3) A third option is sliding scale zoning. This type of zoning allows relatively more lots on smaller parcels with limited farming potential, but relatively fewer lots on large parcels of farmland that are used for commercial agricultural production. Clarke County, Virginia and Fauquier County, Virginia use this approach.
- 4) Fauquier County, Virginia offers a cluster zoning incentive approach in its Resource Conservation and Rural Agricultural zones, combined with its purchase of development rights program. For example, if a landowner owned 50 acres, the landowner could create a 35-acre parcel with one house and 5 building lots on the remaining 15 acres. The landowner would sell a permanent conservation easement to the County on the 35 acres as part of the clustering process.<sup>viii</sup> Fauquier County allows alternative sewer systems.

### **Urban Growth Boundaries**

An urban growth boundary sets a limit to the extension of urban services, especially sewer and water lines and public schools. Neither public nor private sewer and water lines can be extended beyond an urban growth boundary. A growth boundary should contain enough buildable land to support growth over the next 20 years. The first urban

growth boundary in the United States was created as an agreement between Lexington, Kentucky and its surrounding county, Fayette County, in 1958. The growth boundary has expanded over time but still exists 56 years later.

Baltimore County, Maryland adopted a growth boundary, known as the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line, in 1967.

The State of Oregon required all of its 236 cities and 36 counties to adopt urban growth boundaries as part of its 1973 State Land Use program. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania has designated urban growth boundaries since 1993. Nine urban growth boundaries have been created by local voters in Sonoma County, California.

Virginia Beach, Virginia has had a growth boundary, known as the green line, for more than 20 years.

All told, there are about 150 urban growth boundaries nationwide.

It is important to note that a growth boundary is more likely to accommodate a majority of growth if the countryside outside the growth boundary has low density zoning. For example, Baltimore County, Maryland has zoning that allows only one house per 50 acres in its agricultural zone to the north of the Urban-Rural Demarcation Line.

### **Agricultural Districts**

More than 20 states, including Virginia, allow agricultural districts in which landowners can voluntarily enroll their land. To create a district, landowners must enroll a minimum acreage (for example, a minimum of 250 acres in Pennsylvania; 200 acres minimum in Prince William County) that the local elected officials must approve. Each parcel must also be at least a certain minimum size (such as 10 acres).

A district is reviewed for continuation or termination every several years (usually 7 to 10 years, depending on the state). A landowner may withdraw land from the district at any time, but there may be a property tax penalty for landowners who withdraw from a district. Districts do not impose land use restrictions beyond the commitment to maintain the land in agriculture or forestry. While the benefits of a district vary from state to state, landowners may qualify for use-value property taxation, which values the land at its agricultural value, rather than at its “highest and best” value for development. In Virginia, properties included in an agricultural and forestal district automatically qualify for an agricultural or forestal use value assessment for property tax purposes. In 1972, Prince William County also adopted a use-value assessment program for farm, forestry, and open space uses.<sup>ix</sup>

A district may also place limits on sewer and water fees and drainage taxes, as well as limits on the extension of sewer and water lines into a district. A common benefit is that local elected officials agree not to enact nuisance ordinances that would restrict normal farming practices. Also, there may be a state-level review for any proposed eminent



domain action that would condemn land in a district. And, finally, a district may make landowners eligible to sell development rights to the state or county government.

Agricultural districts are especially popular in rural areas where development pressure is low to moderate. Fewer districts have been created in suburban areas. Agricultural districts alone offer rather little protection against encroaching non-farm development. But agricultural districts have worked well in combination with restrictive zoning to retain land in farm use. This has been the experience in California and Pennsylvania. In places without restrictive zoning, agricultural districts can be attractive. For instance, New York has more than 8 million acres enrolled in agricultural districts, but has very little restrictive zoning.

A problem with Virginia's agricultural and forestal districts is that a landowner must show five years of agricultural or forest use before receiving use-value assessment for property tax purposes. This feature can pose a heavy burden on a landowner beginning a new farming operation. This issue was raised by members of the Prince William County Farm Bureau during the focus group discussions.

### **Purchase of Development Rights**

The purchase of development rights (PDR) is a voluntary program in which a landowner agrees to sell his or her development rights to a municipal, county, or state government or the federal government in return for a cash payment. A PDR program is typically a key program component of counties with best land preservation practices.

A landowner in the United States actually owns a bundle of rights to property. These rights include: mineral rights, water rights, air rights, use rights, the right to sell or lease land, the right to pass land to heirs, and the right to develop the property. Each right can be sold or given away separately. When a landowner sells his or her property rights, those rights are severed from the property and are then owned by the government agency that has bought those development rights.

The sale of development rights occurs through a "deed of easement," which is a legally-binding document that spells out restrictions placed on the landowner's property and the responsibilities of the government agency that now holds the development rights. In general, under such easements, agricultural and open space uses of the property are allowed, but no commercial, industrial, or residential development.

State and local governments have purchased development rights on more than 2.6 million acres nationwide.<sup>x</sup>

The advantages of PDR are:

- a) The landowner voluntarily sells the development rights. There is no eminent domain and no taking of land by government. The landowner receives cash compensation for selling the development rights.

- b) The land remains private property, and remains on the tax rolls.
- c) The land is preserved in perpetuity. (Note: Some term easements do exist. The federal government will purchase development rights for 30 years through the Wetlands Reserve Program). A purchase of development rights can be overturned through eminent domain by a government agency or by court order if the holder of the Deed of Easement does not monitor the property under the conservation easement. A purchase of development rights provides greater permanence than zoning.
- d) It is fairly easy to create and administer a PDR program.
- e) The PDR program can be coordinated with the county's overall growth management strategy.

The disadvantages of PDR are:

- a) It is expensive.
- b) It is not easy to reverse, so preserving the right land in the right location is important.
- c) It requires a long-term funding commitment to purchase development rights and to monitor properties under easement.

There are several funding options for PDR. The sale of general obligation bonds has been a popular option for counties. Purchasing development rights to farmland can be seen as a long-term capital investment in green infrastructure. The typical way that counties fund capital projects, such as sewer and water facilities and schools, is through the sale of 20-year tax-exempt bonds. Given that interest rates are at historic lows, raising funds through the sale of bonds is currently especially attractive. Also, the advantage of selling bonds is that more money becomes available sooner to purchase development rights.

In some cases, the sale of bonds has been put before the voters as a referendum. In others, such as in Pennsylvania, only the approval of the county elected officials is required.

Some counties have chosen a pay-as-you-go approach. The advantage to this type of funding is that a county can pay for the program each year out of the general fund without borrowing costs. The downside to this approach is that less money becomes available sooner compared to the sale of bonds. Smaller, more rural counties tend to use the pay-as-you-go approach.

A few counties, such as Suffolk County, New York, have dedicated real estate transfer taxes for the purchase of development rights.

Several counties have used installment purchase agreements (IPAs) with landowners to combine a funding approach with a payment arrangement. In an installment purchase agreement, agrees to pay the landowner annual tax-free interest payments based on the value of the development rights sold and usually for up to 20 years. At the end of the 20 years, the landowner receives the payment for the development rights. If the landowner wants to take the payment for the development rights before 20 years, the landowner can sell the installment purchase agreement on the municipal bond market. This has happened in several cases.

The county covers its cost of the tax-free interest payments from the general fund and the final development rights payment through the purchase of zero coupon U.S. Treasury bonds.

Carroll County, Maryland and Harford County, Maryland offer only IPAs to landowners.

The advantage of the installment purchase agreement to landowners is that it provides tax free interest and the landowner can decide when to take the payment for the development rights. The payment for the development rights is taxed as a capital gain, so it can be attractive to delay paying the capital gains taxes while enjoying tax free interest payments.

A disadvantage of the installment purchase agreement to landowners is when tax-free interest rates are low, meaning there is relatively little annual tax-free interest.

The advantage of the installment purchase agreement to a county is that ability to preserve considerable land with little up front cost (the tax free interest).

The disadvantage of the installment purchase agreement is the county must have available funds to purchase the zero coupon U.S. Treasury bonds and the ability to make the annual tax-free interest payments. The county cannot sell municipal bonds to raise funds to buy zero coupon U.S. Treasury bonds.

### *Selecting Lands for Preservation*

Best practice county farmland preservation programs rely upon a modified Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system or comparable system to prioritize applications from landowners to sell their development rights. An example of a LESA system appears in the Appendix of this report. The advantage of the LESA system is that it uses an objective, numbers-based approach to ranking applications according to factors that the County has deemed most important. The LESA system is flexible as to which factors to consider and how much weight to give each factor. Also, the LESA system can be used to set a minimum number of points for a property to be considered for preservation by the County.

The LESA system consists of two parts: 1) The Land Evaluation factors rate the quality of the property, such as parcel size, soil quality, and environmental features (streams,

wildlife, views); The Site Assessment factors refer to the development potential of the property, such as road frontage, proximity to sewer and water lines, and proximity to residential or commercial zoning. Each factor times its score are added up, first for a Land Evaluation score and then for a Site Assessment score. Finally, the Land Evaluation score and the Site Assessment scores are added together to give a total score for the property.

A County can set up the LESA system to reflect a particular land preservation strategy. For example, if the County wanted to give preference to properties that are far from sewer and water lines, this factor would receive little weight in determining the Site Assessment score. On the other hand, if the County wanted to preserve land close to the Development Area, then the sewer and water lines factor would be given substantial weight in determining the Site Assessment

### **Partnerships and Leveraging Funds for PDR**

A key feature of successful county PDR programs is the ability to partner with other government programs and private land trusts to leverage a county's funds for land preservation. This has happened in five main ways.

1. If a state has a PDR program, a county can maximize matching funds by increasing its contribution. This is the case in Pennsylvania and in Virginia, for example.
2. The federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), begun in 1996, has provided about \$1.5 billion in grants to state and local governments and land trusts to purchase development rights to agricultural land. Under the FRPP program, the federal government, acting through the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture, provides up to 50 percent of the cost of purchasing the development rights. The FRPP program is competitive and each state has a set allocation each year.
3. Counties have also partnered with non-profit land trusts to purchase development rights from willing landowners.
4. Some counties have given preference to landowners who agree to sell their development rights for less than the appraised value. Often, the larger the discount, the more willing the county is to purchase the development rights. This has long been a practice in Maryland.
5. Some counties have placed a maximum limit on how much they will pay for development rights. For instance, Lancaster County, PA will purchase development rights for up to \$4,000 an acre. If the appraised value of development rights is higher than \$4,000 an acre, the seller can use the difference between the appraised value and the selling price as a federal income tax deduction. When the sale price is less than the appraised value of the development rights, this is called a "bargain sale."

### **Cooperating with Land Trusts**

Several local governments have worked with private, non-profit land trusts to purchase development rights (also known as conservation easements when land trusts participate in the purchase). The main benefits of such public-private partnerships are: 1) more money can be focused on land preservation; and 2) there tends to be more consistency between preservation efforts and local land use planning.

One of the leading examples of a public-private effort in farmland preservation is the cooperative agreement between Lancaster County, PA and the Lancaster Farmland Trust. The County and Trust have jointly preserved seven farms and work together to direct landowners to the organization that can be of most help to them. The County has preserved about 75,000 acres and the Trust has preserved more than 25,000 acres. Prince William County has only limited experience in the use of partnerships for land preservation.

**State Agencies and Land Preservation**

Virginia has a leading state-level land preservation program which offers state income tax credits to landowners who donate a conservation easement to a land trust or the state Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) See Table 2). The VOF was created by the Virginia legislature in 1966 and has preserved more than 675,000 acres throughout the Commonwealth.<sup>xi</sup> In Prince William County, the VOF has preserved approximately 2,600 acres. This suggests that relatively few landowners in Prince William County have taken advantage of the state income tax credit incentive for donating a conservation easement. There may be an opportunity to educate landowners about the state income tax credit and the financial benefits of land preservation in general.

**Table 2 Virginia State Income Tax Credit Example**

<b>50 acre farm</b>	
Fair Market Value:	\$750,000
Restricted Value	\$450,000
PDR Easement Value	\$300,000
Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)	\$80,000
Virginia Income Tax on \$80,000 is about \$4,000.	
So landowners can claim credits of \$40,000 over 10 years and sell \$80,000 in credits	

The Virginia rules allow an income tax credit of up to 40 percent of the value of the conservation easement. In Table 2, the conservation easement is appraised at \$300,000. Thus, the total possible credit is 40 percent of \$300,000 or \$120,000. Table 2 assumes

that the landowner has an adjusted gross income of \$80,000 a year. The Virginia state income tax on \$80,000 a year is roughly 5 percent or \$4,000. The landowner can claim credits for up to 10 years or until the value of the credit is used up, whichever comes first. A landowner may also sell credits to another individual. In the example in Table 1, the landowner can use \$4,000 in income tax credits each year for 10 years or a total of \$40,000 in credits (assuming a steady income of \$80,000 a year). The landowner can also sell \$80,000 in credits to someone else to use. The Virginia state income tax credit can be used in addition to the federal income tax deduction for a donated conservation easement.

In 2013, landowners who donate an easement are eligible for a federal income tax deduction of up to 50 percent of Adjusted Gross Income in a year, with a 15 year carry-forward, or until the value of the easement has been used up. For example, a landowner donates a conservation easement on 100 acres; the easement value is \$400,000 (the difference between the fair market value and the value of the property for agricultural, forestry, and open space uses). The landowner has an adjusted gross income of \$80,000 (and assume it stays at \$80,000 a year). The landowner can deduct \$40,000 a year for taxable income each year for seven years and \$20,000 in year eight. Since 2007, the total amount of Virginia state income tax credits available has been capped at \$100 million a year.<sup>xii</sup>

Finally, Virginia landowners who preserve their land with a conservation easement may be eligible for a reduction in estate taxes and local property taxes, if they are not already enrolled in a use-value taxation program.

Another source of funding is the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. This is a program run by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The Department awarded \$1.55 million in 2012 for 12 projects covering 1,642 acres statewide (See [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/virginia\\_land\\_conservation\\_foundation/index.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/virginia_land_conservation_foundation/index.shtml))

### **Federal Agencies and Land Preservation**

In addition to the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, there are a number of federal funding sources for land preservation. The federal Wetlands Reserve Program, created in 1985 and administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture, buys conservation easements (development rights) on wetlands for either a 30-year term or in perpetuity. The maximum value of a 30-year term conservation easement is 75 percent of the value of a perpetual conservation easement. The Wetlands Reserve Program has preserved 2.6 million acres nationwide as of 2012, but slightly less than 2,200 acres in Virginia.

The federal Forest Legacy Program, created in 1990 and administered by the U.S. Forest Service, provides funding to states for the purchase of conservation easements (development rights) on forest land. As of 2012, more than 2.2 million acres have been preserved nationwide and a total of 9,750 acres of forestland have been preserved in Virginia.<sup>xiii</sup>

Neither the Wetlands Reserve Program nor the Forest Legacy Program appear to have been used in Prince William County.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program was formed in 2003 to purchase lands or development rights on land adjacent to military bases. The Department of Defense has been concerned about development encroaching on the edges of military bases so that military training and performance may be hindered. Through 2012, the REPI program has protected 264,000 acres in 64 locations in 24 states.<sup>xiv</sup> In Virginia, the REPI program has preserved 10,866 acres, including 416 acres in two projects in Fauquier County adjacent to the Marine Corps Base at Quantico.<sup>xv</sup> A third REPI project in Fauquier County was recently completed, according to representatives from the Marine Corps Base at Quantico. Merrimac Farms in Prince William County was preserved with REPI funds, but no Prince William County government funds were involved.

### **Transfer of Development Rights**

A transfer of development rights (TDR) program features the creation of a market in development credits through the county government. The county gives development credits to landowners in a designated sending area, from which the development credits will be sent and the land is preserved by a Deed of Easement (conservation easement). The development credits can be purchased by developers and landowners in designated receiving areas, and proposed developments will be allowed to be built at a higher than normal density. As noted above, transfer of development rights programs have been allowed under Virginia law since 2006. Prince William County has not created one.

Montgomery County, Maryland created a TDR program by giving each landowner with five or more acres in a designated sending area one transferable development credit for every five acres owned. In the receiving areas, a developer who purchased a TDR was allowed to increase the density from two houses per acre to three per acre. King County, Washington has created a TDR program that transfers TDRs from lands outside the county's urban growth area to inside the growth area.

The price of TDRs is determined through negotiation, just as in any real estate transaction.

Successful TDR programs have some common features:

1. They are developer-driven. That is, there is a strong demand for TDRs from developers. Because developers are willing to pay attractive process for TDRs, landowners in the sending areas have been willing to sell TDRs and thus preserve their land.
2. The sending and receiving areas are clearly separated. This is called the dual zone approach to TDRs.



3. Development potential in the sending area is limited by restrictive zoning. For instance, Montgomery County, Maryland allows one house per 25 acres in its sending area.
4. Local government officials do not give density away through re-zonings. Instead the purchase of TDRs by a developer is a condition of the approval of a re-zoning.
5. An important determination is the number of development credits in the sending area compared to the number of development credits that could be used in the receiving areas. TDRs generally do not work well in rural areas because there are often many more development credits to send than there are places to put them in the receiving areas. This oversupply of development credits tends to drive down the price of the development credits and discourages landowners in the sending areas from selling development credits.

### **Local Right-to-Farm Ordinance**

Nearly every state, including Virginia, has a right-to-farm law aimed at protecting farmers from nuisance lawsuits for standard farming practices.<sup>xvi</sup> Some local governments have adopted their own right-to-farm ordinance to emphasize their intention not to restrict normal farming practices. Prince William County does not have a separate right-to-farm ordinance. Yet, a right-to-farm law does not mean that someone cannot file a lawsuit against a farm operator. Right-to-farm laws are largely untested. The state right-to-farm law alone is probably adequate in most cases.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Prince William County has relied upon two land use controls to limit development in the Rural Crescent: the Sewer Service Boundary and large lot zoning. These techniques have generally maintained the rural character of the Rural Crescent, though with continued development pressure and loss of agricultural land there are concerns over the ability of these techniques alone to maintain this character in the future. Without central sewer service, intensive suburban and urban development is not possible. Lots of ten or more acres help to retain open space, though they do not help traditional commercial row crop and livestock agriculture. The following recommendations are based on the assumption that the citizens and Board of Supervisors of Prince William County wish to maintain the Rural Crescent as a largely rural area. These recommendations build on the County's existing growth management efforts.

### **Zoning**

*Maintain the Agricultural-Estate zoning of one house per ten acres.* The Agricultural Estate zoning has worked fairly well to limit the level of new development in the Rural Crescent. This zoning has been in place since 1998 across most of the Rural Crescent and landowners have become accustomed to it and have expectations about land value based on this zoning. Some landowners have expressed a preference to return to the zoning as it

was prior to 1998. About 3,700 additional houses could be built within the AE zone under current policies.

Reducing the density to restrictive zoning of one house per 20 acres would lower the number of potential new lots and houses. But the pushback from landowners could be severe. Restrictive zoning is typically used in areas with many commercial agricultural operations. The most common type of farming in Prince William County is what could be called “lifestyle farming,” featuring small farms that raise horses and other livestock, but the landowners earn the majority of their income off the farm.

*Revise and incentivize the cluster provision of the AE zone.* The cluster provision in the AE zone has not been used much at all. One reason is that the Rural Crescent generally contains poor soils for on-site septic systems. Cluster developments typically rely on community on-lot systems or even private package sewage treatment plants. Prince William County does not allow such systems.

Cluster developments could be created in areas adjacent to the Developed Area of eastern Prince William County. A suggested minimum lot size is two acres, combined with a requirement that at least 50 percent of the site remain as open space under a permanent conservation easement. The current minimum size for a cluster development is 50 acres. Cluster development should only be allowed if the development is serviced by a central sewer system, not by on-site septic, a community on-lot system, or package sewage treatment plant.

*Maintain the family conveyance provision of the AE zone.* Family conveyances can have the potential for abuse. A landowner may propose to create one or more lots for family members that are soon sold to buyers outside of the family. Family conveyances involve one-acre lots, and the proliferation of such lots could run counter to the 10-acre zoning. From 2000 to 2012, there were 144 family conveyances covering 359 acres, according to Prince William County land records. This is a relatively small number compared to the overall the amount of subdivision in the Rural Area. The County should continue to monitor use of this provision and consider revisions should abuse become evident.

### **Sewer Service Boundary**

Prince William County’s sewer service boundary plays a critical role in limiting development in the Rural Crescent. Although a sewer service boundary is not meant to be permanent, expansion of the boundary and extensions of sewer outside of the boundary into the Rural Crescent should be done with care.

*Maintain the sewer service boundary as much as reasonably possible.* There may be some areas in the Rural Crescent that are close to the sewer service boundary where the land base has been fragmented to less than one house per ten acres that could be appropriate for sewer service. These areas should be developed in a cluster style that creates a buffer with adjacent Rural Crescent lands.

### **Schools**

*Discourage the location of schools in the Rural Crescent.* Schools are major public investments that attract development nearby. While land in the Rural Crescent is generally cheaper than inside the urban service boundary, schools are an urban service. Locating schools in the Rural Crescent not only involves the extension of sewer and water lines into the Rural Crescent, but increases development pressure within the Rural Crescent. Over time, locating schools in the Rural Crescent will lead to additional residential development within the Rural Crescent.

## Purchase of Development Rights

1. Prince William County should initiate a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. There are about 28,000 acres of undeveloped and unpreserved privately-held land in the Rural Crescent. Of this total, about 20,000 acres are in agricultural use, according to the acreage analysis for the Rural Preservation Study. Two important features of a PDR program are: the level of funding and an acreage goal to work toward. A reasonable, though aggressive, goal would be to preserve 10,000 acres. This level of preservation would maintain the largely rural character of the area through PDR. Parcels of more than 20 acres should be targeted. We recommend the County appropriate \$5 million through the sale of bonds to begin funding the program. Some of these funds could be used to partner with the Marine Base at Quantico and the REPI program to preserve lands close to the base. The County should also look to acquire state and federal matching funds for the PDR program and should seek to partner on land preservation projects with private non-profit land trusts.

\$5 million could preserve at least 1,000 acres, if the County were to adopt a cap on how much the County would offer to pay for development rights (see Appendix One for a more in-depth discussion).

2. Another important issue for a PDR program is setting a maximum payment per acre. Generally, if a county is paying more than \$5,000 an acre for development rights, the county will likely not have enough funds to preserve a significant amount of land. Thus, a \$5,000 maximum payment per acre is recommended. The value of the development rights is determined by a professional real estate appraiser. If the value of the development rights is appraised at more than \$5,000 an acre, a landowner can use the difference between the appraised development rights value and the \$5,000 sales price as a federal income tax deduction.
3. Additional key factors are a minimum eligible parcel size and location. Under the Agricultural Estate zoning in the Rural Crescent, a landowner is allowed one house per ten acres. To subdivide a property, a landowner must have at least 20 acres. A minimum eligible parcel size is recommended at 20 acres. In addition, the county should give preference to those properties that are enrolled in agricultural and forestal districts. The county should favor properties that are located beyond one-quarter mile from the Rural Crescent boundary, where the per acre cost of preserving these lands will be lower. Finally, the county should favor properties within the joint planning area identified by the county and the Marine Base at Quantico through the ongoing Joint Land Use Study. The Department of Defense has considerable funding through the REPI program to partner with local governments on the preservation of lands close to military bases. A county PDR could preserve more land by acquiring conservation easements with the help of the REPI program. The PDR program could also give preference to Agricultural Estate-zoned land near the Manassas Battlefield. If the bi-county connector road is built, the Virginia Department of Transportation

has offered the Park Service \$3 million for purchasing land and/or conservation easements.<sup>xvii</sup>

4. For funding options, the sale of bonds is a logical way to start a PDR program. Bonds are typically used to fund long-term capital investments and a PDR program can be viewed as a long-term investment in the county's green infrastructure. Also, the installment purchase agreement (IPA) approach could be a good fit for Prince William County. Many of the landowners in the Rural Crescent are older and hence may be interested in tax-free interest while deciding when to take the payment for the development rights. Also, the county would have better control over payments compared to simply selling bonds. The county would not have to make tax-free interest payments or purchase zero coupon U.S. Treasury bonds until landowners have entered into the installment purchase agreements. The IPA approach would enable the county to preserve more land and sooner than in a pay-as-you-go funding approach.
5. Prince William County should work with the Virginia state farmland preservation program.
6. Prince William County should explore working with the federal Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program. The Virginia state office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service can provide technical assistance about the program.
7. Prince William County should explore working with land trusts and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation on bargain sales and jointly held conservation easements.
8. Prince William County should explore working with the U.S. Marine Corps base at Quantico about preserving lands near to the base. Quantico has already helped to fund the preservation of two properties in Fauquier County near the base.

### **Transfer of Development Rights**

Prince William County should explore creating a transfer of development rights program. Sending areas would be the highest value agricultural, scenic, and culturally significant parts of the Rural Area, including the greater Route 15 Journey Through Hallowed Ground corridor. Receiving areas would be appropriate locations in the Development Area (the Innovation Area has been discussed as one potential). A key advantage of a TDR is that the cost to the County is very low. The benefit is that the real estate market through private transactions between sellers and buyers of TDR credits can both preserve rural land and foster new development in desired growth areas.

## Appendix

### **Appendix One: Discussion of A Purchase of Development Rights Program for Prince William County**

There are currently about 28,000 acres of undeveloped and uncommitted land in the Rural Area of Prince William County. The purpose of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program is to provide compensation to landowners who willingly sell the right to develop their property. In return, the County gets long term land protection, growth management, and the benefits of open space, rural character, and farm and forestry activities. In the purchase of development rights, a permanent conservation easement is placed on the landowner's property. The conservation easement runs with the land, so if the land is sold or passed on to heirs, the restrictions of the conservation easement still apply. By purchasing the development rights, the County is assuming a long-term responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the terms of the conservation easement.

The purchase of development rights is a much stronger legal device than zoning. Zoning can be changed by a vote of the County Supervisors. A conservation easement is a legal document; very few conservation easements have been overturned by the courts.

**Goal: Preserve 15,000 acres in the Rural Area.** The first step in establishing a PDR program is to set a goal of how many acres to preserve. We recommend that Prince William County set a goal to preserve 15,000 acres out of the 28,000 undeveloped acres in the Rural Area. We believe that the preservation of 15,000 acres will significantly help to retain open space, rural character, and farm and forestry activities. Without a PDR program, land holdings in the Rural Area will decrease in size over time toward the 10-acre minimum lot size which has limited value for open space, rural character, and farm and forestry activities.

**Eligibility: At least 20 acres in the Rural Area.** The next step is to establish eligibility criteria, especially the minimum acre size. We recommend 20 acres as the minimum size for preservation. Landowners with less than 20 acres do not have the right to subdivide their property under the Agricultural Estate zoning of one house per 10 acres. An estimated 81 percent of the undeveloped parcels in the Rural Area are greater than 20 acres.

**Cost and Funding.** It is important to estimate how much a PDR would cost and to determine how the County would pay for it over time. The value of a landowner's development rights is calculated by a professional real estate appraiser. The value of the development rights is the difference between what the property would fetch today on the open market (known as the Fair Market Value) and the value of the property today if it were restricted by a conservation easement (no development rights remaining). The difference between the Fair Market Value and the No Development Rights Value is the value of the development rights (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Sample Calculation of PDR Value**

<b>50 acre farm</b>	
Fair Market Value:	\$750,000
Restricted Value – No development rights	\$450,000
Value of the Development Rights	\$300,000

The County can decide how much of the value of the development rights it wants to offer the landowner in cash. For instance, some counties in Pennsylvania have placed a cap on how much they will offer per acre. In Lancaster County, PA, the cap is \$4,000 an acre.

A landowner can use the difference between the appraised value of the development rights and the cash payment as an income tax deduction against federal taxable income. So, if the appraised value of the development rights is \$300,000 or \$6,000 an acre and the County offered \$200,000 in cash or \$4,000 an acre, the landowner could use the \$100,000 difference as an income tax deduction against federal taxable income.

In Prince William County, a 10-acre lot sells for about \$250,000 or about \$25,000 an acre. A 50-acre farm could be split into 5 lots of 10 acres each. But there are costs associated with the subdivision process. Also, the per acre value of a parcel of land declines as the size of the parcel increases. So, a value of 50 acres of bare land at \$750,000 is not unrealistic.

We recommend that Prince William County adopt a cap of \$5,000 an acre. With a goal to preserve 10,000 to 15,000 acres at an average of \$5,000 an acre, the County would need to identify sources of up to \$75 million.

**Funding sources.** The County has bonding authority. A purchase of development rights program can be seen as a long term investment in green infrastructure. A county typically sells bonds to pay for long-term capital investments. Also, interest rates in the bond market are at or near historic lows. Many counties have sold bonds to fund their purchase of development rights program.

The County should aggressively pursue other funding sources. These include: the Virginia Farmland Preservation Program, the federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, the Department of Defense REPI program, and land trusts.

Landowners should be encouraged to consult with financial advisors about the tax implications of the sale and/or donation of development rights. The State of Virginia has a generous state income tax credit program for the donation of development rights.



Finally, some land, perhaps 2,000 acres, could be preserved through cluster developments.

**Appendix Two Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) System example for Ranking Purchase of Development Rights Applications**

A County can use this LESA ranking system to evaluate and place in priority order applications for the purchase of development rights. The purpose of the PDR program is to preserve high quality lands in large blocks. Preference is given to lands under moderate development pressure.

- A. Land Evaluation: Quality of the Property. 50% of the overall points. There are five factors which are related to the quality of the property. Each factor is assigned a weight (from 1 to 10) and a range of possible point values (from 0 to 10). The weight times the actual points determines a number value for a factor. The sum of the points for each factor yields a score for the Land Evaluation: Quality of the Property category. That score is adjusted to reflect the Quality category points on a scale from 0 to a total of 50 possible points.
- B. Site Assessment: Likelihood of Conversion to Development. 50% of the overall points. There are five factors related to the development pressure on the property. Each factor is assigned a weight (from 1 to 10) and a range of possible points (from 0 to 10). The weight times the points determines a number value for a factor. The sum of the points for each factor yields a score for the Site Assessment: Likelihood of Conversion category. That score is adjusted to reflect the Likelihood of Conversion category points on a scale from 0 to a total of 50 possible points.

To find the Total Points for a property, add the points for the Land Evaluation: Quality of the Property to the points for the Site Assessment: Likelihood of Conversion.  
 Quality of the Property + Likelihood of Conversion = TOTAL SCORE  
 (maximum 50 points)      (maximum 50 points)      (up to 100 points)

**LAND EVALUATION - QUALITY OF THE PROPERTY**

<u>FACTORS</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Point Value</u>	<u>Score</u>
1. Size of Property			
-80.1 acres or more.....	10	10	100
-40.1 to 80 acres.....	7	10	70
-20 to 40 acres.....	4	10	40
2. Soils.			
-75% or more NRCS Class II and III.....	6	10	60
-50-74% Class II and III.....	4	10	40
-Less than 50% Class II, and III	0	0	0

3. Agricultural and Forestal District.			
-Yes.....	3	10	30
-No	0	0	0
4. Stewardship.			
-NRCS soil conservation plan on property...	3	10	30
-No plan on property	0	0	0
5. Historic and Environmental Value.			
-Exceptional.....	8	10	80
-Significant.....	4	10	40
-Some.....	1	10	10

TOTAL Maximum points for Quality of the Property = 300 points multiplied by the adjustment factor (1/6) = 50 points maximum

SITE ASSESSMENT - LIKELIHOOD OF CONVERSION TO DEVELOPMENT

<u>FACTORS</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Point Value</u>	<u>Score</u>
1. Residential development in the Area.			
-10 or more residential lots adjacent.....	7	10	70
-20 or more residential lots within 1/2 mile.....	10	10	100
-Scattered residential lots within 1 mile.....	4	10	40
-No significant residential development in area	0	0	0
2. Zoning.			
-Residential or commercial zoning within 1/4 mile.....	3	10	30
- Residential or commercial zoning 1/4 to 1/2 mile.....	5	10	50
- Residential or commercial zoning 1/2 to 1 mile.....	2	10	20
-Agricultural estate zoning in more than 1/2 mile radius	0	0	0
3. Distance to Sewer Service			
-Existing capacity within 1/4 mile.....	3	10	30
-Existing capacity within 1/2 mile.....	5	10	50
-Existing capacity within 1 mile.....	2	10	20
-No capacity within 1 mile	0	0	0
4. Road Frontage			
-Over 1/4 mile of buildable frontage.....	5	10	50
-400 to 1320 feet of buildable frontage.....	5	5	25
-Less than 400 feet of buildable frontage	0	0	0
5. Distance to a Permanently Preserved Property or or Development Rights Sale Application			
-Adjacent.....	10	10	100
-Within 1/2 mile.....	10	5	50
-More than 1/2 mile	0	0	0

TOTAL Maximum points for Likelihood of Conversion = 350 points multiplied by the adjustment factor (1/7) = 50 points maximum

Example: Property A is 55 acres with 50% Class II and III soils. Property A does not have a soil conservation plan and is not enrolled in an Agricultural or Forestal District. Property A has beautiful scenic views, some woods and a small stream. Property A is not near a permanently preserved property or a property whose owner has applied to sell development rights to the County. Property A is beyond 1 mile of sewer service. There are more than 20 houses within half a mile. The property has 1,500 feet of road frontage.

<u>Quality of the Property Factors</u>		<u>Likelihood of Conversion Factors</u>	
<u>Factor</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Factor</u>	<u>Score</u>
1. Size	70	1. Residential development	100
2. Soils	40	2. Zoning	0
3. District	0	3. Distance to Sewer	0
4. Stewardship	0	4. Road Frontage	50
5. Environment	40	5. Distance to Preserved Property	0
TOTAL	150	TOTAL	150
times 1/6 =	25	times 1/7 =	21.43

Quality of Property Score + Likelihood of Conversion Score= TOTAL SCORE

$$25 + 21.43 = \underline{46.43}$$

## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 2012.

[http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/pdf/ag\\_forestal\\_summary.pdf](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/pdf/ag_forestal_summary.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> See, VA Code 15.1-1507 to 15.1-1513.

<sup>iii</sup> Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Office of Farmland Preservation. Farmland Preservation Tools. <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/preservation/tools.shtml>

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>v</sup> Farmland Information Center, Status of State PACE Programs.

[http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/39353/FIC\\_State\\_PACE\\_09-2012.pdf](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/39353/FIC_State_PACE_09-2012.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Annual Report of the Office of Farmland Preservation-2012.

<http://leg2.state.va.us/DLS/H&SDocs.NSF/682def7a6a969fbf85256ec100529ebd/3b3b7e7547e809e38525794300506f6d?OpenDocument>.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>viii</sup> [http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/documents/departments/commdev/pdf/zoningordinance/ART\\_04.PDF](http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/documents/departments/commdev/pdf/zoningordinance/ART_04.PDF).

<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/planning/Documents/13543.pdf>.

<sup>x</sup> Farmland Information Center, Status of Local PACE Programs.

[http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/39354/FIC\\_Local\\_PACE\\_09-2012.pdf](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/39354/FIC_Local_PACE_09-2012.pdf) and Farmland Information Center, Status of State PACE Programs.

[http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/39353/FIC\\_State\\_PACE\\_09-2012.pdf](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/39353/FIC_State_PACE_09-2012.pdf)

<sup>xi</sup> Virginia Outdoors Foundation. About VOF. <http://www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org/about/>

<sup>xii</sup> Virginia Department of Forestry. Tax Benefits of Donating a Conservation Easement.

<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/land/easement/tax-benefits.htm>.

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<sup>xiii</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service. Forest Legacy Program.

[http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/flp\\_projects.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/flp_projects.shtml)

<sup>xiv</sup> U.S. Department of Defense. Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program.

<http://www.repi.mil/>

<sup>xv</sup> U.S. Department of Defense. Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program, 2013 Report to Congress. <http://www.repi.mil/Documents/Report/REPI2013RTC.pdf>

<sup>xvi</sup> See, <http://law.justia.com/codes/virginia/2006/toc0301000/3.1-22.28.html>.

<sup>xvii</sup> [http://www.baconsrebellion.com/articles/2013/05/battlefield\\_battle.html](http://www.baconsrebellion.com/articles/2013/05/battlefield_battle.html).

**Appendix 5 Workshop powerpoint presentations from Study Open House December 7,  
2013**

*Rural Character Areas*

*Land Preservation*

*Rural Economy*

# Prince William County Rural Preservation Study

*Public Open House Sessions, December 7, 2013*

## Rural Character Areas

Keith A. Weaver, PLA, AICP, LEED AP, ASLA  
Associate Principal, EDSA, Inc.  
ERM Team





# Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Session purpose
3. What we have done
4. What we have heard
5. What is/is not rural for you?
6. What is out there?
  - How do maps translate to real conditions?
  - Emerging Rural Character Areas - Visual assessment of physical elements in the rural area
7. Options for protecting/enhancing the Rural Character Areas
8. Final Discussion – Q&A





# What We Have Done

Since our last public meeting we have:

1. Conducted an online survey to solicit public input about the County's rural preservation efforts.
2. Conducted 18 stakeholder interviews with 33 participants
3. Conducted a photographic tour of the Rural Crescent area
  - Over 1300 photographs
  - Traveled most public roads and a representative sample of private roads and subdivisions
  - This work will be the focus of this session



# Session Purpose

1. Exploring what the terms rural and rural landscape mean in Prince William County
2. Comparing regulatory mapping to real Rural Area conditions
3. Recognizing different Rural Character Areas and the potential need for different practices/policies in different areas to protect and enhance the character
4. Considering best practices and potential policy options to protect/enhance the character areas



# Defining Rural in Prince William County

## How can we go beyond popular definitions/perceptions of rural?

- “Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of the country, country life or country people”;
- “Living in the country”;
- “Of or pertaining to agriculture”;
- “A geographic area that is located outside cities and towns”;
- “Typically areas of low population density and small settlements. Agricultural areas are commonly rural, though so are others such as forests”.





# What is Rural Today in Prince William County?

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Mountaintop vistas from Bull Run Mountain across the valley floor farms & rural subdivisions



# What is Rural Today in Prince William County?

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Valley vistas across large farms to Bull Run Mountain



# What is Rural Today in Prince William County?

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Mountain and valley vistas along Logmill Road and Shelter Lane



# What is Rural Today in Prince William County?



Active livestock farming in the north and south portions of the Rural Crescent



# What is Rural Today in Prince William County?

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Relatively large picturesque farms in the north and south portions of the Rural Crescent

# What is Rural in Prince William County?

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Large individual single-family estates on large lots are dispersed through the Rural Crescent



# What is Rural Today in Prince William County?

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Rural estate lot subdivisions are a growing trend in the Rural Crescent

# What is Rural Today in Prince William County?

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Higher density rural subdivisions/ residential hamlets were a trend of the past prior to the Rural Crescent's establishment



# What is Rural Today in Prince William County?



Country churches and cemeteries also dot the Rural Crescent



# What is Rural Today in Prince William County?



Large portions of the southern valley areas are dedicated to regulated shooting/hunting preserves and hunt clubs



# What is Rural Today in Prince William County?



The rural area scenic roads are a draw for all forms of shared transportation

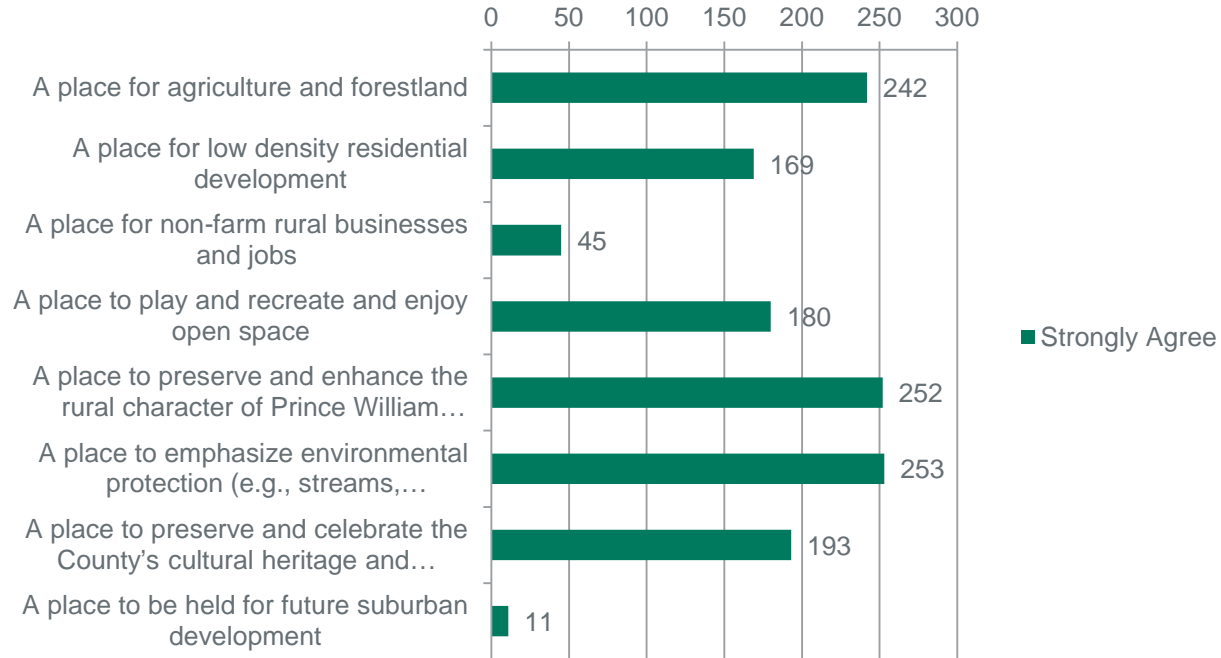


# What We Have Heard

## SURVEY TOPIC #5

### What does the Rural Area mean to you?

Please indicate your opinion about what the Rural Area means to you; how you think of the Rural Area.



Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average	Response Count
A place for agriculture and forestland	242	98	17	7	3	1.45	367
A place for low density residential development	169	96	36	46	16	2.02	363
A place for non-farm rural businesses and jobs	45	109	86	69	52	2.93	361
A place to play and recreate and enjoy open space	180	126	38	20	3	1.75	367
A place to preserve and enhance the rural character of Prince William County	252	67	24	20	4	1.52	367
A place to emphasize environmental protection (e.g., streams, groundwater, soils, wildlife habitat)	253	65	34	10	7	1.52	369
A place to preserve and celebrate the County's cultural heritage and historical significance	193	97	46	25	8	1.80	369
A place to be held for future suburban development	11	20	36	81	213	4.29	361
						<i>answered question</i>	<b>371</b>
						<i>skipped question</i>	<b>13</b>

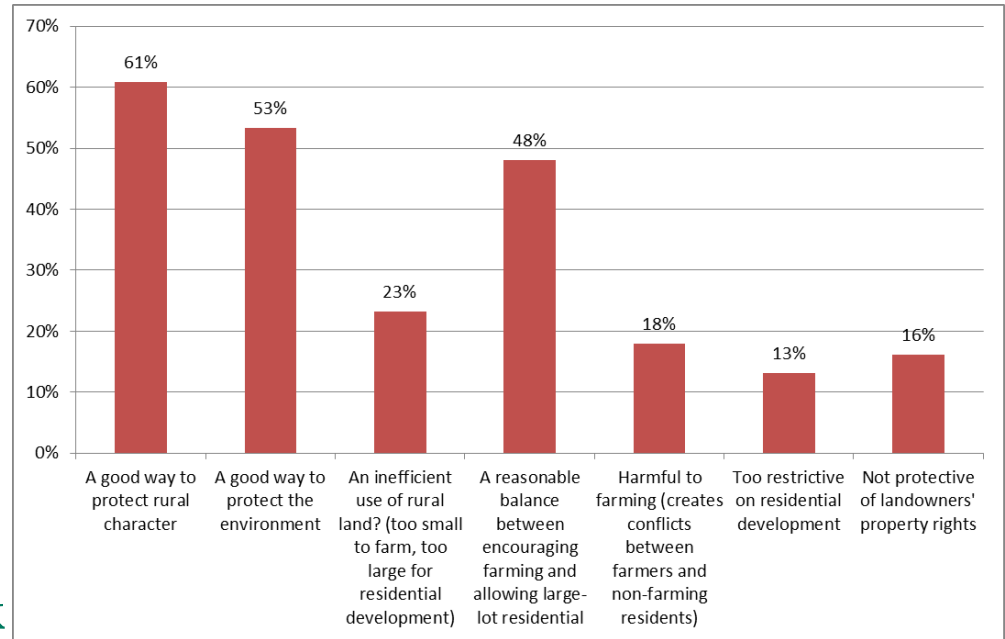
# What We Have Heard

## SURVEY TOPIC #6

### Future Residential Development:

The primary residential development pattern (occurring today) in the rural area is ten-acre lots.

Do you think this approach to residential development is (check all that you think apply).



Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A good way to protect rural character	61%	223
A good way to protect the environment	53%	195
An inefficient use of rural land? (too small to farm, too large for residential development)	23%	85
A reasonable balance between encouraging farming and allowing large-lot residential	48%	176
Harmful to farming (creates conflicts between farmers and non-farming residents)	18%	66
Too restrictive on residential development	13%	48
Not protective of landowners' property rights	16%	59
<i>answered question</i>		<b>366</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>18</b>

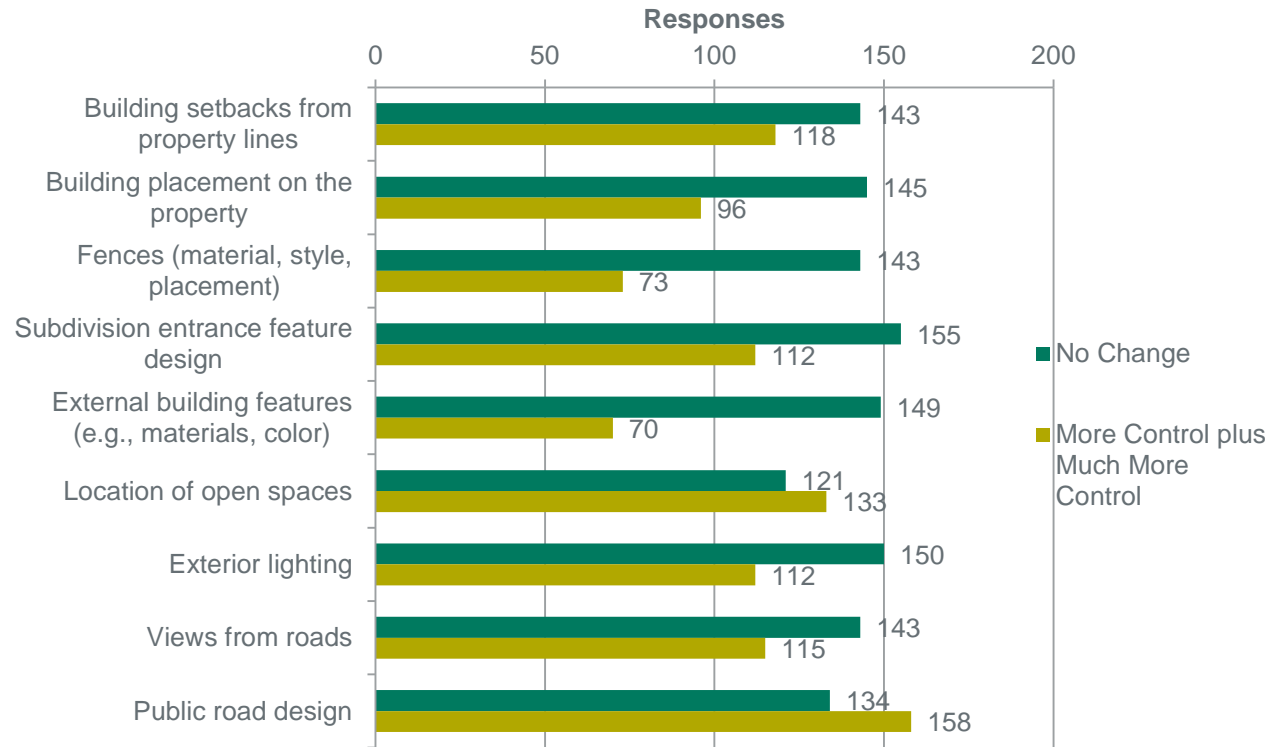
# What We Have Heard

## SURVEY TOPIC #12

### Preserving and Enhancing Rural Character:

A number of site design, landscape architectural, and architectural techniques can help preserve and/or enhance the character of a rural landscape.

To what extent would you support more or less county control over the following?



Answer Options	Much More Control	More Control	No Change	Less Control	Much Less Control	Rating Average	Response Count	More Control + Much More Control
1 Building setbacks from property lines	37	81	143	45	19	2.78	325	118
2 Building placement on the property	28	68	145	61	24	2.95	326	96
3 Fences (material, style, placement)	21	52	143	71	35	3.15	322	73
4 Subdivision entrance feature design	38	74	155	36	21	2.78	324	112
5 External building features (e.g., materials, color)	22	48	149	68	36	3.15	323	70
6 Location of open spaces	46	87	121	45	25	2.74	324	133
7 Exterior lighting	39	73	150	37	22	2.78	321	112
8 Views from roads	36	79	143	40	26	2.82	324	115
9 Public road design	59	99	134	19	12	2.46	323	158
<i>answered question</i>							<b>329</b>	
<i>skipped question</i>								<b>55</b>

# What is Rural in Prince William County?

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- From the survey results, it's clearly a lifestyle choice for many Prince William County Residents that needs to be carefully protected and maintained.
- It is a combination of uses, density, development pattern, environmental response and resources.
- Citizens of Prince William County decide to live and do business in the Rural Crescent for a particular reason....What are those reasons? What draws people from different walks of life to converge on the rural area?
  - Family heritage in area?
  - Individuals grew-up in the rural setting?
  - Family tie to the land/homestead?
  - Country living close to DC, goods and services?
  - Quality of life decision for self or family - Quieter lifestyle?
  - The lifestyle aligns with hobbies; hunting, fishing, horse riding, golfing, biking, running, canoeing, etc.?
  - Perceived better schools?
  - Less crime per capita?
  - Scenery and vistas?
  - Less traffic?
  - Less controls over what happens on the property?
  - More land and space?
  - Others reasons?

# Rural Mapping and Visual Reality

## Long Range Comprehensive Plan

- Provides a more general view of proposed land uses in the Rural Area, including:
  - Agricultural or Estate
  - Convenience Retail
  - Environmental Resources
  - Agricultural and Forestal District
  - Nokesville Sector Plan
  - County Registered Historic Sites
  - Parks and Open Space
  - Public Lands
  - Federal Lands
    - Marine Corps Base Quantico & Quantico Cemetery
    - Manassas National Battlefield Park

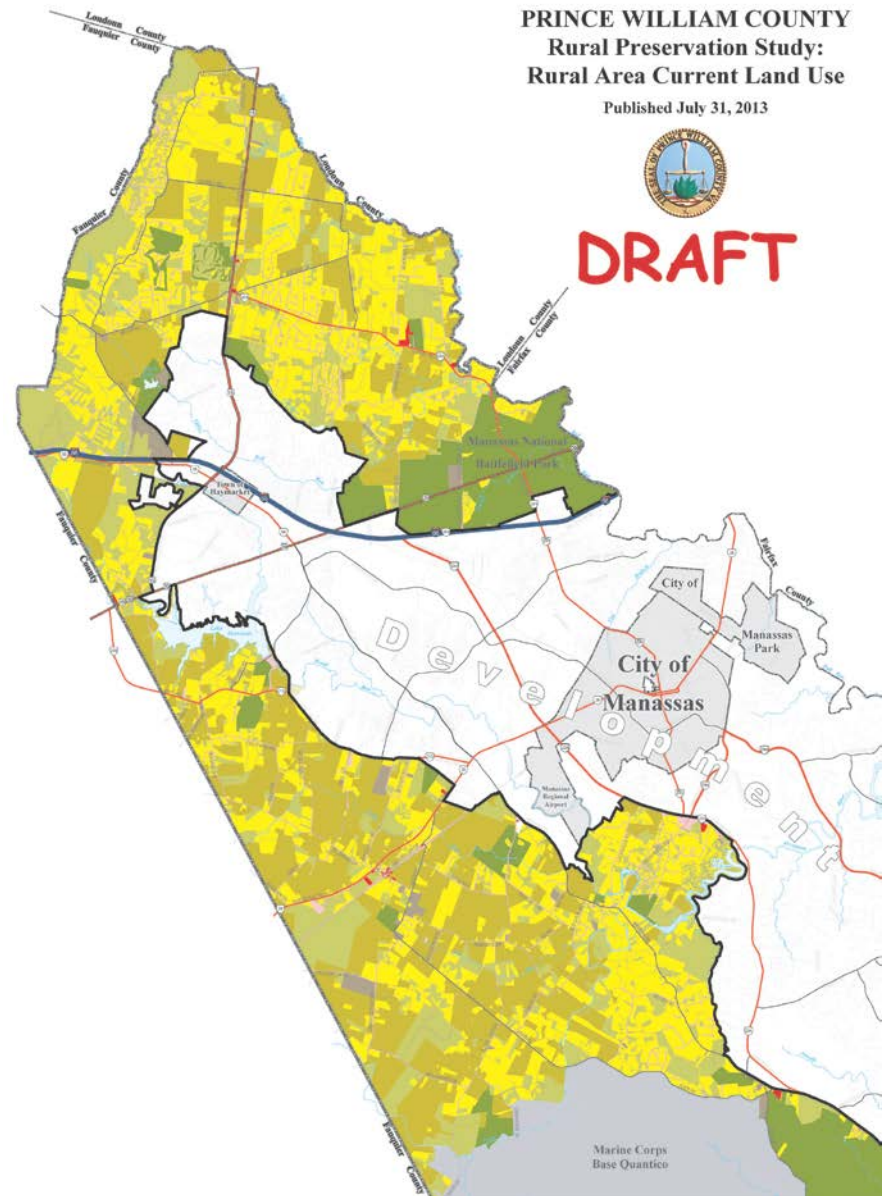




# Rural Mapping and Visual Reality

## Current Rural Area Actual Land Uses:

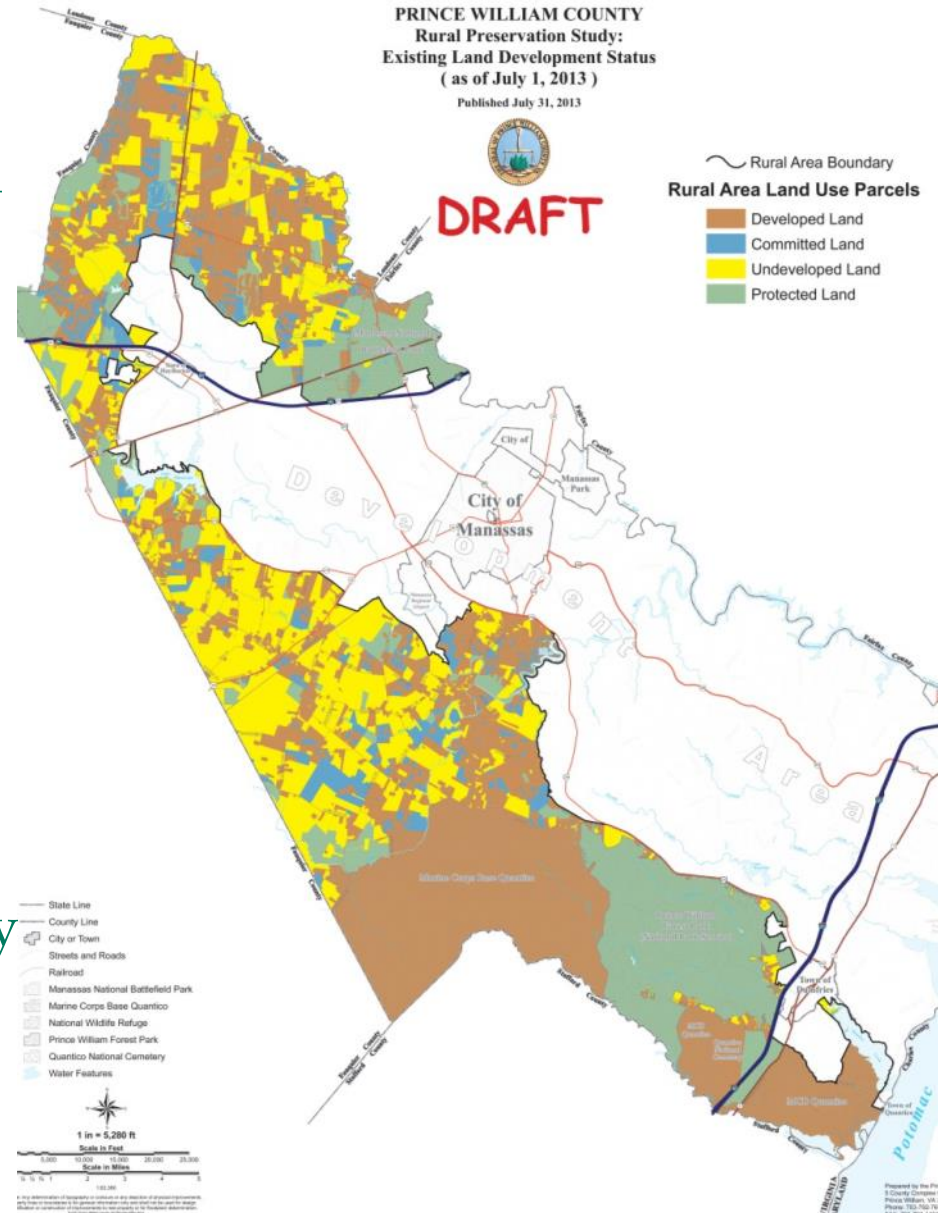
- Provides a more general view of current land uses in the Rural Area, including:
  - Agricultural and Forestal
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Institutional
  - Non-Recreational Lands (State & Fed.)
  - Vacant (undeveloped) Parcels
  - Open Water
  - Recreational Lands
  - Residential (old & new densities)
  - Utilities
  - VDOT and Railroad Right-of-Ways



# Rural Mapping and Visual Reality

## Land Development Observations:

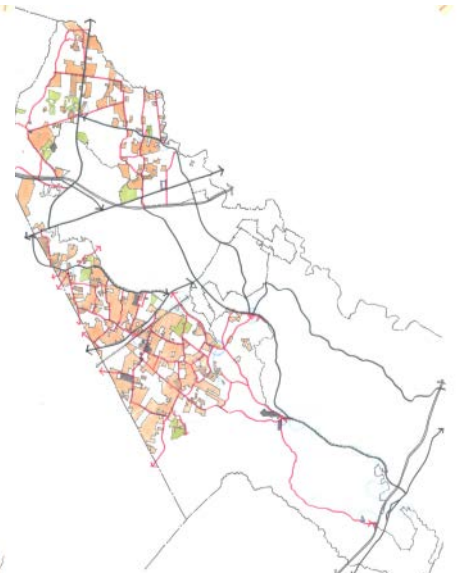
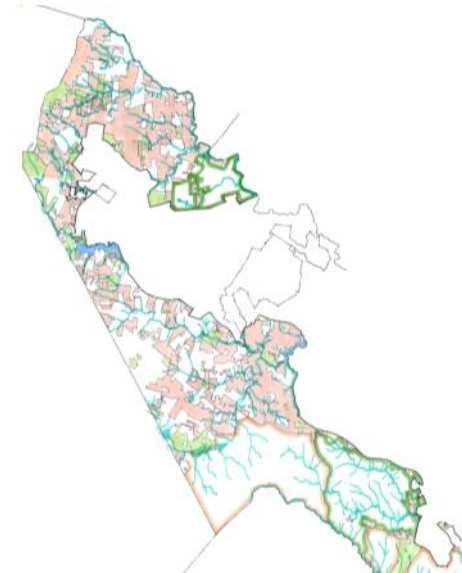
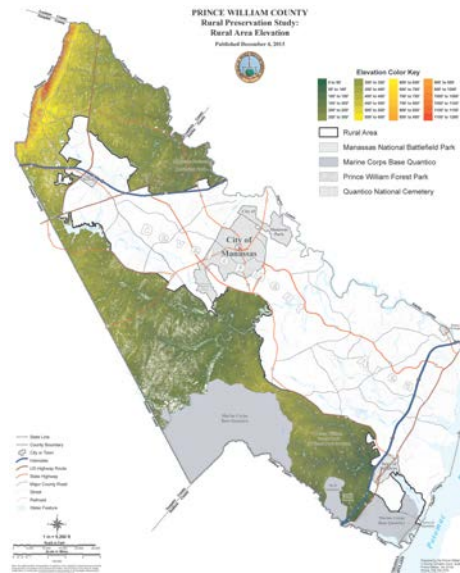
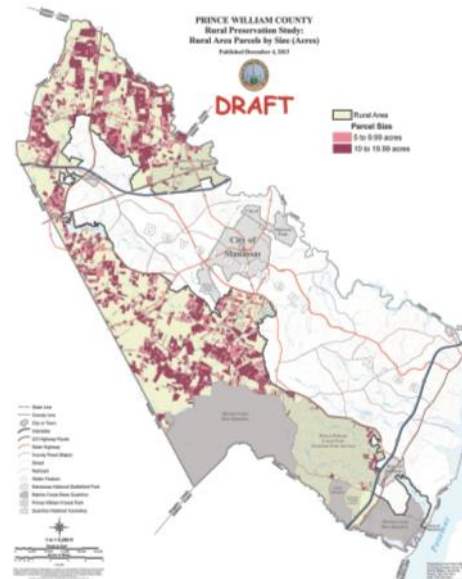
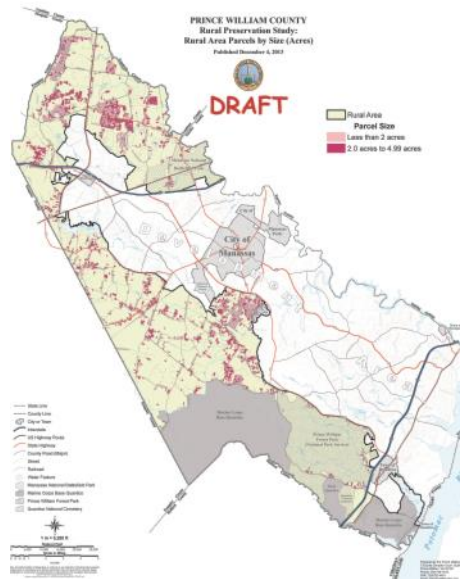
- Developed and Committed Lands for Development already occupy a large portion of the rural area.
- Stream corridors still offer an opportunity for connecting open space resources in many areas
- Protecting the context for county historic resource sites and parks is key for those surrounded by undeveloped land.
- Undeveloped lands - The priority areas of focus and further definition for new rural policy may be: the active or fallow agricultural/ forestal lands, hunting preserves and yet undeveloped natural lands.





# What Have We Looked At ?

- Rural residential densities/parcel sizes – both less than and greater than 1:10 acres
- Environmental resources and vegetation patterns
- Topography, views and vistas
- Developed and committed lands
- Dedicated open spaces and recreation
- Agricultural/forested areas, undeveloped lands & road typologies



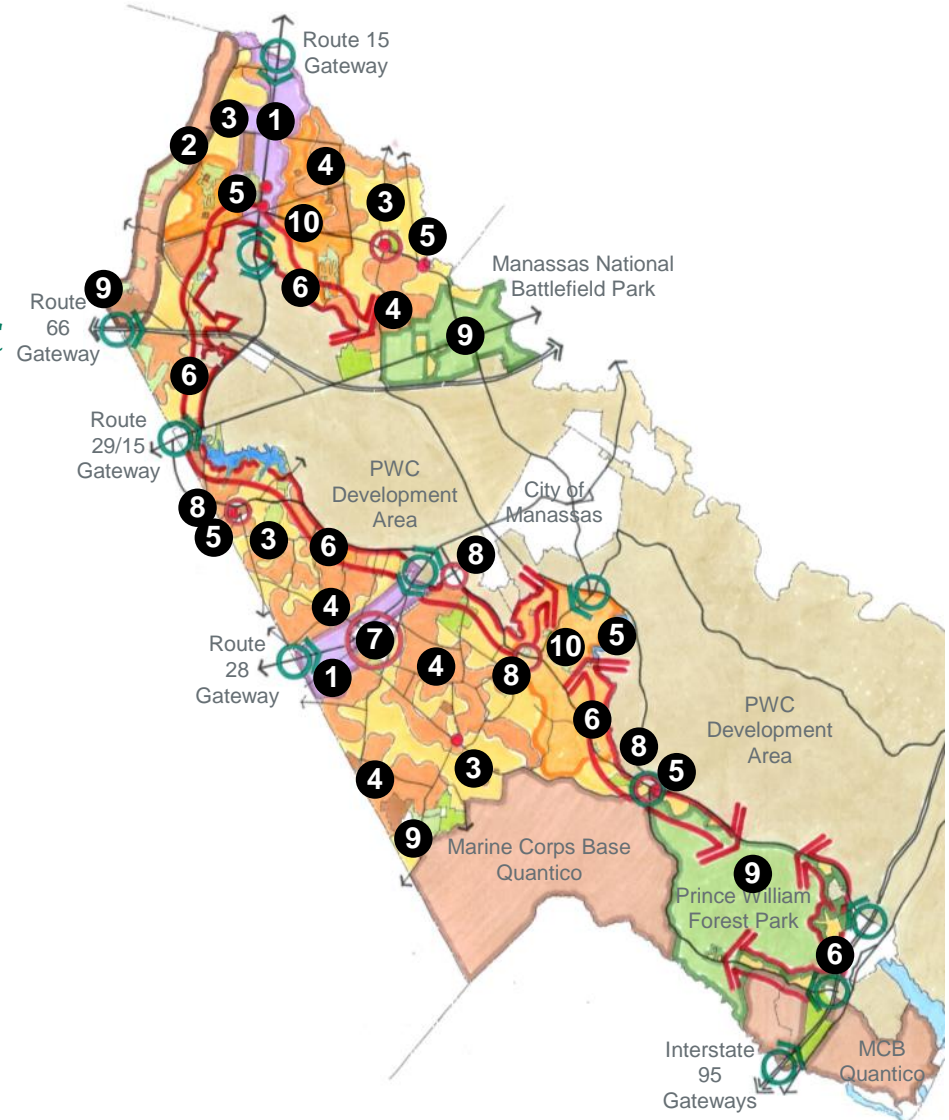
*These drawings represent a portion of the analysis process that led to the suggestion of Rural Character Areas*

# The Emerging Rural Character Areas

## What are Rural Character Areas?

- Recognizable geographic areas that share like characteristics and evoke a unique and different feeling through their natural and man-made elements and surroundings.
- Many rural character areas exist in the PWC Rural Area. An initial list and map of Rural Character Areas has been shaped by land uses, geography & development pattern observations for consideration:

1. Rural Gateway Corridors
2. Bull Run Mountainside
3. Stream Valley Estates and Subdivisions
4. Valley Agriculture and Forests
5. Crossroad Commercial Areas
6. Transitional Ribbon(s)
7. Nokesville Village
8. Mixed-Use Hamlets
9. Protected Lands, Public Lands/Facilities & Organized Recreation Parks/Golf Course
10. Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves



*Suggested Rural Character Areas Map  
For Consideration*



# 1. The Rural Gateway Corridors



Route 15 Scenic Byway



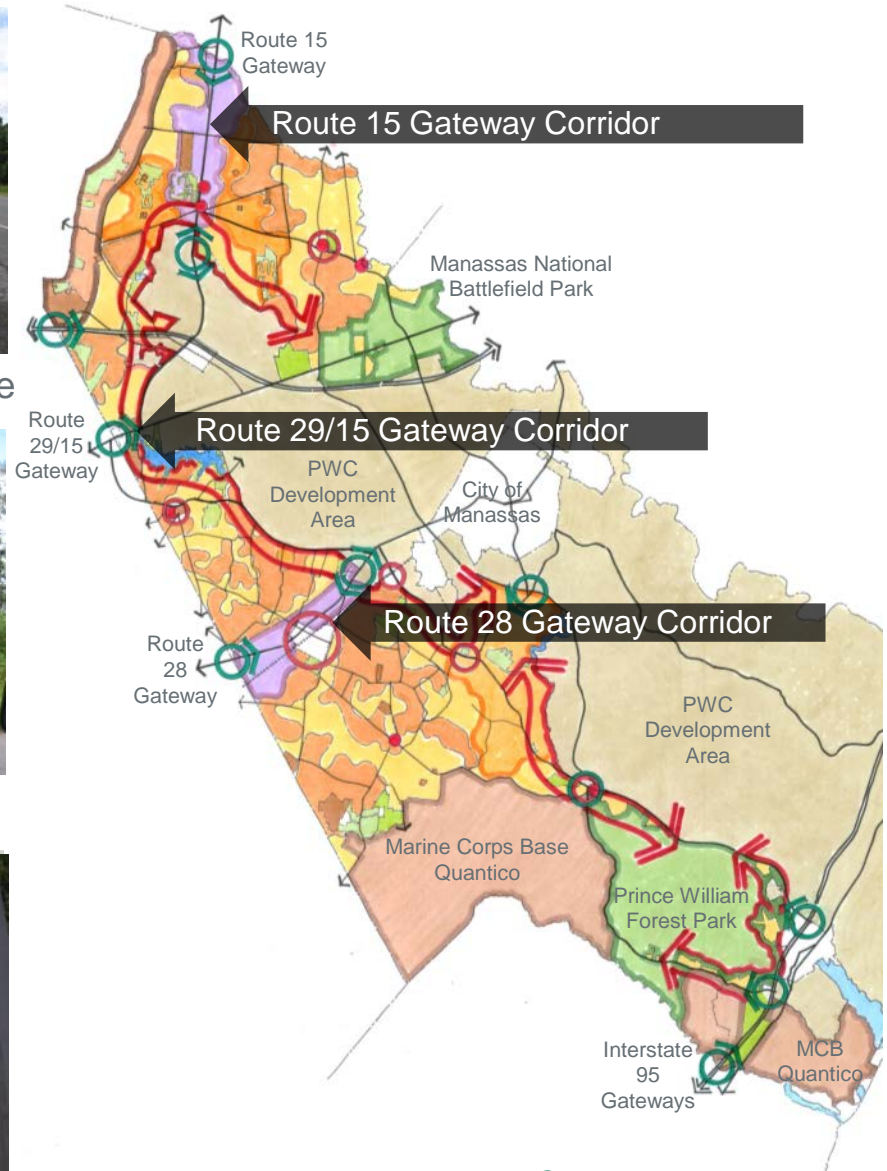
Interpretive Marker Tour Site



Homestead and Church in Hallowed Ground Area



Civil War Trail Interpretive Site – Ewell's Chapel Storyboard

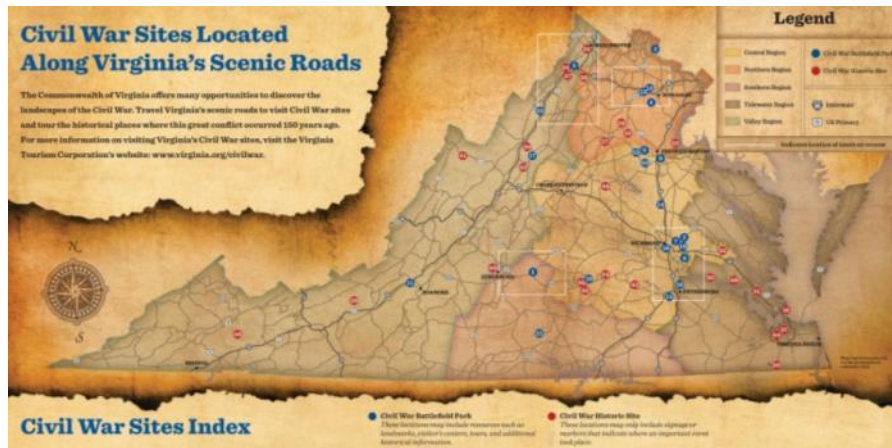


Rural Character Areas Map  
Gateway Corridors

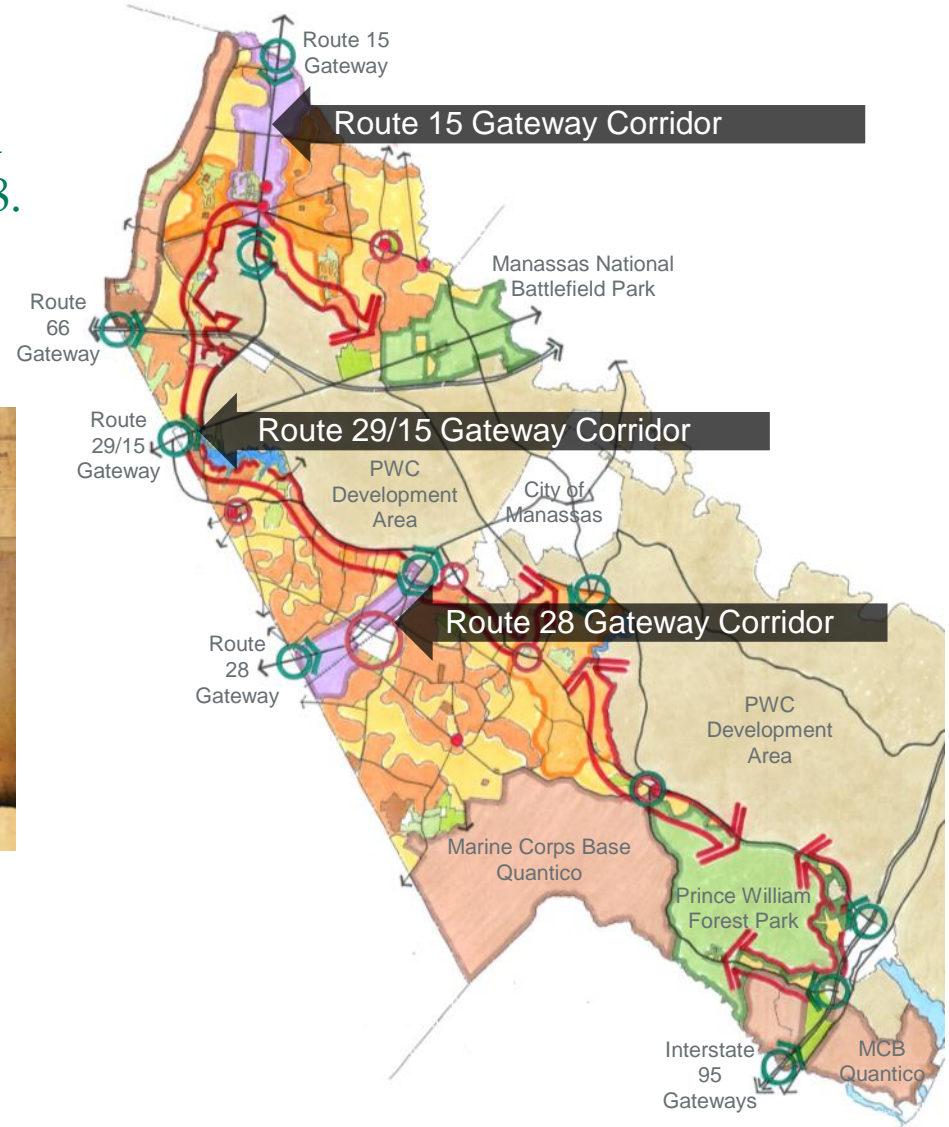
# 1. The Rural Gateway Corridors

## Characteristics of what is there:

- Form first impression of the Rural area from outside PWC - Routes 15, 29 & 28.
- Route 15/29 Designated Journey through Hallowed Ground route



- Civil War Trail stops and historic interpretation markers
- Roads provide access to frontage parcels.
- Great views and vistas to rural lands



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Gateway Corridors*



# 1. The Rural Gateway Corridors



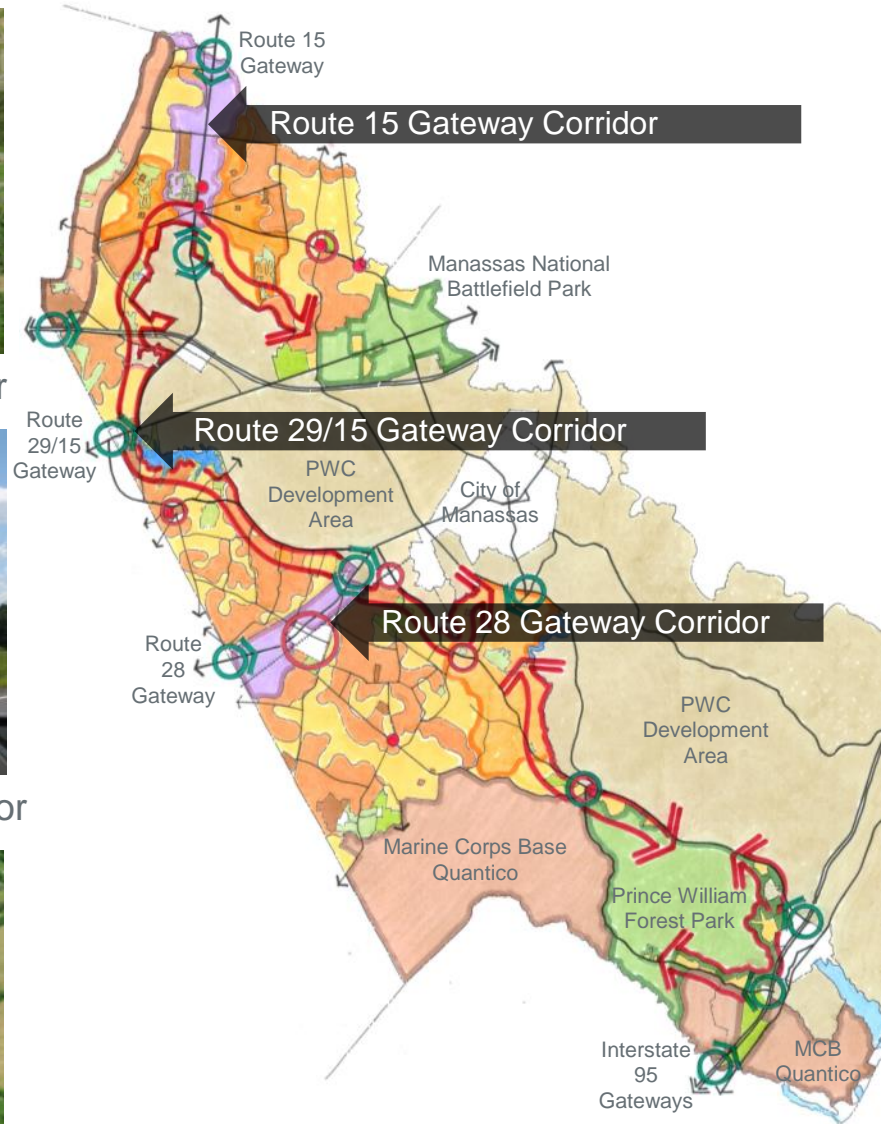
Rte. 29 Gateway portion of the Hallowed Ground Corridor



East & west end character of the Rte. 28 Gateway Corridor



Nokesville identity on the Rte. 28 Gateway Corridor



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Gateway Corridors*



# 2. The Bull Run Mountainside



Bull Run Mountain from Logmill Road



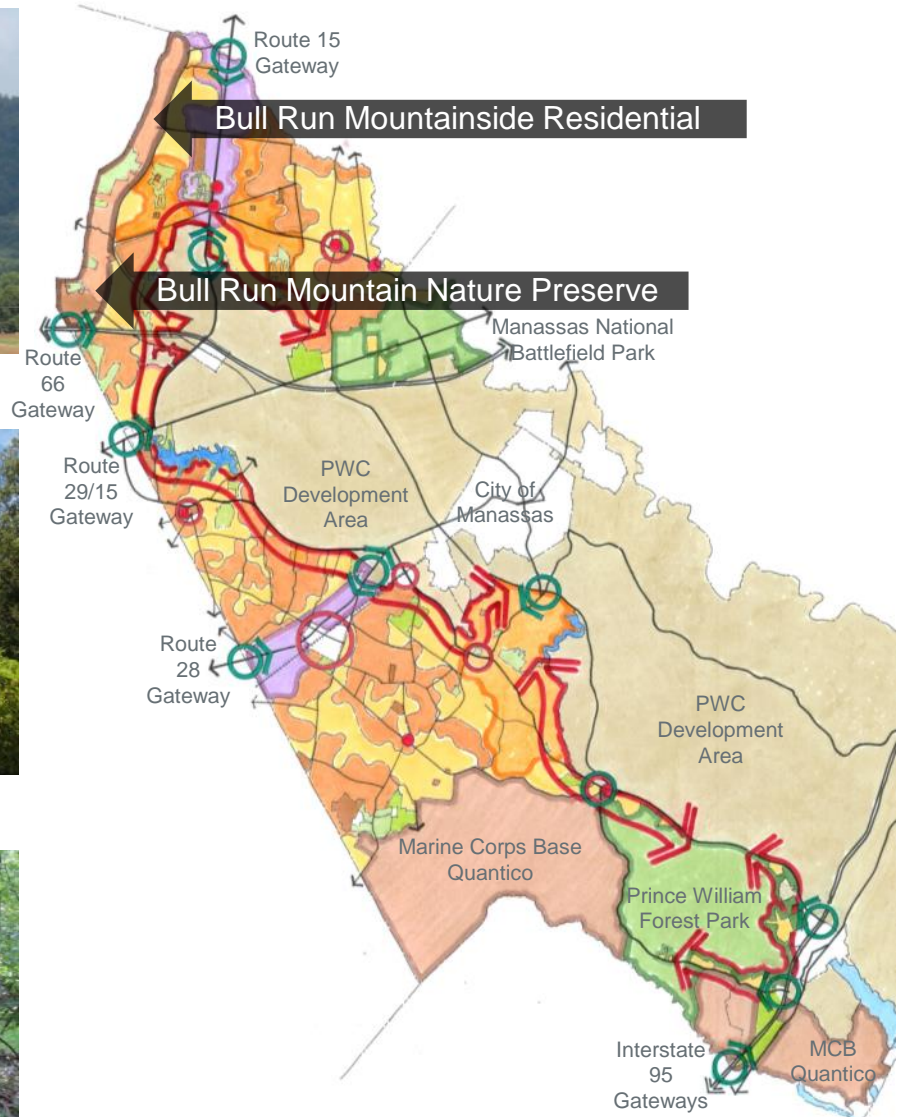
Mountainside living – Bull Run Mountain Estates



Small-lot foothill residential



Bull Run Nature Preserve

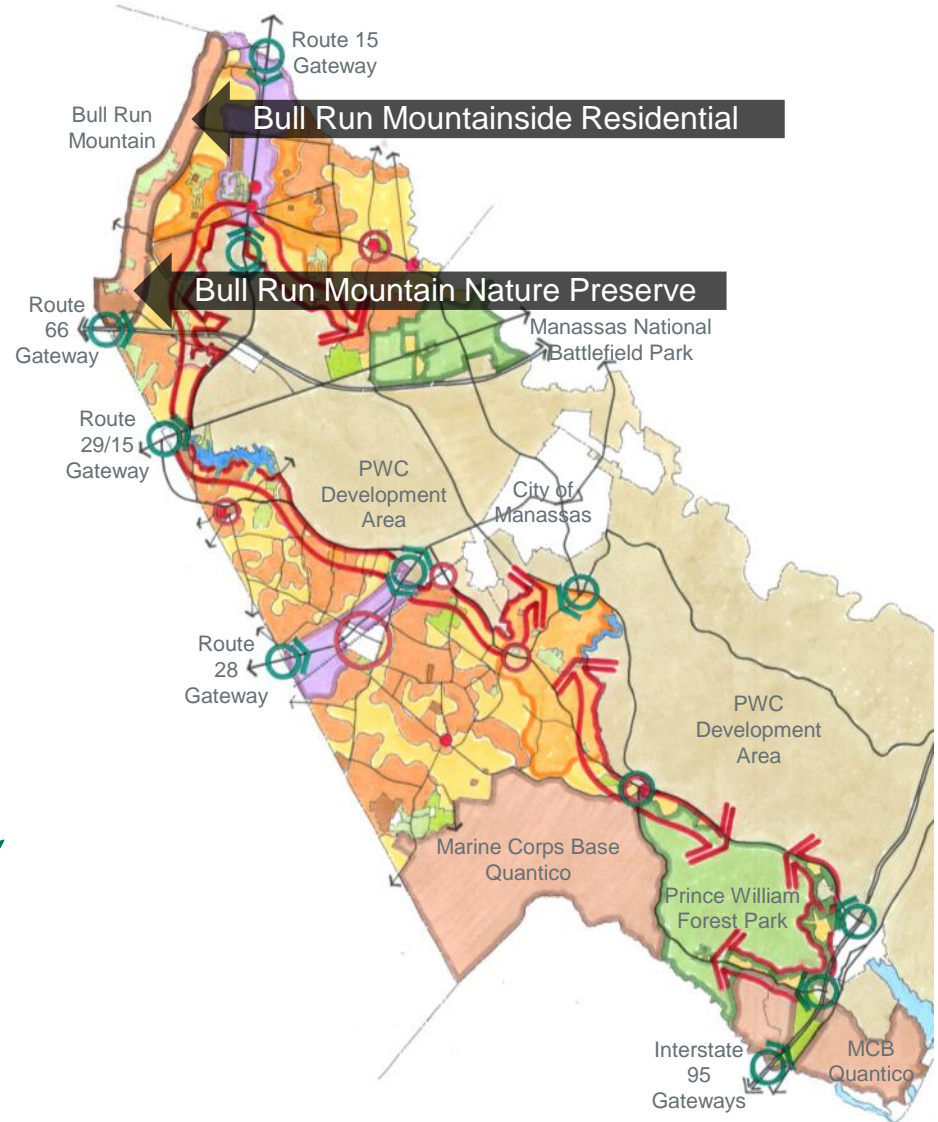


*Rural Character Areas Map  
Bull Run Mountainside*

# 2. The Bull Run Mountainside

## Characteristics of what is there:

- Great views to and from the mountain
- Dramatic elevation change with steep slopes
- Relatively small lot subdivisions
- Mix of older and newer homes
- Narrow, winding substandard streets with public water utilities
- Largely committed to development, but not fully built-out
- Existing protected open space and heritage resources



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Bull Run Mountainside*



# 3. The Valley Estates and Subdivisions



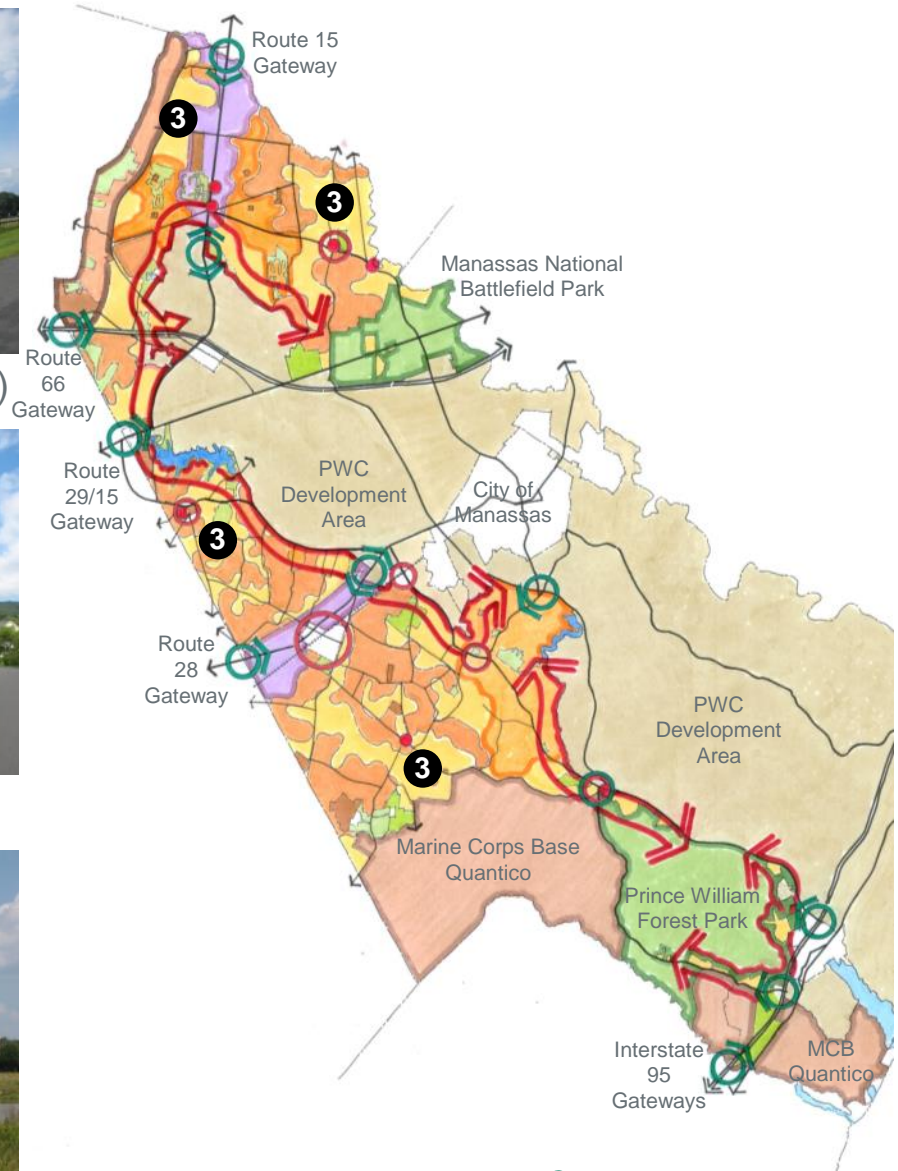
Single homes/lots along roadways (North & South areas)



Valley living - 1:10 Acre rural subdivisions (North area)



Wooded residential lots and residential overlooking farming



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Valley Estates and Subdivisions*

# 3. The Valley Estates and Subdivisions



Subdivision & single estates 10+ Acre equestrian homes

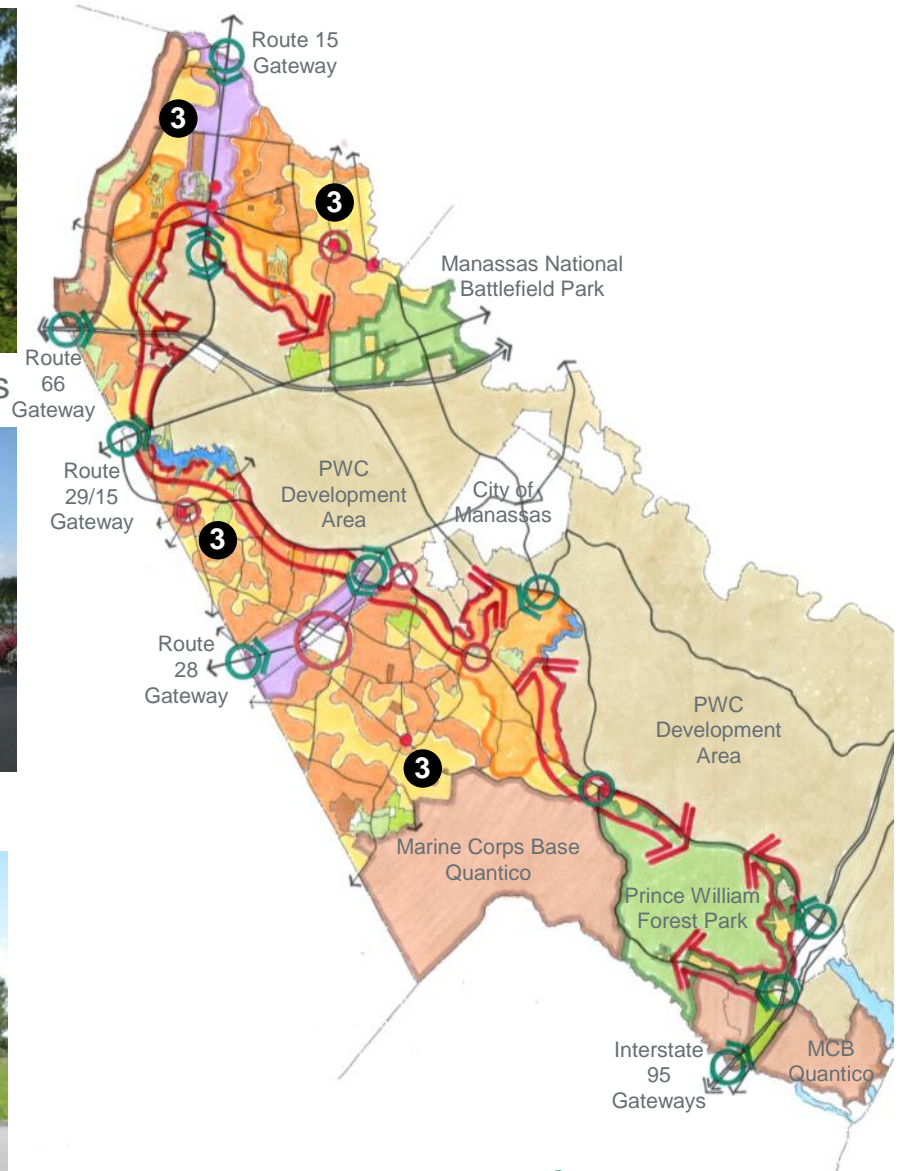


Gated communities - Green Gables community



Gated single estates

Open rural character entrances



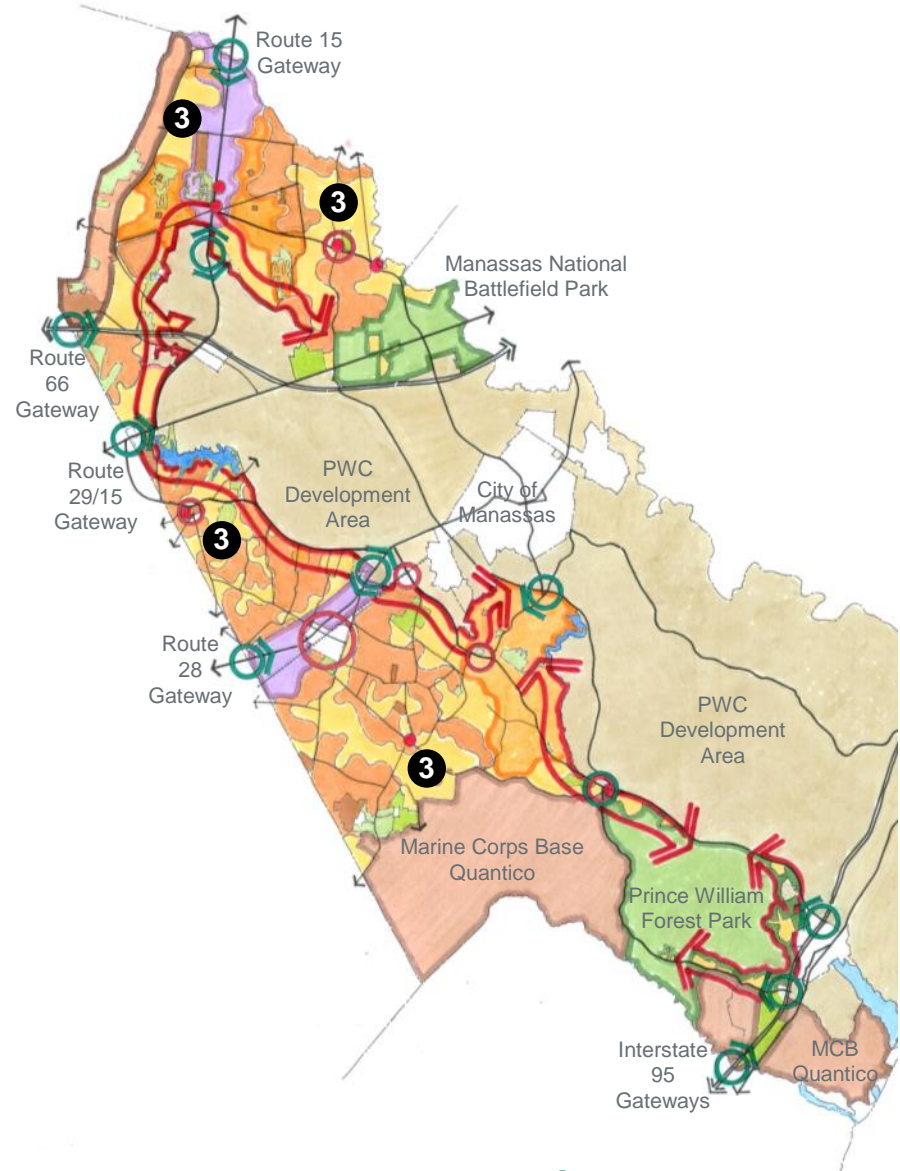
*Rural Character Areas Map  
Valley Estates and Subdivisions*



# 3. The Valley Estates and Subdivisions

## Characteristics of what is there:

- “Valley” refers to the many stream valleys that cross the area
- Existing mix of individual homes/ or committed building lots and organized subdivisions
- Range of lot sizes depending on zoning/ subdivision requirements when built
- Suburban densities of ½ acre to 3 acre lots in many areas
- Subdivision densities have sparked road widening beyond rural standards
- Located in areas with mostly improved roads and nearby access to key commuter routes



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Valley Estates and Subdivisions*

# 4. Valley Agriculture and Forestry



Waterloo crop farm



Beef and dairy farms



Livestock stables



Turf and sod farms



Long-standing working farms and Fallow farmlands



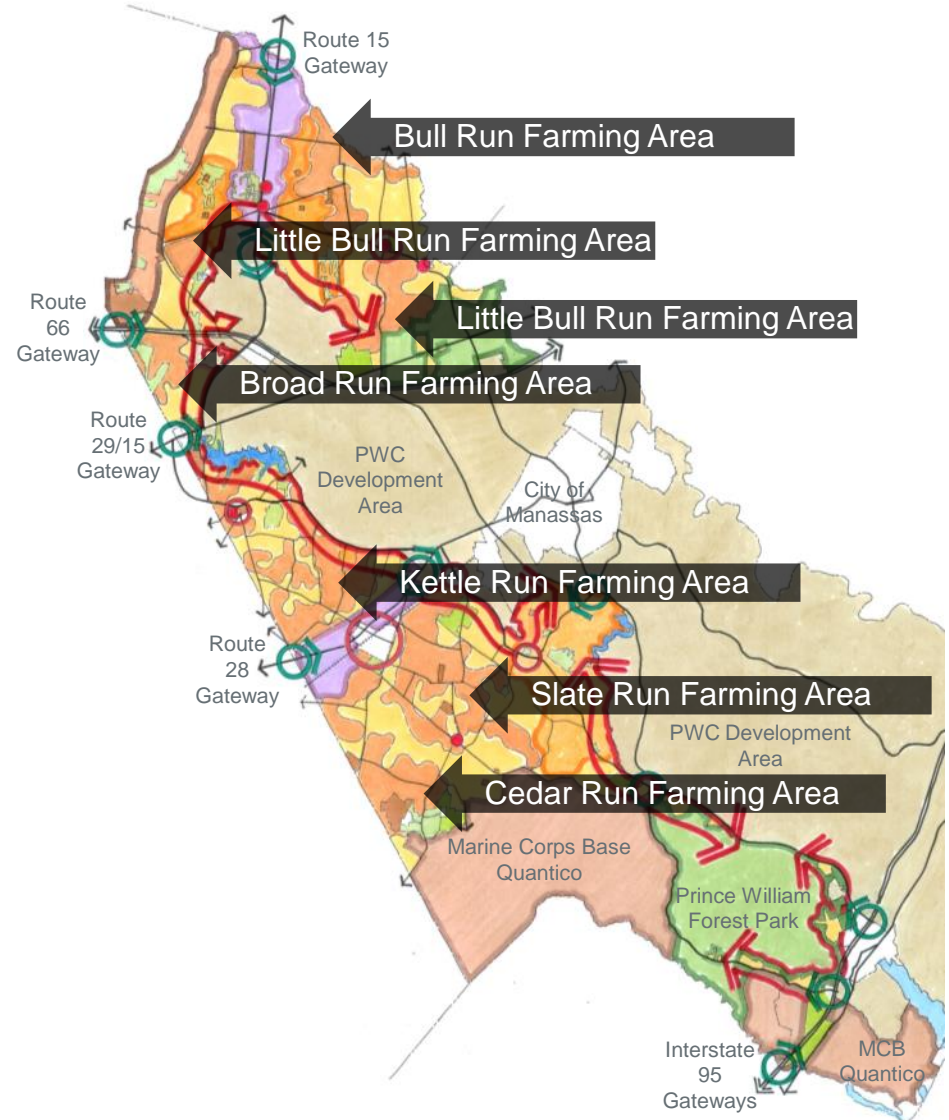
*Prime soils & woodland form the basis for remaining Valley Agriculture and Forestry Character Areas*



# 4. Valley Agriculture and Forestry

## Characteristics of what is there:

- Composed of existing active and fallow farming areas and forestal areas
- Adjacent undeveloped lands
- Allow for open vistas to Bull Run Mountain, Manassas Battlefield, valley stream corridors, etc.
- Scenic farm buildings/complexes



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Valley Agriculture and Forestry*

# 4. Valley Agribusiness



Marrakech Farm



Main Street Garden Center



Organic farming and Isolated commercial businesses



Horse Riding/Boarding Centers



Greenville Farm & Family Campground

## Observed & Potential Agribusiness:

- Vineyards & Wineries
- Garden Centers
- Farmer's markets/ vegetable & fruit stands
- Children's Camps
- Equestrian facilities
- Farming - Raising crops, raising animals, boarding and stables, equestrian facilities, sod farms, others?
- Sustainable Farm Resources, Farm to table restaurants
- Farm supply/ equipment retail
- Hunting /hunt clubs



# 5. The Crossroads Commercial



Vance's Evergreen



7-Eleven



Catharpin Square & Post Office



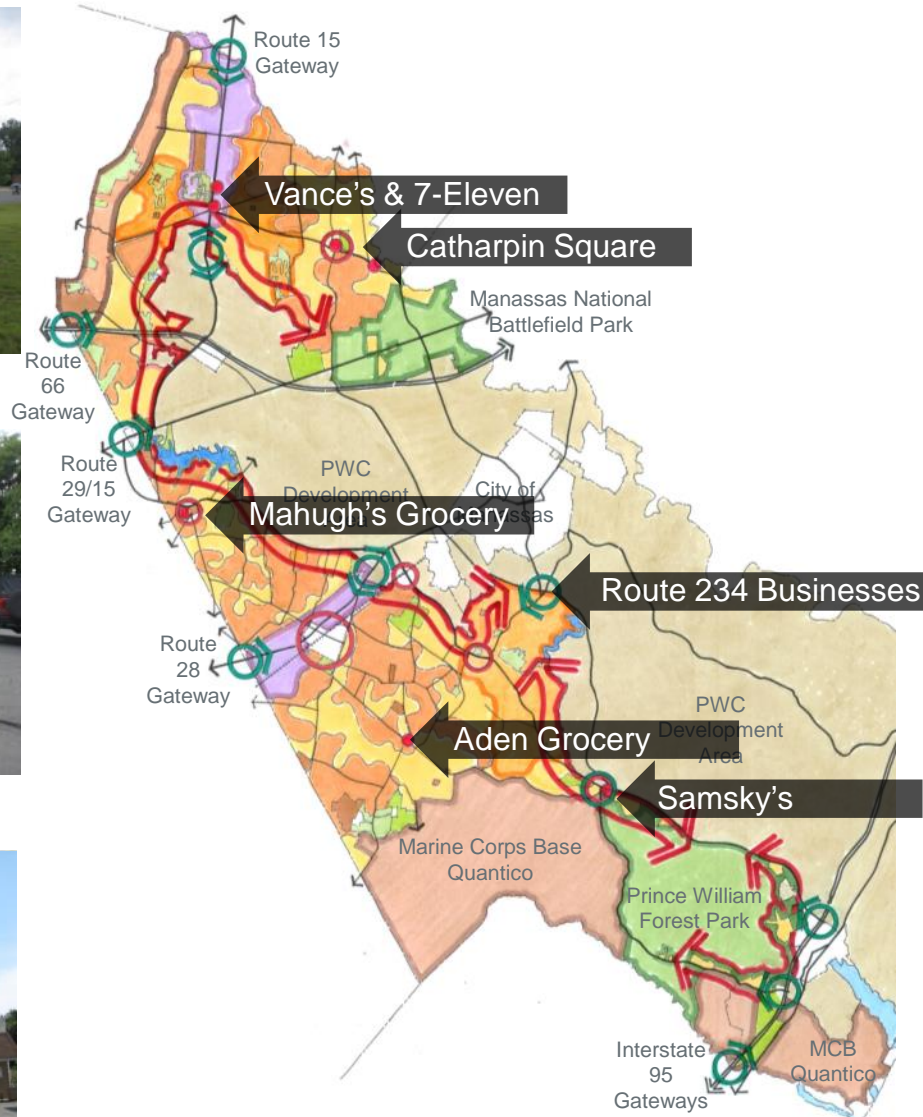
Mahugh's Grocery



Aden's Grocery



Samsky's convenience store

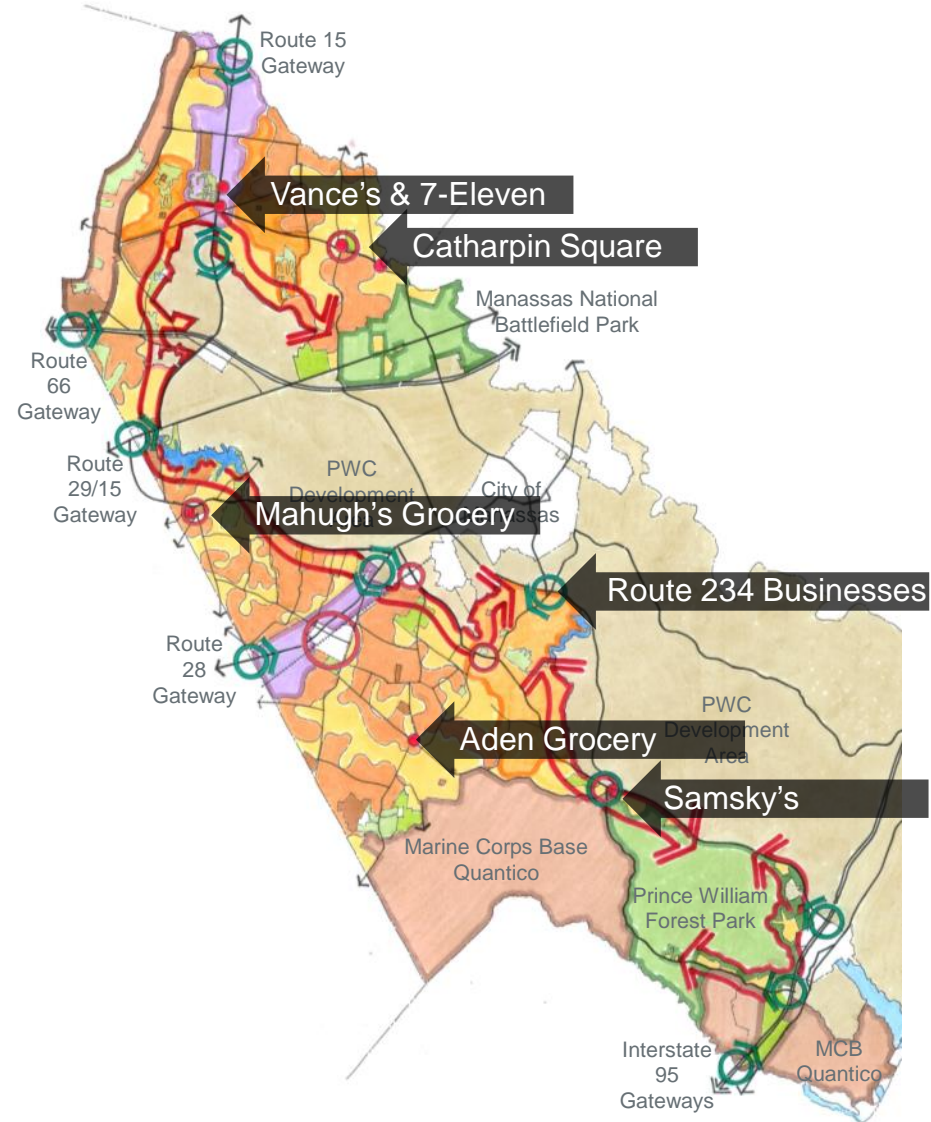


*Rural Character Areas Map  
Crossroads Commercial*

# 5. The Crossroads Commercial

## Characteristics of what is there?

- One or more commercial uses located at rural crossroads
- Primarily convenience retail, grocery or auto service uses with some commercial service businesses
- Building styles vary by requirements - from older traditional to standard franchise architecture



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Crossroads Commercial*



# 6. The Transitional Ribbon - North



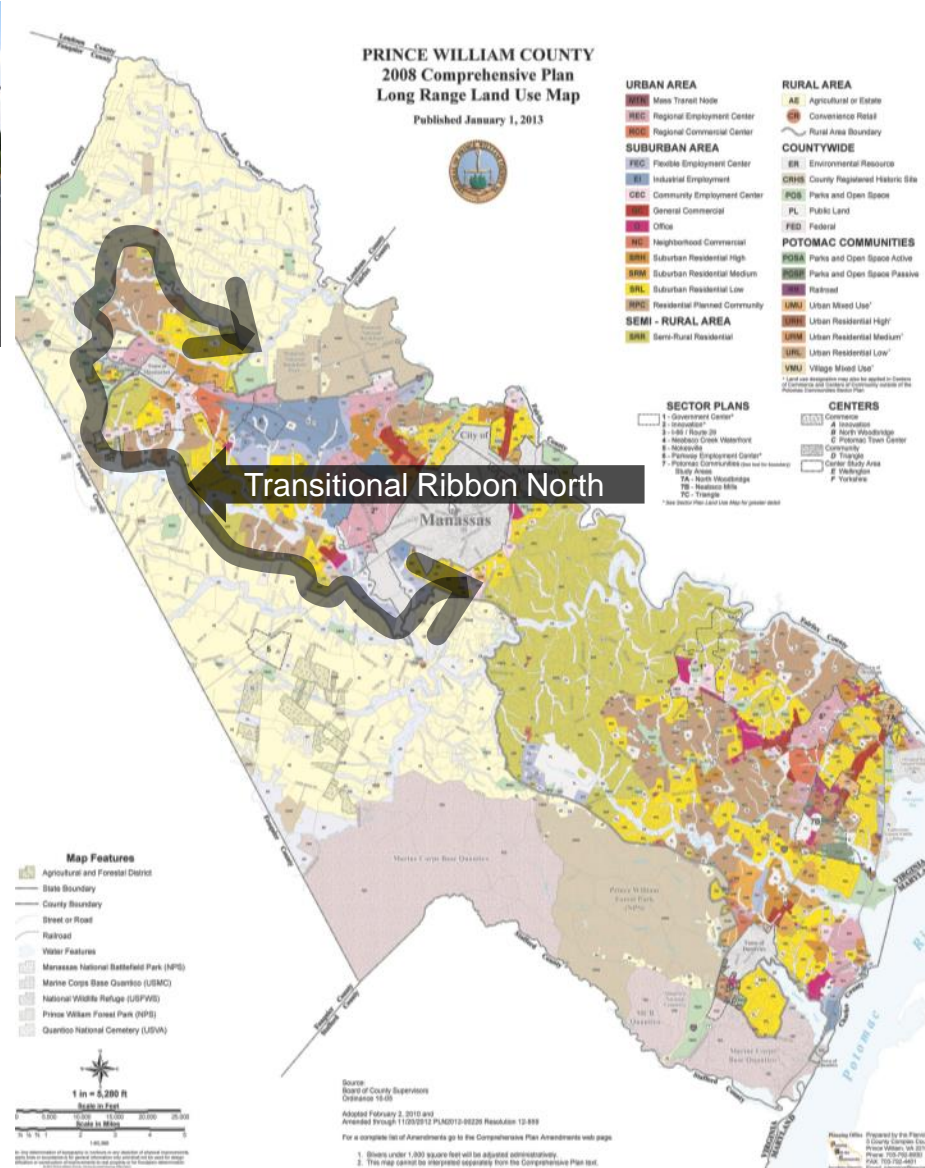
Route 28 Corridor



Lake Manassas and South Shore Farms



Bristow Road corridor lands and Meadows at Bristow Ridge



Transitioning from Development Area to Rural Area



# 6. The Transitional Ribbon - South



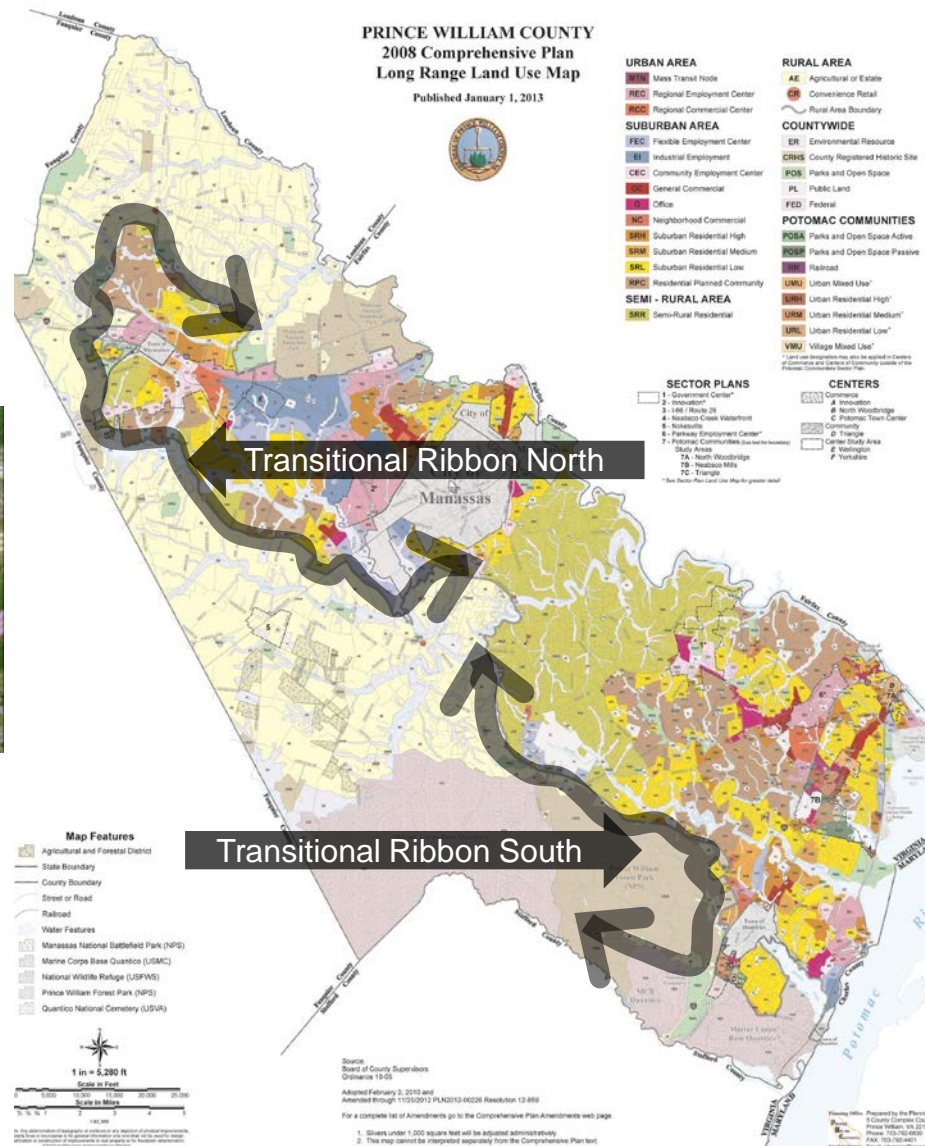
Route 234 Fringe Area – Undeveloped and Developed



Route 234 Residential and Mine Road Residential Fringe



Joplan Road Institutional and Residential Fringe Area



*Transitioning from Development Area to Rural Area*

# 6. The Transitional Ribbon

## What is the Transitional Ribbon?

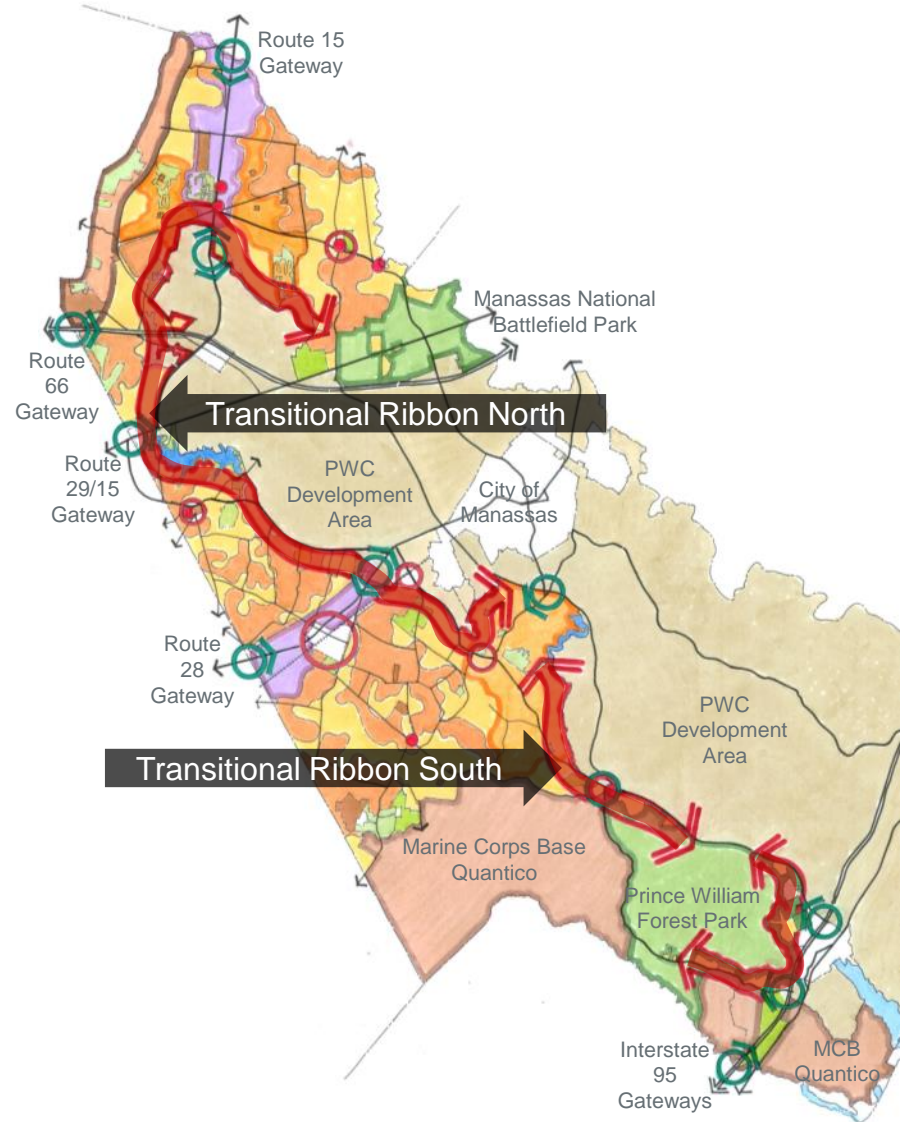
- A linear area of land use transition between the Development Area and the Rural Crescent
- It follows frontage roads and streams that in some cases could create future conflict between rural quality and Development Area goals/ principles.

## Transitional Ribbon North Characteristics

- Edge conditions and mix of uses create transition areas along the Manassas Battlefield, the West Haymarket area, Rte. 215/Vint Hill Rd, Bristow Rd & Manassas Airport, & south side of Lake Manassas.

## Transitional Ribbon South Characteristics

- Primarily composed of the Prince William Forest Park fringe
- Relatively small pieces of land
- Many of which are already developed
- Mostly developed, little capacity for significant rural development



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Transitional Ribbon*



# 7. Nokesville Village



Nokesville Gateway at Route 28 leading into Main Street



Rural area service businesses



The Chuckwagon Restaurant and Rural Post Office



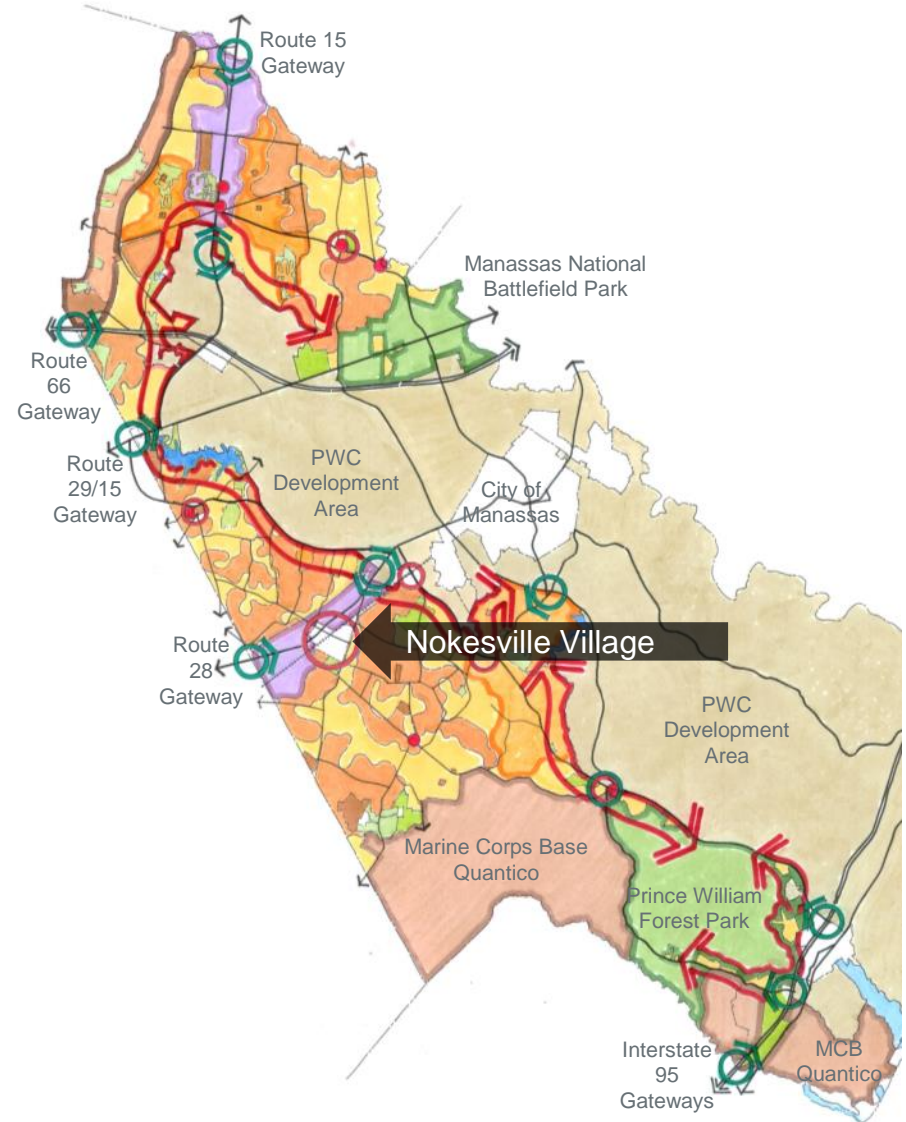
*Rural Character Areas Map  
Nokesville Village*



# 7. Nokesville Village

## Characteristics of what is there?

- Distinct sense of place and sense of community
- Already a recognized sub-area of the Rural Crescent with its own Sector Plan
- Mix of uses and businesses oriented toward serving the rural area
- Village gateway identity on and across Route 28
- Higher density building/lot configurations
- Pedestrian and bike-friendly infrastructure



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Nokesville Village*

# 8. Mixed-use Hamlets



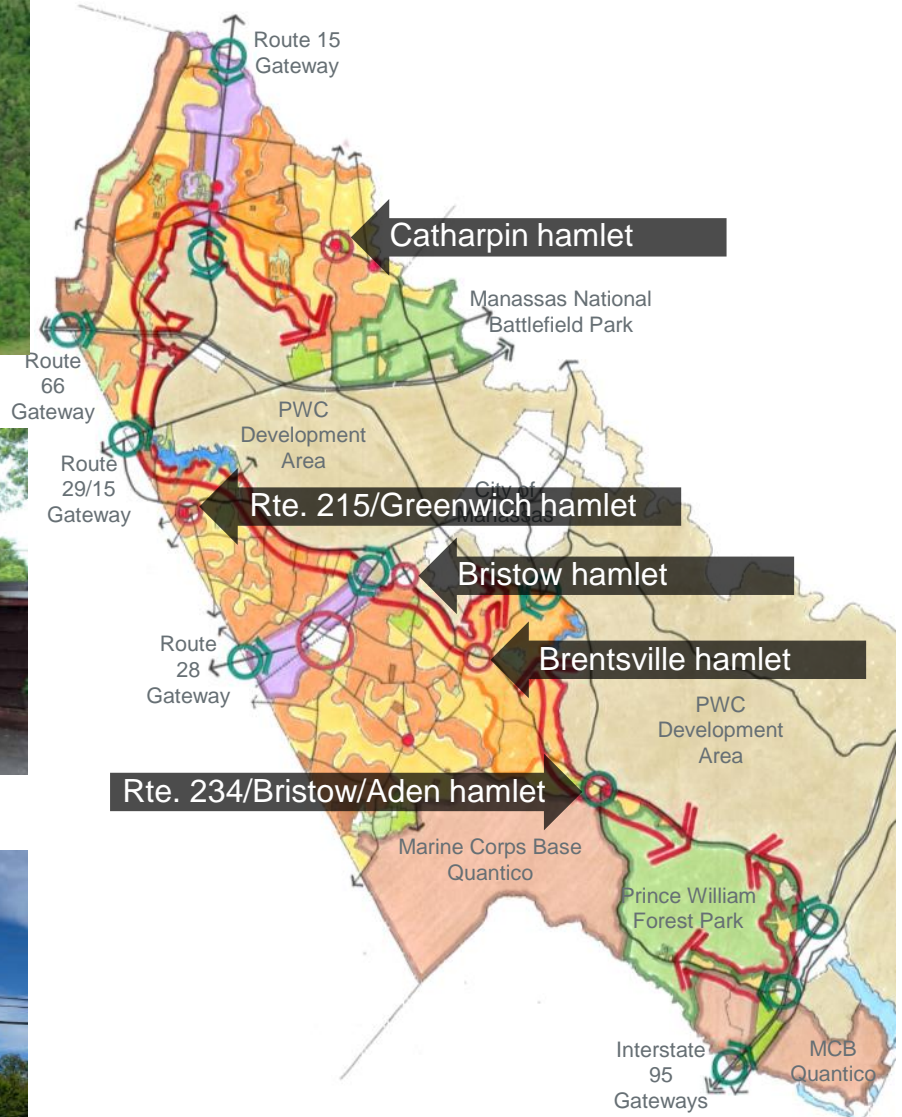
Aerial view of Bristow hamlet area at railway tracks



Historic Brentsville Courthouse Site and Country Store



Brentsville Presbyterian, Hatcher Memorial Baptist & Union Churches



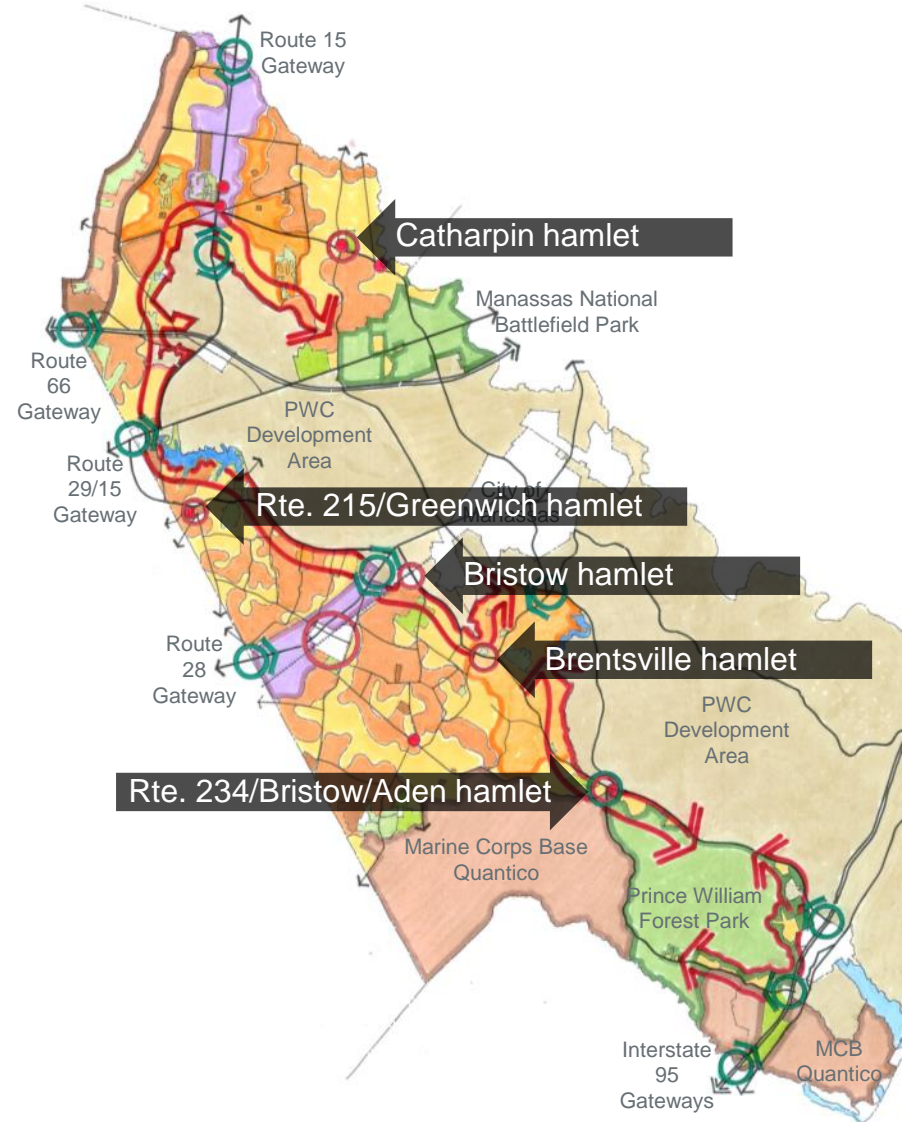
*Rural Character Areas Map  
Mixed-use Hamlets*



# 8. Mixed-use Hamlets

## Characteristics of what is there?

- Higher density building and lots than current rural zoning allows, yet smaller and lower density than Nokesville
- Primarily residential uses surrounding one to three institutional, governmental or commercial use(s)
- Mostly older buildings with historic designations or rural heritage references



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Mixed-use Hamlets*

# 9. Protected, Public, & Recreation Lands



Manassas Battlefield



Public fire & rescue services



New & existing schools



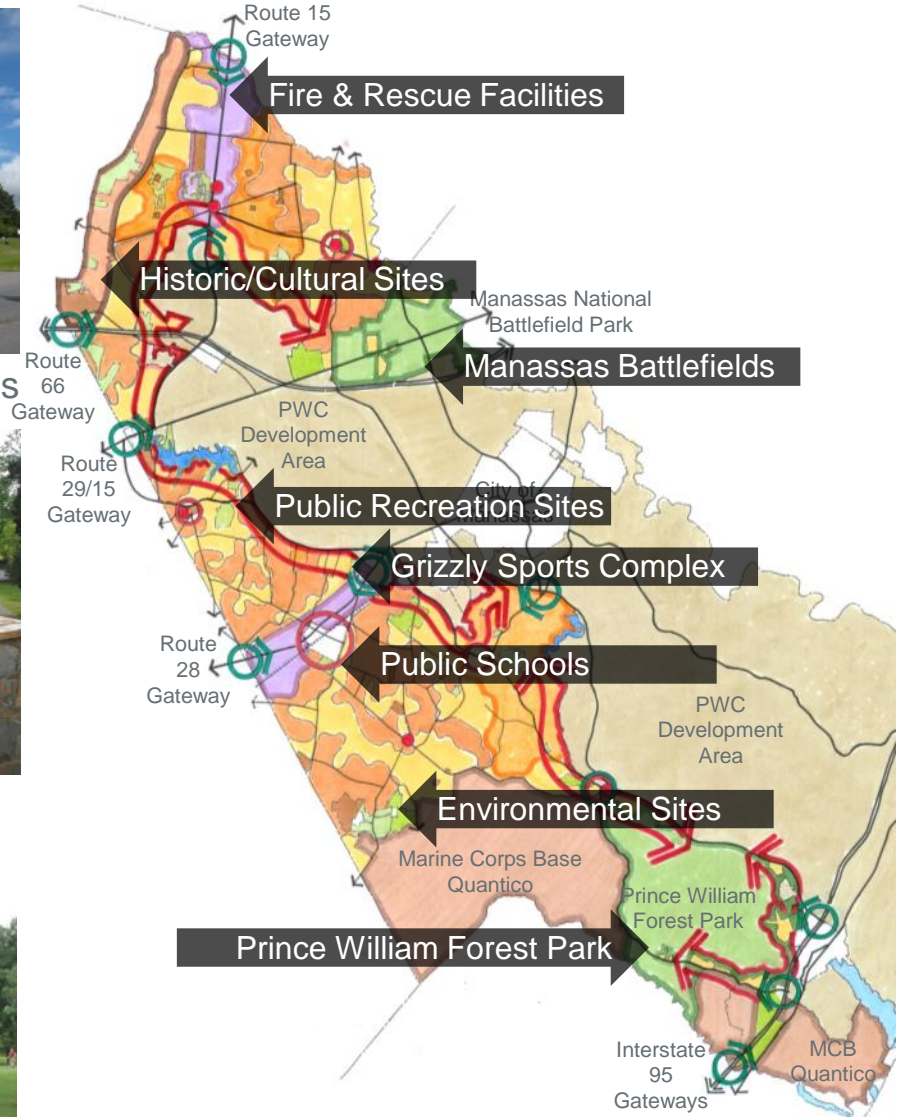
Historic sites



Parks & sports complexes



Public golf courses



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Protected, Public, and Recreation Lands*



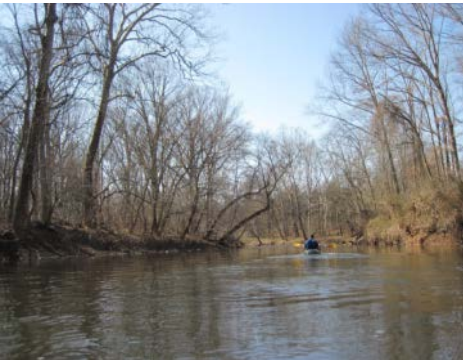
# 9. Protected, Public, & Recreation Lands



Lake Jackson Dam



Upper Broad Run canoeing



Scenic Cedar Run and Merrimac Farm Wildlife Mgt. Area



Created water resources



Cedar Run Wetland Bank

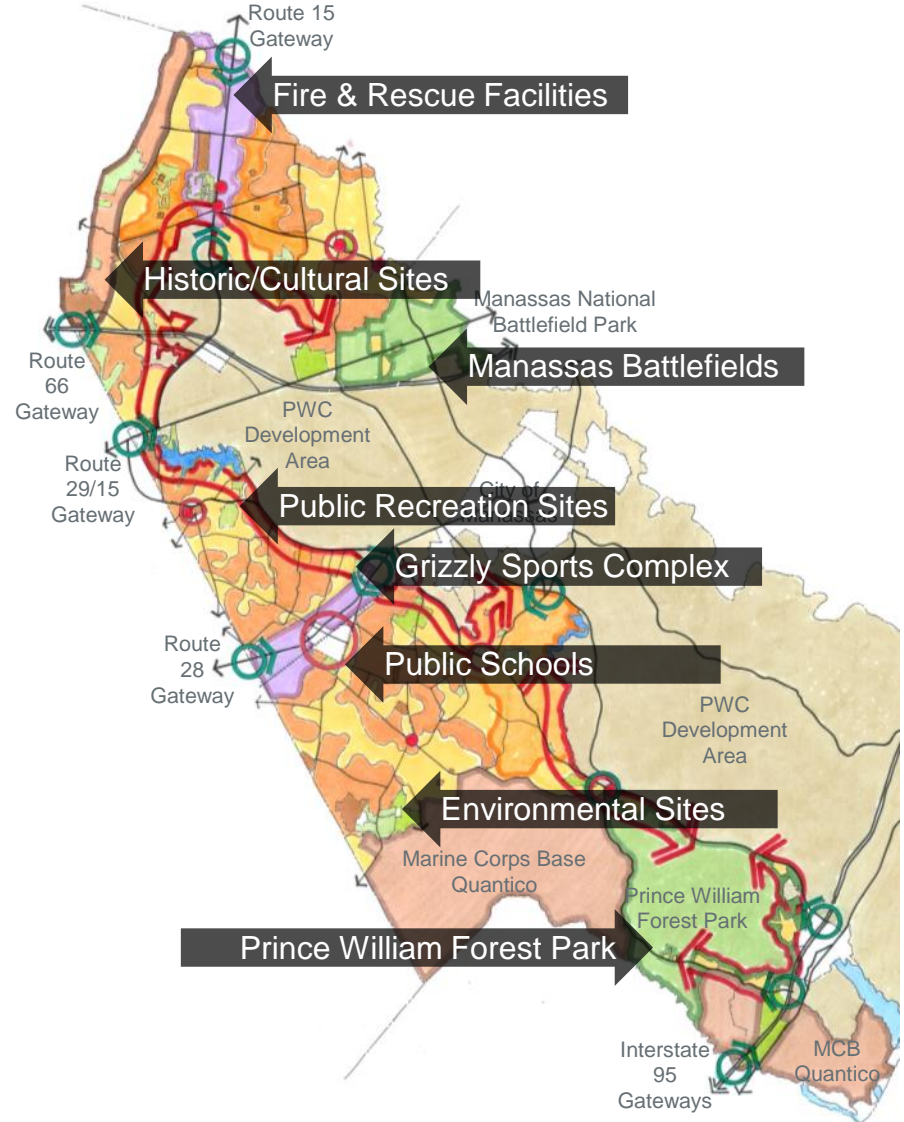


*Environmental Features to Respect - Rivers, Streams, Wetlands and Floodplains*

# 9. Protected, Public, & Recreation Lands

## Characteristics/Types:

- State & Federal Lands & Facilities
- County Historic/Cultural Sites
- County School and Government Facility Lands
- County Recreational Facilities:
  - Golf Courses
  - Active Recreation Parks
  - Passive Recreation Parks
  - Navigable water bodies for watercraft of all sizes
  - Local activity camps
  - State permit-oriented hunting and fishing areas



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Protected, Public, and Recreation Lands*



# 10. Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves



Older, moderate and small lot rural residential - Logmill Rd



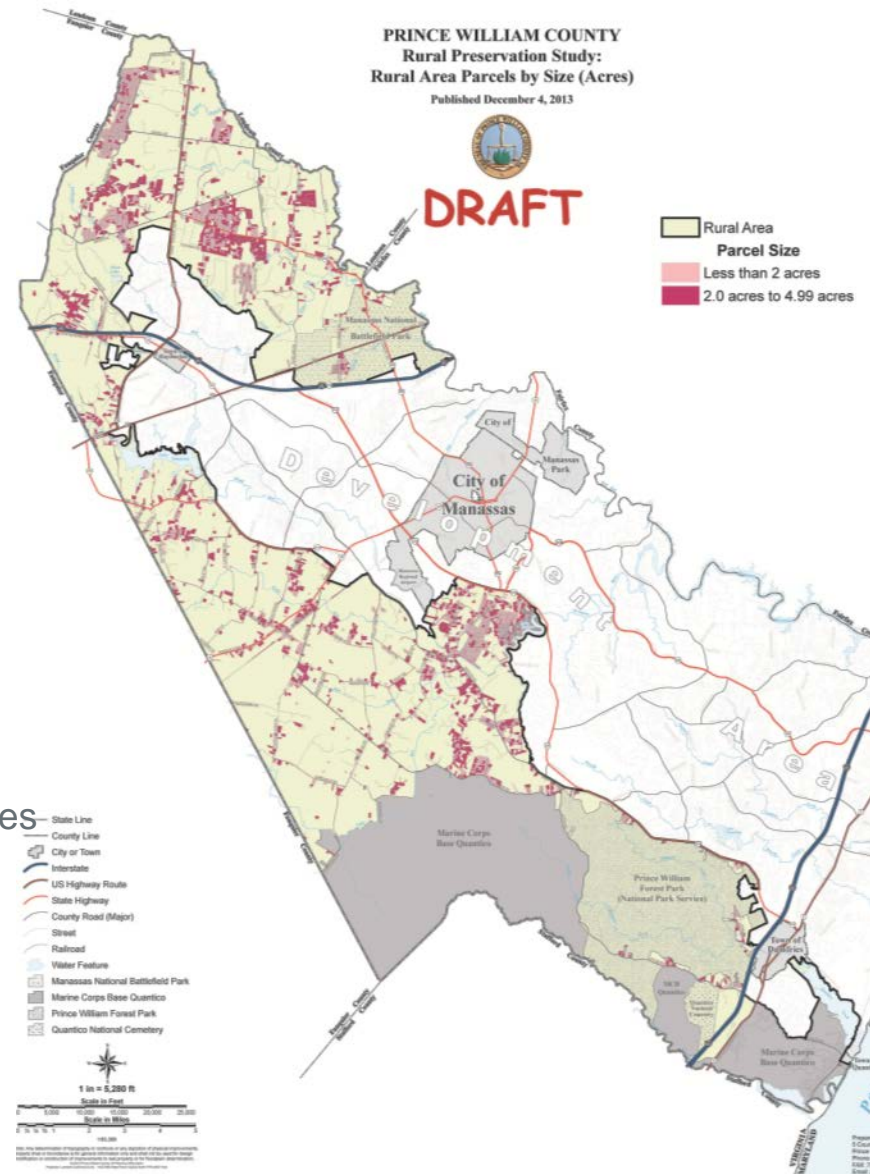
Older, small lot residential – Little River, Rd & Mobile Homes



Traditional rural single lot



New small lot infill residential

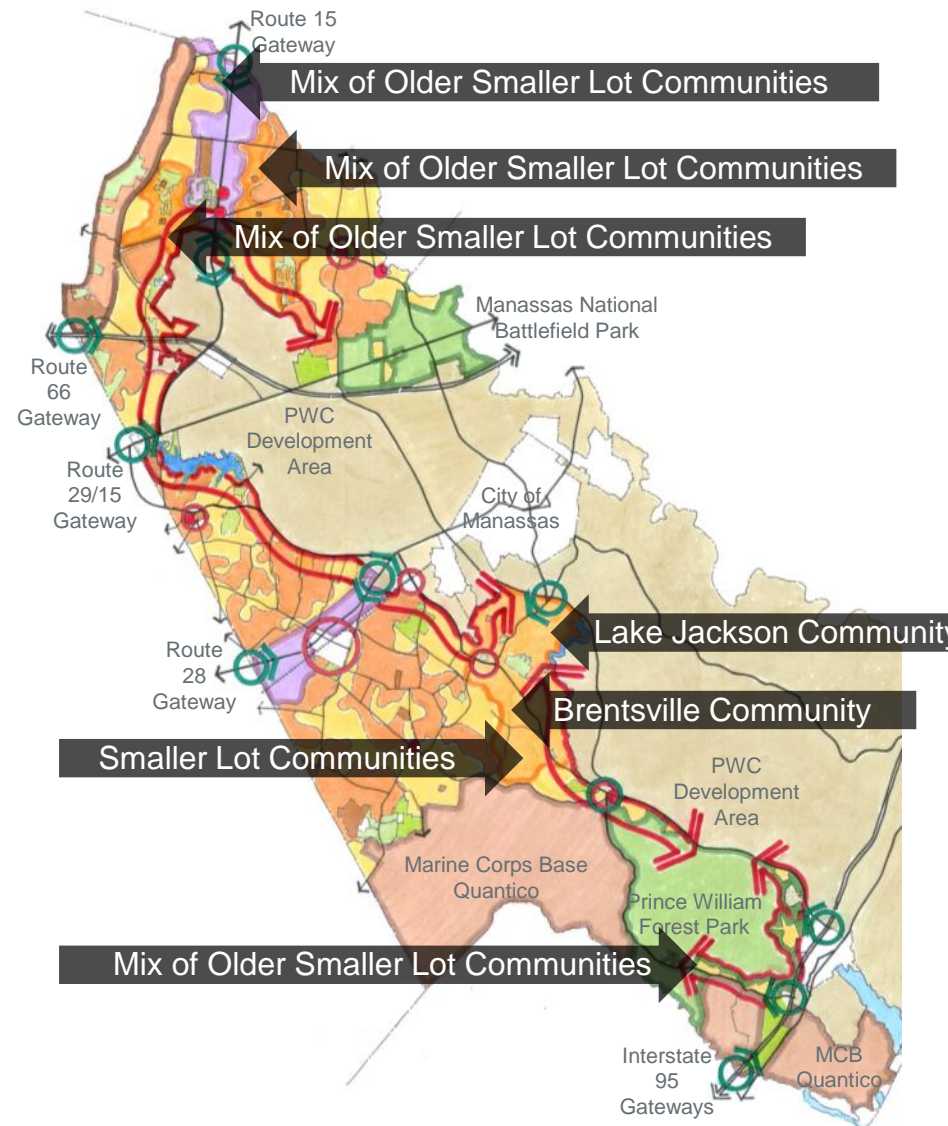


Existing Smaller-Lot (0-5 AC) Residential Enclaves

# 10. Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves

## Characteristics of what is there?

- Higher density lotting than currently permitted in A-1 ranging from .5 to 5 acres in size
- Views blocked by more constant building frontage
- More manicured look to parcels and subdivision entrances.
- Wider roadway entrances with merge lanes in some cases to accommodate higher trip demand
- Noticeable increase in street cuts and driveways, mail boxes, trash and recycling services.
- Remnant vacant parcels committed for individual residences



*Rural Character Areas Map  
Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves*



# Transportation's Role in Rural Character



Substandard mountain roads    Forested subdivision street



Valley subdivision street    Rural subdivision cul-de-sac

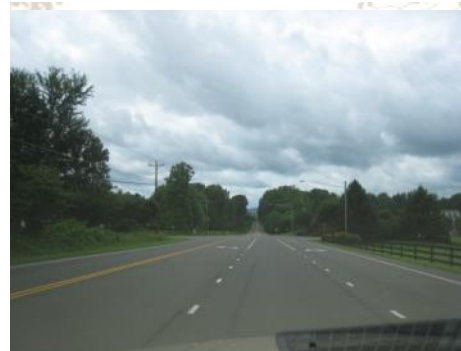


Private subdivision roads    Forested road – Mountain Rd



*Road Type/Design Helps to Form Rural Character*

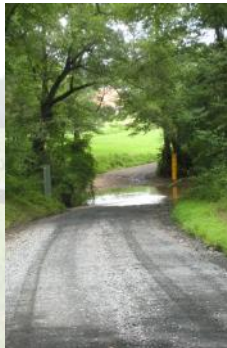
# Transportation's Role in Rural Character



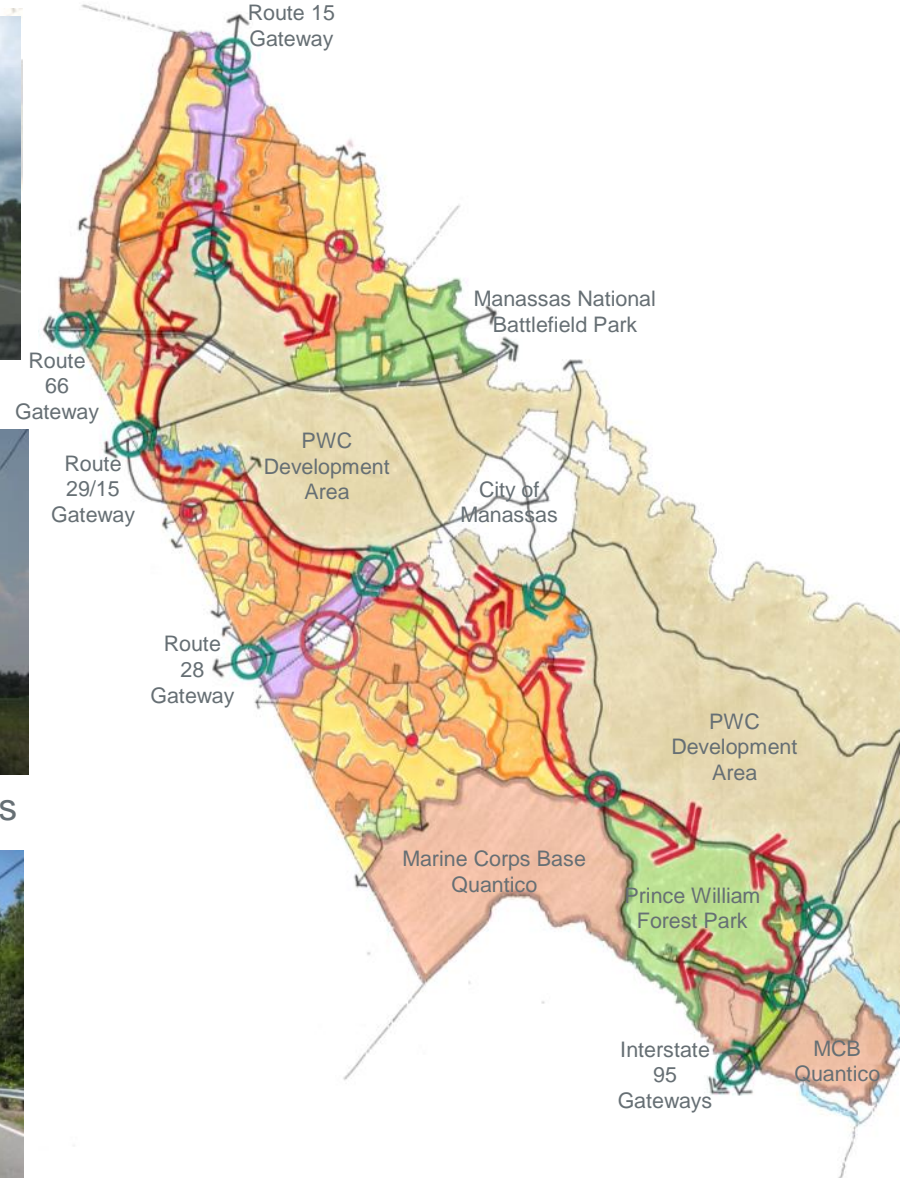
Shelter Lane subdivision turn lanes



Loudoun Rd. - Public tar & chip/gravel farm access roads



Road surface transitions, Stream fiord & Bridge crossings





# Activity 1: Rural Character Areas Input

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## Discussion:

1. What creates the feeling of rural character? How do you know you are in the rural area of PWC without looking at a line on a map?
2. Do you agree with the Rural Character Areas approach and mapping in concept?
  - a. *If so, please identify what you like about this approach.*
  - b. *If not, please identify changes for consideration and action.*

# Enhancing the Rural Character Areas



What if this farmland...

## Valley Estates and Subdivisions

If the remainder of the undeveloped rural crescent developed at 1:10 what would it look like? Would you still consider it having a rural appearance?



...became more of this 1:10 Acre Residential?



...With supporting roads?



# Enhancing the Rural Character Areas

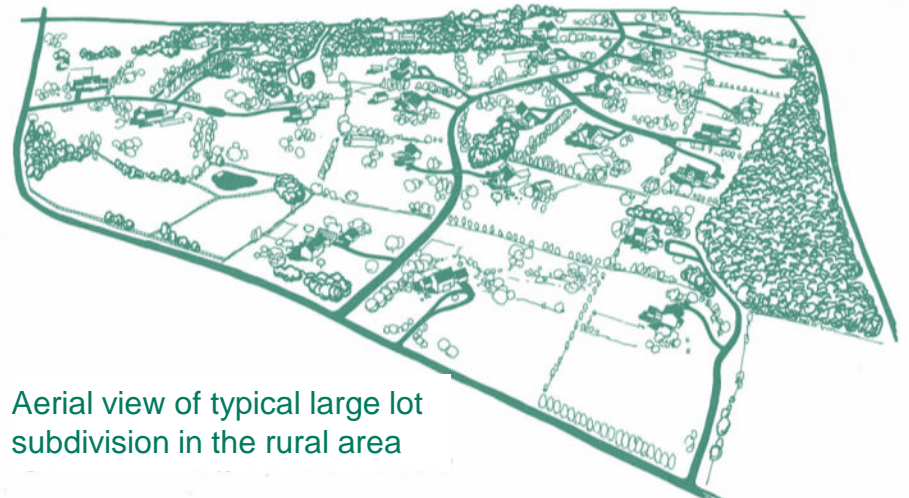
Many areas are already committed to large-lot residential development



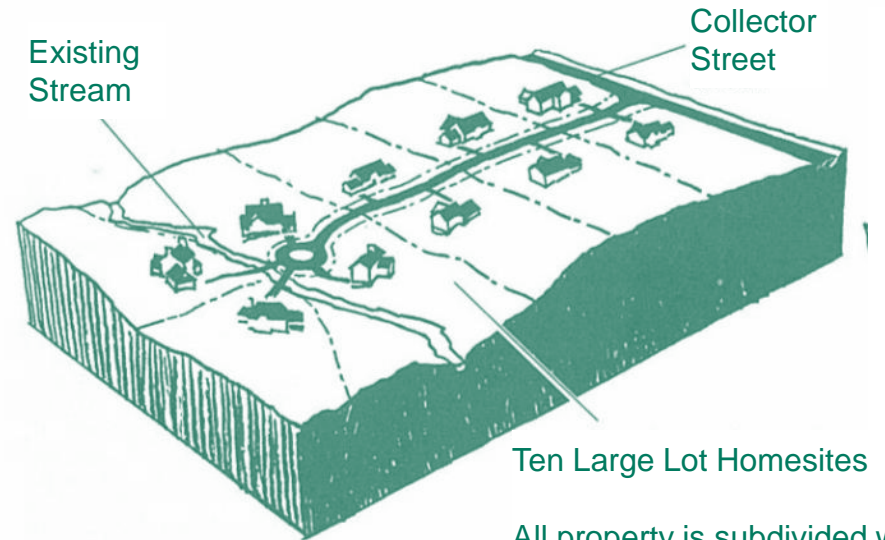
# Enhancing the Rural Character Areas

## How does current Large-Lot Zoning affect the Rural Area?

- Reduces the overall density of development on rural lands
- Limits the number of vehicle trips, but can require longer driveways, public or private roadways
- Typically does not preserve land beyond the required buffers
- Results in larger yard spaces that require higher maintenance/care
- Can result in unusual parcel configurations to satisfy access, well and septic requirements.
- Has a different visual impact in forested areas vs. open fields



Aerial view of typical large lot subdivision in the rural area



Ten Large Lot Homesites

All property is subdivided with no common open space

*Image Source: Site Planning and Community Design for Great Neighborhoods, Author: Frederick D. Jarvis, Associate Principal with EDSA until 2005 and recognized subject matter expert in residential development best practices*

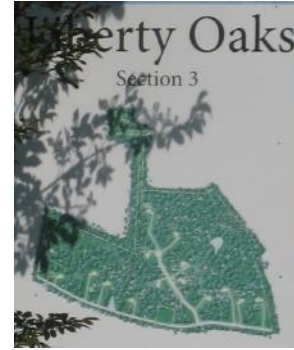


# Enhancing the Rural Character Areas

What does current Large-Lot Zoning look like in the Rural Area?



Windy Ridge Estates – Linear roadway and parcels overlooking farmland



Liberty Oaks Community – Homesites preserve tree & soften visual impact

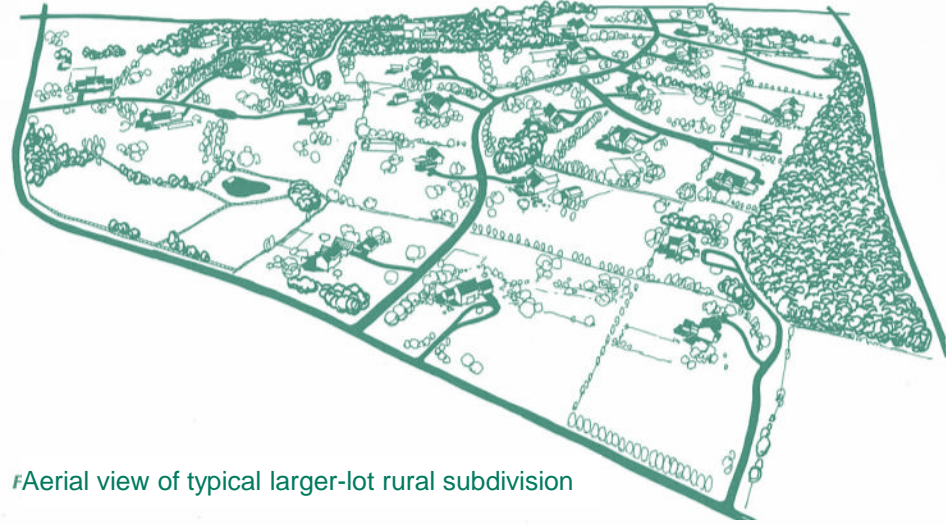


Old Church Estates – Private roads and lotting that fill the farmland properties

# Enhancing the Rural Character Areas

## Consider an Optional Cluster Approach to Rural Homesites in some Character Areas

- Conveys sensitivity to environmental regulations & creates ecological value
- Protects rural neighborhood character with permanent, common open space
- Provides the setting for potential dedication of historic or culturally significant features
- Creates a wider variety of passive & active neighborhood recreation uses
- Possible option for the Transitional Ribbon, Valley Farming and Valley Subdivision Areas



Aerial view of typical larger-lot rural subdivision



Aerial view of 1-acre cluster homesite option

*Image Source: Site Planning and Community Design for Great Neighborhoods, Author: Frederick D. Jarvis, Associate Principal with EDSA until 2005 and recognized subject matter expert in residential development best practices*



# Enhancing the Rural Character Areas

## Consider an Optional Cluster Approach to Rural Homesites in Some Character Areas cont'd

- Creation of a more diverse and architecturally interesting neighborhood
- Creation of a friendlier pedestrian - cyclist environment
- It saves land for common open space
- It's grounded in addressing environmental concerns and Permanency and maintenance of the open space
- Typically a more economical pattern of development due to less roads and utilities
- “Same Density Cluster” vs. “Bonus Density Cluster” (Additional density is usually the only way to make a cluster proposal economically viable)



Conventional Plan Concept

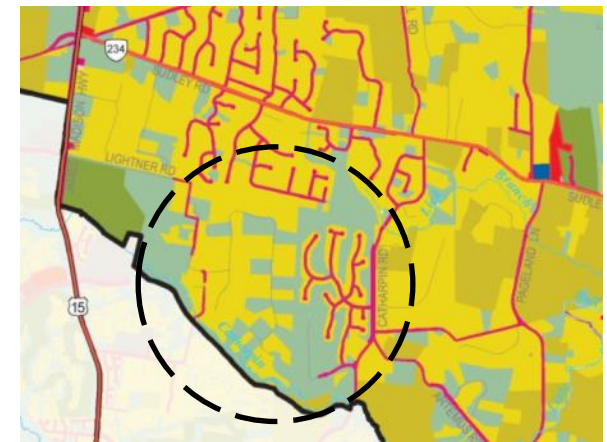
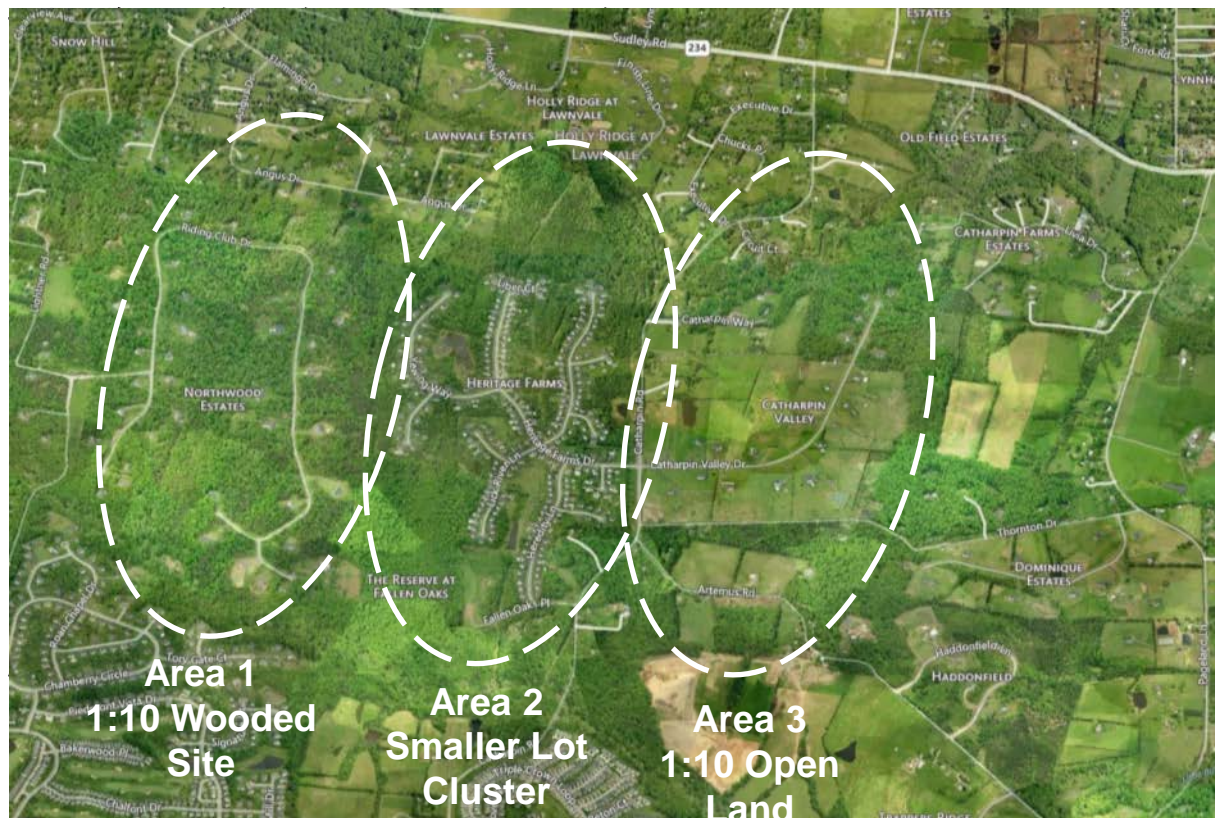


Cluster Plan Concept

# Enhancing the Rural Character Areas

## Valley Area Case Study

- **Northwood Estates** A-1 = Agricultural Zoning
  - 1 dwelling per 10 acres with isolated open space preserve areas
- **Heritage Farms** SR-1C = SR-1 Cluster Development Zoning
  - 1 dwelling per ½ acre with dedicated open space preserve areas

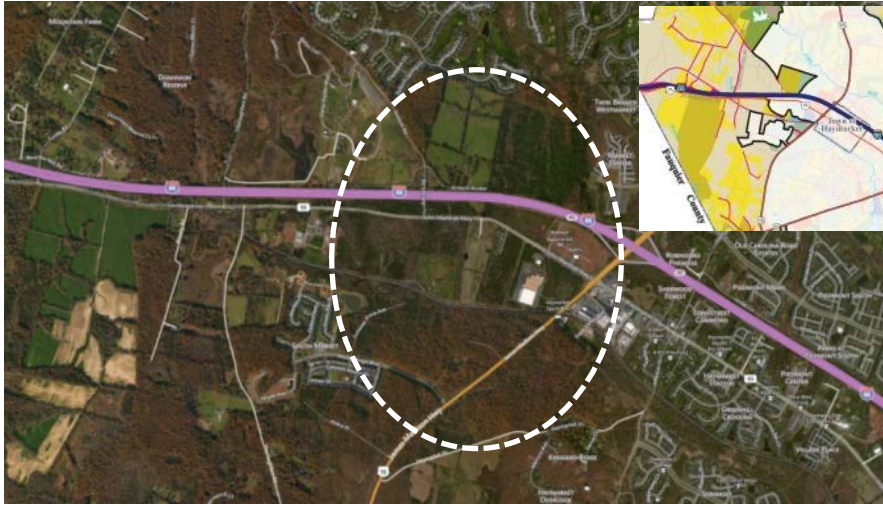


Public vs. private roads and segmented vs. contiguous open space comparisons



# Enhancing the Rural Character Areas

What is the best use, treatment, or development of these examples of undeveloped Transitional Ribbon lands?



The West Haymarket area



The Route 215 / Vint Hill Road corridor frontage area



The Lake Manassas south shoreline area



The Bristow Road corridor frontage area

# Enhancing the Rural Character Areas

## Consider Limited Sewer Extensions

- Sewer exists to a very limited extent in four parts of the Rural Area
- Sewer (with cluster) could help preserve rural character – in very specific areas
- Sewer can help in addressing environmental concerns associated with failing septic systems
- Consider a strategic and controlled policy of sewer extensions in specific areas of the Transitional Ribbon Area





# Activity 2: Considering New Policies

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## Discussion:

1. What do you think of the cluster/bonus cluster concept option for protecting/enhancing Rural Character Areas?
2. What do you think of the sewer extension concept option for protecting/enhancing Rural Character Areas?
3. What other best practices or policies might you consider for protecting/enhancing the Rural Character Areas?
  - For example PDR/TDR
  - Rural economy
  - Public uses focused toward key preservation areas
4. What other questions or comments do you have concerning the Rural Character Areas and Landscape Assessment?

# Closing

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- How will your input be used.
- Next steps in the process

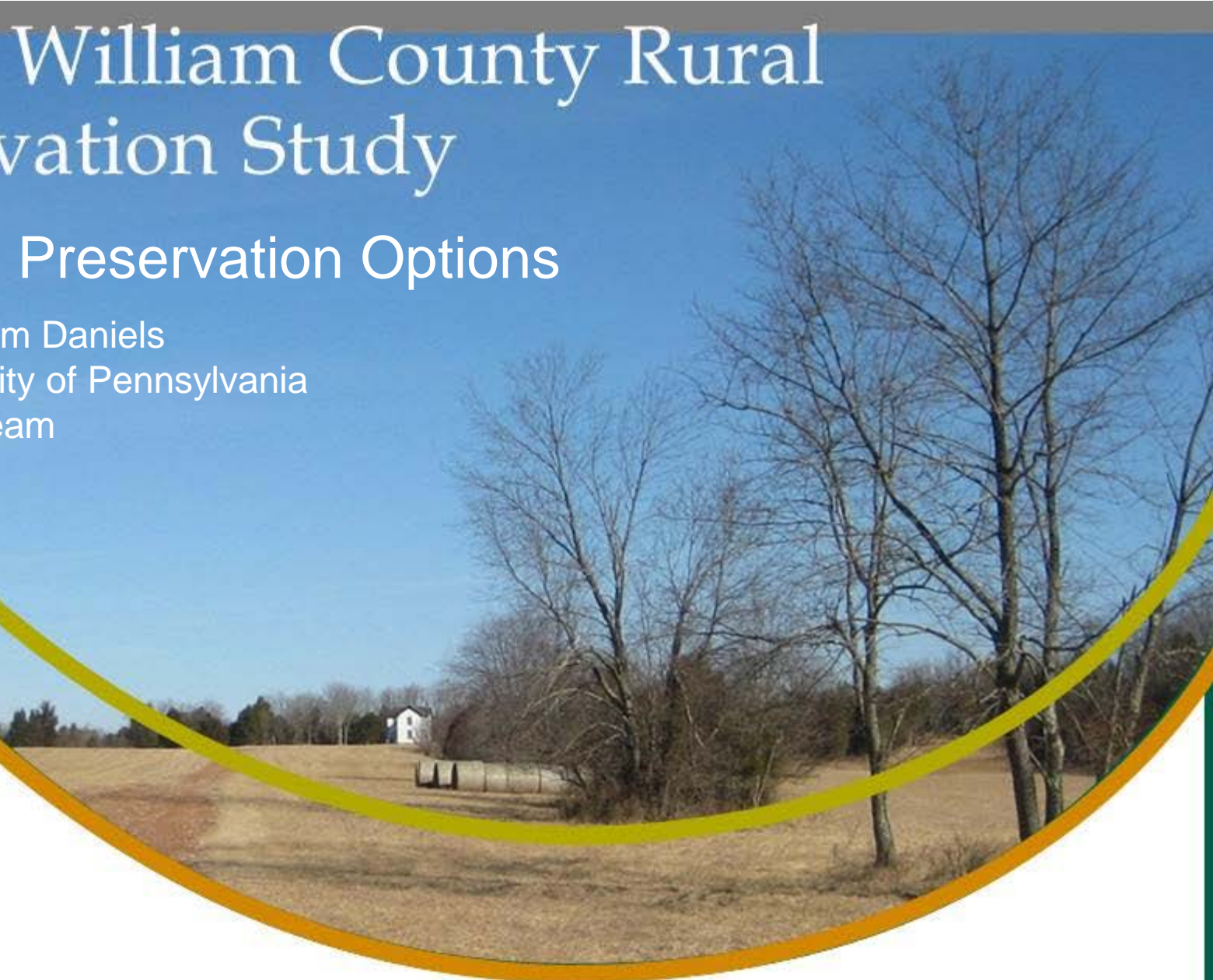
*Thank you for coming out today!!  
and for your input!*

*Happy Holidays to You*

# Prince William County Rural Preservation Study

## Land Preservation Options

Prof. Tom Daniels  
University of Pennsylvania  
ERM Team





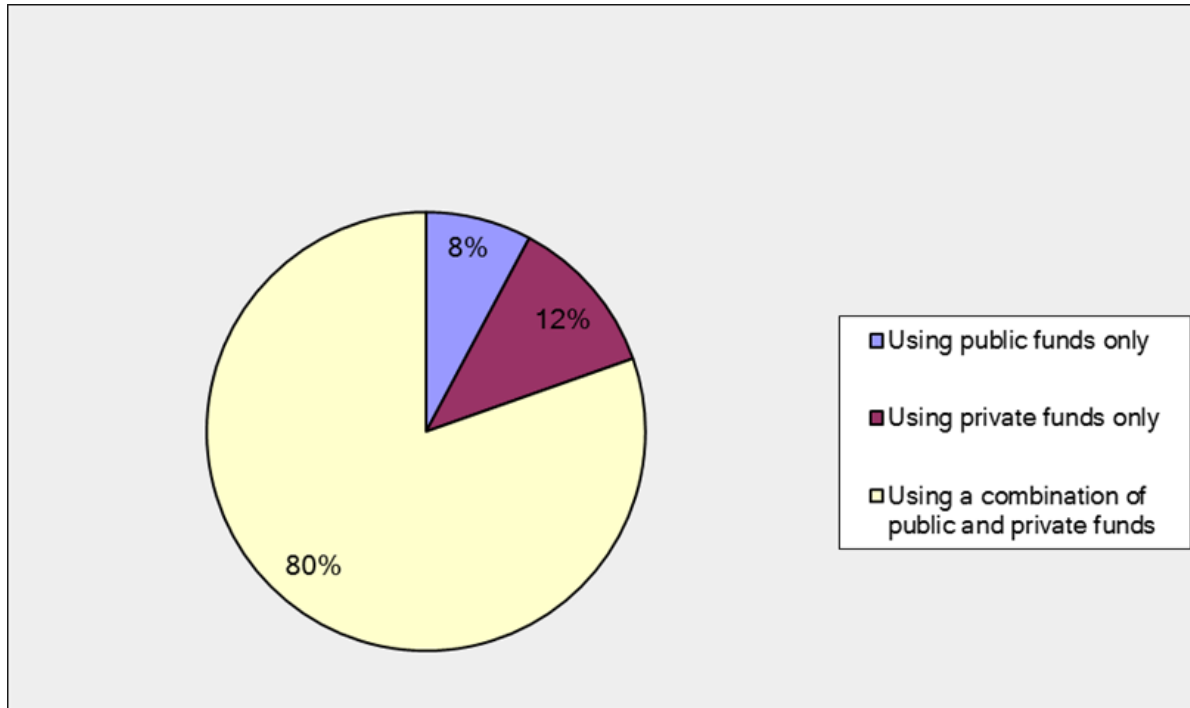
# Land Preservation Options and Opportunities

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- What options exist?
- Where in Prince William County would they work best?
- The Bundle of Property Rights
  - Fee Simple
  - Less than Fee Simple

# Survey Response

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8. Willingness to Pay for Land Preservation: Preserving land often costs money to acquire land or compensate property owners who agree to sell conservation easements.

Land preservation can be accomplished with public or private funds or some combination of the two. This question and the following two questions address aspects of this issue. How do you think land preservation is best paid for?

# Land Preservation Options

---

- Purchase of development rights
- Donation of a conservation easement
- Bargain Sale of Development Rights
- Transfer of development rights
- Cluster development with mandatory preservation of open space

Look at these from the perspectives of:

a) landowners b) county government; and c) the public

# Purchase of Development Rights

---

1. A landowner can sever the right to develop the land from the rest of the bundle of rights.
2. Can sell that development right to a private non-profit land trust or a government agency
3. Restrictions are placed on the land through a Conservation Easement (legally recorded)
4. Most conservation easements are permanent
5. A conservation easement runs with the land
6. Holder of the easement must monitor the property
7. Eminent domain issue

# Purchase of Development Rights

---

- State of Virginia has a farmland preservation program that provides money to counties to purchase development rights
- The value of the development rights is determined by a professional appraiser
- Virginia Beach has a PDR program as does James City County
- Federal funding is available through the NRCS, Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and US Forest Service Forest Legacy Program



# Federal Funding for Farmland, Forestland, and Natural Areas PDRs

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- Farm and Ranchland Protection Program – NRCS/USDA
- Forest Legacy Program - US Forest Service
- Wetlands Reserve Program – NRCS/USDA
- Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program – Dept. of Defense

# Financial Benefits of PDR

---

Landowner gets cash

Taxed as a capital gain

- County government gets preserved land for growth management, environmental quality, local economy
- Public gets preserved land for views and local economy, though usually no right of access

# Sample PDR Sale

---

<b>50 acre farm</b>	
Fair Market Value:	\$750,000
Restricted Value	\$450,000
PDR Easement Value	\$300,000
Basis	\$100,000
Taxable capital gain	\$200,000
Federal Gains Tax @15%	\$30,000

# Conservation Easement Donation

---

1. Tax benefits
2. Federal income tax deduction, up to 50% of AGI and up to 16 years
3. Possible estate tax benefit
4. Virginia state income tax credit: 40% of the value of the donated easement. Landowner can claim up to \$100,000 a year, credits can be claimed for up to 10 years
5. A landowner may sell some or all of the tax credits.
6. From 2000-2012, 591,612 acres in Virginia were preserved through 2,774 easement donations

# Easement Donation Example

---

<b>50 acre farm</b>	
Fair Market Value:	\$750,000
Restricted Value	\$450,000
PDR Easement Value	\$300,000
Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)	\$80,000
Can deduct \$40,000 a year for 7 years and \$20,000 in year 8.	
Federal tax savings about \$75,000	



# Virginia State Income Tax Credit

---

<b>50 acre farm</b>	
Fair Market Value:	\$750,000
Restricted Value	\$450,000
PDR Easement Value	\$300,000
Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)	\$80,000
Virginia Income Tax on \$80,000 is about \$4,000.	
So landowners can claim credits of \$40,000 over 10 years and sell \$80,000 in credits	

# Transfer of Development Rights





---

1. A county program is authorized in Virginia
2. Sending areas, receiving areas
3. Landowners receive development credits, developers must buy credits to build at a higher density than normally allowed
4. Conservation easement placed on land in sending area when all development credits are sold.
5. Montgomery County, Maryland example
6. Frederick County, VA





# PROTECTED AGRICULTURAL LANDS

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY





### Land Zoned For Agriculture

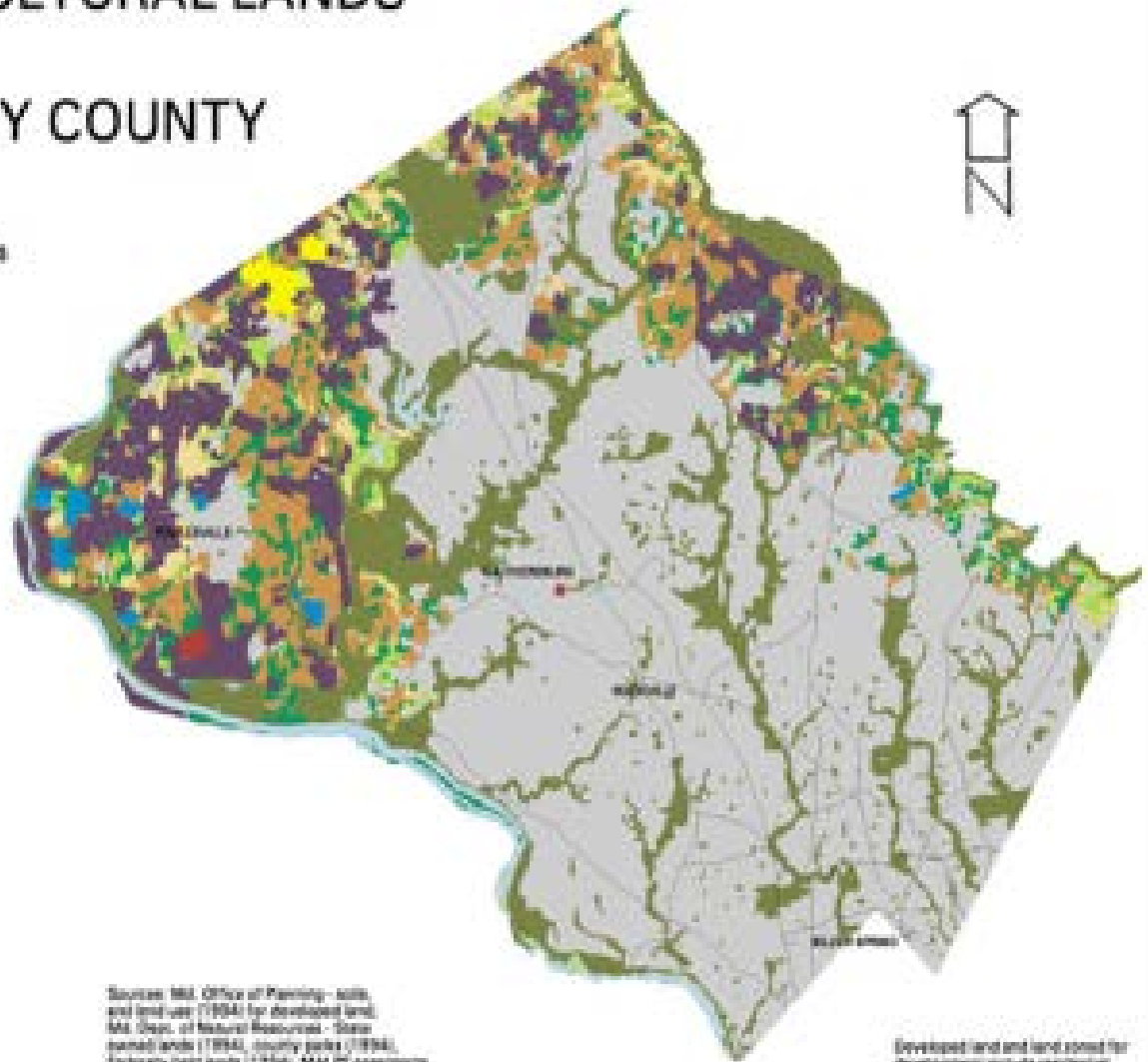
-  Agricultural land on prime / productive soils
-  Agricultural land on other soils
-  Forest land on prime / productive soils
-  Forest land on other soils

### Protected Lands

-  Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) easements
-  County easements and preserved TDR sending areas
-  Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) agricultural easements
-  Private conservation easements

### Other Areas

-  Publicly owned land
-  Wetlands and conservation zoning allowing development
-  Developed or zoned for development
-  Water



Sources: MD, Office of Planning - soils and land use (1994) for developed land; MD, Dept. of Natural Resources - State owned lands (1994), county parks (1994), Federal land lands (1994), MALPF easements (1994), MET easements (1994) and private conservation easements (1994) and Montgomery County for zoning (1997) and local easements (1996).

scale 1:225,000

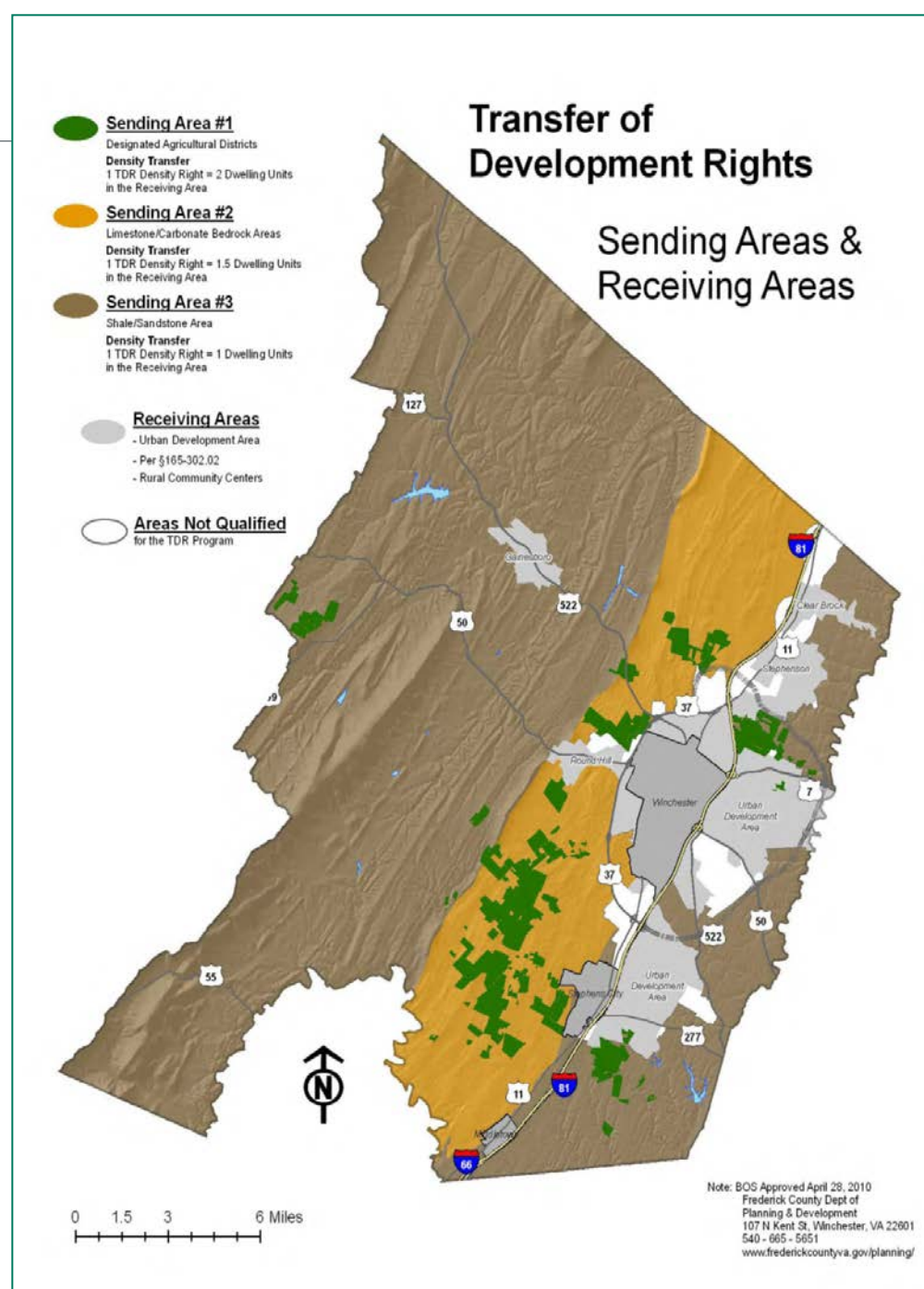
Developed land and land zoned for development include residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, extractive, open urban, large lot residential, and other non-agricultural uses.



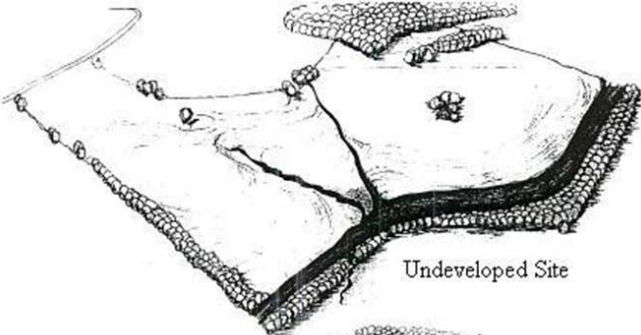
MARYLAND Office of Planning  
Planning Coordination and  
Resource Management Unit 12/97

# Frederick County, VA

## TDR Program



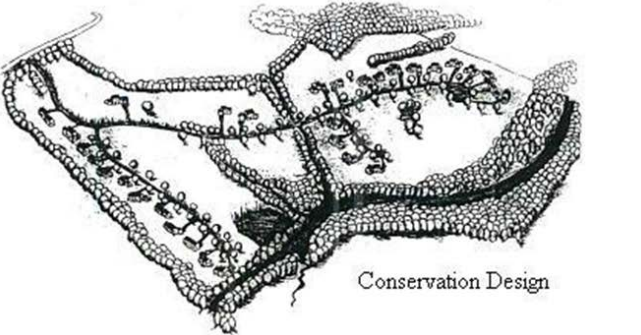
# Cluster Development with Preserved Open Space



Undeveloped Site



Conventional Development



Conservation Design



# Where to Preserve? The Rural Crescent

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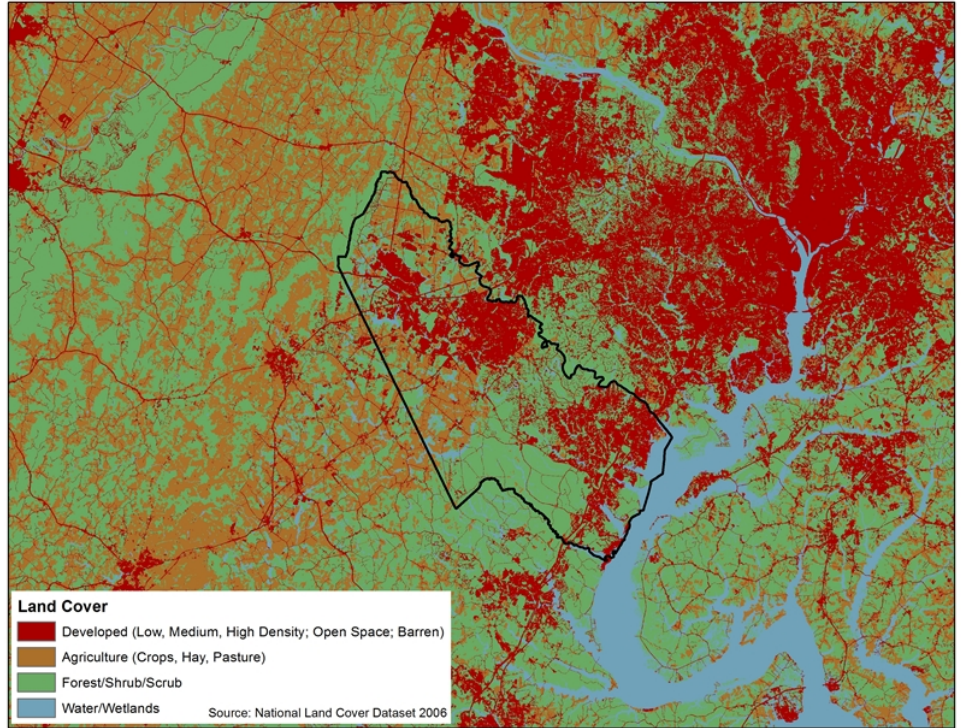
- The Rural Crescent was established in 1998
- Covers about 116,000 acres or 52% of the County
- About 28% of the Rural Crescent is already permanently preserved, not including the Quantico Marine Base
- About 7,570 houses in the Rural Crescent
- Capacity for about 3,700 more
- Base zoning one house per 10 acres
- Public water is permitted, public sewer generally is not permitted

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY  
 Rural Preservation Study:  
 Rural Area Parcels by Size (Acres)  
 Published December 4, 2013



**DRAFT**

- Rural Area Parcel Size**
- Rural Area
  - 20 to 49.99 acre
  - Larger than 50 a



- State Line
- County Line
- City or Town
- Interstate
- US Highway Route
- State Highway
- County Road (Major)
- Street
- Railroad
- Water Feature
- Manassas National Battlefield Park
- Marine Corps Base Quantico
- Prince William Forest Park
- Quantico National Cemetery



1 in = 5,280 ft

Scale in Feet



1:52,800

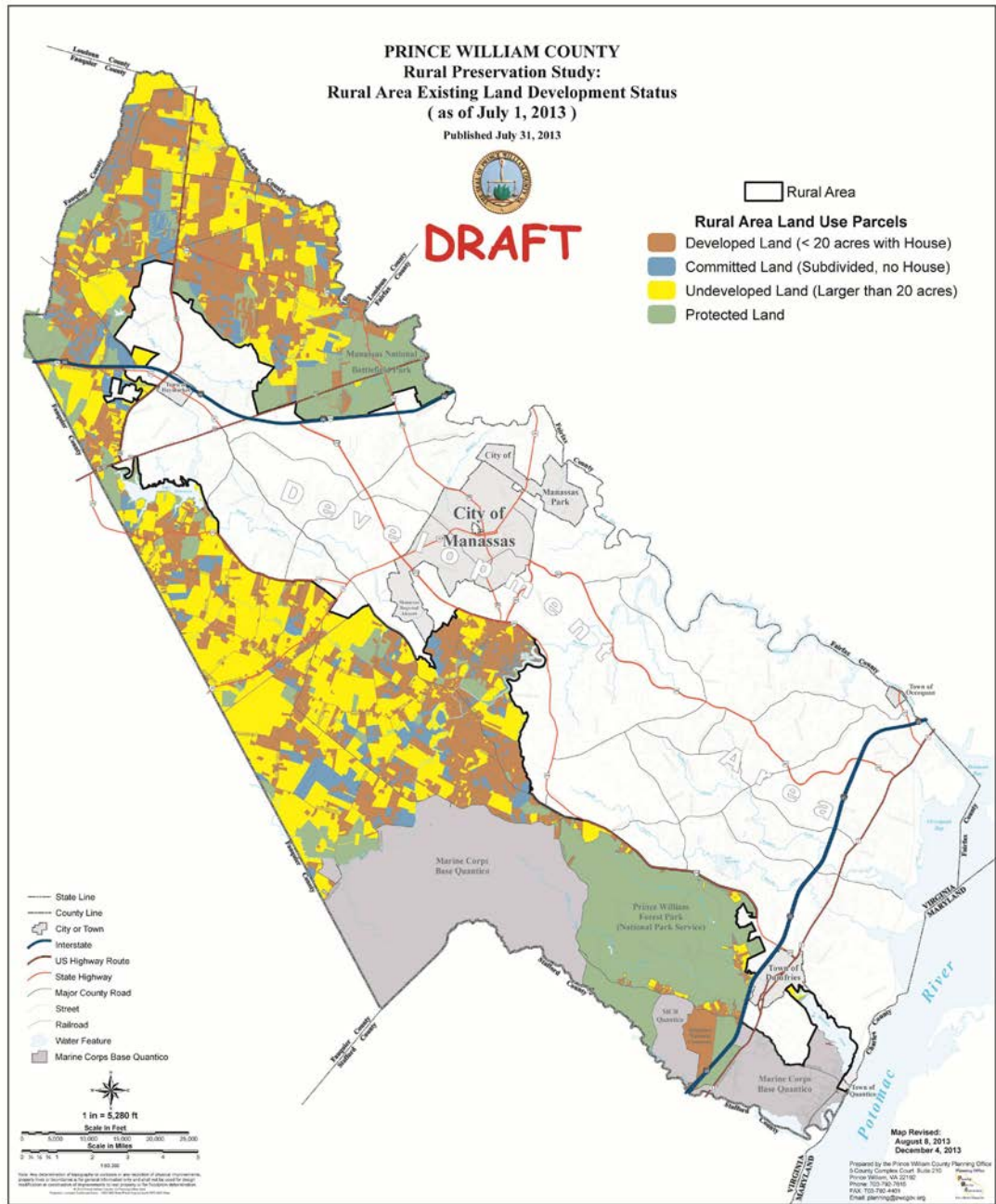
Prepared by the Prince William County Planning Office  
 © County Geomatics Dept. Suite 110  
 Prince William, VA 22192  
 Phone: 703-730-3011  
 Fax: 703-730-4001  
 Email: planning@pwgov.org

# Land Status in the Rural Crescent

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	Acres
Developed (including Quantico)	55,082
Committed	8,218
Permanently Protected	25,750
Undeveloped and unprotected	27,944
Total	115,994

# Land Status in the Rural Crescent





# Preserved Land in Prince William County

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	<b>Acres</b>
Federal	16,707
State	744
Prince William County (Including Schools)	2,212
County Registered Historic Sites	1,278
Land Conservators	2,598
Other (HOA, City of Manassas, Golf Courses)	2,211
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,750</b>

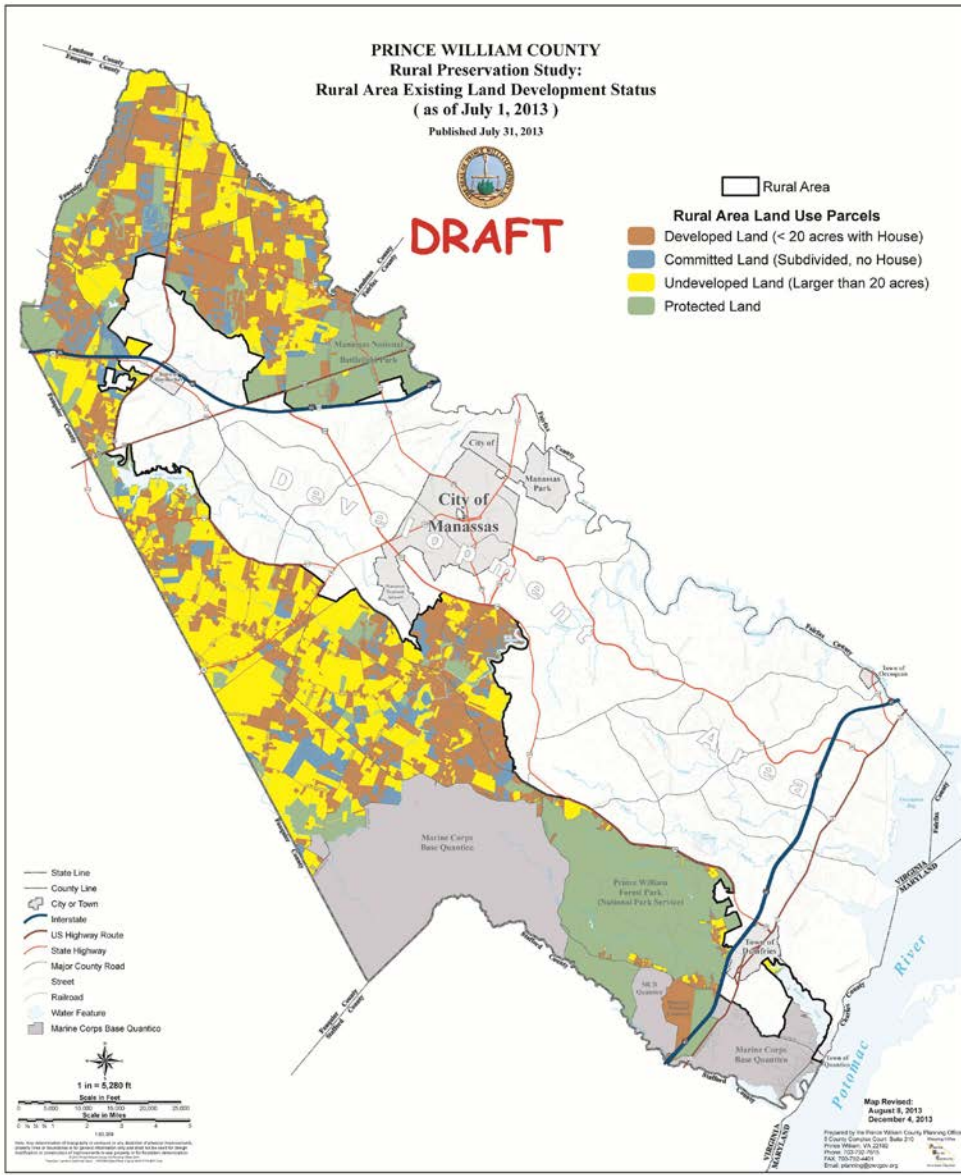


# Where Would Programs Be Appropriate?

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- Purchase of Development Rights?
- Donation of Conservation Easements?
- Transfer of Development Rights?
- Limited development with preserved open space?
- REPI

# Questions and Comments





# Prince William County Rural Preservation Study

*Public Workshop and Open House, December 7, 2013*

## *The Rural Economy*

Clive Graham, AICP,  
Principal Planner, ERM



# ERM – All-environmental consultancy

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- Founded in 1977
- 5,000 staff in 39 countries
- Nearby offices in Annapolis, Washington D.C., Richmond
- Planning, Engineering, Environmental Science, Sustainability

## Planning Services

- Planning: 90 percent public sector
- Comprehensive Plans, Master Plans
- Recreation Planning
- Growth Management
- Zoning
- Environmental & Natural Resource Planning



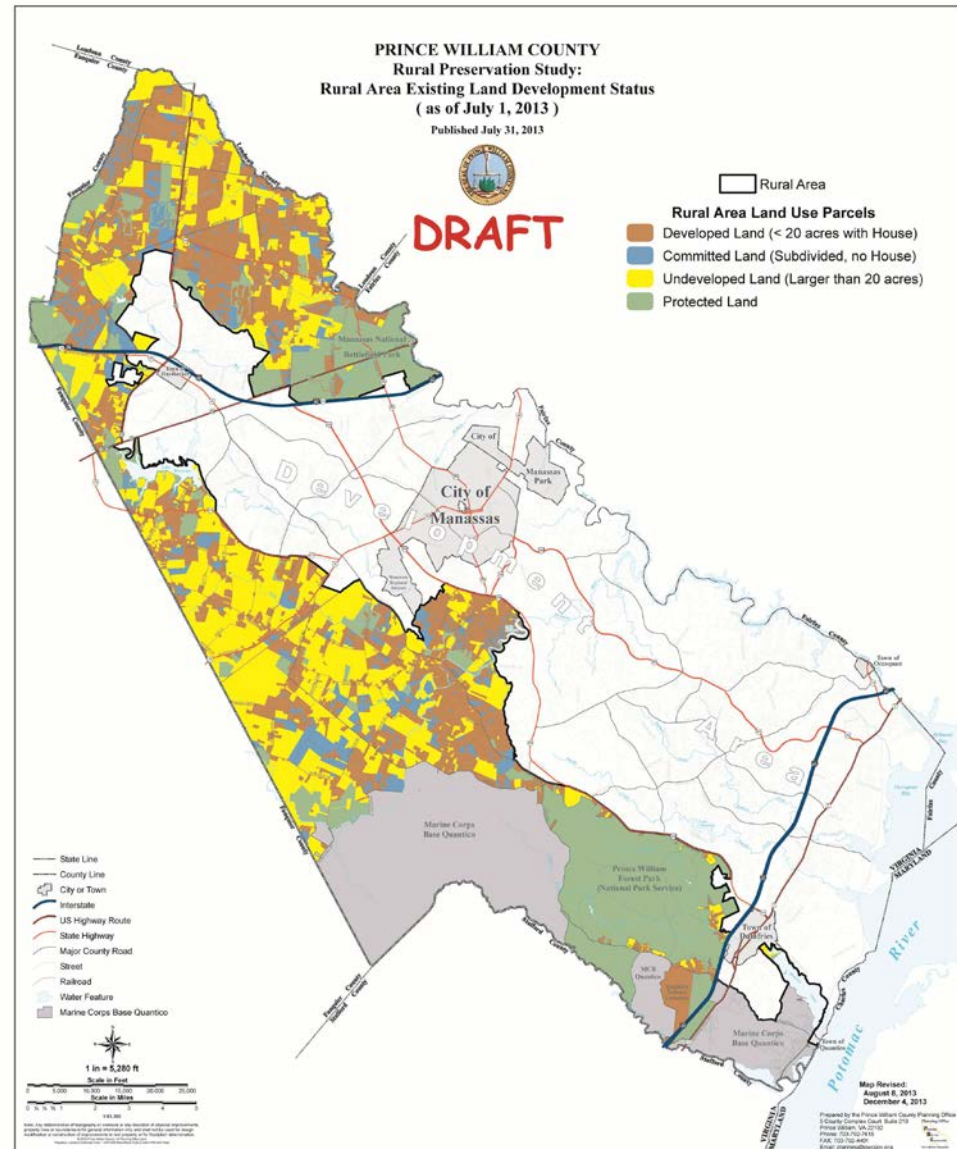
# Purpose of Session

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- Complement the land preservation and rural character sessions
- Present some economic baseline information
- Solicit input for policies to incentivize rural economic enterprises
  - Support an area that has preservation
  - But it is also a working, productive landscape
  - Where people can live and make a living
  - Not to stimulate additional growth and development.

# Existing Economy Overview

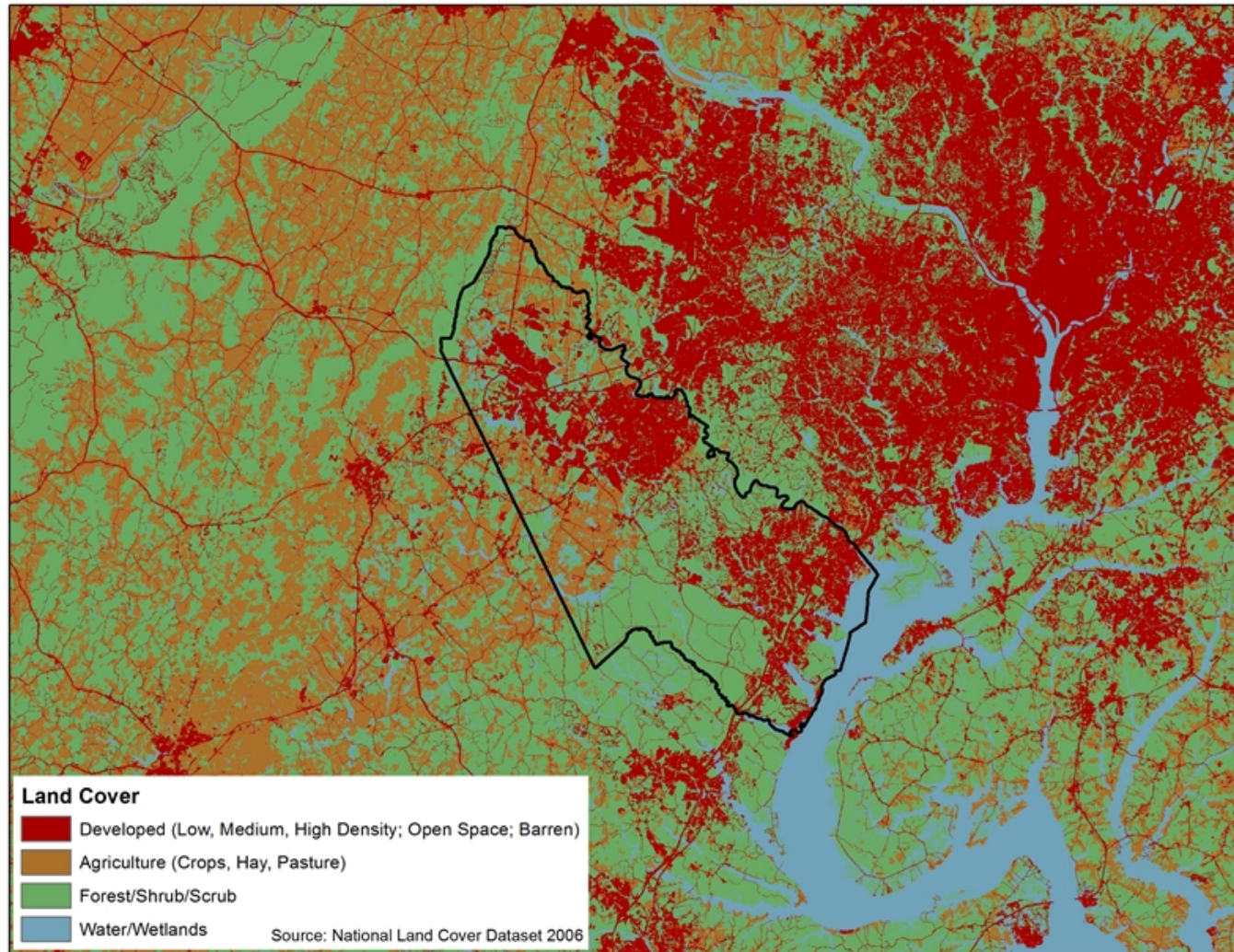
- Rural Area covers approximately 52 percent of the County (117,000 acres)
- Rural Area contains approx. 7,570 homes = approx. 23,100 people
- 6% of total Prince William County population in 2011: 411,751
- Rural Area capacity for approximately 3,670 more homes (under current policies)



# Regional Context

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Rural Area is the outer edge of Washington Metro area





# Agriculture

Prince William County (2007 Census of Ag)

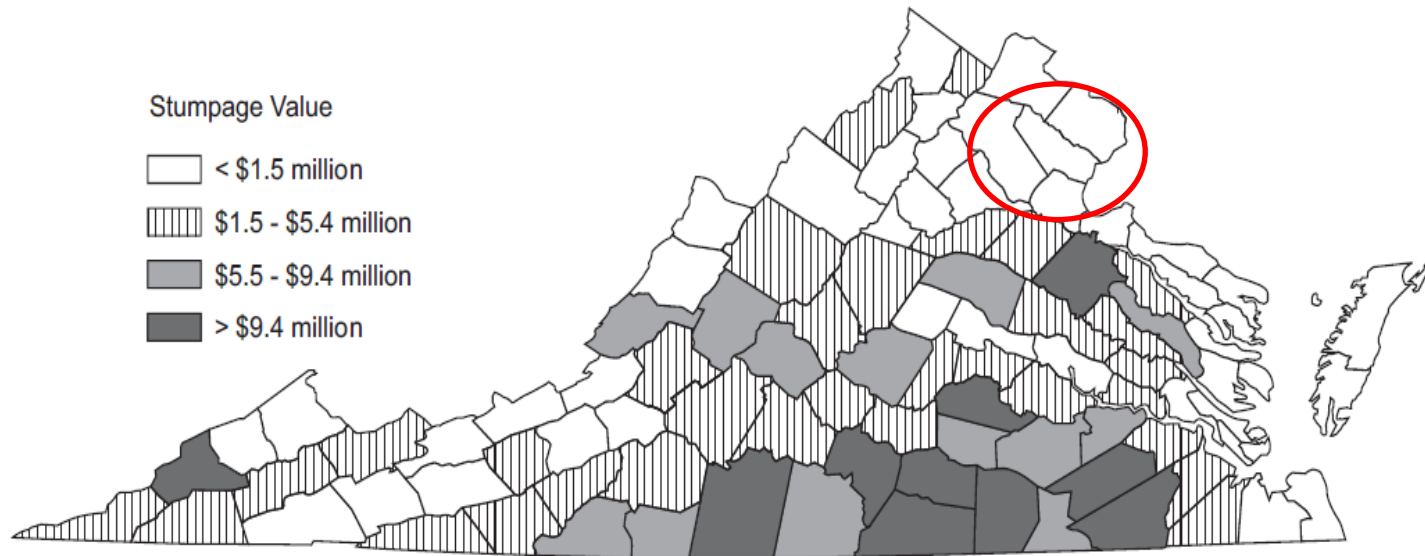
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- 345 total farms of which 210 were 50 acres or less.
  - Very small “farms” (< \$1,000 sales value) are not counted
- Acres in farms; 32,800. Market value of agricultural products sold: \$9.43 million. Avg. per farm \$27,330. (excludes value of horse industry)
  - 181 farms had income of less than \$2,500
- The largest 3 farms in the County accounted for \$5.5 million in total sales, or nearly 60%
- Total farm production expenses \$15,752 million (i.e, overall farm losses)
- Small amount of employment; less than 3% of county employment (Weldon Cooper Center 2008)

# Forestry

- Value of forest production: \$350,000 (Virginia Tech, 2010).
- From 1980 to 2001, PW County averaged \$125,000 a year in forest products sales.
  - This ranked the county 95th out of the 98 Virginia counties.

Figure 1.14 Value of Virginia Stumpage by Locality, 2006



Source: Unpublished data from Virginia Department of Forestry (2007)



# Recreation

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- No composite economic data specific to the Rural Area.
- People value the Rural Area as recreation resource (survey responses)
- How much money recreationists spend in the Rural Area is not known
- Activities: Bicycling, hunting clubs, golf, parks (Prince William Forest, Manassas Battlefield, Silver Lake Regional), nature viewing, cultural/historic

	Annual Park Visitation (source: NPS)	
	Prince William Forest Park	Manassas Battlefield Park
2011	379,535	659,740
2012	280,325	600,354

# Other Economic Activity

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- Marine Corps Base Quantico (approx. 28,000 weekday population)
- Nokesville; the “rural center”.
- Other
  - Scattered crossroads commercial, retail nurseries (B-1 zoning)
  - Home businesses (home employment, rural home business)

# Stakeholder interview input

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- Only a small number of remaining large farms (less than two dozen).
- Farmers state it is difficult to farm (area has suburbanized).
  - “No good farmland in PW County”, “corn yields are low”, (compared to other places) , “Ag is gone”.
- Farm tours, farm events (bluebell festival).
  - “Agri-tourism brings a lot of people in”.
- Farmettes, hobby farms, lifestyle farming– Often these don’t show on ag. stats (too small), but can be locally valuable.
  - cited were horse boarding, hydroponics, goats, sheep


# Stakeholder interview input

Some farms committed to farming in Prince William County :  
e.g., Evergreen Acres (Nokesville)

Home Tomatoes Pumpkin Patch Trees and Prices Directions and Contact

## Evergreen Acres

Organic Tomatoes, Pumpkin Patch and  
Choose and Cut Christmas Trees



### Prince William County's : Premier Christmas Tree Farm, Pumpkin Patch and Only Organic Produce

Click [here](#) for facebook updates

We will open for tree sales the Friday after Thanksgiving 8-5.  
We will be open weekends from 8-5 and weekdays 2-5.

Dogs are welcome with leash and duty bag.

We have all three tree types up to at least 10' tall at the beginning of  
the season.

We accept cash and check, but not plastic.

More information is on the [Trees and Prices](#) tab

Updated August 28, 2013

# Stakeholder interview input

- Farm bureau; 300 registered producers in PW and Fairfax.
  - “PW is right at the market’s door”.
- Farmers generally not in favor of 10-acre zoning
  - “too large to mow, too small to farm”
- Economic benefits of land conservation: working lands, tourism, stabilizing land values, fiscal benefits, reducing environmental costs



[virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org](http://virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org)

## The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation

*From agriculture to tourism to local planning, open-space preservation is paying off in many ways.*

 Since Virginia's Land Preservation Tax Credit program was rolled out in 2000, more than \$1 billion in credits have been issued to easement donors, resulting in the protection of more than 600,000 acres. The natural and cultural resources protected by these easements are vast: thousands of miles of streams, thousands of historic landmarks, hundreds of thousands of acres of prime soils and forests, and more than half a million acres of undeveloped open space in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Water quality, wildlife habitat, scenic landscapes, rich soils, areas for recreation—all have benefited from what many consider to be the best voluntary land conservation incentive program in the nation.

The environmental benefits, however, are only part of the story. Recently, the Department of Conservation and Recreation wrote a paper summarizing the benefits of land conservation in Virginia. It turns out that some of the most tangible benefits are to Virginia's economy.

**PROTECTING VIRGINIA'S WORKING LANDS**

Today, the majority of land conserved within Virginia contains



Working with the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Agribusiness Council, and others, VOF has developed easements that better protect working farms from development.

BENEFITS continued on page 4



# Policy Recommendations from Interviews

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- Zoning ordinance is unclear regarding what is an agri-business.
- Zoning and other rules are written for large operations or— for suburbs (e.g., fences)
  - Review definition of agriculture. Make things easier for small operators
- Create an Agricultural Development Officer position
- Promote the “new” agriculture
  - chickens, (where you can keep them), hobby farms, value – added products
- Explore/revise? agricultural land use tax (five year rule)
- Add a Rural Preservation Chapter in the Comprehensive Plan

# Survey Input

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**What types of development would you like to see in the Rural Area?**

Selected representative responses follow, text also on handout

# Survey Input

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- Broad mix of responses – a challenge for policy makers.
- Many responses indicated no change is needed or uncertainty about the benefits of change
- “Other low traffic developments which by design are well integrated with the rural concept would also be fine. Examples that come to mind include: Cemeteries, Businesses related to rural use such as farm related businesses if the development is meant to service the surrounding area ONLY such as agricultural processing plants. Businesses that support use of park and forest land features such as small stores, restaurants, gas stations, etc. but ONLY if the number is limited and placement is sensible for the surrounding area.”

# What types of development would you like to see in the Rural Area?

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- “Parks, camps, preserves, wildlife tours, wineries, horseback riding trails, apple orchards, corn mazes”.
- “Wholesale nurseries should be encouraged, but retail nurseries that are traffic magnets should be discouraged.”
- “Access to affordable Internet - many places are still unserved by Comcast or Verizon”.
- “Arts, small shops, and culture would be an amazing addition the area”
- “Don't be afraid if people actually want to have working farms - which usually aren't pretty little manicured estates. Be ready for animals (and their manure), processing of agricultural products, noises (during the day)”

# Survey Input

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**Besides farming, what types of business development do you think are appropriate in the rural area to support the rural economy?**

Selected representative responses follow, text also on handout



# Types of business suitable for the Rural Area?

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- Again a mix: themes in reading: general support for businesses supporting/related to farms, recreation environment, cultural/historic. Small business, including home-based: Not large or “heavy” industry.
- Some responses that would favor a broader suite of businesses. A good number of “none”.
- “Alternative energy sources, i.e. wind farms or solar energy plants”
- “Nurseries, small stores (general), occasional gas stations, antique shops.”
- “Agricultural and equestrian related activities. NOT the landfill-like operations we are currently seeing taking place!”
- “I do not think “commercial business development” should be allowed in the Rural Crescent. However, farms are businesses. Vineyards are businesses. Raising and training horses is a business.”

# Types of business suitable for the Rural Area?

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- “One thing I think the county could do much better is to utilize the rural area to encourage farming and then to use that industry to sell in its own area. In other words, we should support our local farmers by helping and encouraging their production and then selling their produce locally through strategically placed stores (designed to fit in a rural setting). “
- “Non-manufacturing jobs such as IT and R&D would help alleviate some of the traffic on 66 and possibly 95. These higher wage jobs would be necessary for the desired types of housing developments. A high end shopping mall near the rural area (Gainesville maybe) would be a great addition. “
- “Home businesses and home schooling should be encouraged in every way possible. Having more people staying in neighborhoods during the day increases safety and decreases demand on the roads. “

# Types of business suitable for the Rural Area?

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- “There is no need for business development in the rural area. The BEAUTY of the rural crescent is that it is close enough to large industry and already established businesses that there is no need for more to support the "rural economy". “
- “Nokesville has a strong horse community - leverage it with trails throughout and otherwise make it a closer in Middleburg (Note: you have hunters/jumpers and trail riders when it comes to horsepeople so segmentation is very possible). Other areas may have aquatics - rowing, canoeing, fishing, diving etc.,.”

# Questions

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1. What obstacles to rural-related enterprises do you see?
2. Do you see any of these as overriding obstacles?
3. What are the top 3 or 4 (market) opportunities for rural economic development?
4. How could the county help reduce obstacles and barriers and enhance opportunities?

*Thank you for coming out today!!*

***And for your input!***