



# STAFF REPORT

<b>PC Meeting Date:</b>	March 17, 2021
<b>Agenda Title:</b>	Comprehensive Plan Amendment #CPA2018-00009, Rural Preservation (Rural Area Plan)
<b>District Impact:</b>	Countywide
<b>Requested Action:</b>	Recommend Approval of Comprehensive Plan Amendment #CPA2018-00009, Rural Preservation (Rural Area Plan)
<b>Department:</b>	Planning Office
<b>Case Planner:</b>	David J. McGettigan, AICP

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to incorporate the recommendations of the Rural Area 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 appropriate rural preservation tools that may be appropriate and effective and make recommendations regarding possible amendments to the County's land use planning policies. This project involves updates to multiple sections of the Comprehensive Plan and a number of companion ordinance text amendments. The Comprehensive Plan Amendment guides the implementation of these text amendments and is essential for identifying where and how these texts work.

The Rural Area Plan includes adoption of the vision statement and recommends policies and action strategies that are aimed at achieving the vision that the community created through the public outreach process. The Rural Area Plan also includes maps to support the policy recommendations of creating Purchase of Development Rights areas, Transfer of Development Rights (sending and receiving areas), Conservation Residential with permanent conservation easements, and Agritourism and Rural Economy.

It is the recommendation of staff that the Planning Commission approve Comprehensive Plan Text Amendment #CPA2018-00009, Rural Preservation (Rural Area Plan).

## BACKGROUND

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- A. Initiation of Comprehensive Update – Under Section 15.2-2229 of the Virginia Code, the Board of County Supervisors may consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. On August 3, 2016, the Board approved the proposed scope of work for comprehensive plan amendments which included incorporating recommendations from existing studies such as the Rural Preservation Study referenced in the attached resolution (Attachment C - RES NO. 16-647).
- B. Historical Background Context – The Rural Area is an area of the County, in which agricultural and farming historically occurred. Prince William County has a long history of rural preservation. 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". In 1998, as growth pressure in the Northern Virginia area increased, the Board of County Supervisors formalized the designation of the Rural Area during the Comprehensive Plan update. This identified the county as two distinct areas: a Development Area and a Rural Area. As of 2018, the Rural Area in Prince William County covers approximately 117,000 acres or 52% of the County.
- C. 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 study was completed and presented to the BOCS on May 6, 2014. Several of the study's recommendations relate directly to elements of the Comprehensive Plan (e.g., land use, open space, infrastructure, etc.). In addition, through DIR 14-82, the BOCS directed staff to review the Zoning Ordinance to implement some of the recommendations of the Rural Preservation Study.
- D. Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment – The proposed amendment would incorporate some recommendations from the Rural Preservation Study into the Comprehensive Plan through development of a new Rural Area Plan. The Plan includes adoption of the vision statement and recommends policies and action strategies that are aimed at achieving the vision that the community created through the public outreach process. The Rural Area Plan also includes maps to support the policy recommendations of creating Purchase of Development Rights areas, Transfer of Development Rights (sending and receiving areas), Conservation Residential with permanent conservation easements, and Agritourism and Rural Economy.
- E. Vision Statement – The Plan provides the following vision statement, "As part of the overall vision to encourage people to live, work, play and retire in our community, Prince William County recognizes access to open space and agricultural viewsheds contribute to a high quality of life; as such, the County:
- preserves open space, environmental resources, and cultural resources;

- honors and respects property rights of county landowners;
  - promotes availability of farmland (via easements) and agritourism.”
- F. Intent – The intent of the Rural Area Plan is to provide a vision and policy guidance on uses and development within the Rural Area and to consolidate the Comprehensive Plan’s many existing policies specifically applicable to the Rural Area and rural preservation.
- Goal #1: Adopt land preservation tools to facilitate preservation of protected open space in the Rural Area.
  - Goal #2: Designate rural character areas, connected open space corridors and trails maps to provide policy guidance on future uses within the Rural Area.
  - Goal #3: Adopt policies to enhance the rural economy.
  - Goal #4: Adopt policies to achieve preservation of cultural resources and access to farmland in the Rural Area.
- G. Rural Area Plan Map – A map showing Rural Character Areas and a modification to the Long-Range Land Use map to designate TDR sending and receiving areas as well as Conservation Residential areas is included in this comprehensive plan amendment (see attached maps).

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

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- A. Initiation of Comprehensive Update – Under Section 15.2-2229 of the Virginia Code, the Board of County Supervisors may consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. On August 3, 2016, the Board approved the proposed scope of work for comprehensive plan amendments which included incorporating recommendations from existing studies such as the Rural Preservations Study. (RES NO. 16-647)
- B. Comprehensive Plan Update Community Conversations – The Planning Office held a series of Community Conversations public meetings on the Comprehensive Plan Update. The meetings were held on October 30, 2018, November 13, 2018, and November 14, 2018. Opportunities for feedback on the development of the Rural Area Plan, along with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, were made available through direct feedback to staff members and through use of a mobile application designed specifically for public engagement related to the Comprehensive Plan update.
- C. Community Engagement Sessions – The Planning Office held a series of Community Engagement public meetings on the Rural Area Plan. The meetings were held on June 24, 2019, July 30, 2019, and September 24, 2019, to gather stakeholder ideas and thoughts on the Rural Area and to distribute information and answer questions regarding the staff recommendations for rural preservation.
- D. Expressed Concerns – The following summarizes some of the community feedback received during the community engagement sessions and submitted comments:

- Based on feedback provided the Planning Office believes that some of the recommendations in the 2014 Rural Preservation Study were too intense and recommended inappropriate levels of density within the County's rural areas.
- Citizens expressed concern at the development of the transitional ribbon, therefore, staff does not recommend adoption of a transitional ribbon.
- Staff also heard concerns about the extent of sewer extension in the rural area, therefore staff is not recommending a county-wide extension of sewer and instead recommends tools that would permit but limit sewer extensions in specific areas by requiring the establishment of permanent conservation easements on the specific properties and then prohibiting the crossing of sewer easements through the "green wall" thereby restricting further extension of public sewer.
- There was concern expressed about the lack of Development-Area TDR receiving areas, which staff has addressed by recommending several Regional Activity Centers in the Development Area as receiving areas for TDRs.
- Citizens expressed concern with increased density in rural cluster subdivisions, therefore staff does not recommend a county-wide increase of density in the rural cluster regulations.
- Some expressed a concern with further downzoning the A-1, Agriculture zoning district and to address this concern staff is not recommending a change to the minimum lot size in the A-1 zoning district. These examples demonstrate how staff has addressed citizen input.

The recommendations have been drafted to address staff and community concerns to the greatest extent possible.

- E. Proposed Language – Draft language was published on the project website on September 17, 2019, and notifications were sent to all who subscribe to PWC Alerts. A project website was developed and maintained by the Planning Office throughout the project. This website included all project information including meeting materials, maps, survey results, presentations, etc. Notification of the public meetings was provided on the project website, the County's homepage, and through newspaper advertising.
- F. Planning Commission Work Session and Public Meeting – The Planning Commission held work sessions on the proposed language on October 23, 2019, November 13, 2019, and December 2, 2020.
- G. Planning Commission Public Hearing – A public hearing before the Planning Commission has been properly advertised for March 17, 2021, and notifications were sent to all who subscribe to PWC Alerts. The text and maps are also available on the Planning web site [www.pwcgov.org/PlanUpdate](http://www.pwcgov.org/PlanUpdate).

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Planning Office recommends approval of #CPA2018-00009, Rural Area Plan for the following reasons:

The Rural Area Plan establishes a new vision for the Rural Area, new goals, and action strategies to guide preservation tools. The Plan identifies special character areas that recognize the diverse makeup of the Rural Area.

The following guiding principles were used to develop policies and action strategies that align with the vision statement:

- Preserves or protects contiguous open space for publicly accessible passive recreation
- Preserves potential for continued farming in the County
- Allows bucolic farmland viewsheds
- Represents smart growth
- Preserves cultural resources
- Protects rural economy
- Demonstrates fiscal responsibility

Through policies and action strategies the Rural Area Plan addresses

- Rural character
- Rural Character Areas
- Rural Economic Development
- Cultural Resources
- Environment, Open Space and Recreation
- Long-Range Land Use
- Long-Range Land Use Classifications
- Transfer of Development Rights – Rural Areas
- Transfer of Development Rights – Development Areas
- Transfer of Development Rights – Sending Areas
- Rural Infrastructure
- Public Sewer
- Transportation, Public Safety, Schools, Public Facilities & Capital Projects

### **Community Input**

In October and November of 2018, the Planning Office hosted three community conversations for the Comprehensive Plan Update, which included requesting public input on the Rural Area. On June 24, 2019 and July 30, 2019, the Planning Office held community input meetings on rural preservation in the County. These meetings resulted in the recommendations provided herein, as well as the creation of a vision for rural area preservation. Approximately 180 citizens attended each of the public meetings in 2019. Over 1,000 written citizen comments were received during the process.

As required by § 15.2-2204, Code of Virginia, notice of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment has been advertised and the proposed amendment has been published on the Prince William County

government web site and has been available in the Planning Office. The Planning Office also received feedback during public meetings held June 24, 2019, July 30, 2019, and September 24, 2019.

The Planning Office has received hundreds of emails (reflected in a 281-page spread sheet posted on the webpage) and received feedback through response cards which were completed by participants at the July 30, 2019 Community Feedback meeting. Copies of the responses received are located on our web page, <https://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/planning/Pages/Rural-Area-Plan.aspx>.

The comments ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree where some residents confirmed their desire for no change to current rural policy while others supported a wholesale adoption of the Rural Preservation Study Recommendations. There was significant feedback for “no change” to the rural policies.

### **Legal Issues**

Legal issues, if any, are appropriately addressed through the County Attorney’s Office.

### **Timing**

Section 15.2-2229, Code of Virginia allows that if the governing body desires an amendment, it may prepare such an amendment and refer it to the local planning commission for public hearing within 60 days after written request by the governing body. A public hearing before the Planning Commission was advertised for March 17, 2021.

### **STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

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### **ATTACHMENTS**

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Area Maps  
Staff Analysis  
Planning Commission Resolution

## Rural Area Plan

### Introduction

The Rural Area is the area of Prince William County which contains agricultural, agritourism, protected open space, and large-lot residential land uses, as well as occasional small-scale convenience retail centers, existing small lot residential enclaves and community facilities. 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, and the open space and rural character presently found there. The Rural Area also helps to protect the mission of Marine Corps Base Quantico, Prince William Forest Park and Manassas National Battlefield Park, which serve as key anchor points within the Rural Area classification. Providing methods to permanently preserve protected open space 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 support the agricultural economy, preserve open space, and minimize the encroachment and impact of infrastructure and public facilities.

### Vision Statement

As part of the overall vision to encourage people to live, work, play, and retire in our community, Prince William County recognizes access to open space and agricultural viewsheds contribute to a high quality of life; as such, the County:

- preserves open space, environmental resources, and cultural resources;
- honors and respects property rights of county landowners; and
- promotes availability of farmland (via easements) and agritourism.

### Guiding Principles

These guiding principles were used to develop policies and action strategies that align with the Vision Statement:

- Preserves or protects contiguous open space for publicly accessible passive recreation
- Preserves potential for continued farming in the County
- Allows bucolic farmland viewsheds
- Represents smart growth
- Preserves cultural resources
- Protects rural economy
- Demonstrates fiscal responsibility

### Background

The Rural Area is an area of the County, in which agricultural and farming historically occurred. Prince William County has a long history of rural preservation. 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". In 1998, as growth pressure in the northern Virginia area increased, the Board of County Supervisors formalized the designation of the Rural Area during the Comprehensive Plan update. This identified the county as two distinct areas: a Development Area and a Rural Area. As of 2018, the Rural Area in Prince William County covers approximately 117,000 acres or 52% of the County.

In 2013, at the direction of the Board of County Supervisors, the Planning Office conducted research on appropriate planning tools to incentivize the preservation of the Rural Area. 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. Opportunities for stakeholder input were provided throughout the study. The Rural Preservation Study was published in 2014. In 2016, the Board of County Supervisors directed staff to bring forward recommendations to incorporate appropriate components of the Rural Preservation Study as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process. Shortly after, major changes regarding how local jurisdictions could accept proffers were adopted in the General Assembly, which directly affected the recommendations of the Rural Preservation Study. Staff focused on proffer reform between 2016-2019. In October and November of 2018, the Planning Office hosted three community conversations for the Comprehensive Plan Update, which included requesting public input on the Rural Area. On June 24, 2019 and July 30, 2019, the Planning Office held community input meetings on rural preservation in the County. These meetings resulted in the recommendations provided herein, as well as the creation of a vision for rural area preservation. Approximately 180 citizens attended each of the public meetings in 2019. Over 1,000 written citizen comments were received during the process.

### **Intent**

The intent of the Rural Area Plan is to provide a vision and policy guidance on uses and development within the Rural Area and to consolidate the Comprehensive Plan's many existing policies specifically applicable to the Rural Area and rural preservation.

Goal #1: Adopt land preservation tools to facilitate preservation of protected open space in the Rural Area.

Goal #2: Designate rural character areas, connected open space corridors and trails maps to provide policy guidance on future uses within the Rural Area.

Goal #3: Adopt policies to enhance the rural economy.

Goal #4: Adopt policies to achieve preservation of cultural resources and access to farmland in the Rural Area.

Within the Plan's Community Design chapter are design guidelines for gateways and corridors. Two of the County's five gateways identified in that chapter are in the Rural Area:



Route 29, from the Fauquier County boundary to Route 15. The objective is to create a gateway in a historic community that complements the rural village of the Buckland Historic District. (GATEWAY 2).

Interstate 66 West. The objective is to create a corridor that illustrates both the rich agricultural history of the western portion of the County and demonstrate the transition to the high quality, mixed-use projects being developed at the Route 15 interchange. (GATEWAY 3).

### **Rural Character**

Rural character means a landscape dominated by or with a strong presence of **rural elements**. We list these elements in Table 1. 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 1 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, districts, cultural landscapes, 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, the 2014 Rural Preservation Study 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. Tours and photo-documentation of the area with over 1,300 photographs was completed. Overall, based on field work and analysis, it was concluded 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. We call these sub-areas “rural character areas”, which are defined 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.

### **Rural Character Areas**

The Rural Area contains five main recognizable geographic areas that share like characteristics and evoke a unique and different feeling through their natural and man-made elements and surroundings.

**Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves** – These areas were subdivided and built prior to the establishment of the Rural Area and the change to the minimum lot size of 10 acres in the A-1, Agricultural Zoning District. Goals for this rural character area focus on preserving the smaller-lot rural residential character of the area and allowing limited infill development consistent with the existing density and use. The main characteristics defining these areas include:

- Existing suburban densities of 0.5 to 3 acre lots in many areas;
- Primarily residential uses;
- Little or no agricultural uses; and
- Located in areas with mostly improved roads and nearby access to existing commuter routes.

**Estates and Subdivisions** – These areas are characterized by 10-acre subdivisions that are principally residential, but still offer opportunities for limited agriculture production. The goals for this rural character area focus on preserving existing large-lot estate subdivisions and providing for low impact agricultural uses.

- Majority of lots are 10 acres or less;
- Limited agricultural uses;
- Primarily residential uses;
- Existing mix of individual homes for committed building lots and organized subdivisions; and
- Road widening beyond rural standards.

### **Actions Strategies**

1. Allow Transfer of Development Rights and Purchase of Development Rights to permanently sever development rights within this area.
2. Retain existing A-1, Agricultural, uses per the Zoning Ordinance.
3. Promote rural arts, specialty crops and low impact agricultural uses on lots with the current agricultural density permitted in the A-1 zoning district.

**Agriculture and Forest** – These areas are dominated by agriculture and forest use. Goals for this rural character area focus on supporting the agricultural economy and preserving agricultural lands. The main characteristics defining these areas include:

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

### Action Strategies

1. Allow Transfer of Development Rights and Purchase of Development Rights to permanently sever development rights within this area.
2. Retain existing A-1, Agricultural, uses per the Zoning Ordinance.
3. Promote rural arts, specialty crops and low impact agricultural uses on lots with the current agricultural density permitted in the A-1 zoning district.
4. Establish an Agricultural Economic Development Program.
5. Promote Agri-business and Agri-tourism.
6. Develop a targeted Agri-business list.

**Gateway Corridors** – These areas form the first impression of the Rural Area from outside the County along Routes 15, 29 and 28. Goals for this rural character area focus on maintaining the rural feel of the area, connecting and identifying historic resources along the corridor, and designing attractive signage and landscaping at County gateways. The main characteristics defining these areas include:

- Rural highways;
- Scenic views and vistas to rural land; and
- Historic interpretive signage.

### Action Strategies

1. Prioritize Gateway Corridors for the purchase of development rights.
2. Avoid locating visually intrusive, high traffic recreation facilities such as sports complexes in Gateway Corridors.

**Bull Run Mountainside** – This area is generally over the Bull Run Mountains. Goals for this rural character area focus on preserving the scenic view of the mountainside. The main characteristics defining this area include:

- Views to and from the mountains
- Dramatic elevation change with steep slopes

- Existing protected open space and heritage resources

### Action Strategies

1. Prioritize Bull Run Mountainside areas for the purchase of development rights.
2. Avoid locating visually intrusive structures such as cell towers and electric transmission towers in the Bull Run Mountainside area.

**Historical Areas** – These are defined geographic areas with well-represented thematic (historic) contexts. These areas overlay the above rural character areas. The policy priority is on preservation and interpretation of the thematic context or contexts.

Selection Criteria [methodology] – 1) defined geographic area, 2) one or more thematic contexts\* or a single context that demonstrated a large impact on the history of the County, 3) may represent multiple periods (time periods) of significance, and may warrant special focus in order to preserve, protect and interpret as much of the historic context as possible.

\*Some examples of thematic contexts are as follows: Domestic, Subsistence and Agriculture, Government or Political, Health Care or Medical, Education, Military or Defense, Religion, Social, Recreation or Arts, Transportation or Communication, Commerce or Trade, Industry or processing or extraction. A full list is in the Guidelines for Conducting Historic Resources Survey in Virginia 2017.

**RA-RC POLICY 1:** Adopt map of rural character areas.

**RA-RC POLICY 2:** Use the character areas as the basis for policies that protect and/or enhance the character in the different areas.

### **Action Strategies:**

**RA-RC 2.1** Allow selective public sewer extensions in areas designated for Conservation Residential, with the following considerations:

**RA-RC 2.1 a.** Allowed only through a rezoning application to a Conservation Residential (CR) district.

**RA-RC 2.1 b.** At least 60% of the rezoning area is preserved through the dedication of a permanent conservation easement, permanent open space easement, or other appropriate easement.

**RA-RC 2.1 c.** Impacts on adjoining/nearby parcels, impacts on adjoining/nearby character areas are mitigated and development design, and the amount and location of open space contributes to the Rural Area vision.

**RA-RC 2.2** Allow Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) on all parcels a minimum of 20 acres within the Rural Area, subject to the requirements of any TDR or PDR ordinance.

**RA-RC 2.3** Apply roadway design standards to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas. For example, avoid road widenings (acceleration/deceleration lanes) in the Agriculture and Forest areas.

**RA-RC 2.4** Adopt design standards for the gateway corridors of Route 29, Route 15 and Interstate 66.

**RA-RC POLICY 3:** Use the rural character areas as the basis for prioritizing land preservation through PDR and TDR.

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-RC 3.1** Priority areas would be: Gateway Corridors, Agriculture and Forests Character Areas, land adjacent to the open space corridors map, historical areas and land adjacent to existing protected lands.

**RA-RC POLICY 4:** Use the rural character areas to analyze the scale and compatibility of public facilities and institutional uses.

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-RC 4.1** Avoid locating schools or sports complexes in Gateway Corridors, adjacent to existing protected lands, or Agriculture and Forests Character Areas.

**RA-RC POLICY 5:** Preserve and enhance the unique architectural and landscape qualities of the County's Rural Areas.

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-RC 5.1** 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.

**RA-RC 5.2** Adopt site design, landscape architectural, and architectural techniques to help preserve and/or enhance the character of selected character areas.

**RA-RC POLICY 6:** Protect rural viewsheds.:

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-RC 6.1** Encourage and incentivize rural uses through adoption of overlay zoning districts.

**RA-RC 6.2** Allow TDR and PDR throughout the Rural Area and prioritize areas within the Open Space Corridors map and gateway corridors.

**RA-RC 6.3** Allow cluster development with access to sewer in appropriate locations as designated on the Long-Range Land Use Plan where additional dedication of permanently protected open space would facilitate the protection of rural viewsheds.

## **Rural Economic Development**

Economic 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. 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. From an economic perspective the prospects for farming in Prince William County are decreasing. In both the 2002 and the 2007 Census of Agriculture, total farm production expenses exceeded gross sales, indicating a net financial loss. 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, based on this Census data, farming lost money in both 2002 and 2007, and about half of the farms produced negligible sales. Caveats to this are as follows:

- 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 should not make a large difference to the overall economic results, the interest trend in such farms is increasing and that they do make an important contribution to rural character in Prince William County.

Some farms remain committed to farming, for example Evergreen Acres, Windy Knoll Farm (Nokesville) and Yankey Farms. The County has two wineries (The Winery at La Grange and Effingham Winery). The Prince William County and Fairfax County Farm Bureau has approximately 300 registered producers.

**RA-ED POLICY 1:** Give recognition to and support farming, agritourism, and rural recreation as making contributions to the County's economic development and quality of life.

### **Action Strategies:**

**RA-ED 1.1** Create a rural economic development strategy, incorporating rural economic development as a form of targeted industry.

**RA-ED 1.2** Adopt incentives to encourage agritourism and compatible uses within the Rural Area that help maintain the rural character.

**RA-ED 1.3** Support General Assembly legislative reform to enable more flexibility at the local level in Virginia's Use Value Taxation Program, to allow local governments to better incentivize agricultural and agritourism through local tax policy.

**RA-ED POLICY 2:** Revise the mission of the Agricultural and Forestal District Committee to include recommending revisions to codes and regulations to support agriculture and the rural economy.

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-ED 2.1** Clarify what uses should be permitted as agri-businesses.

**RA-ED 2.2** Review regulations to be supportive of small farmers/operators.

**RA-ED POLICY 3:** Continue to support an agri-business and agritourism staff position within the County government. This position could focus on the following:

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-ED 3.1** Support existing farms.

**RA-ED 3.2** Promote the “new” agriculture (hobby farms, value -added products).

**RA-ED 3.3** Promote the proposed PDR and TDR programs.

**RA-ED 3.4** Explore potential revisions to five-year prior use standards for entry into Virginia’s Use Value Taxation Program.

**RA-ED POLICY 4:** Recognize 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.

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-ED 4.1** Focus study efforts on understanding Prince William County’s regional identity and identify where the County should focus efforts to attract future investment.

**RA-ED 4.2** Promote Prince William County’s regional contribution to the broader rural economy and leverage this contribution to increase investments in the local economy.

**Cultural Resources**

Prince William County takes pride in its past and understands the value of its rich history. The County promotes the identification, evaluation, and protection of its cultural resource sites, as well as the tourism opportunities these sites present. Historic resources in the Rural Plan Area are represented in individual sites, districts, buildings, structures, landscapes and objects, and cemeteries. These historic resources encompass many time periods, starting during pre -contact (before 1607) up to and through the mid-twentieth century. This history informed our land use and past decisions to designate the Rural Area. These historic areas are tangible elements of our shared past.

There are a number of Historic Areas within the Rural Character Area Map area. These areas are designated Character Areas because of cultural resources that reflect one or more historic contexts.

Historic Areas are not the only significant elements of our shared history. Also, within the Rural Area, are approximately 677 architectural sites, 745 archaeology sites recorded with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Of those, 23 are listed on the Virginia Landmarks Registry and the National Register of Historic Places. County records show 208 cemeteries located in the Rural Area.

as well as 37 of the County's 57 County Registered Historic Sites. There are 7,529 acres classified as High Historic Sensitivity and 6,228 acres classified as High Prehistoric Sensitivity. There are also five battlefield landscapes and the Journey Through Hallowed Ground corridor which comprise vast areas of the Rural Area.

**RA-CR POLICY 1 - Protect battlefield landscapes and viewsheds; avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts.**

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-CR 1.1 Identify and map battlefield landscapes to be preserved.**

**RA-CR 1.2 Use GIS analysis to identify appropriate viewshed protection zones surrounding selected battlefields and create zoning overlay districts.**

**RA-CR 1.3 Encourage and facilitate property owners to secure preservation or conservation easement**

**RA-CR 1.4 Designate battlefield landscape as sending areas for the TDR sending area and designate the area for the PDR program.**

**RA-CR POLICY 2 - Connect historic areas and promote rural economic development.**

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-CR 2.1 Incentivize multi-modal trail connections to historic sites, where possible.**

**RA-CR 2.2 Where appropriate and it does not diminish historic integrity collocate open space and passive recreation park facilities with historic sites.**

**RA-CR 2.3 Identify and build (i.e., infrastructure signs, trails, easements) rural heritage tour routes and corridors connecting historic sites to explore the Rural Area's history.**

**RA-CR 2.4 Conduct a study and prepare a wayfinding and signage program to connect Historic Character Areas.**

**RA-CR 2.5 Identify and create unguided tours along heritage corridors in the Rural Area.**

**RA-CR 2.6 Incentivize historical private tour operations in the Rural Area.**

**RA-CR POLICY 3 - Use the Journey Through Hallowed Ground to create a distinct sense of place and entry features into and exiting the Rural Area.**

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-CR 3.1 Adopt the Journey Through Hallowed Ground's *The Living Legacy Project Master Plan* (2014) for the Route 15 corridor.**

**RA-CR 3.2 Identify funding for implementation of *The Living Legacy Project Master Plan* (2014).**



**RA-CR POLICY 4:** Conduct a study and prepare specific set of action strategies for the following:

Historical Areas.

- a. Beverly-Chapman's Mill/Thoroughfare Gap;
- b. Brentsville Courthouse;
- c. Buckland/Buckland Mills Battlefield;
- d. Greenwich Church/Lawn Historic Area;
- e. Manassas Battlefields; and
- f. Nokesville Historic Area.

### **Environment, Open Space and Recreation**

Open space significantly contributes to the bucolic aesthetic of the Rural Area as well as provide important environmental benefits to the County, such as plant and animal habitat, groundwater recharge, and storm water filtration, among others. Open space provides opportunities to link passive recreation and multi-use trails (pedestrian, bike, equestrian) between the Rural and Development Areas of the County. There is much interest in green infrastructure, corridor, and trail planning. Conserved open space could be used to help preserve affordable access to farmland.

**RA-ER POLICY 1:** Permanently protect 60 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the Rural Area equivalent to approximately 13,600 acres.

#### **Action Strategies:**

**RA-ER 1.1** Adopt a TDR program, allowing conservation, open space, or other appropriate easements to include farming as a permitted use in appropriate locations.

**RA-ER 1.2** Adopt a PDR program, allowing conservation, open space, or other appropriate easements to include farming as a permitted use in appropriate locations.

**RA-ER 1.3** Leverage PDR opportunities with Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program, federal and state acquisitions, and funding support to acquire prioritized areas, such as RPA, Open Space Corridors, battlefields, parks, and historic areas, for conservation.

**RA-ER 1.4** Encourage dedication of permanent conservation, open space, or other appropriate easements over open space in by-right cluster subdivisions.

**RA-ER 1.5** Designate areas for Conservation Residential as a Long-Range Land Use, requiring a higher amount of conserved open space and dedication of a permanent conservation, open space, or other appropriate easement.

### **Long Range Land Use**

**RA-LR POLICY 1:** Permanently conserve 60 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the Rural Area – equivalent to approximately 13,600 acres. Protection would come from a combination of a variety of sources and programs including Purchase of Development Rights, Transfer of Development Rights, park acquisition, federal and state acquisitions and funding support, easement donations, US Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program, and protected open space preserved in a permanent conservation, open space, or other appropriate easement in cluster subdivisions.

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-LR 1.1** Adopt a PDR program. Leverage PDR opportunities with REPI, and federal and state acquisitions and funding support.

**RA-LR 1.2** Adopt a TDR program.

**RA-LR 1.3** Incentivize residential cluster policies, including the dedication of permanent conservation, open space or other appropriate easements.

**RA-LR POLICY 2:** 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.

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-LR 2.1** Establish the entire Rural Area as a TDR sending area.

**RA-LR POLICY 3:** Incentivize the cluster development provisions in the Rural Area.

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-LR 3.1** Allow cluster development within the Rural Area with access to sewer only in areas with appropriate surrounding character and where there exists opportunity to leverage existing features prioritized for protection, such as open space corridors, sensitive environmental features, and existing protected lands.

**RA-LR 3.2** Provide for areas to receive transferred development rights with appropriate surrounding character and where there exists opportunity to leverage existing features prioritized for protection, such as open space corridors, sensitive environmental features, and existing protected lands.

**RA-LR POLICY 4:** 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.

**Action Strategies:**

**RA-LR 4.1** Incorporate environmental, recreation, and heritage considerations.

**RA-LR 4.2** Include consideration of related efforts such as the:

- I. Northern Virginia Regional Commission Conservation Corridor Project mapping.
- II. Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Virginia Outdoors Plan.
- III. Journey Through Hallowed Ground Scenic Byway corridor management plan, and
- IV. Rural Preservation Study's Rural Character Area mapping.

**LONG RANGE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS:**

**Conservation Residential (CRES).** The purpose of the Conservation Residential classification is to promote conservation of protected open space through a cluster residential rezoning. The minimum area for a Conservation District rezoning should be 40 acres in order to allow an adequate amount of permanent open space preservation. Permanently preserved open space should be located closest to or abutting the AE, Agricultural and Estates portions of the Rural Area and should be connected to adjacent high-value sites, such as national parks, national battlefields, open space and environmentally significant corridors. The maximum density is dependent on the following Rural Character Areas:

**I. Agriculture and Forest**

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 row crops, livestock or horses, or forested. To incentivize clustering, the permitted density is increased from one dwelling per 10 acres to one dwelling per five acres. The open space requirement should be increased to 60 percent. Open space should be placed in a permanent conservation, open space, or other appropriate easement. Easement terms can include passive recreation, forest, farming and agricultural activities, and similar, as appropriate.

While clustering works best in areas with public sewer, we do not recommend extending public sewer throughout the Rural Area. Extensions of public sewer in the Rural Area is permitted only through a Conservation Residential (CR) rezoning and in areas designated as Conservation Residential on the Long-Range Land Use Plan.

**II. Estates and Subdivisions**

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. 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. To incentivize clustering, the permitted density could be increased from one dwelling per 10 acres to one dwelling per three (3) acres. The open space requirement should be increased to 60 percent. Open space should be placed in a permanent conservation, open space, or other appropriate easement. Easement terms can include passive recreation, forest, farming and agricultural activities, and similar, as appropriate.

Not every property in these areas would be suitable for public sewer. Extensions of public sewer in the Rural Area is permitted only through a Conservation Residential (CR) rezoning and in areas designated as Conservation Residential on the Long-Range Land Use Plan.

**Transfer of Development Rights Receiving Area, Rural Area Designation (TDR-R).** The purpose of the TDR-R receiving area is to designate areas appropriate for low density, clustered residential with increased open space permanently preserved. Extension of public sewer in the TDR-R areas are permitted through an approved transfer of development rights process. Properties within these areas shall meet development standards consistent with the CR-1, Conservation Residential, zoning district.

### **Transfer of Development Rights Receiving Area, Development Area Designation (TDR-D).**

The purpose of the TDR-D receiving area is to designate areas appropriate for high density residential in the County's Regional Activity Centers. Other areas may be considered when a property owner submits a request to designate a new TDR-D in conjunction with a Mixed-Use Zoning District (MXD) rezoning. Areas should be appropriate for high density residential, preferably in areas with dense walkable mixed use and in areas with designated transit facilities and centers. Properties within this designation shall meet development standards, excluding the required mix of unit types, consistent with the PMR Urban High, Planned Mixed Residential, zoning district.

**Transfer of Development Rights Sending Area (TDR-S).** The purpose of the TDR-S sending area is to designate areas appropriate for preservation through a permanent severance of development rights in the sending area and transfer those development rights to a TDR-R or TDR-D receiving area. The basis for determining the transferred development rights should be the Rural Character Area designation as follows:

#### **I. Agriculture and Forest**

To incentivize the transfer of development rights, the transferable density is one dwelling per five acres. Development rights should only be calculated on property not otherwise being used for a permitted use, special use, accessory use or otherwise similar, or property already under a conservation easement or permanent protection status.

#### **II. Estates and Subdivisions**

To incentivize clustering, the transferable density is one dwelling per three (3) acres. Development rights should only be calculated on property not otherwise being used for a permitted use, special use, accessory use or otherwise similar, or property already under a conservation easement or permanent protection status.

All other areas within the TDR-S, not designated Agriculture and Forestry or Estates and Subdivision, transferable density should be one unit per ten acres. Development rights should only be calculated on property not otherwise being used for a permitted use, special use, accessory use or otherwise similar, or property already under a conservation easement or permanent protection status.

## **Rural Infrastructure**

A critical component of plan implementation is to plan for public facilities that ensure investment in public infrastructure to achieve the vision. Public facilities and infrastructure located in the Rural Area must meet both the needs of Rural Area residents and the Development Area residents throughout the County. Public facility needs such as schools, police, fire and rescue, mobility, and potable water and sewer are crucial to maintaining an adequate level of service throughout the Rural Area. Rural infrastructure should provide for the needs of the Rural Area residents without promoting development that is incompatible with the character of the Rural Area. The design of rural infrastructure should not only have minimum visual impact but should enhance the character in which it is located. Coordinating the location and extent of public facilities play a supportive role in land use and development planning. Strategic location of public facilities can be used to serve multiple purposes such as extending Open Space Corridors or preserving existing character areas.

### Mobility, Public Safety, Schools, Public Facilities & Capital Projects

**RA-RI POLICY 1:** Avoid locating visually intrusive, high traffic recreation facilities such as sports complexes in sensitive Rural Character Areas such as Gateway Corridors or Agriculture and Forests areas.

**RA-RI POLICY 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.

**RA-RI POLICY 3:** Roadway design standards should be applied to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas when constructing road upgrades. As a general guideline, rural roads should not be widened with the exception of four-lane major collector and higher classification roads.

### **Public Sewer**

**RA-PS POLICY 1:** Allow extensions of public sewer on a case-by-case basis in the following areas:

#### **Action Strategies:**

**RA-PS 1.1** Extension of public sewer in the TDR-R areas are permitted through an approved TDR process.

**RA-PS 1.2** Extension of public sewer in the Conservation Residential areas are permitted through a Residential Conservation (RC) rezoning approved by the Board.

**RA-PS POLICY 2:** Retain all other existing Rural Area sewer policies.

### **Public Facilities**

**RA-PF POLICY 1:** Plan for public facilities, such as schools, police, fire and rescue, mobility, and potable water and sewer within the Rural Area, but ensure that these facilities are compatible with the rural character.

#### **Action Strategies:**

RA-PF 1.1 Avoid locating visually intrusive, high traffic recreation facilities such as sports complexes in sensitive Rural Character Areas.

RA-PF 1.2 Coordinate the location of new public facilities with the Open Space and Corridors map to help fill gaps in corridors and reinforce Rural Area policies.

RA-PF 1.3 Use the Rural Character Areas in selecting/screening sites for public facilities.

RA-PF POLICY 2: In making road upgrades, roadway design standards should be applied to protect and/or enhance the rural character in specific character areas.

**Action Strategies:**

RA-PF 2.1 Pursue development of a rural rustic road program that aims to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas. Consider mobility and multimodal access in the Rural Areas and adhere to VDOT regulations and guidelines. As a general guideline, rural roads should not be widened with the exception of four-lane major collector and higher classification roads.

RA-PF POLICY 3: Enhance mobile data broadband services in the Rural Area to enhance service to both residents and 911 services.

**Action Strategies:**

RA-PF 3.1 Where appropriate and consistent with applicable law, encourage extension of broadband and fiber into the Rural Areas through rezoning and special use permit requests, and through public road infrastructure projects.

## Rural Area Plan

### Introduction

The Rural Area is the area of Prince William County which contains agricultural, agritourism, protected open space, and large-lot residential land uses, as well as occasional small-scale convenience retail centers, existing small lot residential enclaves and community facilities. 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, and the open space and rural character presently found there. The Rural Area also helps to protect the mission of Marine Corps Base Quantico, Prince William Forest Park and Manassas National Battlefield Park, which serve as key anchor points within the Rural Area classification. Providing methods to permanently preserve protected open space 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 support the agricultural economy, preserve open space, and minimize the encroachment and impact of infrastructure and public facilities.

### Vision Statement

As part of the overall vision to encourage people to live, work, play, and retire in our community, Prince William County recognizes access to open space and agricultural viewsheds contribute to a high quality of life; as such, the County:

- preserves open space, environmental resources, and cultural resources;
- honors and respects property rights of county landowners; and
- promotes availability of farmland (via easements) and agritourism.

### Guiding Principles

These guiding principles were used to develop policies and action strategies that align with the Vision Statement:

- Preserves or protects contiguous open space for publicly accessible passive recreation
- Preserves potential for continued farming in the County
- Allows bucolic farmland viewsheds
- Represents smart growth
- Preserves cultural resources
- Protects rural economy
- Demonstrates fiscal responsibility

### Background

The Rural Area is an area of the County, in which agricultural and farming historically occurred. Prince William County has a long history of rural preservation. In 1964, Harland Bartholomew and

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

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". In 1998, as growth pressure in the northern Virginia area increased, the Board of County Supervisors formalized the designation of the Rural Area during the Comprehensive Plan update. This identified the county as two distinct areas: a Development Area and a Rural Area. As of 2018, the Rural Area in Prince William County covers approximately 117,000 acres or 52% of the County.

In 2013, at the direction of the Board of County Supervisors, the Planning Office conducted research on appropriate planning tools to incentivize the preservation of the Rural Area. 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. Opportunities for stakeholder input were provided throughout the study. The Rural Preservation Study was published in 2014. In 2016, the Board of County Supervisors directed staff to bring forward recommendations to incorporate appropriate components of the Rural Preservation Study as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process. Shortly after, major changes regarding how local jurisdictions could accept proffers were adopted in the General Assembly, which directly affected the recommendations of the Rural Preservation Study. Staff focused on proffer reform between 2016-2019. In October and November of 2018, the Planning Office hosted three community conversations for the Comprehensive Plan Update, which included requesting public input on the Rural Area. On June 24, 2019 and July 30, 2019, the Planning Office held community input meetings on rural preservation in the County. These meetings resulted in the recommendations provided herein, as well as the creation of a vision for rural area preservation. Approximately 180 citizens attended each of the public meetings in 2019. Over 1,000 written citizen comments were received during the process.

### Intent

The intent of the Rural Area Plan is to provide a vision and policy guidance on uses and development within the Rural Area and to consolidate the Comprehensive Plan's many existing policies specifically applicable to the Rural Area and rural preservation.

Goal #1: Adopt land preservation tools to facilitate preservation of protected open space in the Rural Area.

Goal #2: Designate rural character areas, connected open space corridors and trails maps to provide policy guidance on future uses within the Rural Area.

Goal #3: Adopt policies to enhance the rural economy.

Goal #4: Adopt policies to achieve preservation of cultural resources and access to farmland in the Rural Area.

Within the Plan's Community Design ~~element~~[chapter](#) are design guidelines for gateways and corridors. Two of the County's five gateways [identified in that chapter](#) are in the Rural Area:



## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

Route 29, from the Fauquier County boundary to Route 15. The objective is to create a gateway in a historic community that complements the rural village of the Buckland Historic District. (GATEWAY~~S-19~~2).

Interstate 66 West. The objective is to create a corridor that illustrates both the rich agricultural history of the western portion of the County and demonstrate the transition to the high quality, mixed-use projects being developed at the Route 15 ~~intersection~~interchange. (GATEWAY~~S-20~~3).

### Rural Character

Rural character means a landscape dominated by or with a strong presence of **rural elements**. We list these elements in Table 1. 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 1 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, districts, cultural landscapes, 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, the 2014 Rural Preservation Study 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. Tours and photo-documentation of the area with over 1,300 photographs was completed. Overall, based on field work and analysis, it was concluded 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

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

different, for example, near Quantico and Prince William Forest Park compared to Nokesville or to the Bull Run Mountainside. We call these sub-areas “rural character areas”, which are defined 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.

### Rural Character Areas

The Rural Area contains five main recognizable geographic areas that share like characteristics and evoke a unique and different feeling through their natural and man-made elements and surroundings.

**Older, Smaller-Lot Residential Enclaves** – These areas were subdivided and built prior to the establishment of the Rural Area and the change to the minimum lot size of 10 acres in the A-1, Agricultural Zoning District. Goals for this rural character area focus on preserving the smaller-lot rural residential character of the area and allowing limited infill development consistent with the existing density and use. The main characteristics defining these areas include:

- Existing suburban densities of 0.5 to 3 acre lots in many areas;
- Primarily residential uses;
- Little or no agricultural uses; and
- Located in areas with mostly improved roads and nearby access to existing commuter routes.

**Estates and Subdivisions** – These areas are characterized by 10-acre subdivisions that are principally residential, but still offer opportunities for limited agriculture production. The goals for this rural character area focus on preserving existing large-lot estate subdivisions and providing for low impact agricultural uses.

- Majority of lots are 10 acres or less;
- Limited agricultural uses;
- Primarily residential uses;
- Existing mix of individual homes, ~~for~~ committed building lots and organized subdivisions; and
- Road widening beyond rural standards.

### Actions Strategies

1. Allow Transfer of Development Rights and Purchase of Development Rights to permanently sever development rights within this area.
2. Retain existing A-1, Agricultural, ~~and Estates~~ uses per the Zoning Ordinance.
3. Promote rural arts, specialty crops and low impact agricultural uses on lots with the current agricultural density permitted in the A-1 zoning district.

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

**Agriculture and Forest** – These areas are dominated by agriculture and forest use. Goals for this rural character area focus on supporting the agricultural economy and preserving agricultural lands. The main characteristics defining these areas include:

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

### Action Strategies

1. Allow Transfer of Development Rights and Purchase of Development Rights to permanently sever development rights within this area.
2. Retain existing A-1, Agricultural, ~~and Estates~~ uses per the Zoning Ordinance.
3. Promote rural arts, specialty crops and low impact agricultural uses on lots with the current agricultural density permitted in the A-1 zoning district.
4. Establish an Agricultural Economic Development Program.
5. Promote Agri-business and Agri-tourism.
6. Develop a targeted Agri-business list.

**Gateway Corridors** – These areas form the first impression of the Rural Area from outside the County along Routes 15, 29 and 28. Goals for this rural character area focus on maintaining the rural feel of the area, connecting and identifying historic resources along the corridor, and designing attractive signage and landscaping at County gateways. The main characteristics defining these areas include:

- Rural highways;
- Scenic views and vistas to rural land; and
- Historic interpretive signage.

### Action Strategies

1. Prioritize Gateway Corridors for the purchase of development rights.
2. Avoid locating visually intrusive, high traffic recreation facilities such as sports complexes in Gateway Corridors.

**Bull Run Mountainside** – This area is generally over the Bull Run Mountains. Goals for this rural character area focus on preserving the scenic view of the mountainside. The main characteristics defining this area include:

- Views to and from the mountains
- Dramatic elevation change with steep slopes

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

- Existing protected open space and heritage resources

### Action Strategies

3. Prioritize Bull Run Mountainside areas for [the](#) purchase of development rights.
4. Avoid locating visually intrusive structures such as cell towers and electric transmission towers in the Bull Run Mountainside area.

**Historical Areas** – These are defined geographic areas with well-represented thematic (historic) contexts. These areas overlay the above rural character areas. The policy priority is on preservation and interpretation of the thematic context or contexts.

Selection Criteria [methodology] – 1) defined geographic area, 2) one or more thematic contexts\* or a single context that demonstrated a large impact on the history of the County, 3) may represent multiple periods (time periods) of significance, and may warrant special focus in order to preserve, protect and interpret as much of the historic context as possible.

\*Some examples of thematic contexts are as follows: Domestic, Subsistence and Agriculture, Government or Political, Health Care or Medical, Education, Military or Defense, Religion, Social, Recreation or Arts, Transportation or Communication, Commerce or Trade, Industry or processing or extraction. A full list is in the Guidelines for Conducting Historic Resources Survey in Virginia 2017.

**RA-RC POLICY 1:** Adopt map of rural character areas.

**RA-RC POLICY 2:** Use the character areas as the basis for policies that protect and/or enhance the character in the different areas.

### Action Strategies:

**RA-RC 2.1** Allow selective public sewer extensions in areas designated for Conservation Residential, with the following considerations:

**RA-RC 2.1 a.** Allowed only through a rezoning application to a Conservation Residential (CR-4) ~~district~~[designation](#).

**RA-RC 2.1 b.** At least 60% of the rezoning area is preserved through the dedication of a permanent conservation easement, [permanent open space easement, or other appropriate easement](#).

**RA-RC 2.1 c.** Impacts on adjoining/nearby parcels, impacts on adjoining/nearby character areas are mitigated and development design, [and](#) the amount and location of open space contributes to the Rural Area vision.

**RA-RC 2.2** Allow Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) on all parcels a minimum of 20 acres within the Rural Area, [subject to the requirements of any TDR or PDR ordinance](#).

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

**RA-RC 2.3** Apply roadway design standards ~~more carefully~~ to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas. For example, avoid road widenings (acceleration/deceleration lanes) in the Agriculture and Forest areas.

**RA-RC 2.4** Adopt design standards for the gateway corridors of Route 29, Route 15 and Interstate 66.

**RA-RC POLICY 3:** Use the rural character areas as the basis for prioritizing land preservation through PDR and TDR.

### Action Strategies:

**RA-RC 3.1** Priority areas would be: Gateway Corridors, Agriculture and Forests Character Areas, land adjacent to the open space corridors map, historical areas and land adjacent to existing protected lands.

**RA-RC POLICY 4:** Use the rural character areas to analyze the scale and compatibility of public facilities and institutional uses.

### Action Strategies:

**RA-RC 4.1** Avoid locating schools or sports complexes in Gateway Corridors, adjacent to existing protected lands, or Agriculture and Forests Ccharacter Aareas.

**RA-RC POLICY 5:** Preserve and enhance the unique architectural and landscape qualities of the County's Rrural Aareas.

### Action Strategies:

**RA-RC 5.1** 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.

**RA-RC 5.2** Adopt site design, landscape architectural, and architectural techniques to help preserve and/or enhance the character of selected character areas.

**RA-RC POLICY 6:** Protect rural viewsheds.

### Action Strategies:

**RA-RC 6.1** Encourage and incentivize rural uses through adoption of overlay zoning districts.

**RA-RC 6.2** Allow TDR and PDR throughout the Rural Area and prioritize areas within the Open Space Corridors map and ~~entry~~gateway corridors.

**RA-RC 6.3** Allow cluster development with access to sewer in appropriate locations as designated on the Long-Range Land Use Plan where additional dedication of permanently protected open space would facilitate the protection of rural viewsheds.

### Rural Economic Development

Economic 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. Research has shown clearly that businesses making location decisions consider in part their employees' quality of life, and easy access to an attractive, ~~R~~rural ~~A~~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. From an economic perspective the prospects for farming in Prince William County are decreasing. In both the 2002 and the 2007 Census of Agriculture, total farm production expenses exceeded gross sales, indicating a net financial loss. 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, [based on this Census data](#), farming lost money in both 2002 and 2007, and about half of the farms produced negligible sales. Caveats to this are as follows:

- 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 ~~w~~should not make a large difference to the overall economic results, the interest trend in such farms is increasing and that they do make an important contribution to rural character in Prince William County.

Some farms remain committed to farming, for example Evergreen Acres, Windy Knoll Farm (Nokesville) and Yankey Farms. The County has two wineries (The Winery at La Grange and Effingham Winery). The Prince William County and Fairfax County Farm Bureau has approximately 300 registered producers.

**~~RA-ED~~ POLICY 1:** Give recognition to and support farming, agritourism, and rural recreation as making contributions to the County's economic development and quality of life.

#### **Action Strategies:**

**~~RA-ED~~ 1.1** Create a rural economic development strategy, incorporating rural economic development as a form of targeted industry.

**~~RA-ED~~ 1.2** Adopt incentives to encourage agritourism and compatible uses within the ~~R~~rural ~~A~~area that help maintain the rural character.

**~~RA-ED~~ 1.3** Support General Assembly legislative reform to enable more flexibility at the local level in Virginia's Use Value Taxation Program, to allow local governments to better incentivize agricultural and agritourism through local tax policy.

**~~RA-ED~~ POLICY 2:** Revise the mission of the Agricultural and Forestal District Committee to include recommending revisions to codes and regulations to support agriculture and the rural economy.

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

### Action Strategies:

[RA-ED 2.1](#) Clarify what uses should be permitted as agri-businesses.

[RA-ED 2.2](#) Review regulations to be supportive of small farmers/operators.

[RA-ED POLICY 3](#): Continue to support an agri-business and agritourism [staff](#) position within the County [government](#). This position could focus on the following:

### Action Strategies:

[RA-ED 3.1](#) Support existing farms.

~~[RA-ED 3.2](#) Work with the Soil and Water Conservation District to resolve farmers' regulatory issues.~~

[RA-ED 3.3](#) Promote the "new" agriculture (hobby farms, value -added products).

[RA-ED 3.4](#) Promote the proposed PDR and TDR programs.

[RA-ED 3.5](#) Explore potential revisions to five-year prior use standards for entry into Virginia's Use Value Taxation Program.

[RA-ED POLICY 4](#): Recognize the overall rural economy is large and should be understood broadly and in an integrated manner to include recreation, tourism, and other types of economic activity.

### Action Strategies:

[RA-ED 4.1](#) Focus study efforts on understanding Prince William County's regional identity and identify where the County should focus efforts to attract future investment.

[RA-ED 4.2](#) Promote Prince William County's regional contribution to the broader rural economy and leverage this contribution to increase investments in the local economy.

## Cultural Resources

Prince William County takes pride in its past and understands the value of its rich history. The County promotes the identification, evaluation, and protection of its cultural resource sites, as well as the tourism opportunities these sites present. Historic resources in the Rural ~~Sector~~ Plan Area are represented in individual sites, districts, buildings, structures, landscapes and objects, and cemeteries. These historic resources encompass many time periods, starting during pre -contact (before 1607) up to and through the mid-twentieth century. This history informed our land use and past decisions to designate the Rural Area. These historic areas are tangible elements of our shared past.

There are a number of Historic Areas within the Rural Character Area Map [area](#). These areas are designated Character Areas because of cultural resources that reflect one or more historic contexts.

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

Historic Areas are not the only significant elements of our shared history. Also, within the Rural Area, are approximately 677 architectural sites, 745 archaeology sites recorded with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Of those, 23 are listed on the Virginia Landmarks Registry and the National Register of Historic Places. County records show 208 cemeteries located in the Rural Area, as well as 37 of the County's 57 County Registered Historic Sites. There are 7,529 acres classified as High Historic Sensitivity and 6,228 acres classified as High Prehistoric Sensitivity. There are also five battlefield landscapes and the Journey Through Hallowed Ground corridor which comprise vast areas of the Rural Area.

**RA-CR POLICY 1** - Protect battlefield landscapes and viewsheds; avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts.

### Action Strategies:

**RA-CR 1.1** Identify and map battlefield landscapes to be preserved.

**RA-CR 1.2** Use GIS analysis to identify appropriate viewshed protection zones surrounding selected battlefields and create [zoning](#) overlay [districts](#).

**RA-CR 1.3** Encourage and facilitate property owners to secure preservation or conservation easement

**RA-CR 1.4** Designate battlefield landscape as sending areas for ~~PDR &~~ [the TDR sending area and designate the area for the PDR program](#).

**RA-CR POLICY 2** - Connect historic areas and promote rural economic development.

### Action Strategies:

**RA-CR 2.1** Incentivize multi-model trail connections to historic sites, where possible.

**RA-CR 2.2** Where appropriate and it does not diminish historic integrity collocate open space and passive recreation park facilities with historic sites.

**RA-CR 2.3** Identity and build (i.e., infrastructure signs, trails, easements) rural heritage tour routes and corridors connecting historic sites to explore the [Rural Area's](#) history.

**RA-CR 2.4** Conduct a study and prepare a wayfinding and signage program to connect Historic Character Areas.

**RA-CR 2.5** Identify and create unguided tours along heritage corridors in the [Rural Area](#).

**RA-CR 2.6** Incentivize historical private tour operations in the [Rural Area](#).

**RA-CR POLICY 3** - Use the Journey Through Hallowed Ground to create a distinct sense of place and entry features into and exiting the Rural Area.

### Action Strategies:



## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

**RA-CR 3.1** Adopt the Journey Through Hallowed Ground's *The Living Legacy Project Master Plan* (2014) for the Route 15 corridor.

**RA-CR 3.2** Identify funding for implementation of *The Living Legacy Project Master Plan* (2014).

**RA-CR POLICY 4:** Conduct a study and prepare specific set of action strategies for the following:

Historical Areas.

- g. Beverly-Chapman's Mill/Thoroughfare Gap;
- h. Brentsville Courthouse;
- i. Buckland/Buckland Mills Battlefield;
- j. Greenwich Church/Lawn Historic Area;
- k. Manassas Battlefields; and
- l. Nokesville Historic Area.

### Environment, Open Space and Recreation

Open space significantly contributes to the bucolic aesthetic of the Rural Area as well as provide important environmental benefits to the County, such as plant and animal habitat, groundwater recharge, and storm water filtration, among others. Open space provides opportunities to link passive recreation and multi-use trails (pedestrian, bike, equestrian) between the Rural and Development Areas of the County. There is much interest in green infrastructure, corridor and trail planning. Conserved open space could be used to help preserve affordable access to farmland.

**RA-ER POLICY 1:** Permanently protect 60 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the Rural Area equivalent to approximately 13,600 acres.

#### Action Strategies:

**RA-ER 1.1** Adopt a TDR program, allowing conservation, open space, or other appropriate easements to include farming as a permitted use in appropriate locations.

**RA-ER 1.2** Adopt a PDR program, allowing conservation, open space, or other appropriate easements to include farming as a permitted use in appropriate locations.

**RA-ER 1.3** Leverage PDR opportunities with Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program, federal and state acquisitions, and funding support to acquire prioritized areas, such as RPA, Open Space Corridors, battlefields, parks, and historic areas, for conservation.

**RA-ER 1.4** Encourage dedication of permanent conservation, open space, or other appropriate easements over open space in by-right cluster subdivisions.

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

**RA-ER 1.5** Designate areas for Conservation Residential as a Long-Range Land Use, requiring a higher amount of conserved open space and dedication of a permanent conservation, [open space, or other appropriate](#) easement.

### Long Range Land Use

**RA-LR POLICY 1:** Permanently conserve 60 percent of the remaining undeveloped land in the Rural Area – equivalent to approximately 13,600 acres. Protection would come from a combination of a variety of sources and programs including Purchase of Development Rights, Transfer of Development Rights, park acquisition, federal and state acquisitions and funding support, easement donations, [US Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration \(REPI\)](#) program, and protected open space preserved in a permanent conservation, [open space, or other appropriate](#) easement in cluster subdivisions.

#### Action Strategies:

**RA-LR 1.1** Adopt [a](#) PDR program. Leverage PDR opportunities with REPI, [and](#) federal and state acquisitions and funding support.

**RA-LR 1.2** Adopt [a](#) TDR program.

**RA-LR 1.3** Incentivize residential cluster policies, ~~requiring~~[including the](#) dedication of permanent conservation, [open space or other appropriate](#) easements.

**RA-LR POLICY 2:** 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.

#### Action Strategies:

**RA-LR 2.1** Establish [the](#) entire Rural Area as a TDR sending area.

**RA-LR POLICY 3:** Incentivize the cluster [development](#) provisions in the Rural Area.

#### Action Strategies:

**RA-LR 3.1** Allow cluster [development](#) within the Rural Area with access to ~~S~~[s](#)ewer only in areas with appropriate surrounding character and where there exists opportunity to leverage existing features prioritized for protection, such as open space corridors, sensitive environmental features, and existing protected lands.

**RA-LR 3.2** Provide for areas to receive transferred development rights with appropriate surrounding character and where there exists opportunity to leverage existing features prioritized for protection, such as open space corridors, sensitive environmental features, and existing protected lands.

**RA-LR POLICY 4:** 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.

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

### Action Strategies:

[RA-LR 4.1](#) Incorporate environmental, recreation, and heritage considerations.

[RA-LR 4.2](#) Include consideration of related efforts such as the:

- V. Northern Virginia Regional Commission Conservation Corridor Project mapping,
- VI. Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Virginia Outdoors Plan,
- VII. Journey Through Hallowed Ground Scenic Byway corridor management plan, [and](#)
- VIII. Rural Preservation Study's ~~R~~rural ~~C~~character ~~A~~area mapping.

### LONG RANGE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS:

**Conservation Residential (CRES).** The purpose of the Conservation Residential classification is to promote conservation of protected open space through a cluster residential rezoning. The minimum area for a Conservation District rezoning should be 40 acres in order to allow an adequate amount of permanent open space preservation. Permanently ~~conserved~~[preserved](#) open space should be located closest to or abutting the AE, Agricultural and Estates portions of the Rural Area and should be connected to adjacent high-value sites, such as national parks, national battlefields, open space and environmentally significant corridors. The maximum density is dependent on the following ~~R~~rural ~~C~~character ~~A~~areas:

#### III. Agriculture and Forest

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 row crops, livestock or horses, or forested. To incentivize clustering, the permitted density is increased from one dwelling per 10 acres to one dwelling per five acres. The open space requirement should be increased to 60 percent. Open space should be placed in a permanent conservation, [open space, or other appropriate](#) easement. Easement terms can include passive recreation, forest, farming and agricultural activities, and similar, as appropriate.

While clustering works best in areas with public sewer, we do not recommend extending public sewer throughout the Rural Area. Extensions of public sewer in the Rural Area is permitted only through a Conservation Residential (~~CR-4~~) rezoning and in areas designated as Conservation Residential on the Long-Range Land Use Plan.

#### IV. Estates and Subdivisions

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. 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. To incentivize clustering, the permitted density could be increased from one dwelling per 10 acres to one dwelling per three (3) acres. The open

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

space requirement should be increased to 60 percent. Open space should be placed in a permanent conservation, [open space, or other appropriate](#) easement. Easement terms can include passive recreation, forest, farming and agricultural activities, and similar, as appropriate.

Not every property in these areas would be suitable for public sewer. Extensions of public sewer in the Rural Area is permitted only through a Conservation Residential (CR~~4~~) rezoning and in areas designated as Conservation Residential on the Long-Range Land Use Plan.

**Transfer of Development Rights Receiving Area, Rural Area Designation (TDR-R).** The purpose of the TDR-R receiving area is to designate areas appropriate for low density, clustered residential with increased open space permanently preserved ~~for conservation~~. Extension of public sewer in the TDR-R areas are permitted through an approved transfer of development rights process. Properties within these areas shall meet development standards consistent with the CR-1, Conservation Residential, zoning district.

### **Transfer of Development Rights Receiving Area, Development Area Designation (TDR-D).**

The purpose of the TDR-D receiving area is to designate areas appropriate for high density residential in the County's Regional Activity Centers. Other areas may be considered when a property owner submits a request to designate a new TDR-D in conjunction with a Mixed-Use Zoning District (MXD) rezoning. Areas should be appropriate for high density residential, preferably in areas with dense walkable mixed use and in areas with designated transit facilities and centers. Properties within this designation shall meet development standards, excluding the required mix of unit types, consistent with the PMR Urban High, Planned Mixed Residential, zoning district.

**Transfer of Development Rights Sending Area (TDR-S).** The purpose of the TDR-S sending area is to designate areas appropriate for ~~conservation~~[preservation](#) through a permanent severance of development rights in the sending area and transfer those development rights to a TDR-R or TDR-D receiving area. The basis for determining the transferred development rights ~~shall~~[should](#) be the ~~R~~[r](#)ural ~~C~~[c](#)haracter ~~A~~[a](#)rea designation as follows:

#### **III. Agriculture and Forest**

To incentivize [the](#) transfer of development rights, the transferable density is one dwelling per five acres. Development rights ~~shall~~[should](#) only be calculated on property not otherwise being used for a permitted use, special use, accessory use or otherwise similar, or property already under a conservation easement or permanent protection status.

#### **IV. Estates and Subdivisions**

To incentivize clustering, the transferable density is one dwelling per three (3) acres. Development rights ~~shall~~[should](#) only be calculated on property not otherwise being used for a permitted use, special use, accessory use or otherwise similar, or property already under a conservation easement or permanent protection status.

All other areas within the TDR-S, not designated Agriculture and Forestry or Estates and Subdivision, transferable density ~~shall~~[should](#) be one unit per ten acres. Development rights ~~shall~~[should](#) only be

## Rural Area Plan [Strikethrough/Underline]

calculated on property not otherwise being used for a permitted use, special use, accessory use or otherwise similar, or property already under a conservation easement or permanent protection status.

### Rural Infrastructure

A critical component of plan implementation is to plan for public facilities that ensure investment in public infrastructure to achieve the vision. Public facilities and infrastructure located in the Rural Area must meet both the needs of Rural Area residents and the Development Area residents throughout the County. Public Facility needs such as schools, police, fire and rescue, ~~transportation~~mobility, and potable water and sewer are crucial to maintaining an adequate level of service throughout the Rural Area. Rural infrastructure should provide for the needs of the Rrural Area residents without promoting development that is incompatible with the character of the Rrural Area. The design of rural infrastructure should not only have minimum visual impact but should enhance the character in which ~~they are~~it is located. Coordinating the location and extent of public facilities play a supportive role in land use and development planning. Strategic location of public facilities can be used to serve multiple purposes such as extending Open Space Corridors or preserving existing character areas.

### ~~Transportation~~Mobility, Public Safety, Schools, Public Facilities & Capital Projects

**RA-RI POLICY 1:** Avoid locating visually intrusive, high traffic recreation facilities such as sports complexes in sensitive Rrural Character Areas such as Gateway Corridors or Agriculture and Forests areas.

**RA-RI POLICY 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.

**RA-RI POLICY 3:** ~~In making road upgrades~~ Roadway design standards should be applied carefully to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas when constructing road upgrades. As a general guideline, rural roads should not be widened with the exception of ~~primary~~ four-lane major collector and higher classification roads.

### Public Sewer

**RA-PS POLICY 1:** Allow extensions of public sewer on a case-by-case basis in the following areas:

#### Action Strategies:

**RA-PS 1.1** Extension of public sewer in the TDR-R areas are permitted through an approved TDR process.

**RA-PS 1.2** Extension of public sewer in the ~~and~~ Conservation Residential areas are permitted through an ~~approved~~ Residential Conservation (RC-1) rezoning ~~process and~~ approved by the County Board.

**RA-PS POLICY 2:** Retain all other existing Rural Area sewer policies.

## Public Facilities

**RA-PF POLICY 1:** Plan for public facilities, such as schools, police, fire and rescue, ~~transportation~~mobility, and potable water and sewer within the Rural Area, but ensure that these facilities are compatible with the rural character.

### Action Strategies:

**RA-PF 1.1** Avoid locating visually intrusive, high traffic recreation facilities such as sports complexes in sensitive ~~R~~rural ~~C~~character ~~A~~areas.

**RA-PF 1.2** Coordinate the location of new public facilities with the Open Space and Corridors map to help fill gaps in corridors and reinforce Rural Area policies.

**RA-PF 1.3** Use the ~~R~~rural ~~C~~character ~~A~~areas in selecting/screening sites for public facilities.

**RA-PF POLICY 2:** In making road upgrades, roadway design standards should be applied ~~carefully~~ to protect and/or enhance the rural character in specific character areas.

### Action Strategies:

**RA-PF 2.1** Pursue development of a rural rustic road program that aims to protect and/or enhance the character in different character areas. Consider mobility and multimodal access in the ~~R~~rural ~~A~~areas and adhere to VDOT regulations and guidelines. ~~Consider a~~A as a general guideline, rural roads should not be widened with the exception of ~~primary~~ four-lane major collector and higher classification roads.

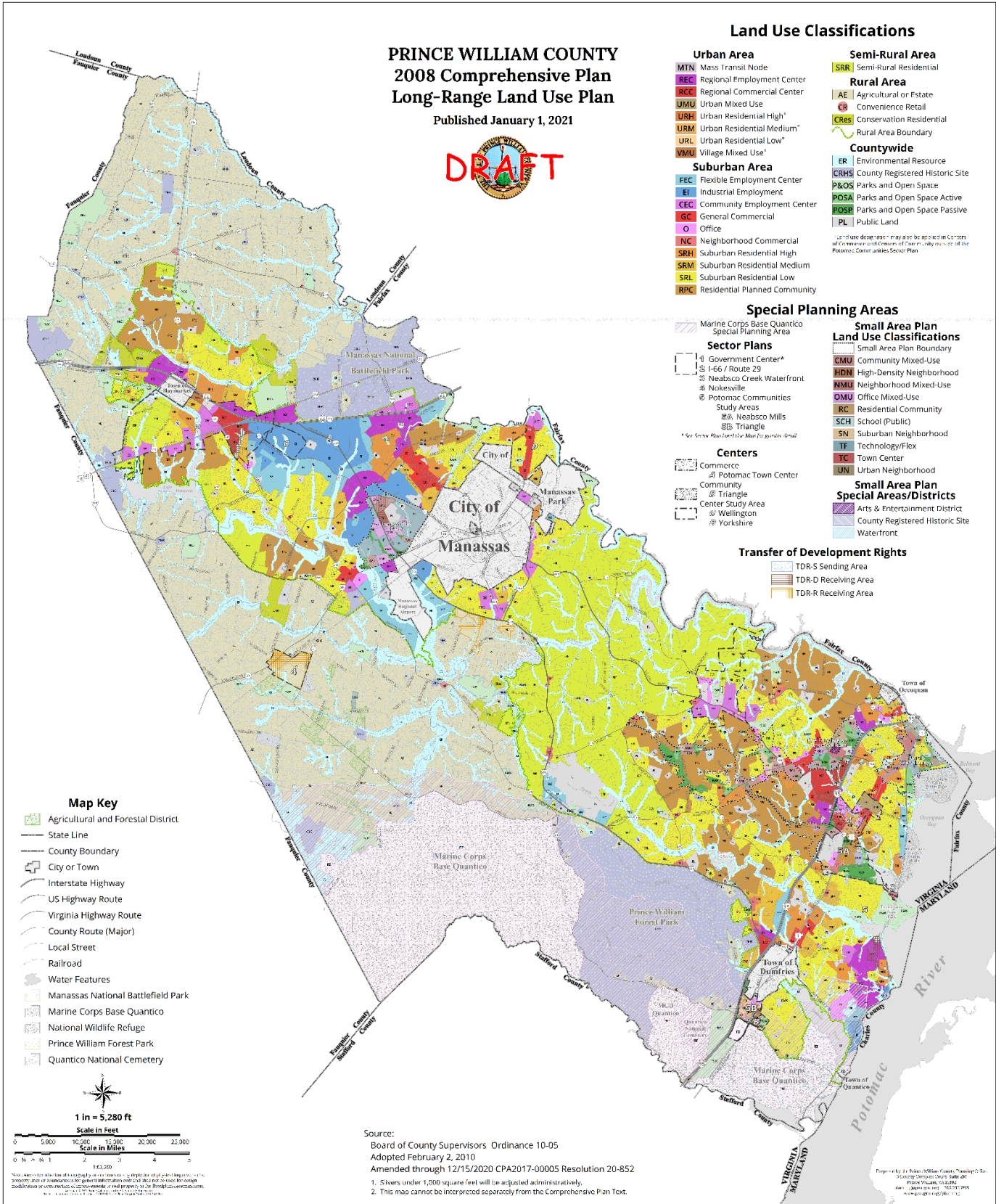
**RA-PF POLICY 3:** Enhance mobile data broadband services in the Rural Area to enhance service to both residents and 911 services.

### Action Strategies:

**RA-PF 3.1** Where appropriate and consistent with applicable law, ~~E~~ncourage extension of broadband and fiber into the ~~R~~rural ~~A~~areas through rezoning and special use permit requests, and through public road infrastructure projects ~~when possible~~.

**PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY  
2008 Comprehensive Plan  
Long-Range Land Use Plan**

Published January 1, 2021



**Land Use Classifications**

- Urban Area**
  - MTN Mass Transit Node
  - REC Regional Employment Center
  - RCC Regional Commercial Center
  - UMU Urban Mixed Use
  - URH Urban Residential High\*
  - URM Urban Residential Medium\*
  - URL Urban Residential Low\*
  - VMU Village Mixed Use\*
- Suburban Area**
  - FEC Flexible Employment Center
  - EI Industrial Employment
  - CEC Community Employment Center
  - GC General Commercial
  - O Office
  - NC Neighborhood Commercial
  - SRH Suburban Residential High
  - SRM Suburban Residential Medium
  - SRL Suburban Residential Low
  - RPC Residential Planned Community
- Semi-Rural Area**
  - SRR Semi-Rural Residential
- Rural Area**
  - AE Agricultural or Estate
  - CR Convenience Retail
  - CRes Conservation Residential
  - RAB Rural Area Boundary
- Countywide**
  - ER Environmental Resource
  - CRHS County Registered Historic Site
  - P&OS Parks and Open Space
  - POSA Parks and Open Space Active
  - POSP Parks and Open Space Passive
  - PL Public Land

**Special Planning Areas**

- Marine Corps Base Quantico Special Planning Area
- Sector Plans**
  - Government Center\*
  - I-66 / Route 29
  - Neabsco Creek Waterfront
  - Nokesville
  - Potomac Communities Study Areas
  - Neabsco Mills
  - Triangle
- Centers**
  - Potomac Town Center
  - Commerce
  - Community
  - Center Study Area
  - Wellington
  - Yorkshire
- Small Area Plan Land Use Classifications**
  - Small Area Plan Boundary
  - CMU Community Mixed-Use
  - HDN High-Density Neighborhood
  - NMU Neighborhood Mixed-Use
  - OMU Office Mixed-Use
  - RC Residential Community
  - SCH School (Public)
  - SN Suburban Neighborhood
  - TF Technology/Flex
  - TC Town Center
  - UN Urban Neighborhood
- Small Area Plan Special Areas/Districts**
  - Arts & Entertainment District
  - County Registered Historic Site
  - Waterfront

**Transfer of Development Rights**

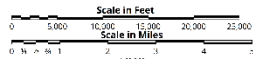
- TDR-S Sending Area
- TDR-D Receiving Area
- TDR-R Receiving Area

**Map Key**

- Agricultural and Forestal District
- State Line
- County Boundary
- City or Town
- Interstate Highway
- US Highway Route
- Virginia Highway Route
- County Route (Major)
- Local Street
- Railroad
- Water Features
- Manassas National Battlefield Park
- Marine Corps Base Quantico
- National Wildlife Refuge
- Prince William Forest Park
- Quantico National Cemetery



1 in = 5,280 ft

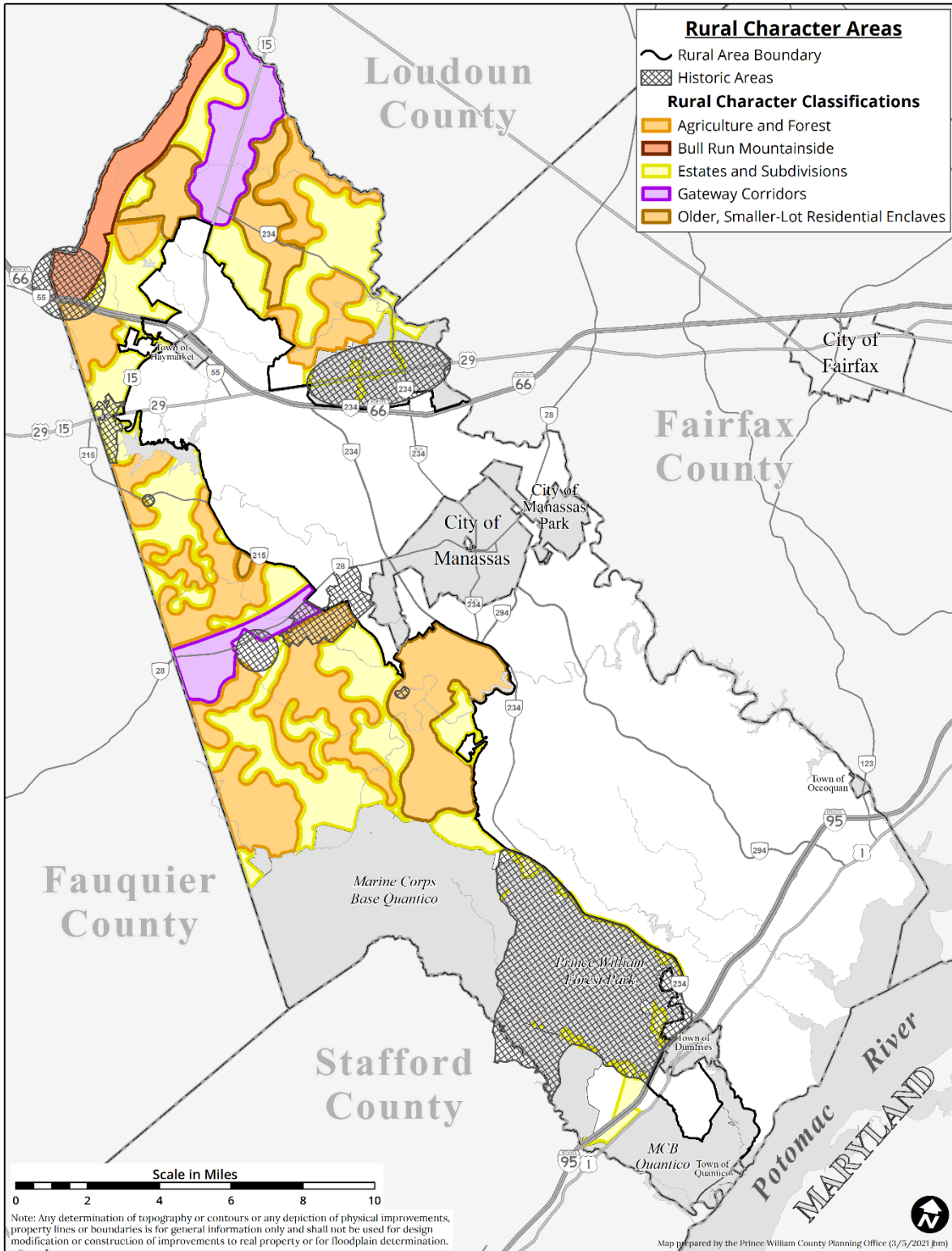


Source:  
Board of County Supervisors Ordinance 10-05  
Adopted February 2, 2010  
Amended through 12/15/2020 CPA2017-00005 Resolution 20-852

1. Slivers under 1,000 square feet will be un-adjusted administratively.
2. This map cannot be incorporated separately from the Comprehensive Plan Text.

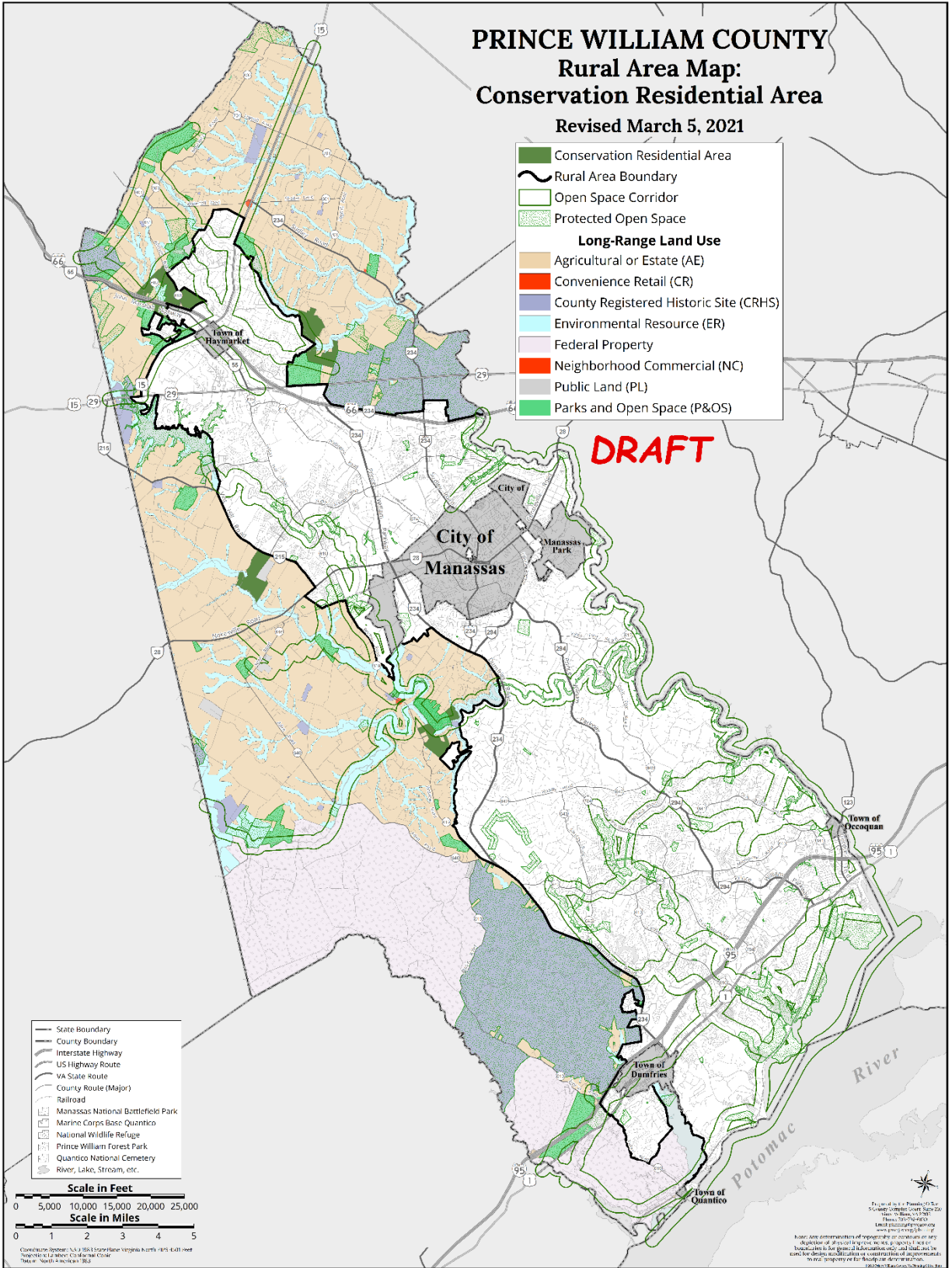
Prepared for the Prince William County Board of Supervisors by the Planning Department, 10000 Old Dominion Blvd., Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22031. Date: 01/15/2021. Project No: 20-852. www.pw.org

# Rural Character Area Map





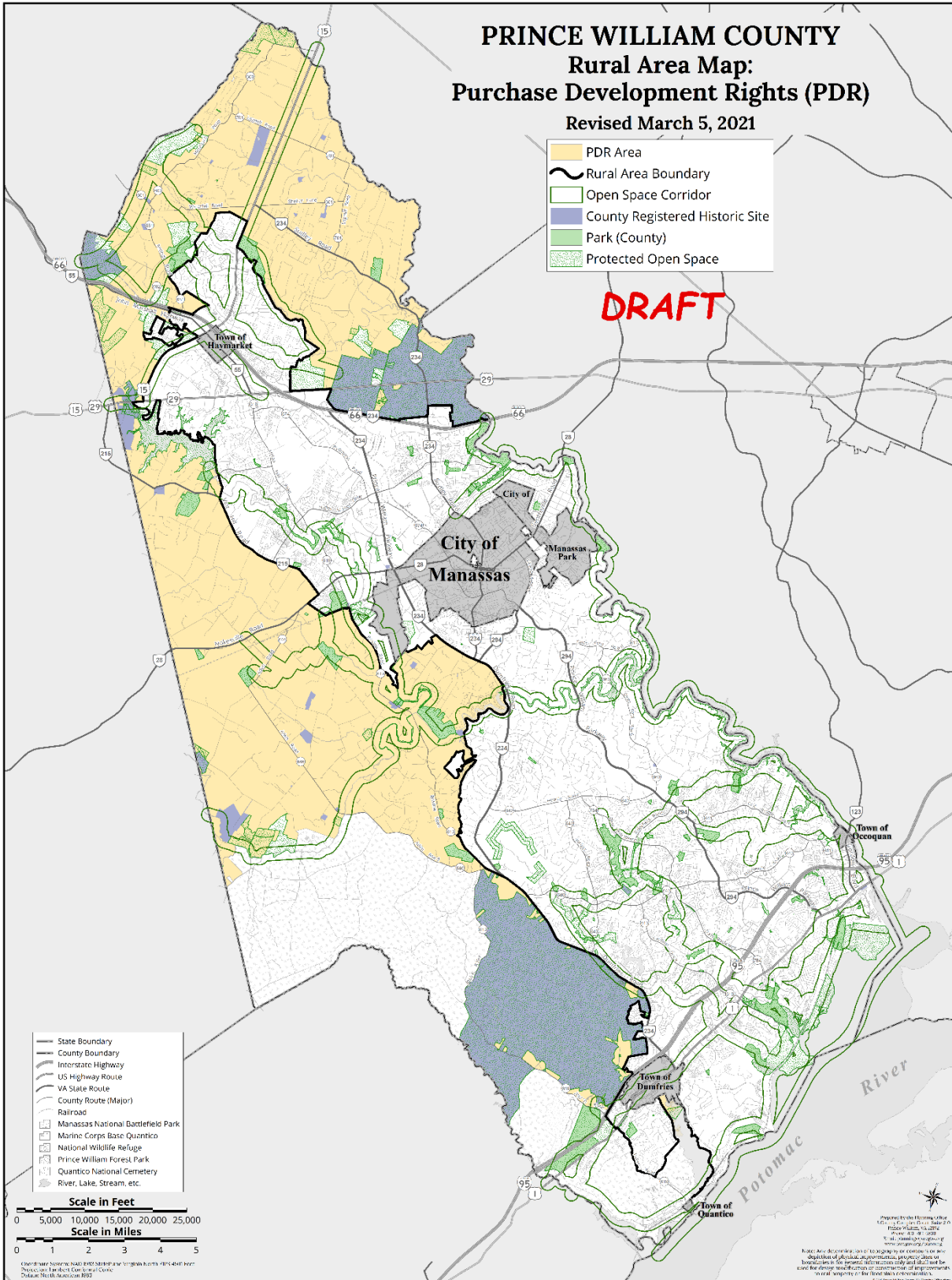
# Conservation Residential Areas Map







# Purchase of Development Rights Area Map



**Long-Range Land Use**

The Rural Area Plan establishes the frame work for the CR, Conservation Residential zoning district, the Transfer of Development Rights Program, and the Purchase of Development Rights Program. The impacts related to the implementation of these tools will vary depending on how much is utilized of each program. The analysis below will provide the maximum impact for the TDR program and the CR zoning district if they are fully implemented.

The Analysis makes the assumption of no impact of the PDR program. At this time the scope of the PDR program is not yet determined by the Board so its impacts are not included in this analysis. The development rights available in the Rural Area are finite. Therefore, the assumption can be made for every development purchased through the PDR program the county would be reducing the impact shown below by 1-3 units depending on the Rural Character of the development right.

The following tables summarizes the general changes in development potential as a result of implementing the full suite of implementation tools:

<b>TDR Sending Areas</b>					
	Total Potential Acreage to be Developed	Potential Protected Open Space Acreage	Remaining Acreage to be Developed	Severable By-Right Dwelling units	Maximum Transferable Development Rights
Agricultural and Forest	13,821	11,741	2,080	1,154	2,252
Estates and Subdivisions	4,256	2,926	1,330	349	985
Bull Run Mountainside	411	351	60	36	33
Gateway Corridors	3,811	3,291	520	333	307
Older, Smaller Lot Residential Enclaves	872	532	340	34	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,171</b>	<b>18,841</b>	<b>4,330</b>	<b>1,906</b>	<b>3,605</b>

\*As of 2019

## Staff Analysis

<b>TDR-Rural Receiving Area</b>					
	Total Potential Acreage to be Developed	Potential Protected Open Space Acreage	Remaining Acreage to be Developed	By-Right Dwelling units	Maximum Transferable Development Rights
Area A	174	104	70	17	58
Area B	282	169	113	28	94
Total	456	273	182	45	152

\*As of 2019

<b>Conservation Residential Zoning District Impacts</b>						
	Total Potential Acreage to be Developed	Potential Protected Open Space Acreage	Remaining Acreage to be Developed	By-Right Dwelling units	Maximum Potential Dwelling units	Difference
Agricultural and Forest	908	545	363	90	181	+91
Estates and Subdivisions	1,190	714	476	119	396	+277
Total	2,098	1,259	839	209	577	+368

\*As of 2019

It is staff assessment that if the TDR-R and Conservation Residential Zoning District are fully implemented only 2,876 development rights would be available for transfer to the four TDR-D areas. This is a reduction from the 3,605 development rights if all of the rights were transferred to the development area.

### Environment and Open Space

The Rural Area Plan establishes new environmental policies and goals. It also furthers several goals already established in the Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Plan Policy Goals: Open Space Policies 2, 4 and 5, and Environment Policies 3 and 5.

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

## Staff Analysis

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

OS 4.1 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.

OS 4.2 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, (excluding acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico), should be retained as protected open space.

OS 5.2 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.

OS 5.3 In the Comprehensive Plan, identify and map existing open space and other areas where acquisition of additional protected open space should be prioritized.

OS 5.4 Review opportunities, including the purchase of development rights (PDRs) 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.

OS 5.5 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.

OS 5.6 Acquire easements as authorized by the Virginia Open Space Land Act.

**EN-POLICY 3:** To further support a minimum of 39 percent of the total area in the County excluding acreage of Marine Corps Base Quantico, should be retained as protected open space.

EN 3.1 Encourage cluster development to protect contiguous natural open space, as defined by the Zoning Ordinance.

EN 3.8 The County shall review and implement opportunities for a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.

**EN-POLICY 5:** Protect and manage the County's soils and natural landscape to retain and enhance their associated economic, aesthetic and ecosystem benefits.

## Schools

Direct impacts of the Rural Area Plan on Prince William County Public Schools is demonstrated below. If the TDR Program is fully utilized and the all CR designated properties are rezoned the net impact based on PWCS student generation factor would be a total of 158 more students. Elementary Schools would see the largest impacts estimated at 153 new students countywide. The 2020-21 Office Student Enrollment documents produced by PWCS show the only available existing capacity in the school system is at the elementary school level.

## Staff Analysis

Potential Level of Service Impact						
		Severable By-Right Single Family Detached	Tansferred/CR Single-Family Detached	Transferred Multi-Family	Total Transferred	Net Change
Dwelling Units Generated		1,906	729	2,876	3,605	+1,699
Students Generated	ES	534	204	483	687	+153
	MS	298	114	207	321	+23
	HS	410	157	235	392	-18
	Total	1,242	475	925	1,400	+158
Percentage of School Facility Needed	ES	58%	22%	52%	74%	+17%
	MS	20%	14%	14%	22%	+2%
	HS	16%	9%	9%	15%	-1%

\*As of 2019



## BOCS Initiating Resolution

**MOTION: NOHE**

**August 3, 2016  
Regular Meeting  
Res. No. 16-647**

**SECOND: PRINCIPI**

**RE: ACCEPT THE PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

**ACTION: APPROVED**

**WHEREAS**, under Section 15.2-2229 of the Virginia Code, the Board of County Supervisors may consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, due to the availability of updated demographic projections extending to 2040, policies adopted and amended by the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, Board directives, changes in State law and completion of numerous public infrastructure projects, there is a need to update the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors has initiated a number of Comprehensive Plan amendments including:

- Thoroughfare Plan Update
- Technical Review to Update Population and Employment Forecasts
- Economic Development Plan Update
- Urban Development Areas
- Levels of Service Standards; and

**WHEREAS**, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors has authorized various planning studies to provide analysis and recommendations regarding planning and land use issues including:

- COG Regional Activity Centers Study
- Potomac Communities Design Guidelines
- MCB Quantico Joint Land Use Study
- Rural Preservation Study
- Cockpit Point Battlefield Study
- Dale City Design Guidelines
- VRE Studies
- Bristoe Station and the Kettle Run Battlefields Preservation Study; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Office has recommended that the following areas be re-planned or have their existing plans revisited:

- North Woodbridge
- Parkway Employment Center
- Innovation
- Fairgrounds/New Dominion Area
- Independent Hill
- Triangle
- Yorkshire; and

**BOCS Initiating Resolution**

**August 3, 2016  
Regular Meeting  
Res. No. 16-647  
Page Two**

**WHEREAS**, the proposed scope of work to update the Comprehensive Plan includes the above referenced comprehensive plan amendments, planning studies and areas recommended for additional planning;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors does hereby accept the proposed scope of work for the Comprehensive Plan update.

**Votes:**

**Ayes:** Anderson, Caddigan, Candland, Jenkins, Lawson, Nohe, Principi, Stewart

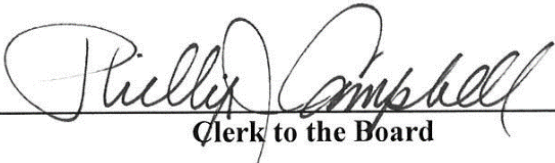
**Nays:** None

**Absent from Vote:** None

**Absent from Meeting:** None

**For Information:**

Planning Director

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
  
**Clerk to the Board**