

Healthy Growth Frequently Asked Questions

10-8-20

What is proposed?

- **Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment:** The Board of Supervisors is proposing to amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish a maximum allocated density in the A-1, Agricultural Zoning District of **1 dwelling unit per 10 acres**. The minimum lot size will not change, leaving the current minimum 3-acre lot size for conventional subdivisions and the 1.5-acre minimum lot size for cluster subdivisions unchanged.
- **Explain how this zoning change will work?**
 - Example 1: If an A-1 zoned parcel has a net area of 30 acres (after subtracting areas of wetlands, floodplains and slopes greater than 35 percent from the gross area), the proposed maximum allocated density would allow for up to 3 lots/dwelling units. The size of the lots may vary, so long as there are no lots under 3 acres. For example, the parcel could be divided into two 3-acre lots and one 24-acre lot. The 24-acre lot could not be further subdivided.
 - Example 2: If an A-1 zoned parcel has a net area of 100 acres, the proposed maximum allocated density would allow for up to 10 lots/dwelling units. The parcel is first divided into five lots consisting of one 88-acre lot and four 3-acre lots. In order to conform with the parcel's original allocated density of 10 dwelling units, no more than 5 additional lots (6 lots total) may result from any further divisions of all or part of the 88-acre lot remaining after the first division.
 - Example diagrams have been provided at <https://staffordcountyva.gov/2181/Healthy-Growth-Initiative>
- **Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment:** A complementary Comprehensive Plan amendment is also proposed, which would include language indicating a maximum rural residential density of 1 unit per 10 acres to align with the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment.

Why is this being proposed?

- The Board of Supervisors is proposing this amendment in an effort to better align the rate of growth in the rural areas of the County with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
 - The Comprehensive Plan recommends that 80% of future residential growth occur within the Urban Services Area (USA), where public water and sewer services are available.
 - Development inside the USA reduces the demand on public facilities/services in the rural areas that are less equipped to handle the density. These include roads, schools, public safety, and water and septic systems.
 - The County has put together a discussion paper on rural growth management strategies, which provides more detailed information on the growth challenges experienced by the County. This discussion paper can be found online at <https://staffordcountyva.gov/2181/Healthy-Growth-Initiative>

Why did I receive a notification in the mail?

- You received a notification because you own property zoned A-1 and it may be impacted by the proposed Ordinance amendment. The law requires the County to notify all property owners who may be impacted.

Will this impact my ability to subdivide my property?

- The proposed amendments may impact you if you plan to subdivide your property into additional residential lots or plan to sell your property for residential subdivision/development purposes.
- The proposed amendments should not impact your ability to subdivide if you do not plan to subdivide your property or if your property is less than 6 acres (parcels less than 6 acres in size cannot be subdivided under the current regulations in the Zoning Ordinance).

Will pending subdivision applications be affected?

- The proposed Ordinance amendment does not propose any protection for pending subdivision applications. As currently proposed, pending A-1 zoning district subdivision applications that are not vested through another approved plan pursuant to the Virginia Code, would be impacted by these proposed amendments.

How do I voice my support or opposition?

- You may submit written remarks and public hearing comments through the County's website (<https://staffordcountyva.gov/publichearings>) until October 28, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.
- You may attend the public hearing in person and speak to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors (more information below).

What are the next steps?

- The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will be holding a joint public hearing to consider the proposed Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan amendments.
- **The joint public hearing will be held on Thursday, October 29, 2020, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium of Colonial Forge High School, 550 Courthouse Road, Stafford, Virginia**
- If you plan to attend and speak at the meeting, you can fill out a speaker card in advance at <https://staffordcountyva.gov/publichearings> and put "Speaking" in the Written Comments section.
- Each speaker at the hearing will have up to 3 minutes to make comments.
- You may also submit written remarks and public comments via <https://staffordcountyva.gov/publichearings>, which will be included in the public hearing record

For more information, refer to the [Healthy Growth information page](#) linked on the County web page home screen: www.staffordcountyva.gov