

The Foundation for the Future

2.2 Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1. Manage growth and development in a sustainable manner.

Objective 1.4. Discourage growth in the Rural areas ~~outside the Urban Services Area of the county.~~

Policy 1.4.1. Areas outside of the Urban Services Area will be characterized by ~~large lot residential subdivisions~~, agricultural ~~and forestry~~ activities, and open land. These rural areas will have limited public services, utilities and facilities. Location of new residential development is discouraged; however, such uses should have a maximum allocated density of one (1) dwelling unit per ten (10) acres, with a minimum lot size of at least 3 acres in size, except where significant farming and forest lands can be incorporated into cluster developments.

The Land Use Plan

3.1 Overview

The Land Use Plan for Stafford County is a key element of the Comprehensive Plan, guiding the physical form of the County by directing the location, type, and intensity of land uses. The Plan has been developed after taking into account factors such as existing development patterns and conditions, the potential for existing land use regulations to accommodate projected growth, and opportunities and constraints.

The key points of the Plan are:

- The Land Uses within the Urban Services Area (USA) have been generalized as Planning Areas, Suburban areas, and Business and Industry areas.
- The USA boundary has been designated to promote infill development to access public water and sewer in the established suburban and industrial areas. The majority of future residential and commercial development is being recommended along the I-95 and U.S. Route 1 corridors.
- Key Planning Areas are identified with one land use designation for areas that include Targeted Growth Areas and/or Economic Development Priority Focus Areas, including Redevelopment Areas, in an effort to simplify overlapping planning recommendations.
- Establishes five (5) Targeted Growth Areas (with a mix of residential and commercial land uses) located in the vicinity of primary road networks, transportation hubs, and along the rail corridor to maximize the use of public transportation.
- Business and Industrial land uses are encouraged around established and developing business areas.
- Lot sizes~~Residential development~~ in agricultural and rural areas ~~outside of the USA~~ should ~~be~~ have a maximum allocated density of one (1) dwelling unit per ten (10) acres, with a minimum lot size of at least three (3) acres in size except where significant farming and forest lands can be incorporatedd into cluster developments.

Exhibit A: Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Agricultural/Rural Areas Density

3.6 Future Land Use Recommendations

The recommended future use of land in the County is designated in Figure 3.6, the Future Land Use Map. The type of development that is recommended in each land use designation, as depicted in the map, is described in detail in this section.

Agricultural/Rural Areas

Areas of the county where farming, forestry and ~~low density residential land conservation~~ activities are encouraged. ~~Location of new Single single-family detached dwelling units are to be discouraged; however, such uses~~ may be developed at a maximum density of one (1) unit per ~~three (3) ten (10)~~ acres. ~~Such-These~~ areas are located beyond the limits of the Urban Service Area and would have limited community services. Agricultural service establishments and community service retail establishments may be located at significant crossroads. As a means to support agriculture and the existing rural character, these areas ~~will~~ may be designated as sending areas in a future transfer of development rights (TDR) program. They are also the focal point for the County's purchase of development rights (PDR) programs ~~and voluntary land conservation efforts~~.

In order to help preserve the rural character, the following design criteria for development are recommended for the Agricultural/Rural area:

- useable open space shall be preserved for ~~agricultural-agriculture, forestry and or~~ conservation purposes
- areas containing steep slopes greater than 25%, Resource Protection Areas, and floodplains should be excluded from the developable area ~~calculations for residential lot conversion~~
- a building setback of 100 feet should be maintained from the perimeter boundary where located adjacent to existing agricultural uses
- a building setback of 100 feet to be maintained along existing state-maintained roads to help retain the scenic quality of rural county roads
- wildlife migration corridors to be maintained where identified. Connectivity of open space areas shall be considered to enhance wildlife movement
- large stands of trees shall be maintained to the greatest extent possible on forested tracts of land
- the preservation of cultural resources to be considered in accordance with the Cultural Resources Management Plan
- cluster subdivisions should be encouraged where permitted
- Low Impact Development (LID) practices should be encouraged for stormwater management

6.0 The People and the Place

6.1 Land Use

6.1.3 Future Build-out Under Existing Zoning

To assess the impact the current zoning regulations would have on future land development in the County, a build-out analysis was conducted. This assumes that all available land builds out to its maximum potential based on the maximum allowable densities [in effect as of August 16, 2016](#).