

A G E N D A
JAMES CITY COUNTY POLICY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
Building A Large Conference Room
101 Mounts Bay Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185
November 10, 2022
4:00 PM

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

C. MINUTES

1. Minutes of the August 11, 2022 Meeting
2. Minutes of the August 22, 2022 Meeting

D. OLD BUSINESS

1. ORD-22-0001. Amendments for Scenic Roadway Protection

E. NEW BUSINESS

F. ADJOURNMENT

ITEM SUMMARY

DATE: 11/10/2022

TO: The Policy Committee

FROM: Paul D. Holt, III, Secretary

SUBJECT: Minutes of the August 11, 2022 Meeting

ATTACHMENTS:

	Description	Type
	Minutes of the August 11, 2022 Meeting	Minutes

REVIEWERS:

Department	Reviewer	Action	Date
Policy	Cook, Ellen	Approved	11/3/2022 - 8:43 AM
Policy	Holt, Paul	Approved	11/3/2022 - 11:47 AM
Publication Management	Daniel, Martha	Approved	11/3/2022 - 11:57 AM
Policy Secretary	Secretary, Policy	Approved	11/3/2022 - 12:50 PM

MINUTES
JAMES CITY COUNTY POLICY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
Building A Large Conference Room
101 Mounts Bay Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185
August 11, 2022
4:00 PM

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jack Haldeman called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Present:

Jack Haldeman, Chair

Rich Krapf

Frank Polster

Staff:

Josh Crump, Principal Planner

Ellen Cook, Principal Planner

Thomas Wysong, Senior Planner

John Risinger, Planner

Paxton Condon, Planner

Christy Parrish, Zoning Administrator

Andrea Case, Community Development Assistant

Liz Parman, Deputy County Attorney – Virtual

Other:

Vlad Gavrilovic, EPR, PC, Consultant – Virtual

Absent:

Tim O'Connor

C. MINUTES

1. Minutes of the April 14, 2022 Meeting

Mr. Frank Polster made a motion to Approve the minutes.

The motion passed 3-0.

1. Minutes of the April 14, 2022 Meeting

D. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business.

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. ORD-22-0002. Amendments for R-8, Rural Residential and A-1, General Agricultural Lot Size and Related Requirements

Ms. Linda Rice, 2394 Forge Road, spoke in favor of increasing the lot size in rural areas zoned R-8 and A-1 to a 20-acre lot minimum. Ms. Rice stated that the change would also conserve groundwater by reducing the number of wells outside of the Primary Service Area

(PSA). Ms. Rice stated her appreciation for considering the Ordinance and for the work of Planning staff and expressed hope that the Board of Supervisors would approve the Ordinance.

Ms. Roberta Sulouff, 100 Paddock Lane, representing Habitat for Humanity, 11011 Warwick Boulevard, stated that having a rural area helps to give the County its character; however, Habitat for Humanity is concerned about the impact of these large lot sizes on affordable housing. Ms. Sulouff stated that most of the affordable land in the County is in the northern part and asked the Committee, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors to further explore the impact of this policy on the County's affordable housing goals.

Mr. Thomas Wysong stated this proposed Ordinance follows unanimous approval of the Comprehensive Plan in fall 2021 and a Board of Supervisors Initiating Resolution in Spring 2022. Mr. Wysong stated direction from the resolution was to amend the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances for R-8 and A-1 Zoning Districts to be consistent with the stated rural lands designation description and development standards outlined in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan. He stated the directive stated a density of no greater than one residence per 20 acres, grandfathering all parcels in existence as of January 1, 2022 that are 25 acres or less, and eliminating the central well requirement for major subdivisions. Mr. Wysong presented draft Ordinance language and stated staff recommends that the Policy Committee recommend approval of the draft Ordinance to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Rich Krapf asked if grandfathered parcels would retain the right of a three-acre lot minimum lot size if the property was sold.

Mr. Wysong stated this was correct, as it would be based on the date of the parcel creation.

Mr. Polster asked if staff could provide the number of parcels affected for R-8 and A-1.

Mr. Wysong stated staff would provide this information.

Mr. Jack Haldeman stated he and Mr. Krapf participated on the Workforce Housing Task Force and that affordable housing would likely be built in the Primary Service Area (PSA) to allow access to utilities, jobs, and public transportation. He also stated that affordable housing is likely to be multifamily housing and unaffected by the policy change.

Mr. Polster asked for staff to define which properties would be included or excluded, such as James City County properties and for staff to clarify how this affects properties with Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) or any easements. Mr. Polster further stated he would like to see how the Natural and Cultural Assets mapping plan would interact with buffers and cluster placements to avoid impacting the value of the land and connection points.

Mr. Krapf agreed.

Mr. Haldeman asked if the Ordinance changes would apply to parcels already master planned such as Summer Place.

Mr. Josh Crump confirmed for Summer Place that the construction plan is approved for 47 lots and would be grandfathered in to allow one unit per three acres. Other phases would be evaluated for vested rights as they are submitted.

Mr. Polster asked if any upcoming proposals would be affected.

Mr. Crump stated this would be evaluated with the County Attorney at the time of submission.

Ms. Ellen Cook stated vested rights are guided by State Code provisions and related to what point of the process the project is in.

Mr. Wysong clarified that Ordinance requirements would be implemented for the entirety of the R-8 and A-1 Zoning Districts. He stated that parcels under 25 acres would continue with the three acre minimum lot size and parcels over 25 acres would require the 20-acre minimum lot size.

Mr. Polster stated he was concerned that affordable housing in the form of RV and mobile home parks would be affected by this.

Ms. Cook replied those parcels are within the PSA and should have a designation other than Rural Lands, and that future development or redevelopment could be done which is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan's residential designations.

Mr. Wysong confirmed the mobile home park is designated for Moderate Density Residential. He asked if the Committee would like a map showing parcels both larger and smaller than 25 acres.

Mr. Polster stated he was more interested in the language than a map.

Mr. Haldeman stated Mr. Wysong sent a helpful map of R-8 and A-1 parcels larger than 25 acres and that the change would be applied on a case-by-case basis.

Staff stated that the change would be applied to the entire zoning district; however, parcels with projects currently under review would be considered individually.

Mr. Haldeman asked if the County should encourage more clustering.

Mr. John Risinger stated the Comprehensive Plan maintains the same density for by-right conventional lots and for clusters in Rural Lands.

Mr. Krapf asked for staff to summarize what staff would like to accomplish with the discussion.

Mr. Wysong stated that staff recommends the Committee recommend approval of the A-1 and R-8 draft language to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Haldeman asked for clarification on the Ordinance language for Section 24-214 and 24-222.

Mr. Wysong stated the cluster standards language was moved from one section to the other but that the only change was the unit density language.

Mr. Polster asked what standards would be used for development within the R-8 District.

Mr. Wysong replied that a subdivision application would be subject to the requirements of the Subdivision Ordinance, including the 20-acre minimum.

Mr. Polster asked if the design guidelines in the Comprehensive Plan would apply.

My. Wysong stated those would only be applied to legislative cases. He detailed that a cluster development in A-1 would require a Special Use Permit (SUP) and may include additional requirements.

Mr. Polster asked if a cluster development within the R-8 District and within the PSA would be prohibited.

Mr. Wysong stated this was correct, that the type of rural cluster permitted in A-1 is not permitted in R-8.

Mr. Polster asked if only one residence per 20 acres would be allowed.

Mr. Wysong stated this was correct.

Mr. Polster asked about design guidelines for R-8 within the PSA.

Mr. Wysong stated the guidelines would be considered at the time of a legislative application which would be subject to Comprehensive Plan guidance.

Mr. Polster asked about design guidelines for R-8 commercial development.

Mr. Wysong stated that by-right development would not be subject to design guidelines.

The Committee discussed by-right development and the possibility of an applicant rezoning for different uses. Staff confirmed that the design guidelines in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan would apply during the legislative process.

Mr. Polster asked for a copy of the design guidelines.

Mr. Risinger stated the guidelines for the applicable current land use designation would apply.

Mr. Wysong agreed that staff would refer to the appropriate land use designation description in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Risinger stated that this is the current process staff follows and that staff will continue to do so.

Mr. Polster asked if any easements would be affected.

Mr. Wysong stated that the minimum area requirements would not affect any existing easements on a property and that any easements would remain in place.

Mr. Polster asked if any portion of the properties not in an easement would be affected.

Mr. Wysong stated the zoning and any easements would both remain applicable factors for properties.

Mr. Risinger stated easements are an overlaying regulation that also require consideration.

Ms. Christy Parrish stated the easement does not trump the zoning district.

Ms. Cook stated easements are separate from the zoning. She stated that changing the minimum lot size would apply to all parcels in the zoning district and was not property specific.

Mr. Wysong stated some conservation easements are not in perpetuity.

Mr. Polster asked about the impact to the landowner.

Ms. Cook stated the impact would be if a landowner wanted to go through a subdivision, they would be subject to the minimum lot size in the drafted Ordinance amendment.

Mr. Wysong stated that every affected property owner (approximately 4,700) would receive a mailing for the proposed change.

Mr. Polster stated he was not comfortable moving forward to the Planning Commission at this time.

Mr. Krapf stated the Committee needed to discuss any relevant issues and the potential for unintended consequences.

Mr. Polster stated applying the Natural and Cultural Lands information was important and may relate to changes in how projects and clusters come to the Development Review Committee in the future.

Mr. Haldeman stated he believed the drafted Ordinance fulfilled the directive from the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Polster stated that he would like to change the cluster portion of the Ordinance to have a different process and incorporate the Natural and Cultural Lands considerations.

Ms. Cook stated that the cluster portion of the draft Ordinance amendment before them only involved the density, and that the third agenda item would begin the discussion on revisiting the standards for cluster development.

Mr. Haldeman asked if the Committee could discuss all agenda items and then vote on each item.

Mr. Polster agreed.

Mr. Wysong stated the A-1 and R-8 density changes are a separate agenda item in response to the Board of Supervisor's Initiating Resolution.

Mr. Krapf stated that he believed the A-1 and R-8 updates to be straightforward.

Mr. Polster stated he was concerned that approving the cluster language would preclude further discussion and changes.

Mr. Wysong stated that an aspect of cluster development would be approved to directly respond to the resolution.

Mr. Polster stated that he was uncomfortable with amending A-1 now and that he would like to see how rural clusters are affected by scenic roadways, open space, buffering, etc.

Mr. Krapf stated that he agreed with Mr. Polster and would like an additional Policy Committee discussion.

The Committee discussed some of the advantages and disadvantages of clustering.

Ms. Cook stated that the Comprehensive Plan Rural Lands Designation Description guidance does include clustering guidance.

Mr. Krapf stated that it would be an interesting discussion if an Ordinance was amended to conflict with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Krapf asked Mr. Haldeman what his thoughts were.

Mr. Haldeman stated he supported tabling the discussion.

Mr. Polster commended staff's work.

Mr. Krapf agreed.

Mr. Wysong stated staff appreciated the Committee's time to review the materials and their thoughtful approach to each item.

2. ORD-22-0001, Amendments for Scenic Roadway Protection

Mr. Wysong stated the approved Comprehensive Plan includes strategy LU 6.3 within the Land Use chapter to "help retain the character of Rural Lands, develop additional zoning and subdivision tools (e.g., scenic easement dedication requirements, increased minimum lot sizes, increased setbacks, and/or overlay districts), to protect and preserve scenic roadways such as Forge Road. Consider 400-foot setbacks along Community Character Corridors outside the PSA." He stated the Board of Supervisors adopted an Initiating Resolution directing staff to consider additional requirements in both the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to preserve scenic roadways, though "scenic roadways" are not defined in the resolution or County Ordinance. He stated the County has a well-established practice of designating certain roadways as being important to the character of the County within the Comprehensive Plan. He stated dating back to 1975, these "Greenbelt" roads were designated along major segments of roads deemed to have great scenic value and contributed to the semi-rural character of the County. He stated over time, these roadways and others became known as Community Character Corridors (CCC) and have landscape and Ordinance requirements to protect properties along these corridors. He stated staff is requesting feedback on staff's view that a scenic roadway is a CCC and if, given that the Goals, Strategies, and Actions (GSAs) focuses on portions outside of the PSA, the proposed regulations should be tailored to portions of CCC's outside the PSA. He also stated that staff recommends the Committee direct staff to further explore options such as increased setbacks and buffering as options. Mr. Polster asked if Option No. 5, involving the mandatory clustering for major subdivisions, would mean that a cluster could be developed right next to the road.

Mr. Wysong stated that this could make that mandatory for major subdivisions.

Mr. Polster asked if the recommendation was to have staff continue this analysis.

Mr. Wysong stated this was correct.

Mr. Polster replied he agreed with this recommendation. He said he would like Croaker Road from the Interstate 64 (I-64) interchange to Sycamore Landing Road included.

Mr. Krapf stated that staff's table was very helpful and asked why Option No. 4 for an overlay district would require all properties to be rezoned.

Mr. Wysong stated that State Code treats overlay districts as a rezoning of the property.

Mr. Krapf asked to confirm that overlay districts are not treated as an administrative process.

Mr. Wysong stated this was correct and differs from zoning text amendments. He stated an overlay district adds an additional zoning layer on top of the existing zoning. He stated he believed the intent was to ensure property owners are notified of the change.

Mr. Krapf stated the photoshop examples illustrating various setback distances were very helpful. He stated the citizen survey completed during the Comprehensive Plan showed citizens wanted to preserve the rural character of these areas. He stated the examples provided showed setbacks up to 400 feet, but many properties' residential structures are set back 400 - 1,000 feet from the road. He stated citizens provided positive feedback on having structures set further back and commended staff on the work to put this analysis together.

Ms. Cook stated Mr. Vlad Gavrilovic with EPR, PC, put together the illustrations. She stated the desire to add Croaker Road per Mr. Polster's suggestion.

Mr. Polster stated he agreed with grandfathering 400 feet setbacks for Forge Road. He asked if staff had assessed other roadways.

Mr. Wysong stated staff would like confirmation on the current process and then, if recommended, could proceed with an in-depth analysis of each CCC. He stated each roadway has its own character and may require different strategies.

Mr. Polster agreed it would depend on the character of the area and stated he is interested to see how this applies to specific areas on Croaker Road and Greensprings Road.

Mr. Krapf asked Mr. Polster what section of Croaker Road he wanted included.

Mr. Polster stated Croaker Road from the I-64 interchange to Sycamore Landing Road. He stated it would depend on the type of CCC and that grandfathering on Route 199 would not make sense because of the existing PDR easements.

Mr. Wysong agreed and stated the Comprehensive Plan has different standards for CCCs based on the character of the roadway.

Ms. Cook stated the list of scenic roadways was developed from the Comprehensive Plan and the GSAs language related to areas outside the PSA.

Mr. Polster stated his concern relating to rural clusters and where they are placed. He stated he appreciated the analysis of how it would be applied and stated he expected some grandfathering to apply. He asked about including Diascund Road heading to the reservoir at the end of Forge Road.

Ms. Cook asked if this would include adding restrictions to the road.

Mr. Polster stated that it would.

Ms. Cook stated it is difficult to include all rural roads in a defensible list.

Mr. Polster stated he would be okay with only Forge Road and Croaker Road being added.

Mr. Krapf stated that it is impossible to include all roadways.

My. Wysong stated staff completed an exercise looking at additional roadways in the County and chose to begin with CCCs because the public is familiar with the term, staff knows the preservation measures work, and standards already exist.

Mr. Polster stated he would like Greensprings Road added.

Mr. Haldeman stated expanded setbacks would be difficult on that road due to the perpetual conservation easements for Historic Mainland Farm.

Mr. Polster stated it was R-8.

Mr. Haldeman stated he believed the former horse farm had a conservation easement as well.

Ms. Cook stated this was correct.

Mr. Haldeman stated the area was already developed on both sides of the road.

Mr. Polster stated he believed this area did not have a conservation easement.

Mr. Wysong stated staff could look into it.

Ms. Cook stated staff were primarily focused outside of the PSA, given the Rural Lands Land Use Designation cited in the GSAs. Ms. Cook stated that properties inside the PSA submitting for rezoning for a residential development or SUP for a cluster would be required to abide by the Landscape Ordinance.

Mr. Polster stated he would like to withdraw Greensprings Road from consideration.

Mr. Krapf asked Mr. Gavrilovic for his opinion on this discussion.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated an option is to have a setback requirement for a zoning district and not the roadway. He stated distance from the road for buildings is a key aspect of visual rural character that the County residents value. He stated larger lot zoning would be the most impactful action based on the research.

Mr. Krapf stated this was helpful and that Mr. Gavrilovic has extensive experience in James City County.

Mr. Haldeman confirmed there was not a draft amendment available and that the current direction provided included adding Croaker Road.

Mr. Krapf asked if staff evaluated applying setbacks to zoning districts or if there were many grandfathered cases to apply this method.

Mr. Wysong confirmed the grandfathering presented an issue and stated that increasing the setbacks in the agricultural zoning districts would preserve land adjacent to roadways; however, there are many smaller lots that would be adversely affected.

Ms. Cook stated the mechanism and location of Ordinance amendments have not been determined. She stated it was possible it would be within the A-1 or R-8 Zoning Districts and specified as applying to CCCs outside the PSA. She stated more work and thought is required after receiving initial direction from the Committee.

Mr. Haldeman asked if there was further direction other than the addition of Croaker Road.

Mr. Polster stated he would like to hear more about the implementation at a future meeting. He stated possibly having these updates made to the A-1 Zoning District is why he was uncomfortable because the language may change.

Ms. Cook stated other sections of the A-1 Zoning District may change.

Mr. Polster stated it was why Mr. Gavrilovic was speaking of other approaches and is worried about unintended consequences. He stated he would like to see the analysis for the cluster

piece and the addition of Croaker Road. He stated he would be interested in hearing more about where this would be implemented and how it relates to ORD-22-0006, Amendments for A-1 Cluster Configuration Subdivision.

Mr. Krapf asked for clarification on Item No. 5, if the intent was to prevent a cluster development from occurring too close to a scenic roadway.

Mr. Polster stated this was correct.

Mr. Krapf stated he remembered citizen input during the development of the Comprehensive Plan was to extend scenic vistas from setbacks of more than 400 feet.

Mr. Wysong stated the item would not just pertain to a subdivision along a scenic road. He stated without Option No. 5 a major subdivision could be proposed without clustering. He stated this option would require major subdivisions along a scenic road to be clustered and meet the standards.

Ms. Cook asked if the Committee would also like staff to further explore Item No. 3 for increased setbacks and buffering.

Mr. Krapf agreed and stated that Item Nos. 3 and 5 (increased setbacks and buffering and mandatory clustering for major subdivisions) both seemed viable.

Mr. Polster asked to include the grandfathering for setbacks.

Ms. Cook asked if staff had the guidance needed from the Committee.

Mr. Wysong agreed.

3. ORD-22-0006. Amendments for A-1 Cluster Configuration Subdivision

Mr. Wysong stated the only current proposed change to the density is to one dwelling per 20 acres. He stated that 11 additional standards exist and that staff requests feedback for revisions to these standards.

Mr. Polster stated he agreed with staff about looking at different standards and that he would like to see guidance related to Natural and Cultural Assets pertaining to A-1 and clusters. He said he likes the idea of conservation lots as mentioned in the staff analysis. He stated that buffering and screening for scenic roads would relate to clusters as well and that he would like to see how all these elements would apply to a property.

Mr. Krapf stated Lombardy Farms be used as an example.

Mr. Polster stated Forge Road was mostly agricultural and without habitat corridors. He stated Chickahominy Summerplace was a good example and that staff should look at the connectivity of habitat corridors.

Mr. Krapf asked if there may be incentives in the future for items such as ecotourism that relate to other GSAs.

Ms. Cook stated there were other GSAs that would support this.

Mr. Krapf stated this could provide additional linkages as well as revenue generation for the County.

Mr. Polster stated he would like to see more on how conservation design best practices inform the design guidelines and the Ordinance.

Ms. Cook asked if any categories were not appropriate for future research or any missing strategies that should be explored.

Mr. Polster stated that permitted density is an important factor.

Mr. Wysong asked if the Committee wanted staff to explore less restrictive measures than a conventional subdivision. He stated an example of not requiring a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) road.

Mr. Krapf stated the alternative to a VDOT road would be a private road and asked if the County would be involved.

Mr. Wysong agreed the road would be private and the County would not be involved. He stated roads in the County are either VDOT or private.

Mr. Polster asked if staff saw a difference in rural clusters inside of the PSA compared to rural clusters outside of the PSA.

Ms. Cook stated different standards would apply. She stated clusters outside of the PSA may focus on agricultural and forestry uses and inside the PSA may focus on open space and environmental preservation.

Mr. Polster stated a density bonus for developers willing to buffer farther from Resource Protection Areas could benefit open space in the County. He asked what design guidelines would be used for a cluster major subdivision in Toano near Stonehouse Elementary School.

Ms. Cook stated that is within the PSA and that Ordinance amendments for cluster overlays within the PSA are not currently proposed. She stated only the A-1 cluster is being reviewed.

Mr. Polster stated he would need to look at cluster language within the PSA for this property.

Ms. Cook stated this was correct.

Mr. Polster stated he was trying to determine the impact.

Ms. Cook stated there is a cluster overlay district with standards for clusters within the PSA.

Mr. Gavrilovic stated the purpose of incentivizing clusters is important. He stated the purpose may be to provide more flexibility for the property owner or to achieve rural preservation. He stated studies reveal clusters do not preserve visual rural character. He stated the houses typically are quite large and look like a suburban development in a rural area, even with increased setbacks. He stated clustering may have other effects such as providing more flexibility to preserve environmental areas, or lower development costs but is not recommended as a strategy for preserving rural character and preventing the visual impact of development.

Mr. Krapf stated this was great information.

Mr. Polster stated this was the reason for dividing rural character as inside or outside the PSA. He stated this is the reason he would like to study the standards.

Mr. Krapf asked if the County should allow rural clusters in A-1 and what the benefits would

be. He asked if there were any cluster developments in rural lands.

Mr. Polster stated there is one across from the golf course.

Mr. Krapf asked if this was the golf course off Croaker Road.

Mr. Polster stated that it was.

Mr. Haldeman asked if he meant Kiskiack Golf Club.

Mr. Polster confirmed he did.

Mr. Krapf asked if rural clusters in A-1 still served a purpose and if they were still needed.

Ms. Cook stated this was a good question. She stated there this is guidance language in the rural lands section of the Comprehensive Plan that refers to rural clusters.

Mr. Krapf stated that the language in the Comprehensive Plan may become moot if the Ordinance changed, as it is a policy document whereby the Ordinance is a legal document.

Mr. Polster stated this is the reason he is uncomfortable changing the A-1 zoning now. He stated he would like a picture because rural clusters are affected by scenic roadways, open space, buffering, and other pieces. He stated he would not like to see a mansion in a rural cluster on a road such as Forge Road.

Mr. Krapf stated there are already houses on Forge Road that differ in architecture and size from other homes. He stated he agreed with Mr. Polster and would request an additional Policy Committee meeting on the item.

Ms. Cook stated that the Comprehensive Plan sets the stage for a rural cluster option.

Mr. Krapf stated it would be an interesting discussion of what would happen if an Ordinance change contradicts the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Cook stated that staff's interpretation was that since rural clusters were included, they were part of the vision.

Mr. Krapf asked Mr. Haldeman for his thoughts.

Mr. Haldeman stated he supported tabling the discussion.

Mr. Polster commended staff's work.

Mr. Krapf agreed.

Mr. Wysong stated staff appreciated the Committee's time to review the materials and the thoughtful approach to each item.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Polster made a motion to Adjourn.

The motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Haldeman adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:40 p.m.

ITEM SUMMARY

DATE: 11/10/2022

TO: The Policy Committee

FROM: Paul D. Holt, III, Secretary

SUBJECT: Minutes of the August 22, 2022 Meeting

ATTACHMENTS:

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MINUTES
JAMES CITY COUNTY POLICY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
Building A Large Conference Room
101 Mounts Bay Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185
August 22, 2022
10:00 AM

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jack Haldeman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Present:

Jack Haldeman, Chair

Rich Krapf

Tim O'Connor

Frank Polster

Staff:

Ellen Cook, Principal Planner

Thomas Wysong, Senior Planner

John Risinger, Planner

Paxton Condon, Planner

Liz Parman, Deputy County Attorney

Andrea Case, Community Development Assistant

C. MINUTES

There were no minutes.

D. OLD BUSINESS

1. ORD-22-0002. Amendments for R-8, Rural Residential and A-1, General Agricultural Lot Size and Related Requirements

Mr. Thomas Wysong stated the Policy Committee requested a special meeting to continue discussion on ORD-22-0002 Amendments for R-8, Rural Residential and A-1, General Agricultural Lot Size and Related Requirements as a follow-up to the August 11th meeting. He stated the effort builds on the unanimous approval of the Comprehensive Plan in fall of 2021 and the Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopted an Initiating Resolution this spring pertaining to the R-8, Rural Residential and A-1, General Agricultural Districts. He stated this resolution contains three specific Board directives. He stated that the first directive is to amend the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to revise the R-8 and A-1 Districts to be consistent with the stated Rural Lands Designation Description and Development Standards contained in the adopted 2045 Comprehensive Plan. He stated these standards state the "subdivision of lots should occur at a density of no greater than one residence per twenty acres" (1:20 ratio). He stated that the second directive is to include language that grandfathers all parcels in existence as of January 1, 2022, that are 25 or fewer acres in size. He stated that the third directive is to include language that eliminates the central well requirement for subdivisions that are consistent with the stated Rural Lands designation description and development standards. He stated in response to these directives, staff prepared draft Ordinance language to: increase the minimum lot size in the A-1 and R-8 Zoning Districts from three acres to 20 acres, with all parcels in existence as of January 1, 2022, that are 25 or fewer acres in size being grandfathered with the existing three-acre minimum lot size; increase the overall density

for the A-1 cluster configuration option from one unit per two acres to one unit per 20 acre; and eliminate the central well requirement for new major subdivisions, meaning these subdivisions are required to have individual wells on each lot. He stated the prepared draft language has not been revised since the previous Policy Meeting and staff recommends the Committee recommend approval of the attached draft Ordinance for consideration by the Planning Commission at its September 7, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Jack Haldeman stated he thought that the draft language set forth by staff met the directives in the Initiating Resolution by the BOS. He stated the recommendation was tabled to obtain clarification on how the Ordinance amendments would affect Natural and Cultural Assets Plan mapping, wildlife corridors, and new clustering standards. He asked staff for any updates.

Mr. Frank Polster stated he is fine with clustering inside the Primary Service Area (PSA), as the standards are within the existing separate residential cluster overlay district Ordinance, and that he also agrees with the 1:20 ratio for R-8 and A-1 in rural areas. He stated that upcoming meetings would involve discussing setbacks and clustering. He stated he recommended the Committee approve the Ordinance to move forward to the Planning Commission and BOS.

Mr. Rich Krapf stated that he was also fine with the 1:20 ratio. He stated he questioned the need for rural residential clusters because the 1:20 ratio would preserve rural character. He stated that performance standards for rural clusters may be needed to align with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Polster stated that was correct. He stated that the clustering memorandum included language on natural and cultural assets that he would like to revisit this after this issue.

Mr. Tim O'Connor stated he believed clusters would be treated differently than the 1:20 ratio based on conversations from the Comprehensive Plan. He stated he was okay with this ratio for by-right development but believed it to be punitive for clusters. He also stated his concern regarding a potential reduction in developable acreage. He asked for confirmation if an Initiating Resolution from the BOS for this existed.

Ms. Ellen Cook stated the BOS resolution regarding calculation of net developable acreage is stated as being for the residential zoning districts, which are primarily inside the PSA.

Mr. Polster asked if clustering in the rural lands in the A-1 and R-8 Zoning Districts outside the PSA would be discussed at future Policy Committee meetings.

Ms. Cook confirmed.

Mr. O'Connor asked if the current amendments would cap A-1 cluster development at the 1:20 ratio.

Mr. Polster stated this was correct.

Mr. O'Connor stated he did not agree with this.

Mr. Haldeman asked if the Initiating Resolution and Comprehensive Plan allowed for any adjustments to cluster development density. He stated direction should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, which stated a 1:20 development density.

Mr. O'Connor stated he thought the Comprehensive Plan did not state a density for clusters and the 1:20 ratio was applied in a different section.

Ms. Cook stated she believed that during the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission Working Group recommended to the BOS to not have the 1:20 density apply to rural clusters. She stated the BOS did not direct staff to make this change in the Comprehensive Plan. She stated there is language in the cluster portion of the rural lands designation description that states the cluster density would be at the same density as the standard lot size. She stated the language as written would keep the density consistent between these options.

Mr. Haldeman asked if the Ordinance could be changed in a way that was inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and if the density for clusters could be lower.

Mr. Polster asked if the Policy Committee could recommend the Planning Commission recommend the BOS revisit this issue.

Mr. Krapf stated that Mr. Vlad Gavrilovic, EPR PC, Consultant had made a good point at the August 11, 2022 meeting that rural clusters may not preserve rural character. He stated rural residential clusters may no longer be of use in James City County with this new density and that the density should be lower.

Mr. Polster stated this issue relates to setbacks and viewsheds and cannot be separated.

Mr. Krapf agreed.

Ms. Cook stated the amendments before the Committee would keep the cluster language consistent with standard lot sizes and consistent with recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that future discussions would address other cluster standards such as setbacks and development design.

Mr. Krapf asked if the Committee could recommend the amended Ordinance and continue to discuss clusters, setbacks, and other discussion items. He asked to confirm the update would recommend a new by-right standard and allow for additional elements to be addressed later.

Ms. Cook stated this was correct and represented a phased approach.

Mr. O'Connor stated he was concerned that opportunities for affordable housing stock may be eliminated through this and other changes.

Mr. Haldeman stated this concern came up during the last meeting via a representative from Habitat for Humanity. He stated that in the Comprehensive Plan workforce and affordable housing is recommended to be within the PSA to be closer to jobs and public transportation, not in Rural Lands.

Mr. Krapf stated there is also grandfathering for parcels smaller than 25 acres and that densities of 1:3 would be allowed by-right.

Mr. O'Connor stated he did not think this would be enough to develop affordable housing. He stated wells and septic systems are not affordable when combined with the requirement to have a larger lot to accommodate a reserve field. He cited Bush Springs Road as an example.

Mr. Haldeman stated he did not know how affordable housing could be built anywhere with current inflation.

Mr. O'Connor said he currently is working with Habitat for Humanity on 1,300 homes in Charlottesville and that it requires building vertically.

Mr. Polster made a motion to recommend approval of the draft Ordinance as shown in Attachment Nos. 3, 4, and 5 to the Planning Commission.

The motion passed 4-0.

E. NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Krapf made a motion to Adjourn.

The motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Haldeman adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:25 a.m.

Mr. Jack Haldeman, Chair

Mr. Paul Holt, Secretary

ITEM SUMMARY

DATE: 11/10/2022

TO: The Policy Committee

FROM: Thomas Wysong, Senior Planner II; Jose Ribeiro, Senior Planner II; John Risinger, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: ORD-22-0001. Amendments for Scenic Roadway Protection

ATTACHMENTS:

	Description	Type
▣	Staff Report	Staff Report
▣	Attachment 1. Initiating Resolution	Backup Material
▣	Attachment 2. 2045 Comprehensive Plan Community Character Chapter	Backup Material
▣	Attachment 3. Community Character Corridor Buffer Treatment Guidelines and Map	Backup Material
▣	Attachment 4. 2045 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation Description for Rural Lands	Backup Material
▣	Attachment 5. Rural Roadway Preservation Analysis	Backup Material
▣	Attachment 6. Scenic Roadway Character and Vision Summary	Backup Material
▣	Attachment 7. A-1 Setback Requirements	Backup Material

REVIEWERS:

Department	Reviewer	Action	Date
Policy	Cook, Ellen	Approved	11/2/2022 - 3:22 PM
Policy	Holt, Paul	Approved	11/2/2022 - 4:33 PM
Publication Management	Daniel, Martha	Approved	11/2/2022 - 4:37 PM
Policy Secretary	Secretary, Policy	Approved	11/3/2022 - 8:38 AM

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 10, 2022

TO: The Policy Committee

FROM: Thomas Wyson, Senior Planner II
Jose L. Ribeiro, Senior Landscape Planner II
John Risinger, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: ORD-22-0001. Amendments for Scenic Roadway Protection

Introduction

At its meeting on October 26, 2021, the Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted the 2045 James City County Comprehensive Plan: *Our County, Our Shared Future*. The adopted plan includes the following strategy within the Land Use Chapter that focuses on preserving scenic roadways:

LU 6.3 - To help retain the character of Rural Lands, develop additional zoning and subdivision tools (e.g., scenic easement dedication requirements, increased minimum lot sizes, increased setbacks, and/or overlay districts) to protect and preserve scenic roadways such as Forge Road. Consider 400-foot setbacks along Community Character Corridors outside the PSA.

Aligning with this adopted strategy, the Board of Supervisors adopted an Initiating Resolution pertaining to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance (see Attachment No. 1) at its meeting on November 23, 2021. The Initiating Resolution directs staff to consider additional requirements in both the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance to preserve scenic roadways such as Forge Road.

Policy Committee Direction

At its August 11, 2022, meeting, the Policy Committee directed staff for the purpose of this Ordinance amendment, to identify Community Character Corridors (CCCs) as those scenic roadways referenced in Goals, Strategies, and Actions (GSAs) LU 6.3 plus the portion of Croaker Road outside the Primary Service Area (PSA) that connects to Sycamore Landing Road. Furthermore, the Policy Committee directed staff to explore increased setbacks and buffering and mandatory clustering as the preservation tools for accomplishing this GSA.

Following this guidance, Planning staff met with the County Attorney's Office to further discuss these options. The County Attorney's Office informed staff that preservation tools for roadways must be applied uniformly and categorically. This means that the County can increase setbacks and buffering standards along roadways, but the roadways must be within an established category. As such, the proposed inclusion of Croaker Road to Sycamore Landing Road could not be included in the list below, since these two roads are not CCCs.

Furthermore, in reviewing the updated Future Land Use Map and relevant property information, staff notes that Centerville Road and the Colonial Parkway are wholly located within the PSA and that there are less than 10 parcels abutting these CCCs located outside the PSA. Furthermore, the property located adjacent to the Colonial Parkway is wholly located within the Gospel Spreading Farm Agricultural and Forestal District (AFD) and does not take its setback from the Colonial Parkway. Based on this further research and analysis, staff recommends removing these two CCCs from the list under consideration. The revised list of CCCs is provided below (the classification of CCC is included in parentheses):

1. Forge Road (classified as “Open/Agricultural”)
2. Old Stage Road (classified as “Open/Agricultural”)
3. Richmond Road (classified outside the PSA as “Wooded”)
4. Monticello Avenue (classified outside the PSA as “Wooded”)
5. John Tyler Memorial Highway (classified outside the PSA as “Wooded”)
6. Riverview Road (classified as “Wooded”)

Planning staff also evaluated the mandatory clustering option for major subdivisions adjacent to scenic roadways. There are two factors that lead staff to recommend against pursuing this requirement. First, if ORD-22-0002 was approved by the Board of Supervisors, resulting in a minimum lot size of 20 acres for A-1 and R-8 properties that are greater than 25 acres in size. This change will significantly decrease the possibility of suburban-style development for large tracts of property located in the County’s Rural Lands. Second, the proposed buffering and setbacks recommended for this Ordinance amendment would result in new proposed residences being in a significantly less visually impactful location. As such, these two Ordinance amendments would work in tandem to protect the scenic roadways, making the requirement for mandatory clustering of major subdivisions less necessary. Indeed, with the aforementioned changes, staff finds that mandatory clustering would not be a necessary tool to preserve the rural character of the County. Voluntary clustering could remain as an option however, as there may be additional factors favorable depending on specific details of specific properties.

Scenic Roadway Factors

There are three major factors to consider for a proposed increase to setbacks and buffering for the purpose of retaining the character of Rural Lands. These factors are: a) the existing character of the roadway being considered; b) the vision for the roadway as expressed within the Comprehensive Plan; and c) the amount of preservation necessary to preserve character and achieve this vision. Staff has prepared a briefing of the existing character and Comprehensive Plan roadway vision factors for each roadway under consideration, which is found in Attachment No. 6. The sections below discuss staff’s recommendations for Ordinance tools to address preservation of character through setback and buffer approaches. As discussed in staff’s previous memorandum to the Policy Committee, setbacks are an Ordinance tool that only addresses structures and the distance they must be from the front lot line, while buffers typically regulate all land use within a given area and address landscape standards within that area.

Recommended Setback

Staff recommends increasing the setback requirement within the General Agricultural District, A-1, Zoning District, rather than creating a section within the Zoning Ordinance specific to scenic roadways for two reasons. First, locating the enhanced setback within the A-1 Zoning District allows the setback to be applied evenly on a parcel basis. Second, per the County Attorney’s Office guidance, creating a section for scenic roadways with unique setbacks could risk this amendment being considered an overlay district, which would affect continuation of the project in its current form.

Currently, the setbacks found within the A-1 Zoning District vary based on the lot size requirement and the use being proposed. (See existing A-1 setback requirements in Attachment No. 7.) Since the scope of this Ordinance amendment is focused on protecting scenic roadways, staff recommends tailoring an enhanced setback to apply only to those parcels adjacent to these scenic roadways and located outside the PSA.

Furthermore, staff recommends an enhanced setback be tailored to apply solely to the Open/Agricultural CCCs, with enhanced buffering being tailored to apply solely to Wooded CCCs. As detailed within Attachment No. 6, the Open/Agricultural CCCs are intended to preserve the viewshed and integrity of farm fields and natural open spaces, which is best accomplished by a larger setback rather than increased buffering. Wooded CCCs are intended to preserve natural wooded areas and encourage supplementary

planting to ensure that buffers visually screen development from the road, which is best accomplished by buffering rather than an enhanced setback.

For the Open/Agricultural CCCs, staff recommends a setback of 400 feet for structures. This proposed setback aligns with the width recommended for consideration in GSA LU 6.3 and is recommended as an option within EPR's Rural Roadway Preservation Analysis. EPR's analysis states that the 400-foot setback is "more similar to a typically rural context and view from the road" and "provides an opportunity to create buffering and screening around the houses with vegetation that would be more reminiscent of a rural farm scape rather than a suburban landscape pattern." As can be seen in Planning staff's analysis, this distance matches the character of Forge Road regarding existing structure locations and parcel sizes. In consideration of the property owners with shallower lots and houses near the roadway for Forge Road and Old Stage Road, staff recommends exempting shallower parcels (and considering allowing certain parcels to utilize setbacks previously recorded on subdivision plats). Another possible exemption that staff had considered was for traditional agricultural structures (barns, run-in sheds, etc.) in recognition of agricultural and forestal uses being the intended primary uses in the A-1 District. However, staff has concluded that having a lesser setback for agricultural structures could have significant enforcement implications and could result in unintended violations or the inability to use or convert structures to non-agricultural uses over time.

Recommended Buffering

Currently when developments are proposed along private/public rights-of-way, landscape buffers directly adjacent to the rights-of-way are required to be preserved and/or supplemented with additional landscaping. For commercial projects, the landscape section of the Ordinance requires a 50-foot-wide vegetated buffer along CCCs for all districts. For residential uses, a buffer for major subdivision development (150 feet in width for CCCs), is currently not included in the A-1 District unlike most residential or mixed-use zoning districts. For minor subdivision development and at the time of issuance of building permits on existing lots, the A-1 District is similar to other districts in not requiring a buffer. Staff recommends the following Ordinance changes be considered:

- Buffers along Wooded CCCs. For commercial projects, staff recommends enhanced buffering by increasing the width of the required buffer (in Section 24-98) from 50 feet to 100 feet wide. For residential major subdivisions, staff recommends establishing a buffer requirement in the A-1 District with a specified width of 200 feet. The vegetated buffer should remain undisturbed and supplemented with additional landscaping to meet the minimum quantity required of trees and shrubs in accordance with existing Zoning Ordinance buffer language currently found in other districts.
- Buffers along Open/Agricultural CCCs. Staff recommends no additional buffering requirements for these CCCs.
- Timbering Activities Buffer/Setback. Section 24-43 of the Zoning Ordinance requires buffer and setbacks for timbering activities. Subsection (3) addresses properties that are zoned A-1, and currently specifies that for properties within the Primary Service Area (PSA), all timbering activities shall be located a minimum of 50 feet from any public right-of-way, while for properties that are outside the PSA, there is no required setback for timbering. In order to address the preservation of the character of wooded CCCs, staff recommends considering amending this language to include a timbering setback of at least 50 feet on properties along Wooded CCCs outside the PSA.

Attachments:

1. Initiating Resolution
2. 2045 Comprehensive Plan Community Character Chapter
3. Community Character Corridor Buffer Treatment Guidelines and Map
4. 2045 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation Description for Rural Lands
5. Rural Roadway Preservation Analysis
6. Scenic Roadway Character and Vision Summary
7. A-1 Setback Requirements

RESOLUTION

INITIATION OF CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE AND

SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS TO PROTECT

AND PRESERVE SCENIC ROADWAYS SUCH AS FORGE ROAD

WHEREAS, section 15.2-2286(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended (the "Virginia Code"), and County Code Section 24-13 authorize the Board of Supervisors of James City County, Virginia (the "Board"), to, by resolution, initiate amendments to the regulations of the Zoning Ordinance that the Board finds to be prudent and required by public necessity, convenience, general welfare, or good zoning practice; and

WHEREAS, section 15.2-2253 of the Virginia Code and County Code Section 19-10 authorize the Board to request the Planning Commission to prepare and recommend amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance; and

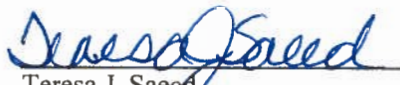
WHEREAS, the Board is of the opinion that the public necessity, general welfare, and good zoning practice warrant the consideration of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of James City County, Virginia, does hereby initiate amendment of the James City County Code, Chapter 24, Zoning in order to consider additional requirements to protect and preserve scenic roadways such as Forge Road. The Planning Commission shall hold at least one public hearing on the consideration of amendments to said Zoning Ordinances and shall forward its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors in accordance with the law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of James City County, Virginia, does hereby request the Planning Commission to prepare and recommend amendments to Chapter 19, Subdivisions, in order to consider additional requirements to protect and preserve scenic roadways such as Forge Road. The Planning Commission shall hold at least one public hearing on the consideration of amendments to said Subdivision Ordinances and shall forward its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors in accordance with the law.


Michael J. Hipple
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:


Teresa J. Saeed
Deputy Clerk to the Board

SADLER
ICENHOUR
LARSON
MCGLENNON
HIPPLE

VOTES			
<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
☒	☐	☐	☐
☒	☐	☐	☐
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Adopted by the Board of Supervisors of James City County, Virginia, this 23rd day of November, 2021.

InitConsdForgeRd-res

Community Character

Introduction

James City County's community character is often described as "historic," "rural," and "small town." Key components include the natural topography; large wooded areas of tall deciduous forests; open vistas across ravines, wetlands, and water bodies; relatively low traffic volumes; scenic roads; and small scale, low-intensity development. Places such as Norge, Toano, Grove, Five Forks, and Jamestown bring to mind separate, identifiable areas of the County. However, this small town feel and sense of place has been challenged by the growth of the past 20 years, including an evolution to more urban and suburban landscapes. The guidance that this chapter offers is intended to maintain the small town feel and sense of place even as the County changes over the years.

As this growth occurs, it can change the County's character in a positive or negative way. Factors such as architectural style and massing, streetscape, buffers, scale, and accessibility can influence whether designs are distinctive and build the community's character, or lack authenticity and are indistinguishable from those found anywhere else in the United States. Through its policies and Ordinances, the County continues to encourage new growth to locate inside the Primary Service Area (PSA), rather than outside the PSA in more rural areas. This important tool, along with other Ordinances, policies, and the new Character Design Guidelines, work to ensure that development is in keeping with the existing community and preserves the elements of the County's unique community character.

The character of James City County is important to its citizens and business community members alike, and has contributed to the County's attractiveness and growth through the years. As noted in the *2019 James City County Comprehensive Plan Survey* (2019 Citizen Survey), preserving the nature of the area and its quality of life remains a high priority. Additionally, placemaking and economic development go hand in hand. According to research by the Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, investing in placemaking not only creates livable, multimodal communities that are attractive to a broad range of residents - these elements also attract businesses and economic growth. Recent trends show that business site selection is data-driven, with companies looking for communities that can attract and retain a viable workforce.

The Community Character Chapter Goal, and the Strategies and Actions, are listed at the end of the chapter. After careful review and public input, the Goal language as written in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan has been updated, with several changes to acknowledge the current character of the County by adding "architectural" to the qualities to be preserved and enhanced, "the overall health...of its residents" and by noting the County's "distinctive character" as a replacement for "rural and small town." The Goal now states: **"The County will be a good steward of the land by preserving and enhancing the scenic, cultural, rural, farm, forestal, natural, architectural, and historic qualities that are essential to the County's distinctive character, economic vitality, and overall health and quality of life of its residents."** In recognition of the importance and value of community character, the County has taken many positive steps over the years toward shaping future development, which are detailed in part in the Spotlight on Implementation section, and continues to be sensitive to the many characteristics that already exist. The methods that the County has at its disposal influence not only the appearance of the community, but also the way the community functions and the experiences of visitors, citizens, and those who do business in

the County. Further action through the revised and updated Strategies and Actions will continue these efforts into the future.

Key Planning Influences

Important Places of Character

Recognizing the value and importance of the natural and historical resources of the County, the Comprehensive Plan has since 1997 designated certain roads and areas in the County as Community Character Corridors (CCCs) and Community Character Areas (CCAs). Other areas in the County such as the Grove and Croaker communities and Forge Road, although not designated as Community Characters, are still important places of character in the County. Map CC-1 shows the designated Community Character Corridors and Areas in the County.

James City County

Community Character Areas (CCA) and Community Character Corridors (CCC)

Legend:

- Community Character Areas (Green shaded regions)
- Primary Service Area (Dashed black line)
- Community Character Corridors (CCC):
 - Open/Agricultural (Green line)
 - Urban & Suburban (Blue line)
 - Wooded (Orange line)

Map Labels:

- New Kent County
- Gloucester County
- York County
- Charles City County
- Surry County
- City of Williamsburg
- City of Newport News
- York River
- James River
- Richmond Rd
- Barnes Rd
- Old Stage Rd
- St. Mount Zion Rd
- Ways Creek Rd
- Rochambeau Dr
- 30
- 60
- 64
- Riverview Rd
- Norman Rd
- Barlow Rd
- Fentons Mill Rd
- Johnston Rd
- Centerville Rd
- Longhill Rd
- Towne Rd
- Old
- Moore Rd
- Airport Rd
- Bypass Rd
- Colonial Pkwy
- Merimee Trl
- 199
- 143
- 60
- Pocahontas Trl
- 64
- 143
- City of Williamsburg
- Five Forks
- News Rd
- Black Bat Rd
- John Tyler Hwy
- 5
- Monticello Ave
- Green Springs Rd
- Longwood Rd
- Jamestown Rd
- Lake Powell Rd
- Colonial Pkwy
- Jamestown Island
- Neck Land Rd
- Little Creek Dam Rd
- Chickahominy Rd
- Forge Rd
- N Riverside Dr
- Diament Rd
- Jolly Pond Rd

Community Character Corridors

Community Character Corridors (CCCs) are roads in the County that were previously designated as greenbelt roads, described in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan as entrance corridors and roads which promoted the rural, natural, or historic character of the County. In 1997 they were adopted as CCCs and have played an instrumental role in helping to preserve the original character of these roads. More attention has been given to the roads which are considered to be entrance corridors, or gateways, because they set the important first impression that many visitors have of the area.

Since the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, each plan has identified the following three types of CCCs and their corresponding goals: Open/Agricultural, Wooded, and Urban/Suburban. Some roads have more than one designation depending on the location within the County.

Table CC-1. County CCC Designations

Road	Open/ Agricultural	Wooded	Urban/ Suburban
Centerville Road		X	X
Colonial Parkway		X	
DePue Road			X
Forge Road	X		
Greensprings Road	X	X	
Humelsine Parkway (Route 199)		X	X
Ironbound Road from Jamestown Road to News Road			X
Ironbound Road from Strawberry Plains Road to City of Williamsburg border			X
Jamestown Road		X	X
John Tyler Highway		X	X
Longhill Road		X	X
Monticello Avenue		X	X
News Road		X	
Old Stage Road and Barhamsville Road from Anderson's Corner (intersection of Routes 30 and 60) to New Kent County border	X		
Pocahontas Trail south of Humelsine Parkway to Newport News border			X
Richmond Road from Anderson's Corner to New Kent County border		X	
Richmond Road from Anderson's Corner to City of Williamsburg border	X		X
Riverview Road from Croaker Road to the entrance of York River State Park		X	
Sandy Bay Road from Ironbound Road to Jamestown Road			X

The County has created standards and guidelines for how CCC buffers are to be treated during development and how to preserve the unique community character along these key corridors throughout the County. To give better guidance regarding landscape treatments along the different Community Character Corridors, in January 2011, the Board of Supervisors adopted buffer treatment guidelines and a map showing the location of the corridors and their buffer type designations.

For the most effective corridor buffers, existing plant material should be maintained and supplemented with a mix of small trees and shrubs that are both evergreen and deciduous and preferably native. Planting should occur in a staggered pattern, with the smaller understory plant material defining the edges of the existing groupings of material. New buffers can also be successfully planted in a more natural design, especially when the buffer might be very wide and the developer wants to reduce maintenance costs associated with a manicured area.

In addition to the treatment guidelines adopted by the Board, the Landscape Ordinance specifies when CCC buffer treatments are required for development plans. Generally, roads designated as CCCs require a 50-foot average buffer along the right-of-way, but in some instances the Ordinance allows for a buffer width reduction if it best complements the surrounding area. For example, parcels located in a Community Character Area with design guidelines recommending a more urban design with shallower setbacks may be eligible for a reduced CCC landscape buffer width in order to better align with the neighboring streetscape. A buffer reduction may be conditioned upon superior site design, such as enhanced landscaping and architectural features, and should not be viewed as a method for reducing landscaping requirements. Additionally, consideration should be paid to the context of the right-of-way itself. For example, the design of any complementary facilities should be in keeping with state and regional guidelines, such as the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) Multimodal System Design Guidelines.

Highlights from the adopted policy describing the three types of buffer treatments and their corresponding goals are provided below.

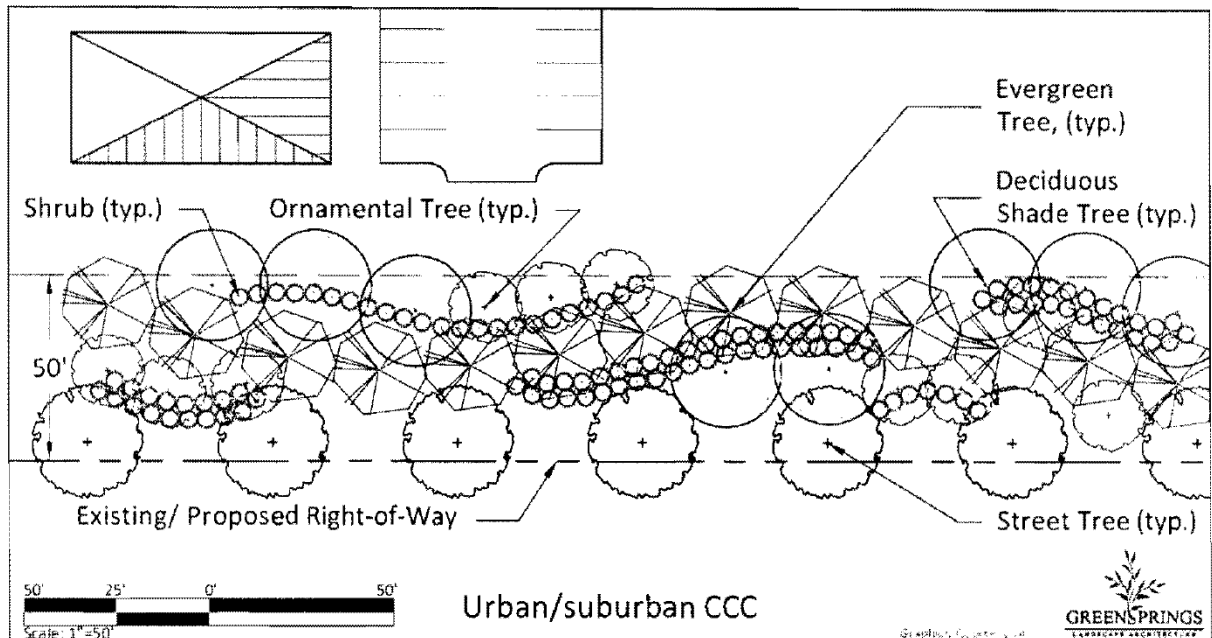
Urban/Suburban Community Character Corridors

- Characterized as having high to moderate traffic, commercial uses, and some residential uses.
- Predominant visual character should be the built environment and natural landscape.
- Buffer treatments should incorporate existing and new vegetation, berms, and other desirable design features to complement and enhance the visual quality of the corridor.
- Vehicle-related activities such as parking lots, deliveries, and outdoor operations should be screened.



Image CC-1. Richmond Road along Williamsburg Premium Outlets

Figure CC-1. Urban/Suburban CCC Treatment Exhibit



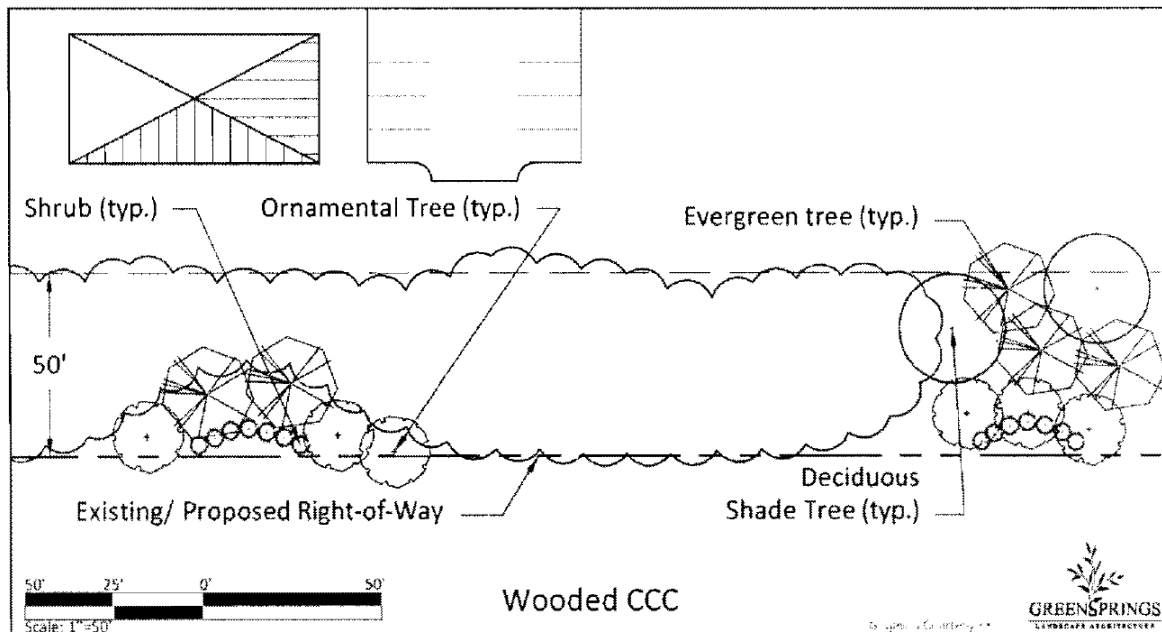
Wooded Community Character Corridors

- Characterized as having natural wooded areas along the road, with light to moderate traffic, and minimal commercial development.
- Existing vegetation should be preserved or supplemented to create a wooded buffer that preserves open space and wildlife habitat.
- The buffer should visually screen the development from the road to maintain the natural character of the County.



Image CC-2. Western Monticello Avenue

Figure CC-2. Wooded CCC Treatment Exhibit



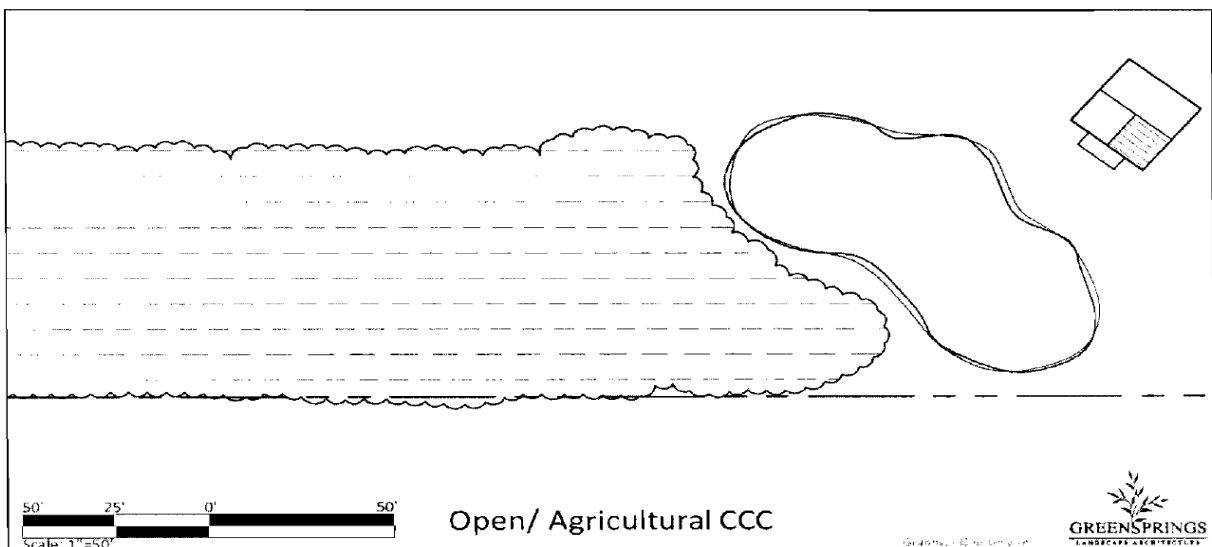
Open/Agricultural Community Character Corridors

- Characterized as a corridor located primarily in rural lands where farming and forestry activities are predominant.
- The viewshed and integrity of farm fields and natural open spaces should be preserved so they remain the dominant visual features.



Image CC-3. Forge Road

Figure CC-3. Open/Agricultural CCC Treatment Exhibit



Rural Roads

A number of secondary roads both inside and outside the PSA have a distinct rural character. These roads are characterized by pavement widths typically less than 20 feet, limited sight distances, narrow shoulders, and in many instances, tree canopies that extend over the pavement. Such roads play a major role in preserving the rural character of the County. Some need safety improvements while others are impacted by traffic volumes greater than their intended capabilities. The County works with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to make needed improvements through the Secondary Six-Year Improvement Program (SSYIP) in a manner that retains the rural character of these roads.

Community Character Areas

Existing Community Character Areas

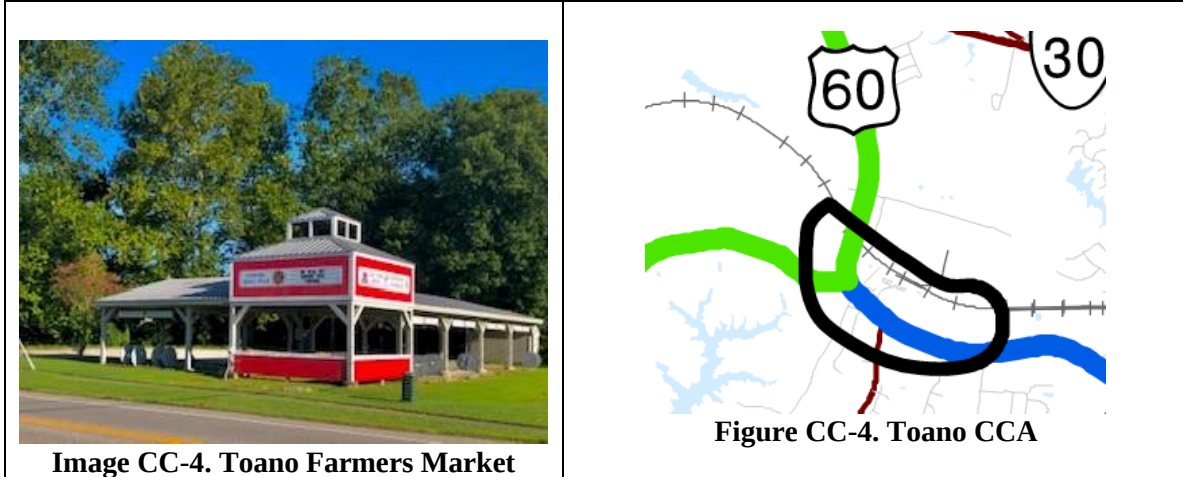
During the 1997 Comprehensive Plan process, certain areas of James City County were confirmed as important places during the public participation process. The following areas are identified as Community Character Areas (CCAs):

- Toano
- Norge
- Jamestown Island - Jamestown Settlement - Greensprings Road
- New Town
- Five Forks

Design guidelines for future development have been developed for these areas. Both Toano and the Five Forks CCAs have standalone design guidelines with specific design standards adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The New Town CCA has guidelines developed as part of the rezoning and master planning of the New Town Mixed Use development. Unlike these three CCAs, Norge and Jamestown Island do not have standalone design guidelines, and therefore, design standards for these areas are listed within the text below.

The boundaries of CCAs, as represented on the Land Use Map, are not intended to be parcel-specific. Instead, they are meant to be used as a guide to areas that citizens have identified as possessing unique characteristics and maintaining a relatively defined sense of place. The specific design characteristics outlined for each area are used at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors when considering new large-scale developments at the rezoning and Special Use Permit (SUP) stage and are not necessarily intended to be applied to individual homeowners in existing neighborhoods. Most CCAs have a central core area, where stricter adherence to the area's description is seen as very important in order for the area to maintain the desired character. Application of the design characteristics may be more relaxed for parcels towards the perimeter of the CCA, but may still involve an evaluation of the parcel's impact on other adjacent parcels within the CCA, specifically as they pertain to the viewshed, parcel connections, and walkability.

Toano



Toano, derived from a western U.S. Native American word meaning “high ground,” has been a center of modern commerce and trade since the colonial era. Prior to English colonization, this area was part of the Powhatan Confederacy. Beginning in the 1700s, the area was home to “ordinaries,” or inns providing lodging and meals to travelers on the road from Williamsburg to Richmond. The area became known as “Burnt Ordinary” following a Revolutionary War-era fire, and retained this name until the 1880s, when it was renamed to Toano by out-of-town developers of the C&O Railway for a new station on a new rail line.

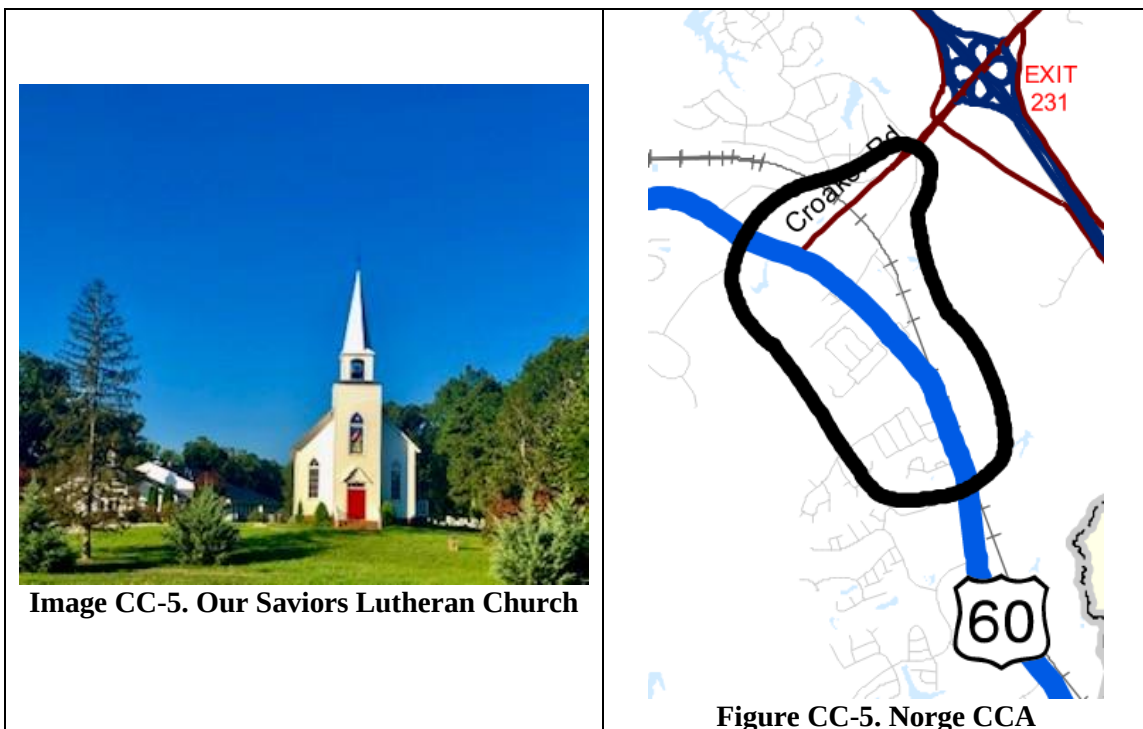
The addition of the railroad allowed commerce to grow, and by the early 20th century downtown Toano included the C&O depot, a variety of retail shops and trades services, banks, inns, and a school. The area became known as a “Village of Stores” and solidified itself as an important commercial hub for upper James City County.

Toano still retains much of the “village” character that led to its designation as a Community Character Area. Although some new development has occurred, the character is still dominated by buildings constructed at the beginning of the 20th century. These buildings have shallow setbacks and many are two-story, creating a more pedestrian-oriented storefront environment than any other area in the County. Toano has also retained a fairly clear visual separation from more recent development along Richmond Road, with visitors enjoying a distinct sense of arrival from both the east and the west.

In September 2005, the Board of Supervisors created the Toano Community Character Area Study Committee in order to listen to the views of County citizens, particularly those who live and work in Toano. The Committee’s purpose was to recommend principles and guidelines that highlight and honor Toano’s history, encourage growth that enhances the area’s character, and improve streetscapes and a pedestrian-friendly town center. The guidelines created by the study were adopted by the Board of Supervisors in February 2006. The design guidelines highlight improvements and plans for the Toano area and give guidance for all future developments inside the CCA. For parcels fronting on Richmond Road on the northwest side of its intersection with Forge Road, the design guidelines encourage a mix of commercial and residential uses, but predominantly neighborhood commercial on the Richmond Road frontage. Speed limits should be lowered in transitional zones entering Historic Toano, and pedestrian/bicycle access should be promoted throughout the corridor with safe, improved sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and sidewalk buffers.

Since the design guidelines were adopted, improvements have been made to median landscaping, sidewalks, and signage, and additional drainage and roadway infrastructure improvements are currently being planned. An example of beautification improvements include the installation of “Welcome to Toano” signs in 2006, featuring a design inspired by demi-lune windows, a type of window frequently featured in early 20th century architecture around the village. In addition to these efforts, in 2019 the Toano Commercial Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places, and in 2020 Toano was accepted as a Commercial District Affiliate of the Virginia Main Street Program. An affiliate is an introductory tier of the Main Street Program that allows communities to access the national network of strategies and resources for preserving and revitalizing community character.

Norge



Prior to the 1890s, the area now encompassing Norge was sparsely populated. Settlers of Scandinavian origin located in the Midwestern United States, who were unhappy with the farming conditions of the Midwest, were persuaded to move to the upper Peninsula through the efforts of Carl M. Bergh, a Norwegian immigrant who worked as a C&O Railway land agent. Having bought property in James City County himself, he soon encouraged other Norwegians to join him. The first Norwegian resettlers arrived in the late 1890s and situated themselves in the area now known as Norge.

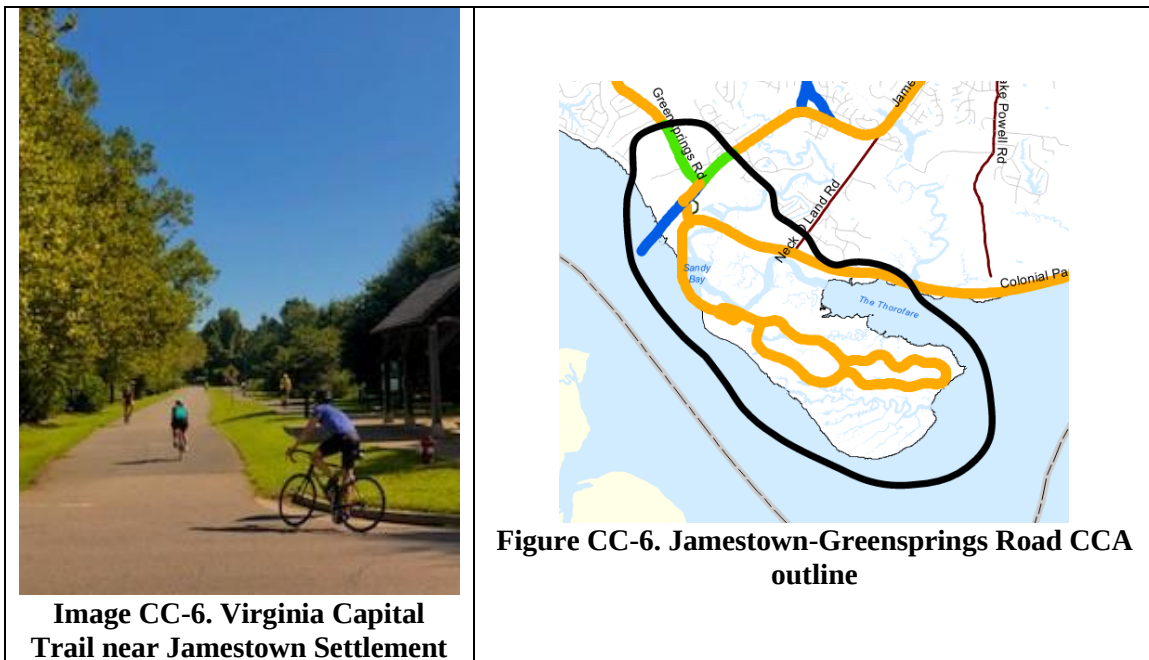
In contrast to Toano, Norge has been more impacted by recent commercial development along Richmond Road and has not been the subject of a subarea study. While Norge continues to have a unique and identifiable residential component located off Richmond Road, along with some pedestrian-oriented storefronts, the early 20th century “village” character of its business and residential areas along Richmond Road has been visually impacted by automobile-oriented development. Many original buildings from the early 1900s were demolished for the widening of Richmond Road in the 1960s. Further, newer development from the east has substantially blurred the distinction between Norge and neighboring Lightfoot. A subarea study with guidelines similar

to Toano may be beneficial in providing a more comprehensive evaluation of how to minimize impacts to the historic village character of Norge. Outlined below are specific design standards intended to guide future development and redevelopment in Norge:

- The architecture, scale, materials, spacing, and color of buildings should complement the historic character of the area.
- Building setbacks should be consistent with nearby historic buildings and structures.
- Where possible, parking should be located to the rear of buildings. Parking should be screened from roadway and adjacent properties.
- Shared access and parking should be pursued before constructing new access breaks and parking facilities.
- Existing specimen trees and shrubs should be preserved to the extent possible.
- New landscaping should be of a type, size, and scale to complement and enhance the building and site design. Native plant and tree species are encouraged.
- Signage should be of a scale, size, color, and materials to complement the historic character of the area.
- Pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation should be promoted through the provision of sidewalks, bike racks, benches, crosswalks, street trees, and other design features which help accomplish this goal.
- Mixed use development which provides residential, commercial, and office uses in close proximity is encouraged.
- Efforts to maintain and reinforce the boundaries of Norge and Toano through open space and site design measures are strongly encouraged.

Community character considerations are important for development within areas of the CCA that are designated Economic Opportunity (EO) areas but present some unique considerations. Acknowledging that most EO land is at the perimeter of the Norge CCA, protecting the viewshed around the central core of the CCA and along the railroad should be a primary consideration. Outlined below are specific design standards intended to guide future development and redevelopment in the Norge EO:

- Building setbacks similar to those in central Norge should be more flexible based on the types of uses that are master planned within the CCA. For compatible uses with low impacts, smaller setbacks should be encouraged to integrate the areas. For larger, less compatible uses, attention should be paid to larger setbacks and buffering to minimize impacts.
- Building scale may be larger, but height and massing should gradually increase as development moves away from the core of Norge and closer to the perimeter of the CCA.
- Architectural features consistent with the Norge area should be included in designs for those buildings that are contained within or are clearly visible from the CCA.
- Signage facing into the CCA should also be minimized or designed in a manner consistent with the Norge character.
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections over the railroad tracks should also be promoted through the use of elevated or signalized crossings, sidewalks along roads on either side of the tracks, and bike racks to further integrate EO land with the Norge CCA.



Since acquiring Jamestown Beach Event Park and the James City County Marina in 2006 as greenspace purchases, the County has invested in shaping the long-term preservation and revitalization of this important corridor. With its waterfront access and close proximity to both Jamestown Settlement and Colonial National Historical Park, this area has unique opportunities for historic and environmental preservation, as well as economic development.

Jamestown Beach and the Marina, along with Chickahominy Riverfront Park on John Tyler Highway, were evaluated in a master planning project called Shaping Our Shores (SOS). Originally adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 9, 2009, the SOS Master Plan addressed the long-range physical development, use, and stewardship of these sites over the next 20 years. It presented a vision for the physical environment that promoted and supported the values and goals of James City County citizens. The master plan proposed specific land uses and development which are compatible with specific design standards outlined below:

- The architecture, scale, materials, and color of buildings should be complementary and reflect the historic character of James City County, the City of Williamsburg, and Colonial Williamsburg.
- All development should be well screened from Jamestown Road.
- Parking should be located to the rear of buildings and should be well landscaped with shrubs and street trees.
- All utilities should be placed underground.
- Existing specimen trees and shrubs should be preserved to the extent possible.
- New landscaping should be of a type, size, and scale to complement and enhance the building and site design. Native plant and tree species are encouraged.
- Signage should be of a scale, size, color, and materials to complement the architecture and scale of buildings. Low signs with subdued colors are encouraged.
- Pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation should be promoted through the provision of sidewalks, bike racks, benches, and other design features which help accomplish this goal.
- Natural woodland, open space, and waterfront vistas should be the predominant features.

- Public access to the waterfront should be an integral feature of new development but carefully designed to limit the visual impact on views from the river.

In 2018, a review and update of the 2009 SOS Master Plan was launched by the Parks and Recreation Department to incorporate recently added amenities and adapt to changes in the community's facility needs. The purpose of the review was not to recreate or fix the old plan, but rather to update the plan with these goals:

- Evaluate and confirm where existing park amenities are successfully meeting community needs;
- Identify unmet needs or opportunities and challenges to improve upon existing amenities;
- Evaluate maintenance/conditions and longevity of park features;
- Learn from the community if facilities in the plan are no longer needed, feasible, or should be built in other parks; and
- Create an updated master plan to guide development for the next decade and beyond.

Staff from Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Planning, General Services, and the James City Service Authority were all involved in the review to ensure the revised master plan complied with local infrastructure and easement requirements and provided enhanced revenue opportunities. Feedback from the community was also sought through public meetings, online surveys, and paper surveys. Some changes included relocation of buildings, equipment and amenities out of the flood plain, removing high-intensity uses such as condos and retail, and adding facilities such as bathrooms and offices. The SOS Master Plan update was adopted by the James City County Board of Supervisors on July 28, 2020.

New Town



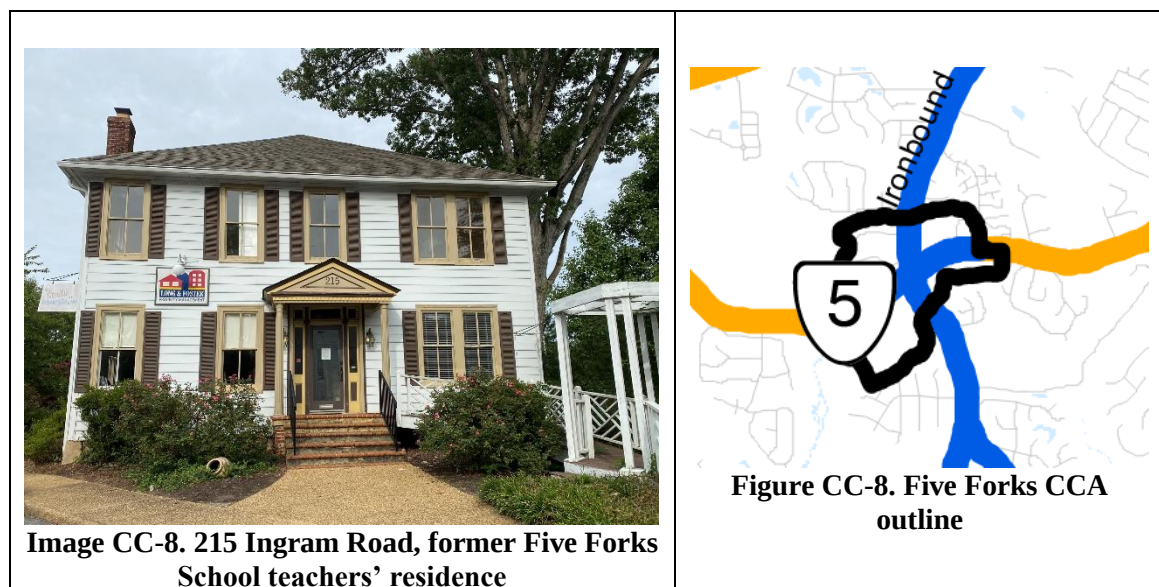
In August 1995, James City County and the C.C. Casey Limited Company sponsored parallel design competitions for a Courthouse and Town Plan, respectively, to be located on approximately 600 acres known as the “Casey” Property. The winning town plan, chosen from among 99 entries worldwide, was submitted by Michel Dionne, Paul Milana, and Christopher Stienon of New York City. The plan included several civic facilities, 600,000 square feet of regional and community retail, 400,000 square feet of office space, and 2,000 residential units of varying types. The plan locates a civic green at the southeast corner of the site where it becomes central to the larger

Williamsburg region and a gateway to the town. A retail square is the focus of the mixed use town center with research and development corporations along Discovery Boulevard. The neighborhoods are composed of a simple street and block pattern that accommodates alleys and permits a variety of lot sizes and housing types. The public spaces of the plan connect to the regional system of public open space so that the new town becomes an urban extension and center for the region. Using the winning town plan as a launching pad, on December 22, 1997, the Board of Supervisors approved rezoning applications that set forth the New Town binding Master Plan and Design Review Guidelines.

Since then, the Board has amended the guidelines several times as new sections have been developed. The design guidelines were prepared by Cooper, Robertson & Partners, and the New Town Design Review Board was created to review all development plans within the New Town master plan area for compliance with the guidelines. Both the guidelines and master plan established standards for different areas of New Town. As development continues many of the original design features are now taking shape, and the New Town Design Review Board has been instrumental in adhering to the design guidelines, thus ensuring that the original concept is realized.

The area designated as the New Town CCA is mostly the same area shown on the adopted master plan for New Town; however, some parcels located within the CCA are not part of the master plan or subject to the same proffers. For the parcels that are located within the New Town Master Plan area and which were rezoned, development must follow the standards provided by the adopted design guidelines. For the parcels that are in the New Town Master Plan area and referenced in the design guidelines but were not rezoned or bound by proffers, development is strongly encouraged to follow the design guidelines. For parcels located outside the New Town Master Plan area, development is encouraged to follow New Town's architectural and design features in order to maintain a unifying look and feel to the area.

Five Forks



Five Forks is an area that retains elements of a village character, including two original buildings dating to the early 1900s: the original Five Forks School and the neighboring teachers' residence, located near the corner of Ironbound and Ingram Roads. Both are good surviving examples of

American four square construction and have influenced the design of newer buildings directly adjacent, which were designed to share a vernacular appearance.

This area has grown and changed, and as a result, the Board of Supervisors created the Five Forks Area Study Committee in June 2004 to listen to the views of County citizens, particularly those who live and work in Five Forks. The Committee's purpose was to recommend principles that preserve and build upon the many positive qualities of Five Forks, including protecting both creek watersheds and safeguarding the village character of the area. These principles addressed residential growth, commercial development, traffic concerns, and alternative transportation, and called for the creation of the Five Forks Community Character Area to incorporate design standards for future development. The Board of Supervisors adopted the Primary Principles for the Five Forks Area in August 2004.

Other Special Places

While not all areas that contribute to the County's character have historic or distinct architecture and definable boundaries that would qualify them as Community Character Areas, they are still special to the community because of historic, aesthetic, natural, and/or cultural elements that exist in these locations. Because of this, additional consideration should be given to enhancing and building the character of these areas. Based upon citizen comments as well as a review of documents from the Historical Commission and the book, *James City County: Keystone of the Commonwealth*, three special places have been identified for their contributions to the greater community: the Grove, Croaker, and Forge Road communities.

Grove

Grove is a community in the southeastern portion of the County, valued for its historic, cultural, and agricultural roots. Bordered by the James River to the west and separated from the Newport News city limits by Skiffes Creek, the area was originally part of the Powhatan Confederacy before being colonized by the English. Historic sites in Grove related to Virginia's colonial past include the archaeological site of Wolstenholme Towne, the administrative center of Martin's Hundred dating to 1618, and Carter's Grove Plantation, built in 1755. The Grove community was probably named for nearby Grove Creek, which drains into the James River about six miles east of Jamestown. It may also have been named after Carter's Grove Plantation.

The southeast portion of Grove was largely agricultural through the 1990s before being developed into industrial parks. While the physical presence of Grove's agricultural roots has decreased, a small amount of agricultural land remains on the Carter's Grove property, which is currently included in the Agricultural and Forestal District program.

Grove's present day development began with African-American settlement by freedmen from Carter's Grove and other plantations following the American Civil War. Its population was fewer than 100 people until after the turn of the 20th century. The African-American population increased during the two World Wars, due in part to attracting hundreds of people displaced by federal land acquisition for military installations, including the Naval Weapons Station, Cheatham Annex, and Camp Peary. Grove eventually became the largest African-American community in the County and was commemorated with a Historical Highway Marker in 2013.

Today, Grove is an active community with increasing amenities and programs, including the Abram Frink, Jr. Community Center, the Community Garden, and Grove Community Playground, which

was recently refurbished. Proposed additions by the County include a Lower County Park and a new Convenience Center, both cited in the top five priorities by the Planning Commission in the adopted 2021-25 Capital Improvements Program. Additionally, a segment of Pocahontas Trail will be widened and has undergone a VDOT corridor study with public feedback. To help protect and complement the visual character of the community, Pocahontas Trail, the main thoroughfare through Grove, is a designated Community Character Corridor. Any new development along this route must adhere to CCC buffer requirements. As the area grows and industrial development brings jobs and new residents, it will continue to be important to identify and enhance the special character of Grove.

Croaker

Croaker is a community on the south bank of the York River. The name "Croaker" is believed to have derived from the abundant quantity of Atlantic Croaker, an inshore, bottom-dwelling fish. The community of Croaker was known in its early history as Taskinas Plantation, then Hollywood due to the many holly trees. "Taskinask" was designated by the Tobacco Inspection Act of 1730 as the site of the public tobacco warehouse where local planters stored their crops to be shipped to England. While much of Croaker is now within York River State Park, the remaining area is divided among residential, farming, and woodland areas, which was highlighted as a special place by citizens. The Croaker community includes many historic resources. Croaker Landing, an archaeological site listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) since 1987, contains evidence of Native American habitation throughout the Woodland Period (c. 1000 B.C. - A.D. 1600). Riverview Plantation, a historic Federal and Greek Revival home dating to the 1850s with early 20th century additions, is also listed on the NRHP. The grounds of Riverview also include contributing structures dating to the 1940s.

Riverview Road from Croaker Road to York River State Park has been designated as an open/agricultural CCC, which enhances the County's ability to preserve the special character of this area. Valued for its history as an agricultural community, the farming and natural character of the area is notable as one of the few agricultural communities left in the County. Since the opening of York River State Park much of the scenic beauty of the areas has been preserved for generations to come, but special attention should be given to acknowledging and protecting the remaining agricultural character of the area.

Forge Road

As colonists moved inland from Jamestown along the waterways, the land bound by the Chickahominy River and Diascund Creek was rapidly settled. By the mid-18th century a number of large farms were established in the area that would become the Forge Road corridor. In this area, troop movement occurred during both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. The Revolutionary War-era Chickahominy Shipyard, destroyed by the British in 1781 and now included on the National Register of Historic Places, was accessed from Forge Road. Despite the activity that took place in this area during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, a significant number of 18th and 19th century homes survive today along Forge Road. Architectural remnants which reflect the agrarian heritage of the Forge Road community include the homes of Windsor Castle, Lombardy, and Warrenton.

Today the vistas seen from Forge Road are of larger, pastoral parcels, used primarily for agricultural purposes. The relatively flat terrain along the road has mostly been cleared for residences, crops, or livestock, with denser clusters of trees located at the rear of parcels or around bodies of water. Houses and other structures tend to be set back farther from the road. Much of the land in this area has been recognized for having prime farmland soils and has been an attractive area for horse-related uses. The County has invested in various open space purchases along this corridor.

Forge Road is a two-lane road with a shoulder and is designated as an Open/Agricultural CCC. Additionally, Forge Road at the intersection of Richmond Road is within the Toano CCA. Given the area's historic significance, the agricultural value of the land and the unique and attractive viewshed, the County has been careful regarding road improvements to Forge Road for vehicular traffic. Future development proposals for Forge Road will be encouraged to preserve the agricultural economy that has defined the rural character rooted here for generations.

Factors that Influence Community Character

There are many different factors that can influence community appearance and character. In James City County, factors such as architectural and design elements, the preservation of natural resources, and the area's historic and cultural heritage are important elements that contribute to the overall character of the County.

Neighborhood and Community Appearance

While market conditions greatly determine the type of housing and commercial product offered to citizens, the County can influence the design and appearance of the community to meet the ideals expressed by citizens. Public input shows that many residents value the history and culture of the area, as well as the small-town and friendly atmosphere the County offers. Elements of development can reflect these characteristics that help make James City County a special place for its residents. They are addressed in many ways, from suggestions and requirements for new development to expectations for public plans and improvements.

County Policy and Beautification

The County employs development review and other techniques for beautification. The County has designated funds toward the beautification of high profile corridors, intersections, and public areas in the County, including landscape planting and maintenance. Landscaping has been installed along Humelsine Parkway, Monticello Avenue, Richmond Road, Jamestown Road, Anderson's Corner, and many other areas. County staff also created a sound wall policy and provided feedback regarding landscaping and sound walls to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for the I-64 widening project. In addition to landscaping, James City County funded the replacement of standard VDOT signs along Humelsine Parkway and adjacent roads with signs more complementary to the character of the area. Previous efforts include the installation a new wayfinding system in anticipation of the Jamestown 400th Anniversary Commemoration, completed in 2006. This was a regional effort to make the entire Historic Triangle more navigable, with signage that was easier to read and more aesthetically pleasing than the standard VDOT signs.

The County's Sign Ordinance also includes regulations intended to safeguard against inappropriate or excessive signage that may be incompatible with the surrounding character of the area. The Sign Ordinance was amended in 2017 in response to a Supreme Court ruling which stripped localities of the ability to regulate signage based on content, but protections against nuisance signage remained as strong as possible through clarifications to the County's definitions and regulations. Examples include restrictions against off-site signs, illuminated signs, temporary signs, and new billboards, along with specifications for sign dimensions relative to a building façade's surface area. Colors and design of signs are further reviewed for aesthetic compatibility when located on a CCC, within a CCA, or as required by proffers and conditions. Reducing distractions, obstructions,

and visual clutter helps protect the historic and natural character of the County, as well as promote traffic and pedestrian safety.

Character Design Guidelines

Historically, the County has been able to review architectural elevations and/or design guidelines when required for legislative cases. The resulting documents typically then become a binding commitment through conditions or proffers. However, design guidelines are specific to the vision of the developer and may have limited consistency in the elements addressed as compared to other development.

The James City County Engage2045 Comprehensive Plan update is grounded in the idea that County residents should steer the future of their community through clear and open engagement in the planning process. Community engagement opportunities have included a variety of surveys, forums, meetings, and other venues for input on growth, goals, appearance and other topics. Through these engagement opportunities, residents have expressed interests in preserving aspects of James City County's appearance and character that can be shaped by design guidelines.

The James City County Design Guidelines, found in Appendix H, are an important new tool to achieve community character goals. The Guidelines present standards and best practices for lot siting, building placement, building form, access, and landscaping across the County. The Guidelines were developed to support the goals of the James City County Comprehensive Plan and reflect the community's preferences and priorities for the County's continued growth in coming years. The Guidelines ensure that new development is contextual and reflective of James City County's unique natural, historic, and cultural resources, promotes the walkable scale and character the residents appreciate in their neighborhoods, directs new growth to embody sustainable land use practices and landscaping that preserve and protect the County's community character, and contribute to continued distinct character and economic vitality throughout the County. The Guidelines are divided into chapters covering Site and Street Design; Rural; Small Lot (one unit per lot: single-family and multi-family units); Apartments; Commercial & Industrial; and Mixed Use. The Guidelines focus on guidance for development form and placement, and are intended to complement the guidance on use and development scale/intensity found in the land use designation descriptions in the Land Use Chapter. In addition, the Guidelines are intended to complement, but not supersede, the guidance provided in this chapter for the geographically-specific Community Character Corridors and Community Character Areas. Development proposals will also still need to meet Zoning Ordinance requirements.

The new Comprehensive Plan, with the addition of strong Character Guidelines based on public input, will considerably enhance the County's ability to shape new development so that it is more sensitive to community character and design quality standards.

Preserving Vegetation during Development

Landscape requirements per the Zoning Ordinance, open space requirements per the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance, and buffer preservation all play a role in retaining existing trees and vegetation during development. Listed below are some of the Zoning Ordinance requirements that help the County preserve vegetation during development.

- *CCCs and Right-of-Way Landscape Requirements.* When development occurs along a right-of-way, landscape buffers directly adjacent to the right-of-way are required to be preserved or installed. CCCs require a 50-foot buffer for commercial projects and a 150-foot buffer for

major subdivision projects. All other roads require a 30-foot buffer for commercial projects and a 75-foot buffer for major subdivision projects.

- *Transitional Screening.* When development occurs adjacent to a conflicting land use, such as a commercial development next to a residential district, an enlarged buffer is required between the two uses. The buffer is required to be preserved in its natural and undisturbed state. If the buffer is not vegetated, then screening landscaping is to be installed.
- *Perimeter Buffers.* The side and rear perimeters of parcels located in commercial or industrial districts that are not adjacent to a roadway or require transitional screening must have a 15-foot landscape buffer. These buffers are to be left in their natural undisturbed state, unless supplemental planting is needed.
- *Phased Clearing Plan.* A Phased Clearing Plan is required for any development that disturbs more than 25 acres. This requirement is intended to minimize the size of areas of land to be cleared at once, enabling developers to lessen the visual and environmental impacts that the clearing causes.
- *Outstanding Specimen Tree Designation.* The Zoning Ordinance includes an Outstanding Specimen Tree Designation. This designation allows developers to gain five credits toward fulfilling tree planting requirements. This incentive is intended to make it more economically feasible and practical for developers to preserve large healthy specimen trees.
- *Tree Protection and Criteria for Removal.* The Zoning Ordinance establishes criteria and standards for the protection of existing trees in accordance with specifications contained within the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook.

These constitute a comprehensive and extensive set of County regulations to preserve vegetation. By implementing the following procedures to enforce these regulations, the County endeavors to improve the quality of tree preservation efforts and ensure the integrity of buffers:

- Concurrently conduct plan reviews by both Stormwater & Resource Protection Division and Planning Division staff.
- Enforce the language of the tree protection Landscape Ordinance.
- Emphasize tree protection measures during pre-construction meetings.
- Train the County Stormwater & Resource Protection Division inspectors on proper tree protection measures and identification of native plants.
- Strictly enforce tree protection measures during development and follow up on violations found in the field for encroachment into protected areas, as well as for damage associated with improper tree protection techniques.

Historic Preservation

Historic Sites

The character of James City County is closely linked with the numerous known and unknown historic sites within its boundaries. As home to Native American settlements dating to prehistoric times, Jamestown Island, the Battle of Green Spring, and the first free black settlement, just to name a few, the County is known for its diverse wealth of nationally significant historic and archaeological resources. Currently, the County has 18 properties on the National Register of Historic Places and/or the Virginia Landmarks Register, detailed in Table CC-2. The newest addition to these registers is the Toano Commercial Historic District, approved in 2018 at the state level, and 2019 federally.

Table CC-2. Properties Listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places

Property Name	Property Type	Virginia Landmarks Register	National Register of Historic Places
Amblers House	19th-century dwelling	X	X
Carter's Grove*	18th-century plantation	X	X
Chickahominy Shipyard Archaeological Sites	18th-century shipyard	X	X
Colonial National Historical Park/Colonial Parkway	Collection of noncontiguous 17th-/18th-century sites and 20th-century scenic parkway		X
Croaker Landing Archaeological Site	Prehistoric archaeological site, middle-late Woodland Period	X	X
Governor's Land Archaeological District	17th-century English settlement sites	X	X
Green Spring Archaeological Site	17th-century plantation	X	X
Hickory Neck Church	18th-century church	X	X
Jamestown National Historic Site	17th-century village	X	X
Kingsmill Plantation Archaeological District	18th-century plantation	X	X
Norge Train Depot	20th-century train depot	X	X
Paspahegh Archaeological Site	Prehistoric Native American settlement	X	X
Pinewoods (Warbuton House)	17th-century dwelling	X	X
Powhatan	18th-century dwelling	X	X
Riverview	19th-20th-century dwelling	X	X

Property Name	Property Type	Virginia Landmarks Register	National Register of Historic Places
Stone House	c. 17th-century structure, unknown origin	X	X
Toano Commercial Historic District	Early 20th-century commercial center	X	X
Tutter's Neck Site	18th-century dwelling	X	
White Hall	19th-century dwelling	X	X
Windsor Castle	18th-century dwelling	X	X

Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

*Also Designated a National Historic Landmark

Archaeological Studies and Policies

The County's Archaeological Policy was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1998 and applies to legislative rezoning and SUP cases, ensuring the identification and protection of sites as new development occurs in the County. The policy recommends adding a condition to all appropriate legislative cases requiring archaeological studies within the proposed limits of disturbance. Submitted studies are reviewed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) for conformance with DHR's *Guidelines for Conducting Historic Resources Surveys in Virginia* and the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Archaeological Documentation*. Sites that are identified as potentially eligible for the National Register must conduct further studies to either preserve the site in situ or excavate and document the materials found within the site per an approved treatment plan.

In 2018, the policy was converted to an Ordinance requirement for non-legislative development projects that require a site plan. This ensured that by-right projects would be subject to the same archaeological requirements as legislative cases, and provided further assurances that unknown archaeological resources would be preserved or documented within the County.

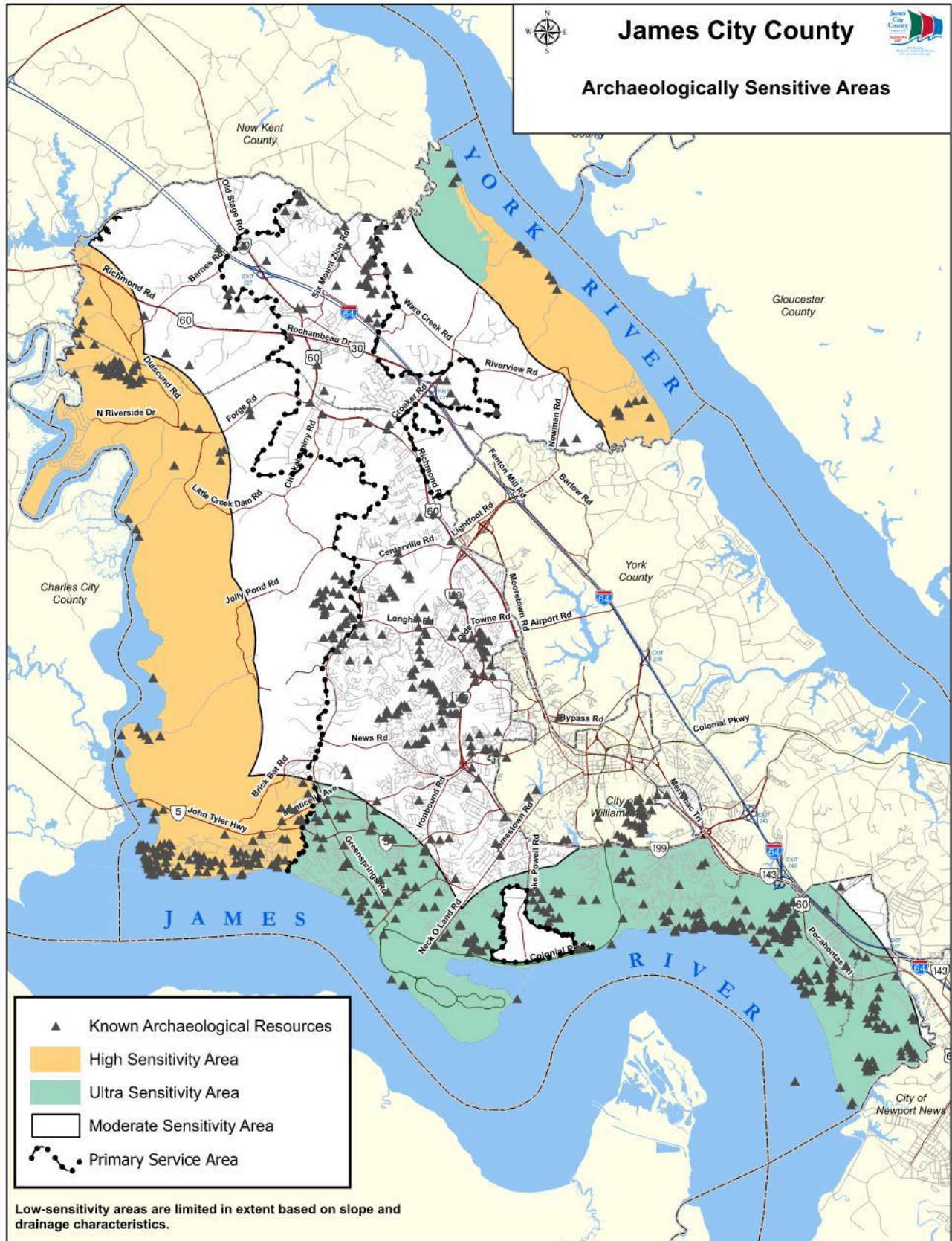
In addition to development-related requirements, the following studies have been commissioned to identify and evaluate the archaeological and historic resources in the County, and future opportunities for updates to these studies could be explored:

- *Toward a Resource Protection Process* is a cultural resource preservation plan for James City County, York County, Williamsburg, and Poquoson written by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in 1986.
- *Toward a Resource Protection Process Update (RP3)* is a 1992 update to the 1986 plan.
- *Preserving Our Hidden Heritage* is an archaeological assessment of historic resources in James City County written by the College of William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research

in 1997. Map CC-2 illustrates moderate, high, and ultra-sensitive resource areas in the County as identified by this study. An update to this plan should be considered.

- An architectural survey was begun by the County in 1999 and was expanded in 2006 to include 223 historic properties. The survey establishes historic contexts, which are guides that categorize these properties by period of time, ethnic and cultural background, and how they were influenced by historical events of the times. Each historical context has its own set of historical and architectural themes. The survey has been an important planning tool in negotiations with developers to demonstrate the importance of the structure and why it should be preserved. Some notable successes are the redevelopment in the Five Forks area of the former school building and the renovation of the Power's house on Richmond Road in Toano.

Map CC-2. Archaeologically Sensitive Areas



Historical Commission

In 1985 the Board of Supervisors established the Historical Commission, whose mission is to further the efforts of the County to document, commemorate, preserve, and promote public interest in the history and historic legacy of the County. The Commission meets bimonthly September through May each year, and in cooperation as appropriate with County agencies and other public or private bodies, carries out the following objectives:

- Ensure that historic buildings and archaeological sites are surveyed, identified, and documented within the County;
- Assemble, preserve, and disseminate information respecting such buildings and sites;
- Advise the County government and appropriate private parties on historical considerations relating to the use and development of land, waterways, and other resources within the County; and
- Conduct and encourage educational activities that will stimulate interest in the history and archaeology of the County.

Typical projects for the Historical Commission include funding new historic highway markers through DHR's historic highway marker program, presenting annual Historic Preservation Awards to community members or groups who have made significant local contributions, and commissioning architectural/archaeological studies of important sites.

Utility Lines

Utility lines include electrical, natural gas, petroleum, water and sewer transmission, and communication lines and related facilities. Many utilities are placed underground or are substantially screened for safety reasons. Although all new utilities are required to be placed underground unless granted an exception by the Planning Commission, the visual impact of existing or proposed above-ground utilities can be substantial and can increase as lines are upgraded and expanded. Not only is undergrounding of utilities an important aspect of Community Character, it also helps to improve reliability since underground utilities are less susceptible to damage during storm events and vehicle accidents.

Placing existing utilities underground can be costly and difficult. Often the most efficient way to accomplish the burial of utility lines is in conjunction with transportation projects where the County does not have to bear all the costs. Recent and upcoming examples of burying utility lines concurrently with road projects include the widening of Longhill Road and Croaker Road, and turn lane construction along Olde Towne Road. Past examples include projects along Jamestown Road, John Tyler Highway, and Ironbound Road. Given this efficiency and broader benefits, it will continue to be the policy of the County to evaluate and pursue burial of existing utilities in conjunction with transportation projects.

Communications Facilities

In 1998, the increasing need for new wireless communication facilities (WCF) prompted the County to establish a new division in the Zoning Ordinance to address them, along with the *Performance Standards for Wireless Communication Facilities* policy. Through the use of the new Ordinance and policy, the County sought to accomplish the following:

- Keep the number of WCF sites to a minimum;
- Minimize the impacts of newly approved WCF facilities; and
- Expedite the approval process for new WCF applications.

The Ordinance and performance standards strived to mitigate the impact of WCF on the viewsheds of surrounding areas. This could be achieved by constructing towers below the surrounding tree line or built as a camouflaged structure to blend in with the surrounding natural and man-made environment. The Ordinance also included protections against new towers in certain residential districts.

Amendments to the WCF Ordinance and policy were approved in 2012 and in 2016 to ensure compatibility with new technologies, promote by-right options for hidden antennas, add protections against by-right towers within residential districts, and clarify mechanisms to review certain systems that were not defined at that time. To capture the scope of these amendments, the language of the Ordinance and policy was broadened to include communication facilities, antennas, towers, and/or support structures (CATS). In addition to meeting the requirements of the Spectrum Act, the 2016 CATS updates included revisions and clarifications regarding height triggers for new towers such as:

- By-right heights for new towers were lowered in certain districts, and in other districts new towers became a specially permitted use or not allowed.
- Camouflaging of towers continued to be encouraged or required wherever possible.
- Protections for residential districts remained.

In 2020, the CATS Ordinance was again revised for compatibility with new State Code changes to support the deployment of 5G technology. These changes affect how localities can process applications for CATS and establish by-right administrative review procedures for certain new structures up to 50 feet in height. While new state and federal mandates erode local zoning authority to regulate new and modified facilities, the County has stayed firm wherever possible to continue requiring camouflaged towers and other impact-reducing measures to protect local viewsheds.

Open Space Preservation - Community Character Aspects

The Land Use Chapter describes the County's Open Space preservation goals and approaches, including the concept that proceeding in a way that integrates different categories of resources, as well as integrates different possible programs and stakeholders, will likely lead to the best results for the County. As described throughout the preceding sections, categories central to this chapter that are, and will continue to be, facets of the County's Open Space preservation approach include:

- **Historic Preservation and Cultural Heritage Landscapes**
- **Scenic Properties and Scenic Viewsheds**
- **Agricultural and Forestal Lands**
- **Entrance Corridors and Road Buffers, including Community Character Corridors**

- **Open Spaces that complete or enhance the County's Community Character Areas, neighborhoods and other built environments**

An integrated approach that considers the resources above will be one important tool in achieving community character goals.

Community Guidance

Public Engagement

Public input for the Community Character Chapter was received at key points of the Engage 2045 process. The 2019 Citizen Survey was conducted in the spring of 2019 and the results were reported in the summer. Responses related to the Community Character Chapter were generally consistent with the results from the 2014 Citizen Survey. When asked for their opinions regarding the preservation of the County's rural character 69% were satisfied with existing efforts to protect and preserve the County's rural character. Regarding the visual appearance of buildings in the County and preservation of farm land, 84% of respondents ranked the visual appearance of buildings within new developments in the County as very important or somewhat important and 78.5% of respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that it is more important to preserve farmland in the County than it is to have more development.

Open-ended responses from the 2019 Citizen Survey showed that respondents found that was better to have neighborhoods in which there is a mix of housing options and small scale retail and office development.

The first round of community engagement was held in the fall of 2019 during the Summit on the Future event. Ninety percent of respondents indicated that it was somewhat or very important for the County to do more to improve our efforts to protect and preserve our rural character in the County. Forty-six percent supported locating any new development inside the Primary Service Area (PSA) on empty lots in already developed areas as a top choice and 71.3% supported protecting as much rural and environmentally sensitive land as possible. Participants were also provided an opportunity to share their "Big Ideas." Responses to this activity indicated support for preserving the "small town" character and encouraging development/redevelopment to locate inside the PSA.

The second round of community engagement was held in the fall of 2020 to evaluate the existing Comprehensive Plan goals and the future land use alternatives. The Establishing our Goals questionnaire asked respondents to compare the goal from the Community Character Chapter in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan to the Engage 2045 Public Input Priority for Community Character and to evaluate if any changes should be made. Of the 131 responses received, 75.6% said that the goal should remain the same and 21.5 % said that the goal should be changed.

The third round of community engagement was held in the winter of 2021. This round solicited input on policy directions the County should pursue and actions it should take to enable citizens' vision for the future of our community to be realized. Overall, there was consistent support for enhancing quality of life amenities in James City County with a strong emphasis on walking and biking facilities. Respondents supported prioritizing County resources for enhancing quality of life amenities. They also supported prioritizing walking and biking amenities in locations that increase connectivity between neighborhoods and shopping, schools, employment areas, and greenways.

Throughout the planning process, there has been consistent public support to prioritize protection of the County's unique community character, particularly the character of rural lands and communities in the County. In Round 3, there was strong support for styles of development that

reduce development intensity supported through the expression of values for natural beauty, agricultural conservation, privacy, walkability, historical architecture, and community. Round 3 participants' primary community character concern was preserving the existing rural and low-density development patterns in James City County. Participants believed that rural residential development must be planned with farmland preservation in mind, but participant comments revealed disagreements in how to achieve this. Participants generally associated high-density development with increased traffic and a lower quality of life. However, there was evidence that middle density land uses could be supported with County-compatible designs and the incorporation of nature and green spaces. Respondents expressed support for higher densities within mixed use and employment contexts that provided walkability and opportunities for interaction.

The Character Design Guidelines questionnaire inputs will be leveraged to update the County's Character Design Guidelines. The findings from this engagement reinforce and reaffirm the direction of design standards and the preexisting standards that the County was following. Resident feedback regarding density, scale, and character in many ways echoed the feedback collected in Rounds 1 and 2, and reflected the County's ongoing efforts to encourage that any new growth be contextually appropriate and contribute to local heritage and character. This feedback can also guide priorities and preferences in the Design Guidelines.

Spotlight on Implementation

Retaining and enhancing Community Character in James City County is furthered through the establishment of CCCs and CCAs and the preservation of scenic, cultural, rural, agricultural, forestal, natural, and historic qualities. The County has endeavored to be good stewards of the land by taking actions that support this goal.

Creating clear guidance for development along CCCs and working with developers to create sensitive designs in CCAs, such as the Food Lion/CVS in Norge, the redevelopment of Lightfoot Market Place, and the new fire station in Toano have helped ensure compatibility with neighborhood character and reinforced a sense of place. Adopting new lighting Ordinances with dark sky principles as well as guidelines for sound wall design and landscape treatment have helped to preserve and enhance community appearance. Additionally, several policies including those related to street tree plantings and pedestrian/bicycle accommodations were converted to Zoning Ordinance requirements so that they now apply to all new development, including by-right development, meeting certain criteria. The Pocahontas Trail Corridor Study engaged the community to identify key transportation needs and define a vision for the future of the corridor. These regulations and guidance help ensure that future projects and private development will be mindful of the local context and the opportunities to strengthen the area's aesthetic tapestry.

The County capitalized on the opportunity to bury utilities along Longhill Road concurrently with the Phase 1 widening project, allowing efficient use of resources and promoting community character while also stabilizing utility services for residents. Other improvements planned for the Longhill Road Phase 1 corridor include improved access management strategies at several intersections, a roundabout at one intersection (Longhill Road and Williamsburg Plantation Drive), signal system wireless interconnects, construction of bus pull-off areas, and pedestrian improvements in the form of a multiuse path and crosswalks with pedestrian push buttons.

Funding was also approved for similar improvements along Croaker Road which are in the process of coming to fruition. These include a road widening from two to four lanes with a new two-lane bridge parallel to the existing bridge over the CSX line to accommodate additional travel lanes. There will also be a new multipurpose trail to connect the library, residential areas, and commercial areas, and utilities will be relocated underground.

Through a Revenue Sharing Program with VDOT approved in 2018, the Toano area will also see a variety of improvements along a 0.5-mile section of Richmond Road from Forge Road to the entrance of Toano Middle School. These include improvements to the storm drain system, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations including crosswalks, ADA upgrades, and bike lanes, and other safety improvements such as grass medians to restrict turning movements and improve traffic safety.

As stated previously, many businesses desire to locate in this area because of its unique community character. Upholding this character through careful and deliberate design is essential to attracting and retaining a viable and diverse economic base, which ensures that future generations will want to live, work, and visit the area. Looking to 2045, James City County will continue to promote policies and regulations that further the efforts of preserving community character.

Goals, Strategies, and Actions

Goal

CC - The County will be a good steward of the land by preserving and enhancing the scenic, cultural, rural, farm, forestal, natural, architectural, and historic qualities that are essential to the County's distinctive character, economic vitality, and the overall health and quality of life of its residents.

Strategies and Actions

CC 1 - Preserve and enhance entrance corridors and roads that promote the rural, natural, or historic character of the County.

- CC 1.1 - Ensure that development along Community Character Corridors (CCCs) protects the natural views of the area; promotes the historic, rural, or unique character of the area; and establishes entrance corridors that enhance the experience of residents and visitors.
- CC 1.2 - Continue to explore opportunities and cost-sharing arrangements to bury overhead utilities in Community Character Corridors and Community Character Areas through transportation initiatives.
- CC 1.3 - Monitor the status of billboards throughout the County and pursue action, where possible, to remove billboards using all currently available methods, and explore and pursue any new methods as they become available.
- CC 1.4. - Pursue the expenditure of public funds from sources such as the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to enhance the appearance of highly visible focal points of the County, including, but not limited to, County entrance corridors, median areas, interstate interchanges, and undeveloped parcels fronting on thoroughfares. Entrance corridors and roads in the proximity of historic landmarks should be prioritized for improvements. Improvements include, but are not limited to, placement of existing utilities underground, beautification through sustainable landscaping or buildings changes, and the acquisitions of easements and properties. The County shall continue to coordinate corridor enhancement efforts within the County and surrounding localities to achieve compatible, attractive corridors.
- CC 1.5 - Preserve the character of rural roads by identifying roads that should be preserved and work with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to maintain their rural character while providing an acceptable level of safety.
- CC 1.6 - Carefully monitor development along roads that are important to maintain community character so that the build-out of surrounding areas will not require improvements such as road widening that disrupt the community character of the areas.

CC 2 - Maintain the unique heritage and identity of designated Community Character Areas (CCAs) within the County.

- CC 2.1 - Ensure that development in CCAs protects the natural views of the area; promotes the historic, rural, or unique character of the area; and establishes entrance corridors that enhance the experience of residents and visitors.
- CC 2.2 - Within the CCA boundaries, continue to establish development management and preservation techniques to meet specific historic preservation and community character needs. Encourage development patterns and building designs that maintain and reinforce the visual separation of CCAs.
- CC 2.3 - In New Town, continue to support the design review process by working closely with the New Town Design Review Board and supporting the implementation of New Town's design guidelines.
 - CC 2.3.1 - For areas within the New Town CCA but not subject to the New Town Master Plan and/or proffers, ensure that new development is consistent with existing adjacent development and the New Town design guidelines.
- CC 2.4 - In Toano, ensure that developers apply the adopted design guidelines to projects within the Toano CCA.
 - CC 2.4.1 - Consider updates to the Toano CCA Design guidelines to complement the Toano Commercial Historic District.
- CC 2.5 - In Five Forks, ensure that developers apply the adopted Primary Principles to projects within the Five Forks CCA.
- CC 2.6 - In Norge, consider development and adoption of formal design guidelines.
- CC 2.7 - In the Jamestown/Greensprings area, consider development and adoption of formal design guidelines, and/or guidance on maintaining the historic and rural/wooded character of that area.

CC 3 - Preserve and enhance neighborhood and community appearance.

- CC 3.1 - Protect vistas and other scenic resources and encourage building, site, and road designs that enhance the natural landscape and preserve valued vistas. These designs should also minimize any potential negative impacts with regard to noise and light pollution and other quality of life concerns.
- CC 3.2 - Require illustrative drawings, including streetscapes, architecture, and perspectives as a binding component for appropriate rezoning and special use permit applications.
- CC 3.3 - Continue to improve and protect the character of the County through use of the Character Design Guidelines.

CC 3.3.1 - Further the use of the Character Design Guidelines in legislative review processes and encourage private developers to familiarize themselves with these guidelines as part of educational materials and pre-application meetings.

CC 3.3.2 - Incorporate the Character Design Guidelines in appropriate portions of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, policies, and other regulations.

CC 3.3.3 - Incorporate elements of the Character Design Guidelines in other County policy documents and explore if any of the elements could be converted into regulations within the zoning and subdivision ordinance.

CC 3.3.4 - Continue to evaluate the Character Design Guidelines and update, revise, and enhance the Guidelines regularly.

CC 3.3.5 - Consider developing Character Design Guidelines for rural areas in the County.

CC 3.3.6 - Consider incorporating elements of the Character Design Guidelines into the future land use guidelines in the Land Use chapter to ensure consistency between the Community Character and Land Use guidelines.

CC 4 - Integrate community character considerations in open space planning and programs.

- CC 4.1 - Continue to gather and gain technical knowledge on data that is available to help the County identify and map its archaeological, historic, and cultural assets, and, where appropriate, use such data as an information tool to help guide decisions during the creation of regulations and policies, to provide guidance to property owners and development proposal applicants on lands best suited for development, and to inform open space preservation efforts.
- CC 4.2 - Devote resources to and operate programs to preserve or enhance components of the County that significantly contribute to community character, including historic properties and cultural heritage landscapes, scenic properties and viewsheds, agricultural and forestal lands, and entrance corridors, community character corridors, community character areas, and other special places. Integrate these considerations with others found in the Parks and Recreation, Environment and Land Use chapters. In addition, collaborate with other entities, the private sector, and landowners in these efforts.

CC 5 - Preserve existing vegetation as possible and appropriate during development.

- CC 5.1 - Use County Ordinances and/or policies as enabled by the Code of Virginia to require a more detailed phased clearing plan that minimizes the removal of existing trees and ensures tree preservation requirements are implemented during the site plan review and pre-construction phase of development. Consider developing requirements for County staff to inspect projects pre-and-post construction specifically to ensure compliance with the tree protection requirement of the Zoning Ordinance.
- CC 5.2 - Promote the Optional Specimen Tree Designation to enable more developers to preserve specimen trees that are not within required tree save areas.

- CC 5.3 - Continue to enforce existing methods/requirements the County uses during planning, pre-construction, construction, and post-construction phases to make sure tree preservation measures are properly performed, resulting in healthier trees, buffers, and proper maintenance.
- CC 5.4 - Evaluate the appropriateness of street trees along narrow streets or located in neighborhoods with reduced setbacks and update the Streetscape Policy Guidelines accordingly.

CC 6 - Identify and protect archaeological and historic sites.

- CC 6.1 - Require that archaeological studies for development proposals are conducted and require their recommendations to be implemented.
- CC 6.2 - Update the document *Preserving Our Hidden Heritage*, an assessment of the archaeological resources in James City County. Review the document prior to each Comprehensive Plan revision and perform a complete revision every 10 years to include new site surveys.
- CC 6.3 - Pursue the preservation of historic and archaeological sites of the County by:
 - CC 6.3.1 - Enlisting the assistance of the County's Historical Commission in updating the County's inventory of historic places.
 - CC 6.3.2 - Promoting voluntary techniques for preservation of these properties.
 - CC 6.3.3 - Considering designating areas of the County as historic districts or historic corridors with architectural review.
 - CC 6.3.4 - Discouraging the demolition or inappropriate use of cultural and historic resources through regulatory and voluntary techniques.
 - CC 6.3.5 - Integrating the results of the architectural survey into the planning process.
 - CC 6.3.6 - Exploring opportunities to preserve and enhance Community Character Areas such as those found in Five Forks, Norge and Toano through use of partnerships, pattern books, and design guidelines.

CC 7 - Keep pace with the changes in wireless communication technology to better enable providers to preserve existing community character while providing quality service.

- CC 7.1 - Update the Communications Facilities section of the Zoning Ordinance as necessary to accommodate the use of new and emerging wireless communication services while preserving community character.

Community Character Areas (CCA) and Community Character Corridors (CCC) with Type Designation and Buffer Treatment.

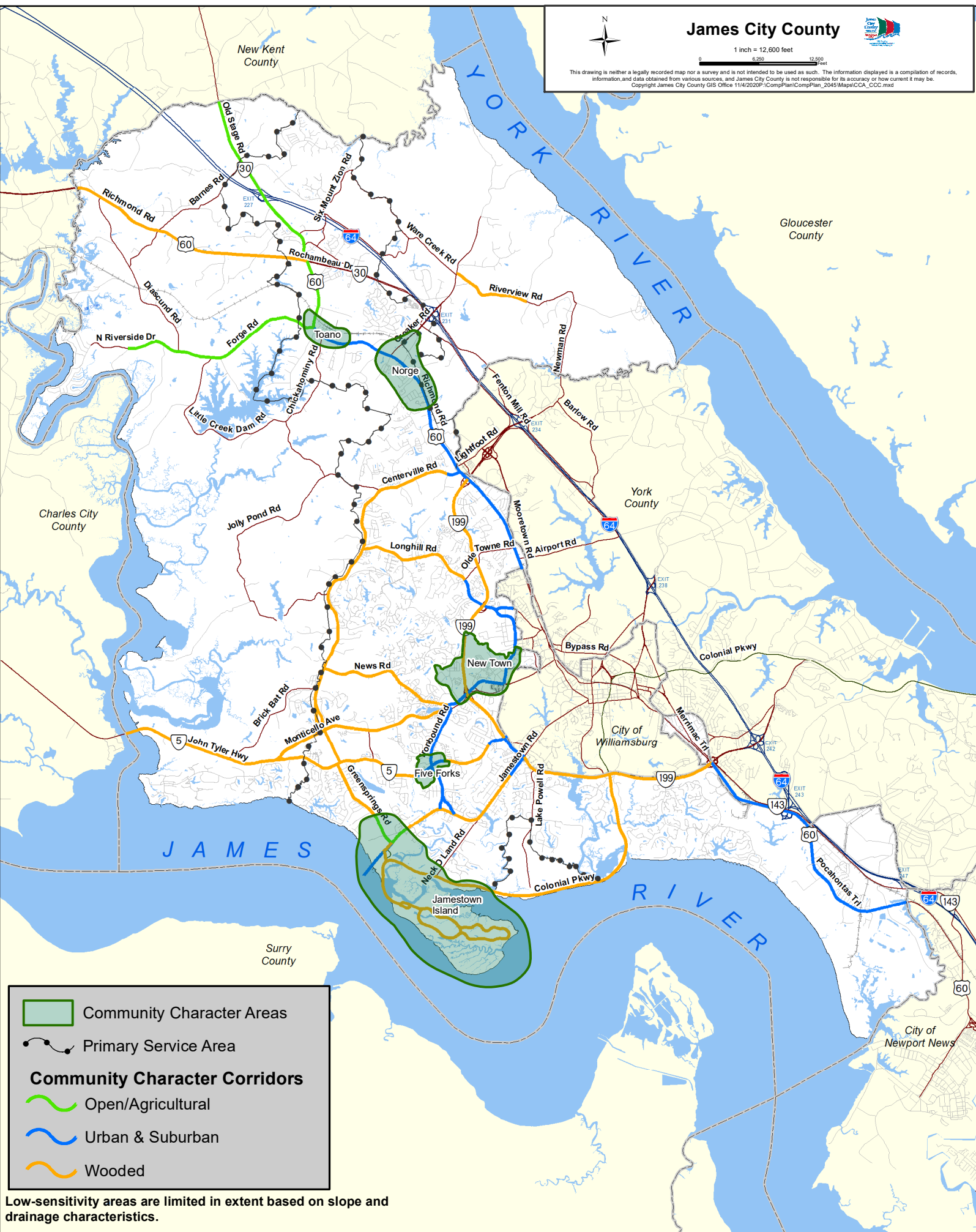
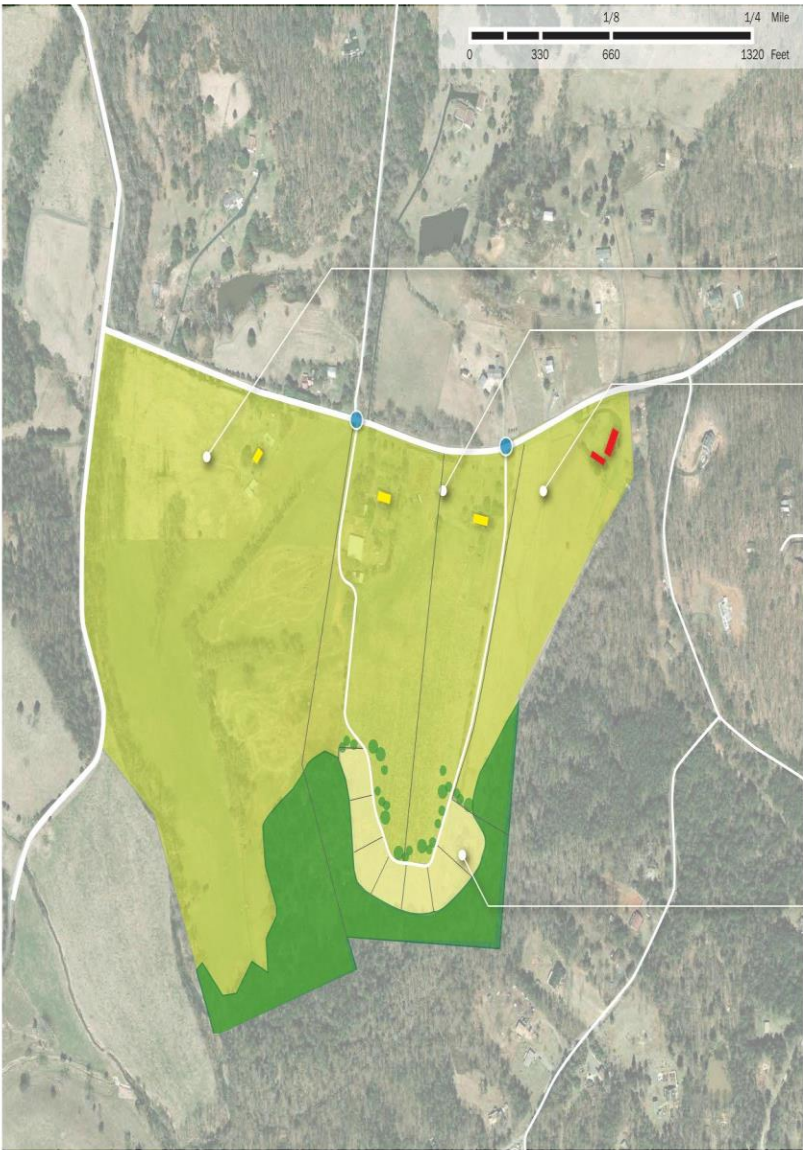


Chart 1. Rural Lands Designation Description	
1. Basic Description	Rural Lands are areas containing farms, forests and scattered houses, exclusively outside of the PSA, where a lower level of public service delivery exists or where utilities and urban services do not exist and are not planned for in the future. Rural Lands uses are intended to help protect and enhance the viability of agricultural and forestal resources and compatible rural economic development uses as important components of the local economy.
2. Recommended Uses	Appropriate primary uses include traditional agricultural and forestal activities, but also innovative agriculture, horticulture, silviculture, specialty or niche farming, commercial and non-commercial equine opportunities, agri-tourism, rural-based public or commercial recreation, rural-support businesses and certain public or semi- public and institutional uses that require a spacious site and are compatible with the natural and rural surroundings. Retail and other commercial uses serving Rural Lands are encouraged to be located at planned commercial locations on major thoroughfares inside the PSA. However, appropriately-scaled and located direct agricultural or forestal-support uses (including agri-business and eco-tourism), home-based occupations, or certain uses which require very low intensity settings relative to the site in which it will be located may be considered on the basis of a case-by-case review, provided such uses are compatible with the natural and rural character of the area and are in accordance with the Rural Lands Development Standards. These uses should be located in a manner that minimizes effects on agricultural and forestal activities, and where public services and facilities, especially roads, can adequately accommodate them.
3. Recommended Density	Residential development is not a recommended use and is discouraged outside the Primary Service Area in the Rural Lands. Residences associated with agricultural and forestal activities may be appropriate, but subdivision of lots should occur at a density of no greater than one residence per 20 acres. A very limited amount of residential development could be permitted in the form of rural clusters, provided significant preservation of the natural resources is achieved, such development does not interrupt rural qualities or character, and the development standards for rural clusters listed below are followed.
Rural Lands Development Standards	
4. Use and Character Compatibility	a) Uses in Rural Lands should reflect and enhance the rural character of the County. Particular attention should be given to the following: - Locating structures and uses outside of sensitive areas; - Maintaining existing topography, vegetation, trees, and tree lines to the maximum extent possible, especially along roads and between uses; - Discouraging development on farmland, open fields, scenic roadside vistas, and other important agricultural/forestal soils and resources; - Encouraging enhanced landscaping to screen structures located in open fields using a natural appearance or one that resembles traditional hedgerows and windbreaks; - Locating new driveways or service roads so that they follow existing contours and old roadway corridors whenever feasible; - Generally limiting the height of structures to an elevation below the height of surrounding mature trees and scaling buildings to be compatible with the character of the existing community; - Minimizing the number of street and driveway intersections along the main road by providing common driveways; and - Utilizing lighting only where necessary and in a manner that eliminates glare and brightness. b) Encourage the preservation and reuse of existing agricultural structures such as barns, silos, and houses. c) Site more intensive uses in areas where the existing road network can accommodate the additional vehicle trips without the need for significant upgrades or modifications that would impact the character of the rural road network.
5. Rural Clusters	If built, rural clusters should develop with the following guidelines: - Densities should be no higher than the maximum permitted density in the underlying zoning district. Lot sizes may be reduced as appropriate to maximize the preservation of rural view-sheds and resources as described in the standards below. - Minimize the impact of residential development by retaining a substantial amount (at least two-thirds) of the site in large, undivided blocks of land for permanent open space, farming, timbering and/or rural economic uses. - Appropriate goals for open space and lot layout include preservation of farmland, open fields, scenic vistas, woodland, meadows, wildlife habitats, and vegetation; protection of environmentally sensitive land including wetlands, stream corridors, and steep slopes; important historic and archaeological resources, and roadway buffers. - The goals of the open space and lot layout should be shown on a conceptual plan, and the design should support these goals. For instance, if preservation of agriculture is one of the main goals of the open space, the open space should encompass that land which is most suitable for farming (topography, soils). Blocks of land large enough to support a farm should be set aside in the open space. In addition, potential conflicts between the uses should be minimized by designing buffers between the farmland and the residential development. Similar design considerations would be expected to support other open space goals as well. - The open space should be placed in a conservation easement or the equivalent to ensure that the land will remain undeveloped. - The visibility of the development from the main road should be minimized. It is recommended that lots be placed along an access road rather than along the main route so that the view from the main route still appears rural in nature.



Rural Lands

SAMPLE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

This illustration represents one potential way that the policies in the Land Use chapter for this land use could be interpreted. Alternate concepts that follow these policies may also be acceptable. This development concept is only for illustrative purposes and design guidelines, policies and ordinance requirements are a factor, particularly with respect to detailed requirements such as landscaping

Large farm remains in agricultural / forestal use

Medium sized parcel divided into two large lots managed as small farms

Small farm managed as rural economic enterprise with agritourism and winery use

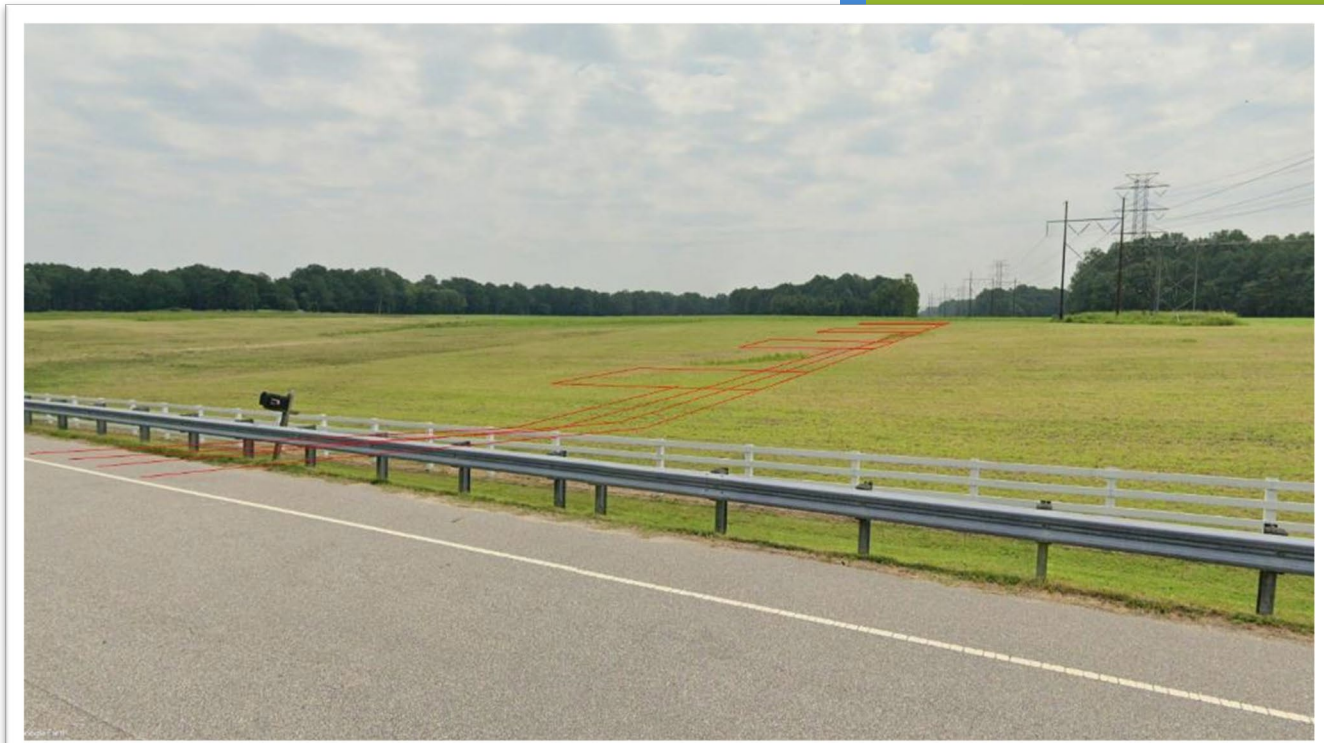


Small rural cluster sited away from roads and screened by trees to preserve rural viewsheds

Legend			
Mixed use	Low Density Residential	Common Open Space	
Commercial	Moderate Density Residential - Level 1	Wooded or Landscaped Buffer Areas	
Civic	Moderate Density Residential - Level 2		
Industrial	Parking	Pedestrian/ Bike Paths	Roadway Interconnectivity



Rural Roadway Preservation



James City County Zoning Update
DRAFT August 2, 2022

Prepared by EPR,PC

Contents

Part 1. Visual Analysis of Viewsheds	2
Introduction	2
Ground Level Visualizations	2
Methodology.....	2
Results	3
House A:	4
House B.	6
Conclusions	8
Aerial Visualizations	9
Methodology.....	9
Results:	9
Conclusions	13

Rural Roadway Preservation

Part 1. Visual Analysis of Viewsheds

Introduction

In 2021, the James City County Board of Supervisors approved a Resolution to initiate the amendment of the James City Zoning and Subdivision ordinances in order to consider additional requirements to protect and preserve scenic roadways such as Forge Road. As part of an analysis to consider new standards for protection of these scenic roadways, EPR, PC was asked to develop analytic visualizations of the visual impacts of the viewshed on Forge Road.

The results of this analysis are presented here in two parts:

1. **Ground Level Visualizations** - The first part is a series of photomontages that were developed based on alternative measured distances from the road.
2. **Aerial Visualizations** - The second part is a series of aerial photographs of the Forge Road corridor showing different distances from the road as colored buffers along the roadway, with existing structures highlighted to show where they fall within the distance buffers.

It is important to note that, even though these are illustrative visualizations, they are based on actual measured dimensions using computer mapping for the distances so they represent a reasonably accurate representation of what potential distance standards could look like in reality.

Ground Level Visualizations

Methodology

For the purposes of the visualizations, a photograph of a segment of Forge Road was used that represents a typical “view from the road” on a relatively level portion of the road without any existing screening or buffering along the roadway. Using computer mapping, house sites were located at the following distances from the edge of the roadway (which is also the edge of the Right of Way):

- 100 feet
- 200 feet
- 300 feet
- 400 feet



Figure 1. Existing photo of Forge Road with computer mapping of different setback distances

Secondly, photographs of two typical houses were selected at the same view angle as the “view from the road” photograph to be used in composing the photomontages. House A was a simple one story brick home with attached garage and minimal landscaping and House B was a more elaborate house with detached garage and extensive landscaping in the front yard.

These houses were then photo montaged into the existing Forge Road photograph precisely at each of the distance points to show a reasonably realistic view of the visual impact of the houses at each distance parameter.

Results

The images below show the final photomontages with each house at each of the distances from the road.

House A:



Figure 2. House A. 100 ft. distance



Figure 4. House A. 200 ft. distance



Figure 3. House A. 300 ft. distance



Figure 5. House A. 400 ft. distance

House B.



Figure 6. House B. 100 ft. distance



Figure 7. House B. 200 ft. distance



Figure 8. House B. 300 ft. distance



Figure 9. House B. 400 ft. distance

Conclusions

The use of computer aided photomontage visualizations is a practical way to assess the potential visual impacts of alternative provisions for distances from the road. However, it is important to recognize that many other factors can influence the perception of different distances to houses when viewed from the road. These include topography, the presence of existing vegetation, and the general architectural character of structures. The above visualizations are of course open to different interpretations regarding what distance standards should be developed. From the consultant's perspective, a few observations are offered for consideration from a professional planning perspective:

- The visual impact of both houses at the 100 foot distance is considerable. This scale of this distance is more reminiscent of a suburban development pattern than what is typically seen in a rural, farming based landscape.
- 300 to 400 foot distances are more similar to a typically rural context and view from the road, although houses on large lots are frequently set back even more than that. Often, homeowners who purchased large lots prefer a wide set back from the road to maintain their sense of private space and rural character.
- Particularly at the 400 foot distance line, there is an opportunity to create buffering and screening around the houses with vegetation that would be more reminiscent of a rural farm scape rather than a suburban landscape pattern.
- The architecture and landscaping around the house also influence the character of the view from the road. Large suburban houses with tall roofs and suburban style landscaping create more of a discontinuity with the rural landscape than a low ranch house with an attached garage.

Aerial Visualizations

Methodology

Based on County staff request, EPR developed an aerial mapping analysis of different distance widths applied to a section of Forge Road located outside of the PSA. The maps were presented as aerial photos with the distances shown as colored buffers on the photos and as oblique aerial views of segments of Forge Road showing existing structures.

The following maps were developed:

- **Baseline Setback Map.** This map shows the setback that currently applies under the existing zoning requirements for A-1.
- **Potential Alternate Distance Analysis Map:** This maps shows potential distances of 100', 200', 300' and 400'.
- **Oblique Aerials of Segments of Forge Road.** These maps show detailed oblique views of five segments of Forge Road with the potential distance ranges from 100' to 400' and highlight existing structures.

Results:

JAMES CITY COUNTY ZONING ANALYSIS | Forge Rd. Basemap (Existing Setback)

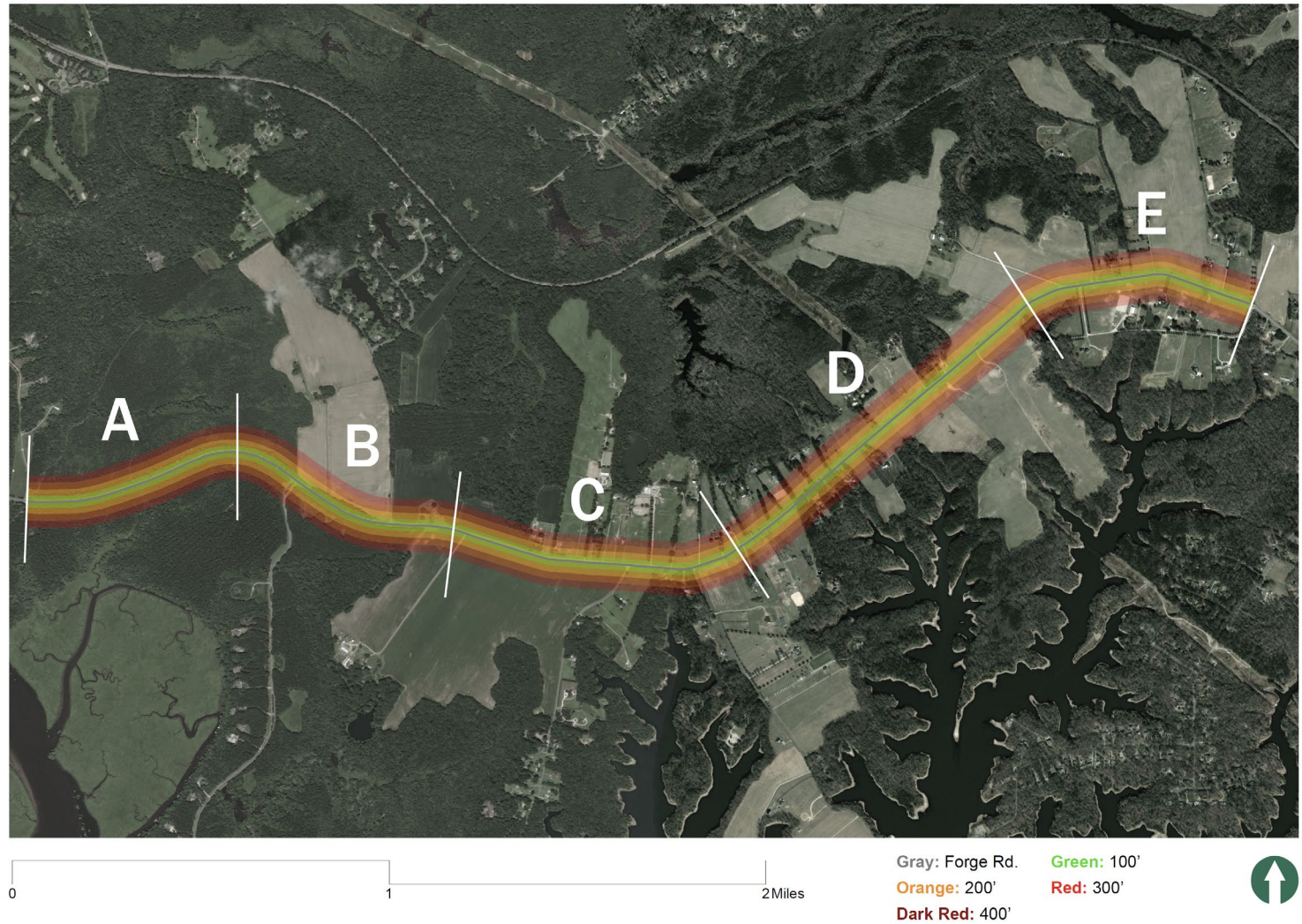


Gray: Forge Rd.
Purple: Existing 75' Setback



Figure 10. Base Map showing Existing Setback for A1 Zone

JAMES CITY COUNTY ZONING ANALYSIS | Forge Rd. Basemap (Proposed Setbacks)



JAMES CITY COUNTY ZONING ANALYSIS | Forge Rd. Basemap (Proposed Setbacks) - Segment A

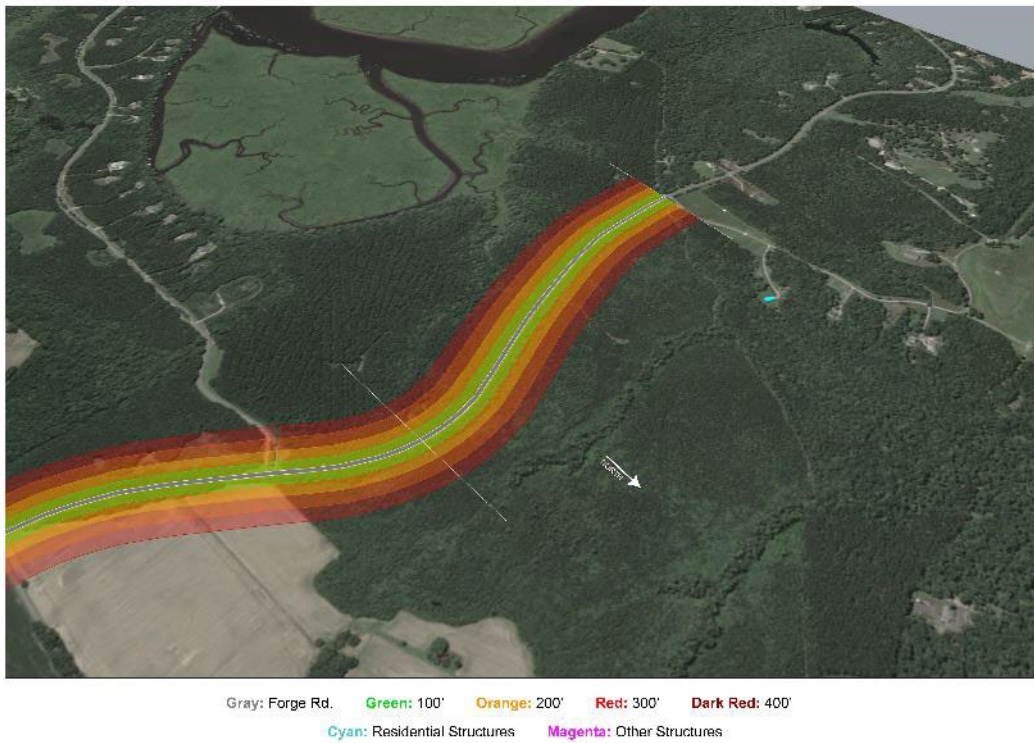


Figure 13. Potential distances - Segment A.

JAMES CITY COUNTY ZONING ANALYSIS | Forge Rd. Basemap (Proposed Setbacks) - Segment B



Figure 12. Potential distances - Segment B.

JAMES CITY COUNTY ZONING ANALYSIS | Forge Rd. Basemap (Proposed Setbacks) - Segment C

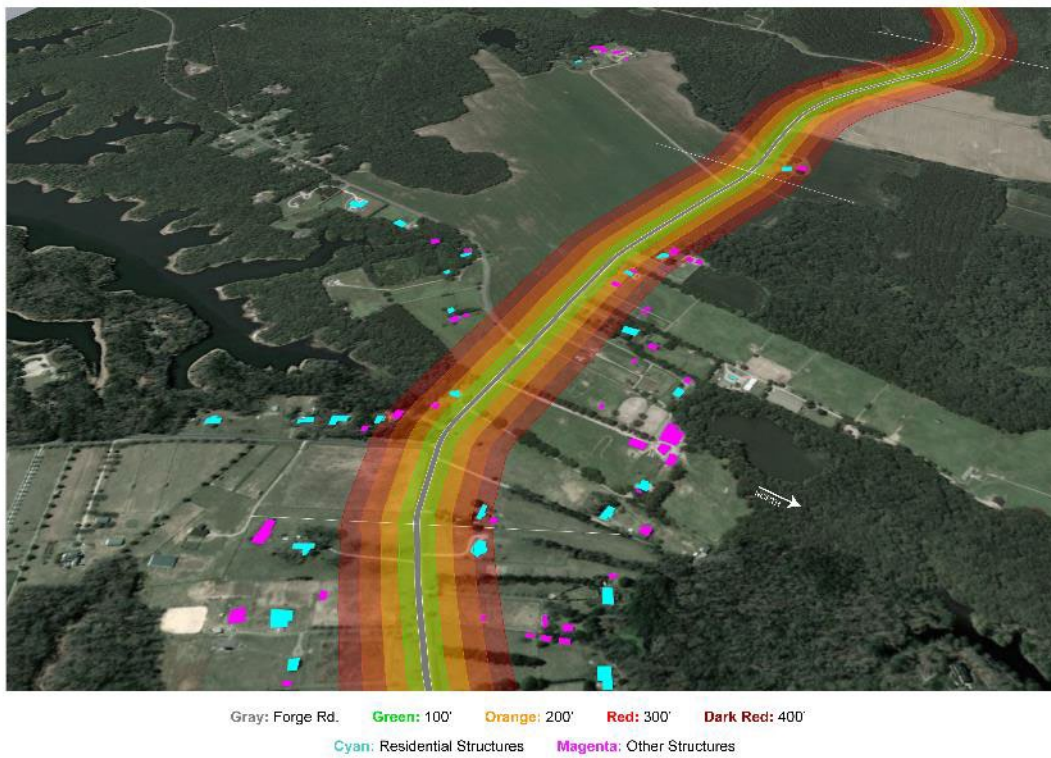


Figure 15. Potential distances - Segment C.

JAMES CITY COUNTY ZONING ANALYSIS | Forge Rd. Basemap (Proposed Setbacks) - Segment D

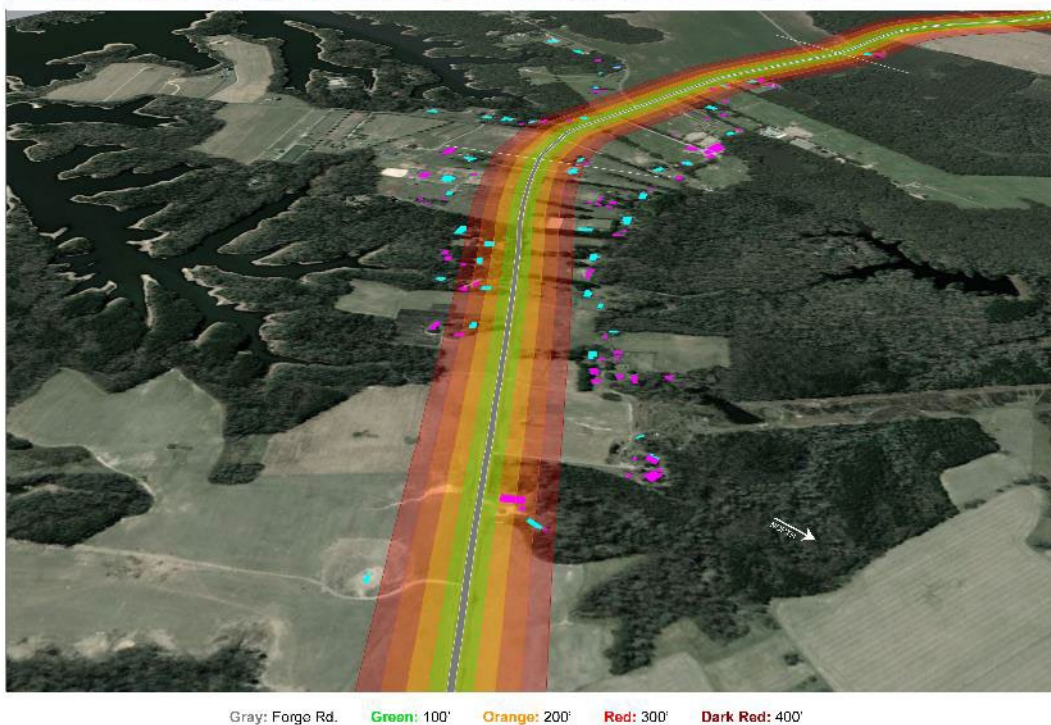


Figure 14. Potential distances - Segment D.

JAMES CITY COUNTY ZONING ANALYSIS | Forge Rd. Basemap (Proposed Setbacks) - Section E



Figure 16. Potential distances - Segment E.

Conclusions

The analysis of existing and potential distances through aerial photography provides a useful assessment of the existing conditions along Forge Rd and the existing setbacks of existing structures. A few summary findings from this analysis include:

- Very few existing structures are built right up to the existing setback line of 75 feet for the A1 zoning district.
- Only one residential structure in segment C and one residential structure in segment D approach the 100 foot distance line. Also, one nonresidential structure in segment D is also built at the 100 foot distance line.
- The majority of structures that fall within the potential distance buffers range from 200 to 400 foot distances.
- a great number of structures are set back well beyond the 400 foot distance line. Segments C and D show a wide variety of structures set well back from the road up to 1000 feet or more.
- In general, both the diversity of setbacks of existing structures and the extensive average distance from the road contribute to the scenic character of Forge Rd and ensure that view sheds are not dominated by views of houses or other structures.
- In addition, the rolling terrain and pattern of existing trees and vegetation break up the views of the structures and contribute to the overall pastoral viewsheds from the road.

Forge Road (Portion Outside of PSA)

Planning Information	Character Description
Comp. Plan CCC Description Open/Agricultural Characterized as a corridor located primarily in rural lands where farming and forestry activities are predominant. The viewshed and integrity of farm fields and natural open spaces should be preserved so they remain the dominant visual features. Rural Lands Designation Basic Description Rural Lands are areas containing farms, forests and scattered houses, exclusively outside of the PSA, where a lower level of public service delivery exists or where utilities and urban services do not exist and are not planned for in the future. Rural Lands uses are intended to help protect and enhance the viability of agricultural and forestal resources and compatible rural economic development uses as important components of the local economy. Adjacent Property Zoning: A-1, General Agricultural Adjacent AFD: Mill Creek	Development Description Adjacent development consists primarily of scattered single-family residences and agricultural uses, with minimal tree buffering adjacent to the roadway. Existing conservation easements establish a large setback for segments of the roadway Lot Configuration and Structure Placement Description There are several 100 acres + farms abutting the roadway that provide significant frontage and contribute greatly to its rural character with housing set far from the roadway. There are shallower lots interspersed between the farms that are utilized primarily for residential use and have structures typically located closer to the road. Existing Development Information Structures Located Within 400’ of ROW: 45 Average Setback for Structures: 495’ Abutting Parcels with Lot Depth ≤ 500’: 11

Old Stage Road (Portion Outside of PSA)

Planning Information	Character Description
Comp. Plan CCC Description Open/Agricultural Characterized as a corridor located primarily in rural lands where farming and forestry activities are predominant. The viewshed and integrity of farm fields and natural open spaces should be preserved so they remain the dominant visual features. Rural Lands Designation Basic Description Rural Lands are areas containing farms, forests and scattered houses, exclusively outside of the PSA, where a lower level of public service delivery exists or where utilities and urban services do not exist and are not planned for in the future. Rural Lands uses are intended to help protect and enhance the viability of agricultural and forestal resources and compatible rural economic development uses as important components of the local economy. Adjacent Property Zoning: A-1, General Agricultural Adjacent AFD: Barnes Swamp	Development Description Adjacent development consists primarily of single-family residences, with some larger agricultural and forestal parcels. Excluding the parcels in farm use, the majority of these parcels are developed as single family residences, with some buffering on each parcel and and cleared area for property access. Lot Configuration and Structure Placement Description The majority of parcels are utilized for single-family residential use and are located on lots that are less than 5 acres, though there are larger farm parcels adjacent to New Kent County and interspersed along the road. Adjacent to the PSA, residences are located closer to the right-of-way and represent a more suburban development style. Existing Development Information Structures Located Within 400’ of ROW: 87 Average Setback for Structures: 170’ Abutting Parcels with Lot Depth ≤ 500’: 23

Richmond Road (Portion Outside of PSA)

Planning Information	Character Description
Comp. Plan CCC Description Wooded Characterized as having natural wooded areas along the road, with light to moderate traffic, and minimal commercial development. Existing vegetation should be preserved or supplemented to create a wooded buffer that preserves open space and wildlife habitat. The buffer should visually screen the development from the road to maintain the natural character of the County. Rural Lands Designation Basic Description Rural Lands are areas containing farms, forests and scattered houses, exclusively outside of the PSA, where a lower level of public service delivery exists or where utilities and urban services do not exist and are not planned for in the future. Rural Lands uses are intended to help protect and enhance the viability of agricultural and forestal resources and compatible rural economic development uses as important components of the local economy. Adjacent Property Zoning: A-1, General Agricultural Adjacent AFD: Barnes Swamp Mill Creek	Development Description Adjacent development consists primarily of single-family residences, with some limited commercial uses. Large undeveloped wooded parcels are interspersed throughout the frontage of the roadway. Lot Configuration and Structure Placement Description There are several larger, undeveloped and forested parcels of land which provide significant buffered frontage along the roadway that is essential to the character of the roadway. Developed lots are primarily for single-family residential use and are characterized by suburban type development with residences and commercial uses located closely to the roadway. Existing Development Information Structures Located Within 400’ of ROW: 258 Average Setback for Structures: 139’ Abutting Parcels with Lot Depth ≤ 500’: 65

Monticello Avenue (Portion Outside of PSA)

Planning Information	Character Description
Comp. Plan CCC Description Wooded Characterized as having natural wooded areas along the road, with light to moderate traffic, and minimal commercial development. Existing vegetation should be preserved or supplemented to create a wooded buffer that preserves open space and wildlife habitat. The buffer should visually screen the development from the road to maintain the natural character of the County. Rural Lands Designation Basic Description Rural Lands are areas containing farms, forests and scattered houses, exclusively outside of the PSA, where a lower level of public service delivery exists or where utilities and urban services do not exist and are not planned for in the future. Rural Lands uses are intended to help protect and enhance the viability of agricultural and forestal resources and compatible rural economic development uses as important components of the local economy. Adjacent Property Zoning: A-1, General Agricultural R-4, Residential Planned Community Adjacent AFD: None	Development Description Adjacent development consists of a mixture of single-family residences, recreational uses, and undeveloped wooded parcels. Lot Configuration and Structure Placement Description There are several larger, undeveloped and forested tracts of land which provide significant buffered frontage along the roadway. Developed lots are for single-family residential use, institutional or are located within minor subdivisions fronting directly on the roadway. The vacant R-4 parcels are part of a master planned development and include a proffered buffer. Existing Development Information (A-1 Parcels) Structures Located Within 400’ of ROW: 0 Average Setback for Structures: 0 Abutting Parcels with Lot Depth ≤ 500’: 2

John Tyler Memorial Highway (Portion Outside of PSA)

Planning Information	Character Description
Comp. Plan CCC Description Wooded Characterized as having natural wooded areas along the road, with light to moderate traffic, and minimal commercial development. Existing vegetation should be preserved or supplemented to create a wooded buffer that preserves open space and wildlife habitat. The buffer should visually screen the development from the road to maintain the natural character of the County. Rural Lands Designation Basic Description Rural Lands are areas containing farms, forests and scattered houses, exclusively outside of the PSA, where a lower level of public service delivery exists or where utilities and urban services do not exist and are not planned for in the future. Rural Lands uses are intended to help protect and enhance the viability of agricultural and forestal resources and compatible rural economic development uses as important components of the local economy. Adjacent Property Zoning: A-1, General Agricultural (Majority) R-4, Residential Planned Community PL, Public Lands Adjacent AFD: Gordon Creek	Development Description Adjacent development consists primarily of single-family residences and wooded lots, with extensive tree buffering adjacent to the roadway. Existing conservation easements establish a large setback for segments of the roadway. Lot Configuration and Structure Placement Description There are several large, undeveloped and forested tracts of land which provide significant buffered frontage along the roadway. Developed lots are typically for single-family residential use are located within minor subdivisions fronting directly on the roadway. Existing Development Information Structures Located Within 400’ of ROW: 42 Average Setback for Structures: 207’ Abutting Parcels with Lot Depth ≤ 500’: 6

Riverview Road (Portion Outside of PSA)

Planning Information	Character Description
Comp. Plan CCC Description Wooded Characterized as having natural wooded areas along the road, with light to moderate traffic, and minimal commercial development. Existing vegetation should be preserved or supplemented to create a wooded buffer that preserves open space and wildlife habitat. The buffer should visually screen the development from the road to maintain the natural character of the County. Rural Lands Designation Basic Description Rural Lands are areas containing farms, forests and scattered houses, exclusively outside of the PSA, where a lower level of public service delivery exists or where utilities and urban services do not exist and are not planned for in the future. Rural Lands uses are intended to help protect and enhance the viability of agricultural and forestal resources and compatible rural economic development uses as important components of the local economy. Adjacent Property Zoning: A-1, General Agricultural Adjacent AFD: Croaker	Development Description Adjacent development consists primarily of single-family residences to the west, with larger agricultural and forestal parcels to the east. Buffering is consistent throughout the roadway and located on smaller residential lots and larger farm parcels. Lot Configuration and Structure Placement Description There are several large, undeveloped, and forested tracts of land which provide buffered frontage along the roadway. Developed lots are typically for single-family residential use are located within minor subdivisions fronting directly on the roadway. Overall, these shallow lots are integrated between the large, forested tracts that provide buffering and establish the character of the roadway. Existing Development Information Structures Located Within 400’ of ROW: 129 Average Setback for Structures: 240’ Abutting Parcels with Lot Depth ≤ 500’: 29

Sec. 24-215. - Setback requirements.

- (a) Structures, except those associated with intensive agricultural uses, shall be located a minimum of 50 feet from any street right-of-way which is 50 feet or greater in width. If the street right-of-way is less than 50 feet in width, structures shall be located a minimum of 75 feet from the centerline of the street; except that where the minimum lot area is three acres or more, the minimum setback shall be 75 feet from any street right-of-way which is 50 feet or greater in width and 100 feet from the centerline of any street right-of-way less than 50 feet in width. Devices for nutrient management plans, pens, and structures associated with intensive agricultural uses shall be 250 feet from any dwelling not owned by the operator of the use, all property lines not associated with the use, all public roads, and 1,000 feet from platted residential subdivisions, residentially zoned districts, areas designated for residential use on the comprehensive plan, schools, parks and playgrounds, recreation areas, public wells, water tanks and reservoirs.
- (b) All subdivisions platted and recorded prior to March 1, 1969, with building setback lines shown on their recorded plat will be allowed to adhere to these established setback lines.

(Ord. No. 31A-88, § 20-31, 4-8-85; Ord. No. 31A-114, 5-1-89; Ord. No. 31A-165, 9-18-95; Ord. No. 31A-169, 5-28-96; Ord. No. 31A-257, 11-22-11)