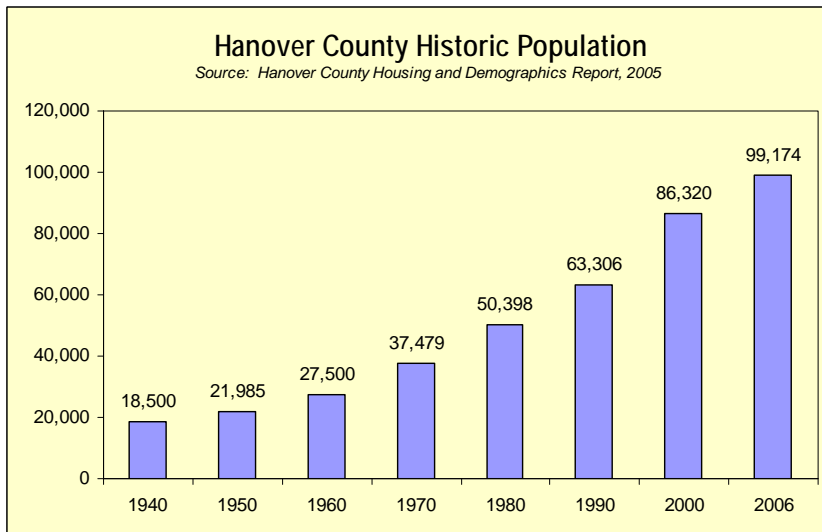




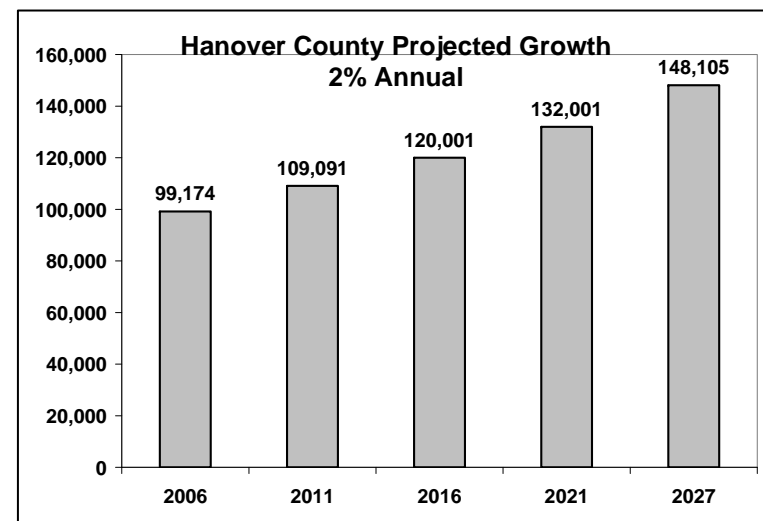
## SECTION 2 *Land Use*

### PREFACE

Over the last twenty years, Hanover County has seen expansion of most types of land use – residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial – while its agricultural land area has undergone significant changes. Initially, the rural areas of the County were host to varying types of development, including small lots along roads and the by-right creation of 4 lots for every 25 acres of land. The suburban area was developed with commercial road-stripping and ½ acre to 1 acre residential lots with individual septic systems. With several major public investments (the sewer system, I-295, and water system improvements, among others), the County’s population has been on the increase. Table 1 shows the long-range population forecast for Hanover County, which anticipates a population of 148,105 in 2027. The Land Use Plan is designed to manage and guide this growth into areas of the County deemed most appropriate to accommodate it, while protecting the character of the rural areas of the County.



**Table 1**



## THE PRESENT

Since 1982, the County has relied on our Phased Suburban Development plan element, discussed elsewhere in this document, to manage growth. This phasing plan has a distinct and direct impact on the land use patterns shown on the *General Land Use Plan* map, since all residential density designations (anywhere from 1 to 15 dwelling units per acre) are contained within the Suburban Service Area boundaries. Throughout the remainder of the County – the rural area – residential development can occur at a density no greater than 1 dwelling unit for every 6.25 acres. The intent of this low residential density is to provide for housing to be available throughout the rural areas as well as preserving and enhancing the rural character of the County. The rural areas of the county have historically developed to a density of one unit/6.25 acres.

Since 1996, the Board has revised the requirements of the Agricultural zoning district to change the density from 1 unit/6.25 acres to 1 unit/10 acres. To address the issue of lost density for agricultural property owners, two new zoning districts were created: an agricultural-residential district and a rural conservation district. Both offer low-density residential opportunities, but the rural conservation district (the RC) also requires preservation of no less than 70% of the property. While both districts allow the same density, only the RC provides for maintenance of viable agricultural land in addition to the clustering of homes on a small portion of the property.

A new designation on the *Conservation and Phased Suburban Development Plan* map, Rural Conservation, provides for long-term protection of the rural character of the County, setting aside over forty percent (40%) of the area of the County as a means of ensuring that the rural heritage of the County is maintained, and that the agricultural and forestal operations within the County remain viable into the future.

Open space is not only an important component of rural area planning and development, but also development within the Suburban Service Area. In 2000, the County eliminated conventional single-family zoning districts from its ordinance and created one variable-density residential district for use throughout the Suburban Service Area. This district, which requires the provision of open space, pedestrian pathways, buffers along the County's public roads, and other amenities in return for consideration of higher densities, also allows the development of attached dwellings in addition to detached homes. The intent of this district is to maintain some of the rural character and feel of the County within the areas of higher concentration of population.

Business development in general has continued within the major road corridors of the County, with the majority of new businesses being located in close proximity to U.S. Route 360 in the eastern part of the County. In response to the potential for "road-stripping", the *General Land Use Plan* map identifies appropriate intersections of major thoroughfares as "nodes" and recommends business development occur at these intersections. In addition, there are corridors identified

(I-295 and U.S. Route 1) where commercial development is also appropriate. Concentration of commercial development within these designated areas will help to prevent the extension of businesses along the full length of Hanover's major roadways, reducing traffic impacts and providing greater opportunities for well-defined groupings with consistent standards.

Commercial nodes are shown throughout the County, but the type of development appropriate at each node will differ depending on the location. While high-intensity, highway-oriented businesses may be appropriate at a node near an Interstate interchange, low-intensity neighborhood retail development might be more appropriate at a rural intersection located outside the Suburban Service Area. Furthermore, new structures located within the identified rural commercial nodes should be compatible with, and scaled to complement the character of, the existing community. Zoning should be based on the determination of the needs of the neighborhood served by the development, as well as the availability of retail and/or service opportunities nearby.

Opportunities for new and different types of development, including mixed-use and transitional zoning, should be provided. New zoning districts should be developed which allow for more efficient, less costly commercial and residential projects. Many locations within the Suburban Service Area may be appropriate for mixed-use development, combining retail, office, institutional, recreational, and residential uses, and such development should be encouraged at all appropriate sites. Mixed-use development has the potential to not only provide a diverse range of housing opportunities throughout the Suburban Service Area, but also allow the creation of self-contained (and self-sustaining) communities within the larger County community. These projects typically reduce traffic generation by capturing many of the trips that would otherwise be forced to leave the community by virtue of providing retail, office, and employment opportunities within the development. In addition, mixed-use projects have the potential to provide economic development beyond that expected within the areas already designated for commercial and/or industrial uses throughout the Suburban Service Area.

Several interchanges along I-95 and I-295 are identified as "economic development zones". Within these zones, the County may be able to provide higher levels of assistance, including incentives, for requests which will result in significant expansion of the County's tax base or increased employment opportunities. Different land uses are planned for these zones, including industrial, office, retail, and office-service uses, or a combination of some or all of these. In addition, industrial and commercial designations are shown generally along the Interstate highway corridors, from the North Anna River to the Chickahominy River. The more intense industrial uses should be located in such a way as to mitigate potential impacts on adjoining property, with other, less intense industrial areas considered where they might complement the character of adjoining existing or future development. However, within these zones designated specifically for economic development, it would not be appropriate to introduce residential uses through consideration of mixed-use zoning.

Sometimes a change in land use causes conflict between economic, social and preservation forces; sometimes, it calls into question the capability of the land to support the land uses. It is important that this conflict not result in the loss of our important resources and unique natural characteristics. Any agreed-upon land use changes should not degrade the environmental quality, the natural beauty or the nationally significant historical resources of our County. Planning can help to sort out these conflicts and achieve maximum utilization of the County's resources while fostering healthy economic, political, and social development.

## **THE GOALS**

**Goal 1: To recognize the interdependent relationship between rural and suburban areas of the County, provide for preservation of agricultural and forestal uses in rural areas, and provide for development of residential, commercial, and industrial uses in suburban areas.**

Objective 1: The long-range population growth should be maintained at an average annual rate of between 1.5%–2.5% (2% for planning purposes).

Objective 2: Suburban development should be concentrated in those sections of the County with an existing infrastructure, or where extension of service is economically feasible, so that future development can continue to be compact and contiguous through the 2027 period of extension of the suburban boundary.

Objective 3: Any addition proposed to the Suburban Service Area after 2027 will be given strict scrutiny. When expansion is necessary and when it is both economically feasible and efficient to do so, the suburban service area should be expanded in accordance with natural watershed boundaries in areas generally described as follows:

- North of Newfound River, west of Doswell, and east of the Rural Conservation Area;
- East of the Town of Ashland, south of East Patrick Henry Road (State Route 54), west of Hanover Courthouse Road (U.S. Route 301) and Georgetown Road (State Route 651).

Objective 4: The County should establish policies that encourage 70% of residential building permits for new homes will be located in planned suburban areas, with only 30% in rural areas.

Objective 5: The overall density of development in the Suburban Service Area should approximate 2.5 dwelling units per acre, although individual project densities may range substantially higher when warranted and where appropriate. For utility planning purposes, a 2.0 dwelling unit per gross acre average residential density is used. Higher density generally anticipates higher standards and more amenities. Areas planned for suburban high density and multi-family

density development (4-15 dwelling units per acre) should be sited near major thoroughfares and major commercial and industrial centers. Mixed use projects, which can have densities as high as thirty (30) units per acre as an overall gross density, must be situated so as to assure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

Objective 6: The rural areas of the County should remain agricultural and forestal in character and density. Development of rural areas should reserve agricultural areas solely for agricultural use and other accessory residential or other land uses in conjunction with agricultural activities. Non-agricultural uses should be allowed only where land is not suitable for agricultural purposes or where the use can be shown to be a benefit to the community.

Objective 7: Within suburban and non-agricultural areas of the County, a harmonious relationship should be established among residential, public, and commercial land uses.

Objective 8: In general, planning should respect existing low-density development and promote a gradual transition from lower to higher density or more intensive development. This is particularly true when considering mixed use proposals.

Objective 9: Decisions regarding development should receive careful review to protect the historic and natural features of the County's environment.

Objective 10: Planned developments, including mixed use projects, should be encouraged within the Suburban Service Area.

**Goal 2: To provide consistent and orderly development of residential areas.**

Objective 1: Encourage an organization of residential areas which will accommodate a variety of housing types for people of all income levels.

Objective 2: Prevent encroachment in residential areas by incompatible or inappropriate uses.

Objective 3: Encourage development of neighborhood patterns which permit a full range of public services to be provided efficiently, economically, and conveniently.

Objective 4: Plan for residential areas that provide for safe, convenient, and efficient access to commercial, community, and employment facilities.

**Goal 3: To provide consistent and orderly development of commercial areas.**

Objective 1: Encourage strong districts for commerce and services in existing suburban locations, such as Ashland and Mechanicsville, rather than indiscriminately scattering commercial and service facilities. Provide for the inclusion of residential uses at appropriate locations within the Suburban Service Area, within commercial districts and vice-versa, in order to reduce dependence on the automobile and eliminate unnecessary traffic movements.

Objective 2: Discourage the linear spread of commercial activities along thoroughfares in favor of planned commercial facilities at selected places.

Objective 3: Require the functional, safe, and attractive design of commercial areas.

Objective 4: Allow neighborhood retail commercial development in areas appropriate to the residential areas served, including the rural areas.

**Goal 4: To promote compatible industrial development and guide it into appropriate areas.**

Objective 1: Channel industrial growth into areas with characteristics unique to industrial development (size, transportation access, and planned utilities), timed to coincide with the provision of public facilities adequate to properly accommodate and encourage appropriate development.

Objective 2: Establish a program of public facilities for the support of existing industrial development and the promotion of planned development areas to attract firms best suited for the local labor force.

Objective 3: Develop a program for historic tourism, providing greater emphasis on tourism as a component of the County's economic development efforts and providing marketing assistance to owners of historic properties and tourist-related business.

Objective 4: Allow all types of industrial development, consistent with the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan and the overriding need to maintain environmental quality and safety, a balanced tax base, and buffering from residential areas.

Objective 5: Create and implement strategies for the support and expansion of small businesses.

Objective 6: Encourage low-intensity industrial uses within proposed mixed-use projects, to enhance the employment opportunities available throughout the County.

**Goal 5: To protect and maintain current agricultural/forestal areas.**

Objective 1: Preserve prime and important agricultural and forestal lands.

Objective 2: Restrict the intrusion of inappropriate residential, commercial, and industrial uses into rural areas where such development would compete with prime and important agricultural and forestal uses.

Objective 3: Identify remaining agricultural and forestal operations and encourage their long-term preservation through techniques such as the Purchase of Development Rights and the creation of Agricultural and Forestal Districts, Conservation Easements, and Open Space Districts.

Objective 4: Encourage the use of clustering of residential development in the rural areas to protect the rural character of the County, preserve open space, enhance agricultural/forestal opportunities, and reduce the loss of prime and important agricultural soils to development.

**Goal 6: To protect natural and cultural resources while providing for adequate areas to accommodate planned growth.**

Objective 1: Identify productive agricultural and forestal land based on recent soil and forestal surveys, and designate significant areas of such land on the *Conservation and Phased Suburban development Plan* map for preservation in rural areas.

Objective 2: Evaluate the benefits of preserving productive agricultural and forestal land for such use as watershed protection, recreation, floodplains, scenic natural beauty and protection of historical resources. Protect the County's natural features from development, such as prime agricultural soils, excessively steep slopes, flood prone areas, and major stream valleys with unusual and sensitive ecologies.

**THE MEANS**

To continue to effectively combat sprawl, certain design and development criteria should be used when considering development proposals. These criteria are divided into categories:

1. Residential areas. While the policies over the last twenty years have produced many outstanding residential communities, changing needs require new approaches to residential development to assure that all citizens have access to adequate housing. To accomplish this, the following criteria need to be considered:
  - A. Areas developed for detached single family dwellings should be preserved for that use.
  - B. The neighborhood development concept should be applied in planning residential areas. Included in this concept would be provision of various housing types, preservation of important physical features and focal points, access to transportation facilities, and mixing of uses to limit traffic and vehicle trips.
    - 1) The use of attached residential dwellings, such as apartments and townhouses, when their inclusion in a development is appropriate, should be encouraged. Indications suggest that a greater number of such dwellings will be required in the future.
    - 2) Apartment projects should meet definite criteria regarding access, public services, location with respect to shopping and employment, open space, and effects on adjoining or nearby development.
    - 3) Suburban residential development should be defined by four basic density categories on the *General Land Use Plan* map: suburban transitional (1-2 units/acre); suburban general (1-4 units/acre); suburban high (4-8 units/acre); and multi-family (8-15 units/acre). The first two residential categories are for single-family dwellings, both attached and detached; the third, for single-family attached and limited multi-family; and the fourth, apartments and townhouses.
    - 4) Within the broad definitions described above, mixed-use projects should be encouraged in appropriate areas throughout the Suburban Service Area. Self-contained developments which provide a wide range of housing types and greater densities, in order to better address the needs of the County's citizens, should be designed to fit into the fabric of the community while creating a separate "sense of place" for the specific project. Incorporation of these developments into the neighborhood at large should be accomplished through extension of existing roads, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and open spaces.
2. Employment centers. Employment centers in Hanover County should consist generally of four types: Office uses or planned light industrial districts, or the two combined (shown as "office service" on the *General Land Use Plan* map); general light industry, including transportation terminals, warehousing, and similar low-intensity uses without outdoor storage of materials ("limited industrial"); heavy industry, controlled for protection of the environment ("industrial"); and "business park," a mixed-use district that combines residential, limited industrial, office, commercial, public, and open

space uses in a consolidated development. Mixed-use development would be considered appropriate for such designated areas, although it is intended that such projects should include fewer residential uses and more commercial components. No mixed-use projects should be considered for locations designated for industrial use or within a designated Economic Development Zone, although the designations described above may comprise an EDZ.

- A. Employment centers of all types should be near major arterial thoroughfares which can be used for trucking. Heavy industries would tend to be located near railroads as well as arterial thoroughfares.
- B. Industrial development within the “industrial” areas should be further differentiated into two general categories based on their setting and character:
  - 1) "General Industrial" – Where a full range of industrial uses will be considered on a case-by-case basis, recognizing the existing and future character of the area.
  - 2) "Light Industrial" - Where, because of nearby residences, high exposure to major thoroughfares, or an industrial park setting, higher standards are expected to mitigate impacts or complement the character of development in specified areas of the County.
- C. Development within designated “Destination Commerce” areas should be limited to those uses for which Interstate visibility and access is critical. These uses are regional in scope and unique in character, and draw from an area far beyond the boundaries of the County for clients and customers.
- D. Mixed Use development should be considered as being appropriate for consideration throughout the Suburban Service Area with the exception of those areas designated for industrial use or those areas within a designated Economic Development Zone, and should be designed in such a way as to assure its compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. Such projects should provide opportunities for housing, commerce, employment, recreation, and, when appropriate, preservation within the boundary of the development, although every mixed use development should also be designed, to the extent possible, to become a part of the community in which it is located. This should be done by extension of roads and pathways, connection of open space, location of retail/office uses to encourage non-residents to use them without detrimental impact on the residents of the mixed use project, and creation of live/work opportunities within the development.
- E. Business Parks generally consist of fifty (50) acres or more, which are planned, developed, and operated as integrated facilities for one or more business or limited industrial uses, with consideration to transportation facilities, circulation, parking, utilities, aesthetics, and compatibility with surrounding land uses. Business Parks shall incorporate design guidelines and restrictive covenants to ensure a sustainable and attractive development.

Design guidelines for Business Parks are to be developed by the County. The development of these guidelines should include extensive community involvement to ensure that future development is consistent with the community's vision. The plans should also provide sufficient guidance to ensure that future business development will be designed to standards which will provide for attractive and sustainable employment centers for generations to come. Specifically, the plans should include guidelines to maintain open space within business parks that will provide for passive and active amenities for employees working within the parks, and that will honor the rural heritage of Hanover County.

Business park development in the Rt. 33/Hylas Community Planning Area should consider potential impact on the existing rural community within the planning area and should mitigate those impacts to the extent possible (please refer to Appendix LU-8). Within this designated area, appropriate zoning districts for consideration shall include BP, Business Park District and MX, Mixed Use District. Properties consisting of 30 or fewer acres may be considered for BP zoning if the Board makes the finding that the property can meet the standards for such development. For properties which do not qualify for BP consideration, the OS, Office Service District may be considered. The intent of the business park designation on the land use map is to recognize the potential for significant economic development opportunities within this area of Hanover County, while protecting the rights of property owners and the character of the existing communities. Proposed projects within the designated area should comprise office, institutional, and commercial uses, along with supporting residential development in some MX projects. Within a Mixed-Use development, there should be no industrial uses proposed.

With any project in this area, there will be an open space element. When a project adjoins the Chickahominy River along the southern boundary of the County, the River frontage should be utilized as an element of the open space. Projects along the River should strive to incorporate the River as an active component of open space, giving due consideration to creation of a linear park along the Chickahominy River. This open space component should continue from project to project, designed in such a way as to continue walking trails, landscaping elements, and hardscape amenities such as benches, tables, gazebos, and other useful inclusions. Such linear parks could be incorporated into a public park system at some point in the future.

Development within the designated business park area should also direct traffic onto the proposed major thoroughfare to the extent practicable, although other thoroughfares will also become elements of transportation planning and traffic dispersion. However, minimization of traffic impacts on existing roadways should be a goal of any proposed project.

3. Shopping and Commercial Service Areas. Provision of appropriate commercial development throughout the County to serve our citizens safely and conveniently dictates consideration of differing levels of business activities based on the setting.
  - A. Shopping and commercial service areas should be located in well-defined groupings, to the extent possible.
  - B. New commercial strips should be avoided and advantage taken of every reasonable opportunity to stop extensions of existing commercial strips.
  - C. Commercial facilities should be planned in two basic categories: 1) Retail shopping and services, and 2) General commercial, highway- or automobile-oriented, with some mixed retail and service uses.
    - 1) Retail shopping and services grouped in centers should be planned for three categories in "commercial areas" as designated on the *General Land Use Plan* map:
      - a. The isolated small village or country store.
      - b. The small neighborhood shopping center.
      - c. The larger community shopping center, such as Ashland and Mechanicsville.
  - D. Design standards should be developed to provide quality shopping and commercial areas that are an enhancement to Hanover County.
  - E. Mixed use projects should incorporate retail, office, and employment opportunities within the development in such a way as to encourage use by citizens who may not live within the project.
4. Open Space. Open space preservation is an important component of planning in both the Rural Planning Area and the Suburban Service Area. Planning for open space should be directed primarily to:
  - A. The immediate protection of rare and unusual historic features, such as the several Civil War Battlefields identified on the *Historic Resource and Heritage Tourism Plan* map.
  - B. The protection, both immediate and long-range, of natural environments of unusual beauty, such as those found along the North Anna, South Anna, and Newfound Rivers, and several of their tributaries.
  - C. Preservation, both immediate and long-range, of the floodplains of the County's streams and rivers.

D. Enlargement of the inventory of land which may be used for recreation and aesthetic purposes.

E. Increased use of open space as a device to give form and beauty to suburban places.

The open space planning objectives for the Suburban Service Area are not the same as those which will encourage preservation of large tracts of vacant land for farming, lumbering, wildlife habitats, and water resources in the Rural Planning Area, and should also include those open spaces associated with less extensive historic places, buildings, and their grounds.

## THE FUTURE

### 1. Planning areas

The *General Land Use Plan* map generally reflects land use patterns and densities appropriate for the suburban areas, allowing for some adjustments to reflect existing zoning in these areas and for transitions between land use categories. Charts 1 and 2 show the calculations for the number of units needed to accommodate our projected population, and the acreage required for the anticipated units.

Chart 1

<b>2026 RESIDENTIAL Land Capacity Summary (2% Growth)</b>			
<b>Location</b>	<b>Demand Dwelling Units (DU)</b>	<b>Estimate of Capacity, adjusted by 2:1 ratio (DU)</b>	<b>Projected Deficit of Dwelling Units (DU) Density assumption used to estimate capacity for new residential development is 2 dwelling units per acre and adjusted by 2:1 ratio: <math>(5,243 \text{ DU} / 2 \text{ units per acre} / 2 \text{ ratio} = 5,250 \text{ Acres})</math></b>
SSA	9,835 DU	4,592 DU	(5,243 DU) (5,250 Additional Acres Needed)

\*Assumption of 2.77 persons per dwelling unit is used to calculate projected dwelling units

Chart2

<b>2026 NON-RESIDENTIAL Land Capacity Summary (2% growth)</b>			
<b>Location</b>	<b>Estimated Non-Residential Demand, adjusted to allow for 2:1 ratio</b>	<b>Estimated Non-Residential Capacity</b>	<b>Projected Deficit of Land to accommodate projected Non-Residential development</b>
SSA	4,120 acres ( <i>unadjusted</i> )8,250 acres ( <i>adjusted with 2:1 ratio</i> )	1,670 acres available	(6,580 Additional Acres Needed)

Within the Suburban Service Area, there are also two designations which overlay the land use plan and provide additional direction for future development: Interchange Sectors and Small Area Plan areas.

- A. Interchange Sectors. The land within the immediate vicinity of I-295 interchanges offers prime locations for intensive, mixed-use development when public sewers are available. I-295 provides ready access to the major north-south and east-west highways in the state. Because these lands have maximum accessibility to this highway, the potential for intensive development activity will be greater there. Development most suitable for interchange areas with utilities would be:
  - 1) Residential - Apartments, townhouses, and higher-density subdivisions, preferably in large-tract in varying mixtures.
  - 2) Commercial - Shopping centers and highway service businesses such as motels, gas stations, and restaurants, preferably in conjunction with other planned developments, such as office complexes or parks.
  - 3) Industrial - Light industrial development, preferably in planned parks (particularly those desiring exposure or access for distribution purposes).
  
- B. Small Area Plans. In certain areas of the County, additional details are necessary to help define the intent of the Plan. These details may include design criteria, concept roads, land uses, or other issues of interest to the community. In order to address these issues, plans are developed for specific areas of the County. Five Small

Area Plans are included in this section: Brown Grove; Atlee/Elmont Interchange; Rural Point/Meadowbridge/I-295; Elmont; and Mechanicsville.

## 2. Phased Suburban Development

Future planning for the suburban areas includes designation of areas for future incremental extensions of utilities. The plan for accommodating and managing future growth in the Suburban Service Area includes designations for both existing service areas (those areas where public utilities are already available) and suburban expansion areas (those areas for which the extension of utilities is planned for a subsequent time period, through 2027).

The intent of the land use plan is to use the location of public facilities, stormwater drainage, sewer, and water to control the location, timing, and density of new development. As the facilities are built and extended, the location of future growth is to be staged to correspond with the phasing schedule.

A. Policies for Development Within the Existing Service Areas. Water and sewer availability and major thoroughfare access in these service areas has made them the best locations in Hanover County to accommodate suburban growth. These areas then become the base from which future suburban growth expands, in accordance with the phasing plan. Planning for development of these areas includes:

- 1) Residential development at densities ranging from 1 to 15 units per acre, resulting in a wide range of housing types, developed within natural watershed boundaries.
- 2) An appropriate mix of housing, shopping, employment opportunities, recreation, and institutional uses to accommodate the anticipated population.
- 3) Provision for an appropriate level of utility service at the appropriate time, in accordance with the phasing plan.
- 4) Protection of existing neighborhoods and preservation of significant natural features from adverse impacts of planned new development. .

B. Policies for Development Within the Suburban Expansion Areas. Planning for this category should consider the following:

- 1) The eventual construction of public sewers will require densities greater than one dwelling unit per acre to be economic and efficient.
- 2) Commercial development should be limited, to avoid the stripping of highways.
- 3) Designation of the areas west of Rte. 33 and south of Ashland Road, and north of Rte. 54 and east of I-95, reflects the projected need for future suburban development. In these areas, demand for industrial and/or commercial development could result in the provision of Hanover County utilities prior to 2027.
- 4) The size, location, shape, and timing of future expansion areas will depend on future trends of growth justifying public expenditure of funds, as indicated by forecasted growth supporting the public costs associated with serving these areas. In general, these future areas should correspond with the designated areas for future growth beyond the 20-yr planning horizon. The need to expand within the identified expansion areas should be evaluated every five years as part of the overall review of the plan. Owners of property within the outlined areas will be able to develop their property under current zoning district development standards.
- 5) Properties planned for residential development within the Suburban Expansion Area are not be expected to remain undeveloped, but would be permitted to develop in such a way so as not to preclude future development with the efficient and cost-effective provision of public utilities. To ensure that properties within this area are not converted to lower density uses inconsistent with the purpose of the Suburban Service Area, the County should consider policies to preserve existing large tracts of land which will be necessary to accommodate future projected growth. One such means would be to allow the by-right clustering of lots at a density of one dwelling unit per 10 acres. The open space area could be protected by an open space easement scheduled to expire July 1, 2017, which is consistent with the beginning of the proposed 2017-2027 suburban development phase.

### 3. Prevention of Sprawl.

By accommodating future growth in the Suburban Service Area, development in Hanover County will present a more compact pattern. An estimated 70% of the net growth of the County is projected to be within the Suburban Service Area.

### 4. Economic Development.

To promote economic development, it will be the policy of the County to develop a comprehensive Economic Development Plan consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Commercial and industrial development in advance of the Phased Suburban Development Plan schedule will be allowed when that development can

be shown to otherwise be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Staff will give priority to processing complete and consistent commercial and industrial rezoning requests.

#### 5. Rural Planning Areas

Outside of the Suburban Service Area are the Rural Land Use Areas, comprising both the transitional area and the Rural Conservation area. The predominant land uses in the rural areas would be expected to be:

- A. Agricultural and Forestal operations of all types.
- B. Accessory land uses complementary to agriculture and forestry.
- C. Low density residential development in existing areas with vested rights and on marginal lands not indicated to be in conflict with agricultural and forestal development, at current densities (both 10-acres and 6.25 acres per lot) within the transitional area, and at the 10-acre density in the conservation area.
- D. Open space to accommodate public parks

#### 6. Right to Farm and Right to Practice Forestry.

In general, the rural areas of the County have the "right to farm" and should be protected from inappropriate development. Protection of prime agricultural and forestal lands may be accomplished through consideration of various means, including use of open space zoning which clusters development. By channeling suburban growth into the Suburban Service Area, and by protecting the rural character of the County through both application of open space development and designation of conservation areas, the random pattern of subdivisions in the rural areas should be stabilized.

#### 7. Non-Agricultural Development.

The only non-agricultural development that would be permitted in the Rural Land Use Area would be:

- A. Individual Homes. Residential development within the transitional area is permitted on lots sized to support septic systems. Generally, the density in this area is 1 unit per 10 acres, although lots as small as 2 acres in area may be created for family homesteads. Homes may also be developed in the AR-6, Agricultural-Residential District, and the RC, Rural Conservation District, at a density no greater than 1 unit per 6.25 acres, the previous density

permitted within the A-1, Agricultural District. Within the areas designated for Rural Conservation, incentives should be provided so that residential development reflects the rural legacy of the area.

1. A request for rezoning to the AR-6, Agricultural-Residential District outside of the Rural Conservation area will be considered in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan if the following criteria are met:
  - a. Provides for cash proffers to offset fiscal impacts of the development in accordance with the cash proffer policy of the Board of Supervisors.
  - b. Provides a conceptual plan, including lot configurations and road locations.
  - c. Provides compatibility with existing residential development in the immediate area.
  - d. Provides compatibility with the rural setting, including sensitivity to natural and cultural features (i.e., tree line, historic structures, battlefields).
  - e. Provides adequate and safe access that does not allow for stripping of existing public roads.
2. A request for rezoning to the RC, Rural Conservation District outside of the Rural Conservation area will be considered in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan if the following criteria are met:
  - a. Protection and preservation of all floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes from clearing, grading, filling, or construction (except as may be approved by the county for essential infrastructure or active or passive recreation amenities).
  - b. Preservation and maintenance of existing treelines between fields or meadows, mature woodlands, pastures, meadows, and orchards, which create sufficient buffer areas to minimize conflicts between residential and other uses; and limitation of impacts on large woodlands (greater than five (5) acres), especially those containing many mature trees or a significant wildlife habitat. Also, woodlands of any size on highly erodible soils with slopes greater than ten (10) percent should be avoided.
  - c. Minimization of development on open fields or pastures. Dwellings should be sited on the least prime agricultural soils, or in locations at the far edge of a field, as seen from existing public roads.

- d. Preservation of existing vistas, particularly as seen from public roadways, and buffering of development within view of public roads with landscaping screens.
- e. Avoidance of siting new construction on prominent hilltops or ridges, by taking advantage of lower topographic features.
- f. Preservation of sites of historic, archaeological, or cultural value, and their environs, insofar as needed to safeguard the character of the feature.
- g. Provision of active recreational areas in suitable locations offering convenient access by residents, and with adequate screening from nearby residential lots.
- h. Inclusion of a pedestrian circulation system designed to assure that pedestrians can walk safely and easily on the site, between properties and activities or special features within the open space. All roadside footpaths should connect with off-road trails, which in turn should link with open space.
- i. Provision of open space that is reasonably contiguous and avoids fragmentation so that these areas are not divided into numerous small parcels located in various parts of the development. The open space shall generally abut existing or potential open space land on adjacent parcels, and shall be designed as part of any existing or proposed larger contiguous and integrated greenway systems.

B. Non-residential uses. Uses which provide safety, education, employment, recreation, or other benefits for the rural population may be permitted, generally as conditional uses which provide for public involvement in the consideration and approval process.

C. Neighborhood and Village Commercial Activities. Neighborhood commercial activities necessary to serve the rural population should be permitted in areas defined as "Commercial Nodes" on the *General Land Use Plan* map. These uses should be designed to be supportive of the rural community by providing convenient retail, service, and employment opportunities scaled to meet the needs of the smaller community in proximity to the proposed project. Larger-scale projects, which may provide uses designed for a greater trading area, should be located within the commercial nodes near or within existing rural communities, such as Beaverdam, Montpelier, and Rockville.

D. Natural Resource Extraction Areas. Areas appropriate for the extraction of natural resources may be permitted in the rural areas.

## 8. Growth Management

Hanover County's concept of managing growth is through the phasing of development. This concept is expected to be adapted to accommodate future growth demands by expanding utility service throughout the Suburban Service Area. Although the County will continue to grow, only those areas of the County planned for public utility service would be developed for suburban uses. As a result, suburban development would be confined to relatively efficient areas of the County, enabling the protection of the rural areas into the future.

## 9. Government Centers

Around major government facilities, there should be recognition of the impact of public facilities on surrounding properties.

### **Ashland Community Planning Area**

Hanover County has created the Ashland Overlay District to encourage development in the areas of the County surrounding the Town of Ashland in a manner that is compatible with development in the Town, to provide for the most efficient provision of government services to the area, and to protect the financial viability of the area and the role that the Town plays in the region's economy. The Ashland Overlay District regulations provide development standards for commercial and industrial uses within the district. Within those areas of the overlay district that are designated for residential use, the RC Rural Conservation District is an option available for consideration along with the other available residential zoning districts.

## **LAND USE APPENDICES**

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