

II. EXISTING POLICIES

Policy discussions should begin with an inventory and analysis of existing policies. This section summarizes the local, regional, and state policies regarding open space. Currently, the most effective tool is the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and its associated regulations. The comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance provide additional guidance in the design and review of new development proposals. The strategic plan gives guidance to government efforts and inform the budget and capital improvements program. State programs provide policies, funding and support for natural heritage conservation, historic preservation, wildlife and fisheries management, recreational facilities and park planning.

A. STATE POLICIES

Local Cooperation with the Department of Conservation and Recreation

Virginia Code Section 10.1-207 requires any political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia and park authorities to cooperate with the Department of Conservation and Recreation in the preparation, revision and implementation of a comprehensive plan for the development of outdoor recreational facilities, and such local and detailed plans as may be adopted.

Dedication of natural area preserves

Virginia Code Section 10.1-213 (D) empowers any owner, including the County to dedicate to the Commonwealth suitable land areas as natural area preserves.

Open Space Land Act

Virginia Code Section 10.1-1700 *et seq.*

The Act permits any public body, including a County or a Park Authority to acquire title to and designate any interests or rights of not less than five years duration in real property as a means for the preservation of open-space. The use of the real property for open-space land shall conform to the official comprehensive plan for the area in which the property is located. The public body may acquire said properties subject to reservation of rights to use such land for farming or timbering. No open-space land, obtained pursuant to this Act, shall be converted or diverted from open-space land use unless it is determined by the public body that it is essential to the orderly development and growth of the urban area and in accordance with the comprehensive plan.

Virginia Code Section 10.1-1702 states that in order to carry out the purposes and provisions of Chapter 10.1, (Conservation) public bodies have the following powers:

1. To borrow funds and make expenditures;
2. To advance or accept advances of public funds;
3. To apply for and accept and utilize grants, to give required security, enter into and carry out contracts, etc.;

4. To make and execute contracts and other instruments;
5. In connection with real property acquired and designated...to provide or to arrange or contract for the provision, construction, maintenance, operation, or repair by any person or agency, public or private, of services, privileges, works, streets, roads, public utilities, or other facilities or structures that may be necessary to the provision, maintenance, and management of property as open-land space;
6. To insure or provide insurance on real or personal property of the public body.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation

Virginia Code Section 10.1-1800 *et seq.* The Virginia Outdoors Foundation was established to promote the preservation of open-space lands and to encourage private gifts of money, securities, land or other property to preserve the natural, scenic, historic, scientific, open-space and recreational areas of the Commonwealth. The Foundation is authorized to accept, hold, and administer gifts and bequests of money, securities or other property, for the purpose for which it was created.

Special Assessment for Land Use Preservation

Virginia Code Section 58.1-3229 *et seq.* permits a locality to adopt a program of preferential treatment for lands devoted to agricultural, horticultural, forestry, and open space uses. Eligible land under this law is assessed at its use value rather than its fair market value. Such a designation can be used to preserve parkland, natural or historic resources or assist in “shaping the character, direction, and timing of community development.” Prince William County has established a Use Value Assessments program pursuant to this law.

Conservation Easements

Virginia Code Section 10.1-1009, known as the Virginia Conservation Easement Act enables landowners to record conservation easements with qualified nonprofit organizations in order to protect or retain natural or open space values of real property, assuring its availability for agricultural, forestall, recreational, or open space use.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a public agency or conservation group. The parties agree to protect the open space and natural resources values (for an open space or conservation easement) or the historic values (for preservation easement). The easement runs with the land and is recorded in the local land records. Each easement is tailored to reflect the conservation and/or historic values of the property and the individual goals of the landowner.

A conservation easement is a recorded agreement in which a landowner agrees to give up some or all of his rights to develop or use the land for residential, commercial or industrial purposes, and grants to a land trust, governmental entity or other qualified holder the right to permanently enforce that promise against the landowner and future owners of the land. Easements allow landowners to preserve their land’s natural and/or historic resources after they move or pass away.

Easements can be a preferable tool for protecting land than acquisition. They are typically less expensive and allow the property to remain in active agriculture. The land does not have to be managed which can be very expensive.

Conservation easements make eminent domain very difficult. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation, established by the General Assembly in 1966, is a state agency with authority equal to other agencies such as VDOT. Therefore, VDOT cannot take land to build a new highway.

Even with its mission of conserving open space, VOF will not try to override or usurp local zoning. Landowners with property zoned for industrial use, for instance, cannot get a conservation easement.

Historic Preservation Easements

A historic preservation easement is a right or limitation, set forth in a legal instrument or deed, which allows the donor to retain ownership and possession of an historic property, while granting a government agency or qualified non-profit organization the authority to protect the historic, cultural, architectural, or archaeological characteristics of the property. The agreement may be called a “preservation”, “conservation”, “scenic”, “open space”, “exterior”, or “façade” easement. In each case, the easement as it is legally termed, must contain covenants which are binding and enforceable, running with the land and buildings. These covenants obligate the owner to refrain from actions which are incompatible with the preservation of the property.

Typically, the easement involves the surrender of some right that, as the owner, you would otherwise have, such as the right to modify the exterior or to use the adjacent space in a way that might compromise the historic character and integrity of the site.

Since easements reflect the wishes of the grantor, the property will be protected regardless of who the future owners may be. Should the property be sold, the easement continues to bind the new owner, and the title passes with the easement in force. Although easement agreements are final, changes to the property are allowed subject to approval by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources, should the easement be donated to the Commonwealth.

These easements clearly define the features to be protected, generally including adjacent open space, and prohibit incompatible uses, such as commercial development, subdivision or other actions which are inappropriate.

These easements are an economical way for the state to ensure protection of its historic resources. Government agencies or conservation organizations normally cannot afford to purchase, maintain, secure, and supervise all the places worthy of preservation. With preservation easements, important sites can be maintained largely or totally without cost

to the taxpayer. At the same time, the public benefits from the historic or educational value of the property.

The Virginia Board of Historic Resources accepts only those easements that are granted in perpetuity. In the case of a historic building, the Board generally requires control over the architectural elements of the interior, as well as the exterior. Usually the owner obtains written approval from the Board before beginning any alterations or additions. The Board generally requires that the easement cover sufficient acreage to preserve the setting and the historic context of the building. The restrictions on the land may require that the landscape character of the property be maintained.

The value of the easement can be claimed as a charitable donation deduction from taxable income. The easement can also be used to reduce estate taxes. The easement can also create favorable consequences for local property taxes, as the local tax assessor is required by law to take the easement into account when assess the value of the property.

By accepting the easement the Commonwealth has made a commitment to the preservation of the property. The technical advice and assistance of the Department of Historic Resources is made available to the property owner.

In order for the Board to accept an easement, the property must be listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register, either individually or as a contributing member in a registered historic district. In order to be eligible for the tax deductions, the property must also be listed in the National Register of Historic Places individually or as a component of a National Register historic district.

Rural Historic District Program

Rural historic districts are collections of sites, buildings, cultural and historic landscapes, and supporting heritage resources. In Virginia, there are 12 rural historic districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and/or the Virginia Landmarks Register VLR.

The NRHP is the official list of the nation's cultural resources. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the NRHP is part of the national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archaeological resources. Listing of a property or district in the NRHP or VLR is honorific and does not carry any regulatory restrictions on private property owners. It does, however, require that any federal action be evaluated as to impact on the listed or eligible property or district and a plan for mitigation of impact be developed. Listing in the NRHP or the VLR may entitle a property owner to apply and obtain rehabilitation credits against income taxes.

A rural historic landscape and one that qualifies as a Rural Historic District is defined as a "geographic area that historically has been used by people, or shaped or modified by human activity, occupancy, or intervention, and that possess a significant concentration,

linkage, or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features”. The Commonwealth of Virginia uses the same criteria for considering listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register.

The designation of a rural historic district by Virginia’s Board of Historic Resources is intended to inform the public about the significance of the designated areas. It encourages local governments and property owners to take the registered areas’ historic, architectural, archaeological, cultural, and natural significance into consideration in planning and decision making. The process for drawing the boundaries of the districts, whether listed in the NRHP or the VLR is identical. Because districts are significant concentrations of sites, the boundaries are usually drawn to include the greatest number of historic resources that add or contribute to the significance of the district. Rural historic district can contain non-contributing properties (buildings that are less than 50 years old or for other reasons, such as a major structural change, no longer contribute historically).

Although not officially recognized as “Rural Historic Districts”, Prince William County has two National Register historic districts in the Rural Area of the County (Buckland Historic District and Brentsville Historic District). The Buckland Historic District also contains a local historic overlay zoning district, the only historic overlay district in the County. The Bristow Station Battlefield was listed in the NRHP, but was de-listed at the request of a former property owner. The battlefield continues to be eligible for listing and the County is planning on applying for re-listing once ownership is transferred from the Civil War Preservation Trust to the County.

Agricultural and Forestal Act

Virginia Code Section 15.1-1506 known as the “Agricultural and Forestal District Act” established a program by which agricultural and forestal lands may be protected and enhanced as an important natural resource. Each district shall have a core of no less than 200 acres in one parcel or in contiguous districts. Districts are voluntarily formed by landowners with the cooperation of the local government in order to relieve growth pressures through the imposition of development constraints. Furthermore, land lying within such districts that is used for agricultural or forestal production qualifies for an agricultural or forestal use-value assessment on the land.

Agricultural and Forestal districts guarantee use value taxation for members of the district, whether or not the locality otherwise provides for use value taxation. Property owners are entitled to a reduction of the property tax assessment.

These districts also provide member landowners with immunity from nuisance actions challenging farm practices, and they give member landowners limited protection from the exercise of eminent domain by state agencies and public utilities. Such districts normally restrict landowner members’ development right during the period of the existence of the district (up to ten years).

These districts are agreements between landowners and the county board of supervisors, stipulating that parcels in the district may not be developed for non-agricultural use for a set number of years.

Historic Property Acquisition

Virginia Code Section 15.2-944 allows localities to acquire, except by condemnation, sites, landmarks, structures, and records of historic interest and value to the Commonwealth and may restore and preserve them, or may convey them to a non-stock corporation chartered under Virginia law for the purposes of acquiring and preserving such places and things. A locality may appropriate money to any such corporation.

Soil And Water Conservation Districts

The Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District works closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and The Farm Service Agency both part of the U.S Department of Agriculture. These federal agencies have many financial incentives and conservation programs for farmers and landowners interested in farmland protection, wetland restoration, wildlife habitat improvement, riparian buffer establishment and other natural resources conservation concerns.

State Cost Share Program - Provides up to 75% cost-share for many popular conservation practices including rotational grazing systems, streamside fencing, cropland to permanent pasture conversion, cover crops, split applications of nitrogen on corn and small grain, grassed waterways, and many more.

State Tax-Credit Program - A state income tax credit is available for farmers and landowners implementing conservation practices on their properties. The tax credit rate is 25% of the landowners cost to install the practice or not to exceed \$17,500.

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act

The Chesapeake Bay is an important and productive estuary, providing economic and social benefits to the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The health of the bay is vital to maintaining the state's economy and the welfare of its citizens.

The Chesapeake Bay waters have been degraded significantly by point source and non-point source pollution from land uses and development along the shores of the Bay, its tributaries and other state waters. Existing high quality waters are worthy of protection from degradation to guard against further pollution. Certain lands that are proximate to shorelines have intrinsic water quality value due to the ecological and biological processes they perform. Other lands have severe development constraints from flooding, susceptibility to erosion, and soil limitations. With proper management, such lands offer significant ecological benefits by providing water quality maintenance and pollution control, as well as flood and shoreline erosion control. These lands together, designated by the Board of County Supervisors of Prince William County as Resource Protection Areas and Resource Management Areas comprise Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas, in

accordance with the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, sections 10.1-2100, *et seq.*, VA Code Ann. (“the Act”), need to be protected from destruction and damage in order to protect the quality of water in the Bay and consequently the quality of life in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Comprehensive Plan

Virginia Code Section 15.1-446 *et seq.* requires that the County designate on its official comprehensive plan map, among other things, areas of public and private development conservation and recreation areas, as well as the designation of a system of community facilities such as parks, forests, playgrounds, community centers, and other facilities.

Section 15.1-456 requires that no park facility or other public area shall be established, or authorized unless the general location has been approved by the Planning Commission.

B. LOCAL POLICIES

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas/Resource Protection Areas

The County has established a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Overlay District in its Zoning Ordinance. This ordinance is enacted to implement the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Act. The intent of the Board of County Supervisors and the purpose of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Overlay District is to: (a) protect existing high quality state waters; (b) restore all other state waters to a condition or quality that will permit all reasonable public uses and will support the propagation and growth of all aquatic life, including game fish, which might reasonably be expected to inhabit them; (c) safeguard the clean waters of the Commonwealth from pollution; (d) prevent any increase in pollution; (e) reduce existing pollution, and (f) promote water resource conservation in order to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the present and future citizens of Prince William County.

The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Overlay District is enacted under the authority of the Chesapeake Bay Act and section 15.2-2283, VA Code Ann. Section 15.2-2283 states that zoning ordinances may “also include reasonable provisions, not inconsistent with applicable state water quality standards, to protect surface water and ground water as defined in section 62.1-255”.

With regard to designation of Resource Management Areas in the County as required by the regulations, it is the finding of the Board of County Supervisors that it is authorized by section 10.1-2109, VA Code Ann., in addition to the authority cited above, to enact the measures attending development in Resource Management Areas without regard to the mandates of the Act, that the restrictions thereon attending constitute good development practice; that adoption of Resource Management Area restrictions for less than all the County is unworkable and that, indeed, virtually all of the development practices mandated by the Act have heretofore been required in all or part of the County.

The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Overlay District applies to all lands identified as a Resource Protection Area and Resource Management Area and as determined by section 700 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual. The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Overlay District Map is a part of this ordinance.

The Resource Protection Area consists of lands adjacent to water bodies with perennial flow that include:

- (a) Tidal wetlands;
- (b) Nontidal wetlands connected by surface flow and contiguous to tidal wetlands or water bodies with perennial flow tributary streams;
- (c) Tidal shores;
- (d) Perennial water bodies;
- (e) A 100-foot area located adjacent to and landward of the components listed in subsections a. through d. above, and along both sides of a water body with perennial flow, to be known as the "RPA buffer area".
- (f) Other lands with sensitive environmental features that have the potential of significantly affecting water quality as determined by the Director of Public Works.

Uses permitted in Resource Management Areas include all uses permitted in the underlying zoning district(s), provided that all standards established by this part and all requirements otherwise imposed by this Chapter are met.

Uses permitted in Resource Protection Areas are limited to new or expanded water-dependent facilities or redevelopment in intensely developed areas. Water wells, passive recreation facilities such as boardwalks, trails and pathways; historic preservation and archaeological activities and regional storm water management facilities may also be permitted in the RPA.

Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive Plan - Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan for the County contains a clear strategy for responsible, fiscally-sound growth to produce a vibrant, prosperous, stable, "livable" community. The Plan encourages new opportunities for high-end housing and targeted economic development that will strengthen the County's tax base and balance existing housing and economic activities. It seeks to ensure high quality of life for all County residents and heighten the County's image by:

- Providing large amounts of open space, particularly in preservation and conservation areas.
- Encouraging higher land use densities at transit locations.
- Maintaining planned levels of residential and non-residential development.
- Providing adequate and affordable public services to meet the needs of current and future residents, and meeting established levels of service.
- Improving the design of sites and buildings.

Prince William County as an attractive, “livable” community is further described as a community with the following:

- Good community design to ensure a high quality of life for County residents and to attract targeted businesses.
- Preservation of areas of rural character and significant cultural/historical resources.
- Revitalization of older commercial and residential areas of the County.
- Sound environmental quality.
- A variety of land use types and densities to make the County an interesting place to live and visit.

The Rural Area is established in the Comprehensive Plan and defined as that portion of the County containing agricultural, open space, forestry, and large lot residential land uses, as well as two federal parks. Large lot residential clusters, providing large tracts of permanent open space, are an alternative residential pattern permitted in the Rural Area. The Rural Area designation helps preserve the County’s agricultural economy and resources, the quality of the ground water supply, and the present open space and rural character of Prince William County.

The Development Evaluation Criteria of the Comprehensive Plan are intended to aid in the determination of whether a proposed project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The criteria include an evaluation of environmental resources, including a developer submitted environmental constraints analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to determine areas of a site unsuited for development and areas that could be provided as preservation or conservation areas. In general, however, the objectives of environmental resource consideration include:

- Reducing surface runoff
- Reducing erosion potential
- Increasing pollutant removal potential
- Managing soil nutrients
- Controlling toxic substances
- Minimizing storm water runoff and mitigating the impact of such runoff through the use of low-impact design techniques

- Protecting federal or state rare, threatened, or endangered species, or species of special concern identified by the US Fish and Wildlife Service or the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Avoiding direct disturbance to aquatic habitats
- Protecting aquatic habitats
- Preserving tree coverage
- Clustering of residential units resulting in densities no greater than that possible under conventional development standards to further environmental objectives
- Preserving and conserving open space and areas, including woodland conservation areas that will remain in their natural state or otherwise undisturbed by development

Comprehensive Plan – Community Design

The Community Design Plan contains the goals of community design, specific policies, and action strategies that encourage innovation and imagination in building design and site planning, while ensuring that certain universal principles of good community design are upheld. Certain action strategies advocate changes to existing site development ordinances and standards—in an effort to achieve alternative compliance or a new standard and to foster better, more creative, and more sustainable building and site designs. Other action strategies address ways in which the visual quality of County gateways and major travel corridors can be upgraded.

DES-POLICY 2: Encourage site, building, and landscape designs that result in the creation of safe and accessible pedestrian circulation and community open space.

Action Strategy 1: Encourage the location of public open spaces and facilities in new developments close to active uses--commercial, community services, employment, and schools.

Action Strategy 2: Encourage the provision of pedestrian links between and among commercial properties, community facilities, and nearby residential neighborhoods.

Comprehensive Plan – Cultural Resources

The primary intent of the Cultural Resources Plan is to facilitate and encourage the identification and protection of the County's significant cultural resources—architectural, archaeological, and historical sites and districts. The secondary intent is to enhance awareness of the history of the County and the importance of preserving properties that are significantly linked with that history.

Prince William County promotes the identification, evaluation, and protection of cultural resource sites throughout the County. To facilitate the identification and protection of

known significant properties that have cultural resource values worthy of preservation under the County's land planning jurisdiction, the land use classification "Designated Cultural Resource (DCR)" is used in the Comprehensive Plan. Designated sites have been systematically evaluated, and their significance has been determined, using specific, recognized criteria. The Long-Range Land Use Plan describes the DCR land use classification, and the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map shows the location of DCR properties. The Cultural Resources Plan provides additional specificity and definition to the DCR land use classification. Map 1 locates each DCR. Table 1 provides site-specific descriptions and identification of the appropriate primary uses for each DCR.

The Cultural Resources Plan includes a discussion of the "Historic Resource Management Overlay," with maps showing areas of potentially significant known but ill-defined or suspected pre-historic sites, Civil War sites, historic viewsheds (or views of and from historic properties), and private family cemeteries, or areas of potential impact to important historic viewsheds (Maps 2 and 3). The Cultural Resources Plan also contains action strategies that will assist in defining the boundary of the Historic Resource Management Overlay study area.

CR-POLICY 1: Identify the significant cultural resources in the County.

Action Strategy 1: Maintain and update the County's inventory of significant pre-historic and historic resources, and the computerized file of cemeteries and gravesites.

Action Strategy 6: Conduct an inventory to identify cultural resource sites that are of significance to the County's minority communities and integrate the preservation of these sites into the overall program to protect and preserve Prince William County's heritage.

CR-POLICY 2: Protect cultural resources that are important for documenting or demonstrating the prehistory or history of the county.

Action Strategy 6: Support the use of voluntary redistribution of development rights through encouragement of voluntary establishment by property owners of conservation easements, facade easements, and similar strategies, including those described under the "Virginia Conservation Easement Act", Virginia Code (Sections 10.1-1009 - 10.1-1016).

Action Strategy 7: Pursue obtaining funds from private, foundation, and public sources for acquisition of historic properties.

Action Strategy 12: Establish an agency that will oversee County-owned historic structures and will accept historic properties and preservation easements. [This has been accomplished.]

Action Strategy 13: Develop a County viewshed policy around DCRs and criteria for implementing that policy.

CR-POLICY 3: Enhance the awareness of Prince William County's history and the importance of the County in the historical development of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States.

Action Strategy 6: Inventory, in cooperation with the Prince William County Department of Economic Development, pre-historic and historic sites that may be used or developed to promote tourism in the County.

Action Strategy 9: Encourage the conversion of the Brentsville Courthouse Historic District into a living history museum and community center, and the conversion of Ben Lomond Manor into a Civil War visitor's center, living history park, archival storage facility, and meeting center. [This is underway.]

Action Strategy 10: Continue actions to document and protect the site of the Neabsco Mills Iron Works.

CR-POLICY 4: Encourage preservation of the County's most significant historic properties through use of the Designated Cultural Resource (DCR) classification.

A property may only be designated as a "Designated Cultural Resource" (DCR) site if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Has been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or Virginia Landmarks Register by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources or the National Park Service.
- Has been included in the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) or the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER).
- Is in a preservation easement.
- Is part of a Historic Overlay District.
- Has been selected for inclusion on the list of DCRs in the annual evaluation and update of such list by the Historical Commission during the past 12 months.
- Has the consent of the property owner at the time of the DCR designation and the approval by the Board of County Supervisors for such DCR designation.

To be in one of these indicated inventories or registers, a property must be significant in terms of its architectural, archaeological, or historical characteristics. Designated sites have been systematically evaluated and their significance has been determined using specific criteria (such as the National Register Criteria for Evaluation). (Refer to Map 1 for the location of these designated sites.)

In summary, the emphasis is on the protection or preservation of those characteristics or features that make the site significant. For example, if a structure is important because of its architecture, then the preservation of the structure and its architectural integrity is desirable. If an area is important because of what the ground is known to contain, then minimizing ground-disturbing activities in the area is encouraged. Each DCR is described in Table 1, at the end of this chapter.

Table 1 also identifies appropriate primary uses—including dwelling unit densities where applicable—for each of the DCRs shown on the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map. What constitutes an appropriate primary use of a cultural resource depends on the nature of the cultural resource and the surrounding land uses. In order to encourage preservation of the County's most significant DCRs, a range of appropriate uses is generally presented for each DCR. The County advocates adaptive re-use of historic properties. Rather than demolition, a plantation manor house could be incorporated into a residential development as a community center, or a large, architecturally unique barn might be converted into a restaurant.

Appropriate primary uses generally include one or more of the following:

- Residential, which includes dwelling unit densities corresponding to the residential land use classifications reflected on the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map.
- Retail-Historic, which includes retail uses that are compatible with and help to preserve and promote the cultural or historical values or characteristics of a site, such as bed-and-breakfast, restaurant or gift store.
- Historical/Cultural, which includes educational or cultural uses that are compatible with and help to preserve and promote the cultural or historic values of a site, such as museum, community center or educational center.

Other primary uses described in the Long-Range Land Use Plan may also be appropriate. For example, lands surrounding a historic structure or located within the bounds of a battlefield could have agriculture or parks and open space as the primary use. Table 1 identifies appropriate primary uses on a property-by-property basis.

The County's Planning Office maintains files on all designated and non-designated cultural resources under the County's land planning jurisdiction. With the exception of cemeteries, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources also maintains comprehensive files on the County's sites.

CR-POLICY 5: Encourage preservation of known (but ill-defined) or expected significant historic properties through application of the Historic Resource Management Overlay.

The Historic Resources Management Overlay designation (Maps 2 and 3) is an overlay that is applied to Comprehensive Plan land use classifications that are described in the Long-Range Land Use Plan and shown on the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map. In an area with a Historic Resource Management Overlay there is concern about:

- The presence of known but often ill-defined—such as where there is a suspected presence, where exact boundaries are not delineated—cultural resources, or where the exact location is unknown of potentially significant cultural resources.
- The presence of expected significant cultural resources.
- Potential impacts to important historic viewsheds.

If an Historic Resources Management Overlay is shown (Maps 1 and 2) and important cultural resources are expected to be located in a given area, then special actions are usually indicated. Examples of these actions include:

- Conducting archaeological surveys of the property to determine if the expected resource is present, its extent, and its integrity.
- Preserving the resource or mitigating the impacts to those resources that are determined to be highly significant (those that meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation).
- Opting for low-rise buildings and/or retaining vegetation buffers and/or using the natural topography to eliminate or mitigate visual impacts, in accordance with the policies and action strategies in the Community Design chapter.

Appropriate actions must be determined on a site-specific basis. In general, a Phase I—and perhaps a Phase II—level study will be requested when potentially significant pre-historic or Civil War archaeology sites are expected.

If historic viewsheds are of concern, then a visual study to identify ways to minimize or alleviate the visual impacts may be indicated.

Sensitivity maps have been developed for pre-historic and historic sites, cultural resources, and historic viewsheds (Maps 1 and 2). The sensitivity maps are not site-specific. For example, some types of pre-historic sites are known to be located in areas that have certain environmental features. Areas with these features, rather than individual pre-historic sites, have been mapped. The sensitivity map for Civil War sites is based primarily on historic research and accounts, rather than on environmental variables.

CR-POLICY 6: Encourage preservation and maintenance of known or discoverable cemeteries and gravesites, whether marked or unmarked.

Action Strategy 1: Encourage owners and developers of land to preserve known or discoverable cemeteries, marked or unmarked, and to provide a 25-foot landscaped or undisturbed, natural vegetative buffer around these cemeteries.

Comprehensive Plan - Environment

The Environment Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is intended to ensure that in developing the County, the natural beauty of the County is preserved, water quality is protected, property values and quality of life are enhanced, and ecological diversity is preserved. The Environment Plan is intended to be used to address environmental issues, evaluate development proposals in their earliest stages, and develop ordinances. The overall goal of the Environment Plan is to preserve, protect and enhance the environmental resources and features of the County, including air quality, topography, soils, ground and surface water, biotic communities (stream corridors, forests, and wetlands), sensitive plant and animal species, and natural viewsheds.

EN-POLICY 1: Consider environmental concerns at all levels of land use-related decision-making.

Action Strategy 7: Ensure that open space is maintained in the County and that a minimum of 39 percent of the total land area in the County will be retained as open space by buildout of the Comprehensive Plan, through appropriate amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to increase open space requirements.

Action Strategy 8: Amend the open space requirements in the Zoning Ordinance to ensure preservation/provision of open space within all developments.

EN-POLICY 4: Protect and manage the County's soils and natural vegetation.

Action Strategy 2: Preservation/conservation of certain natural land forms is important to the County in achieving water quality targets, good community design objectives, and ecological diversity. Accordingly, discourage development adjacent to a perennial stream in the following areas:

- Wooded slopes of 25 percent and greater with highly erodible soils, permeable soils or marine clay soils
- Wooded slopes of 25 percent and greater having a continuous area of 10,000 square feet
- Wooded slopes of 15 percent and greater with highly erodible soils, permeable soils, or marine clay soils
- Wooded 100-year floodplain
- Non-wooded slopes of 25 percent and greater with highly erodible soils, permeable soils or marine clay soils
- Non-wooded slopes of 25 percent and greater having a continuous area of 10,000 square feet

- Non-wooded slopes of 15 percent and greater with highly erodible soils, permeable soils, or marine clay soils
- Non-wooded 100-year floodplain

EN-POLICY 5: Maintain or enhance the integrity of surface bodies of water (lakes, ponds, rivers, streams) and watersheds.

Action Strategy 10: Encourage leaving a natural buffer of existing woodland or forestation area of at least 50 feet along each side of all waterways that are not otherwise protected under the Chesapeake Bay regulations or similar regulations.

EN-POLICY 10: Ensure the high quality of public drinking water sources, such as Lake Manassas and the Occoquan Reservoir.

Action Strategy 6: Promote open space uses and—where practical—acquire land along the Occoquan Reservoir for special use parks that are designed to promote an appreciation of the natural environment and facilitate passive recreation (such as fishing, hiking, and non-motorized boating).

EN-POLICY 11: Preserve natural vegetation—especially existing and mature trees—and provide for the replacement of trees.

Action Strategy 3: Continue to support and implement the Agricultural and Forestal District program to preserve farmland and woodland areas in the County.

Action Strategy 4: Continue the progress toward establishing a Countywide greenway and path system through the voluntary donation of land and easements from interested property owners, as a means of environmental protection.

Action Strategy 5: Coordinate with the Virginia Department of Forestry to implement an urban forestry program.

Action Strategy 6: Conduct a professional study to identify the County's mature hardwood forests (such as oak/hickory) and the location of those forests deserving special protection.

Action Strategy 7: Consider acquisition of select sites for public parks/forests and/or encourage the dedication of such sites by private property owners.

EN-POLICY 12: Identify, manage, and protect all ecological communities and wildlife as well as endangered and threatened species, and species of special concern, as identified in official Federal and State lists.

Action Strategy 4: To protect the biological diversity, processes, and function of natural habitats, identify a network of preservation corridors or large woodland areas to be incorporated into an overall habitat protection network.

Action Strategy 5: Investigate the benefits of establishing a private conservancy fund for the purpose of purchasing privately held lands for preservation purposes and seeking perpetual conservation easements to preserve open space.

Comprehensive Plan - Long-Range Land Use

Land Use Objective 1: Confine urban, suburban and semi-rural development – and densities appropriate to that development, as described in this Long-Range Land Use Plan – to the Development Area, as reflected by the Long Range Land Use Map.

Land Use Objective 5: Protect environmentally sensitive land and maintain open space.

Land Use Objective 6: Encourage in appropriate locations within the Development Area, the development of livable, planned communities that promote a variety of residential opportunities, and provide public facilities, goods and services, open space, recreational opportunities, and related employment at a neighborhood scale.

Land Use Objective 10: Maintain and improve the quality of life for all County residents by preserving open space, protecting valuable environmental resources, and encouraging growth in appropriate areas and locations.

Action Strategy 2: Ensure that the primary function of the Rural Area as reflected by the Long Range Land Use Map is to maintain open space, protect native habitats, allow for large-lot residential development, allow for agricultural activities, and provide potential sites for community facilities.

Action Strategy 17: Allow cluster housing and the use of planned districts and the planned unit development concept in the Development Area. Open space created as part of these clusters should be preserved as permanent open space, through creation and dedication of a perpetual conservation easement. The purpose of both cluster development and planned district/planned unit development is to:

- Promote the efficient use of land
- Preserve slopes and woodlands
- Better manage storm water runoff and water quality
- Reduce the lengths of streets, utility lines, and storm water piping
- Provide design flexibility
- Promote the cost-effective provision of public services necessary to support the development

Action Strategy 20: Create a zoning district for environment resources (ER).

Comprehensive Plan – Parks And Open Space

The intent of the Parks and Open Space Plan is to provide a county-wide system of well-maintained parks, park and recreation facilities, and public open space that meet a variety of the active and passive recreational needs of County residents of all ages.

The Parks and Open Space Plan contains current park needs by park type and projected park land needs. In addition, the Plan contains a parks and open space map that shows existing parks, schools, and Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Areas.

The Parks and Open Space Plan is intended to delineate already dedicated or proposed public walking, biking, hiking, and horse riding trails adjacent to public rights-of-way and already dedicated or donated greenways or linear corridors of open space that connect and protect natural, recreational, and cultural resources in the County. These delineations, however, are not currently mapped and shown as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Additions to the Parks and Open Space Plan Map may take place on public property, within the public right-of-way, or on private property through voluntary donations by citizens and through negotiated proffers from land owners and/or the development community, as development occurs. Private property owners are not obligated to participate in the trails and greenways program. Private property immediately adjacent to the proposed trail or greenway shall not be affected by that trail or greenway without consent by the owner of that property.

REC POLICY 1: Ensure the consistency and coordination of interagency planning techniques to provide for an appropriate quantity, variety, and quality of park sites and facilities.

Action Strategy 3: Create and maintain an inventory of existing private sector and other jurisdictional parkland and facilities for use in future park analysis.

Action Strategy 5: Assist the Park Authority in soliciting funding from appropriate governmental agencies for the purpose of acquisition, development, renovation, and maintenance of County parks, trails, open space and recreational sites and facilities.

Action Strategy 7: Coordinate interagency planning efforts to implement a Countywide comprehensive trails and greenways system.

REC POLICY 2: Acquire and maintain park acreage and facility development at a rate consistent with population growth and in accordance with adopted standards, through the development process and other means, as appropriate.

Action Strategy 5: Encourage the use of conservation easements or restrictive covenants by private landowners to protect and preserve historic sites and environmentally sensitive areas.

Action Strategy 6: Encourage the use of public/private partnerships for the purpose of acquiring, constructing and/or operating parks and park facilities.

REC POLICY 4: Promote and encourage the establishment of a Countywide system of biking, hiking and horse trails and greenways, consistent with the Park Authority's Parks and Open Space and Trails Plan.

Action Strategy 1: Promote the implementation of the Park Authority trails and greenways system with the assistance of citizen groups, the development community, and the Virginia Department of Transportation in order to link public property and the County's natural/historic/recreational resources, neighborhoods, employment centers, transit facilities, and other public facilities.

Action Strategy 2: Include in planning for the trails and greenways system and working with the various public and private groups assisting the Park Authority in implementing that system of floodways, existing utility and conservation easements, abandoned railroad beds, and other appropriate sites as potential trail or greenway segments.

Action Strategy 3: Create designated stream valley (linear) parks to be incorporated into the Countywide trails and greenways system, to be provided through voluntary contributions by landowners or through Park Authority purchase of the land within the proposed stream valley park.

Action Strategy 4: Coordinate efforts between the Park Authority and the County to establish standards and guidelines for the dedication of land and the acquisition of easements from private property owners for the Countywide trails and greenways system.

Action Strategy 5: Encourage the use of tax benefits as an incentive for property owners to provide trails and greenways and/or restrictive and conservation easements to promote connections between existing and planned trails and greenways where such facilities are identified on the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map.

Action Strategy 7: Cooperate with local, state, regional, and federal planning agencies to seek private donations of land or other voluntary means and conveyance of public property to develop the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail corridor along Prince William County's eastern boundary as a segment of a regional trails and greenways network.

Action Strategy 8: Provide, through private donations of land or other voluntary means and conveyance of public property, trails and greenways for passive recreational purposes along the Occoquan Reservoir and Lake Manassas, to provide for passive recreation needs, with the added benefit of protecting the public drinking water supply.

Action Strategy 9: Assure the construction of Class I and Class II bicycle trails within the public right-of-way as development occurs and/or as roadways are upgraded. Encourage linkages of these trails with established trails in accordance with the Transportation Plan

Action Strategy 10: Promote cooperation with surrounding jurisdictions and regional planning authorities, to provide an inter-jurisdictional trails and greenways system through the cooperation and participation of the private and public sectors.

Action Strategy 11: Work with local citizens and private organizations with an interest in trails and greenways, to assist in encouraging private participation in and maintenance of the trails and greenways system.

Action Strategy 12: Consider incorporating scenic vistas and natural viewsheds—identified through the Environment Plan—into the trails and greenways system, as appropriate.

Action Strategy 13: Encourage developers to collocate—where appropriate—trails and greenways within sewer line easements, utility corridors, utility easements, and buffers alongside stream valleys and roads, to minimize land acquisition and disruption of the natural environment.

Action Strategy 14: Encourage the construction and maintenance of trails and greenways within private developments that feed into the Countywide trails and greenways system.

Action Strategy 15: Consider conveying to the Park Authority any unused rights-of-way or other unused, abandoned County land.

Comprehensive Plan – Transportation Plan

The Transportation Plan is designed to promote the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the County and surrounding jurisdictions. The Plan utilizes a multi-modal approach to the transportation network – roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

The Plan contains roadway functional classifications and composition guidelines (Table 1) that include bicycle and pedestrian trails, a Thoroughfare Plan Summary (Table 2) that

lists the trail class (I, II or III) and location for each roadway in the Plan, and several non-motorized action strategies as follows:

Non-Motorized Action Strategy N1.1: Encourage the development of a safe and continuous system of sidewalks, bike lanes, and/or trails within the rights-of-way of new and existing parkways, arterials, collector roads, and residential streets.

Non-Motorized Action Strategy N2.1: Develop a detailed sidewalk/bicycle trail/lane plan that will demonstrate how to expand and improve—in an affordable manner—the use and safety of sidewalks and trails within the right-of-way adjacent to residential, employment, retail, and recreational areas.

Non-Motorized Action Strategy N6.1: Research and apply for all available state and federal assistance in developing a safe and effective bicycle and pedestrian transportation network.

Non-Motorized Action Strategy N6.2: Encourage maintenance of neighborhood trails by homeowner associations.

Non-Motorized Action Strategy N7.1: Encourage extension of the Prince William County Park Authority Trails Plan to effectively connect with Countywide trails.

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning Ordinance – Rural Cluster Development

Rural cluster developments are permitted in the Rural Area, as designated on the Comprehensive Plan, on land in the A-1, agricultural zoning district.

Within rural cluster developments, the permitted uses are one (1) family dwellings, home occupations, home employment uses, and agricultural uses and their accessory uses, and buildings and structures, as permitted in the A-1 agricultural zoning district and as determined under the homeowners' association covenants.

If the property contains a designated cultural resource, that resource may be developed, as part of the rural cluster development, in accordance with the use(s) outlined for it in the Cultural Resources Plan chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

A rural cluster development is designed so as to foster the preservation of open space or existing farmland; to protect the distinct visual quality and the natural landscape, topographic, and natural resource features of the rural area; to provide landowners in the rural area an alternative use of their property; and to uphold the general intent of the A-1, agricultural zoning district.

A minimum rural cluster development area of one hundred (100) acres is required. Additions to existing rural cluster developments may be less than one hundred (100) acres.

The minimum size of lots for residential use shall be three (3) acres and the maximum size of lots for residential use shall be five (5) acres; provided, however, that the total number of units within a rural cluster development shall not exceed one dwelling unit for each ten (10) acres of land.

Open space required in a rural cluster development is at least fifty (50) percent of the gross acreage of the property.

Zoning Ordinance – Semi-Rural Cluster Development

Semi-rural cluster development of one-family dwellings is allowed in the SR-5, SR-3 and SR-1 residential districts. The semi-rural cluster developments are located within an area designated in the Comprehensive Plan for suburban residential purposes and are designed so as to protect natural vegetation and the topographic features of the site and concentrate construction so as to minimize the intrusion of manmade improvements upon the surrounding area.

No minimum development area is required for semi-rural cluster lots served by public water and sewerage facilities. A minimum of twenty-five (25) acres for lots on well and septic is required unless the development area is part of and fully integrated into a larger cluster or planned residential project.

Additions less than the minimum development area required may be made to existing semi-rural cluster developments provided all other design criteria of these provisions are met, the proposed addition is fully integrated into and compatible with the project to which it is to be added, and the existing homeowners' association or other appropriate parties agree in writing to accept the new area.

Notwithstanding the minimum lot size permitted for a semi-rural cluster development, the total number of units permitted cannot exceed that allowed in the regulations for the underlying zoning district.

A minimum of thirty-five (35) percent of the gross acreage is required to be designated as open space for semi-rural cluster developments. Such open space may be conveyed to a homeowners' association, the Park Authority, or to an authorized public or private grantee, agreeing, in writing, to accept the land into an approved open space or preservation program.

Absent approval by the Planning Director, no portion of any land dedicated for a public school site, library site, or commuter parking facility may be counted as part of the required open space in the semi-rural cluster development. Public parkland for passive recreational purposes beyond that otherwise required for such project, may be counted as

part of the required open space, excluding land improved by structures or other impervious surfaces. All property dedicated for public uses not qualifying as open space (excluding street right-of-way) shall be deducted from the gross acreage of the project for calculation of open space required by subsection 5. above.

Unless approved as part of a plan to establish significant vegetation, land disturbance in the designated open space shall be limited to the minimum necessary to permit extension of required utilities, construct required street crossings or connections, install drainage or other storm water management facilities, or create lakes or ponds as approved by the Director of Public Works. Disturbed areas outside of utility easements shall be replanted in accordance with an approved landscaping plan and shall thereafter remain undisturbed, except for required maintenance.

The minimum residential lot size for semi-rural cluster developments served by public water and sewer is twenty thousand (20,000) square feet. The minimum residential lot size for semi-rural cluster developments not served by public water and sewer is one (1) acre in the SR-5, SR-3 and SR-1 districts. Minimum lot sizes are determined excluding slopes fifteen (15) percent and greater adjacent to perennial streams, 100-year floodplain, and Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Area.

Zoning Ordinance – Suburban Cluster Development

Cluster development of one-family dwellings is permitted in the R-2 and R-4 residential districts. A suburban cluster development is designed so as to protect natural vegetation and the topographic features of the site and concentrate construction so as to minimize the intrusion of manmade improvements upon the surrounding area.

No minimum development area is required for a cluster development. The cluster development may be a part of a larger planned residential or mixed use project approved in one preliminary subdivision or site plan, in which case the cluster development area is specifically set forth on such plan. Additions may be made to existing cluster developments provided that all other design criteria of the Zoning Ordinance are met, and the existing homeowners association agrees in writing to accept the new area as part of its association.

A minimum of thirty (30) percent of the gross acreage of the property is required to be designated as open space. Open space area is required to be equitably and logically distributed throughout the development or concentrated in environmentally sensitive areas, particularly on slopes adjacent to perennial streams.

Land within a major utility easement or right-of-way for existing above-ground utilities cannot represent more than ten (10) percent of the area needed to satisfy the open space requirement, nor be counted as any part of a required dedicated open space area. For the purpose of this requirement, a major utility easement or right-of-way for existing above-ground utilities shall be one having a width of twenty-five (25) feet or greater and used to

support above-ground structures, existing at the time of final subdivision approval, that are associated with a public utility.

A 50-foot wide perimeter landscaped buffer area surrounding the edge of suburban cluster developments is required and it must be planted in accordance with section 800 of the Design and Construction Standards Manual. When these buffer areas contain mature trees and other vegetation adequate to screen the development from the street, such vegetation may be used to satisfy the buffer area requirement

Buffer areas may be crossed by necessary street and utility connections, and necessary temporary disturbance of these buffer areas along the edges of such connections may be permitted, provided any disturbed areas are thereafter landscaped. Except for such temporary disturbance and the installation of landscaping, these buffer areas are to remain undisturbed. Buffer areas conveyed to a homeowners association or other authorized grantee accepting the buffer area into its approved open space program may be counted as a part of the required open space.

Adequate access to and within the development for pedestrian traffic including common walkways to open space areas is required.

No portion of any residential lot can be platted in the Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Area, a non-tidal wetland area, one hundred (100) year floodplain, perimeter buffers, major utility easement or right-of-way for existing above-ground utilities, or on slopes greater than 15 percent adjacent to a perennial stream. Streets cannot be located in any wetland area (tidal or upland) or in any one hundred (100) year floodplain except for necessary crossings or access points.

Zoning Ordinance – Planned Districts

The Planned Development District is a flexible land development zoning category intended to promote efficient use of land, allow a compatible mix of land uses on a single parcel or group of parcels, obtain design flexibility not otherwise possible, ensure efficient traffic circulation and the preservation of open space and sensitive environmental and historic features, ensure compatibility of the development with surrounding properties and the public utilities and services necessary to the development and to implement the purposes of zoning set forth in section 15.2-2283, VA Code Ann.

Planned development districts providing principally for nonresidential uses are categorized as mixed use (PMD) or business (PBD). Planned development districts providing principally for residential uses are established as planned mixed residential (PMR). A town center may be established in any planned development district permitting residential uses. The RPC district, while functioning as a Planned Development District is included in the term “Planned Development District” due to structural differences in its creation and regulatory framework.

Specific Objectives: The specific objectives of the planned development districts are:

- (a) To facilitate the efficient use of land through a more economical arrangement of buildings, circulation systems, land use and utilities;
- (b) To preserve the existing sensitive environmental areas to utilize such features in a harmonious fashion, and to promote environmentally sustainable development patterns;
- (c) To provide for more usable and suitably located recreation facilities and other public common facilities that would not otherwise be provided using conventional land development controls; and
- (d) To combine and coordinate architectural styles, building forms and building relationships within the planned development.

Planned development districts are generally intended to be consistent with and implement the intent, goals, objectives, policies and action strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. The PMR, Planned Mixed Residential District is intended to implement the suburban residential low, suburban residential medium, suburban residential high and community employment center land use classifications of the Comprehensive Plan. The PMD, Planned Mixed Use District is intended to implement the community employment center and regional employment center land use classifications of the Comprehensive Plan. The PBD, Planned Business District is intended to implement the office, flexible use employment center, and regional employment center land use classifications of the Comprehensive Plan.

A Master Zoning Plan is required which demonstrates how the planned development meets the specific objectives listed above.

Zoning Ordinance – Residential Planned Districts

The Planned Mixed Residential (PMR) district is intended to implement the general purpose, intent, goals, objectives, policies, and action strategies of the comprehensive plan by promoting residential development consistent with the suburban residential low, suburban residential medium, suburban residential high, and community employment center land use classifications of the Comprehensive Plan in planned developments. The PMR district is designed to permit and encourage the establishment of communities of varied housing types in planned developments of ten (10) or more contiguous acres, incorporating appropriate public, community and supportive commercial and employment services. This district is intended to provide flexibility, and the opportunity for specialized application of planning principles.

Within the PMR development, all public services and utilities, parks, open spaces, transportation network, and housing types are to be planned and located in such mix and fashion as to harmonize with natural features of the property, the overall planned development and surrounding uses.

The PMR Master Zoning Plan consists of drawings and text which show the proposed general layout, transportation network, community open space and parks, general location and extent of proposed housing types, commercial, neighborhood commercial, employment and other uses. The Master Zoning Plan depicts the major road network, utility network, general storm drainage plan and community and public facilities.

Accessory uses are permitted such as community operated parks, clubhouses, swimming pools, racquet ball and tennis courts, health and fitness facilities, and other recreational or civic facilities for the exclusive use of the residents of the development and their guests.

Zoning Ordinance – Town Center

Town centers are established by Special Use Permit in any PMD or PMR zoning district. Town centers are intended to implement the regional employment center and community employment center land use classifications of the Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose of town centers is to promote the development of a pedestrian-oriented and fully-integrated mixed use community where public facilities and services can be efficiently provided and where environmental characteristics are sensitively considered. These town center provisions are created in the urban convention prevalent in the United States from colonial times to the 1940's.

The following elements characterize town centers:

1. A community with clearly defined built limits.
2. Consists of land bays containing mixed uses that comprise a substantial amount of land area within the town center.

3. Pedestrian-oriented circulation system with a continuity of streets, sidewalks, and blocks so all parts of the community are easily accessible by pedestrians, motor vehicles and bicycles.
4. Close proximity of uses such that one may live, shop, recreate and work generally within a quarter of a mile and accessible by pedestrians.
5. A variety of housing types through land use designations.
6. Civic buildings and parks, plazas, squares, and open space or recreational uses that act as focal points centrally located for the community and provide places of assembly or services for residents.
7. Consistent coordination and compatible architectural character and urban design concepts.
8. Densities that promote a compact and efficient use of land.

Zoning Ordinance – Planned Mixed Use District

The planned development - mixed use district (PMD) is intended to encourage and accommodate a mix of commercial, office, and residential development with flexibility of design necessary to implement the economic development goals and objectives as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. More specifically, it is intended to implement the community employment center and regional employment center land use classifications of the Comprehensive Plan. The PMD provides a single zoning district which promotes an integrated business community within which businesses and residences are conveniently linked. The PMD should be established in areas served by a freeway or interstate highway or serviced by a minor arterial or greater designation roadway. The objectives of the PMD are:

1. To promote a comprehensively planned business community that may include commercial services and a residential component.
2. To encourage coordination of “campus-like” office park and employment centers with residential areas, linked by pedestrian walkways through open space.
3. To reduce vehicular traffic by promoting employment and housing opportunities in close proximity to one another.

Zoning Ordinance – Open Space Requirements

Zoning District	% Open Space Requirement for Site Area
A-1 – 10-acre lots	None
A-1 Cluster - 3 to 5-acre lots	50%
SR-5 – 5-acre lots	None
SR-5 Cluster – 20,000 sq. ft to 1-acre lots	35%
SR-3 – 3-acre lots	None
SR-3 Cluster - 20,000 sq. ft to 1-acre lots	35%
SR-1 – One acre lots	None
SR-1 Cluster - 20,000 sq. ft to 1-acre lots	35%
R-2 – 20,000 sq. ft. lots	None
R-2 Cluster – 15,000 sq. ft. lots	30%
R-4 – 10,000 sq. ft. lots	None
R-4 Cluster – 7,500 sq. ft. lots	30%
R-6 – 6,000 sq. ft. lots or less	30%
R-16 – Multi-family	25%
R-30 – Multi-family	25%
RU- Mid to Hi-rise multi-family	25 to 40% depending on unit type
PMR	30%
B-1	15%
B-2	20%
B-3	20%
O(L)	20%
O(M)	20%
O(H)	20%
O(F)	20%
M-2	20%
M-1	15%
M/T	15%
PBD	20%
PMD	20%

Zoning Ordinance – Historic Overlay District

Historic overlay districts are created for the purpose of imposing special requirements in addition to the requirements pertaining to the underlying zoning in designated areas of the County, in order to protect and perpetuate those areas or structures which have been designated as being of significant historic, architectural or cultural interest.

The Board of County Supervisors may create historical overlay districts provided such districts contain buildings or places in which historic events occurred or having special public value because of notable architectural or other features relating to the cultural or artistic heritage of the community, of such significance to warrant conservation and

preservation. Regulations imposed in such districts are intended to protect against destruction of or encroachment upon such historic resources, to encourage uses which will continue to preserve them, and to prevent the creation of adverse environmental influences.

In order to fully protect historic resources and areas, the boundaries of an historic overlay district may include adjoining land closely related to and bearing upon the character of the historic resource. Individual owner consent for inclusion in the zoning district is not required.

Each such district shall meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Is closely associated with one or more persons, events, activities, or institutions that have made a significant contribution to local, regional or national history; or
- Contains buildings or structures which the exterior design or features of which exemplify the distinctive characteristics of one or more historic types, periods or methods of construction, or which represent the work of an acknowledged master or masters; or
- Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to local, regional or national history; or
- Possesses an identifiable character representative of the architectural and cultural heritage of Prince William County; or
- Contains a registered landmark, building or structure included on the National Register of Historic Places or the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Zoning Ordinance – Adaptive Reuse Of Historic Buildings

Section 32-300.07 of the Zoning Ordinance was amended on June 7, 2005 by the Board of County Supervisors to allow additional uses in the Agricultural District for historic buildings. This new ordinance should result in more preservation and use of historic buildings and properties in the Agricultural District, particularly in the Rural Area of the County.

Zoning Ordinance – Highway Corridor Overlay Districts

Pursuant to State Code Sections 15.2-2200, 15.2283, and 15.2284, Prince William County has highway corridor overlay districts on various roads. The districts overlay existing zoning and provide for greater building and parking lot setbacks and landscaped buffer areas along the edge of a roadway than required with the underlying zoning. Trails are allowed in the buffer areas and opportunity may exist for using these buffer areas for trails.

Strategic Plan

The Prince William County Strategic Plan is a four-year document designed to help the County achieve its long-term vision. As such, it provides crucial policy guidance for service delivery and resource allocation decisions during the Board of County Supervisor's four-year term. The Prince William County Strategic Plan defines:

1. The mission statement for County government;
2. Strategic goals for the County;
3. Community outcomes which measure success in achieving the strategic goals; and
4. Strategies and objectives to achieve the goals.

The Prince William County Strategic Plan represents many hundreds of hours of work from citizens, the Board of County Supervisors and County staff. All are dedicated to creating the best possible future for our County. Working together, the community has created a Plan that will take Prince William into the next century and beyond.

Strategic planning leads to focused achievement of the community's vision because it:

1. Concentrates on a limited number of strategic goals.
2. Explicitly considers resource availability.
3. Assesses internal strengths and weaknesses.
4. Considers major events and changes occurring outside the jurisdiction.
5. Explores different alternatives for achieving strategic goals.
6. Is action oriented with an emphasis on achieving practical outcomes.

The current Strategic Plan was adopted in October 2004 and will guide the County through 2008. A major change between the last Strategic Plan and the 2004-2008 Strategic Plan is the addition of the Community Development Goal, increasing the number of strategic goal areas from five to six.

Community Development Strategic Goal: Prince William County will develop and maintain a well-planned, attractive and sustainable community where citizens enjoy a high quality of life and positive reward for their investment. We are a community where

residents, businesses and visitors appreciate the County's historic, cultural, natural and recreational resources.

Community Outcomes:

- Increase citizen satisfaction with their quality of life, as measured by the Citizen Survey.
- Increase satisfaction with the County's efforts with planning and land use.
- Increase citizen satisfaction with County efforts in historic preservation.

Strategy 3: New residential development will provide necessary community facilities and pay for infrastructure impacts - "growth pays for growth".

Objectives:

1. New re-zonings will provide proffers consistent with Board proffer guidelines for transportation, libraries, schools, parks and recreation, and fire and rescue.
2. Utilize the Capital Improvement Plan to construct capital facilities as needed to support development, with identified proffers included to support the cost.

Strategy 4: Balance the provision of infrastructure with the community's willingness to pay.

Objectives:

2. Continue to utilize bond referenda as a mechanism to finance projects within the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Strategy 10: Identify and protect cultural/historical resources that are important for documenting or demonstrating the pre-history or history of the County.

Objectives:

1. Explore the identification of additional historic overlay districts.
3. Create and maintain a database of prehistoric and historic features including cemeteries, archeological sites and historically significant architecture.
6. Explore the establishment of additional National Register districts or properties.

Strategy 11: Preserve, rehabilitate, and program County-owned historic sites for public use.

Objective 1: Complete the restoration and public facility improvements at County owned historic sites, including but not limited to:

- Rippon Lodge
- Brentsville Courthouse
- Ben Lomond
- Bushy Park
- Barnes House
- Bennett School

Objective 5. Explore acquisition and all alternative means to preserve significant threatened County historic sites.

Strategy 12: Link historic properties with tourism, new development, and re-development.

Objective 2: Develop appropriate historic themes and integrate them into County sponsored projects.

Strategy 13: Strengthen environmental education, information, and community programs.

Objective 4: Encourage more participation in “adopt a stream” and “adopt a spot” programs.

Objective 5: Expand partnerships with community groups, homeowners associations and volunteers for riparian restoration.

Strategy 14: Enhance County environmental protection efforts.

Objective 1: Develop a stream protection policy.

Objective 3: Explore proactive identification and monitoring of Resource Protection Areas.

Objective 7: Develop Watershed Management Plans for key watersheds.

Strategy 15: Optimize the use of existing recreational and cultural resources.

Objective1: Prioritize the maintenance and safety of existing recreational facilities prior to constructing new facilities.

Objective2: Encourage greater usage of County schools and facilities for community recreational use.

Strategy 16: Create the opportunity for citizens to experience art, culture and recreation in their daily lives.

Objective 3: Inventory existing private and public recreational facilities to determine adequacy and future needs based on population, demographics, and usage trends.

Objective 5: Advance the McCoart Plaza as a venue for community events.

Objective 6: Explore a Comprehensive Plan amendment to require new development to provide a community gathering place such as open space, park land or picnic areas.

Objective 7. Develop an open space plan for the County.

Park Authority Comprehensive Plan 2000-2025

The Park Authority Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide an overview of the Park Authority's long-range acreage and facility needs and to identify priorities for future planning efforts. This is accomplished through a combined evaluation of existing and planned facilities, community needs, and implementation strategies. This plan serves as a guide for the Park Authority's planning, design, and construction efforts over the next several years. Needs projections have been carried out to the year 2025 to be consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan states the Park Authority does not currently have any standards for the amount of open space/natural areas that should be preserved in relation to the amount of active recreational lands that are provided. In previous Comprehensive Plans, the Park Authority categorized the number of active and passive areas available at each of its park sites, but these values did not truly quantify how much of the site was in fact, open space. The Comprehensive Plan states that with the current rate of growth, the County is rapidly losing its open space (i.e., "green infrastructure") to residential and commercial development. Since the Park Authority is the agency that has historically been designated as the steward of the County's open space areas, it is therefore becoming increasingly important for the County and the Park Authority to develop policies regarding the protection of the County's green infrastructure.

This Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Park Authority develop a Parks and Open Space Master Plan for the County. This plan was recommended to be developed in conjunction with the Planning Office, and should set forth a plan for the acquisition and preservation of the environmentally sensitive areas, historic/cultural resource areas, or lands suitable for parks and recreation, which in turn, are often part of a green infrastructure system. Without a plan of this type, the Park Authority will likely continue to lose out on opportunities to acquire additional park, recreation, and open space areas,

and in turn, will continue to fall short of its 100 percent level of service standards for acreage and facilities needs. Further, without a plan of this type, the County does not have any means of identifying how it will protect and/or promote the green infrastructure of the County.

This Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Park Authority should consider developing a per capita standard for open space and/or passive park acreage. This would enable the Park Authority to assist the County in preserving more of its green infrastructure and, in turn, could expand the services of the Park Authority to include nature centers and/or nature education programs. To help preserve open space in the County, the Park Authority may also want to develop a development hierarchy for its undeveloped sites. With additional review, there could be properties that would be more beneficial to the County's green infrastructure system if left as undeveloped or primarily passive parks.

The Park Authority's deficit in nature/greenway trails is projected to be more than 100 miles. This deficit is due to the fact that the Park Authority has not historically been involved in the planning and construction of greenway trails. The Park Authority adopted a Greenway and Trails Master Plan in 1993 and began taking responsibility for creating a greenway and trails network throughout the County. The greenway trails for which the Park Authority has been responsible for obtaining through development proffers or deeded easements include portions of trails planned along Catharpin Creek, Little Bull Run, Broad Run, Rocky Branch, and Neabsco Creek.

The Park Authority currently has only 8 miles of nature trails. The longest trail is 4.5 miles long, located at Locust Shade Park. The Park Authority has determined that it needs to assess where the demand for these facilities is, and where additional trails should be constructed. The Park Authority also needs to develop an equestrian trail network, primarily in the western and northern portions of the County.

The Park Authority and the Planning Office are working with various federal and state agencies and developers to develop the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. The establishment of this trail was enacted by Congress in 1974. This national scenic trail is intended to extend from the Laurel Highlands area in western Pennsylvania, along the length of the Potomac River, to its confluence with the Chesapeake Bay. The law enacting the trail, however, states that no lands outside the exterior boundaries of any federally-administered area are to be acquired by the federal government, thus leaving a large portion of the trail's acquisition, planning, and development efforts up to local initiatives. This trail is currently being planned in Prince William to follow the Potomac River as closely as possible, extending from the Town of Occoquan to the Town of Quantico. At completion, the trail would be 22 miles long, with a number of alternative/side routes connecting to the County's natural, cultural, and heritage resources such as Belmont Bay Science Museum, Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Rippon Lodge, the Julie Metz Wetland, Prince William Forest Park, and the Marine Corps Heritage Center.

The portion of the Potomac Heritage Trail between the Belmont Bay development and Leesylvania State Park is currently part of the County's fiscal year 2006-2011 Capital Improvements Program. The portion of the trail between I-95 and the Belmont Bay development is currently being planned with the Potomac Communities initiatives and projects, including the North Woodbridge Master Plan, the Route 1/Route 123 bridge, and an IDI Corporation proposal for high rise apartments along the Occoquan River.

If all of the trails corridors cited above are part of the trails and greenways system by 2014, the Park Authority's greenway trail deficit would be reduced by more than 38 miles. The Park Authority's Greenways and Trails Master Plan needs to be updated and included in the County's Comprehensive Plan to show the current trail planning efforts and to establish a current approved trails plan.

Park Acquisition Policies

The Park Authority is guided by the following guidelines and policies for the planning, acquisition and development of public parkland and open space.

Per the Park Authority's Comprehensive Plan, the Park Authority plans for a minimum of 13.8 acres of parkland per every 1,000 in population. The Park Authority plans for a mix of Neighborhood, Community, Regional and Special Use parks at a minimum of 1, 4, 6 and 2.8 acres per every 1,000 in population, respectively. In addition to these park types, the Park Authority may also acquire rights to use properties through leases. Leased park sites are generally provided in locations where a specific need has been identified and a property has been made available by way of a lease option with the property owner.

The Park Authority pursues parkland acquisition through development proffers, purchase, lease, donations, and public/private partnerships. The County's Design and Construction Standards Manual identifies the policies relevant to the dedication of property for Park Authority use. Pursuant to the DCSM and the Park Authority's Articles of Incorporation, all properties dedicated for Park Authority use are to be deeded to the Prince William County Board of County Supervisors. These properties are then conveyed to the Park Authority at our request. Properties dedicated for Park Authority use are generally to be no less than five (5) acres in size, in a contiguous parcel, with a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of that acreage being developable. The County's DCSM further identifies that lands deeded for park purposes must be acknowledged by the Park Authority as acceptable for County park and recreation use. This is further acknowledged in the Parks and Open Space section of the County's Comprehensive Plan where it states that developers may dedicate a park site or park sites, dedicate park facilities, provide adequate recreation sites or facilities on-site to address the identified shortfall, or provide funding for parks and park facilities, or a combination of one or more of these alternative mitigation measures, so long as that mitigation is acceptable to the Park Authority.

With regard to the above, the Park Authority can therefore use monetary contributions from developers to purchase parkland, or it may use one of the other funding sources identified in Section ___ of this document.

Facilities Programming

The facilities program for Park Authority sites are either determined in conjunction with the developer at the time the property is dedicated for public park use, or the site is master planned pursuant to the Park Authority's master planning process. If a site is developed prior to dedication to the Park Authority, the Park Authority will generally work with the developer to identify the best uses for that parcel in conjunction with the Park Authority's Comprehensive Plan, Needs Assessment, and/or general public needs in the vicinity of the property. If a site is dedicated to the Park Authority as undeveloped property, the Park Authority pursues a facilities program or development plan through its master planning process. This process takes into consideration the needs and desires of the sites users, the needs that are identified in the Park Authority's Comprehensive Plan, and the needs established in the Park Authority's Needs Assessment, in conjunction with any site constraints that may prohibit the development of certain uses. The master plan for any site is subject to a public hearing and review by the citizens of the County before adoption by the Park Authority Board.

The Park Authority utilizes the facilities documentation within the Park Authority Inventory Guide and Comprehensive Plan to assist in deciding which facilities need to be built in order of highest priority.

Agricultural And Forestal Districts

Prince William currently 3 agricultural and forestall districts with a total of 3,400 acres in these districts. Currently there are three cases requesting premature removal from the district to allow residential subdivisions. One property (Effingham) withdrew from the program last year and is currently subdivided for 10-acre lots in one portion of the property and 3-acre cluster lots in another portion of the property.

Historic Preservation Foundation Revolving Fund

A Revolving Fund has many applications in the field of heritage preservation. Monies from such a fund could be put to myriad uses such as the acquisition and rehabilitation of historic structures. The properties are then marketed to buyers who agree to preserve and maintain the structures. Protective covenants are attached to the deeds to ensure that the historic integrity of each property is retained and purchasers are required to sign rehabilitation agreements based on the work to be performed on the structure. Any proceeds from the sale of the properties are returned to the fund, thereby 'revolving' the use of the initial capital.

The Prince William Historic Preservation Foundation is in the process of establishing such a fund.

Land Use Assessment Program

The Land Use Assessment Program provides for the partial deferral of taxes on real estate that qualifies for agricultural, horticultural, forestry and/or open space uses. Assessed values under the program are generally less than those estimated at fair market value. The purpose of the program is to further the public interest by encouraging the preservation of land and the conservation of the County's natural resources.

The Prince William qualifying criteria for the land use assessment program is as follows:

- **Agricultural:** When devoted to the bona fide production for sale of plants and animals useful to man under uniform standards prescribed the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services or when devoted to and meeting the requirements and qualifications for payments or other compensation pursuant to a soil conservation program under an agreement with an agency of the federal government. Pleasure horses do not qualify. A minimum of 5 acres is required.
- **Horticultural:** When devoted to the bona fide production for sale of fruits of all kinds, including grapes, nuts and berries; vegetables; nursery and floral products under uniform standards prescribed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services or when devoted to and meeting the requirements and qualifications for payments or other compensation pursuant to a soil conservation program under and agreement with an agency of the federal government. A minimum of 5 acres is required.
- **Forestry:** When devoted to tree growth in such quantity and so spaced and maintained as to constitute a forest area under standards prescribed by the State Forester. The owner shall certify that the real estate is being used in a planned program of timed-management and soil conservation practices. Certification of intent by the owner can be shown by submitting a signed commitment to maintain and protect forestland by documenting land-use objectives to include methods of resource management and soil and water protection or by submitting a plan prepared by a professional forester. A minimum of 20 acres is required.
- **Open Space:** When so used as to be provided or preserved for park or recreational purposes, conservation of land or other natural resources, floodways, historic or scenic purposes, or assisting in the shaping of the character, direction, and timing of community development under uniform standards prescribed by the Director of the Conservation and Recreation. A minimum of 20 acres is required..

In the event taxes become delinquent on the property, the land will be removed from the use value assessment program. If there is a change in use or subdivision, the owner must

report the change to the Real Estate Assessments Office. If the land is converted to a non-qualifying use, is rezoned, or subdivided, that land may be subject to additional taxes and interest.

Water Quality Conservation Areas And Easements

Site and subdivision plans have been submitted over the past few years with conservation areas used to meet water quality requirements. The County's policy has been to allow these open space areas to be established not as easements, but as conservation areas that satisfy "best management practices" requirements. These conservation areas are part of a property owners' association for maintenance responsibility.

Historic Preservation Easements

Prince William currently has 6 historic easements granted to the Commonwealth (Bel Air, Ben Lomond, Brentsville Courthouse, Old Manassas Courthouse, Pilgrim's Rest, and Rippon Lodge).

Historic Property Acquisitions

The County currently holds 70 acres of historic properties and is projected to add another 160 acres in the next year. The FY 2006-2011 Capital Improvements Program includes \$1,507,000 for historic property acquisitions.

Watershed Study/Impaired Streams Program

The County Watershed Management Group has contracted with a consultant to evaluate the condition of selected streams in the County to support the development of specific watershed management plans. Additional stream reaches will be selected and the evaluations will be completed next year.

The data from the consultant's study will be utilized as a baseline in the selection of specific candidates for stream restoration. The County and representatives of The Nature Conservancy met in August to explore the opportunity of using money from the Virginia Stream Restoration Trust Fund to pay for the selected restoration efforts.

