



Melissa S. Peacor  
County Executive

## COUNTY OF PRINCE WILLIAM

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

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# 9-A

BOARD OF COUNTY SUPERVISORS

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W.S. Wally Covington, III, Vice Chairman

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May 28, 2013

**TO:** Board of County Supervisors

**FROM:** Christopher M. Price, AICP  
Director of Planning

**THRU:** Melissa S. Peacor  
County Executive

**RE:** Rural Preservation Study

**I. Background is as follows:**

- A. Rural Area Strategies – Prince William County has a long rural preservation history. In 1964, Harland Bartholomew and Associates conducted a planning study for Prince William County and recommended a Comprehensive Plan that identified a significant portion of the County as “Large Estate and Agricultural.” The County’s 1972 Comprehensive Plan designates much of that area as Agricultural and Large Estate. The preservation goals for this area became more formalized through designation of the Rural Area in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. At that time, the area was formally described with both a map and a series of policies and strategies. In addition to the Rural Area, the County has over time adopted various rural preservation measures including policies and strategies in several Comprehensive Plan Chapters (e.g. Environment, Parks, Open Space, and Trails, Long Range Land Use, Sanitary Sewer), zoning ordinance provisions (e.g. large lot zoning, cluster ordinance), and subdivision ordinance standards. Together, these measures constitute the County’s overall rural preservation vision, goals, policies, and strategies. However, since the establishment of the Rural Area, the County has not measured the effectiveness of our rural preservation tools.
- B. Rural Area Study – On November 22, 2011, through Directive 11-120, Preserve Open Space – Rural Areas, the Board of County Supervisors directed the Planning Office to conduct research on appropriate planning tools to help in the preservation of open space in rural areas and to report its recommendations to the Board.

On March 20, 2012, the BOCS discussed the need to 1) evaluate whether the goals for the Rural Area have been effectively met through its implementation and 2) identify other rural preservation tools that may be effective and appropriate. Staff noted that this could be accomplished by conducting a policy analysis of the Rural Area to review what has happened since its implementation and a study of what other conservation tools may be available.

On May 4, 2012, in response to Directive 11-120, the Planning Office provided a summary of the rural open space preservation tools available to Virginia localities and detailed which tools were currently available within Prince William County. Staff also noted that there are likely ways to improve upon several of our existing strategies, that additional rural preservation tools are available for use by Virginia localities but are not currently authorized or utilized in Prince William County, and that these tools warrant further study.

On May 8, 2012, the Planning Office presented a 2012/2013 Work Program to the BOCS. This work program and the corresponding staff presentation noted that a variety of rural/open space preservation strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan have been adopted by the BOCS, but have not yet been initiated and that staff does not have the resource capacity to develop and implement those strategies. Given the fact that there are several rural preservation strategies authorized for use within Virginia but not currently available within Prince William County, the Board's discussion regarding the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the Rural Area in meeting its objectives, and the many uninitiated rural preservation strategies from the County's adopted Comprehensive Plan, staff recommended that the County procure consulting services to determine the effectiveness of the Rural Area and to identify additional rural preservation strategies. The BOCS approved that request (Attachment A - Res. 12-500).

C. Project Status – Project milestones to date are as follows:

- November 2012: Planning Office prepared RFP for consulting services
- January 2013: County issued RFP for consulting services
- March 2013: Consultant interviews conducted
- April 2013: Consultant selected
- May 2013: Contract awarded
- June 2013: Project initiation

D. Project Goals – The purpose of the rural preservation study is to provide an overview of the County's rural preservation policies and an evaluation of their effectiveness, identify additional rural preservation tools that may be appropriate and effective, and make recommendations regarding possible amendments to County's land use planning policies.

**II. Current Situation** is as follows:

- A. Scope of Work – The consultant has been selected and will begin work immediately. Specific work tasks are as follows:
- Evaluate effectiveness of the County’s rural preservation policies in meeting stated goals and objectives;
  - Evaluate the County’s rural preservation tools with respect to best practices;
  - Assist the County in developing clear rural preservation policy statement and measureable goals and objectives based on stakeholder input, identified needs, and best practices;
  - Prepare policy guidance framework for evaluating future Comprehensive Plan amendments and rezoning requests consistent with identified rural preservation policies, goals, and objectives;
  - Identify and recommend tools including policies, ordinances, etc. to implement rural preservation policies, goals, and objectives as appropriate;
  - Conduct stakeholder interviews and workshops and provide a written summary of the process and input;
  - Present results to the Board of County Supervisors.
- B. Project Timeline:
- June 4, 2013: Project “kick-off”
  - June – July: Preliminary Analysis and Evaluation
  - June – November: Stakeholder input opportunities (public meetings, interviews, surveys, project website, etc.) throughout project
  - October: Review and evaluate findings/Prepare draft report
  - November: Present report to BOCS

**III. Recommendation** – This report is for information only.

**Staff:** Chris Price, AICP x6857, Ray Utz, AICP x6846

**Attachment:**

- A. BOCS Resolution

## Attachment A – Resolution 12-500

**MOTION:** NOHE

May 8, 2012  
Regular Meeting  
Res. No. 12-500

**SECOND:** CADDIGAN

**RE:** TRANSFER, BUDGET AND APPROPRIATE \$60,000 FROM THE  
CONTINGENCY RESERVE ACCOUNT INTO THE PLANNING  
OFFICE CONTRACTUAL SERVICES ACCOUNT

**ACTION:** APPROVED

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Office is responsible for assisting the community in developing the County to its best potential by evaluating and implementing policies to support the goals of the community as it prospers and matures; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 22, 2011, the Board of County Supervisors issued Directive 11-120 for the Planning Office to research appropriate planning tools to help in the preservation of open space in the Rural Area; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 20, 2012, the Board of County Supervisors discussed the need to evaluate whether the goals set forth at the creation of the Rural Area have been effectively met through its implementation and to identify other rural preservation tools as appropriate; and

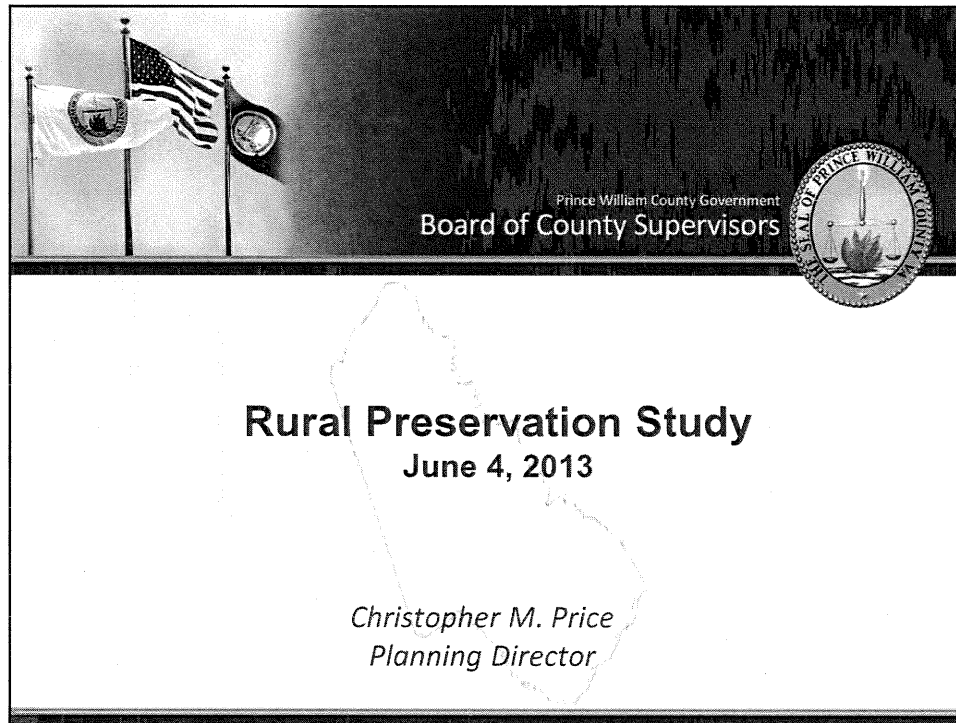
**WHEREAS**, staff has recommended an evaluation of the Rural Area and identification of additional rural preservation tools as a priority but does not currently have the capacity to accomplish these tasks;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors does hereby transfer, budget and appropriate \$60,000 from the Contingency Reserve Account into the Planning Office Contractual Services Account to procure consultant services to evaluate whether the goals set forth at the creation of the Rural Area have been effectively met through its implementation, identify and make recommendations regarding possible amendments to the County's land use planning policies for the Rural Area, develop a policy framework for evaluating land use proposals in the Rural Area, and coordinate the stakeholder input process.

**Transfer:**

**Increase Transfer From:**

<u>OCA</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Object Level 3- Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
690008	Contingency Reserve Account	5800 – Undistributed/Misc.	\$60,000



## BACKGROUND

- County has long history of rural preservation strategies dating back to 1964
- Strategies have evolved and improved over time
- Existing rural preservation strategies include mix of policies, ordinances, guidelines, and standards
- Effectiveness of strategies has not been measured

June 4, 2013

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## BACKGROUND (cont'd)

### ■ Existing Rural Preservation Strategies:

#### ◆ Comprehensive Plan

- Land Use Chapter (Rural Area established in 1998)
- Environment Chapter
- Parks, Open Space, & Trails Chapter
- Sanitary Sewer Chapter

#### ◆ Zoning Ordinance provisions

- Large Lot Zoning
- Rural Cluster

#### ◆ Subdivision Ordinance

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## PROJECT HISTORY

- November 2011: BOCS directed the Planning Office to conduct research on planning tools available for rural open space preservation

- ◆ Staff prepared a summary of tools available to Virginia localities and noted that we are using many, but not all, available strategies
- ◆ Staff recommended that further study is warranted to evaluate both existing and new tools

- March 2012: Board discussed need to evaluate whether Rural Area goals have been effectively met through its implementation and to identify other rural preservation tools as appropriate

- ◆ Staff noted that this could be accomplished by conducting a policy analysis of the Rural Area to review what has happened since its implementation and a study of what other conservation tools may be available.

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## PROJECT HISTORY (cont'd)

- May 2012: Planning Office presented Work Program to BOCS
  - ◆ Staff provided an overview of previous directives and discussions and noted several adopted rural preservation strategies from Comprehensive Plan that have not been implemented
  - ◆ Staff recommended procurement of consulting services
  - ◆ BOCS approved request (Res. 12-500)

June 4, 2013

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## PROJECT MILESTONES

- November 2012: RFP prepared
- January 2013: RFP issued
- March 2013: Consultants interviewed
- April 2013: Consultant selected
- May 2013: Contract Awarded
- June 2013: Rural Preservation Study initiated

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## RURAL PRESERVATION STUDY GOALS

- Provide an overview of the County's rural preservation policies and an evaluation of their effectiveness
- Identify additional rural preservation tools that may be appropriate and effective
- Make recommendations regarding possible amendments to County's land use planning policies

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## SCOPE OF WORK

- Evaluate effectiveness of the County's rural preservation policies in meeting stated goals and objectives
- Evaluate the County's rural preservation tools with respect to best practices
- Assist County in developing clear rural preservation policy statement and measureable goals and objectives based on stakeholder input, identified needs, and best practices

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## SCOPE OF WORK (cont'd)

- Identify and recommend tools including policies, ordinances, etc. to implement rural preservation policies, goals, and objectives as appropriate
- Prepare policy guidance framework for evaluating future Comprehensive Plan amendments and rezoning requests consistent with identified rural preservation policies, goals, and objectives
- Conduct stakeholder interviews and workshops and provide a written summary of the process and input
- Present results to the Board of County Supervisors

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## ESTIMATED PROJECT TIMELINE

- June 4, 2013: Project “kick-off”
- June – July: Data Gathering; Preliminary Analysis and Evaluation
- June – November: Stakeholder input opportunities throughout entire project
- October: Review and evaluate findings/Prepare draft report
- November: Present report to BOCS

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## STAKEHOLDER INPUT

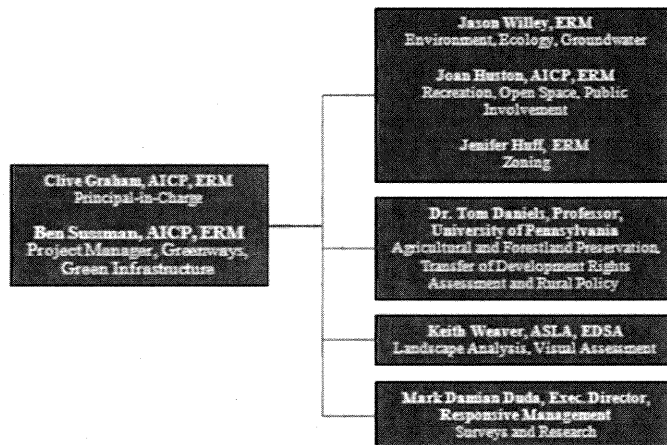
- There will be several stakeholder input opportunities throughout the project
- Opportunities will include public meetings, surveys, interviews, comment forms, etc.
- Meeting notices will be posted on website and distributed to local media
- Any proposed amendments to land use policies would require public hearings before both PC and BOCS
- Dedicated project website will be maintained at [www.pwcgov.org/planning](http://www.pwcgov.org/planning)

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## PROJECT TEAM

### The Team



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## PROJECT TEAM

### ERM – All-environmental consultancy

- Founded in 1977
- Over 4,700 staff in 39 countries
- Nearby offices in Annapolis, Washington D.C., Richmond
- Annapolis office opened in 1984 (50 staff)
- Planning, Engineering, Environmental Science, Sustainability

### Planning Services

- Planning: 90 percent public sector
- Comprehensive Plans, Master Plans
- Recreation Planning
- Growth Management
- Zoning
- Environmental & Natural Resource Planning



\*The world's leading sustainability consultancy

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