



# Clustered Residential Development

*presented by John McBride*

**Odin  
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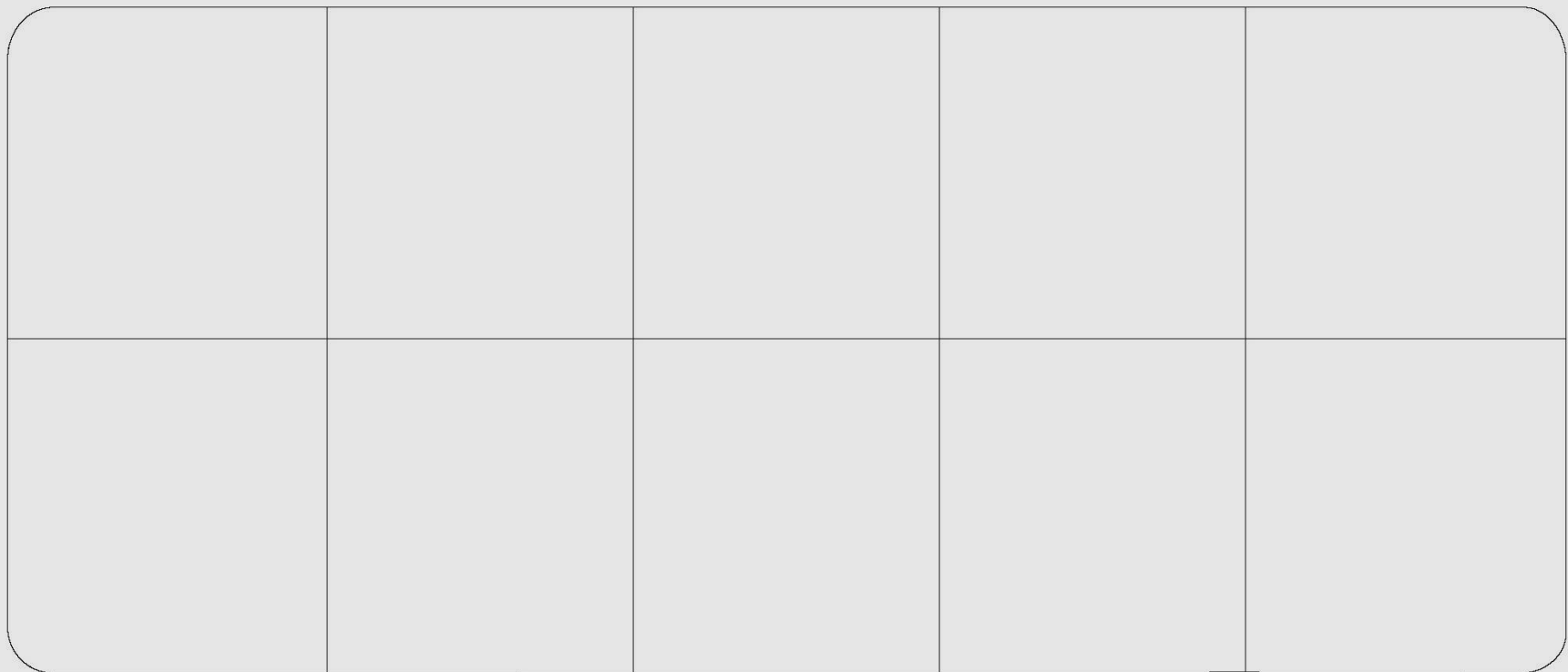
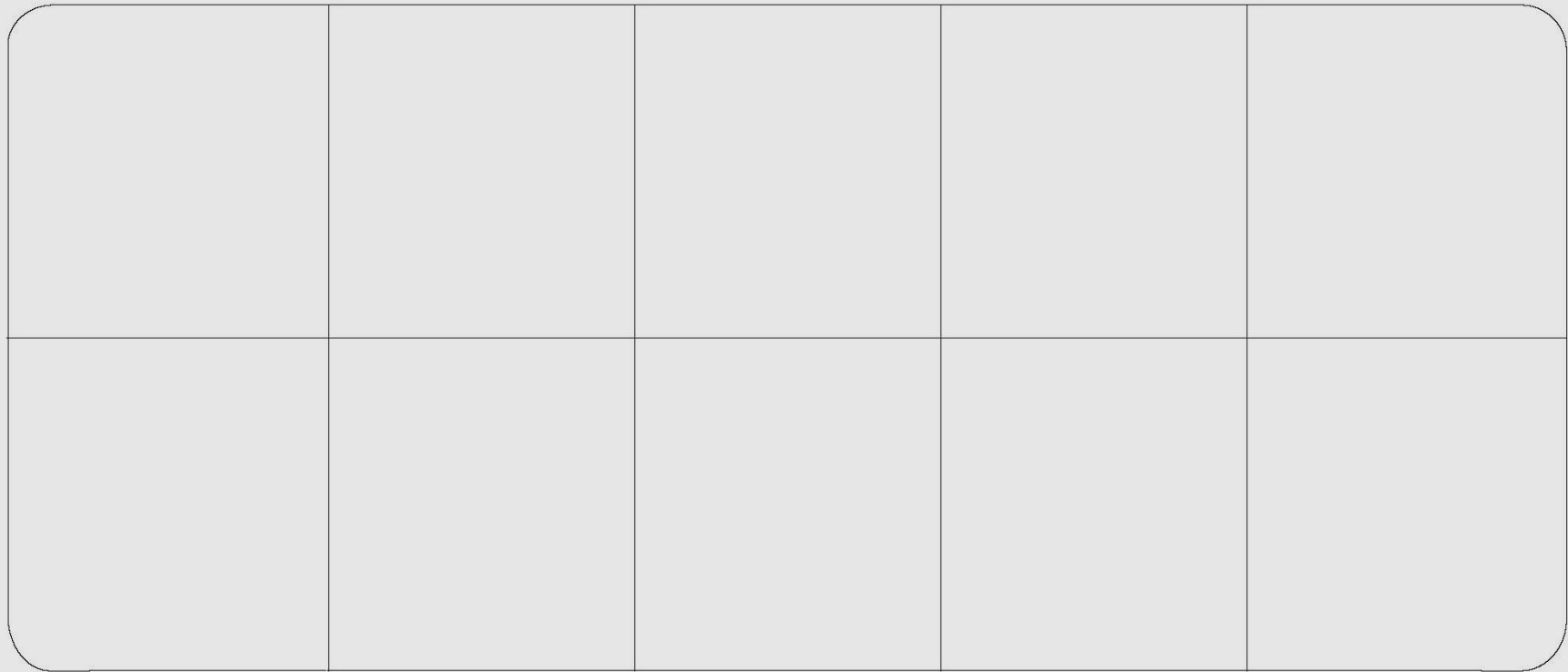












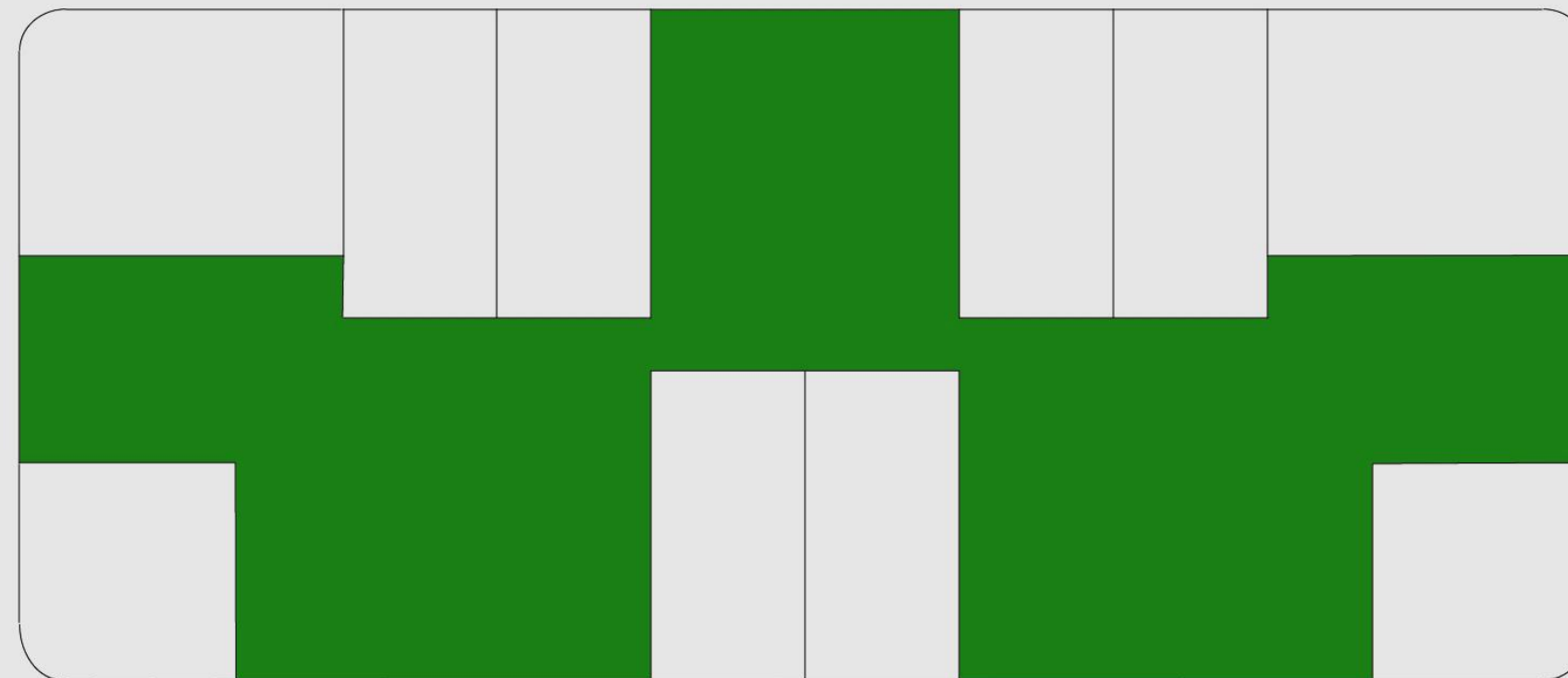
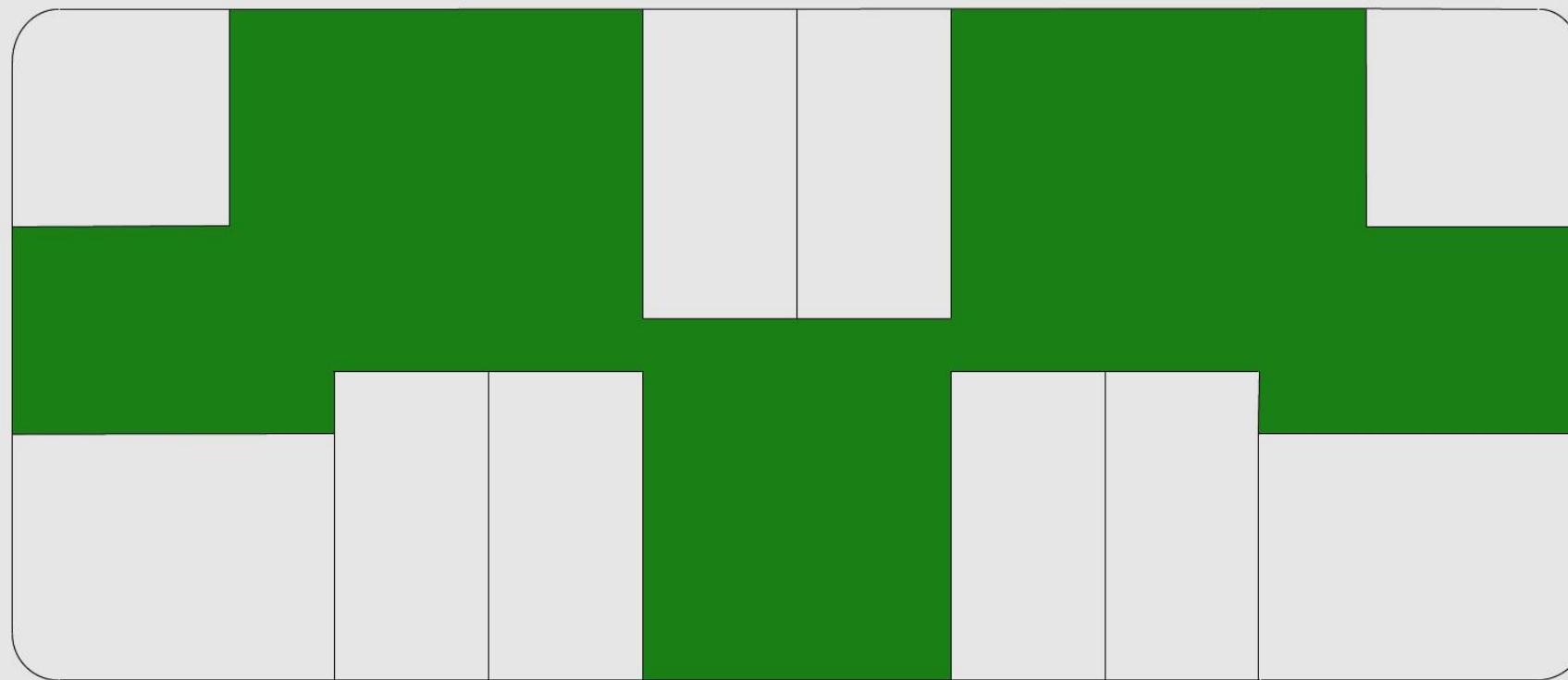
**SR-1 Conventional**

20 lots

26 acres (lots + streets)

0 acres of open space

(minimum 1-acre lots, minimum 100-foot frontage, o.s. not required)



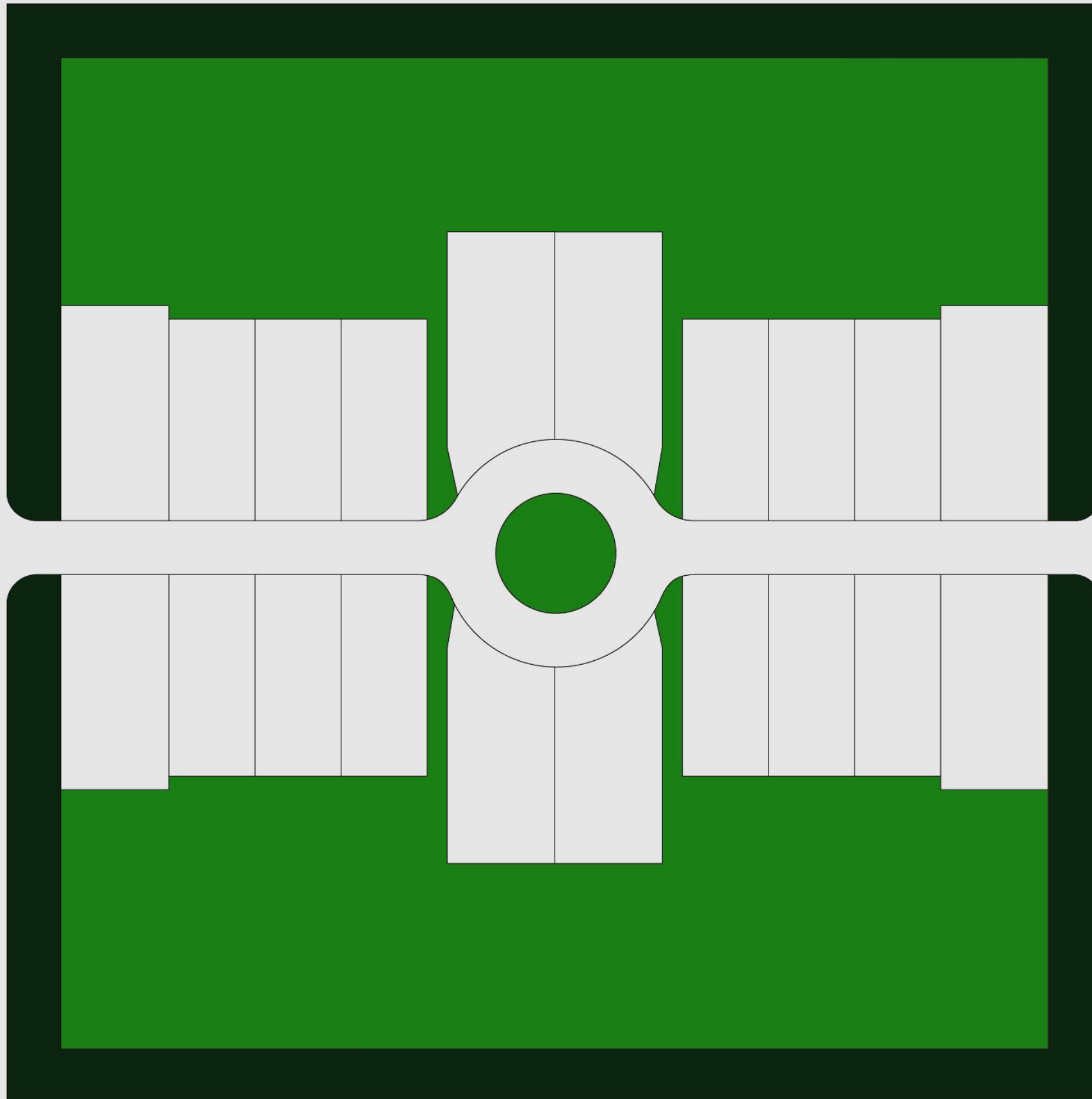
## SR-1 Cluster

20 lots

16.9 acres (lots + streets)

9.1 acres of open space (35%)  
(minimum 20k-sqft lots, minimum 100-foot  
frontage, public water/sewer,  
35% o.s. required)





## R-2 Cluster

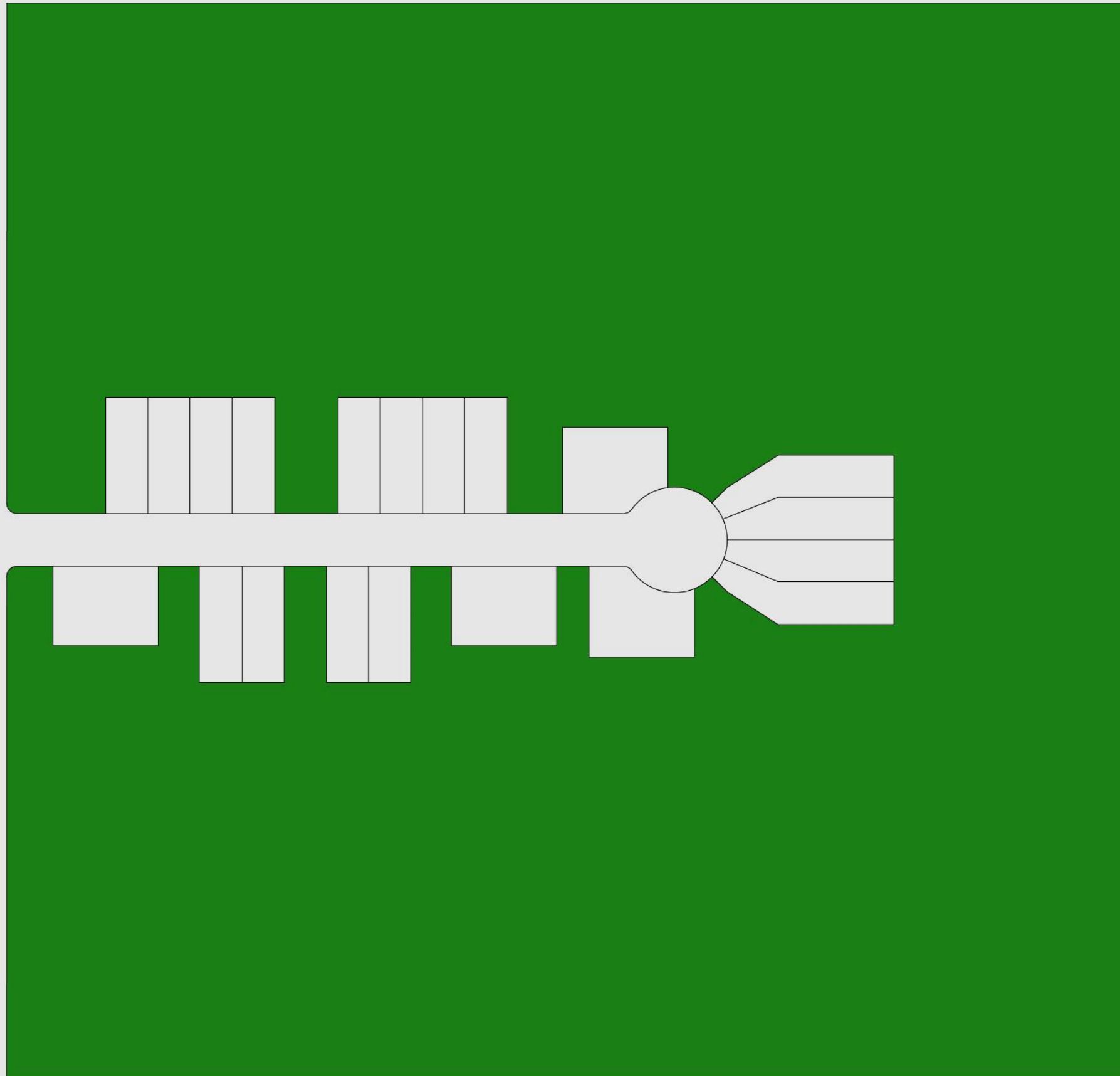
20 lots

11.9 acres (lots + streets)

14.1 acres of open space (54%)

(minimum 15k-sqft lots, public water/sewer,  
minimum 80-ft interior and 100-ft corner  
lot widths, 50-ft wide perimeter buffer,  
30% o.s. required)





## Zoning Ordinance PMR

20 lots

4.5 acres (lots + streets)

21.5 acres of open space (82%)  
(4.2k to 7.5k-sqft lots, public water/sewer,

40-foot TH lot widths,

100-foot SFD lot widths,

minimum 20-foot separations,

30% o.s. required)













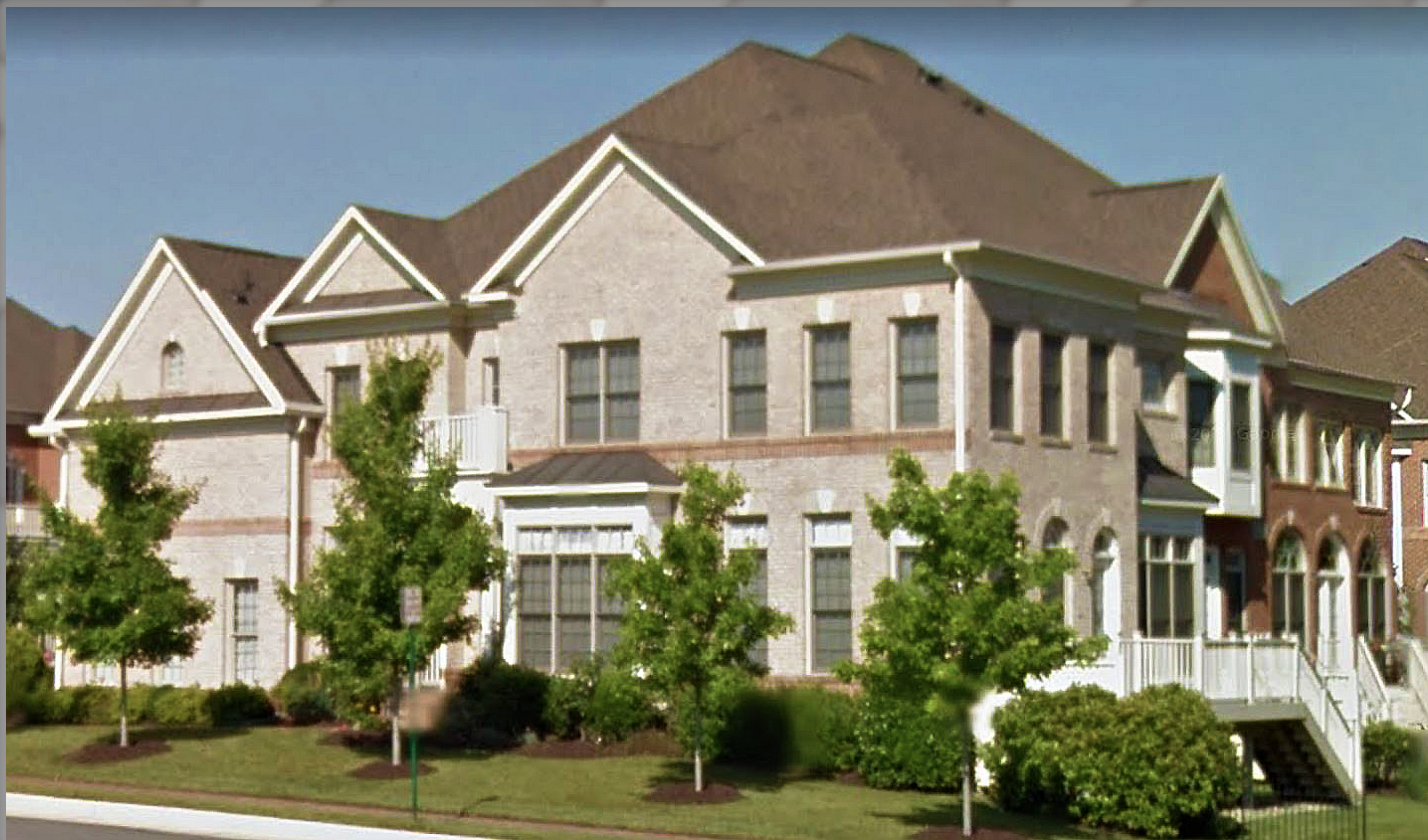












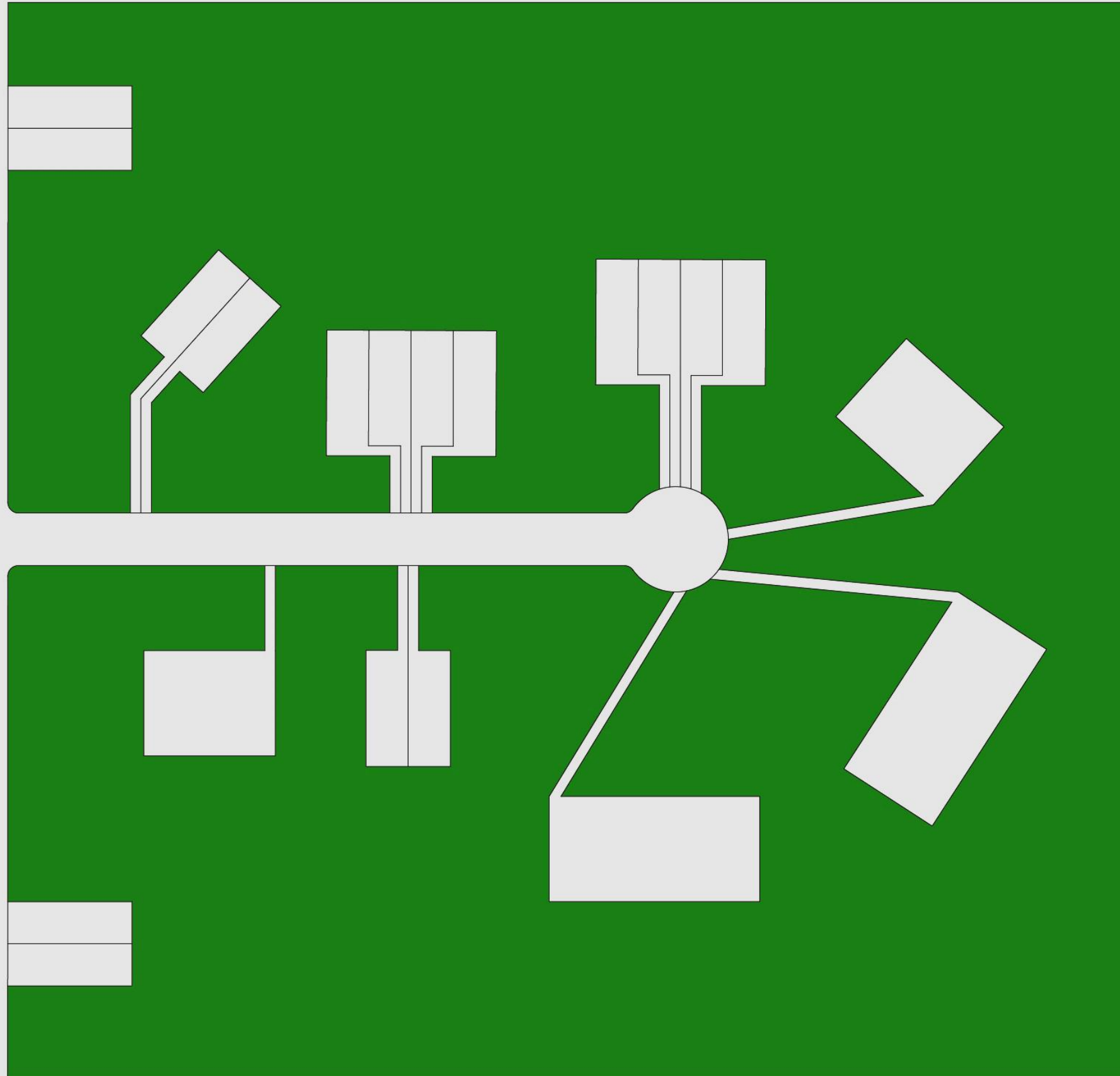












## Custom PMR

20 lots

5.1 acres (lots + streets)

20.9 acres of open space (80%)  
(4.2k to 20k-sqft lots, public water/sewer,  
40-foot TH lot widths,  
100-foot SFD lot widths,  
30% o.s. required)



# Prince William County Rural Preservation Study



*The world's leading sustainability consultancy*



Rural Area

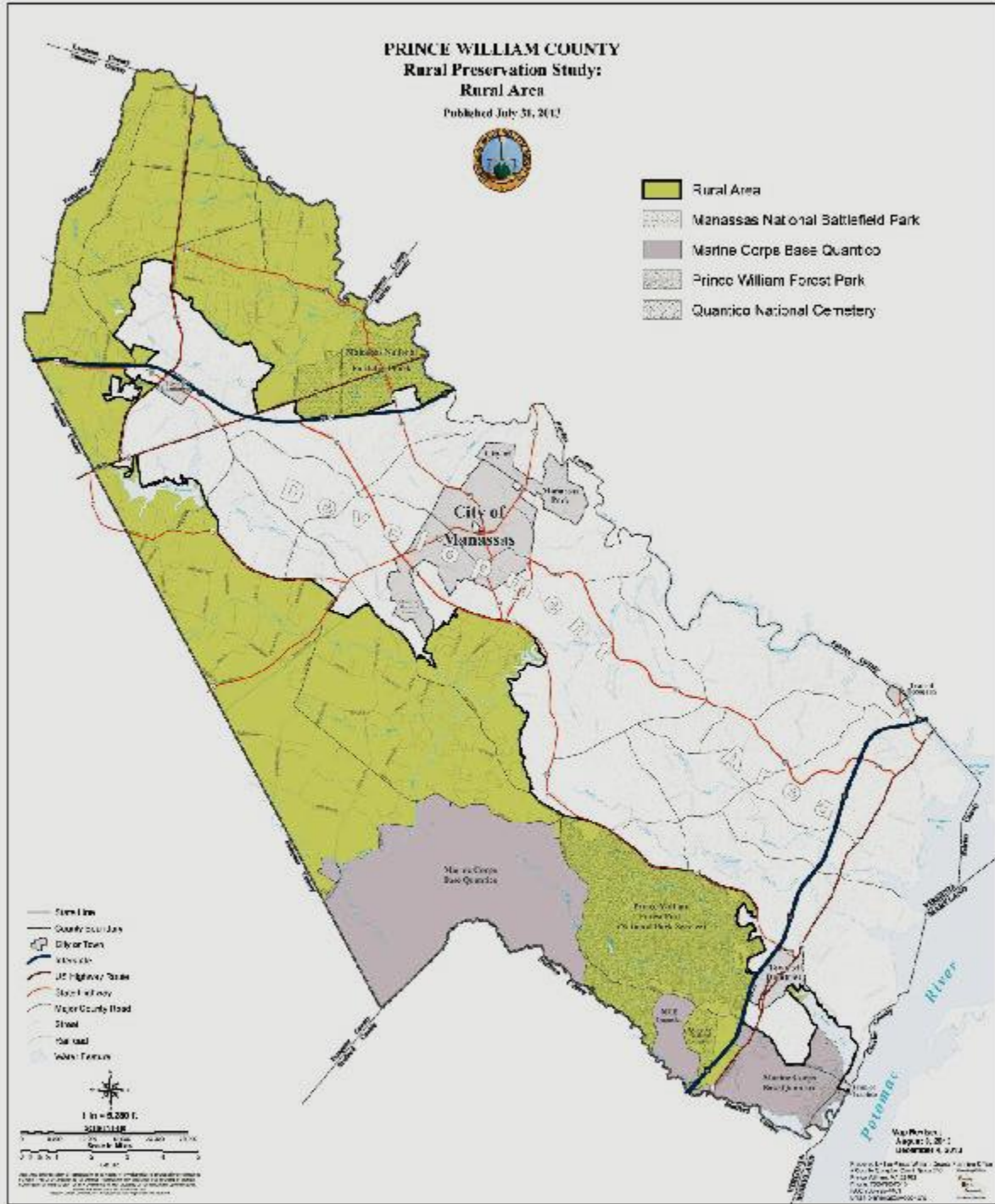
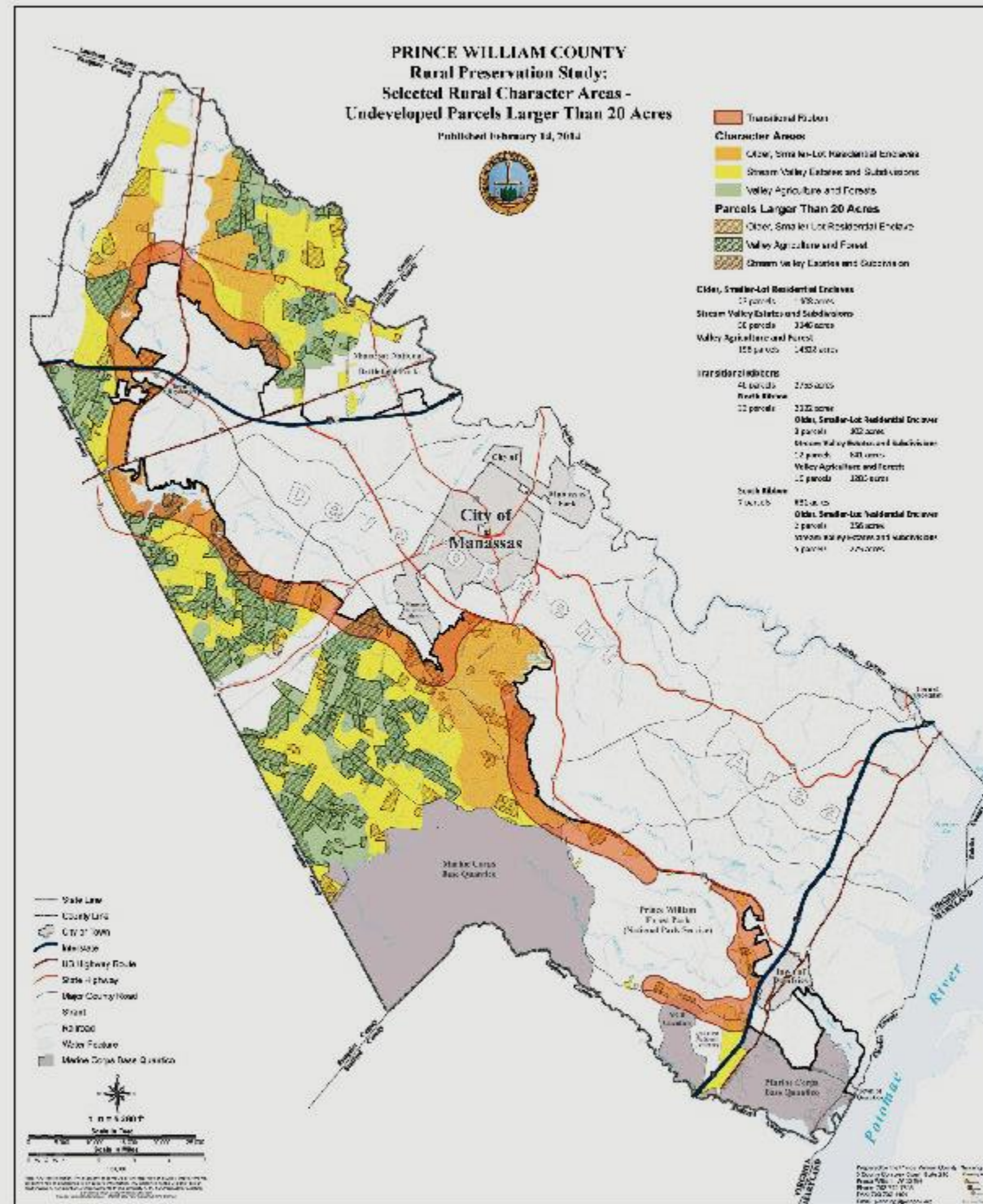




Figure 21 Selected Rural Character Areas –Undeveloped Parcels larger than 20 Acres





27-year time frame is provided for context discussion only and is not based on a residential real estate market analysis.

#### *5.3.3 Rezoning – land removed from Rural Area*

The Rural Area Boundary has remained largely unchanged and the Rural Area itself has experienced a net reduction of less than 0.5 percent (454 acres) of the total land area as it was constituted in 1998. These changes are the result of four rezonings (The Reserve at Lake Manassas, Airport Gateway Commerce Center, Dominion Valley, and Avendale) that reduced the size of the rural area, and two rezonings (Van Buren and Villages of Piedmont II) that added land to the Rural Area.

#### *5.3.4 Cluster development*

Few if any cluster developments have occurred in the Rural Area since 1998. Although permitted, the cluster development option is not attractive to developers (see below, Section 5.4). There are some current cluster developments in the Rural Area (e.g., Oak Valley see Figure 12 below), but their zoning appears to predate the 1998 Comprehensive Plan.

#### *5.3.4 Family subdivisions*

Family subdivisions are a small part of the development picture in the Rural Area. Between 2000 and 2012 there were 144 family conveyances covering 359 acres.



#### 5.4.2 Cluster Development

The current cluster development regulations are not used for several reasons:

- There is little developer incentive to cluster because the cluster option does not offer a density increase over the base 1 dwelling per 10 acre zoning.
- There is a developer disincentive because cluster development has to go through the County's development review process for approval. This can be time-consuming and expensive.
- Cluster is easiest to accomplish with central sewer or with a package sewerage treatment plant or a shared community on-lot septic system. Opportunity to tap into sewer lines in the Rural Area is scarce.

Some counties such as Fauquier allow "alternate sewerage systems" (such as shared septic drainfields or mound systems) that can allow smaller lot sizes. Prince William County allows package sewer systems only if connected to public sewer, and each parcel is required to have its own on-site private (e.g., septic) system.

- Soils in the Rural Crescent generally do not "percolate" well and so have limited ability to support on-site septic systems – especially multiple drainfields in close proximity or large, shared fields.
- The market economics are not favorable: a 10-acre lot may currently sell for about \$250,000. A three-acre lot might fetch \$80,000<sup>13</sup>.

Cluster can play a role in helping to preserve land in the Rural Area and in contributing to rural character, but the cluster regulations would need to be revised.

#### 5.4.3 Marine Corps Base Quantico

The Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) adds more impetus to preserving land that might create incompatibilities between off base land uses and the MCB Quantico's military mission. The Military Influence Areas are limited in extent into the Rural Area (see Figure 10) and the 10-acre zoning is generally protective of the mission.

The REPI program is a preservation tool that can be used in the Military Influence Area as has been demonstrated in the preservation of Merrimac Farm.

### 5.5 Recommendations

#### 5.5.1 Maintain the A-1 zoning density of one dwelling per ten acres, but create policy flexibility in locations where adjustments would advance the vision for the Rural Area.

There is much dissatisfaction with the present zoning but no clear consensus emerged for what to put in its place. Reducing the density to more restrictive zoning (such as one house per 20 acres or the sliding scale used in Fauquier County) would lower the number of potential new dwellings, but would be very unpopular among property owners. Rolling back the Comprehensive Plan mapping to pre-1998 conditions (thereby allowing increases in density through upzonings) would be a major policy reversal and would be very unpopular among supporters of the Rural Area.

In the survey for the Study, participants were asked their views on 10-acre lots. Among the respondents, 48 percent indicated it was a "reasonable balance between encouraging farming and allowing large-lot

<sup>13</sup> Consultant estimates based on properties listed for sale during the study period and feedback at the stakeholder group meetings.



Members of the Prince William County Architectural Review Board participated in the stakeholder interviews and expressed specific interest in the Buckland Historic District.

#### 11.4 Observations

Over 600,000 visits are made annually to Manassas Battlefield (Table 6). This scale of visitation has spinoff economic impacts that the Rural Area could both support and take greater advantage of.

As noted above, the Comprehensive Plan's Open Space and Corridors Map is a forward-looking map combining environmental, recreation, and heritage considerations into a unified open space vision. The map includes two heritage corridors (Route 15 and Bristow/Brentsville).

The recommended cluster provisions in Section 5 above would result in more development going through the development review process, and would help implement the Comprehensive Plan's action strategy to ensure that development in the Rural Area that will impact historic lands and structures undergo site or subdivision plan review.

#### 11.5 Recommendations

##### 11.1 *Identify specific cultural-related projects to implement the recommended refined Comprehensive Plan's Open Space and Corridors map*

Coordinate with existing efforts and plans including those of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership such as the Buckland Preservation Society, and the Prince William County & Manassas Convention and Visitors Bureau.

### 12. Public facilities/ capital projects

#### 12.1 Policies

The Comprehensive Plan discusses public facility needs such as schools, police, and fire and rescue in individual elements. A key action strategy is in the Land Use element:

Ensure that policies and public funding associated with other public agencies, ~~and~~ are structured to support the economic development goals of the County. Funds should be concentrated in the Development Area for needed public facilities, but should also be provided in the Rural Area. (LU-3)

County policy allows public facilities in the Rural Area to be served by public water and sewer (see above, Section 7.1)

Transportation is a major element of the Comprehensive Plan. While roads and other transportation facilities were not a focus of this Study, the following action strategy is relevant to the rural character discussion:

Improve existing substandard rural roads through the CIP and/or development-financed road and access improvements. These improvements can be identified during the rezoning, special use permit, and site/subdivision plan review processes. (TRANS-9)





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